OSLOMET

Vera Veum

Supporting integration through conversation-based programming at the public library

A study of the various elements affecting the outcome of conversation-based programs at public libraries in Oslo

OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University,
Department of Archivistics, Library and Information Sciences

Master thesis 2020
Master in Library and Information Science

Abstract: Samtalebaserte program har økt i popularitet ved Deichman de siste årene. Tidligere har studier sett at programmene har potensiale for å øke sosial kapital, bedre integrasjon og redusere fordommer. De observerte fordelene og populariteten har ført til en økt etterspørsel etter kunnskap om effektive metoder for å tilby programmene. Denne studien ser derfor på de ulike elementene som påvirker utfallet av samtalebaserte program. Studien er bygget på kvalitative data, samlet gjennom 14 semistrukturerte intervjuer. Seks intervjuer var med frivillige ved språkkafeer. Seks andre intervjuer var med bibliotekarer som leder språkkafeer. De to siste intervjuene var med nøkkelinformanter som hadde innsikt i et bredere spekter av samtalebaserte program. Resultatene i studien viser til fordelene og utfordringene ved å tilby innvandrere gradvis mer komplekse måter å bruke det lokale språket på. De viser også til fordelene og utfordringene ved å tilby innvandrere muligheter til gradvis å øke deres deltagelse i lokalsamfunnet. På den måten blir de bedre integrert. Resultatene indikerer også at det er et behov for arenaer som tilrettelegger for samarbeid mellom aktørene som jobber med samtalebaserte program.

Abstract: *Conversation-based programs have grown in popularity at Oslo Public Library over the last few years. They have previously been found to have potential for increasing social capital, facilitating integration, and reducing prejudice. The observed benefits and the popularity have led to an increased demand for knowledge around efficient methods for hosting the programs. This study, therefore, looks into the different elements that affect the outcome of conversation-based programs. The study is built on qualitative data gathered through fourteen semi-structured interviews. Six of the interviews were with volunteers at language cafés. Another six interviews were with librarians leading language cafés. The last two interviews were with key informants who had insight into a broader range of conversation-based programs. The results of this study point to the benefits and challenges associated with providing immigrants with access to gradually more complex ways of using the local language. They also point to the benefits and challenges associated with providing immigrants with opportunities to gradually increase their involvement in the local community. In this manner, they become better integrated. The results also suggest the need for arenas that facilitate collaboration between the hosts of the conversation-based programs.*

OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University,
Department of Archivistics, Library and Information Sciences

Acknowledgements

The work towards completing this thesis has not always been easy. I am sincerely grateful for all the help I have been given. It has kept me motivated and working in the right direction.

First of all, I am very grateful to my thesis advisor, Ragnar Andreas Audunson. Without his support and helpful advice, this project would not be what it is today. My gratitude also goes to Sunniva Evjen, for her linguistic advice. Thank you to my proofreaders, I would have been too blind to correct the mistakes you helped me find. I also wish to thank Pia Borlund for the way she led our master's seminars with lots of encouragement and enthusiasm. Thank you to the students and professors who shared their insights with me during these seminars. Last but not least, I am grateful to my loved ones for their moral support, and their help with stress management.

Content

1 Introduction

My project is about conversation-based programming taking place at the public libraries in Oslo, the capital of Norway. The Oslo public library, also known as Deichman, is the oldest and largest library in Norway. It currently includes 21 library branches in addition to the main library (Deichman, n.d.). Conversation-based programming includes programs such as language cafés, conversation groups and literature groups for immigrants. These programs all have one thing in common which is that the main goal is to learn a language through conversation, usually in an informal and social setting (Johnston, 2018).

Previously, studies have shown that conversation-based programming increases social capital and that they offer a unique opportunity to practice the local language with native speakers (Johnston, 2016). Social capital *"refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit"* (Putnam, 1995).

Another finding is that they are good arenas for building social capital as they create meeting places where people with different backgrounds can interact in an open and safe environment (Johnston, 2016). According to a survey by the Norwegian library association, 57% of the public libraries in Norway currently have a language café (Norsk bibliotekforening, 2018).

Language cafés are recurring events where people come together to practice their language skills through informal conversation. The term "café" often does not indicate where the event takes place but is rather used to evoke the informal atmosphere associated with cafés. They were started to meet the needs of immigrants, who lacked opportunities to practice Norwegian. The demand for this opportunity is still present, and the cafés are important arenas where this can be met. This can be seen through how well these events are attended. In Oslo almost all the public libraries have their own language café and many participants go to several cafés a week.

Considering how popular and widespread these events are, more knowledge is required around how to create good programs. It is necessary to have information about what works and what doesn't in order to meet the needs of the immigrants in the best possible way. Having more knowledge around why different elements work can also help the hosts, the volunteers and employees working with the program, in adjusting their events to the circumstances of their patrons. Some ways of offering a language café could work well in one area, though it might not work as well in another area with a different set of participants.

My problem statement is as follows: "*What are effective ways of offering conversation-based programming at the Oslo public libraries in order to improve integration?*"

There is a clear need for more information and knowledge on how to create good programs. This thesis is an attempt at alleviating this need. Therefore, I am going to look at strategies that have been tested out at various libraries, and what the hosts have learned from this. In doing so I hope to learn what works well and what doesn't. I also hope to find out about the challenges that the hosts of these programs face, and how they solve them.

My personal motivation for choosing this topic is because I have volunteered at a language café. During the time I volunteered I faced some difficulties and I observed and listened to others facing similar issues. The main one was trying to find a good way to structure the program. We would discuss this in meetings with the librarian to try to develop a good plan for what to do during the language café. There was a lot of uncertainty around how to host a language café. What did the participants want and what could we as volunteers offer them? There was also not a lot of information about how to create a successful language café. This resulted in a trial and error strategy, where we tested out strategies and asked the participants for feedback and adjusting the program accordingly. For this reason, I thought it would be useful to carry out a study where I try to build a knowledge base about how to develop and maintain a successful language café.

It is important that immigrants who want to learn Norwegian have good arenas where they can do so. This can help them in many aspects of their lives. The language café is one such arena and if done well it can have huge benefits for the patron and society. In order for this to happen, it is necessary to have the knowledge around what works and what doesn't.

Starting out I was confident that there was already a lot of information available on this, but that it was simply spread out between the people working on these programs. Therefore, I hypothesized that a study where I interviewed some of these people and combined their knowledge could help me create rich and useful materials. For this reason, I interviewed seven volunteers and seven employees from six different libraries that host a language café. In these interviews I asked them about how they structure their language cafés, what challenges they have faced, and what they believe to be important elements for creating a good language café. I also interviewed two key informants who had worked with conversation-based programming on a broader scale.

1.1 Research questions

In order to answer my problem statement, "*What are effective ways of offering conversation-based programming at the Oslo public libraries in order to improve integration?"* I will need information on how the conversation-based programs are carried out, and how the different features and elements of the program affects the outcome. To do this, I will look at the following research questions:

1. What elements do the program hosts (volunteers and librarians) consider conducive to an effective conversation-based program, where the goals include integration and language learning?
2. How do these elements affect the outcome of the programs?
3. What challenges do the hosts of the programs face?

2 Literature review

Synnøve Ulvik, an associate Professor at Oslo Metropolitan University, formerly Oslo and Akershus University College, wrote an evaluation report on projects started by the Torshov library in Oslo (1997). In this report she presents a girl group (Jentegruppa). The girl group was created with the intention of bringing girls from different backgrounds together. However, the group ended up including only girls with backgrounds from Pakistan and India. In the group, literature was used as a starting point for discussion around different topics. The girls were also introduced to other activities where they had opportunities to interact with people of different ethnic origins. The project was in general considered a success as the outcome of the project were network building, increased language skills among the immigrants participating, stronger feelings of belonging, increased trust and self-confidence (Ulvik, 1997, p. 154).

Later Ulvik (2010) studied a multicultural memory group at a public library in Oslo. She used the group as an example of how public libraries can be physical meeting places for people from different cultures and thus facilitate integration, understanding and trust. In her study she found that the sharing of memories created bonds and had a positive effect on social capital. In the study she argues that meeting with strangers for a common goal such as sharing memories can reduce prejudice.

A study on generalized trust in neighborhoods by Dietlind Stolle, Stuart Soroka and Richard Johnson (2008), from McGill University, indicated that social interactions have a mediating effect on the distrust which is commonly associated with ethnic diversity. They found that the level of contact between neighbors was negatively correlated with levels of distrust. The individuals who regularly communicated with their neighbors were less influenced by the racial and ethnic character of their neighborhood. The level of trust was higher amongst this group, indicating that social interactions increase trust. The study also found that the increase in trust associated with social interactions between neighbors was more marked in the majority population of neighborhood, than it was amongst the minorities.

Catherine Johnson, an assistant professor in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies at the University of Western Ontario, has studied the social role of public libraries, including whether libraries contribute to the social capital of communities. In 2010 she published a paper presenting a preliminary investigation into whether public libraries contribute to social capital.

In this study she found that library users had significantly higher social capital in terms of community involvement and trust than a random sample of city residents (Johnson, 2010).

A couple years later she published a qualitative study where she interviewed library staff and patrons in order to look further into the relationship between public libraries and social capital. The study suggested that the public libraries can contribute to social capital through the relationships and interactions that occur between staff and patrons. This was happening through building patrons' trust in the library and its staff, connecting people to both community and library resources, providing social support for patrons, reducing social isolation, helping patrons gain skills to function in an increasingly online world, and providing a positive place for neighborhood residents to gather (Johnson, 2012, p. 52).

Johnson also collaborated with Matthew R. Griffis. At the time Griffis was a PhD candidate who was finishing his studies in library and information science at the University of Western Ontario. This collaboration produced two papers, one with a quantitative approach and the other with a qualitative approach, where they looked at the relationship between social capital and public library use in small towns in Ontario, Canada (Griffis & Johnson, 2014; Johnson & Griffis, 2014). In the quantitative study they found that participants from small towns had higher levels of social capital than the urban participants. However, library use had no significant association with levels of social capital for small town participants. This contrasted with the results for urban participants, whose library use did have a significant association with social capital (Johnson & Griffis, 2014, p. 45). In the second qualitative study Johnson and Griffis found data that suggested that "*while rural libraries have high potential to create social capital, the overlap of social networks in rural communities renders the library's influence redundant.*" (Griffis & Johnson, 2014, p. 96).

Andreas Vårheim, a professor at the University in Tromsø (UiT), has studied the potential for libraries to generate social capital. In one of his studies, Vårheim (2011) split different viewpoints among library directors on library policies and goals into two groups which he labeled "activity" and "constitutional". The "activity" group focused on the role of the library as a social place. It focused on building community and trust by engaging everyone in the community. The "constitutional" group focused on promoting democracy through providing universal access to information and literacy. When studying examples in the USA he found that, though the perspective on the library's role were not the same in the "constitutional" and "activity" groups, their strategies for reaching their goals were similar. Most of them offered ESL (English as a second language), computer skills and civics classes. These programs

attracted the target immigrant population and were, according to the interviewed library directors, successful in generating trust and social capital.

In a different study Vårheim (2014a) investigated whether attending library programs increased levels of trust among recently arrived refugees. The participants in the study were refugees currently or formerly enrolled in a compulsory government introductory program to Norwegian language and society, in a city in northern Norway. During the study he looked at whether attending library programming, alongside their introductory course, would benefit the refugees by creating social capital and social trust. He found that the library made the refugees more trusting towards the institution of the public library and library patrons in general. However, trust in the general population decreased. This could, according to Vårheim, be explained by a wearing off of the "honeymoon" effect, where the initial excitement and optimism of arriving in a new country started to decline. Vårheim argued that libraries play an important part in facilitating and speeding up trust-creating processes, making integration less traumatic, even though trust in unknown people remained low, before, during, and after the completion of the programs (Vårheim, 2014a, p. 62).

Ingrid Atlestam and Randi Myhre (2014), from the immigrant institute in Göteborg, wrote about language cafés and how they were started in Sweden in a paper from the 80th IFLA general conference and assembly. According to this paper, using language cafés as a learning method originated in Kortedala Library. It started because they observed how the coffee breaks occurring after their computer courses provided an open and inviting space for conversation between different people, without pressure to speak fluently. Around the same time the librarians also observed that they had several patrons coming to the library searching for opportunities to improve their language skills. As a result, they decided to start a program called "Café Bridging Words – conversation in easy Swedish". After this, language cafés spread to more libraries in Sweden. According to the article, in addition to providing opportunities for language practice, the language café also "*offers an opportunity to receive information and to discuss how things work in Sweden compared to other countries. It becomes a rewarding intercultural exchange and results in mutual integration*" (Atlestad & Myhre, 2014, p. 4).

A five-year ethnographic study of Social Language Learning Spaces (SLLSs), was conducted at the Okayama university by Garold Murray and Naomi Fujishima, an associate professor and professor at Okayama university. During the study they looked at the L-café. The L-café is a physical space at the Okayama university. At the L-café students and professors can come to

learn languages, study and socialize. The L-café provides language learning opportunities through free language classes and language cafés. The L-café also includes an open area where Japanese and international students can come to study or socialize. The goal behind the L-café is to be an arena where Japanese and international students can exchange knowledge and practice their language skills in a social setting.

In the study Murray and Fujishima examine what the lived experiences of administrators, students and teachers can tell educators about SLLSs in institutional settings (Murray & Fujishima, 2016, p. 125). Murray and Fujishima found that the L-café has several perceived affordances. Affordances are opportunities for action in an environment as they are perceived by the individuals (Murray & Fujishima, 2016). One observed affordance was that the students could learn languages through lessons and through informal situations where they communicate with a more knowledgeable or experienced peer. Another affordance was that they could practice their language skills in a variety of conversation contexts. They could also get and give advice on topics such as how to study English and how to prepare for studying abroad. Moreover, they could make friends from a variety of countries, and the people they meet and interact with could help enhance their motivation to keep learning the language.

Another discovery that Murray and Fujishima made was that students, through legitimate peripheral participation, could eventually work their way to full membership in the community. Many students remarked on how they felt awkward the first few times they showed up to the café. When coming to the L-café for the first time, they felt most comfortable at the language classes. They also felt more comfortable if they brought a book or homework with them. This meant they looked busy. Eventually they became regulars and felt more at ease in the environment of the L-café. Murray and Fujishima conclude the study by remarking that:

> "Social spaces for language learning like the L-café, constituted of spatial elements and human agents, can become complex dynamic ecosocial systems offering learners the possibility to generate a diverse range of affordances for learning. […], learners must be willing to step outside their comfort zones, call upon the conviction of their dreams for the future and muster their courage in order to enter these spaces and make a place for themselves. At the L-café, for those who were able to do this, the rewards appear to have been unprecedented affordances for linguistic, intellectual and personal development." (Murray & Fujishima, 2016, p. 146)

Jamie Johnston, an associate professor at Oslo metropolitan university, has done several studies on conversation-based programming. She has studied language cafés, which is a type of conversation-based program, at libraries in Norway, Sweden and Denmark (Johnston, 2016, 2017, 2018; Johnston & Audunson, 2017). In a case study done at Malmö city library, Johnston (2016) looked into the potential of conversation-based programming for supporting immigrant integration. The results indicated that the programs are often the only opportunity the participants have for practicing their Swedish conversation skills. Additionally, the study found that informal information exchanges took place during the programs and that it is a space for social interaction with swedes and other immigrants. Johnston states that conversation-based programming facilitates integration by offering opportunities for language learning, expanding social networks, and increasing social capital.

In a second study (2018) she looked into how conversation-based programming supports integration by offering meaningful interactions between immigrants and the majority population. Having looked at four examples of conversation-based programming, Johnston found that the programs show "*potential for supporting integration through its ability to support, to varying degrees, equal status contact, common goals, intergroup cooperation and explicit social sanction, as well as the extensive and repeated contact needed for intergroup friendships to be established*" (2018, p. 1).

3 Integration

In this study I look into how different elements in conversation-based programming affect integration. Integration is an important concept, but it is not always defined in the same manner. It is a term that is used in many different contexts. In this paper the term is used to refer to the integration of different groups of people, especially ethnic and cultural groups, in a society. The focus of this paper is on immigrants in Norway, and the integration that happens at conversation-based programs where immigrants participate.

John W. Berry is a psychologist known for his work on the adaptation of immigrants and indigenous peoples following intercultural contact. He defines four terms related to how immigrants can be incorporated into a receiving society. Assimilation is a process where the immigrants do not maintain their cultural identity. Instead they seek interaction only with other cultural groups, such as the majority group. Separation happens when immigrants hold on to their original culture and refrains from interaction with other cultures. Marginalization is what happens when the immigrants do not maintain their original culture and they have little contact both with people within their original culture and with people from different cultures. Lastly, integration happens when an interest in maintaining one's original culture occurs at the same time as there is an interest in interacting with other groups and taking part in a larger social network (Berry, 1997; Johnston, 2018).

In Norway there is a government agency called the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi, *Integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet*). This agency is responsible for implementing public policy concerning refugees and integration. In a report written by request from the Directorate of Integration and Diversity on the role of immigrant organizations in integration, they discussed the concept and meaning of integration (Bråten, Jahreie, & Lillevik, 2017). According to this report, the meaning of integration, in politics and in daily speech is primarily linked to how immigrants can become part of the new country. However, when used in politics, it depends on the challenges that integration policy is supposed to help solve (2017, p. 7).

The report further explains how the understanding of the issues related to immigration, which is what integration policies are a response to, has changed over the last five decades. In the early 1970s the focus was on avoiding assimilation. They did not want immigrants to give up all their distinctive, cultural characteristics to become part of Norwegian society. Assimilation was then linked to a strict enforcement policy that the Norwegian state had previously implemented to

assimilate minorities such as the Sami. Norwegian authorities no longer wanted to use this strategy. The strategy that was implemented instead was inspired by multiculturalism. Immigrants should be allowed to become part of Norwegian society without having to give up their culture. In the following decades, attention gradually shifted towards the discrimination and the poor living conditions that affected the immigrant population. The worry then became the social exclusion and segregation of immigrants. In response to this, the integration policy changed focus. Now the task was turned to counter segregation. The integration policies were supposed to protect the rights of the individuals, while also defining their obligations to Norwegian society. They would have both the right and the obligation to acquire gainful employment, attend Norwegian classes and reach a basic level of education (Bråten et al., 2017).

The report, written in 2017, stated that in the newest parliamentary report (*stortingsmelding*) on integration policies, the main goal is to avoid social exclusion. There is a lot of focus on employment, education and Norwegian classes, but also on building trust and a sense of belonging to Norwegian society (Bråten et al., 2017).

In a similar manner, in this paper, integration is viewed as the process in which immigrants come to Norway and become a successful part of Norwegian society. For integration to take place, immigrants need to be included in the labor market, in political debate and in democratic processes. They also need to learn the language to ease their participation in society. Moreover, they need to be included in social networks, with representatives of majority and minority groups. Integration is a mutual process in which both the majority and the minority populations adapt to each other. Mutual trust needs to be built between the groups.

It will be interesting to see what aspects of integration the different elements of conversation-based programs affect. The programs are focused on conversations and so they are likely to help the language learning process of the immigrants. They can also potentially improve integration through being an arena where the immigrant population and the general population are exposed to one another. There are several theories that suggest exposing different groups to one another can lead to improved integration and increased trust in a society. I will present these theories in the following chapter.

4 Theory

In this chapter, I will present the theories used to interpret the thoughts and experiences shared by the interviewed hosts and key informants. These theories can help understand the presented elements of conversation-based programming, and why the hosts perceive them as effective measures to improve integration and language learning. I will first present the theory on social capital which is a concept of vital importance for integration. Then I will present the theories on intergroup contact, high- and low-intensive meeting places and the third place theory. These theories all present different perspectives on how to build trust and social capital. The last theory, communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation describes how learning takes place in a community. It also presents some ideas about the process of becoming a part of a community.

4.1 Social capital

A widely accepted definition of social capital is that it "*refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit*" (Putnam, 1995). It involves social networks, trust, and norms of reciprocity (Audunson, Vårheim, Aabø, & Holm, 2007).

According to Vårheim (2007), research on social capital has grown exponentially since the 1990s. He points to how social capital "*has been credited with having positive effects on democracy, economic development, government efficiency, community development, schooling, individual health and well-being, and with combating crime, drug abuse, and teenage pregnancies*" (Vårheim, 2007, pp. 417-418).

In the same article he explains how there are two perspectives on social capital. There is the society-centered perspective and the institutional-centered perspective. The society-centered perspective focuses on how social capital can be generated through social networks, face-to-face interaction, and voluntary associations. The institutional-centered perspective argues that social capital is increased by establishing institutions and universal programs to create equality and by having, a working democracy, political rights, and civil liberties (Audunson et al., 2007; Vårheim, 2007, p. 419).

Research often distinguishes between bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital is built on the trust and bonds between people forming tight knit groups, for example families or groups of friends. Bridging social capital is based on the generalized trust and weak

ties you have towards people across your closest circles of contacts. Your closest circles of contacts could include your family and close friends. Your weak ties are the relationships and the trust you have towards the people who are not in your closest circles of contacts, such as acquaintances and friends of friends. Bridging social capital creates links between races or ethnic groups through establishing weak ties between people (Audunson et al., 2007; Essmat, Audunson, & Aabø, 2011). For society social capital of the bridging type is especially important. A lack of bridging social capital can cause conflict and distrust between different groups.

Migrants have to rebuild their social capital when they come to a new country. According to Essmat et al., migration "*implies a dramatic reduction in social capital. Migrants leave family, friends, and social networks behind, and face the challenging task of building new networks*" (Essmat et al., 2011, p. 222). They need to build both bridging and bonding social capital. Generating social capital that bridges the gap between the majority population and immigrants is particularly important. As Essmat et al. point out, if migrants "*are to be integrated in the new environments, bridging social capital connecting them to the dominant culture is necessary. Building those bridges is no less challenging than establishing new networks with the capacity of building bonding social capital.*" (Essmat et al., 2011, p. 222).

There are several studies that explore the potential for public libraries to generate social capital (Audunson et al., 2007; Essmat et al., 2011; Ferguson, 2012; Johnson & Griffis, 2014; Khoir, Du, Davison, & Koronios, 2017; Vårheim, 2011, 2014b). According to Vårheim (2007), a public library can create social capital through three different strategies:

> "Firstly, libraries can generate social capital by working with voluntary associations to find ways of enhancing participation in these organizations and thus increasing participation in local community activities. Secondly, libraries can develop their capacity as informal meeting places for people. Thirdly, libraries can create social capital in their role as providers of universal services to the public." (Vårheim, 2007, p. 421)

Conversation-based programs can fit into these categories in several ways. Firstly, some conversation-based programs use volunteers. Secondly, the programs are local community activities. Thirdly, conversation-based programs have the potential to be informal meeting places for people. Furthermore, the society centered approach to generating social capital points to face to face interactions, which is a key feature in conversation-based programming, as a way

to increase social capital. Conversation-based programs could also have a potential for generating social capital that bridges the divide between immigrants and the majority population. This is due to how they create meeting places that can include both immigrants and natives. Therefore, I will look into whether the hosts of the conversation-based programs work towards generating social capital and which strategies they implement to reach this goal.

4.2 Intergroup contact theory and generalized trust

Intergroup contact is a theory developed and presented by Gordon Allport, an American psychologist, in his book, *the Nature of Prejudice*. Intergroup contact is described as a way to reduce prejudice and increase generalized trust. Several studies on intergroup contact have found that contact between groups can reduce prejudice and increase generalized trust (Pettigrew, Tropp, & Dovidio, 2006; Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Stolle et al., 2008).

According to Vårheim, "*generalized trust means relations to people outside one's own group and across divisions of class, education, and ethnicity*" (Vårheim, 2007, p. 418). It is the trust one has to people outside of one's inner circle of contacts. Generalized trust is closely linked to bridging social capital in that they both consider the week ties between people and how they affect the social cohesiveness of a society (Vårheim, 2007). The idea that intergroup contact can increase the levels of generalized trust in a population and reduce prejudice is reflected in the society centered perspective on social capital, where face-to-face interaction is a key element to creating social capital.

Intergroup contact reduces prejudice and increases generalized trust through contact and communication between people belonging to different groups. Being exposed to those outside of one's own group allows people to understand and value perspectives and ways of living life that different from their own. This allows them to better understand the other group and correct their prejudices. Additionally, if the contact that persists over time, it also helps reduce the levels of anxiety that one feels towards outgroup members. However, contact that is characterized by conflict and feelings of increasing anxiety, will often have the opposite effect. This form of contact is more likely to increase prejudice and feelings of hostility towards outgroup members.

Intergroup contact theory goes on to explain what kind of meetings are most effective in generating generalizable trust and reducing prejudice. According to Allport (1958), the

reduction in prejudice due to intergroup contact should be most noticeable when the interaction meets certain criteria.

> "Prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e., by law, custom or local atmosphere), and provided it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups." (Allport, 1958, p. 281)

The criteria mentioned above are that the people meeting should have equal status and common goals, they should cooperate, and the meeting should have social sanction. Equal status means that both groups should put an equal amount of effort into the relationship. It also means that there should not be a hierarchical structure that differentiates between the people belonging to different groups. In relation to the equal status criteria, Allport also explains how the reduction in prejudice is stronger if the people have similarities, such as similar socio-economic backgrounds or life experiences. To achieve this, the common goal should be one that requires cooperation with the outgroup members. The cooperation needs to include both groups in equal measures. It should also not lead to competition. Social sanctions could come from authority, law or custom. The reason behind this criterion is that the intergroup contact needs to be acknowledged as useful and accepted by its surroundings. This could reduce the anxiety felt by the participants.

These criteria help reduce the anxiety that is commonly experienced during intergroup contact. If the intergroup contact does not meet the criteria, it could lead to increased prejudice. For instance, if the situation is competitive or if the status between the groups is unequal.

Studies on intergroup contact theory have put emphasis on the reduction of anxiety felt by individuals when meeting with outgroup members. They observed how anxiety was a common feeling during the first intergroup contact, but that sustained interaction meeting the criteria presented by Allport reduced this feeling towards the other group. This is seen as a key factor contributing to increasing trust and reducing prejudice (Allport, 1958; Pettigrew et al., 2011).

Conversation-based programming could have positive outcomes, such as a reduction in prejudice and an increase in social capital, because they are meeting places where intergroups contact take place. They offer the opportunity for sustained interaction between people belonging to different groups. For this study it will, therefore, be useful to look at whether the

hosts strategies for their programs have the potential to create to intergroup contact that meet the criteria presented by Allport.

4.3 High- and low-intensive meeting places

> "*Multicultural librarianship means developing arenas where people belonging to different cultures are exposed to one another.*" (Audunson, 2005, p. 438)

The concept of high- and low-intensive meeting places was developed by Ragnar Audunson, a professor at Oslo Akershus University College, in a paper about the public library as a meeting place in a multicultural and digital context (2005). According to Audunson, "*high-intensive meeting places are those arenas where people invest their primary engagement, whereas low-intensive meeting places are arenas where one is exposed to the values and interests of others*" (2005, p. 429). The difference between high-intensive versus low-intensive meeting places is related to the differences between bridging and bonding social capital. It is also related to the difference between particularized versus generalized trust (Audunson et al., 2007). The theory can also be seen in relation to intergroup contact theory. The intergroup contact criteria of having a common goal is related to the common interests' people engage with at high-intensive meeting places. However, the contact between different groups required for something to be characterized as intergroup contact would lead to the kind of exposure to values and interests of others, which is characteristic of low-intensive meeting places.

A primary engagement can be one's work, hobby, religion etc. At high-intensive meeting places you engage in these activities. At these places you interact with others who primarily share the same values. The social capital that is generated in these places are more likely to be of the bonding type, and the trust is particularized. According to Audunson et al., "*High intensive meeting places are probably vital in constituting people's identity and providing their lives with meaning and bonding social capital through contact with similar people*" (Audunson et al., 2007).

Low-intensive meeting places, on the other hand, are arenas where one is exposed to people different from oneself and outside of one's inner circle of contacts. Low-intensive meeting places are, therefore, important for generating bridging social capital and increasing generalizable trust (Audunson et al., 2007). These places expose people to values and interests different from their own. The people there can have different backgrounds, and different religious or political views for example. Being exposed to people who are different from oneself can help increase tolerance and understanding towards those people.

According to Audunson (2005), the public library can function as a low-intensive meeting place. In the public library there are a wide variety of people belonging to different groups. People of different ethnicities, ages and genders come to the library. Therefore, the library has a unique potential for offering low-intensive meeting places in our increasingly multicultural society.

Conversation-based programs could act as low-intensive meeting places. Participating in conversation-based programming is rarely seen as someone's primary engagement. It is often done to achieve secondary goals, such as learning a language or improving one's chances of future employment in a new country. Moreover, there is a lot of diversity. At the conversation-based programming there can be representatives of several minority groups as well as representatives of the majority population. Usually in the form of volunteers. People who come the programs do not necessarily share the same values and interests. Because of this, the programs can expose people to views and cultures different from their own.

This process is an important part of integration. The majority group need to become familiarized with the minority groups and vice versa. In exposing the different groups to each other there is a potential for increasing the trust and social capital that bridges between the groups.

If the conversation-based programs act as low-intensive meeting places, while also fulfilling some of the criteria by Allport, they should be able to support integration, through exposing people to otherness in a setting that is not characterized by anxiety or distrust. This could lead to the creation of bridging social capital, generalizable trust and reducing prejudice. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether the structures and elements used by the hosts when creating conversation-based programs, are low-intensive or high-intensive in nature.

4.4 The third place

Ray Oldenburg, an American sociologist, in his book *The Great Good Place*, differentiates between three different types of places where people spend their time. One's first place is one's home and one's second place is where one works. The third place is neither of these two things. It is instead an open and accessible place where one can interact socially on a regular basis with familiar people. It is a place outside of one's home, but where one still feels at home (Oldenburg, 1989). In an article examining the benefits of third places Oldenburg and Brissett (1982) note that, "*Third places exist outside the home and beyond the 'work lots' of modern*

economic production. They are places where people gather primarily to enjoy each other's company" (p. 269).

According to Oldenburg (1989), third places should have the following characteristics:

- **Neutral ground**: People are free to come and go as they please. No one is financially or otherwise tied to the place.
- **Levelling**: There is no established hierarchy and people's socio-economic status is not relevant.
- **Conversation is the main activity**: Conversation does not need to be the only activity, but it is the focus. The conversation should be lighthearted and casual.
- **Regulars**: Though the regulars do not necessarily dominate in numbers, they are a necessary part of a third place because of their effect on the atmosphere.
- **Accessible and accommodating**: Third places need to be easily accessible and free to enter. They should also be comfortable and meet the needs of the people there.
- **Low profile**: Third places do not need to be fancy or extravagant. They may not seem like much from the outside, but the people there see value in the camaraderie they can find within.
- **Playful mood**: There should not be tension or hostility at third places. They are also not meant to require strained conversation or stressful situations. They should be relaxed, friendly and filled with cheerful banter.
- **Home away from home**: The people at a third place should feel the same sense of comfort and belonging that they feel in their own homes

Third places are defined by the pure sociability of the interactions that take place there. The activities and social interactions that take place there are not purposive. According to Oldenburg and Brissett, many places with the potential for being third places, instead take on the qualities of a purposive place, which is more similar to a second place.

