



NORWEGIAN
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Refugee Crisis and Religious Organisations

The approach of Religious Organisations in Norway to the Refugee crisis

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Abstract

This study explores the attitudes of the religious organizations approach towards the refugee crisis which started in 2015 and still continues. The study includes information regarding how religious institutions and leaders help the refugees with conducting activities, charities and fundraising events. About the refugee families visiting the organisations and being invited by the members of the church and the mosque. Also shows the systematic pattern in their approach and practice in dealing with the issues.

Moreover, during these procedures the obstacles that the religious organisations faced and personal opinions of the interviewees have been explained. Within given information about the importance of motivation while approaching the refugees and the importance of cooperation to bring awareness among the people. Correspondingly examines whether in a strong welfare system like in Norway, if the involvement of the religious organisations towards the migration crisis matter or not. Touches to the point, that if the religion of the incoming refugees matter in order to the religious organisation to help them. Which did show that the religion is not a matter of issue in order to approach them.

A qualitative research method was used for collecting data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted for the interviewees to express themselves in a comfortable way. Interviews are the main sources of information which took place among six interviewees, which are members of Christian and Muslim religious organizations. The similarities between this people are their status within the religious organisations. The result shows the work done since the crisis started until these days.

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Above all, I wish to thank my family, particularly my sister, who approached me in an indulgent way in my endeavour for this thesis. It would not have been possible to complete this thesis, if they had not supported me devotedly and had not constantly encouraged me to finish this task.

Abbreviation

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICC	Islamic Cultural Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SSB	Statistiks sentralbyrå (Statistics Norway)
UDI	Norwegian Directorate of Immigration

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Figure1: Asylum applications by citizenship and year

1 Introduction

According to the very basic description given in the utlendingsdirektoratet, Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) web¹ it is said that; residence permit will be granted in Norway as a Refugee if an individual is facing fear of persecution due to her/his origin, ethnicity, religion, nationality, skin colour, membership to a specific political view or social group, or has a real risk of being tortured, sentenced to death penalty, facing other inhuman treatment or punishment in case of returning to his/her home country. The term refugee here is also defined as the one who is fulfilling the requirement for being an asylum (protection) in Norway². Statistics Norway³ gives the official statistics about the Norwegian Society including the population, GDP per capita, employment, immigration and defines the refugee term as one who is granted residence due to humanitarian grounds which refers to the need of protection in terms of vulnerable position, resettlement, protection, and collective protection.

The Syrian refugee crisis is still existing as a global problem. Close countries received many Syrian refugees. For example, in 2015 USA received only 1,682 Syrians, Egypt accepted 115,204 Syrians, Germany received 326,900 refugees in 2015 and is planning to receive 300,000 more in 2016. Lebanon received 1,017,433 which is a big number but when you compare it to Turkey they look small. Turkey opened their doors to 2,790,767 Syrian refugees. It is approximated that there are 4.8 million Syrians which fled from their homes, Syria (Momin, 2017).

In 2015, thousands of refugees drowned in the Mediterranean, where 1 million came to Europe. Out of all this number over 300,000 made their way to Norway which caused a public debate if the society had the ability to accept these many asylum seekers in other words displaced persons (Kim & Valeria, 2016).

In his article, Lars Østby (Østby, 2016), examines the refugees which have lived in Norway with a similar background for several years. When you talk about the crisis in 2015 it is impossible to ignore the previous years. We should also take a look at the past years. In 2006

¹ <https://www.udi.no/>

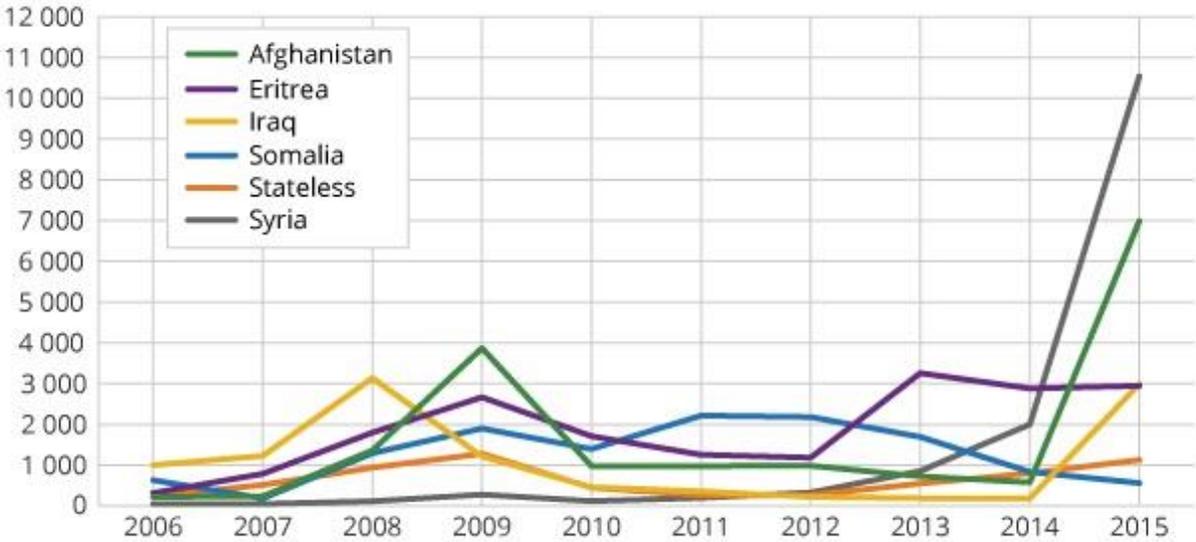
² <https://www.udi.no/en/word-definitions/refugee/>