> "Indeed, the majority of public places in our society fail to become actual third places. Upon entering many of these establishments, one finds intense devotion to the business at hand. One opens the door to a bar, coffee shop, or sauna, and finds people at work, either at their job or at their leisure. There is no lively conversation in these places, no suspension of the usual and typical, no joy of association. The "ingredients" of third place are simply not there." (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982, p. 269)

Third places include a sociable atmosphere, where no one person dominates the conversation. The leveling effect of a third place is an important element to achieve this. Hierarchies that are normally associated with workplaces are not present at a third place. For instance, there are no leaders who take on a different role in a conversation due to their position.

> "The conversational style of third places embodies the spirit of pure sociability. A person must not remain silent, nor must he dominate conversation. In the free and uninhibited atmosphere of third place fellowship, conversation is remarkably democratic. Everyone seems to talk "just the right amount."" (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982, p. 272)

Another important aspect of a third place is its unpredictability. It offers the people who come a chance to experience something outside of their everyday routine in their home and work place.

> "the feeling that it [the unexpected or unpredictable] might occur is a vital part of experiences in the third place. One can never be certain exactly who will be there; can never predict what the chemistry of a particular "mix" of people will create. One can, however, count on it being lively for third places are arenas for active participation with others. Here, individuals truly entertain one another without the trappings of their social status and personal problems." (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982, p. 274-275)

Some important benefits of third places are that they *provide opportunities for important experiences and relationships in a sane society, and are uniquely qualified to sustain a sense of well-being among its members*" (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982, p. 268-269). Furthermore, "*Third places, especially those which are not insulated by formal membership requirements, often uniquely provide a common meeting ground for people with diverse backgrounds and experiences*" (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982, p. 275). This benefit would in turn offer opportunities to build bridging social capital and generalized trust in the population. Because the more people are exposed to otherness, the more they learn to be accepting of it.

The third place theory can be seen in relation to the previous theories in various ways. It is a place facilitating face to face contact and thus has the potential to generate social capital. Intergroup contact can also happen at third places, because they are open to anyone. They also meet the criteria of equal status contact, as third places are supposed to be levelling. Moreover, third places are often low-intensive. First of all, unlike high-intensive meeting places, third places are not focused on a primary engagement. Secondly, they are open to everyone,

independent of socio-economic background. Thirdly, because they offer a common meeting ground for people with diverse backgrounds, they expose the people there to the values and interests of others.

Some elements in a conversation-based program, such as meeting both regulars and newcomers, could have similarities with third places, while others, such as completing language learning tasks, could correspond more to a second place. It can be useful to use third place theory, in order to look at the different elements the hosts implement in their organization of conversation-based programs and whether they can be useful in creating third places. This could give an indication of whether the face to face contact at the conversation-based programs have potential for providing the benefits associated with third places.

4.5 Communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation

The term communities of practice was coined by anthropologist Jean Lave and educational theorist and practitioner Etienne Wenger, while they were studying apprenticeship as a learning model (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998, 2014). Apprenticeship has often been seen as a relationship between a student and a master. However, studies have pointed to a more complex set of social relationships through which learning takes place. Lave and Wenger, therefore, coined the term community of practice. It refers to the community that acts as a living curriculum for the apprentice. Wenger defines it as "*groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly*" (Wenger, 2014). This definition includes both communities where learning is an intended outcome, as well as communities where learning is an incidental outcome of a member's interactions.

There are three parts necessary for something to be a community of practice.

- **The domain** which is an area of shared interest
- **The community** which is based on how members engage in joint activities and discussions
- And a **shared practice**, which is developed through sustained interaction (Wenger, 2014)

According to Wenger, it "*is the combination of these three elements that constitutes a community of practice. And it is by developing these three elements in parallel that one cultivates such a community*" (Wenger, 2014).

Lave and Wenger have studied the process through which a novice becomes a full member in such a community. Through this, they have developed a theory on legitimate peripheral participation. The theory explains how a novice goes from participating from the sidelines to becoming more and more involved in the community, eventually becoming a full member (Lave & Wenger, 1991). According to the theory, a novice will gradually learn the common practices of a community through peripheral activities and interacting with those who have been in the community longer than them. Eventually the novice will go from being a newcomer to becoming an established member. During this process, the novices both learn and develop the community practices through their participation.

An important factor affecting the novices' learning process is whether their participation is legitimate. According to Lave and Wenger:

> "To be able to participate in a legitimately peripheral way entails that newcomers have broad access to arenas of mature practice. At the same time, productive peripherality requires less demands on time, effort, and responsibility for work than for full participants. A newcomer's tasks are short and simple, the costs of errors are small, the apprentice has little responsibility for the activity as a whole. [...] it is also true that the initial, partial contributions of apprentices are useful. [...] An apprentice's contributions to ongoing activity gain value in practice – a value which increases as the apprentice becomes more adept." (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 110-111)

Wenger (1998) explains how there are four dimensions to learning in a community of practice:

- **The identity** dimension points to how participants develop their personality and their sense of self as they learn the practices within a community.
- **The community** dimension describes learning through legitimate participation in the community and the sense of belonging caused by the recognition gained within the community, for the work one does.
- **The meaning** dimension refers to the common understanding of the domain and the practice that is developed through interactions and discussions within the community.
- **The practice** dimension refers to the knowledge, experiences, tools, and ways of addressing recurring problems, that are developed within the community over time (Graven & Lerman, 2003; Wenger, 1998; Wittek, 2004).

Wenger developed the following diagram to illustrate the four dimensions and their relationship to learning:
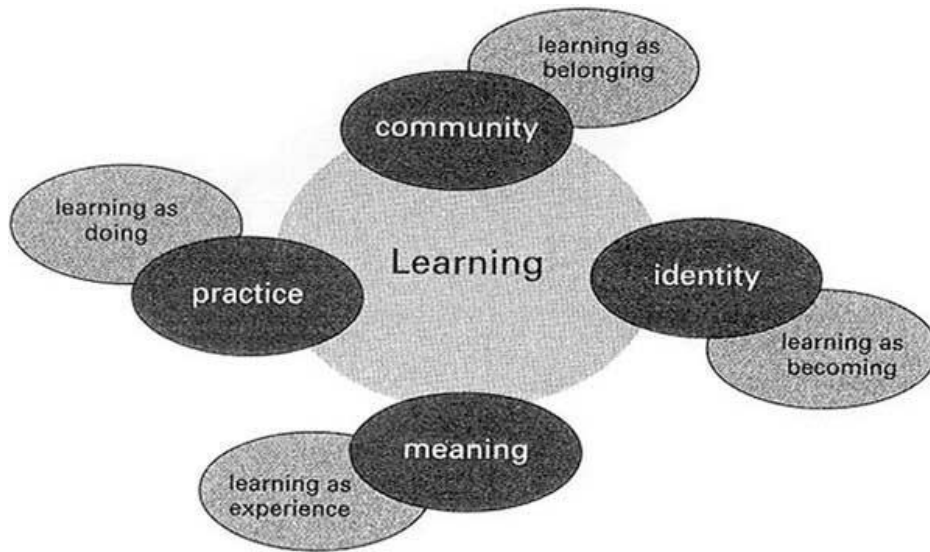
Figure 1: Components of a social theory of learning (Wenger, 1998, p. 5)

The theory on community of practice and legitimate peripheral participation differs from the previous ones in that it focuses mainly on learning processes. However, it also describes how to become part of a community. This part of the theory can be related to the other theories. It is necessary to build relationships and networks between the members of a community. In this way it relates to the theory on social capital. Communities of practice probably generate social capital of the bonding type. The participants bond over a shared interest or domain. The members see value in the work they do within their community and the competencies they develop as a group. The theory states that the members gain a sense of belonging from this. This sense of belonging is like the bonds between people forming tight knit groups, which is an example of social capital of the bonding type. Furthermore, the criteria of common goals and cooperation from the intergroup contact theory are met in a community of practice. The domain would be the common goal, while the community with its shared practice describes how they cooperate. If a community of practice also meets the criteria of equal status contact and social sanction, this could be a good place for intergroup contact to take place.

As mentioned above the theory on communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation focuses on learning and becoming part of a community. Learning is an important part of integration. Immigrants need to learn the language, culture, norms and rules of the receiving society. The majority population also needs to learn about the immigrants. One could

hypothesize that migrants go through a process of legitimate peripheral participation when entering a new society, where the new society is the community of practice. The migrants could learn the common practices of the community through legitimate peripheral participation. Their participation could also end up influencing the community as a whole through the negotiations that happen within a community of practice. Perhaps participation in conversation-based programs can be a form of legitimate peripheral participation in the local community.

The theory can also be used to understand how the hosts describe the structures of their conversation-based programs and how they perceive this to affect the outcome. Do the structures they describe create communities of practice? If so, how are the newcomers welcomed into these communities? Do the structures described allow for peripheral participation in the programs? How do the hosts perceive that these structures affect the outcome of the program?

4.6 Summary of the theoretical perspectives

Above I have presented the theoretical approaches of social capital, contact theory, low- and high-intensive meeting places and third places. One can regard the concept of social capital as a general and overriding concept of vital importance for integration. Contact theory, the concept of high- and low-intensive meeting places and Oldenburg's concept of third places, from different angles, focus on social mechanisms and processes conducive to generating social capital.

I also presented the theoretical approach of communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation. This theory has its focus on the learning that happens through engaging and interacting within a community of practice. Learning is another vital part in integration. By using this theoretical approach, it is possible to see learning as something which happens on the part of the whole community, not just the individual. This corresponds with the idea of mutual integration, where immigrants and the majority population both adapt to and learn about each other.

5 Method

In this chapter I will explain how I gathered data relevant to the problem statement using semi-structured interviews with the hosts of the conversation-based programs, as well as with two key informants with knowledge of the development of these programs over time.

Seven volunteers and seven librarians were interviewed. Two of the volunteers and two of the librarians were interviewed together, resulting in a total of twelve interviews. In addition, two interviews were conducted with key informants with knowledge of the development of conversation-based programs in Oslo.

5.1 Identifying useful participants

I wanted to interview both librarians in charge of conversation-based programs as well as volunteers. When using the term "host" I am referring to both of these roles. The reason I chose to interview the hosts is that they have insight into how the language cafés are held and the challenges that can occur. I consider both the volunteers and the librarians to be important for the creation and maintenance of conversation-based programs. They are often both part of the planning processes and they are also both part of running the program. It can differ from library to library how involved the librarians are in the conversation-based programs. In some cases, it might be more fruitful to interview an active volunteer, as they have more hands-on experience. However, the librarian in charge is more likely to have a better overview. As they work with different aspects of the conversation-based programs they would have different insights into my problem statement. The different backgrounds could reveal differences in their perspectives. Therefore, I decided to interview both volunteers and librarians.

I also interviewed two key informants. They were chosen because of their broader perspective and their roles as leaders at the Oslo Public Library. Both have worked for the Oslo Public Library over a long period of time. During this time, they worked with or oversaw several programs operated by the library. This was reason to believe that they would have insight into a broader set of methods for creating and maintaining conversation-based programs.

The participants at the language café were also a potentially useful source of data, however, there were several reasons why I chose to limit the study to the hosts. The main one was that the focus of the study is on how to create and maintain the conversation-based programs and the participants would not have as much insight into this process as the hosts. They would have more insight into how they benefit from the programs rather than how to run them. Interviewing

the participants could lead to difficulties with interpreting the data, due to language barriers. It was also necessary to limit the number of participants, due to the limitations of the scope of the project.

5.2   Recruiting participants

To recruit hosts of conversation-based programs, I started with the librarians. I contacted the main library administration by email. I asked them to connect me with librarians who oversee a language café or other conversation-based programs. This resulted in one librarian volunteering to participate. To find more participants, I contacted several branch libraries. This process led to six more librarians accepting an interview, leading to a total of seven. These librarians worked at six different libraries in Oslo. Three of them were in areas of Oslo with an above average level of education, and a below average population of immigrants. The remaining three were in areas of Oslo with a below average level of education and an above average population of immigrants.

Recruiting the volunteers was done through the interviewed librarians. I would ask them if they could connect me with volunteers I could interview. They would either give me their email address and I would send them an invitation with detailed information, or they would send the invitation on my behalf and ask the volunteers to contact me if they were interested. Through this process I was able to recruit seven volunteers.

The key informants were contacted by phone, asking if they were interested in participating in the study. The ones who said yes, were then sent an email with both an invitation and more detailed information. My thesis adviser informed me of several people I should contact. The ones I contacted were also asked whether they knew of others who could be relevant for the study. I was able to get an interview with two key informants.

5.3   Testing the interview guide

Before starting the interviews, I tested the interview guide by interviewing a librarian working at a library with a language café in Akershus, a county located next to Oslo. This led to some small alterations to the guide. It was also a useful for me, because then I knew more what to expect during the interviews. I chose to conduct the test interview with someone working outside of Oslo, because I did not wish to deplete the number of potential participants in my study. I also considered Akershus to be sufficiently similar to Oslo that the test would still be relevant.

5.4   Interviewing the hosts

I would start the interviews by presenting myself and my project. I would hand them a document with written information about the project, to let them know what they should expect to be asked about and their rights as participants in the study. This document was also attached to the invitation send to their email. They were asked to sign the document before I started recording the conversation. There were three different documents, one for each group of participants: the volunteers, the librarians, and the key informants. All the interviews were recorded and later transcribed. I had prepared two different interview guides, which I used for support, when interviewing the participants. One interview guide was used for both the volunteers and the librarians. The second one was used for the two key informants.

The interviews were conducted in Norwegian as this was a language which I had in common with all the participants. For most of them Norwegian was their native language, for some it was a language they knew very well. Because the interviews were in Norwegian, the quotes used in the next chapters will first be presented in their original Norwegian, transcribed directly though non-verbatim. An English translation of the quote will then follow. This translation has been done by me. As I do not have a background in linguistics nor translation studies, translating the quotes was a challenge. However, I have tried to stay true to the meaning behind the words when translating.

Five out of the seven librarians were interviewed individually. Two of them worked together at the same library and were interviewed together. I met the librarians at the library, where they work, so that participating was more convenient for them. Conducting the interviews at the same place the conversation-based programs were taking place was useful. This was because the area and tools there would often trigger the participant's memories, leading to more detailed data. One of the librarians was interviewed just before the language café and she invited me to join. I accepted her invitation, even though observation was not a part of the method I had chosen. However, it turned out to be useful to better understand what the librarian, and later also what the volunteers, told me during the interviews.

Five out of the seven volunteers were also interviewed individually. Two of them preferred to be interviewed together since they were married and both volunteering at the same language café. I offered to meet the volunteers in a location they found convenient. One of them suggested meeting at a café, the rest were interviewed at the libraries where they volunteered. These interviews took place either right before or just after the language café was being held.

At one library I interviewed two volunteers before the café and one after. Since I was there during the language café I was also invited to join. This was the second language café I was invited to, and again it was useful as I could observe for myself some of what the hosts told me in their interviews.

The focus of the conversations with the hosts was on their experiences with hosting the language cafés. I would start by asking them to describe the program they host. What they do from start to finish. What do they talk about? What activities are there? How do they divide the participants into groups? I would also ask them what their thoughts were on the purposes behind the program and what they were trying to achieve. I would also ask about what worked well, and what was less successful. What would they do differently? What should stay the same? I would also ask about whether they had encountered any challenges when hosting their program, and if so, how had they handled these challenges?

5.5 The key informant interviews

"*Because the group members challenge each - others' views, the discussion in a focus group has often been found to reveal a more nuanced perspective on a topic than could have been discovered through individual interviews.*" (Wildemuth, 2016, p. 258)

I had originally planned to have a focus group with the key informants. Focus groups distinguish themselves from individual interviews in how they are affected by group dynamics and opinions are exchanged and developed together with others. Focus group interviews are less costly, compared with individual interviews, as more opinions and ideas are shared in a shorter amount of time. They are usually suited to discussing fewer topics, but more in-depth. This is because many points of view need to be included for each topic.

I had hoped to take advantage of the group dynamics of a focus group, to help the participants remember more aspects of their experience with conversation-based programming. I also believed the group dynamics could be useful in having them develop ideas around what elements are important to creating good conversation-based programs. However, I was not able to recruit enough participants for this purpose.

A focus group generally involves 8 to 12 participants who discuss a topic of interest and a moderator who makes sure the discussion stays on topic. There are often difficulties in recruiting enough people (Williamson & Johanson, 2017). This was the case for my study. The focus group I envisioned would have been with between 4 to 8 people with knowledge of the

development of conversation-based programming in Oslo. It would be used to collect data about conversation-based programs, how they have developed and what types have been offered. The participants I worked towards recruiting were selected based on them having experience with conversation-based programs over longer periods of time. Using a focus group as a method for collecting this data would have been beneficial as memories and thoughts shared by the participants could potentially lead others to recall related events, thereby building on each other's responses, leading to richer data.

The recruiting process for the focus group was challenging. I had the help of my thesis adviser in identifying whom to recruit. However, there was a very small pool of people I could recruit from and finding a time slot to suit a large enough group proved to be too difficult. I decided it would be better to do interviews with the two participants who had time instead.

I interviewed the two key informants using a similar method to the one I had with the others. The interviews were semi-structured, though I used a different interview guide. I had originally made a topic guide for the focus group which I had to change into an interview guide. I did not have time to test this interview guide which led to some difficulties in the first interview. However, since I was able to rephrase my questions during the interview, I was still able to gather useful data.

During the interviews I asked them about what they knew about conversation-based programs. I asked about which ones they had participated in creating and/or hosting, and which ones they had heard of throughout their careers. I asked them about other programs that work towards integration. They were asked to share what they had learned through these programs, which forms of programs they had found to be effective and what they believed to be important factors in creating good conversation-based programs. I also asked them about when language cafés were first started in Oslo and about the development of these programs over time.

5.6   Analyzing the interviews

When analyzing the results from the interviews, I used different methods. When analyzing the interviews with the hosts I identified several relevant topics. Then I gathered their opinions on these topics. This way I could compare how they understood the various phenomena, and what their different thoughts were on similar subjects. When analyzing the interviews with the key informants, I used a different strategy. As I only had two key informants, I could be more thorough. Therefore, my strategy was to retell the entire interviews, and then summarizing the key points afterwards. This was useful because the key informants had a broad understanding

of conversation-based programming and the libraries' role in helping immigrants' transition to their new lives in Norway.

5.7 Why I chose semi-structured interviews

To answer the problem statement, I would need information on how conversation-based programs are carried out, and how the different features and elements of the program effects the outcome. I would also need insight into the challenges that the hosts face, and how they handle them.

I chose a qualitative approach because I wished to find detailed information about the conversation-based programs. This would allow me to get more in-depth responses and responses that had not been planned for.

Using semi-structured interviews had several advantages. Interviews can be used to find unexpected and varied results. Interviews are also good for when one wants detailed responses because a participant's experiences and thoughts are best expressed in a setting where they can decide themselves how to respond. Furthermore, they are suited to gathering information on social phenomena as the method can capture both complexity and nuances (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2010). Because conversation-based programs form social settings they are affected by the complexities of social phenomena, which is best explained in more detail than can be expressed in a questionnaire.

There are three main categories of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. A weakness of semi-structured interviews is how less structure may make the comparison of the results more difficult. Another is that the number of participants needs to be limited because interviews take time. However, semi-structured interviews were still the type of interview which I considered most relevant, because the other two did not have the same balance between allowing in-depth responses while maintaining at least some structure to the interviews (Wildemuth, 2016; Williamson & Johanson, 2017).

Semi-structured interviews offer the possibility of gaining in-depth data, while still maintaining structure to the questions. During a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has an interview guide with topics or topic questions that can be followed loosely. The topics do not need to be discussed in any particular order. The interviewer can phrase the questions to suit the participant and use follow up questions to get more information. In this way the semi-structured interview offers flexibility, leaving the possibility for discovering unforeseen aspects of the topic

discussed. The interview guide is useful as it provides some structure so that comparing responses is possible and it ensures that the interviews cover the same set of topics.

Using semi-structured interviews would allow me to gather in depth information on what the programs are like today, what the hosts have learned about how to best conduct their programs and the challenges they face. The interview guide would also offer a useful support during the interviewing process.

5.8 **Limitations**

A nationwide study would have been beyond the scope of this project. I limited the study to the conversation-based programs located at the public libraries of Oslo. The study is also limited to programs taking place at public libraries, thereby excluding programs held elsewhere by other organizations. I have also focused mainly on language cafés, as they are popular conversation-based programs that nearly all the public libraries in Oslo are currently hosting at least once a week.

Having limited the study to one geographical area, it will not represent the country as a whole. Selecting a more qualitative approach led me to limit the project to a smaller geographical area. The results will, therefore, be of more relevance in communities with similar characteristics. Though the results will not be representative, they may lead to insights than can be of interest to other places. Especially for those implementing or considering the implementation of conversation-based programming.

The study focuses more on finding in depth insight into the problem statement, rather than generalizable results. The scope of this study, with only 14 interviews, means the results are not generalizable. However, the study can find useful insights into various elements of a conversation-based programs and how they affect outcomes. I have selected a varied group of libraries throughout Oslo, but the study does not cover all of Oslo's public libraries.

The results could be affected by a selection bias because the participants have not be selected based on gender, education, age or other such variables. The need to control for selection bias was not considered material to this study, because the study does not intend to find representative results, but rather to gain in-depth insight.

The researchers own participation as a volunteer at a conversation-based program can affect the outcome. It is an advantage that the researcher has personal insights, which can lead to creating a study more suited to the research. The disadvantage is that it could lead to a bias in the results,

if the researcher is not careful about remaining neutral during the data collection and the analysis of the results. This is especially important during the interviews, as participants may end up trying to respond in the way they believe the interviewer wants. Preparing an interview guide in advance is helpful in counteracting this effect.

6 Selection

In this chapter I will first describe the districts of the language cafés from where I have recruited participants. Second, I will describe the selection of interviewed librarians. Third, I will describe the interviewed volunteers. Finally, I will describe the two key informants. All the participants in the interviews, except the two key informants, have been given fake names to maintain their anonymity.

6.1 Oslo

Selecting the libraries in Oslo, I could expect richer results, than from areas with less active libraries and fewer immigrants. Oslo has the highest percentage of immigrants in Norway. According to Statistics Norway (Statistisk sentralbyrå), Oslo had 168 700 immigrants and 54 100 Norwegians born with immigrant parents at the beginning of 2018. When counting both first and second generation of immigrants the percentage equaled 33.1 % of the capital's population (Statistics Norway, 2018). It is a city with a long history of high immigration. Furthermore, it is a city where they started early with studies on libraries and their work directed towards immigrants. A thesis about this topic was written as early as 1981 by a student at Oslo metropolitan university which was at the time known as "Statens bibliotekhøgskole" (Berg, Berge, Bleken, & Hagen, 1981).

The libraries in Oslo have often been amongst the first in embracing new trends. The libraries must actively work towards meeting a varied set of needs, due to the high number of residents. This pushes the libraries to adapt and develop their programs rapidly to suit the changing needs of the population. Because of this, it is often one of the areas where programs and services directed towards immigrants, such as conversation-based programs, are first introduced. The programs also have a higher turnout as there are more immigrants who wish to attend. This means it is likely that conversation-based programming is more widespread in this area.

6.2 The districts

I recruited participants from libraries branches, that host language cafés, located in six different districts of Oslo. I have aimed to maintain a balance between areas with above and below average percentage of immigrants. The different areas in Oslo will have different starting points for building and developing their language cafés. This could affect which elements contribute to creating good programs at the different libraries. It could also influence what types of challenges the language cafés have to face. The area and the people who live nearby will affect

who joins the language cafés. And in turn the people who join the language café are a deciding factor in what is needed at the café. If there are a lot of well-educated people who come to the language café, they may want something else out of it than if there are a lot of people who have not finished upper secondary school.

However, there are a lot of participants at travel between the various language cafés in Oslo. Some do so to join a language café of their preference. Others travel to be able to join more than one language café a week. Some of the most motivated participants find a way to go to a language café every day of the week.

The participants I interviewed were from libraries in six different districts of Oslo. Table 1 shows the ratio of immigrants in the various areas. Graph 1 illustrates this data. The statistics are from districts of Oslo in which the libraries are located. Though there may be more than one library in each district, I have not been more specific to maintain the anonymity of the participants. I have used the average of Oslo to compare the districts. The data have been taken from *Bydelsfakta* (district facts) an official web-page run by the municipality of Oslo providing statistics about the various districts (Oslo kommune, n.d.).

Table 1: immigration ratio in the districts of Oslo 2019

District	Non-immigrant residents	Norwegian born with immigrant parents	Immigrants, long residence > 5 years	Immigrants, short residence <= 5 years	All immigrants
1	82.3%	2.5%	9.6%	5.6%	17.8%
2	82.3%	3.2%	10.1%	4.5%	17.7%
3	74.0%	7.1%	14.7%	4.3%	26.0%
4	42.2%	20.4%	30.5%	6.9%	57.8%
5	43.9%	19.5%	29.5%	7.1%	56.1%
6	55.7%	12.4%	23.1%	8.9%	44.3%
Oslo	**66.6%**	**8.1%**	**17.7%**	**7.5%**	**33.4%**

Graph 1: immigrant ratio
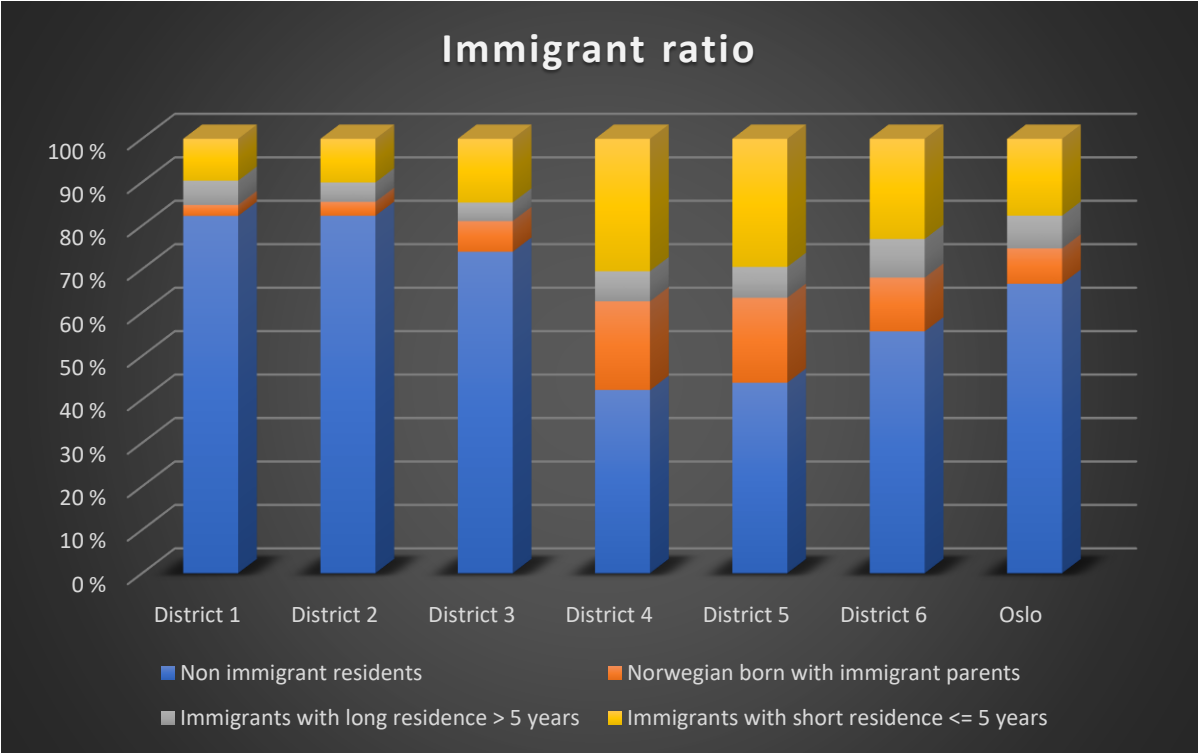
Table 2 shows several living conditions indicators in the 6 districts. The percentage is calculated based on the difference from the average in Oslo. If the percentage is a positive number, that means the indicator is higher than average in this district. If the percentage is a negative number, then the indicator is lower than average in that district. The closer the value is to 0% the closer it is to the overall average in Oslo. The lower the indicator the better the living conditions in the district appear to be.

As seen above the first three districts have a lower than average ratio of immigrants. These same districts also appear to have better than average living conditions based on the indicators in table 2. The three last districts have a higher than average ratio of immigrants and worse than average living condition indicators.

Out of the 6 districts I have looked at in this study, **district 1** is the area with the best living condition indicators. People are better educated. There are significantly fewer with a low education (54.6% less than average) and fewer who have not finished their upper secondary school (14.8% less than average). There are also fewer who are unemployed (25.8% less than average). Additionally, there are considerably fewer than average who live in cramped living conditions (56.4% less than average). The number of low-income households is significantly below average (66.1% less than average).

District 2, though not as significantly positive, has also better than average living condition indicators. There are few low-income households (55.6 % less than average), and few who live in cramped living conditions (47.1 % less than average). The unemployment rate is 26.7% less than average and the rate of low educated people is 32.5% less than average. However, there is a close to average number of people who have not finished upper secondary school, only 1% less than average.

District 3 is close to average in most of the living condition indicators. The number of people with a low education (2.4 % less than average) and people who have not completed upper secondary school (1.4% more than average) is close to average. There are relatively few low-income households (36.3% less than average). There is also a below average rate of unemployment (18.1% less than average) and a below average number of people living in cramped living conditions (25% less than average).

District 4 is the one with the worst living condition indicators. There are almost twice as many as average with a low education (98.8% more than average) and who have not completed upper secondary school (83.3% more than average). The number of low-income households is also significantly higher than average (76.6% more than average). There is a higher unemployment rate than average (38.1% more than average).

District 5 also has worse living condition indicators than average. There more low educated people (64.8% more than average) and more who have not finished upper secondary school (67.9% more than average). There are also more low-income households (59.7% more than average). The unemployment rate is higher (31% higher than average). There is also a somewhat higher than average number of people living in cramped living conditions (17.8% more than average).

District 6 is closer to average than most of the others, though still slightly below when it comes to the living condition indicators. The number of people who are unemployed is only 4.7% less than average. The number of low educated people (28.9% more than average) and those who have not finished upper secondary school (25.4% more than average) is somewhat higher than average. The same goes for the number of low-income households (29% more than average) as well as the number of people living in cramped living conditions (30% more than average).

Table 2. Living condition indicators in the districts of Oslo from 2017

District	Low education	Low-income households w/children	Unemployed	Not finished vgs.*	Overcrowded households
1	-54.6 %	-66.1 %	-25.8 %	-14.8 %	-56.4 %
2	-32.5 %	-55.6 %	-26.7 %	-1.0 %	-47.1 %
3	-2.4 %	-36.3 %	-18.1 %	1.4 %	-25.2 %
4	98.8 %	76.6 %	38.1 %	83.3 %	15.4 %
5	64.8 %	59.7 %	31.0 %	67.9 %	17.8 %
6	28.9 %	29.0 %	4.7 %	25.4 %	30.0 %

Values under 0 % mean a lower frequency than in Oslo, while more than 0 % means a higher frequency

*vgs. = "videregående skole", upper secondary school

6.3 The librarians

Among the librarians who accepted an interview there was one male librarian, the remaining six were female. Three of the librarians had an immigrant background. They could use their own experiences from coming to Norway and learning Norwegian, as a guide to how they wished to shape their language cafés. The rest were native. One of the librarians mentioned that she had a background in teaching. She used her experience as a teacher when planning each language café. She had a more educational and activity centered approach, due to her background in teaching.

Table 3: The librarians

Name	Library	Profession	Codes	Immigrant background	Gender
Lukas	1	Librarian / librarian	L1	Yes	Male
Emma	2	Librarian / librarian	L2	No	Female
Olivia	3	Librarian	L3	Yes	Female
Leah	4	Librarian / teacher	L4	Yes	Female
Maya	5	Librarian	L5a	No	Female
Frida	5	Librarian	L5b	No	Female
Ada	6	Librarian	L6	No	Female

6.4 The volunteers

Only one volunteer had an immigrant background, the rest were all native. The volunteer who with an immigrant background, was a second-generation immigrant who spoke Norwegian fluently. None of the interviewed volunteers were currently employed. Four of the six interviewed volunteers were retired teachers, while the rest were not working due to illness or disability. The retired teachers may have had a more educational approach to how they lead their groups during the language cafés. One of the volunteers who was not working due to illness or disability said she was also active as a volunteer in other arenas. Two of the volunteers were male and the remaining five were female.

Table 4: The volunteers

Name	Library	Profession	Codes	Immigrant background	Gender
Nora	2	Not working due to illness or disability	L2V	No	Female
Philip	3	Retired teacher	L3V1	No	Male
Sara	3	Retired teacher	L3V2	No	Female
Emilie	3	Retired teacher	L3V3	No	Female
Oliver	4	Retired teacher	L4V1	No	Male
Ella	4	Not working due to illness or disability	L4V2	No	Female
Amalie	4	Not working due to illness or disability	L4V3	Yes	Female

6.5 The key informants

The two key informants were both native. They have worked for the Oslo public library most of their careers. They were both retired. Therefore, their experience working at the Oslo Public Library covers a long period of time.

Table 5: The key informants

Name	Library	Profession	Codes	Immigrant background	Gender
Kari Ravnaas	Deichman	Former department director of the Deichman library branches	K1	No	Female
Ingvil Falch	Deichman	Former department director of the Deichman library branches: Torshov and Nydalen	K2	No	Female

7 Results

In this chapter I will present the results from the interviews. The chapter is structured into two main parts. In the first part the key informants' insights are presented in detail. They have a broader perspective on conversation-based programming and their insights are based on several conversation-based programs. In the second part I present the hosts' perspectives on various topics related to language cafés. The quotes are first presented in their original Norwegian, then a translation into English follows.

7.1 The key informants

In this part of the chapter I will first go through the interviews with the key informants. They share their knowledge of various conversation-based programs and what they consider important elements to creating successful programs. I will start with presenting what Kari Ravnaas shared in her interview. Then I will present what Ingvil Falch shared. Lastly, I will summarize some of the key points made during their interviews.

7.1.1 Kari Ravnaas, key informant 1

Kari Ravnaas had worked at Deichman most of her career. From 2008 she was responsible for several of the library branches. From 2015 until 2019 she was responsible for all Deichman's branch libraries. At the time of the interview she had recently retired. Through her years working for Deichman she had observed several events and programs working towards integration and language learning, including chess for immigrants, reading groups and language cafés. During her interview she shared her insight on various of these programs, what effect they had, and what she believed to be necessary elements for creating good programs.

7.1.1.1 The chess program for immigrants

In 2015, there were a lot of refugees comming to Norway. The chess program for immigrant, which was called «Sjakk for flyktninger og alle andre» (Chess for refugees and everyone else), was started at Deichman Bøler in February 2016, to create a meeting place for these refugees (Oslo Kulturbyen, 2018). At the time of the interview the program was still ongoing. According to Ravnaas, hosting chess events for immigrants was a success, which led to several of the participants being better integrated in the local community. She recounted that there were people working at the library with an interest in chess, who decided to start a series of chess events. One of these librarians was on the national chess team and another was a very active chess commentator on NRK, the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation. These two used their

knowledge of chess, and their network, to build a popular chess program for immigrants. The program was very active. It included both immigrants who were well integrated and those who had just arrived. There were participants who were proficient in chess as well as novices. According to Ravnaas, the proficient chess players would help teach the novices.

Ravnaas meant that one of the reasons this program worked so well, was that you didn't need to know any Norwegian in order to play chess. Immigrants could participate regardless, and they could perform well from day one. The events became a social event that offered the opportunity to converse in Norwegian but did not require it. This provided a low threshold for those who wished to practice the language. The program also offered opportunities to build one's network.

7.1.1.2 Conversation-based reading groups for immigrants

At a different library, Deichman Furuset, they hosted a conversation-based reading group for immigrants. Here the librarian used a method called suggestopedi. Suggestopedi is a teaching method mainly used for learning foreign languages, where they use of both text and music as part of the learning process. This program was held in 2009, before the start of the language cafés in Oslo. Ravnaas described it as a predecessor to language cafés. She meant reading groups like these would allow immigrants to improve their Norwegian.

7.1.1.3 Experiences from Fubiak

Fubiak (Furuset bibliotek og aktivitetshus), is a combination of a Deichman library branch and an activity house. It is in Furuset, which is a residential and suburban area in Oslo, within the district of Alna. The ratio of immigrants in Furuset is 72%, while Alna as a whole has a 55% immigrant population. This includes both first- and second-generation immigrants (Oslo kommune, n.d.).

The people who use Fubiak help determine the house's content by organizing activities and contributing as volunteers. An example of this is the project "Groruddalsprodusentene", which they have organized several years. For the project they recruit local teenagers between the ages of 14 and 18 years old to help organize events. The project has a duration of one year each time. They start by providing courses on how to organize various events. Then they are put to work, creating their own events (Furuset bibliotek og aktivitetshus, 2019).

Fubiak has been very active in hosting and creating programs for the people in the local community. Their strategy for creating programs is to listen to the people in their local community about what they want, as well as co-creating their programs together with their

patrons. The library would work together with representatives of the target groups to create more suited and relevant programs. Ravnaas expressed a strong belief in this form of cocreation together with the target group. She believed that using the knowledge of the participants and taking their desires and ideas into consideration would help towards tailor-making the events to suit the specific needs of the target groups.

Another aspect of Fubiac's strategy, that Ravnaas believed in, was how they would create events open to everyone. Their focus was on targeting all the people in the local community. Therefore, they included both immigrants and non-immigrants alike. They didn't focus on creating events specifically for immigrants. However, as there were a lot of immigrants in the local community a lot of the programs would include them. Ravnaas believed this was beneficial as it would lead people to meet across cultures. In doing so the majority and minority population could meet on equal terms.

7.1.1.4 The district mothers (Bydelsmødrene)

Another program mentioned by Ravnaas was the district mothers (*Bydelsmødrene*). This program was started by Nasreen Begum in 2016 and is now a non-profit organization, spanning five of Oslo's districts. The district mothers consist of resourceful women, primarily from ethnic minority backgrounds. They go through a training program on topics such as parenting, work and health. They work together to solve local challenges and help isolated women, primarily of minority back groups. Their work, among other things, include conversation-based programming. The group brings together women in the neighborhood to converse about topics that are relevant to them, such as family relationships, education, health, and finances (Bydelsmødre, 2019). For these events women from the district come to the library once a week, sometimes with their children in a stroller. Though the goal is more towards helping the women in their day to day lives, rather than language learning, the conversation groups are quite similar to language cafés. As language cafés they have a topic for each session and the conversation is held in Norwegian. Sometimes someone from the library or the health clinic would come and talk about topics, ranging from the importance of reading to children to how the children should be clothed during the winter.

> «Bydelsmødrene, der kom det mødre med barn i barnevogn inn på biblioteket. Noen av dem hadde nettopp kommet til Norge, med familiegjenforening osv. I samarbeid med bydelen og bibliotekets ansatte, så startet de dette med en frivillig. En helt strålende frivillig som bodde på Furuset, en aktiv dame som hadde hatt den samme erfaringen. Hun hadde strevd når hun kom til Norge, for rundt 20 år siden. Hun startet da

bydelsmødrene, og de møtes hver uke. Der er det ofte tema, helsestasjonen stiller ofte opp for å snakke, og det er her på biblioteket. De snakker om hvordan du skal kle ungen din på vinteren, vaksinasjon, lesing. Biblioteket snakker om lesing og hvor viktig det er. De møtes og så får de et nettverk. Det er både innvandrere og norske. Det er alle som har lyst til å være med i den gruppa, men jeg tror det er mange innvandrere.»

"*The district mothers, for this event mothers with children in strollers came into the library. Some of them had just arrived in Norway, through family reunion etc. In cooperation with the district and the library employees, they started this with a volunteer. A really wonderful volunteer, who lived at Furuset, an active lady who had experienced the same thing. She had struggled when she came to Norway, about 20 years ago. She then started the district mothers, and they meet every week. There is often a topic, someone from the health clinic often shows up to talk. And it takes place here in the library. They talk about how you should clothe your children during the winter, vaccination, reading. The library talks about reading and how important that is. They meet and then they get a network. There are both immigrants and Norwegians. It is everyone who wants to join the group, but I think there are many immigrants.*" Kari Ravnaas, key informant 1

7.1.1.5 Language cafés

According to Ravnaas, they were given funds from the national library of Norway to start language cafés in 2012 till 2014. It was first started in Tøyen where it was led by Anita Haarbye. It was considered a success, as the amount of people attending led them to expand the program to two days a week. Even with the extended program, they still had to reject some people who wanted to attend, due to reaching maximum capacity.

"Vi fikk midler fra nasjonalbiblioteket til å gjøre et forsøk med språkkafeen fra 2012 til 2014. Det var Tøyen, med Anita Haarbye, som drev prosjektet, og det var bare så vellykket. De måtte utvide det til to ganger i uka og de hadde bonger og folk satt og venta på å få komme.»

«*We were given funding by the National Library in Norway in order to make an attempt at hosting language cafés from 2012 to 2014. It was Tøyen, with Anita Haarbye, who ran the project, and it was just so successful. They had to expand it to two days a week and they had tickets and people sat and waited to be allowed to join.*» Kari Ravnaas, key informant 1

In 2013, after they had held their language café a while and gathered some experiences at Tøyen, they created a document summarizing their experiences and what they had learned. The document was later revised. The revised edition is currently free to access online (Andersen, 2016). The document includes several examples of how one could structure a language café. It has suggestions on topics, tasks and activities that can be used. Based on what Ravnaas expressed, this document was not used as frequently was it should have been. She believed it could benefit libraries who were starting their own language café, because it would give them a lot of material, which they would otherwise have to create themselves.

Ravnaas believed language cafés were important programs. When talking about them Ravnaas mentioned a dual effect as a reason why they were so important. She meant language cafés are beneficial because they bring together both natives and immigrants. This creates a dual effect where they learn from each other. The immigrants learn the Norwegian language, they learn about Norwegian society and about Norwegian people. And the volunteers learn about the cultures of the immigrants, their customs, beliefs and values etc. Another effect is that they become friends and create contacts amongst each other.

“Folk kommer og ønsker å være med på språkkafe, de blir delt inn i ulike grupper og så er det frivillige fra nærmiljøet som er med og da har du to effekter. Både at folk blir bedre i norsk og treffer folk i nærmiljøet som kan norsk. Også er det at de norske møter og ser at det er ikke noe å være redd for. De blir venner, de får tette kontakter. Det tror jeg er kjempesmart. Så jeg har veldig stor tro på språkkafe, jeg synes det er, og har vært, veldig vellykket. Det har holdt på siden 2012 på Deichman, og det er ikke noe som tilsier at dette har blitt mindre populært. Jeg vet på Stovner så evaluerte de språkkafeene, og de som var med da, deltagerne, syntes jo nettopp det at de traff folk som ble hjelpere, at de norske hjalp dem. At det var noe av det beste med språkkafeen.”

“People come and they wish to join the language café, they get divided into different groups and then there are volunteers from the local communities who speak Norwegian. And that the Norwegians meet and see that it isn’t something to be afraid of. They become friends, they get close contacts. I think that is very smart. So, I have a lot of faith in language cafés, I think it is, and has been, very successful. It has been going on since 2012 at Deichman, and there is nothing that says it will become less popular. I know that at Stovner they evaluated the language cafés and the ones who were there then, the participants, they thought that meeting people who became their helpers, that

the Norwegians helped them, that was one of the best things about the language café."
Kari Ravnaas, key informant 1

When asked about the target group of the language cafés, Ravnaas said it was for everyone who wants to learn Norwegian. It is mainly targeted towards adults. She said a lot of labor immigrants show up to the language cafés, while very few young adults and children are there. Ravnaas pointed out that they have not had to market the language cafés very actively, because they fill up by themselves. Therefore, they haven't been selecting which groups to whom they wish to market the program. They simply admit whoever wants to participate. These people are usually the ones who are most motivated to learn Norwegian. They are often resourceful immigrants who want to increase their value on the job market.

When it came to how to best structure language cafés, Ravnaas mentioned some elements she found important. First of all, she meant preparing conversation topics, having volunteers and splitting the participants in groups based on their proficiency in Norwegian were important elements. Secondly, she recommended having something planned for each session and maintaining a relaxed and informal atmosphere. Thirdly, she pointed out the need for a good room in which to hold the language café. Light refreshments were also recommended. Additionally, she recommended having a structure which could allow the participants to progress forward in their language learning. For example, through being able to switch to a more advanced group.

"**Hva skal til for å lage en god språkkafe?**

Ja, det er selvfølgelig tema, antall frivillige, at du deler opp i nivåer, at du har litt planlagt, at du har en avslappet stemning, godt lokale, gode rom, og at du har litt å drikke og spise. Også må du ha et stramt opplegg, det må være noe fremgang. […] At du ikke føler at når du kommer neste gang så er det det samme som skjer. Altså at du har en progresjon på det som skal gjøres. Det er klart at du kan gå opp til neste nivå»

«*What is necessary to create a good language café?*

Well, that is of course the topics, the number of volunteers, that you split the groups up based on level, that you have something planned, that you have a relaxed atmosphere, a good room, and that you have something good to eat and drink. And you have to have a tight schedule, there has to be some kind of progress. […] that you don't feel that when you come next time then it is the same thing happening. Meaning you need to have

Ravnaas pointed out that there was a lot of work involved in hosting language cafés and that it is necessary to take advantage of the resources they have. One such resource are the volunteers. She saw a lot of value in using volunteers because they help the libraries expand what they can offer in terms of events and programs. Ravnaas also meant that sharing resources and plans for language cafés between libraries is important to expand what they can offer.

Another point she made was that it was important for Deichman to be visible in arenas where there are people who are not yet familiar with Norwegian society. Being in these arenas would allow them to market their programs and inform people about the services provided by the library. One such arena where Deichman is present is the Mela festival. This is a festival for immigrants, celebrating art and cultural exhibitions that have come to Norway from other countries. According to their website, their goal is to increase awareness of cultural diversity, increase immigrants' participation in Norway's cultural activities and encourage cultural institutions to be more inclusive (Oslo Mela, n.d.). The festival is, according to Ravnaas, a good place to talk to people about the language café among other things.

Ravnaas believed in dividing the participants into groups based on their language proficiency. Her arguments where that the participants who knew very little Norwegian would not benefit as much from being grouped together with someone with a much higher level, and vice versa. An alternative she also thought could work was to have some volunteers who paid extra attention to the ones who knew little Norwegian.

When asked whether there was anything one should avoid doing at language cafés Ravnaas responded by talking about different the topics and discussions that can take place at a language café. She believed language cafés are a good place for discussion, and that the informal nature of the language café meant the discussions would feel safe. The only topics she thought they should avoid were those that brought up trauma. Apart from this she thought the language cafés were an excellent arena for the volunteers and participants to discuss a wide range of topics, including those that are based on cultural differences. Ravnaas believed it could even be beneficial to discuss such topics as it would allow the volunteers and participants to learn more about other perspectives. Additionally, the libraries' role as an arena for debate and conversation mean this is exactly what they are supposed to be working towards.

«Jeg tror at selve formen på språkkafeer er litt ufarlig, så det er greit å snakke om det meste. For du kan være uenig. Du skal lære deg norsk, ikke vinne en debatt. […] Også tenker jeg at det er en del av biblioteket at vi skal være en samtale og debatt arena. Jeg tenker at det må være midt i blinken for språkkafeer å kunne ta opp nær sagt alt. […] Kanskje det at man ikke snakker om personlige opplevelser. Det kan være ganske mange som har traumatiske opplevelser på vei fra landet sitt, og gjennom Europa. At man passer seg litt for sånne typer personlige ting og overlater det til helsevesenet.»

«I think that the format of the language café is quite harmless, so it is okay to talk about most things. Because you can disagree. You are supposed to learn Norwegian, not win a debate […] and I think that it is a part of the library that we are supposed to be an arena for conversation and debate. I think that it must be perfect for language cafés to allow for nearly all conversation topics. […] Perhaps not personal experiences. There can be quite a lot of people who have experienced traumatic things during their journey away from their countries, and through Europe. You should be a little careful about that kind of personal thing and leave it to the health care system.» Kari Ravnaas, key informant 1

When asked if there was anything she would do differently, there were some key features she would change. She thought there should be more sharing between libraries. She also pointed out the need for more standardization, and that libraries can share their plans between each other more easily. She had seen how several libraries spent a lot of effort trying to develop their own plans and programs, when they could have saved a lot of time by using the plans already created by other libraries. The document developed by Tøyen in 2013 had many such plans, that Ravnaas meant, the librarians hosting language cafés should use. She also thought they should be better organizing the volunteers. Furthermore, she meant cooperating with organizations in the neighborhood was beneficial, particularly volunteer centers like the Red Cross and Frivillighetssentralen.

«Jeg har sett at man bruker en del tid rundt omkring på å finne opp kruttet på nytt og kanskje ikke bruker eller er klar over det heftet som Anita og den frivillige lagde i 2013. […] Og så blir det ganske mye arbeid ut av det. Jeg tror at vi har mye å tjene på å standardisere litt mer. Også det å samarbeide med andre, det har jeg veldig tro på. Sånn som på Nydalen hvor de har klart på få veldig mange frivillige. Jo flere frivillige jo bedre. Så jeg har veldig tro på at man samarbeider med lokale aktører. Frivillighetssentral, lærere og kanskje noen Røde Kors grupper. Og at man forbereder

seg sånn at man finner opplegg som har blitt gjort tidligere og deler inn i nivåer. Det tror jeg er smart.»

"*I have seen that a lot of time is spent trying to reinvent the wheel and that they maybe don't use, or are not aware of, the document that Anita and the volunteer made in 2013. […] And that becomes a lot of work. I think we could benefit a lot from standardizing a bit more. And cooperating with others, I have a lot of faith in that. Like how they did it at Nydalen where they managed to get a lot of volunteers. The more volunteers the better. So, I have a lot of faith in cooperating with local agents. Volunteer centers, teachers and maybe some Red Cross groups. And that you prepare yourself by finding plans that have been used earlier, and that you split people into groups based on levels. I think that is smart.*" Kari Ravnaas, key informant 1

In addition to language cafés, they have also started Norwegian language classes, organized and hosted by the Red Cross. These classes are, according to Ravnaas, similar to language cafés, but they are more structured, and the volunteers are given better training and instruction. She also believed the focus there was more on teaching in an educational manner, rather than the informal way of the language cafés.

7.1.1.6   Objectives

According to Ravnaas, conversation-based programs fall within the mission of public libraries. The mission, as Ravnaas explained, is to provide access to knowledge to everyone who lives in the country. Language is a key factor in providing access to information. Some immigrants are given language classes, but find they still need more practice. Some may still be waiting to gain access to these classes, due to applications for asylum or residence permits still being processed. While yet others do not fit the criteria for getting classes and have to learn the language on their own. For many people the language cafés provide a unique opportunity to learn the language. Due to this, it is important for the libraries to do what they can to help their patrons learn the language, thereby providing them with better access to information. Ravnaas believed that the library had the possibility to change lives for the better, because of the work they do for immigrants.

«Jeg tror samfunnsoppdraget til biblioteket ligger helt klart i bunnen av det hele. Det at bibliotek faktisk kan endre liv. Det å være der og gi alle gratis tilgjengelig kunnskap. At kunnskap er gratis tilgjengelig uansett hvor de bor i landet. Det er det som er utgangspunktet. Og vi så at det var veldig mange som måtte vente lenge for å komme

inn under asyl. For alle som ventet på asyl tok det årevis før de kom inn på noe norskkurs. De måtte først få oppholdstillatelse. Sånn at det er mange som da har brukt Deichman sine språkkafeer, mens de har ventet på det kommunale tilbudet. Også er det ikke alle som har vært kvalifisert for å være på det programmet, og det er noen som kanskje trenger å repetere norsk osv. Så jeg tenker at dette her er en viktig rolle bibliotekene har til å gi folk den muligheten til å tilegne seg kunnskap gratis. Og kanskje være med å endre livene deres, helt pompøst sagt. Litt banalt, men jeg tror i stor grad at det skjer.»

«I think that the mission of the library lies very clearly at the bottom of this. That libraries can actually change lives. Being there and giving everyone free access to information. That knowledge is freely accessible no matter where in the country you live. That is the starting point. And then we saw that there were very many who had to wait a long time to be given asylum. For everyone who were waiting to be given asylum it took years before they were admitted to any Norwegian classes. They first had to get a residence permit. So, there were a lot of people who have then used Deichman's language café while they waited for the municipal services. And then not everyone has been qualified to be on that program, and there are some that perhaps need to go over their Norwegian again etc. So, I think that this here is a very important role that the libraries have to give people the opportunity to acquire knowledge for free. And maybe be a part of changing their lives, a bit pompously said. But I do believe it happens quite a lot." Kari Ravnaas, key informant 1

7.1.2 Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

The second key informant, Ingvil Falch, had worked with several projects aimed at improving integration. The city council gave money for cultural activities and projects that were directed towards minorities, children and senior citizens when Falch was working at Deichman Torshov in the 1990s. After this, Falch and her colleagues started working on several such projects. They were given funding to keep their work going for somewhere between 13 to 14 years. During her interview Falch talked about four main projects: Norwegian education for women, a girl group, a memory sharing program and language cafés.

«Vi fikk faktisk en stilling av bydelen gjennom 13-14 år. De mente at vi skulle rette oss inn mot prioriterte målgrupper i bydelen, det var minoritetsspråklige, barn og eldre. Så da startet vi planleggingen.»

«We actually got an employment resource through 13-14 years. They meant that we should work towards prioritized groups in the district, they were minorities, children and the elderly. So, then we started the planning." Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

7.1.2.1 Norwegian education for minority women

The Norwegian education program for minority women started in 1993, according to Falch. In the district they had noticed that there were a lot of socially isolated women who knew little Norwegian. They were not familiar with Norwegian society and how to deal with everyday life in Norway. This caused them to have difficulty helping their children and acting as authority figures for them. After noticing this issue, Falch and her colleagues decided to start a Norwegian education program for minority women. To do so they needed help from outside resources, and so they reached out to the city council. They ended up collaborating with several organizations in the district and the city council agreed to pay for the language classes. The health clinic agreed to help them with identifying and recruiting women for the program and a kindergarten called *Åpen barnehage* agreed to look after the children while the women were attending the classes.

«Vi jobbet tverrfaglig så vi fanget opp det som skjedde i bydelen. En ting vi hadde registrert på hele bydelen, det var at innvandrer kvinner var sosialt isolerte og kunne dårlig norsk. De satt rundt omkring og var ensomme og isolerte. Andre som både barnevern og helsestasjon hadde registrert at de ikke hadde noen mulighet til å være en autoritet for sine barn, fordi de kunne ikke norsk og de visste ikke hvordan en norsk hverdag fungerte. Hvordan fungerer en norsk skole for eksempel? Så da fant vi i fellesskap ut at da lager vi et norskundervisningstilbud for kvinner i bydelen.»

"We worked in an interdisciplinary way and so we caught on to what was going on in the district. One thing we had registered in the entire district was that there were a lot of immigrant women who were socially isolated and knew very little Norwegian. They sat around and were lonely and isolated. Others such as child welfare services, and the health clinic had registered that they didn't have any possibility to act as authority figures for their children, because they didn't know Norwegian and they didn't know how Norwegian everyday life works. How does a Norwegian school work, for example? So, then together we found out that we were going to make a Norwegian education service for women in the district." Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

The goal of the program was to teach minority women Norwegian, while also teaching them about different aspects of the local community and Norwegian society in general. For example, the school system, parent teacher conferences, work-life, etc. They had two days a week where they held classes. The classes were led by a Norwegian teacher and one librarian. The library's contribution was in finding texts they could use. Often simple texts that are suited to adults with meaningful and relevant content. They also helped with the teaching. During the classes they would teach the women about Norwegian society as well as the language. They invited health care workers to talk about how to take care of their children in a society characterized by cold weather. They also invited the police and other institutions to talk about important aspects of the local community.

The target group at the Norwegian education for minority women, were women who spoke very little Norwegian. Several of them did not speak any Norwegian at all. There were women who hadn't gotten any previous schooling and were illiterate. The program had a very clear goal in that they wanted to help these women. They wanted to help them through giving them a better understanding of the Norwegian language and the Norwegian society. They believed this would give them more authority over their own lives and their families.

> «Å være hjemmeværende og ikke kunne norsk, ikke kunne samfunnet, det er ikke til å forestille seg. […] Du kan knapt ta trikken i byen. Du kan ikke lese et skilt. Og det var viktig å gi mødrene autoritet, slik at de kan veilede barna sine. Si hva som er rett og galt og hvordan livet fungerer. Hvordan skolen fungerer må de vite, de må gå på foreldremøter og lage matpakker.»

> *«Being a housewife who doesn't know Norwegian, doesn't know society, it is impossible to imagine. […] You can hardly take the tram in the city. You can't read signs. And it was important to give the mothers an authority so that they could guide and mentor their children. Say what is right and wrong, and how life works. They need to know how the school works, they need to go to parent teacher meetings, and make lunch boxes."*
> Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

Due to her many positive experiences working with a wide variety of institutions, Falch expressed a strong belief in the benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration. It was due to collaboration that they were able to start the Norwegian education program for minority women. She meant it broadened their perspectives and afforded them better financial opportunities.

They could share their both their knowledge and their economic resources in order to create better programs.

> «Jeg har veldig god erfaring fra tverrfaglig samarbeid. Man får utfylt hverandre faglig sett. Vi har en bit av sannheten og vi har en faglig oppfatning, men hvis vi slår oss sammen og får faglig innspill fra forskjellige sektorer så blir det hele en god løsning. Så jeg har veldig god erfaring med det. Også får man til større ting ved at man spleiser. […] Så vi startet opp dette tilbudet for språkopplæring for kvinner takket være for at alle instanser i bydelen slo seg sammen.»

> *«I have had a lot of good experiences with interdisciplinary cooperation. You complement each other professionally speaking. We have one piece of the truth and we have one professional opinion, but it we team up and get professional input from different sectors, then it all becomes a good solution. So, I have a lot of experience with that. And you can do bigger things by splitting the costs. […] So, we started this service of language education for women thanks to all the institutions in the district that joined forces."* Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

Some challenges they faced included the different starting points of the women. Some had gone to school before they came to Norway and could read, while others were illiterate. This challenge lead to the women being divided into two groups, based on their previous knowledge and education. That way they could make sure the classes were more suited to the language proficiency of the women.

> **«**Kvinnene hadde veldig forskjellige forutsetninger. Det å komme fra Lahore Pakistan og ha tre års skolegang, det er enormt mye mer enn å komme fra Atlasfjellene og være analfabet og ha et ordforråd knyttet til et enkelt jordbrukssamfunn, og da kanskje være 40 år. Det er ikke til å forestille seg hvordan det er. Det er som å komme fra et annet århundre til en moderne vestlig by. […] Etter hvert så fant vi ut at vi måtte dele kvinnene i to.»

> *«The women had very different starting points. Coming from Lahore, Pakistan with three years of schooling, that is a whole lot more than coming from the Atlas Mountains and being illiterate, and having a vocabulary related to a simple agricultural community, and then maybe being 40 years old. You can't imagine what it is like. It is like coming from a different century to a modern western city. […] Eventually we found out that we had to split the women into two groups."* Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

One of the experiences Falch learned from this project was her use of text as a starting point for conversations. She had found this to be a useful way to create discussions that didn't need to be personal but could still be about things that where important to the participants on a personal level. The women could use the text instead of their own experiences to discuss various topics. This allowed them to distance themselves from the discussion, making it less intimidating to participate.

«Mitt bidrag det var å arrangere samtaler med utgangspunkt i tekster. Det har jeg veldig stor tro på. Det ene er faglige, meningsbærende tekster som sier noe om et emne du har lyst til å gi kunnskap om. Det brukte vi mye. Jeg fant ut at det er lettere å ta utgangspunkt i en tekst som er meningsbærende, enn å bare prate. Også litterære tekster, gjerne med etisk innhold, om hva som helst: grensesetting, barneoppdragelse, sosial kontroll, ytringsfrihet, tvangsekteskap, sånne ting. Når man har en tekst å forholde seg til så kan man diskutere noe som er viktig for en uten å bli privat, fordi man har en distanse i teksten. Så slipper man å utlevere seg selv og bli privat, fordi man diskuterer teksten, men allikevel noe som er viktig for en. Det fungerte veldig bra. Så det holdt jeg på med i mange år.»

«My contribution was to arrange conversations with a basis in texts. I have a lot of faith in that. One thing are the factual texts carrying meaning, that say something about a topic you want to give them knowledge about. We have used that a lot. I found out that it was easier to use a text that carries meaning as a starting point, rather than just talking. Also, literary texts, especially those with ethical content, about anything: putting up boundaries, raising children, social control, freedom of speech, forced marriages, that kind of thing. When you have a text that you can use then you can discuss something important to you without becoming private, because then there is a distance in the texts. So, you don't have to expose yourself and becoming private, because you are discussing the text, but still something that is important to you. It worked very well. So, I continued doing that for many years." Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

After they had worked on this project for a while, the city council recognized the necessity of an educational program for minority women. A key factor in why they the program was necessary was because it was considered unacceptable for many women in minority communities to go to classes together alongside men. Moreover, they had difficulties getting around in the city because they were not familiar with how the transportation system worked. Their language skills weren't good enough that they could read the relevant signs and

information. Therefore, they decided they would establish something with more permanence. Several of the institutions that had originally collaborated to create the program continued working together after the city council officially took over the educational program for the minority women. They stayed involved in the program and offered what help they could. The program continued for several years but eventually the city council could no longer afford to continue, so they had to stop.

7.1.2.2   The girl group

Around the same time as they started the Norwegian education program for women, they also started a girl group, for minority girls. The idea sprung from a conference meeting where several institutions in the district got together to discuss various subjects. One complaint was brought up concerning girls with immigrant backgrounds. They were very rarely seen outside of schools. They weren't a part of sports groups, nor were they participating in other leisure activities. However, the librarians could inform them that these girls spent a lot of time at the library. According to Falch, libraries were generally considered a safe space. It is an institution known for cultivating knowledge. This is part of why girls who come from strict families were still permitted to go to the library. And so, there were many girls with immigrant backgrounds who went to the library to do homework. At this point in time they had funds from the city council. Using this as a starting point they decided to do something for these girls. It would be at the library, but in collaboration with the "*feltarbeiderteam*» (a team working to prevent crime and isolation amongst youth).

They had several goals for the girl group. One goal was to help strengthen the language skills of the girls through reading. Another was to build social networks among the girls within the group. Furthermore, they hoped that if the girls felt safe in this group, they would eventually feel safer in other environments, such as sports teams or other leisure groups. They wanted to expand the areas in the local community in which the girls felt comfortable participating.

> «Målene var å styrke språket gjennom å lese mange tekster. Det var å danne nettverk blant jentene, slik at de blir trygge på flere miljøer, altså at de tok i bruk flere sektorer i fritidstilbudet gjennom dette tilbudet.»

> «*The goals were to strengthen their language through reading lots of texts. It was to create a network between the girls, so that they felt safer in other environments, I mean that they would use more leisure activities through this service.*" Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

According to Falch, the girl group was a success. There were about 40 participants, with about 16 or 17 different nationalities. They did a lot of different things together. They wrote texts. They went on cabin trips. They went to the theatre and the cinema. They could also discuss various topics at length. Eventually they achieved the goal of having the girls move on to other arenas. One of them even ended up joining the district's youth council.

> «Det holdt på i mange år […] Det var mange som kom. Det var cirka 40 deltagere, 16/17 nasjonaliteter tror jeg. De ble en kjempe gruppe. De lagde tekster, de skrev dikt og, fordi det var biblioteket som drev det så fikk de lov til å dra på hyttetur og teater og kino. Så den ble virkelig vellykket. Etter hvert så beveget jentene seg over i nye arenaer. Hvor en satt i ungdomsrådet i bydelen.»

> *"It lasted several years [...] A lot of people came. There were about 40 participants. 16/17 nationalities, I think. It became a great group. They made texts, they wrote poetry, and because it was the library who hosted it, they were allowed to go on cabin trips and to the theatre and cinema. So, it was really very successful. Eventually the girls moved over into other arenas. One sat in the district youth council."* Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

According to Falch, one of the reasons this group worked so well was that they had someone who was good at communicating with them. Both the youth librarian and the people in the «*feltarbeiderteam*» were particularly good at this. They had a lot of good conversations with the girls. Another reason she believed the group was a success was that the girls spent so much time together, doing things like reading and discussing texts, writing their own texts and doing their homework. Spending all this time spent together meant they bonded amongst each other. They eventually knew each other well and felt comfortable in the group. As a testimony to the success of the program Falch had experienced several of them coming back to the library to tell her about their lives, how they have gotten married and had their own kids.

> «Etter hvert så har de blitt eldre og giftet seg og de kommer tilbake til biblioteket for å vise barna sine. Så det har betydd mye for dem tror jeg.»

> *«Gradually they got older and got married, and they come back to the library to show their kids. So, it has meant a lot to them, I think.»* Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

7.1.2.3 The memory group for the elderly

The memory group for immigrants was started after the library had organized a memory group for the elderly in the community. This program had been a success and Falch eventually thought this was something she could do for immigrants as well. As she explains it, the memory group consisted of people sharing stories from their lives while others would listen. For the original memory group it was a way to preserve the memories of the elderly and to communicate them to younger generations. This was done through oral storytelling, where they would share stories from their pasts. They had meetings once a week for about half a year.

Falch meant this was an excellent example of how the library can create meeting places, because the program brought together people across generations and cultures so they could share their stories with each other. They would allow one person to present their story at a time, but they would also open up for dialogue with the audience. The event was open to everyone and this led to people with different cultural backgrounds sharing their experiences with each other.

> «Det slår på tvers av kulturer når han fra Marokko kunne fortelle om sin bestefar fra Rabat og Mina kunne fortelle om sin bestemor i Østerdalen. Så møtes man i et tema og forteller, på tvers av generasjoner og på tvers av kulturer. Det er tiltak som jeg har virkelig tro på og som jeg anbefaler. Det er levende historieundervisning og det skaper dialog mellom kulturer og generasjoner.»

> *«It hits across cultures when the guy from Morocco could talk about his grandfather from Rabat and Mina could talk about her grandmother in Østerdalen. Så then you meet in a topic and you share, across generations and across cultures. That is initiatives that I really believe in and recommend. It is history teaching that is more alive, and it creates dialogue between cultures and generations."* Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

When asked about the goals behind the memory group, Falch explained that it was a way to communicate and maintain the district's culture and history. Beyond this, it was also a cross-cultural and cross-generational meeting place. The program helped build trust and understanding between different groups in society. It provided knowledge about society and how it was before.

> «Jeg tror det [formålet] er å formidle på møteplasser hvor det er forskjellige kulturer, forskjellige generasjoner. Det er det viktigste, i hvert fall i denne sammenhengen. Og da er målet å skape kulturell forståelse og å skape tillit. Gi kunnskap om samfunnet, om hvordan det var før. Det er viktig. Man møtes ikke så veldig mye på tvers av

generasjoner, og ikke kulturer heller. Men biblioteket har et potensial til å virkelig bety noe der for vi har alle gruppene.»

«I think it [the purpose] is to communicate at meeting places where there are different cultures, different generations. That is the most important, at least in this situation. And then the goal is to create cultural understanding and trust. To give knowledge about society, about how it was before. That is important. People don't meet that much across generations, and not across cultures either. But the library has a potential to really matter here, because we have all the groups." Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

7.1.2.4   The memory group for immigrants

Falch realized there was potential for this type of program to also help immigrants in Norway. Because of this, she decided to start a memory group for immigrants. The idea was to have them share their experiences from before they came to Norway and possibly create an exhibition related to their memories.

The target group for the memory group were adult immigrants. In order to recruit participants, they contacted NAV (Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration). NAV were responsible for Norwegian classes and work qualification programs for immigrant. With their help they managed to recruit a group of about 20 to 30 people who would come to the library every other week. Though there were some exceptions the participants were generally well educated and spoke Norwegian rather well.

Eventually, Falch dismissed the idea of creating an exhibition because she saw how the conversation and dialogue between the people in the group was the most essential aspect of the program. They would exchange ideas and memories, they would practice Norwegian, and build trust across cultures. As she explains it:

"Vi kan lage en utstilling, men det viktigste er egentlig at du sitter med mennesker fra hele verden, med forskjellige religioner og helt forskjellige kulturer. Det viktigste er kanskje å skape forståelse og tillit på tvers, ved at hver og en forteller, og at man diskuterer. Så det ble ikke noen utstilling ut av det, men det ble en veldig tett og god gruppe som fortalte, og som fikk trening på språk.»

«We can make an exhibition, but the most important thing is really that you sit together with people from all over the world, with different religions and completely different cultures. The most important thing is perhaps to create understanding and trust across,

through each and every one sharing, and through discussion. So, no exhibition came of the event, but it became a very tight knit and good group who shared and got practice speaking." Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

Falch meant the program offered good opportunities to practice both listening and speaking Norwegian. At the memory group for immigrants they had to present their stories in Norwegian while standing in front of the rest of the participants. The rest of the participants who would listen while they talked.

She also meant the program was good for building relations and trust between the participants and for increasing their knowledge about other cultures. Falch recounted how one time the people in the memory group were asked to talk about their home country. For the task they made groups of based on who came from the same country. Then they would dedicate one session to each country. The group responsible for the day's session would get dressed up in clothes from their countries and they would prepare traditional food. They made a festive event out of each session. Falch meant initiatives like this help build trust.

«De skulle fortelle om landet sitt. Da slo de seg sammen i fem og fem, eller så mange som det var fra det landet. De pyntet seg, de bakte og de kom med mat, og så hadde vi fest. Så var det pakistansk den gangen, og indisk neste gang. Det er sånne tiltak som skaper dialog og tillit.»

«They were going to talk about their countries. They then grouped together, in groups of five, or however many there were from that country. They got dressed up, they baked, and then we had a party. Så then it was Pakistan that time, and Indian the next time. It is initiatives like this that create dialogue and trust." Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

The memory group for immigrants lasted 8 years, though the participants changed other the years. Another aspect that changed was the topics they discussed. They eventually introduced other topics that were not based on sharing memories. They found that the group could benefit from learning about the Norwegian society. Therefore, they brought in other institutions to talk about aspects of Norwegian society like the labor market and the school systems etc.

«Etter hvert så beveget vi oss litt utover tema erindring. Vi fant ut at gruppa trenger kunnskap om det norske samfunnet, så vi brakte inn forskjellige instanser for å fortelle om regler i arbeidslivet, hvordan skal du søke jobb, hvordan fungerer skolene osv.

Nyttige ting. […] Så det ble en gruppe med litt minner og litt samfunnskunnskap og litt trening i å sta foran gruppen og fortelle.»

«After a while we moved towards including topics beyond just memories. We found out that the group needed knowledge about the Norwegian society, and so we brought in different institutions to talk about rules in work-life, how do you apply for a job, how do the schools work etc. Useful things. [...] So it became a group with some memories and some social studies and some practice in standing in front of the group talking." Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

7.1.2.5   The language café

Falch has also worked with a language café. She said this was a popular program. The target group for the language café were, according to Falch, the ones who were motivated to learn Norwegian. She also meant the language café was mostly suited to those who already spoke some Norwegian.

They started their language café around the time when there were a lot of Syrian refugees arriving in Norway. Falch recounted how, they put a lot of effort into recruiting enough volunteers because they wanted their participants to have people with whom to speak Norwegian. They even put up an advertisement in the newspaper. In the end they ended up recruiting 60 volunteers to the first meeting. Far more than they needed. However, there were generally very many who attended the language cafés. Sometimes the language café would have as many as 80 people attending, counting both volunteers and participants.

At the language café they divided the tables based on three different levels of language proficiency. The participants would choose themselves which table they thought suited them best. The groups were small, about four to five participants at each group. Falch meant having the groups that size was ideal.

Falch also meant it could be wise to establish a committee of volunteers. The volunteers in the committee would be given extra responsibilities. This way the volunteers would be responsible for more tasks, such as preparing the room by moving tables and chairs, serving coffee and tea, putting everything in place afterwards. This would mean less work for the librarian. Though you can't demand as much from volunteers, as employees, they are often willing to put effort into the projects they participate in. Falch believed that volunteers who are given extra tasks would be willing to take responsibility for them.

«Man kan ikke kreve noe av frivillige, man kan ikke kreve at de skal være der hver gang. Sånn er det. De får ikke lønn. De er frie. Det er opp til dem om de vil komme. Men sitter de i et styre så forplikter det litt mer og min erfaring er at da tar man kanskje mer ansvar.»

«You can't demand anything from the volunteers. You cannot even demand that they be there every time. That is the way it is. They do not get paid. They are free. It is up to them whether they want to come. But if they are in a committee then that creates a bit more commitment. And my experience is that then you perhaps take more responsibility.» Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

Falch found volunteers collaboration with other institutions as essential to creating successful programs. She meant you could manage more if you recruited help from other sources. She had experienced that having a wide network of contacts had been very helpful. Both for creating better programs, but also for being able to pick up on the current challenges in the local community.

«Jeg har hatt stor glede av å jobbe tverrfaglig med andre instanser, og jeg har brukt masse frivillige gjennom årene. Det har vært veldig bra. Da får man de pluss tingene som gjør det morsomt å drive bibliotek.»

«I have experienced great joy in working interdisciplinary along with other institutions, and I have used a lot of volunteers throughout the years. That has been really great. Then you get those extra things that make it fun to work with libraries.» Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

«Jeg tror veldig på tverrfaglig samarbeid. Det å lære av hverandre og se det fra andre profesjoners innfallsvinkel. […] Man er flere og da får man til større ting. Det er en av mine viktigste erfaringer. Og det å kjenne din virkekrets godt. Det vil si at du må ha et godt kontaktnett. I hvert fall for å fange opp det som skjer og kunne knytte an til utfordringer. Det er viktig.»

"I have a lot of faith in interdisciplinary collaboration. Learning from each other and seeing things from the other professions' perspectives. […] You are more people, and then you can manage bigger things. That is one of my most important experiences. And knowing your community well. Meaning you need to have a good contact network. At

least to capture what is going on and being able to connect your work to challenges. That is important." Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

7.1.2.6 Objectives

Falch believed the libraries have a responsibility and a potential for doing something important for people who come from other countries. When asked about why the library hosts language cafés she said it was in the hopes that they could contribute to providing knowledge about the Norwegian society, as well as language learning. Furthermore, she believed building trust was an important reason to host programs like these.

> «Jeg tror biblioteket har en stor oppgave, og virkelig et potensial for å gjøre noe viktig for folk som kommer fra andre steder i verden.»

> *«I believe the library has a huge task, and really a big potential for doing something important for people who come from other places in the world."* Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

> «Vi håper å kunne være viktig for noen og bidra på vår måte, gjennom de mulighetene vi har. Bidra til at de får kunnskap om det norske samfunnet. Bidra til tillit, og bidra til språk. Bygge tillit. Det er viktig.»

> *«We hope to be important for some and to contribute in our way, through the opportunities we have. To contribute to giving them knowledge about the Norwegian society. To contribute to trust, and to language. Building trust. That is important»* Ingvil Falch, key informant 2

7.1.3 Summary of the key informants' insights

Falch and Ravnaas seemed to have the same opinion on several points. They saw the goals of several of their programs as building trust and providing knowledge. They believed in dividing participants based on their proficiency in Norwegian. They believed using volunteers was beneficial. They were both of the opinion that cooperating with other organizations and institution was highly beneficial. Moreover, they believed in creating cross-cultural meeting places to create trust between cultural groups as well as increase people's knowledge and understanding of other cultures. They both mentioned a need to organize the volunteers better so they could contribute more efficiently, and thereby lessen the amount of work needed to be done by the librarians. They also both saw the use of texts as a beneficial tool when teaching

Norwegian. Additionally, they both valued programs that gave the participants a broader social network.

However, there were aspects that was only pointed out by one of them. Ravnaas, for instance, believed in creating low threshold programs. She believed in creating them together with representatives of the target group. She expressed a belief in programs open to a general audience, rather than one specific group. She emphasized the need for more standardization and sharing of resources between libraries. She pointed out the potential of the language café to function safe place to discuss a wide range of topics. Falch, however, put more emphasis on the memory group acting a place for discussion. She pointed out that communicating well with the participants is important, as she had experienced with the girl group. She saw the need for not just cross-cultural meeting places, but also cross-generational ones.

7.2   The hosts of the language cafés

In this part of the chapter I will present the hosts' perspectives on various elements relevant to language cafés. First, I will present their thoughts on the break in the middle of the language café. Secondly, I will present the differing opinions on how best to divide participants into groups. Thirdly, I will present their thoughts on the activities and topics they use during the language café. After this I will present their thoughts on restricting the number of participants due to limited capacity. Then, I will present their thoughts on the volunteers' role at the language café. And lastly, I will present some of the librarians' thoughts on the potential for sharing resources and collaborating across different library branches.

7.2.1   The break

When asked what their thoughts were on the break in the middle of the language café the hosts showed a positive response. The break was seen as very important by both the volunteers and librarians and they argued for it in several ways. The length of the language cafés was said to be between one hour and thirty minutes to two hours long, with a break in the middle. The break is usually 10- to 15-minutes long. During the break, the participants can get up from the tables, walk around and relax for a bit. They are also offered light refreshments, such as coffee, tea, and biscuits. This was a common practice at all the libraries.

The reason why the interviewed volunteers and librarians meant the break was a necessary part of the café, was that it had several positive effects. One such effect was to decrease the intensity of the program. One and a half to two hours of practicing a new language can be very intense, both for the participants and for the volunteers. For some participants the break is also an

opportunity to change groups if the level was too high or too low at the previous one. The rooms where the cafés are held can also be quite full, leading to stuffed air and higher temperatures. Breaking the café up with some light refreshments, and the opportunity to move about has a positive effect on how much energy the volunteers and participants have during the second part of the café.

> "Jeg tror at de pausene er viktig, både for deltagere og oss frivillige, for det er ganske intenst å sitte sånn. Det er veldig dårlig lokale, veldig dårlig akustikk, veldig varmt. Og vi er jo ca. 30, pluss frivillige. Så det er ganske mange mennesker inne på et dårlig rom. Sånn at det er veldig intenst. Og så skal du sitte, og du skal snakke tydelig selv, og så skal du høre på hva de sier, som ikke alltid er på godt norsk. Så når en time er gått da er man ganske sliten, så det er godt med en pause. Og deltakerne, det er intenst for dem også."

> "*I think the breaks are important, both for the participants and for us volunteers, because it is pretty intense to sit like that. The venue is really bad, it has bad acoustics, it is very warm. And we are about 30, plus volunteers. So, there are quite a lot of people in a bad room. So, it is very intense. And you have to sit and talk clearly, and you have to listen to what the others are saying, and they don't always say it is good Norwegian. So, after an hour has gone you are pretty tired, so it is good to have a break. And the participants, it is pretty intense for them too.*" L2V Nora, volunteer at library 2

Another benefit is that the break offers an opportunity to talk to more people. During the language café they are generally divided into groups. They work together with the activities of the day or discuss the topic of the day within that group. The break offers an opportunity to break up this group and allow the participants and volunteers to talk to the other people at the language café. It means the participants have a chance to get to know more people.

> "Det [å ha pause] fungerer veldig bra synes jeg. Da prater folk sammen og litt på kryss og tvers av gruppene."

> "*It [having a break] works very well, I think. People talk together, even across the groups.*" L3V12, Philip, volunteer at library 3

"... også har vi en pause midt i, cirka ti minutter eller et kvarter med å drikke litt kaffe og å gå rundt og snakke med hverandre. Det er mange som har litt bedre kontakt enn andre så det er også en fin mulighet til å bli litt kjent med hverandre uten å sitte i en gruppe. Det fungerer kjempefint å ha den pausen der."

"...and then we have a break in the middle, about ten or fifteen minutes to drink a little coffee and going around talking to each other. There are some who connect better than others, so it is also a good opportunity to get to know each other a bit better without sitting in a group. It works really well to have that break there." L6, Ada, librarian at library 6

Another argument the hosts had for why the break is important is that the conversations during the break is often held in Norwegian. The tone of the conversation is less formal than at the tables, but it is still a useful way to practice the Norwegian language. The focus of language cafés is on giving the participants an opportunity to use the Norwegian language. If this takes place during the break, then it may be just as useful as the discussion happening in the groups. As Olivia the librarian at library 3 pointed out, sometimes the conversations during the break can be so engaging to the participants that they have to remind them to rejoin their group.

"De snakker jo norsk og pausen er kun 15 minutter og de fleste blir stående ved kaffen veldig lenge. Det hender at jeg går bort og sier at nå må dere på plass. For det er kanskje en eller to som venter, vil fortsette og så står de andre og snakker. Men det er så positivt for alle snakker norsk. Så om kafeen er rundt bordet eller ved kaffen det er ikke så veldig stor forskjell."

"They do talk Norwegian, and the break is only 15 minutes long and most of them remain by the coffee for quite a while. Sometimes I go over and tell them that they must return to their tables. Because there might be one or two who are waiting and want to continue, while the others are standing around talking. But it is very positive because they are all speaking in Norwegian. It doesn't make much of a difference if the café is happening around the tables or by the coffee." L3, Olivia, librarian at library 3

There was one potential negative effect of the break, which was pointed out by Nora, a volunteer at library 2. She had noticed that some participants would feel uncomfortable during the break. Usually they were new to the language café and hadn't gotten to know anyone yet. Coming to a language café can be intimidating for many, even in the groups where the conversation is

overseen by the volunteers. Having to start conversations with strangers on their own during the break can be even more intimidating. Therefore, some participants may choose to spend the time on their own. Nora meant it should be the task of the volunteers to pay attention to whether there were any participants who were in this position. If they noticed someone standing by themselves during the break they could go over and talk to them and introduce them to other people at the café.

> "Ja, pause er viktig og lurt. Jeg tror det bare er en liten negativ ting ved det. Og den må vi på en måte bare ta med oss. Jeg har alltid litt øye for om noen føler seg litt utenfor og at ting er vanskelig. Og med en sånn pause så ser jeg jo at, spesielt om du er helt ny så kan det bli litt vanskelig. [...] Og hvis de samtidig synes det er litt skummelt eller ikke har så lett for å prate så kan en sånn pause være utfordrende. Du kan liksom hente deg kaffen og så bli stående litt. Men sånn er det jo med alle ting, når man er på kurs og når man er ny i noe, på skoler og alt hva det er, så det går seg jo fort til. Og så tenker jeg det er litt vår oppgave å følge litt med på det da. Og da gå bort til vedkommende eller koble de sammen eller. Så det tenker jeg er uunngåelig, og egentlig det eneste negative jeg opplever sånn sett."

> *"Yes, a break is important and smart. I think there is just one small negative thing about it. One we just must keep it in mind. I've always got an eye out for if someone is feeling excluded and that things are difficult. And with a break like that, I can see that, especially if you are new then it can be a bit difficult. [...] and if they also think it is scary or find it difficult to talk to people, then a break can be challenging. You can go get coffee and then remain there for a bit. But it is like that with everything, when you are at a class or when you are new at something, at schools and whatever it might be, then it works out eventually. And I think it is our task to pay attention to this. And then walk over and connect people. So, I think it is unavoidable, and really the only negative thing which I experience." L2V, Nora, volunteer at library 2*

7.2.2 Dividing participants based on their proficiency in Norwegian

A common challenge at the language cafés is having to meet the needs of participants who have very different levels of proficiency in Norwegian. What they need to practice speaking varies greatly. Some may benefit more from easier tasks and more image-based material. Others would learn more from more challenging material. Some participants may be illiterate while

others have university degrees. Because the participants don't sign up in advance, the librarians and volunteers have no way of knowing in advance what groups they will be hosting. Therefore, they have to find solutions for how to balance meeting the needs of those with a low proficiency in Norwegian and those who speak it well.

«Og så der er det et av problemene, det er nivåforskjeller på språkkafeen. Vi får en gruppe på fire fem stykker, og så er det en som kom til Norge for tre uker siden, og så er det en som har vært her i 20 år. Og ikke nødvendigvis at den som har vært her i 20 år kan veldig mye norsk, men den kan mer, enn den som omtrent ikke kan noen ting. Og da er det veldig vanskelig å balansere det. For at enten må du da bruke mye tid på den som ikke skjønner det. Og ikke noe på den som kan mest og kanskje har lettest for å lære av dette."

"And then that is one of the issues, at the language café there are differences in levels of proficiency. We get a group of about four or five people, and then there is one that came to Norway three weeks ago, and then there is one who has been here for 20 years. And it is not necessarily the case that the one who has been here for 20 years knows all that much Norwegian, but he knows more than the one who hardly knows anything. And then it is difficult to balance it. Because you can either spend a lot of time helping the one who does not understand, and nothing on the one who knows the most, and therefore, might learn the most from this." L4V1, Oliver, volunteer at library 4

The libraries all had different ways of handling this challenge. Se table 6. At four of the six libraries they divided their participants into groups based on how well they speak Norwegian. The librarian at each of these libraries would prepare three sets of materials or tasks, each suited to a different level. The first and easiest level would usually get a sheet of paper with mainly pictures on them. The second level would get a paper with a little more text, though still short sentences. The third would get mostly text, sometimes in the form of an extract from a newspaper. *Klar Tale* was used at several of the libraries. This is a newspaper designed to be easy to read for those who do not have Norwegian as their native language.

Table 6: Practices for dividing participants into groups

Library	Dividing based on proficiency	Material on paper	Material for three levels	Librarian suggesting seating
1	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
2	No	No	No	No
3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	No	Sometimes	No	Yes
5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Library number 2 and 4 did not divide the participants based on their language skills. These two instead relied on the librarian and volunteers paying attention to the participants to see if there were any that needed extra help. Not dividing the participants would lead to some challenges in trying to balance meeting the needs of the ones in the group who know a lot of Norwegian and the ones who know little. The volunteers would have to pay extra attention and the tasks would have to be flexible so that they could be completed independently of the participants level of proficiency.

> "Det er ulempen med å ikke ha nivådeling, fordi, når det sitter noen, kanskje to stykker, som nesten ikke snakker norsk, og så sitter det to stykker som er veldig gode i å snakke norsk, så blir det litt vanskelig. For da, det er jo egentlig ingen av dem som får det ut av det som det kunne ha vært. Samtidig så er de frivillige veldig flinke til å se hvis det er en som nesten ikke har norske ord. Så har vi en skuff liggende her med materiale som kan brukes. Og da tar den frivillige bare ansvaret og sitter med den ene. Sånn en til en opplæring"

> "*That is the disadvantage to not dividing based on proficiency, because, when there are maybe two sitting there who hardly speak any Norwegian, and then there are two who are really good at speaking Norwegian, then it is difficult. Because then, none of them are really getting out of it what they could. However, the volunteers are very good at seeing whether there is anyone who hardly knows any Norwegian words. And we have a drawer around here, with material that they can use. And then the volunteer would take responsibility and sit with the one. And have like one to one training.*" L2, Emma, the librarian at library 2

The interviewed librarians and volunteers had several arguments both for and against dividing the participants based on language skills. Leah the librarian from library 4 had an argument against dividing them based on level of proficiency. She meant the participants with a higher level could help the others if they are not divided based on language proficiency. This would benefit them as they would gain confidence and feel helpful, which is important when you are new to a society.

> "Jeg mener at her har vi en mulighet for folk å hjelpe hverandre å bruke språk å føle litt som jeg er litt mer ekspert i akkurat dette, og så for å hjelpe til, og det syns jeg er så viktig. Når man er ny i Norge, eller som man er ikke ny i Norge, men man har innvandrerbakgrunn, å føle at du har bidratt til noe er så viktig. Så derfor jeg har ikke nivågrupper."

> *«I think that here we have an opportunity for people to help each other to use language and feel a bit like I am a little more an expert in this particular thing, and then to help a little, and I think that is so important. When you are new in Norway, or if you aren't new in Norway, but you have an immigrant background, to feel that you have contributed to something is so important. So that is why I don't have groups based on proficiency»* L4, Leah, the librarian at library 4

Leah also had an argument in favor of dividing the participants based on proficiency. She argued that the participants sitting around a table will get less out of the conversations if they have different levels of skill. This argument was shared by two volunteers from library 3 and one from library 4. They meant it was at least important to have the weakest separated from the rest, as they would struggle to keep up with a normal conversation. Moreover, the weaker speakers need to practice speaking even though they don't know all that much, and the stronger speakers wouldn't get that much out of listening to them.

> "De svakeste må få lov til å øve seg, og det har jo de som er mye sterkere ingen glede av. De sitter jo bare der og hører på noe de kunne i fjor. Også er det noe med at, når de sterkeste uttaler seg, så skjønner jo ikke de svakeste hvis det er veldig stort sprik.*"*

> "*The weakest speakers have to be allowed to practice, and those who are much stronger speakers don't get anything out of that. They would just sit there listening to something they learned last year. Another thing is that, when the strongest speakers express themselves, the weakest don't understand.*" L3V2 Sara, volunteer at library 3

"Fordi de er ikke på samme nivå så det er vanskelig å få alle til å få utbytte av det. Hvis du fokuserer på de som kan litt norsk så føler de som ikke kan noen ting, eller nesten ingenting, seg veldig utafor, igjen fordi de forstår ingenting. Også omvendt, hjelper du de som ligger nede så er det de som kan litt norsk som kanskje føler seg litt forbigått"

"Because they aren't at the same level it is difficult to get everyone to benefit from it. If you focus on the ones who know a bit of Norwegian then the ones who know nothing, or almost nothing, can feel left out, again because they do not understand anything. And the other way around too, if you help the ones who know hardly anything then it is the ones who do know a bit of Norwegian who might feel left out." L4V2, Ella, volunteer from library 4

Nora, the volunteer from library 2 summed up the advantages and disadvantages as follows:

"Jeg ser jo fordelene og ulempene. Er det delt så blir det mer fokus akkurat på det riktige nivået, og de føler at de lærer mer. På en annen side så, føler jo de som kan litt mindre at de kan lære litt av noen som kan mer, men kanskje kan de også dette av med noen som kan mer."

"I do see the advantages and disadvantages. If it is divided then there is more focus on the right level, and they feel that they are learning more. On the other hand, those who know less feel that they can learn from someone who knows more, but they might also fail at keeping up with someone who knows more." L2V, Nora, volunteer at library 2

Getting the participants to sit at the right table presents volunteers and librarians with some difficulties. At both libraries where they did not divide the participants based on skill, the librarians used this difficulty to argue against dividing based on skill. They meant the participants would not know where they ought to sit as they often underestimate how much they know. Leah from library 4 argued that it would be difficult to try to tell them where they ought to sit, because they might feel sensitive about their level of skill and it is hard to judge from just a brief conversation. She also meant asking them would be difficult as few would be willing to admit how little they know. This concern was shared by Oliver, a volunteer at the same library:

"Hvis du ikke vet at den personen ikke kan så mye, så er det å spørre om det er noen som ikke kan så veldig mye. Så er det ingen som bare sier at nei jeg kan nesten ingenting.

Så det gjør det vanskeligere, man må nesten å kjenne dem litt til slik at du kan skille dem ut på en vennlig måte."

"If you do not know whether the person knows all that much, then to ask if there is anyone who doesn't know all that much. Then no one is just going to say "no, I hardly know anything". So that makes it harder, you pretty much have to know them a bit so that you can separate them in a polite and kind manner." L4V1, Oliver, volunteer at library 4

Emma, the librarian from library 2 pointed out a different complication with tables divided based on proficiency. She pointed out that they could fill up unevenly. This would lead to some participants having to choose a table that doesn't necessarily suit their level.

"Hvorfor har dere valgt å ikke ha nivådeling?

Det er litt praktisk. De som ikke vet hvilket nivå de er på, hvor skal de sitte? Og hvis det er fullt på et bord, hvor skal vi plassere de som egentlig skulle ha sittet der? Så det går på sånne praktiske ting."

«*Why have you chosen to not divide the participants based on proficiency?*

It is a bit practical. The ones who do not know which level they are at, where should they sit? And if one of the tables is full, where should we place the ones who should have been sitting there? So, it is based on practical things like that» L2, Emma, the librarian at library 2

At the libraries where they divide based on level, they had different solutions for how to divide the tables. At library 3 and 5 the librarian would suggest where the participants ought to sit. At the other libraries, the participants chose themselves which group they wanted to join. A couple volunteers from library 2 said that the participants did not always choose the right table to begin with and some would go to a different table after about ten minutes. Sometimes the volunteers would encourage the participants to change to another table if they thought their table wasn't suited to their needs. At library 3 the librarian would let the participants know that they can switch tables during the break.

As the language café at library 2 did not divide based on level they had developed a different method of dealing with participants with very different levels of proficiency. They would have two volunteers at each table and if there was one part of the group that had a lower level than

the rest, they would split the group in two with one volunteer for each. If there was just one participant who needed extra help one of the volunteers could help them individually. The division was done in a more spontaneous manner, whenever they found it necessary.

"Det hender at vi deler bordet i to også. Det gjorde vi sist jeg var her også. Hvor du liksom snapper opp at her er det halvparten cirka som kan lite og halvparten mer. Så kan vi dele oss bare litt sånn på bordet, sånn at en av oss tar den gjengen som kan minst og så en av oss den som kan mer. Sånn sett så kan du jo si at vi driver jo litt med nivådeling og da. Selv om det ikke er organisert, så har vi frivillige bare funnet ut at noen ganger så gjør vi det sånn, fordi at det da fungerer det best."

"*We sometimes split the table in two as well. We did the last time I was here. If we somehow find that here about half know very little and the other half know more. Then we can divide ourselves on the table, so that one of us takes the group that know the least and then one of us the ones who know more. So, in that manner you could say that we do divide based on level. Even though it is not organized, we the volunteers have just found that sometimes we do it that way, because it works best that way.*" L2V, Nora, volunteer at library 2

At library 4 they had tested a solution for separating the participants with the lowest level. They had seen that there were some participants who had a very low level of proficiency and had grouped them together. These would then sit with Oliver, a volunteer who, according to the librarian, was especially good at helping those who speak very little. The rest of the participants were not divided based on proficiency. At the time of the interview they had tested this out one time. Oliver thought it had worked very well and hoped they would continue.

"Sist gang var jeg ikke her, men gangen før der, da var det en gruppe med personer som hadde kommet til Norge noen få uker tidligere. Da skilte vi dem ut da og så satt jeg med dem. Og det var første gang vi har gjort det. Og det tror jeg er en ganske god måte å gjøre det på. For da kan vi i hvert fall få snakket og lært littegranne i den perioden da med meg, og den som er kommet hit og kan såpass mye at de kan lære ved en vanlig samtale, de får lært mer de også. Ikke bare bli sittende og miste interessen. Det er ikke bra."

"*I wasn't here the last time, but the time before that, there was a group of people who had come to Norway just a few weeks ago. We separated them from the rest and then I*

sat with them. And that was the first time we did that. And I think it is a pretty good way to do it. Because then we can at least get to talk and learn a bit, in the period of time they spend with me. And the ones who come here and know enough that they can learn from a normal conversation they get to learn more too. They don't just end up sitting there and losing interest. That isn't good." L4V1, Oliver, volunteer at library 4

7.2.3 Activities

The language cafés all had some form of program for each session. A common practice was to have something prepared that the participants and volunteers could talk about. Several of the librarians chose a topic or theme for each session of the language café. The topics would either be presented orally or through the material handed out. The material could contain texts, pictures and tasks. Other times the librarian would prepare activities.

At library 1, 3 and 6 the librarians would prepare material on paper, in the form of texts or a combination of text and pictures. These three libraries all made three different sets of material to suit three different levels of language skill. The lowest level would have more pictures and shorter sentences, while the highest level would have longer and more complicated texts, sometimes even newspaper articles from papers such as *Klar Tale*. Another aspect they had in common was that they would choose a common topic or theme for the session. The material or discussion topics would then be focused on this one broader topic. This topic could for example be a national holiday such as Norway's Independence Day, the 17 of May, or it could be culinary traditions in people's home countries.

«**Du lagde noen tema ark, hvordan er de?**

Det varierer litt på gruppene. Men på nivå 1 er det ofte mye bilder. Og at de snakker rundt bildene. Det kan være temaer som sanser, farger, det kan være helsetematikk. Mens nivå 2 så er det litt mer tekst, men veldig korte setninger og korte avsnitt. Og på nivå 3 så er det litt mer tekst og litt større setninger og, men også det er jo korte avsnitt der og.»

"*You made some topic sheets, what are they like?*

That depends a bit on the groups. But at level 1 there are often a lot of pictures. And that they talk around the pictures. There can be themes like senses, colors, there can be health related topics. While at level 2 there is a bit more text, but very short sentences and short paragraphs. And at level 3 there is a bit more text and sentences that are a

bit longer and, but also there are short paragraphs there too." Ada, Librarian at library 6

At library 2 Emma, the librarian, also chooses a topic for each session. However, she presents it orally instead of preparing written material. The topic is usually in the form of a question that the participants and volunteers can discuss around the tables. This library also has a tradition of doing crossword puzzles at the end of the language café.

> "**Du sa du hadde noen oppgaver du lager til språkkafeen, hva slags oppgaver da?**
>
> Det er veldig forskjellig, […] men forrige gang da fikk de i oppgave å møblere et hus. Det kan være lag en meny, inviter venner, hva trenger du av ingredienser for å lage rettene? Hva skriver du i invitasjonene? Eller selvfølgelig snakker vi om tradisjoner, vi snakker om nasjonaldager, hvordan vi feirer de. En oppgave vi hadde var hvis du var statsminister, hva ville du gjort da? Eller vi kan snakke om forskjellige familiekonstellasjoner altså, far, mor, søsken, søskenbarn, onkel, tante og sånt. Eller vi kan sette navn på kroppen. Så det er veldig forskjellig. Og det er egentlig veldig enkle oppgaver."

> «*You said you had some tasks you prepare for the language café; what kind of tasks are these?*
>
> *It varies a lot, […] but last time they were given the task of furnishing a house. It can be a menu, inviting friends, what ingredients do you need to make the dishes? What do you write in the invitations? Or of course we talk about traditions, we talk about Independence Days, how we celebrate them. One task we had was if you were prime minister, what would you do? Or we can talk about different family constellations, that is, father, mother, siblings, cousins, uncle, aunt, and such. Or we can name the different body parts. So, it varies a lot. And the tasks are really quite simple.*" Emma, librarian at library 2

Library 4 and 5 both had highly active language cafés. At library 4 Leah would prepare several activities and tasks. She had very little written material as she had found that the written material would draw focus from the conversation and the other people in the room, as well as cause difficulties for the participants who were illiterate. Leah's program for her language café usually started off with a round of introductions where everyone, including the volunteers, had to introduce themselves by answering a set of questions. The round of presentations takes about

half an hour. The next thing at the café is the presentation of the first task. The tasks are usually completed in groups, and there are usually two to three different tasks during one session. An example of a task they use here is to throw a set of dice with different pictures on all sides and then try to create a story based on the pictures that are facing up. After the activities are completed, they conclude with a summary of the day and by going through difficult or interesting words that the participants came across during the café. The participants are asked to explain the words and what they learned about them.

Leah thought that the more active the participants have to be the better. She would often have her participants move about the room to create more activity. She also tried to have several different tasks for each session. She described the chemistry at her café as very positive and friendly, and one of the elements she thought helped to create this chemistry was having activities that were fun and engaging.

> "Ja, jeg mener at aktivitetene altså de oppgavene er kjempeviktig, men enda viktigere er liksom den kjemien man skaper i det rommet, og igjen det er ikke noen enkel oppskrift på det, men jeg vil si aktiviteter som er ikke kjedelige."

> "*Yes, in my opinion the activities, or the tasks, are very important, but even more important is that chemistry that one creates in the room, and again there is no simple recipe for that, but I would say activities that aren't boring.*" L4, Leah, librarian at library 4

At library 5 Maya, the librarian there, would also prepare several activities. As she explained it, she would plan for two activity sessions, with a break in between. The one before the break would consist of simple tasks. For example, a task where you must connect pictures with the corresponding words. Another example is to play Alias with picture cards. Alias is a game where one person knows the word or picture, and must explain what it is, without using this word, so the other person can guess what the word in question is. Maja also often prepares questions or discussion topics for the first session that can be used if the first task is completed. If this is not enough to fill the first session, she also has some extra crossword puzzles and some pictures that they can use to get the participant to try to describe what they see in as many words as they can. The second session is dedicated to reading and discussion tasks. For example, reading an article from *Klar tale* or *Utrop*, these are both newspapers targeting those who do not have Norwegian as their native language. An example of a discussion task she could use was to have the participants pretend they work at a travel agency and that they needed to plan

a trip for someone else who is going to their home country. Where should they go? What should they see? The main goal of the discussion tasks is to get the participants to talk.

Though the libraries had different ways of using activities the reason for using them was always the same. They were all meant to create conversation around the tables. Several of the hosts pointed out how the activities can help stimulate conversation if you use them actively. As Leah pointed out:

> "Jeg planlegger to eller tre forskjellige aktiviteter. Det er veldig sjelden vi holder på en aktivitet resten av timen, vi liker at det er veldig aktivt, og det som jeg er veldig opptatt av er at det er en aktivitet som tvinger folk til å snakke. Jeg har opplevd selv at det er bra å gå på norskkurs, men for å snakke er det veldig ofte at man trenger noe annet. Derfor har jeg bestemt meg for at det skal være veldig aktivt, hvor man engasjerer hverandre til å snakke. Så jeg har veldig mange forskjellig aktiviteter jeg driver med. Det er ikke det samme hver eneste uke, jeg bytter dem ut."

> "*I plan two to three different activities. It is very seldom that we keep working on one activity for the rest of the hour, we like to have it be very active, and what I consider important is that they are activities that force people to talk. I have experienced myself that it is good to take Norwegian classes, but to talk you very often need something different. That is why I have decided that it should be highly active, where you engage each other to talk. So, I have very many different activities which I use. They are not the same each week. I trade them out." L4*, Leah, librarian at library 4

However, the activities can also come in the way of the flow of the conversation if they become too focused or one-sided. It is important to create activities that are adjusted to the language café setting.

> "Hovedmålet her ved språkkafeen er muntlig trening, og da er det faktisk ganske vesentlig hvordan dagens oppgave er som en hjelp til å få i gang den muntlige praten, konversasjonen, og treningen i å snakke."

> "*The main target of the language café is oral practice, and therefore it is actually pretty vital how the day's task is, as a help to get the conversation going, and the practice in speaking" L2V, Nora, volunteer at library 2*

The librarian at library 4 meant too much focus on text could have a negative effect as it took away focus from the conversation and from other people in the room.

> "Det kan være noen ganger vi jobber med tekst, men veldig sjeldent egentlig, fordi det er jo noen ganger problematisk med tekst. Igjen på grunn av nivå, analfabet folk som kan ikke lese eller skrive. Og da blir det veldig fokus på ark i stedet for andre mennesker i rommet og for å få den flyten til å snakke så er det negativt, men innimellom så bruker jeg tekst."

> "*It can happen that we work with text, but it is very rare actually. Because it can be problematic with text. Again because of level of proficiency, illiterate people who don't know how to read or write. And we can end up having a lot of focus on the paper rather than on the people in the room. And to get that conversational flow then that is negative. But occasionally, I use text.*" L4, Leah, librarian at library 4

The activities are also affected by the participants who show up to the language café. As mentioned earlier there are participants with various levels of proficiency in speaking Norwegian who come to the language, and the hosts do not know in advance who will show up. The activities need to suit the language proficiency of the participants in order for them to be able to contribute as much as possible to the conversation. However, creating activities to suit the language proficiency of the participants can be difficult as there is no way of knowing in advance who will come to the language café. Additionally, it can be difficult when each participant has different expectations for what they want out of the café. As one volunteer noted:

> "Det er veldig vanskelig å lage et opplegg som alle er fornøyd med. Fordi de kommer hit med veldig forskjellige forutsetninger og kanskje også forskjellige krav og ønsker."

> "*It is exceedingly difficult to make a program that everyone is satisfied with. Because they come here with vastly different starting points and maybe also different demands and wishes.*" L3V12, Philip, volunteer at library 3

One solution that several libraries have implemented is to divide the tables based on what level of skill they have as was discussed earlier, they would then create three sets of activities and material that would each suit a different level. Another solution is to have very flexible and open tasks, leaving it up to the volunteers to adjust the difficulty based on the participants at their table. The librarian at library 4, one of the two libraries that did not divide based on skill, chose the second option.

"Poenget med en god del av mine aktiviteter er at man kan jo justere det til hvor man er. Så om man kan bare lage en setning så fint lag en setning, om man kan fortelle en hel historie, kjempebra."

"The point of a lot of my activities is that you can adjust them to where you are. So, if all you can do is make one sentence, then that is good, make that one sentence. If you can relate a whole story, then that is really good." L4, Leah, librarian at library 4

The volunteer at library 2, the other library where they did not divide based on skill, meant pictures could be useful for dealing with the various degrees of language skill.

"Men nettopp den utfordringen at det kan være veldig forskjellig nivå til de som kommer og til de man har rundt bordet. Det gjør at utgangspunkt i bilder kan være veldig bra, fordi da kan man holde det litt på bilde nivå, og hvis man har en som kan veldig lite så er det lettere å peke på noe for å få i gang noe. Og fordi at ut ifra bildene så kan man gjøre mye mer ut av det for de som trenger det."

"But the challenge in that there can be a difference in level between the ones who come and the ones you have around the table. It means using pictures as a starting point is a good idea, because then you can keep it at picture level, and if you have someone who knows very little then it is easier to point at something in order to get something going. And because with pictures as a starting point you can make much more out of it for the ones who need that." L2V, Nora, volunteer at library 2

The topics and material presented by the library are suggestions for what to talk about. The volunteers and participants can choose to talk about different topics if that interests them more. Olivia, the librarian at library 3 stressed this point:

"Det er ingen som må bruke tekstene mine, deltagere kan godt komme med egne forslag eller egne ønsker. Men det må jo andre deltagere også tåle. At nå snakker vi om noe helt annet."

"No one has to use my texts. Participants are welcome to come up with their own suggestions or wishes. But the other participants have to be okay with it. That we are now talking about something completely different." L3, Olivia, librarian at library 3

The volunteers had also learnt to adapt each session to the participants who showed up. To do this, they sometimes needed to set aside the material prepared by the librarians. Philip and Sara

pointed out how they do not always use the material handed out, either because they don't find it relevant for their group or because other topics interest them more.

> "Philip: For [bibliotekaren] kommer jo med tips og deler ut noen ark også og det er nyttig, men av og til så rekker vi ikke å komme til det arket. For det er så mange ivrige også de som er på gruppa har så mye på hjertet at samtalen går av seg selv veldig raskt.
>
> Sara: Og det tror jeg er veldig viktig. Å ta utgangspunkt i det som opptar et menneske og flere, hvis du merker at det opptar flere på gruppa så er det veldig lurt å snakke om akkurat det tema."

> "*Philip: The librarian does come with tips and hands out some sheets of paper and that is useful, but sometimes we don't have time to get to them. Because there are so many eager participants, and the ones in the group have so much to say that the conversation very quickly goes by itself.*
>
> *Sara: And I think that is especially important. To use as a starting point something that interests a person or more. If you notice that it interests several people in your group, then it is very smart to talk about just that topic.*" *L3V12 Philip and Sara, volunteers from library 3*

Sara often sat at the table with the lowest Norwegian skill. When asked what she does with this group she mentioned how she for this group she did not always follow the material given out by the library. She would set it aside if she found the topic suggestions were not suited to the needs of the group.

> "Fra biblioteket sin side så får vi jo et ark hvor det er forslag til et tema. Noen ganger så bruker vi det, og noen ganger så synes jeg det passer dårlig og da prater vi heller om hva som helst egentlig."

> "*From the library we get a sheet of paper where there is a topic suggestion. Sometimes we use it, and sometimes I don't think it suits the situation and then instead we talk about anything really.*" *L3V12, Sara, volunteer from library 3*

The volunteers changing the material to suit their group, or ignoring it all together, does not mean that they are not useful. In many cases they are helpful starting points for fruitful conversations. As Nora points out, participants can be shy when they are speaking Norwegian and the material can be a useful tool to get them started.

"Noen ganger så kan det fungere at praten bare kommer i gang og du har de rundt bordene som prater lett eller gjerne vil prate. Det går av seg selv på en måte. Men andre ganger så er det jo noen som blir sjenert av å kunne lite språk ikke sant. Så de kan bli litt for tause eller sjenerte for hverandre. Eller ikke er så pratsomme sånn at vi trenger en oppgave å komme i gang med"

"*Sometimes then it can work, and the talk just gets started on its own and you have the ones around the tables who talk easily and would very much like to talk. It goes by itself in a way. But other times then there are those who are shy and get embarrassed by not knowing so much of the language. They can be rather quiet and shy amongst each other. Or not as talkative so that we need a task with which to get started.*" L2V, Nora, volunteer at library 2

7.2.4 Discussion topics

The topics are often focused on Norwegian society or the participants' home countries. Current news and debates are frequently used as topics of discussion as well. Additionally, topics related to jobs and education are also popular.

There are different motivations behind choosing or not choosing the different types of topics. One aspect that both the volunteers and the hosts wanted to accommodate for is their need to learn about Norway. Focusing on Norwegian society is, therefore, often done to inform and educate the participants, so they become more familiar and comfortable with the country they now live in. Since a lot of the participants are immigrants, and not all of them have been in Norway that long, they are interested in learning about the country, the people there and their traditions. The volunteers also have a lot to contribute to conversations about Norway. Both the volunteers and the librarians pointed out how teaching the participants about Norway is an important aspect of the language café.

"En annen ting som jeg prøver på det er jo å drive litt sånn opplysningsvirksomhet om det norske samfunn. Om regler, mat, 17. mai, hva er det som skjer i Norge, aktuelle saker i nyhetene hender det vi snakker litt om. Og det har de ikke fått med seg, altså viktige ting som vi ser gjennom avisa og tv og sånn, det har de ikke peiling på, men så kan vi drive litt sånn opplysningsvirksomhet også. Samtidig som vi snakker norsk så går det an å snakke om viktige ting."

"Another thing which I am trying to do is to have some educational content about the Norwegian society. About rules, food, 17th of May, what is happening in Norway. Sometimes we talk about current events that have been in the news. And they haven't been previously informed about a lot of things, like important things that we see in the newspaper and on TV and things like that, they don't have a clue about it, but then we can inform them about this. As long as we speak Norwegian we can talk about important things." L3V12, Philip volunteer from library 3

"Det jo klart det med kulturforskjeller og hvorfor gjør de sånn eller hvordan gjør vi det her, det er også interessant. De skal jo bo i Norge. Så å få dem til å forstå litt mer av vår måte å være på, vår måte å leve på, det synes jeg er viktig. Og så ta opp negative ting ved det norske samfunn. Mange får jo av og til et glansbilde."

"Obviously cultural differences and why people do as they do or how we do things here, that is interesting too. They are after all going to live in Norway. So to get them to understand more of our way of being, our way of living, I think that is important. And to talk about the negative things about the Norwegian society. A lot of them end up seeing Norway through rose-colored glasses." L3V3, Emilie, volunteer at library 3

"Jeg prøver å gjøre det til litt sånn dagsaktuelt de temaene de snakker om. Og gjerne ting som er fornuftige å kunne noe om når man kommer til et nytt land. Altså helse og skole, hvordan fungerer samfunnet. [...] De frivillige de òg legger litt vekt på at det skal være litt samfunnsknyttet og fornuftig lagt opp til at de kan lære seg ting som de skal bruke i det daglige da. Sånn som det med helse og skole osv."

"I try to make the topics we talk about current. And often about things that are sensible to know of when you are in a new country. Like health care and schools, how society works [...] the volunteers also put weight on it being related to community and society, and that made it possible for them to learn things that they can use in their daily lives. Like health care and school etcetera." L6, Ada, librarian at library 6

Another aspect to take into consideration is the knowledge of the participants. What to do they know? Which topics or tasks suit their knowledge? Keeping this in mind is important so that the participants can have useful contributions to the conversations around the table.

A downside to focusing too much on Norwegian society is that it can make it harder to participate in the conversation for the participants who have spent little time in Norway. A common problem can occur where the participants have not learned enough about Norway to be able to contribute to the conversation. It can present some difficulties regarding balancing who is contributing to the conversation. In some cases, it can lead to the conversation being dominated by the volunteers. If the topic is a Norwegian tradition or historical event, chances are that only the volunteers have more than surface knowledge on the topic and so the café becomes an arena for the volunteers to share this knowledge, rather than an arena for the participants to practice speaking. The volunteers can then end up more in the role of a lecturer, rather than a conversation partner.

> "Ofte kan det bli oppgaver hvor vi skal lære dem noe om Norge, og det kan være hyggelig det sier de, men de får ikke snakket så mye.»

> "*There can often be tasks where we have to teach them something about Norway. And they say that can be nice, but they don't get to talk as much.*" L2V, Nora, volunteer at library 2

It might instead be more beneficial to focus on topics where the participants can share their own experiences and their own knowledge. This would make it easier for the participants who have just arrived in Norway to be able to contribute with something useful. The librarian at library 4 remarked that topics that use the experiences of the participants are also the ones that engage them the most.

> "Jeg tror de ting som engasjerer mest er når du kan knytte opp det mennesket som er der, og da må de på en måte bruke en del av sin egen erfaring for å snakke om noe."

> "*I think the things that engage the most are when you can connect the people who are there and then they have to in a way use a part of their own experience to talk about something. L4,* Leah, librarian at library 4

Talking about the participants' home countries can lead to more active participation in the conversation amongst the participants, because the participants who are not yet as familiar with Norwegian society would still have meaningful contributions to the conversation. Comparing Norwegian society to the participants' home countries can also be a good option for engaging both the volunteers and the participants. This way everyone has something useful to contribute,

and everyone has something to learn from what the others say. This can also lead to new perspectives on familiar topics such as culture and traditions.

> "Vi snakket om pensjon. Vi presenterer oss for hverandre og jeg sa at jeg var pensjonist og så spurte jeg hvordan det var å være pensjonist i hjemlandene. Så hvor mye får mammaen og pappaen din, må du være med og bidra så de skal få seg nok mat? Så vi bruker det som sammenligningsgrunnlag, og da blir det enklere å forholde seg til det tror jeg."

> *"We talked about pension. We introduced ourselves to each other and I said that I was retired, and then I asked what it is like to be retired in their home countries. Like how much does your mother and father get, do you have to contribute so that they get enough food? Then we use that as grounds for comparison. And then it is easier to relate to it I think."* L3V12, Sara, volunteer from library 3

Not knowing in advance who will show up to the language café will make it challenging to adjust for this aspect. Some of the participants may have legitimate contributions to a conversation on Norwegian society and would benefit from it, whereas others are not as familiar with these topics and would have more to contribute to a conversation about something different. Due to this, the volunteers must learn how to adjust the tasks and topics to suit the people around their table. It is not surprising then that several volunteers mention how they only sometimes use the material presented by the librarian in charge. Sometimes they use it in a different way from how it was originally intended. An example of this is how Nora would change topics like the 17th of May, Norway's Independence Day, to also include celebrations and independence days in other countries.

> "For eksempel, snakk om 17. Mai. Det kan være en oppgave. Og en sånn oppgave, i utgangspunktet så funker den ikke så veldig godt, fordi at det er jo veldig varierende hvor lenge de har vært her i landet og hvor mye de kan om samfunnet og språket og alt. Og en sånn oppgave kan også i verste fall føre til at vi sitter og forteller dem om 17. Mai. Ikke sant? For vi skal jo egentlig si minst mulig. Eller så kan det fungere, fordi vi etter hvert er ganske erfarne på å liksom prøve å dra praten og prøver å få alle med, også ender det jo da ofte med, altså kanskje noen har opplevd noe, har vært her en 17 mai. Og så kan man få litt prat rundt det. Men en sånn oppgave kan også da ende i at vi må dreie den litt og snakke om hva slags nasjonaldag og feiringer har du i ditt land? Ikke sant. Bare på en måte å få praten til å gå da."

"For example, talk about the 17th of May, that can be a task. And a task like that doesn't really work very well, because it is very varied how long they [the participants] have been here in the country and how much they know of the society and the language and everything. And a task like that can also, in a worst-case scenario, lead to us sitting and telling them about 17th of May, right? But we are supposed to say as little as possible. Or it can work, because after a while we get quite experienced in trying to turn the conversation and in trying to get everyone to join in. And it often ends up with, maybe some have experienced something, have been here a 17th of May. And then you can get a little conversation around that. But a task like that can also end in us having to twist it a bit and talk about what kind of independence days and celebrations do they have in their country? Just to get the conversation going." L2V, Nora, volunteer at library 2

When it came to other topics such as topics concerning debates and politics, there were different opinions on what it was okay to discuss, and which topics ought to be avoided. Current news and debates are good topics to start interesting and engaging conversations. Politics, religion and moral are often areas where people have strong opinions, which can lead to more active involvement. Both the volunteers and the participants can find it interesting to discuss topics where they have different views. This can be found as enriching and it can widen their perspective. Several volunteers pointed this out.

"Jeg opplever at jeg lærer like mye som jeg lærer bort. For eksempel verdi. Det er klart at når folk kommer med ulike verdisyn, og sier at "ja, men det er viktig det å ta vare på moren sin". Så klart det gjør du jo. [...] Fordi at okay så kommer det til punkter hvor vi ikke deler noen ting. Nei, okay, men så mener du det. Ikke sant. Og kvinner skal være sånn og menn skal være sånn. Okay, så mener jeg noe helt annet. Kan du godta det, kan du godta at jeg mener noe annet enn deg? [...] Dette her, for i det man får folk i tale og vi snakker med hverandre så kommer det frem det ene etter det andre. Det er sånn. Det er liksom en berikelse det å snakke med folk og liksom oppleve forskjellige måter å se virkeligheten på. Man får et annet syn og ser med en annen type briller. Sånn ser verden ut for deg, og deg, og deg."

"I've experienced that I learn just as much as I teach. For example, values. It is clear that when people come with different values and say that, "yes, but it is important to take care of one's mother" and of course you do [...] Because okay so you come to a point where you don't share anything. No, okay but I mean something completely different. Can you accept that? Can you accept that I think something different from

you? [...] This, because in getting people to talk and in talking to each other one thing after the other is brought up. It is kind of like an enrichment talking to people and like experiencing different ways of viewing the world. You get a different perspective and you see with a different set of glasses. That is how the world looks like for you, and for you, and for you" L4V2, Ella, volunteer from library 4

"Vi er inne på det meste. Når du er i en gruppe du er trygg på, og føler deg trygg i, så kan du snakke om alt. [...] Vi kan snakke om religion, vi kan snakke om hverdagslige ting, mat, hva spiser dere i hjemlandet, hvordan oppdrar vi barn, hvordan behandler vi kvinner, kvinnedagen 8. mars. Ja, vi hadde samtaler som hadde med det. Mishandling, kultur, altså alt som går på en del negative ting med nye kulturer, vet du vi kan komme innom det meste. Så det er jo det som er så fint, at vi har anledning til det. [...] Og gris, hvorfor spiser ikke muslimene svinekjøtt, har jeg vært innom. Så jeg prøver i hvert fall å være åpen og spør. Og jeg har aldri opplevd å få noen negative kommentarer eller at de har reagert negativt på noe som helst vis."

"We talk about most things. When you are in a group where you feel safe, you can talk about anything. [...] we talk about religion, we talk about everyday things, food, what do you eat in your home country, how do you raise children, how do we treat women, international women's day the 8th of march. Yes, we had a conversation about that. Mistreatment, culture... everything that entails the negative things about new cultures. You know we can talk about a lot of things. And that is what is good about it. That we have the opportunity to do that. [...] And pig, why don't Muslims eat pork, that is something we have discussed. And I try to at least be open and ask about things. And I have never experienced getting any negative feedback or that they have reacted negatively in any way." L3V3, Emilie, volunteer at library 3

However, it is a common worry amongst the librarians that these topics may lead to conflict. As it can be difficult to navigate a discussion where there is strong disagreement, the librarians are weary of choosing such topics. They wish to avoid situations where either the participants or the volunteers end up feeling uncomfortable.

"Vi prøver å unngå å bli politiske, det er jo fortsatt bibliotek dette her. Vi brukte Klar tale siden det er en avis og det var bra, fordi det var aktuelle tema, ting som har skjedd

og det har man lyst til å diskutere, men da er det jo også som regel ting som er, eller kan fort bli politiske, og det prøver vi å unngå."

"We try to avoid being political, it is still a library after all. We used Klar tale since it is a newspaper and that was good, because it had current topics. Things that had happened and that you wanted to discuss. But there were also often things that are, or can easily become, political, and we try to avoid that." L1, Lukas, librarian at library 1

"Jeg er litt usikker, fordi jeg ikke sitter så mye på rundt om bordene så vet jeg ikke, men de klarer å snakke om ting som er som politikk, og jeg hører jo at noen ganger så diskuterer de veldig høyt om ting og det unngår jeg litt, jeg er ikke helt der, jeg vil ikke at de skal snakke om for politiske ting eller om for religiøse og troende ting, fordi det kan skape konflikt,"

"I am unsure, because I don't sit that much at the tables, so I don't know, but they can manage to talk about things that are political, and I hear that sometimes they discuss things very loudly, and I try to avoid that, I'm not quite there, I don't want them to talk about too political things or about too religious things, because it can create conflict."
L3, Olivia, librarian at library 3

Discussing private topics can also be sensitive. At one library they had found that talking about the participants' childhood had been a mistake as some of the people there had not had good childhoods and talking about it brought up bad memories.

"Fortell om barndommen din har vært litt [vanskelig], fordi noen har ikke hatt noen god barndom. Så det er sånne ting vi ligger unna. Aldri om religion, nei det er enkelte tema vi aldri snakker om."

""Tell us about your childhood" has been a bit [difficult], because some people haven't had a good childhood. So those are things we stay away from. Never religion, no there are some topics we never talk about." L2, Emma, librarian at library 2

At another library, the librarian pointed out how some people are not as comfortable with sharing personal details.

"Jeg føler det er litt forskjell på hva folk liker å snakke om da. For det vil alltid være sånn med et møte mellom mennesker som ikke kjenner hverandre, så er det noen som

vil være veldig åpne med en gang, og gjerne legger ut om private ting, og det må man jo gjøre hvis det er rom for det og man ønsker det, men så er det andre som er mer reserverte [...] Det er ikke alle som ønsker å snakke om for eksempel bakgrunnen sin eller familien sin og det må man jo respektere."

"I feel like there is some difference between what people like to talk about. Because it will always be like that with a meeting between people who don't know each other. Some will be very open right away, and will talk about private things, and of course you should do that if there is room for it and if that is what you want, but then there are others who are more reserved [...] Not everyone wants to talk about for example their background or their family, and we have to respect that." L5a, Maya, librarian at library 5

The necessity to reuse materials and topics can also influence which topics are chosen. The matter of time as a limited resource when creating the programs came up at several of the libraries. Due to this most of the librarians had found ways to reuse materials and topics to save time. One librarian decided that, though current events and debates were popular topics, she was going to avoid using them due to how they were not easily reusable. Instead the focus would be on topics that can come up again later. Holidays such as Easter and Norway's Independence Day are examples of reusable topics.

"Vi prøver å unngå aktuelle temaer, fordi da kan vi ikke ta gjenbruk av det. Nå har jeg skjønt at det tar for mye tid. Etter hvert skjønte jeg det så nå har vi begynt med litt gjenbruk. Da kan det være en norsk kjent person, Camilla Collett har jeg et opplegg om, for eksempel."

"We try to avoid current topics, because then we can't reuse it. I have now figured out that it takes too much time. After a while I realized this, and now we have started with some reuse. Then it can be about a famous person, like Camilla Collett, I have a program planned with her." L1, Lukas, librarian at library 1

Discussion around jobs and education is popular as a lot of participants want to get good jobs in Norway and they are eager to learn more about the best ways to do so. At several of the cafés they have participants who are highly educated and who have come to Norway to find jobs. These participants are often very motivated to learn the language because it will increase their value on the job market. They are also, for the same reason interested in learning about how to apply for jobs and how to do well during a job interview. Moreover, they are interested in

knowing how the education system here works and how their previous education may or may not be compatible with it.

> "Ja, det har også vært et populært tema: jobbsøking, CV. Og utdanning, det husker jeg, da hadde vi om grunnskole, ungdomsskole, videregående og den oppbygningen, utdanningsoppbygningen. Det var også populært. Fordi mange som kommer hit har egentlig en utdannelse, de har vært i jobb før og så kommer de hit og så er det ikke like lett å komme der de var før."

> "*Yes, that has also been a popular topic. Job applications and resumes. And education, I remember when we talked about primary school, high school and the way it is structured, the educational system. That was also popular. Because a lot of people who come here already have an education, they have been employed before too and then they come here and then it isn't all that easy to get to where they were.*" *L3, Olivia, librarian at library 3*

> "Det er mye prat om jobber. Om å søke seg jobb. Hvordan får jeg meg en jobb. Og da begynner jeg med svaret om at da må du bli bedre i norsk. Og det vet jo alle egentlig, men. [...] Jeg spør om hva har du tenkt til å gjøre. Hva har du tenkt til å jobbe med. For det er jo noen som har en jobb, men ikke kommer videre i jobbsystemet på grunn av norsken. Også er det en god del arbeidsledige som gjerne vil ha jobb. Og da spør jeg om ja, hva slags utdanning har du og hva kan du tenke deg å jobbe med i Norge? Er det noen utdanninger du kan tenke deg og ta som er lur for å få jobb? Det snakker vi mye om synes jeg. Utdanning og jobb.*"

> "*There is a lot of talk about work. About applying for jobs. How do I get myself a job? And then I start with the answer about how then you must get better in Norwegian. And they all know that really [...] I ask about what they are planning on doing. What do you plan to have as a job? Because there are some who have jobs but are not moving forward in their career because of their Norwegian. And quite a few of them are unemployed and would very much like to have a job. And then I ask; what kind of education do you have and what would you like to work with here in Norway? Is there any education you would like to take that would help you get a job? We talk about that a lot, I think. Education and work.*" *L3V12, Sara, volunteer from library 3*

7.2.5   Limiting the number of participants at the café

At three of the cafés they had experienced reaching their maximum capacity for participants. The limitations of the facilities are often the deciding factors when it comes to how many participants the library can host at one language café. The number of participants needs to be regulated based on the size of the room, its ventilation, and the acoustics. Another deciding factor is how many volunteers they have.

The space which the library can dedicate to the language café is limited. Some libraries can expand to another area if they get more participants than usual. Other libraries instead must make sure the number of participants does not exceed the maximum capacity of the room. The capacity can be based on the safety regulations. It can also be based on the physical space, and how it can only fit a certain number of tables and chairs.

If the acoustics are bad, then having too many participants can make it difficult to keep the noise levels low enough that conversations can flow easily. Most participants already have to strain to understand what is said due to the language barrier. If the participants have to strain to hear what the others are saying it will make the language café even more difficult. Therefore, it is important to try to keep the noise to a manageable level. The easiest way to do so is to regulate the number of participants.

The ventilation is also a deciding factor in how many participants a room can accommodate. The increase in temperature and decrease in air quality, which a lack of ventilation can cause, will have a negative effect on the participants ability to focus.

According to the librarians who had experienced reaching their maximum capacity, it was difficult to reject someone who wants to participate. They found it easier if they had a strict rule to follow, rather than to try and evaluate each situation individually. At library 4 they had, therefore, implemented a system where the participants had to get a ticket from the counter. They started handing out the tickets an hour before the language café. The tickets were free, but the participants could only get one for themselves. They had previously experienced that when they could pick up more than one ticket, they would do so for their friends who might show up late, or not at all. The librarian didn't see this as fair. She, therefore, changed the rule. At this library, the system worked to their benefit as there were always more than enough people who wanted to join.

At library 5, however, the librarian wanted to avoid having to use this ticket system. In her opinion it should only be used if necessary. The reason was that it could exclude certain groups. Particularly those who work or study, as they may not be able to show up an hour in advance.

> "Jeg har jobbet på noen filialer hvor de har kommet og hentet lapper for å være med på språkkafeen og det er selvfølgelig, det fungerer jo det, og må man det så må man jo det, men likevel, for eksempel med den kveldskafeen, hvor da det vil være avhengig av at folk kommer fra jobb, og de ikke kan komme så og så lang tid i forveien for å hente den lappen. Så det vil jo kanskje ekskludere noen grupper, så jeg vil helst unngå det."

> "*I have worked at some branch libraries where they have come to get a note to join the language café and that is of course, it does work, and if you have to do that then you do, but even so, for example with the evening café, where it is largely dependent on people who are coming straight from work, and they can't come however much time in advance in order to get that note. That could possibly exclude some groups, so I would prefer to avoid that.*" L5a Maya, librarian at library 5

7.2.6 The volunteers

Having volunteers is an important aspect of the language cafés. At all the libraries I visited they had volunteers who would participate in the conversation around the tables. Their contribution is to allow the participants to practice their Norwegian with someone who speaks it fluently. They are also given the task of keeping the conversation going. When I asked Amalie, a volunteer at library 4, about what advice she would give someone who was starting a language café she emphasized the importance of having volunteers.

> «Skaff deg dyktige frivillige. Hvis jeg skulle starte opp den språkkafeen så hadde ikke jeg klart å gjøre det vi gjorde i dag, uten frivillige, uten planlegging, uten å forutsette alt som er. Vi som frivillige hadde heller ikke klart oss uten [bibliotekaren]. Man kan tenke at bare frivillige kan gå seg imellom og starte noe, men det går ikke, fordi for [bibliotekaren] bruker sin tid til å gjøre det enkelt for oss frivillige, men når vi samarbeider så blir det faktisk bra. Så den som ønsker å starte opp en språkkafe må sørge for disse tingene.»

> "*Get some good volunteers. If I were to start this language café, I would not have been able to do what we did today without volunteers, without planning, without counting on everything there. We, the volunteers, could not do without [the librarian] either. You could think that if only the volunteers got together they could start something on their*

own, but that doesn't work, because [the librarian] spends her time making it easy for us volunteers, but when we collaborate then it actually works well. So, anyone who wants to start a language café has to make sure to have these things." L4V3, Amalie volunteer 3 at library 4

The number of volunteers varies from each café. At some libraries they had fewer volunteers than they wanted because they did not have access to more, while at others they had more than enough. What was considered the ideal number of volunteers was not consistent across all the language cafés. At one café they had one volunteer for each participant. The two librarians at this library thought this was for the best because then the volunteer could focus on the individual needs of the participant they were sitting with.

At another café they had 2 volunteers at each table and at each table there were about 5 to 6 participants. The reasoning behind this was that with two volunteers they could split up the group if they noticed that the level of language skill of the participants at the table varied greatly. They also did not want more than 2 volunteers because this could lead to them talking too much amongst themselves. They would also take up seats in a room with a limited number of seats.

> **"Du nevnte det at dere ikke har tre [frivillige] på bordet, hva er grunnen til at dere har valgt å ha akkurat to og ikke en eller tre?**
>
> Hvis det er veldig stor forskjell på nivået til deltakerne, så blir det veldig krevende. Dette med at det ofte er forskjellig nivå er en grunn til at det er bra med to. Sånn at vi enten kan dele oss ganske konkret og fysisk i to nivåer, eller at vi kan være to som er litt obs på om de skjønte det ikke sant. Så vi har landet på at det er veldig bra med to, og det synes jeg fungerer veldig bra, men på en annen side at er vi tre så blir det litt for dominerende rett og slett noen ganger, med at tre norske skal inn og si noe eller styre det. Og vi tar opp plass for deltakerne! Og støynivå også, lokalet er ikke ideelt. Nei, vi har liksom funnet ut at to er veldig bra. En kan være tungt og lite, og tre for mye."

> "*You mentioned that you weren't three [volunteers] at the table, what is the reason that you choose to be exactly two and not one or three?*
>
> *If there is a big difference in the participants level of skill, then it can be quite challenging. This difference in level is one reason why it is good to be two. So that we can either split up in a very tangible and physical manner in two levels, or we can be*

two who are attentive to whether they understood everything. So, we have found that it is good to have two. I think it works very well, but on the other hand if we are three then it can become too dominating sometimes, having three Norwegians who are all trying to say something or to steer the conversation. And we use seats meant for the participants! And the noise levels as well, the room is not ideal. No, we have found that two are particularly good. One is too few, too heavy, and three is too many." L2V, Nora, volunteer at library 2

At most of the other cafés they had one volunteer for each group, and the groups had somewhere between 3 to 8 participants each.

"Og det er alltid behov for flere frivillige. Jeg ønsker å ha gruppene virkelig så små som mulig. 3 til 5 deltagere på en frivillig er det som er ideelt, men. Det er jo egentlig litt opp til de frivillige og, mange synes det er fint å jobbe med få folk, mange ønsker seg en større gruppe. Og det prøver jeg å tilpasse så godt det lar seg gjøre da."

"*And there is always a need for more volunteers. I want the groups to really be as small as possible. 3 to 5 participants for each volunteer would be ideal but. It is actually a bit up to the volunteers and many think it is nice to work with just a few people, and many want a bigger group. And I try to adjust for that as much as possible." L6, Ada, librarian at library 6*

The argument against having too many volunteers because they take up seats was also used at one of the libraries with one volunteer for each group. At this library they had a max capacity of 20 participants and often had to turn down people who wanted to join. Therefore, they were satisfied with just one volunteer per group.

"Philip: Det har hendt at det har vært så mange frivillige at noen av oss har gått hjem. Det er ikke noe vits i at vi er her hvis det blir flere frivillige.

Sara: Nei, hvis vi er for mange så sitter vi og snakker norsk med hverandre og det er jo ikke det vi skal.*"

"*Philip: It has happened that we have been so many volunteers that some of us have gone home. There is no point to us being here if there are more volunteers.*

Sara: No, if we have too many volunteers then we just sit and talk Norwegian to each other and that isn't what we are supposed to be doing." L3V12, Philip and Sara, volunteers from library 3

At most of the libraries there was uncertainty around how many volunteers would show up to the language café each week.

"Det er vanskelig å administrere med frivillige, i og med at de ikke har noen rapporteringsplikt til meg om de kommer eller ikke. [...] vi kunne kanskje ha prøvd å få et litt bedre rapporteringssystem, at folk sier ifra når de kommer eller ikke, men jeg synes at da mister man litt at det her skal være lavterskel, man ikke skal føle seg forpliktet til å komme hit, verken som deltager eller frivillig. Så jeg har ikke så lyst til å gjøre noe med det heller, enda. Så tar vi det heller mer på sparket, også tror jeg deltagerne synes det fungerer helt greit."

"It is difficult to administer the volunteers, considering they don't have any obligation to report to me about whether or not they are going to show up [...] we could maybe have tried to make a better system for reporting, so that people say whether they are coming or not, but I think we then lose a bit of the sense that this is supposed to be informal and low threshold. You are not supposed to feel obligated to come here, neither as a participant nor as a volunteer. So, I do not want to do something about that, not yet. Instead we will take things more as they come, and I believe the participants think this work simply fine." L6, Ada, librarian at library 6

The volunteers do not have to show up every week. Due to this, the librarians need to have a rather large number of volunteers to be able to count on enough of them to show up to each session. One librarian attempted to create a half-year plan where the volunteers would let her know in advance when they would be able to show up. The attempt was discontinued as very few volunteers responded.

"Ja, [bibliotekaren] har jo prøvd å lage en halvårsplan og få frivillige til å krysse av, men det tror jeg hun har gitt opp. Det går ikke. Det skal jo være frivillig for oss også på en måte da. Og det å binde seg til hver onsdag i et halvt år i forveien det er vanskelig for mange."

"Yes, [the librarian] has tried to make a biannual plan and to get the volunteers to cross out for when they will show up, but I think she gave that up. It doesn't work. It is

supposed to be voluntary for us as well in a way. And to commit to every Wednesday half a year in advance that is difficult for many." Philip, volunteer from library 3

Several of the librarians and volunteers I spoke to meant it was best to make it more flexible for the volunteers. They meant it was easier to be a volunteer if they can come when it is convenient for them. One librarian meant she got more volunteers to show up if they did not need to let her know in advance about whether they were coming.

"Og så setter jo vi frivillige, inkludert meg selv, pris på at det er et sånt fleksibelt opplegg da. Det er mye lettere å være frivillig på noe hvis det ikke er krise om du, en mandag skal passe syke barnebarn, eller skal på lang weekend eller et eller annet sånt. For det er jo stort sett pensjonister som er frivillige da. Så det at det er et fleksibelt opplegg det trives vi med og det fungerer jo også da."

"*And we the volunteers, myself included, appreciate having such a flexible program. It is much easier to be a volunteer if things do not fall apart if one Monday one has to take care of a sick grandchild or are going on an extended weekend holiday or something like that. Because there are mainly senior citizens who are volunteers. So, we are happy with having it be flexible, and it works as well." L2V, Nora, volunteer at library 2*

Due to the uncertainty around how many participants and volunteers will show up, the librarians often have to adjust the groups based on the attendance to each session of the language café.

"Det skal være lav terskel å komme hit, både for deltagerne og for de frivillige. Det er ikke noe forpliktende oppmøte for de frivillige og heller ikke for deltagerne. Her tar vi det som det kommer alt etter hvor mange deltagere og frivillige som kommer og hvor store gruppene blir osv."

"*There is supposed to be a low threshold for coming here, both for the participants and for the volunteers. There is no obligatory attendance for the volunteers, and not for the participants either. We take things as they come here, depending on how many participants and volunteers who show up and how big the groups become." L6, Ada, librarian at library 6*

According to several of the librarians I spoke to, they have a lot of retired people as volunteers, and many of them used to be teachers. Therefore, they have a lot of experience teaching, and know how to be patient with someone who is in the process of learning something new. Being retired also means they have time to show up at the café almost every week.

"Veldig mange av de frivillige har vært lærere. Det er jo stort sett pensjonister som kommer her og er frivillige. Jeg har sett veldig mange tidligere lærere. Noen har vært lærere for fremmedspråklige. Noen har jobbet med det andre steder."

"Very many of the volunteers have been teachers. There are mainly senior citizens who come here to be volunteers. I have seen very many former teachers. Some have been teachers for immigrants. Some have worked other places." L2, Emma, librarian at library 2

One librarian was skeptical of having retired teachers as volunteers. She was worried they might make the café become too formal and educational. She wanted the café to have an informal atmosphere, so that people would feel comfortable participating in the conversations. She didn't want the participants to worry about saying something wrong or using the wrong words. She thought it more important to encourage the participants to speak than to have an educational form to the café.

"Her er det veldig lavterskel, det skal være jordnært, lov å snakke eller si noe feil, le og ha det hyggelig. For det er lettere da for deltakere å åpne seg og snakke. Jeg vet om andre språkkafeer der har de noen tidligere lærere som frivillige og de har veldig pedagogisk opplegg. For noen passer det selvfølgelig, men jeg ser ikke på det som det viktigste i en språkkafe. Det er viktig, det skal ikke være som skolebenken, for da er det så få som tør å snakke. Da er de redd for å si noe feil. Her retter man på hverandre og synes det er helt greit."

"There is a very low threshold here, it is supposed to be down to earth, it is allowed to speak incorrectly or to say something wrong, to laugh and have fun. Because then it is easier for the participants to open and talk. I know of other language cafés where they have some former teachers as volunteers, and they have a very educational program. For some people this works of course, but I do not think of this as the most important thing about a language café. It is important that it is not supposed to be like a classroom, because then there are fewer who dare to speak. Then they become afraid of saying something wrong. Here we correct each other, and we think that is okay." L3, Olivia, librarian at library 3

There seems to be some disagreement between the volunteers and the librarians when it comes to how structured the café should be. The librarians put more focus on keeping the language café casual and informal to encourage conversation. While the volunteers, who often have a

background in teaching, put more emphasis on teaching the language in the most efficient way possible, which they believed would require a more formal structure.

"**Hvis du skulle teste ut andre måter å gjøre ting på hva ville du gjort?**

Da måtte vi jo ha et mer rigid system, for her er det uformelt. Men da blir det jo litt mer skolepreg. Hvor vi har faste grupper og faste frivillige hver gang, her blir det litt sånn, vi vet ikke hvem som kommer, verken av frivillige eller av deltagere. Jeg tror det er veldig vanskelig å ha noe fastere struktur enn vi har for det er frivillig, og vil de komme så kommer de, og vil de ikke komme så kommer de ikke, eller har de ikke anledning så kommer de ikke."

"*If you were going to test out other ways of doing things, what would you try?*

We would have to have a more rigid system, because here it is very informal. But then it would be more like a class. Where we have fixed groups with the same volunteers every time. Here it is a bit like, we do not know who is coming, neither of the volunteers nor of the participants. I think it is very difficult to have a more fixed structure than we do because it is voluntary, and if they want to come they will come, but if they don't want to come then they won't, or if they don't have the opportunity to come then they won't come." L3V3, Emilie, volunteer at library 3

"Også har det vært litt utfordringer med frivillige innimellom at vi opplever at de har litt sånn markeringsbehov da, at på hva ønsker å gjøres altså har veldig mye innvendinger mot hvordan språkkafeen utføres og sånne ting også kan ta litt mye, altså litt den dere rolleforståelsen av at dette er på en måte et tilbud for at man skal øve seg på norsk. Litt sånn som du sa at man snakker veldig mye og liksom ikke helt skjønner den balansen der, men uten at vi egentlig noen gang tror jeg har måttet si ifra. Det har ikke vært så vanskelig."

"*And then there have been a few challenges with the volunteers every once in a while, where we find that they have a desire to leave their mark on the café, that they have a lot of opinions on what should be done and how the language café should be conducted and things like that can take a lot, I mean understanding their roles, where this is in a way meant to be an opportunity to practice speaking Norwegian. A bit like what you said about how they can talk very much and do not really understand that balance, but*

without ever really having to do something about it. It hasn't been that difficult." L5b, Frida, *librarian at library 5*

One of the librarians I spoke to had experience hosting a language café without volunteers. It became a different kind of program because of this. According to the librarian, it became similar to a classroom situation where she would act as a teacher leading the entire group.

It varies how much the volunteers want to participate. Some only want to show up and talk to the participants at their table. Others want to have more influence on the structure and the program for each session.

"Det er noen frivillige som kommer hit og synes det er veldig deilig at opplegget er klart og de har liksom ikke så mange meninger om ting og synes bare det er fint å være her. Mens andre synes det er litt finere å være litt mer delaktig og jeg kommer også til å jobbe litt til høsten med å samarbeide med en frivillig om å hjelpe til litt med utforming av opplegg. Hun er en pensjonert lærer som har masse gode tanker og innspill på hvordan oppleggene han utføres. Så hun synes det er veldig artig å være her og har også lyst til å bidra litt mer at det, hun vil ikke bare komme og være frivillig i gruppene, men også være med å planlegge oppleggene i forkant. Så det er jeg veldig takknemlig for. For det er jo litt jobb med det."

"*There are some volunteers who come here and think it is very nice that the program is ready before they get here, and they don't really have that many opinions about things and think it is simply nice to be here. While others think it would be nice to be more involved, and in the fall, I am going to be collaborating with a volunteer when developing the program. She is a retired teacher who has a lot of good thoughts and suggestions about how the programs should be conducted. So, she thinks it is a lot of fun to be here and she wants to contribute a bit more than just coming here as a volunteer in the groups, but also to help plan the programs in advance. So, I am very grateful for that. Because it is quite a bit of work.*" L6, Ada, *librarian at library 6*

7.2.7 Collaboration

Preparing a program and material for each session of the language café could be a challenge. Some of the librarians mentioned the difficulty in coming up with good ideas for topics and tasks. Others mentioned the lack of time to prepare the written materials. The need for better collaboration and more sharing of material between the libraries was, therefore, mentioned by several of the librarians. Not only did they want to use the material prepared by other libraries,

they also wanted the material they had put work into creating to be applied elsewhere. The work they put into the program and material would only be used once unless they could find ways of reusing it. Several libraries had ways of reusing their own material. However, they also saw that there was potential for making the work more efficient by sharing their plans and material with other libraries as well.

Lukas, the librarian at library 1, shared his opinion on the idea of collaborating and centralizing the work related to hosting language café in the following manner:

> «Jeg kunne egentlig tenkt meg å sentralisere tilbudet mer slik at tilbudet var mer likt på de forskjellige Deichmann avdelingene. Det er veldig strukturert her på [bibliotek 1]. Her er det det samme hver gang. Det er ikke alltid positivt. Det kunne godt vært sånn at de kunne hatt noen spill, men jeg tror kanskje at fordi vi bruker så mye tid på å lage oppleggene. Det tar mange timer å lage tekst som er av god nok kvalitet og så skal vi lage tre tekster, det tar mye tid. Da er det trist at det ikke blir gjenbruk. Vi kunne bruke disse tekstene på andre avdelinger. Eller denne uken lager vi en og neste uke lager en annen avdeling opplegget.»

> «*I would actually like to centralize the service more, so that the service was more similar at the different Deichman library branches. It is very structured here at [library 1] It is the same every time. That is not always a good thing. It could have been good for them to have some games, but I think maybe because we spend so much time making the plans and material. It takes several hours to make texts that are of a good enough quality, and then you must make three texts. That takes a lot of time. And then it is unfortunate that there is no reuse. We could use these plans and materials at other branches. Or this week we make them and next week a different branch makes the plans and material*" L1 Lukas, librarian at library 1

He went on to discuss the possibility of language cafés becoming similar due to collaboration and reuse of plans and materials.

> «Jeg synes det hadde vært bedre om vi kunne kommunisert bedre og delt på opplegg og hvis det hadde vært mer likt. Men jeg synes at det kanskje er mye som er for likt også. Jeg synes at det er bra at hver avdeling har sin identitet. Det er en sjarm med det, men når det er språkkafe så synes jeg det hadde vært bedre om vi kunne delt erfaringer om alt vi gjør.»

"I think it would be better if we could communicate better and share material, and if it were more similar. But I think that maybe there is a lot that is too similar as well. I think that it is good that each library branch has its own identity. There is a charm to that, but when it is a language café then I think it would be better if we could share experiences about what we are doing» L1 Lukas, librarian at library 1

The librarians hosting language cafés often had resources that they had created and collected for their own use. This set of resources are kept at individual libraries. However, they could be useful for other libraries as well if they had more efficient ways of sharing them. For instance, Emma, the librarian at library 2, mentioned that she had her own booklets with ideas for her language café which she would use when she was lacking inspiration.

«Noen ganger er jeg tom for ideer. Og da har jeg jo noen idehefter og ideer liggende.»

«*Sometimes I lack ideas. And then I have some idea booklets and other ideas lying around*» L2, Emma, the librarian at library 2

The librarian at library 3, Olivia, mentioned that she would actively use the document developed by Tøyen in 2013, which was mentioned previously by Kari Ravnaas (see chapter 7.1.1.5).

«Vi har tett kontakt med andre kollegaer på Deichman. Hvis det er noe så kan jeg kontakte andre om tips, og det har jeg gjort tidligere. Jeg har blant annet brukt et dokument, noe språkkafehefte som var brukt på Tøyen, som vi har fått lov til å låne, og der er det noen opplegg som vi kan plukke fra og gjenbruke.»

«*We have close contact with other colleagues at Deichman. If there is anything, I can always contact others about tips, and I have done that previously. I have, among other things, used a document, some language café booklet, that was used at Tøyen, which we have been allowed to borrow, and there are some plans and materials there that we can choose from and reuse*» L3, Olivia, librarian at library 3

This document is available for all the libraries to use for their language cafés. However, Olivia was the only host who mentioned this document during the interviews. Therefore, it is uncertain whether the libraries are aware of it. Moreover, even though some materials may be accessible, they still had to create a lot of material on their own. Due to this, there was still a strong motivation amongst the librarians to find more efficient ways to share their work between the libraries hosting language cafés.

8 Discussion

In this chapter I discuss how the hosts' and key informants' perspectives on effective conversation-based programming aligns with the theories presented earlier. In the first part of this chapter I discuss how the conversation-based programs may affect social capital through the different strategies presented by the participants in the interviews. In this part the strategies are analyzed through the theoretical perspectives on intergroup contact, high- and low-intensive meeting places and third place theory. In the second part I discuss the learning processes associated with the different forms of structuring conversation-based programs through the perspective of communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation.

8.1 Viewing the conversation-based programs through the perspective of social capital

In this chapter the theories on social capital, intergroup contact, high- and low-intensive meeting places and third place theory are used to provide more insight into the possible ways in which the structures of conversation-based programs, as described by the interviewed hosts and key informants, affect the generation of social capital.

8.1.1 In what ways do the social capital generation at the conversation-based program fit the society and institutional centered perspectives?

As mentioned in the theory chapter there are two main perspectives on how social capital is generated. The first is the society-centered perspective, which focuses on how social capital can be generated through social networks, face-to-face interaction and voluntary associations (Audunson et al., 2007; Vårheim, 2007). The conversation-based programs in this study all included face-to-face interaction. Several of the hosts mentioned how participants and volunteers at the language cafés get to know each other, and sometimes become good friends. They also pointed out how the volunteers sometimes help participants outside the language café setting, such as helping them apply for jobs. This points to how social networks are formed at the language cafés, thus increasing social capital.

The second perspective on how social capital is generated is the institutional-centered perspective. This perspective argues that having a working democracy as well as institutions and universal programs to create equality is a precondition for trust (Audunson et al., 2007; Vårheim, 2007, p. 419). The conversation-based programs may contribute this form of social capital generation through facilitating discussion and providing language learning

opportunities. Providing people with opportunities to share opinions and debate political topics is important to maintain a well-functioning democracy. According to the hosts at the language cafés, the participants and the volunteers often shared their opinions and perspectives on various topics. Another important aspect of conversation-based programming is the opportunity to practice the local language. Language is necessary in many aspects of society, including democratic processes. Knowledge and information are often made accessible through language. Moreover, participation in political debates also require language skills. Providing language learning opportunities is, therefore, vital to helping immigrants participate in the democratic system.

Additionally, it is possible that the programs are generating social capital through introducing immigrants to pre-existing institutions and universal programs. Some language cafés and several of the programs mentioned by the key informants had invited representatives of various institutions to come and to talk about their work. This practice was mentioned when talking about the district mothers, the memory group for immigrants, the Norwegian education for minority women and several language cafés. Several of the participants in the study mentioned inviting people to their programs such as the police, health care workers, and child protection services. This practice increases the participants' knowledge of existing structures in society that increase equality. These structures are, according to the institutional perspective, vital to create social capital and trust. Providing knowledge about these structures should, therefore, have the potential for increasing the social capital of the participants.

8.1.2 In what ways do the conversation-based program meet the criteria for intergroup contact?

Increasing generalizable trust and reducing prejudice is a way to increase social capital, particularly social capital of the bridging type. Intergroup contact can, therefore, offer a useful perspective on how conversation-based programs affects social capital.

Conversation-based programming often offer meeting places that include people belonging to different groups, in particular people with different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. They also take place over time, and therefore provide opportunities for sustained interaction between these people. The reduction in prejudice and anxiety towards outgroup members, which is the goal of intergroup contact, requires this form of sustained interaction.

Intergroup contact also theorizes that the reduction in prejudice is strongest when the contact meets the criteria presented by Allport. The criteria are social sanctions (support from

authorities, law or custom), equal status contact, common goals, and cooperation. These criteria are what I have tried to look for when analyzing the results. Do the hosts work towards creating programs that meet these criteria? And in what ways can strategies for conversation-based programs lead to meetings that meet these criteria?

8.1.2.1 In what ways can the hosts work towards creating conversation-based programs that have social sanction?

When analyzing the results, I saw that a lot of the social sanctions that the conversation-based programs had, came from them being hosted by the library. The library is a public institution, providing universal access to information. The library is viewed as a place to learn and educate oneself. It is also a neutral place in terms of politics and religion.

The social sanctions granted by the library as an institution was particularly important for the girl group mentioned by Ingvil Falch. As she explained it one of the reasons for starting the girl group was to create a meeting place for the girls that was socially acceptable for them to join. They had noticed that second generation immigrant girls were not present in arenas outside of their homes and schools. They were not present in sports or other leisure activities for example. Falch explained that this was probably because these arenas were not seen as safe, or appropriate. An exception to this was the library where they were often observed doing their homework. The library was, according to Falch, seen as a socially acceptable place for the girls to spend their time. The library was associated with learning and education. When they realized this, they decided to create the girl group. Their hope was to create a meeting place that had the social sanctions the other arenas lacked.

The social sanctions granted by the library as an institution depends on two things. The first thing is that the library is the one responsible for the event. The other is the opinion people have of the library. If people see the library as a socially acceptable place to spend ones' time, then the library can grant social sanctions to events.

When the library involves another institution when hosting events, social sanctions is granted by both those institutions. This means that people's opinions of both the library and the other institution will decide how much acceptance and approval the event has in the community. The Norwegian education for minority women was built on the collaboration of several institutions. One of these institutions was the health clinic who helped them identify and recruit women who needed to learn Norwegian. This collaboration meant that the program was sanctioned by this institution as well. Therefore, people's opinions and trust towards the health clinic would

probably have affected the opinions and trust they had towards the program. This means that the library can affect the social sanctions of a program by involving other institutions.

Another way to affect the social sanctions of a conversation-based program, is to adjust their format based on what the target group sees as socially acceptable. An example of this is creating a program that is exclusively for women, as they did with the Norwegian education for minority women. Falch explained that some of the minority cultures in the local community did not see women and men attending the same events as socially acceptable. Therefore, they created the program exclusively for women. This meant that the program would have the social sanctions necessary for the women to attend.

8.1.2.2 In what ways do the structures at the conversation-based programs affect whether equal status contact is achieved?

Allport argues that equal status contact between people belonging to different groups, is more likely to result in a reduction in prejudice and an increase in generalized trust, than contact where the groups have different status. This idea seems to be reflected in what Ravnaas had learned from the projects at Fubiak. Here the programs were aimed towards a general audience. Ravnaas argued that these programs were successful because they provided meeting places where immigrants and non-immigrants could meet on equal terms.

Equal status contact is achieved when there is no hierarchical structure between the groups, the different groups contribute equally to the relationship and the people belonging to the different groups have some similarities.

There are a few examples of hierarchical structures at conversation-based programming. The people working with the events, such as the librarians, have a different status. They are there to do their job and often take on the role of a leader for the program. The women leading the district mothers may also have a different status to the women they are there to help. In these examples the hosts have a different status from the participants. There is a hierarchical structure between them. The hosts and participants also contribute in a different way to the meeting. However, these meeting are created for the participants and there may still be equal status contact between them.

The language cafés featured an interesting approach to the hierarchical structure between hosts and participants. The volunteers fit the role of both hosts and participants at the same time. The volunteer's contribution was often both to participate in and to moderate the conversation.

The difference between the volunteers and the participants roles and contributions can be seen reflected in how the volunteers described the different motivations for joining a language café. The way they explained the motivation for the participants to join the language café, was that they were there to practice Norwegian and to socialize. When they described their own motivation, it was to help the participants, socialize, learn about other cultures and perspectives.

Furthermore, the volunteers described their own role as that of a moderator. They would steer the conversation and work towards including everyone. They also mentioned that they tended to dominate the conversations, especially if topic was centered around Norwegian traditions. This means that both the contributions and the status of the volunteers were different from that of the participants.

However, there were a few factors that may contribute to levelling the difference in status between the volunteers and the participants. One is that both the volunteers and the participants are there voluntarily. Another is that the participants are not required to follow any rules presented by the volunteers. There is also an interest to learn from both groups. The volunteers said they learned a lot from the participants and that this was an important reason for why they came to the language cafés.

As mentioned above, equal status contact is also affected by whether the people meeting have similarities. For example, being of the same age or having a similar socio-economic background. Some of the programs mentioned included people with such similarities. The girl group, for example was for girls of a similar age who were from families with immigrant backgrounds. The Norwegian education for minority women is another example, where there were mainly stay at home mothers with minority backgrounds. These programs did not provide intergroup contact between the majority population and immigrants, because they majority group was not represented. However, the immigrants there had different cultural backgrounds which means there could still have been intergroup contact between people belonging to different cultures.

The language cafés did have intergroup contact between the majority population and immigrants. The majority population is represented by the volunteers, while the minority groups are represented by the participants. I have not conducted a statistical analysis of the backgrounds of the people who participate in language cafés, but based on what the hosts shared there seemed to be few similarities between the volunteers and the participants, at least in terms of age, cultural and socio-economic background. The hosts talked about how the volunteers

were often retired, and many had a background in teaching. The volunteers were also described as resourceful and educated. The participants had a much wider variety of backgrounds. The hosts mentioned that there were a lot of highly educated participants, but there were also those who did not have that much education. There were both male and female participants. They came from all over the world. The hosts also pointed out that they were mostly adults, and that there were not that many elderly participants amongst the participants.

Based on this information it seems as though the division between the role of volunteer and participant at the language cafés may get in the way of achieving equal status contact. The way that volunteers and participants are given different roles, contribute in different ways and have different motivations for participating, can negatively affect whether there is equal status contact. The language café is also not targeted towards a specific target group, which means they do not control whether the volunteers and participants have any similarities. This does not mean that equal status contact cannot happen at a language café, but rather that the different roles at the language cafés did not seem to be working towards this.

8.1.2.3   In what ways can the hosts work towards creating common goals and encourage cooperation at the conversation-based programs?

According to Allport's intergroup contact theory, the reduction in prejudice and increase in generalizable trust should be stronger when the individuals belonging to different groups share a common goal and need to cooperate to achieve this shared goal.

Giving a task a group of people can be a way to create a common goal and cooperation at a conversation-based program. Leah, the librarian at library 4 would do this. She structured her language café around several tasks and activities that the volunteers and participants had to solve together. One example was for each person to tell the group two truths and a lie, and then the rest of the group would try to figure out which statement was false. This activity gave the volunteers and participants a common goal, which was finding the lie. They would also need to cooperate. This was done by discussing their thoughts before deciding what to guess.

At a language café both the volunteers and the participants also share the overarching goal of improving the participants' knowledge of the Norwegian language. They have different roles to play in achieving this goal, and so their contributions are not always the same. The volunteers have the extra responsibility to moderate the conversations and help the participants, but they both participate. They both take part in the conversations; they both work towards completing tasks and activities and they both help each other in various ways. The hosts I interviewed

pointed out that the participants would often help each other by explaining difficult words, sometimes in their native language. They also pointed out that the volunteers would contribute by encouraging them to speak as much as possible, as well as explaining difficult words and phrases.

The conversation-based programs mentioned by Falch and Ravnaas were also describes as having goals. The goal of the *Grorudalsprodusentene* project was for teenagers between the ages of 14 to 18 to create an event in the local community (Furuset bibliotek og aktivitetshus, 2019). The project would require that the participants cooperated to plan and organize this event. Some other examples of common goals include playing chess at the chess program, discussing literature at the conversation-based reading group, sharing stories at the memory groups.

There are examples of some goals that do not require cooperation. For example, doing homework like Falch said they did in the girl group. This may be a goal that the girls have in common, but it does not necessarily require them to cooperate. Likewise, learning Norwegian is not in itself a goal that requires cooperation. You can choose a strategy where you learn on your own. However, the language cafés are structured around learning though participating in conversation and activities. This structure does require cooperation. Someone creating and hosting a conversation-based program can in this manner structure the events around tasks and activities that become a common goal that the participants must work together to achieve. This in turn would affect the outcome of the intergroup contact in terms of increasing generalizable trust and reducing prejudice.

8.1.3 Are the conversation-based programs high- or low-intensive and how can this affect the generation of social capital?

Whether the conversation-based programs are high- or low-intensive meeting places is likely to affect the social capital generation. High-intensive meeting places are associated with the generation of bonding social capital whereas low-intensive meeting places are associated with the generation of bridging social capital.

According to Audunson (2005), a high-intensive meeting place is an arena where people invest their primary engagement, this can for example be their work, hobbies or activities related to their ideological and religious beliefs. At these arenas you interact with others who share the same viewpoints and values, especially concerning this engagement. The result of high-

intensive meeting places can be the formation of groups of likeminded with a lot of bonding social capital and particularized trust.

High-intensive meeting places are described by Audunson as vital to individuals because they can find meaning through high-intensive involvement. He also states that high-intensive involvement is "…*vital for a democratic society; it provides society with involved members and it is probably important from the perspective of integration: People who are not affiliated with and integrated into such arenas, run a higher risk of being isolated and marginalised than those who are participants*" (Audunson, 2005, p. 436).

Although high-intensive meeting places have an important function, in a multicultural society they also represent an element that could lead to fragmentation. They represent cultural and social demarcations (Audunson, 2005, p. 436). Low-intensive meeting places counteract this effect through making people visible to each other across these demarcations. Low-intensive meeting places are arenas where people meet and are exposed to others who have different interests and values. According to Audunson, "*… it is a central point with low-intensive arenas that they will facilitate meetings between people who are not exposed to one another on other arenas*" (Audunson, 2005, p. 436).

The term high-intensive meeting place is related to whether the people there are bonding over their similarities. For instance, bonding over a shared set of experiences and opinions or a shared interest. An interest can come in the form of an activity. All the programs mentioned by the interviewed hosts and key informants had activities that the people there could participate in. For example, discussing literature, practicing a language, and sharing stories.

The chess program for immigrants is an example of a conversation-based program centered around people's interest in an activity. The activity in this case is playing chess. People join based on this being their interest. And like in high-intensive meeting places where people who share viewpoints form groups with bonding social capital, so can a group of people bond over a shared interest in an activity such as playing chess. When the focus of a program is on an activity, such as playing chess, this could lead to the program being more high-intensive. For this to happen the people who join would need to bond over their common interest in the activity. However, there is still a possibility that the program may also be low-intensive because people who share an interest in an activity, may have different views on other topics. Therefore, if the program allows for views on other topics to be shared, it can still function as a low

intensive-meeting place. People belonging to different demarcations would still be made visible to each other.

Although the chess program may be high-intensive in its focus on chess as a common interest, it can also be low-intensive because the people who come may have different backgrounds and perspectives on various topics. According to Ravnaas, the chess program was meant to be inclusive of immigrants as well as native Norwegians. She also pointed out that the immigrants who came had various backgrounds. The amount of time they had lived in Norway also varied greatly. It is possible then that the chess program functioned as a low-intensive meeting place where people were exposed to those belonging to different cultural groups while they also bonded over a shared interest in playing chess.

The memory groups also seemed to function as low-intensive based on the description given by Falch. Here people with different backgrounds would meet and share stories from their lives while others listened. This form of sharing and listening is a way to make both differences and similarities between people visible. Therefore, the memory groups may have been arenas where people across demarcations relating to cultural background and generations were made visible to each other.

The girl group was described in ways were similar to a high-intensive meeting place. The program was targeted towards people with similar backgrounds. The target group was girls in their adolescent years who came from families with immigrant backgrounds. Ravnaas talked about how the girl group would have been different if it had included Norwegian girls who did not come from immigrant families because they would not have shared the same experiences.

> "Man kunne sett for seg at det var en norsk en i den jentegruppa for eksempel. Ville det da ikke funket? Kanskje ikke, jeg vet ikke. Fordi en del av de jentene har kanskje noen utfordringer som ikke norske jenter har. Det er litt mer sosial kontroll»

> «*You could try to imagine that there was a Norwegian girl in the girl group, for example. Would it not have worked then? Maybe, maybe not, I don't know. Because some of the girls might have some challenges that Norwegian girls don't have. There is more social control*» Kari Ravnaas, key informant 1

This points to how the girls could bond over their shared experiences growing up as girls from immigrant families. Meeting places where people bond over such similarities are more high-intensive and lead to the generation of bonding social capital.

The strategy for the girl group, as described by Falch, was also to create a safe environment within the group, forming close bonds between the girls there. Their hope was that if the girls first felt comfortable within this environment, they would eventually feel more confident about stepping out into other arenas. This is an interesting idea where participating in a high-intensive meeting place, can lead to people being more confident in also participating in low-intensive meeting places.

The language café had a structure that could lead to it functioning as a low-intensive meeting place. Although the participants probably share an interest in learning Norwegian and may bond over their shared experiences with learning this language, they also discussed topics that were not related to this. According to the interviewed volunteers, they would often discuss differences in how things are done and how people perceive things in different countries. Arenas with discussions where the perspectives of different groups are made visible are low-intensive. This seemed to apply to the language café. Therefore, it is possible that they are arenas where bridging social capital is generated.

The librarians and the volunteers had different perspectives on what to talk about. The topics being discussed is relevant to whether the program functions as a low-intensive meeting place because this is a deciding factor in whether the people there are exposed to the values and interests. The librarians expressed more wariness of introducing topics that could lead to conflict or discomfort. They wanted to avoid topics where people might have different and strong opinions, for example religion and politics. The theory on intergroup contact argues that intergroup contact that is associated with anxiety and other negative feelings could lead to less generalizable trust and more hostility between the groups. However, exposure to the values and interests of others is a necessary part in building understanding and tolerance. The volunteers seemed to have a more liberal opinion about what they could talk about. Some of them had experienced that talking about political, religious, and ethical topics would not necessarily lead to conflict as long as everyone was friendly and respectful of the others' opinions. Some volunteers also expressed a desire to learn about the participants perspectives. They found it fascinating to be exposed to other ideas and viewpoints from the ones they were used to. They would often ask the participants about what their opinions were. They would also encourage comparisons between Norway and the home countries of the participants.

Ravnaas, one of the key informants, also saw benefits to language cafés including discussions on a wide range of topics. An argument for this was the library's role in society as an arena for conversation and debate. Moreover, she believed the volunteers and participants were able to

discuss topics without this leading to conflict. One of her arguments for this was the setting. She believed the language café was a setting that would not lead to conflict, because the discussions were not the main goal, and because the people are not aiming to win an argument. Therefore, she saw it as a good setting for people to expose their ideas and opinions and also listen to others when they express their ideas and opinions. This exchange between people who have different views is an important part of how low intensive meeting places generate social capital of the bridging type.

8.1.4 How can social capital be generated at conversation-based programs through the perspective of third place theory?

Third places are defined as something different from both ones first place, which is someone's home and someone's second place, which is where one works. According Oldenburg and Brisset (1982) third places can provide opportunities for important experiences and relationships, they are uniquely qualified to sustain a sense of well-being among its members. Oldenburg and Brisset also point out that third places*, "… especially those which are not insulated by formal membership requirements, often uniquely provide a common meeting ground for people with diverse backgrounds and experiences"* (1982, p. 275). These aspects of third places can be beneficial in terms of integration and social capital generation. Immigrants and people belonging to the majority population can be exposed to each other and form relationships and ties in a third place setting.

Some of the conversation-based programs may have features more related to second places. An example of this is the reading group mentioned by Ravnaas. The goal for this program was language learning. Based on the description by Ravnaas it was structured similar to how schools structure learning in classroom settings. There was someone leading it like a teacher. There was also a set program for each session that they would work their way through. This format may make the program act more as a second place rather than a third place.

Language cafés share some features with third places. They both have regulars and are open to newcomers. They are freely accessible. There is no need to sign up in advance and it doesn't cost anything. Its main feature is casual conversation and it is very social. Moreover, it is an informal setting. The formality of the language cafés depends on how they are structured. Some ways of structuring the language cafés may be closer to second places such as classrooms. If the language café is too focused on the educational aspect it may act more as Norwegian class rather than a third place. This could mean that, though the participants learn Norwegian quite efficiently, they may not get the same effect on their social capital. How the libraries choose to

balance formality versus informality should, therefore, depend on what they see as their goals. If the goal is building social capital, with networks and trust then it is useful to set up the language café in a way that meets the third place requirements, such as having an informal atmosphere. However, if the goal is strictly language learning, then having a more educational and formal structure may be more beneficial. Most language cafés find a balance between the two.

Language cafés are social meeting places. However, they are characterized by how the majority of the participants are there to achieve a goal. The goal is to learn the Norwegian language. The volunteers and librarians have described them as very motivated to learn. The social aspect is secondary for many of them. Therefore, it is not primarily a social gathering, even though socializing is an important part of it. This affects the potential for language cafés to act as third places. Third places are not supposed to be purposive places. They are meant to be more casual places where you can come and socialize without completing tasks or achieving goals. In this sense the language café is not always a third place.

> "De aller fleste som kommer her de er arbeidssøkere. Og veldig mange av dem er høyt utdannet. Vi har leger, kirurger, økonomer, doktorgradsstipendiater. Og de vet jo at så lenge de ikke snakker norsk så får de ikke jobb. Så det er det som er hensikten, bare å trene på å snakke norsk."

> *«Most of the ones who come here are jobseekers. And many of them are highly educated. We have doctors, surgeons, economics, PhD students. And they know that as long as they don't speak Norwegian, they won't get a job. So that is the purpose, to practice speaking Norwegian. »* L2, Emma, the librarian at library 2

However, it can be used as a third place by some participants and even some volunteers. There is a social aspect to the language café which does attract some people. Many may end up returning for this aspect, more than the learning aspect of it. The volunteers have pointed out that there are those who come regularly and even those who come even after their language skills are at a level where they no longer improve through their participation. This could point to how these participants are using the language café more as a third place, rather than an arena for learning.

> "Vi ser at de bygger relasjoner. Det er noen som kommer hver gang. Noen har vært her i flere års tid. Noen har vært her så lenge at de kanskje ikke burde fortsette på språkkafe

fordi de kan språket nå, men jeg tror de kommer, fordi det er så sosialt og kanskje det er litt nettverking også.”

“*We see that they build relations. There are some that come every time. Some have even been here several years. Some have been here so long that they maybe shouldn't continue because they know the language at this point, but I think they come because it is so social and maybe because there is networking too.*” L1, Lukas the librarian at library 1

The volunteers also expressed that they experienced the language café as a social event, where they met up with a lot of the same people every week, both amongst the other volunteers and the participants. One volunteer, Emilie, from library 4 even mentioned how some participants would send her a text asking about her wellbeing and whereabouts if she didn't show up. This points to how for the volunteers perhaps the language café also acts as a third place. The volunteers often form part of the regulars, as they come frequently. As Oldenburg points out the regulars at a third place are often expected to be there and their absence is noticed (Oldenburg, 1989).

«Om jeg har vært syk en dag så finner de meg på Facebook og sender en melding: Går det bra med deg? Du har ikke vært på språkkafeen. Og det er et fåtall som har mobilnummeret mitt som sender meg en melding: Vi savnet deg på språkkafeen i dag. Går det bra med deg? Så bare det at folk savner deg og virkelig vil at du skal være der. Fordi når du hører at det er ikke det samme når du ikke er der, så gjør det noe med deg. Det er veldig hyggelig å høre»

«*If i have been sick one day then they find me on Facebook and send me a text: Are you okay? You haven't been at the language café. And there are a few who have my number who send me a text: We missed you at the language café today. Are you doing okay? So, just people missing you and really wishing you were there. Because when you hear that it isn't the same when you aren't there, then it does something to you. It is a very nice thing to hear*» L4V3, Amalie, volunteer at library 4

There are a lot of activities and discussion topics at the language cafés. These activities and topics can have the same effect as Oldenburg meant games could have in third places.

“As there are agencies and activities that interfere with conversation, so there are those that aid and encourage it. Third places often incorporate these activities and may even

emerge around them. To be more precise, conversation is a *game* that mixes well with many other games according to the manner in which they are played. In the clubs where I watch others play gin rummy for example, it is a rare card that is played without comment and rarer still is the hand dealt without some terrible judgement being leveled at the dealer. The game and conversation move along in lively fashion, the talk enhancing the card game, the card game giving eternal stimulation to the talk." (Oldenburg, 1989, pp. 30-31).

An example of a program that incorporated an activity like this was the chess program. According to Ravnaas, the activity of playing chess brought people together and a cheerful and friendly atmosphere was created around it. The social aspect of the program, therefore, seemed to be just as important as playing chess. Games or activities like these can be a good way to get the conversation started and keep it lighthearted. The activities can give stimulation to the talk. This was something that the librarians seem to be aware of as several of them pointed out that the reason behind the activities and topics was to start a conversation and to keep it going. It was a way to make socializing easier and more relaxed. Some of the hosts participating in the study had experienced tasks and topics that did not stimulate the conversation, and instead got in the way. Therefore, it was seen as very important to create good activities and choose topics that were engaging.

One of the elements that was pointed out as important was the room where the language café takes place. For third places and for language cafés anything that may hinder the conversation is negative. A room that has bad acoustics, not enough ventilation or one that is simply overcrowded is not good for maintaining a relaxed conversation. These elements negatively affect the atmosphere of the room at the ability to keep the conversation going. Therefore, they also negatively affect the outcome of the program.

Third places provide opportunities for important experiences and relationships in a sane society. They help maintain a sense of well-being among its members (Oldenburg, 1989; Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982). This sense of wellbeing is particularly important to maintain amongst the immigrant population. Immigrants do not necessarily have this feeling of well-being when they come to a new society. Finding a third place in a new society could help rebuild this feeling and maintain it for those experiencing the decline in the honeymoon effect. The honeymoon effect is a term used to describe a common phenomenon where those who move to a new place are filled with excitement and have a positive attitude when they first get there. Then as they get to become more familiar with the place the effect starts to wear off and they can experience culture

shock. After this they either learn to adapt or they start to reject their new surroundings and isolate themselves. Language cafés as a third place may help immigrants through the culture shock and learn to adapt. Once they have adapted it can still provide important experiences and social relations necessary to keep maintaining their wellbeing.

Third places also provide a meeting place for people with diverse backgrounds (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982). Anyone can join a third place, independent of socioeconomic or cultural background. Third places, therefore, provide an arena where you are exposed to otherness in a way that can make you more tolerant. People at a third place are meeting on equal terms. There is no hierarchy, which leads to the interactions there to be of an informal and relaxed nature. When considering intergroup contact theory, third places are good arenas for reducing prejudice and increasing generalized trust due to this leveling effect. The equal status criterion is met at third places. Therefore, language cafés may contribute to the integration, generalizable trust, and wellbeing of the participants. They may also have a positive effect on the wellbeing of the volunteers and their generalizable trust.

The break during the language café is even more similar to a third place. The conversation is more casual and relaxed than around the tables. This means some of the effects of third places are amplified during the breaks. This corresponds with the positive descriptions made by the hosts when they were asked to talk about the break. They saw how the participants socialized in a more informal manner and that there was a lot of conversation during the break. The socialization during the break would also remove the roles of volunteer and participant. During the break no one is expected to take responsibility to keep the conversation going or to help the other learn more efficiently. They are simply conversing. Due to this, the hierarchy is leveled out during the break. Therefore, it is possible that the generation of social capital and generalizable trust is strongest during this period. It is interesting to note how the effect of the break during the language café is similar to the effect that they saw happening at the Kortedala Library in Sweden during the break of a data program (Atlestad & Myhre, 2014). During this break the participants would also converse casually in Swedish. This observed effect was the reason they started their language café. They wanted to recreate it because they saw the benefit of casual conversation in Swedish. It is possible that the purposiveness of the language cafés is getting in the way of the full effect taking place during the program, but that it is still achieved during the break.

Another aspect of the break that was pointed out as beneficial, was that the conversation was happening in Norwegian. This means the break offers both third place benefits as well as opportunities to practice the language.

8.2 Viewing the conversation-based programs through the perspective of communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation

When viewing the data from the perspective of communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation I saw several ways in which conversation-based programs can be affected by the dynamics of communities practice and legitimate peripheral participation.

Lave and Wenger's theory shows how learning takes place in communities of practice through people interacting with others in the community. Legitimate peripheral participation describes how someone can join a community of practice and learn its practice through first taking part in peripheral tasks that gradually increase in both value and complexity over time. Understanding the learning process that takes places at conversation-based programs through this perspective, was helpful when trying to understand how various elements could affect the learning potential of the programs. I found that legitimate peripheral participation played an important role in several of the programs, including the language cafés. The programs in themselves could also be seen as a form of legitimate peripheral activity in the local community.

I had initially intended to use the theory on communities of practice when looking at what was going on inside of the programs and how this affected the participants. However, I found there was a second element to conversation-based programming where the perspective was useful. This was the element of the people working with the programs. The ones creating and conducting conversation-based programming also formed communities of practice. This can affect the programming through the dynamics of a community of practice.

8.2.1 How do the structures and dynamics of communities of practice affect the process of working with conversation-based programs?

When interviewing the hosts and key informants, I was talking to people who work with creating and hosting conversation-based programs. A lot of insights were about the dynamics of the people working with the conversation-based programs and how they developed their practice together. This led me to see some ways in which the people hosting conversation-based programs work in communities of practice. Working in communities of practice can be beneficial because it means the practice of creating programs is developed and improved through negotiations within the community. Seeing the dynamics through this perspective made

it easier to identify potential areas where they can improve their opportunities for developing their own practices, and thus improve the conversation-based programs over time. The key insight was that the positive development of the programs would be most significant when there were opportunities for the people working with it to negotiate their practice. This negotiation requires opportunities to communicate their ideas and experiences amongst each other.

I was able to identify three areas where it could be relevant to view the dynamics of people working together as communities of practice. The study also revealed the potential for including the locals, who are the recipients of the programs, in these communities.

8.2.1.1 Interdisciplinary cooperation in a community of practice

Both Falch and Ravnaas pointed out that there were benefits to teaming up with others when planning and hosting programs. They had experienced the benefits of having a community of practice where the domain was creating programs. Falch described how she had joined a group of people from other institutions with different professional backgrounds to work together. They met up to discuss how they should meet the challenges in the local community. Doing so increased their available resources such as equipment, knowledge, and funding. This collaboration was what lead the creation of the girl group and the Norwegian education for minority women. They also negotiated the terms of their practice though learning from each other and sharing their experiences. This helped them improve their practice over time. According to Falch, they were able to achieve a lot of good thing due to this group of people deciding to work together. They created a community of practice. They had a joint domain and they pooled their resources and skills to create a better practice.

The insight that can be taken from this is that it seems beneficial to create an interdisciplinary community of practice whose domain is planning programs that suit the needs of the local area and its people. This a more overarching community of practice where they look at various forms of programs. They also look at the local community from more than one institutional perspective.

8.2.1.2 Language café hosts in a community of practice

The need for a community of practice that was specific to language cafés, was expressed by some of the participants in the study. Language cafés were, according to Ravnaas, in need of more standardization and sharing of resources between the libraries. This was pointed out by several of the interviewed librarians as well. What they seemed to want is a community of practice between the librarians and volunteers who work with language cafés. They want them

to have shared resources and learn from each other's experiences. In other words, a shared practice. A community of practice is reliant on the members communicating and interacting. It is through this interaction that they develop a common practice. They share the knowledge and tools necessary to achieve their goals, which in this instance would be to create a language café. Setting up regular meetings for those who work with language cafés is a possible way to achieve the benefits of a community of practice. Another is to create channels of communication such as online groups, email threads, messenger groups etc.

8.2.1.3 Volunteers in a community of practice

A community of practice with an even more specific domain could also be useful. The need for better organization of the volunteers was pointed out by both Ravnaas and Falch. Perhaps in this area as well they could benefit from thinking of it as a community of practice. The volunteers along with the librarian need to interact regularly for them to develop a shared practice for how they meet the task of hosting the language café at their library. A board who met up regularly, as was suggested by Falch, would allow for these interactions where they can negotiate their shared practice regarding the specific context of their language café.

8.2.1.4 Including the locals in the community of practice

Ravnaas had learned from the projects at Fubiak that it was useful to use locals to help create the programs. The more they could decide what kind of programming the library had the more suited the programs would be to their needs. By including the locals in the decision-making processes, they felt more ownership of it. This could be because they formed a part of the community of practice. Their domain was then to create programs and the practice for doing so was developed through negotiations between them and the librarians. This community of practice could be seen as parallel to the overarching one mentioned above, as it is not based on a specific form of program.

8.2.2 How can the dynamics of communities of practice affect the potential for learning and community building at conversation-based programs?

There are several ways in which conversation-based programs feature structures that can lead to the creation of communities of practice within the programs. For example, having clear domains or requiring that the participants work together to achieve smaller goals. If the participants at the conversation-based programs form communities of practice, we should be able to see that the dynamics of such communities affects the learning and community building taking place.

The chess program for immigrants illustrated this quite well. It has a clear domain, which is to play chess. It is the interest in chess that brings the group together. The way Ravnaas described how they created bonds amongst each other, could resemble the feeling of belonging that is associated with a community of practice. They also learned from each other and from the two librarians running it. According to the theory on communities of practice, learning from each other is a key aspect to developing a shared practice, and thus it is likely that this was happening at the chess program.

Ravnaas pointed out that there was no need for prior knowledge in chess, nor was there a need to speak any Norwegian. However, these were still skills that were necessary to take active part in the group. When considering the theory of legitimate peripheral participation this makes sense. You can join a community of practice without previous knowledge of their practice. You learn through first taking part in peripheral activities or observation, then as your knowledge increases you are gradually given more complex tasks. In a community of practice novices also learn from the other members. This form of learning took place at the chess program. The more experienced chess players would help teach the others. This interaction could be a part of why the program helped them build their network. Being a part of a community means you build relationships with the other members through your shared interest and through your interactions. The people develop their identity and sense of belonging through their participation in the community. This is likely to have happened at the chess program. Here they were interacting with each other for everyone to become better at playing chess. They were improving the community of chess players through helping and interacting with each other.

Learning Norwegian at the chess program was not the domain. However, Norwegian was a tool that helped them communicate with the other participants. Therefore, it was an important part of the practice and was learned gradually through participation.

8.2.3 How can legitimate peripheral participation affect learning and community building at language cafés?

Allowing for legitimate peripheral participation is important in order to help newcomers learn more efficiently. Facilitating legitimate peripheral participation can be done in several ways. For example, through starting with easier, more concrete tasks, before moving on to more abstract and complex ones. There were some features to language cafés that seemed to affect the participants ability to participate in a legitimate peripheral way, such as the topics, the activities, the division into groups and how they are welcomed upon arriving. These are discussed below.

8.2.3.1 How do the topics affect the potential for legitimate peripheral participation at the language cafés?

The librarians and volunteers seemed to weigh the need for topics with certain qualities differently. The librarians seemed to stress the importance of introducing the participants to Norwegian society through choosing topics related to this. While the volunteers agreed that this was important, they also saw a disadvantage to these topics. They had found it difficult to include the participants in the conversations when the topics were too centered around Norway. These topics could lead to the participants listening to the volunteers more than talking. They would adopt a more observational role. According to the theory on legitimate peripheral participation, legitimate peripherality should provide newcomers with more than an "observational" lookout post. As Lave and Wenger put it: *"It crucially involves participation as a way of learning - of both absorbing and being absorbed in – the "culture of practice." An extended period of legitimate peripherality provides learners with opportunities to make the culture of practice theirs*." (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 95). Therefore, their argument that they need topics where the participants have genuine contributions is a legitimate concern. They need to take an active part in the conversation to learn the most.

8.2.3.2 How do the activities affect the potential for legitimate peripheral participation at language cafés?

A negative aspect of the break that was mentioned by Nora, a volunteer at library 2 was how some participants can find it uncomfortable when they first start attending the language café. They don't know anyone, and they might not feel comfortable starting a conversation with strangers. This corresponds with the findings of the L-café. They also noticed how people who were new to the L-café were at first reluctant to go inside, then they found it difficult and uncomfortable to try to find their place inside the L-café. The next stage, if they kept returning, was that they eventually got to know people there and became more comfortable. This was described as part of the process of joining a community. When you first join a community, you are not familiar with the people there, nor do you know the common norms. This uncertainty can be uncomfortable, but if you keep participating you will eventually learn the norms and you will get to know the other members of the community. This usually happens through peripheral participation. At the L-café many newcomers would participate in the language classes before they started socializing in the open areas. The newcomers also tried to keep themselves busy by bringing homework or books (Murray & Fujishima, 2016)

In a similar manner, newcomers at a language café may find it easier to join the activities and tasks that take place around the tables. These tasks are more controlled. They are guided by the volunteers and the tasks at hand make it easier to know what to do. During the break it is more difficult to stay busy, and they may not know anyone with whom to talk to. However, this is something that only characterizes the beginning. Eventually, the participants who keep returning will become more and more comfortable and they will get to know more of the other people.

To accommodate for this process that the newcomers to the language café go through it could be useful to choose tasks and activities that can help the newcomers to adjust to the language café setting. It may be easier for a newcomer to participate in more educationally structured tasks, as it can be quite intimidating to jump into an open conversation between people who already know each other. Perhaps Majas strategy of starting with the most specific tasks, and then moving on to the more open discussion topics, is a good way to accommodate for this need. This structure was the same for all the participants. Another way to accommodate for this need is to divide the participants based on their level of proficiency. Several of the libraries did this. This way they could have easier and more structured tasks for the ones who need this and more complex ones for the others.

8.2.3.3 *Dividing participants based on their language proficiency to accommodate for legitimate peripheral participation.*

Some of the arguments for and against dividing participants based on their language proficiency can be viewed from the perspective of legitimate peripheral participation. The main argument for dividing them seemed to be that the participants learn less if their level of proficiency is too different. While an important argument against dividing them was that the participants can learn from each other.

The tasks for newcomers in communities of practice need to be peripheral on order to make it easier for them to participate in the beginning. Peripheral tasks should be short and simple. The argument that participants with a lower proficiency learn less if the others in their group have a higher proficiency corresponds with this idea. We view conversation in Norwegian as a domain, and the people conversing in Norwegian as the community. From this perspective the ones with a lower proficiency in the language are the newcomers. They would then need access to legitimate peripheral ways to participate in conversations. Having a conversation with people whose language proficiency far supersedes yours is a complex task. It may not be peripheral enough for the newcomer to be able to participate and learn effectively.

The argument against dividing the participants due to how they can learn from each other can be seen from the perspective of gaining access to mature practice. The newcomers in a community need access to mature practice to learn more efficiently. The idea that those who speak better help the others is, therefore, tied to how they provide them with access to more mature practice.
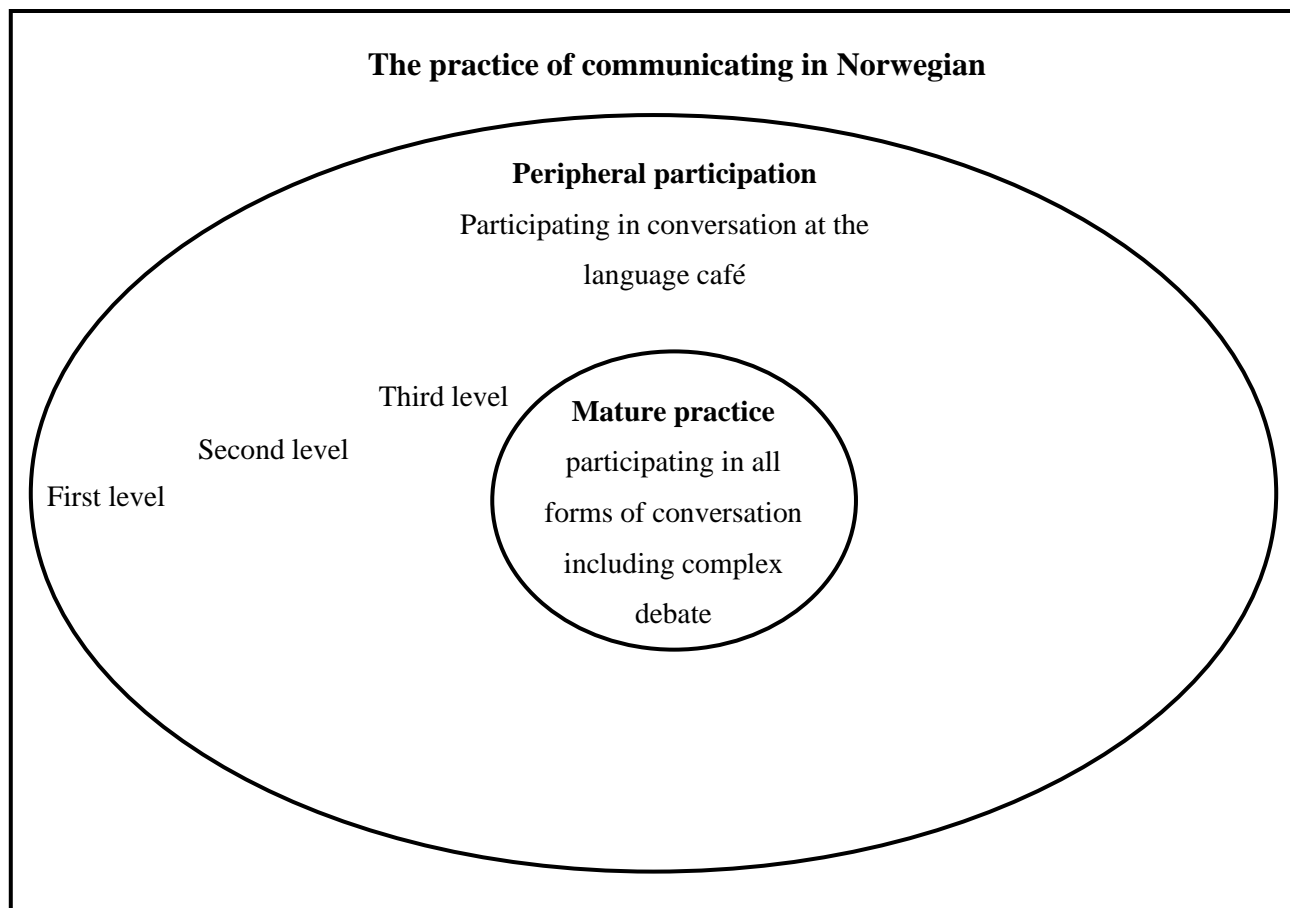
The argument that participants with a higher level of proficiency learn less if they are in a group of participants with levels that are much lower than theirs, can be seen in relation to how they need access to mature practice. These participants are ready for tasks that are less peripheral.

For something to be legitimate peripheral participation it needs to both be peripheral as well as offering access to mature practice. The peripherality of the participation of a newcomer should decrease over time. It should gradually become closer to mature practice. In graph 2 I have attempted to illustrate how the three different levels at language cafés are gradually less peripheral as they advance towards mature practice. The closer the levels get to the center the more access to mature practice is required for the participants to improve their language proficiency. Mature practice in this case would include complex conversation such as political debate and philosophical conversations.

The levels in graph 2 refer to the division done at some of the language cafés where the first level is the easiest, the second level is of medium difficulty and the third is the most advanced. The way the librarian prepared material for the three levels were similar across the 4 libraries that divided their participants based on level. The material for the first level had a lot of pictures and short sentences. The second level would have a bit more text, though the sentences were still short. The third level would have more text, sometimes even articles. The conversation at the different levels would be less complex at level one, and more complex at level three.

Graph 2: Peripheral participation in Norwegian conversation

The levels refer to the three different levels that the participants are divided into at some of the language cafés, where the first is easy, the second is medium difficulty, and the third is difficult.

The practice of communicating in Norwegian

Peripheral participation

Participating in conversation at the language café

Third level

Second level

First level

Mature practice

participating in all forms of conversation including complex debate

8.2.3.4 Welcoming newcomers to a community of practice

At the L-café they had people who met the newcomers and told them about the place and what they do there. Sometimes they would introduce them to other people there. A similar form of welcome was included at the language cafés at library 3 and 5. At these language cafés the librarians would welcome the new participants and show them which table they thought they should sit at. Having the librarian or a volunteer greet the newcomers and guide them to a table in this way may help make it easier for the newcomers to join. It can help them overcome the initial reluctance which is common to feel the first time you enter a community.

"Når deltagere kommer så tar jeg de imot og finner ganske fort ut av hvor de skal sitte"

«When the participants come, I welcome them, and I figure out rather quickly where they should sit.» L3 Olivia

8.2.4 How can attending conversation-based programs be a form of legitimate peripheral participation in the local community?

When talking about several of the conversation-based programs the key informants and hosts pointed out how the goal was to help the participants take part in other areas of the local community. Learning through participation in the setting of a smaller group or a smaller setting, such as a conversation-based program, and then being able to participate in a bigger arena is similar to how novices learn through legitimate peripheral participation. This effect could be seen in most of the programs. As I have not looked at the outcome of the program, I can only view this from the perspective of the goals and structures of the programs as described by the interviewed hosts and key informants.

Participating in conversation-based programs can be described as a peripheral task in the local community. As Lave and Wenger states: "*productive peripherality requires less demands on time, effort, and responsibility for work than for full participants. A newcomer's tasks are short and simple, the costs of errors are small, the apprentice has little responsibility for the activity as a whole*" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, pp. 110-111). The risk of making mistakes at conversation-based programs are often small and the level of commitment is also reduced. There are no financial obligations to attend, and there is often no requirement to sign up in advance. More importantly though, it is a form of participation that they can learn from, and that can help them grow into becoming full members of the local community.

As Falch described it; the Norwegian education for minority women helped the women learn about their local community in a setting that was safe. They would then be better equipped to face the challenges of their day to day life in Norway. This fits the description of how legitimate peripheral participation eventually leads to newcomers gradually feel more confident in taking part in mature practice. The mature practice in this case would be their day to day life in Norway.

The district mothers described by Ravnaas had a similar goal. Participation the conversation groups led by the district mothers, was meant to help the women learn about Norway and the local community. It was also a way to help them feel welcomed by creating a sense of community. Participating in the district mothers' program could then be a peripheral task that

they can learn from, and that can help them eventually take part in more areas of the local community.

Another program where participation could be a form of legitimate peripheral participation in the local community, was the girl group. In the girl group their strategy, as described by Falch, was to create a safe environment within the group, forming close bonds between the girls there. Their hope was that if the girls first felt comfortable within this environment, they would eventually feel more confident about stepping out into other arenas. If we understand this through the perspective of legitimate peripheral participation, you could describe taking part in the girl group as a legitimate peripheral task in the local community. By first taking part in the group they would increase their knowledge of the community, and their social relations to the people within it. This would then help them to later participate in other areas of the local community, just like new members take more and more part in a community of practice.

The language café is another program that could offer a form of legitimate peripheral participation in the local community. Participating at the language café could eventually lead to the participants feeling more comfortable and confident outside the language café setting. Amalie, a volunteer from library 4 mentioned this in the following manner:

> "**Hva tror du deltagerne får ut av å være med på språkkafeen?**
>
> Mye. For det første det sosiale, og for det andre de får seg nye venner. Jeg vet om flere som har blitt venner her som etter hvert har begynt å omgås i fritiden. De snakker med hverandre, de tør litt mer, de åpner seg litt mer. Og det betyr at de som klarer å åpne seg i dette rommet her, så klarer dem etter hvert å åpne seg i hele biblioteket, og så utenfor biblioteket og så med venner, for nå snakker de litt bedre. De er tryggere på norsken sin osv. Så det er ganske mye.»
>
> «*What do you think the participants gain from being at the language café?*
>
> *A lot. First of all, the social part, and second of all they get new friends. I know of several who have become friends here, and who after a while have started meeting up in their spare time. They talk to each other, they dare a little more, they open up a little more. And that means that the ones who manage to open up in this room here, they eventually manage to open up in the entire library, and then outside the library, and then with friends, because now they speak a bit better. They are more confident in their Norwegian etc. So that is quite a lot.* » L4V3, Amalie, a volunteer at library 4

The way she describes this process is similar to how newcomers in a community of practice go from participating in peripheral tasks to more mature participation. If we consider Oslo or Norway as the community of practice, then the citizens form the community and the domain is to improve the lives of the citizens through democratic processes. To achieve better lives for everyone in the community, people need to contribute to the community, through working, socializing, volunteering, voting, participating in leisure activities etc. Being able to communicate with others is important to be able to do many of these things. Language is, therefore, part of the shared practice. It is a necessary tool used to achieve the goals of the community.

Participating in a legitimately peripheral way means that the newcomers have broad access to arenas of mature practice, though the demands are smaller than for full participants. Their cost of errors are small (Lave & Wenger, 1991). At a language café the participants use the Norwegian language and they are participating in an activity. The conversations are legitimate contributions to the democratic processes, as ideas and viewpoints are discussed, networks are created, and social interactions are taking place. The demands and costs of error are, however, quite small. The cost of saying something wrong is small because the people there accept this as part of the learning process. They are also not required to show up regularly, nor are there any demands on how much they need to contribute to the conversations. The language café is a safe setting for the participants to practice and learn, they can choose how much they want to participate in the conversations, and they are not responsible for anything more than their own improvement. However, it is still a social setting and the conversations can lead to friendships and an improved network, and so participation is a useful form of contribution to the community.

According to the theory on legitimate peripheral participation, the newcomers' contributions gain value through practice and they eventually take more part in mature practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). From the way Amalie described the gradual progress of the participants, this seems to be taking place. As she described it the participants first learn the practices at the language café. Then, as they grow more confident, they participate in wider arenas such as the rest of the library, and then even outside the library.

9 Conclusion:
What challenges do the hosts of conversation-based programs face?

In order to summarize some of the points made above, I will look at the challenges that the hosts of conversation-based programs face, and how different strategies for handling these challenges can affect the outcome of the programs.

9.1 The challenge of social capital as a gradual process

For someone developing or hosting a conversation-based program, it can be challenging to find a balance between focusing on bonding or bridging social capital. Programs can be built around bonding over similarities or bridging differences. According to intergroup contact, the more similar people are, the easier they connect and understand each other. However, if the programs aim to bridge differences between groups, it also requires that the participants are exposed to otherness. The hosts, therefore, need to find a balance between focusing on similarities and exposing differences.

One program does not need to fill the need for both bridging and bonding social capital on its own. Some programs lean more towards bonding social capital, such as the girl group. Other programs lean more towards bridging social capital, such as the language café. It can be beneficial to have programs with different balances between generating bonding and bridging social capital, because this allows individuals to choose a more gradual approach towards building their social capital.

An example of how this can happen, can be seen in the girl group project. The girls who joined the girl group gained confidence from the bonding social capital that they built there. This allowed them to move on to other arenas, where there were people with fewer similarities. At these arenas they could gain bridging social capital.

This process corresponds with the theory on legitimate peripheral participation, where you start with peripheral participation and move gradually towards more mature practice. It can be easier for an individual to start by increasing ones bonding social capital in a group of likeminded people, before moving on to other arenas where people have less similar viewpoints. To allow for this gradual process, there is a need for programs that focus on various degrees of bonding and bridging social capital. There is also a need for programs that are peripheral and programs that are less peripheral and closer to mature practice. In this context mature practice is

community involvement. This would allow individuals who are in the process of integrating into a society, to go through a gradual process where they can start with a peripheral program that focuses on bonding social capital. Then they can move on to less peripheral programs with more focus on bridging social capital. This process would help migrants gradually increase their involvement in the society they have migrated to. Eventually they will be fully integrated and can participate in all forms of mature practice.

9.2   The challenge of language learning as a gradual process

Several volunteers and librarians mentioned that they found it difficult to be able to meet the needs of the participants. They have different levels of proficiency in the Norwegian language. Their knowledge of Norwegian society also varied a lot. Some libraries tried to solve this by dividing the participants into three different levels. Others tried to have tasks and activities that were very flexible and could be completed with various degrees of skill. And yet others relied on the volunteers to pay attention and adjust the level where they saw the need to do so. What was common amongst them all, was that they had to find a way to adjust the tasks based on the language proficiency and knowledge of the participants.

This can be viewed through the perspective of legitimate peripheral participation. There was a need to provide the participants with a way to participate in the practice of conversing in Norwegian in a legitimate peripheral way. The challenge then becomes providing access to mature practice, while at the same time allowing for peripheral participation in the conversations. The participants need to be able to participate in the conversations despite not being able to speak fluently. Some had a lower proficiency in the language than others. This would require that they provide opportunities to move gradually from legitimate peripheral participation towards less peripheral participation. A way to do this is to provide tasks and activities with various degrees of difficulty. This would help the participants gain access to gradually more complex tasks, as they progress in their language learning.

9.3   The challenge of balancing language learning and social capital generation

Another challenge the hosts of conversation-based program face, is finding a balance between the more purposive language learning aspect and the social aspects of the programs. Becoming better integrated, participating in more arenas of the community, as well as developing a more complex understanding of the language all have to happen in tandem to support each other.

The difficulty in finding such a balance was illustrated by the difference in how volunteers and librarians viewed the balance between language learning and social capital generation. The librarians put more emphasis on the importance of the social capital generation of the language cafés. The volunteers, on the other hand, put more emphasis on the importance of language learning.

It is important for the hosts to be aware of how the activities affect the program. If the activities focus to much on language learning, it can inhibit building relationships. On the other hand, the result of activities that are too focused on the social aspect, can take away focus from the learning aspect. Such activities could be ones that encourage casual conversation, which adds to the social atmosphere, but do not focus on learning a specific set of vocabulary or grammar.

Being aware of the goals behind the program can be helpful in deciding where to place the focus. It could be useful to discuss the goals and the focus between the volunteers and librarians to develop a common understanding of their focus. When deciding the focus, it could be useful to listen to the motivations of the participants. What are they hoping to gain from the program? Are they there to learn a language or are they there to meet other people? What do they need and how can this need be met at the program?

Creating communities of practice within the conversation-based programs, could be a way to both work towards connecting people in a social setting, while at the same time providing opportunities to practice and learn a language. Members in a community of practice, bond over their shared interest in a domain. They also bond over their collaboration in working towards joint goals. This creates a feeling of belonging and connection within the community, which is a form of bonding social capital. Members in a community also learn from each other and develop their skills through interaction. Communication and negotiation within the community contributes to this. People can share their experiences and what they have learned from them with the others in a community. This process helps a community develop a shared understanding and a shared practice.

The theory on communities of practice can be applied to the social aspect of integration. The norms and culture in a society, can be viewed as a shared practice. The practice is developed through interactions and negotiations within the community. Providing immigrants with a way to participate in this practice would give them opportunities to learn the norms and culture from the other people in the community. They would build a sense of belonging to the community. Furthermore, it would allow them to take part in the interactions and negotiations that are a part

of developing the norms and culture. In this way, mutual integration can be achieved by providing immigrants with arenas where they can interact with others in the community. The results in this study suggest that structuring conversation-based programs around common goals, could lead to the creation of such arenas.

The theory on communities of practice can also be applied to language learning. Language and how it is used can be viewed as a shared practice developed by a society. Participating in the practice of using the language then becomes a way to both learn the language and influence it. This suggests, that because conversation-based programs offer opportunities to participate in the practice of using a language, they also offer opportunities to both learn and influence it.

More research is needed to find which methods are most efficient to create communities of practice at conversation-based programs, that lead to both language learning and increasing social capital. Further research could look into the interactions taking place at conversation-based programs, how these interactions influence the relationships of the people there, as well as how they affect the development of the participants' use of the language they are learning.

9.4 The challenge of creating meeting places between different groups

Creating conversation-based programs that function as meeting places between different groups have some challenges. One such challenge is to create conversation-based programs that have social sanctions. Communities can have different views on what is socially acceptable. The social sanctions of a program, is given by the communities the target group belongs to, depending on how socially acceptable the community views the program. This can be influenced by trying to adapt the program to what those communities find socially acceptable. However, this can be particularly difficult if the target group is not homogenous. It becomes more difficult to adapt to the different views on what is socially acceptable when there are a wide range of views to take into consideration.

Another challenge related to creating meeting places between different groups, is finding a way to create a levelling effect on the people there. The premise for the language cafés in this study, was that the participants would practice Norwegian, with volunteers who already spoke the language fluently. This premise could make it challenging to achieve equal status between the volunteers, who are there to facilitate the learning of Norwegian, and the participants, who are there to learn it. This is because they have different roles and responsibilities. The intergroup contact between the majority and minority population will be affected by this difference. There may, however, be intergroup contact between participants belonging to different groups who

meet on equal terms, such as people with different cultural backgrounds, both coming to learn Norwegian.

If the goal is to reduce prejudice, through intergroup contact between the majority population and immigrants, then it may be beneficial to create a program where both groups are participants to equal measures. An example could be a language café where you come to learn any language, not specifically Norwegian. This strategy could, however, negatively affect how efficient the program is at helping immigrants learn Norwegian. It would take some of the focus away from this aspect. A balance is necessary between how much focus one has on the language learning aspect of a program, and the focus one has on the intergroup contact reducing prejudice. However, both can be achieved at the same time, though this requires that the meetings do not lead to more anxiety and conflict. The way the volunteers saw discussing difficult and political topics as unproblematic, may suggest that the meetings at language cafés were not characterized by conflict and anxiety, despite the different roles and responsibilities. In a community of practice, you can contribute in equal measures despite having different roles. Perhaps the volunteers and participants at a language café could be seen as working together in a community of practice, where the goal is helping immigrants both to integrate into society and to learn the local language. Their roles in achieving this may be different, but they are still contributing in equal measures. In this manner equal status may be achieved despite the different roles.

9.5 The challenge of developing and maintaining conversation-based programs

Developing and maintaining programs requires a lot of work. This workload can become a challenge for librarians whose days are already quite busy. If each library hosting a language café works in isolation, they may end up doing more work than they would if they collaborated. Because of this, several of the participants in my study mentioned the desire to cooperate with others. The key informants both believed in cooperating with other institutions. Ingvil Falch had experienced the benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration when developing programs. Kari Ravnaas pointed to the benefits of collaborating with organizations such as the Red Cross when hosting language cafés. Several of the librarians also expressed a desire to share experiences and resources with others who also work with language cafés. The volunteers also wished to learn from others to improve their ability to help the participants.

The need for more efficient collaboration, could be accommodated by creating arenas for communities of practice. The theory on communities of practice offers insight into how

interaction is key factor in helping its members improve their practice. This is done through negotiations, as well as sharing experiences and other resources. This requires that the members of the community of practice have arenas where they can interact. The analysis of the interviews suggest that the hosts of the language cafés did not have access to such arenas, and that this negatively impacted how efficiently they collaborated.

The arenas could be designed in various ways. For example, an online forum for exchanging ideas, or a group of people who meet up regularly to discuss their practice. The results suggest that it could be useful to have several such arenas. For example, one arena for interdisciplinary collaboration, a second arena for the volunteers, a third for the librarians. A fourth arena for both the librarians and the volunteers could also be useful to maintain a common understanding of the program between the librarians and the volunteers.

The result of providing the hosts of conversation-based programs with such arenas is that they can develop a more efficient practice together. They can improve the activities they use based on a wider set of experiences and knowledge. Moreover, people in a community of practice are often better equipped to identify challenges and find ways to respond to them. Sharing resources also becomes easier in a community of practice. This could make the work more efficient.

More research is necessary to investigate how to maximize the benefits of communities of practice when hosting conversation-based programs. This research could bring useful perspectives on the different arenas for collaboration that already exists, which ones the libraries could take better advantage of, and which ones they could benefit from creating.

10 References

Allport, G. W. (1958). *The nature of prejudice* (Abridged [ed.]. ed.). Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday.

Andersen, I. M. (2016). Idehefte til bruk i språkkafeer: Revidert utgave. In: Deichmanske bibliotek, Tøyen.

Atlestad, I., & Myhre, R. (2014). *Needs, reads and possibilities in a suburban library in a multicultural setting*. Paper presented at the 80th IFLA general conference and assembly, Lyon, France. http://library.ifla.org/851/1/221-atlestam-en.pdf (accessed: 10.10.2018)

Audunson, R. (2005). The public library as a meeting-place in a multicultural and digital context. *Journal of Documentation, 61*(3), 429-441. doi:10.1108/00220410510598562

Audunson, R., Vårheim, A., Aabø, S., & Holm, E. D. (2007). Public libraries, social capital, and low intensive meetingplaces. *Information research, 12*(4). Retrieved from Hentet 03.11.2017 fra http://informationr.net/ir/12-4/colis/colis20.html

Berg, S., Berge, M., Bleken, S., & Hagen, G. (1981). Innvandrere og bibliotek. In. Oslo: Statens bibliotekhøgskole.

Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation. *Applied Psychology, 46*(1), 5-34. doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x

Bråten, B., Jahreie, J., & Lillevik, R. (2017). *Innvandrerorganisasjoners rolle i integrering: Sett gjennom en statlig tilskuddsordning*. Retrieved from [Oslo]: https://www.imdi.no/contentassets/b59b55e4ad124ac9a365a046cef4042a/innvandrerorganisasjoners-rolle-i-integrering.pdf (accessed 18.04.2020)

Bydelsmødre. (2019). Om Bydelsmødre. *bydelsmor.no.* Retrieved from https://www.bydelsmor.no/om-bydelsmodre (accessed 18.04.2020)

Deichman. (n.d.). Om oss. Retrieved from https://deichman.no/om-oss (Accessed 30.04.2020)

Essmat, S., Audunson, R. A., & Aabø, S. (2011). Public libraries : a meeting place for immigrant women? *Library & Information Science Research, 33*(4). doi:10.1016/j.lisr.2011.01.003

Ferguson, S. (2012). Are public libraries developers of social capital? A review of their contribution and attempts to demonstrate it. *The Australian Library Journal, 61*(1), 22-33. doi:10.1080/00049670.2012.10722299

Furuset bibliotek og aktivitetshus. (2019). Groruddalsprodusentene: Er du en av Groruddalsprodusentene 2019? Retrieved from http://fubiak.no/groruddalsprodusentene/ (Accessed 30.04.2020)

Graven, M., & Lerman, S. (2003). Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity. *Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education, 6*, 185-194. doi:10.1023/A:1023947624004

Griffis, M. R., & Johnson, C. A. (2014). Social capital and inclusion in rural public libraries: A qualitative approach. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 46*(2), 96-109. doi:10.1177/0961000612470277

Johannessen, A., Christoffersen, L., & Tufte, P. A. (2010). *Introduksjon til samfunnsvitenskapelig metode* (4. utg. ed.). Oslo: Abstrakt.

Johnson, C. A. (2010). Do public libraries contribute to social capital?: A preliminary investigation into the relationship. *Library and Information Science Research, 32*(2), 147-155. doi:10.1016/j.lisr.2009.12.006

Johnson, C. A. (2012). How do public libraries create social capital? An analysis of interactions between library staff and patrons. *Library and Information Science Research, 34*(1). doi:10.1016/j.lisr.2011.07.009

Johnson, C. A., & Griffis, M. R. (2014). The effect of public library use on the social capital of rural communities. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 46*(3), 179-190. doi:10.1177/0961000612470278

Johnston, J. (2016). Conversation-based programming and newcomer integration: A case study of the Språkhörnan program at Malmö City Library. *Library and Information Science Research, 38*(1), 10-17. doi:10.1016/j.lisr.2016.02.001

Johnston, J. (2017). Friendship potential: Conversation-based programming and immigrant integration. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 1-19. doi:10.1177/0961000617742459

Johnston, J. (2018). The use of conversation-based programming in public libraries to support integration in increasingly multiethnic societies. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 50*(2), 130-140. doi:10.1177/0961000616631613

Johnston, J., & Audunson, R. (2017). Supporting immigrants' political integration through discussion and debate in public libraries. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*. doi:10.1177/0961000617709056

Khoir, S., Du, J. T., Davison, R. M., & Koronios, A. (2017). Contributing to social capital: An investigation of Asian immigrants' use of public library services. *Library and Information Science Research, 39*(1), 34-45. doi:10.1016/j.lisr.2017.01.005

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning : legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Murray, G., & Fujishima, N. (2016). *Social Spaces for Language Learning : Stories from the L-café* (1st ed. 2016. ed.).

Norsk bibliotekforening. (2018). *Brukerundersøkelse om språkkafe*. Retrieved from http://flerkult.norskbibliotekforening.no/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/05/Rapportspr%C3%A5kkafe.pdf

Oldenburg, R. (1989). *The great good place : cafés, coffee shops, community centers, beauty parlors, general stores, bars, hangouts, and how they get you through the day*. New York: Paragon House.

Oldenburg, R., & Brissett, D. (1982). The third place. *Qualitative Sociology, 5*(4), 265-284. doi:10.1007/BF00986754

Oslo kommune. (n.d.). Bydelsfakta – statistikk om befolkning, levekår og boforhold. Retrieved from https://bydelsfakta.oslo.kommune.no/ (accessed 18.04.2020)

Oslo Kulturbyen. (2018). Sjakk for alle på Deichman. Retrieved from http://www.mynewsdesk.com/no/kulturbyen-oslo/news/sjakk-matt-paa-deichman-327104 (Accessed 30.04.2020)

Oslo Mela. (n.d.). Om melafestivalen. *mela.no.* Retrieved from https://www.mela.no/melafestivalen/om-melafestivalen/ (accessed 18.04.2020)

Pettigrew, T. F., Tropp, L. R., & Dovidio, J. F. (2006). A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 90*(5), 751-783. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.90.5.751

Pettigrew, T. F., Tropp, L. R., Wagner, U., & Christ, O. (2011). Recent advances in intergroup contact theory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 35*(3), 271-280. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.03.001

Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. T. (2008). How does intergroup contact reduce prejudice?: Meta-analytic tests of three mediators. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 38*(6), s. 922-934. doi:10.1002/ejsp.504

Putnam, R. D. (1995). Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital. *Journal of Democracy, 6*(1), 65-78. Retrieved from http://www.directory-online.com/Rotary/Accounts/6970/Downloads/4381/Bowling%20Alone%20Article.pdf

Statistics Norway. (2018). 14 prosent av befolkningen er innvandrere: . *Innvandrere og norskfødte med innvandrerforeldre*. Retrieved from https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/14-prosent-av-befolkningen-er-innvandrere (retrieved 30.11.2018)

Stolle, D., Soroka, S., & Johnston, R. (2008). When Does Diversity Erode Trust? Neighborhood Diversity, Interpersonal Trust and the Mediating Effect of Social Interactions. *Political Studies, 56*(1), 57-75. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.2007.00717.x

Ulvik, S. (1997). *Biblioteket som gikk ut av huset sitt : evaluering av prosjektarbeid ved Torshov filial av Deichmanske bibliotek*. Oslo: Høgskolen i Oslo, Avd. for journalistikk, bibliotek- og informasjonsfag.

Ulvik, S. (2010). "Why should the library collect immigrants' memories?". *New Library World, 111*(3/4), 154-160. doi:10.1108/03074801011027655

Vårheim, A. (2007). Social capital and public libraries: The need for research. *Library and Information Science Research, 29*(3), 416-428. doi:10.1016/j.lisr.2007.04.009

Vårheim, A. (2011). Gracious space: Library programming strategies towards immigrants as tools in the creation of social capital. *Library and Information Science Research, 33*(1), 12-18. doi:10.1016/j.lisr.2010.04.005

Vårheim, A. (2014a). Trust and the role of the public library in the integration of refugees: The case of a Northern Norwegian city. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 46*(1), 62-69. doi:10.1177/0961000614523636

Vårheim, A. (2014b). Trust in Libraries and Trust in Most People: Social Capital Creation in the Public Library. *The Library Quarterly, 84*(3), 258-277. doi:10.1086/676487

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice : learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E. (2014). Communities of practice: a brief introduction. Retrieved from https://wenger-trayner.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/06-Brief-introduction-to-communities-of-practice.pdf (Accessed 05.04.2020)

Wildemuth, B. M. (2016). *Applications of social research methods to questions in information and library science*.

Williamson, K., & Johanson, G. (2017). *Research Methods: Information, Systems, and Contexts* (2 ed.): Elsevier Science.

Wittek, L. (2004). *Læring i og mellom mennesker*. Oslo: Cappelen akademisk forl.

11 Appendix A1: Norwegian

Interview guide for the hosts as it was originally written in Norwegian

1. Vennligst si litt om deg selv og hvilken erfaring du har med samtalebaserte arrangement?
2. Kan du beskrive arrangementene?
3. Hvordan er arrangementet organisert? Hva slags struktur følger programmet?
4. Hvordan skjer rekrutteringen av frivillige og deltagere?
5. Hvilke temaer tas opp på arrangementene?
6. Hvordan er kommunikasjonen mellom frivillige og bibliotekar?
7. Hvor mye tid er satt av til å jobbe med arrangementet?
8. Hva er dine tanker rundt formålet med arrangementene?
9. Hva tror du er med på at dere når eller ikke når målene for arrangementet?
10. Hvem når dere frem til?
11. Hva har fungert godt og hva har fungert mindre godt?
12. Hva er viktig for at tiltakene skal fungere godt?
13. Hva mener du burde gjøres annerledes? Har arrangementene forbedringspotensial?
14. Hvilke utfordringer har dere møtt på, og hvordan har dere gått frem for å løse dem?
15. Har du noen eksempler på positive eller negative opplevelser ved arrangementet? Reflekter gjerne rundt hva som bidro til å gjøre opplevelsen positiv eller negativ.

12 Appendix A2: English

English translation of the interview guide for the hosts

1. Could you please start by telling me a bit about yourself and the experience you have with conversation-based programs?
2. Could you describe the events?
3. How are the events organized? What kind of structure does the program follow?
4. How does the recruitment of volunteers and participants happen?
5. What topics do you talk about at the events?
6. How is the communication between librarian and volunteers?
7. How much time do you dedicate to working on the events?
8. What are your thoughts on the objectives behind the events?
9. What do you think contributes to whether you accomplish the objectives of the events?
10. Whom do you reach?
11. What has worked well and what has not worked as well?
12. What is important for the programs to succeed?
13. What do you think should be done differently? Do the events have potential for improvement?
14. What challenges have you encountered, and how have you tried to solve them?
15. Do you have any examples of positive or negative experiences with the events? Please share your thoughts on what contributed to making the experience positive or negative.

13 Appendix B1: Norwegian

The interview guide for the key informants as it was originally written in Norwegian

1. **Oppstarten**: Når startet bibliotekene med samtalebaserte program? Hvilke samtalebaserte program er det tidligste du kjenner til? Når startet bibliotekene å tilby språkkaféer?

2. **Utviklingen**: Hvordan har du opplevd utviklingen av bibliotekets arbeid med språkopplæring og integrering? Hvordan har de samtalebaserte programmene utviklet seg?

3. **Målgruppen**: Hvem er målgruppen? Hvem når dere frem til med arrangementene? Hvem når dere ikke frem til? Hvem ønsker dere å nå frem til?

4. **Formålet**: Hvilke målsettinger ligger bak bibliotekets arbeid med språkopplæring og integrering? Hvilke målsettinger ligger bak de samtalebaserte programmene og språkkaféene mer spesifikt? Hva ønsker bibliotekene å oppnå ved å tilby samtalebaserte program?

5. **Erfaringene**: Hva mener du er et godt arrangement for integrering og inkludering? Hva har du erfart at fungerer godt og hva har fungert dårlig? Hva skal til for å lage et godt samtalebasert program? Hva bør man unngå?

14 Appendix B2: English

English translation of the interview guide for the key informants

1. **The startup**: When did the libraries start hosting conversation-based programs? Which are the earliest conversation-based programs you know of? When did the libraries start to host language cafés?

2. **The development**: How have you experienced the development of the library's work with language learning and integration? How have the conversation-based programs developed?

3. **The target audience**: Who is the target audience? Whom do you reach with these programs? Whom do you not reach? Whom do you wish to reach?

4. **The objectives**: Which goals motivate the libraries work with language learning and integration? Which goals are behind the conversation-based programs, and language cafés more specifically? What do the libraries wish to achieve by offering conversation-based programs?

5. **The experiences**: What do you think is a good event or program for integration and inclusion? What have you experienced as working well and what has not worked well? What is necessary for creating a good conversation-based program? What should be avoided?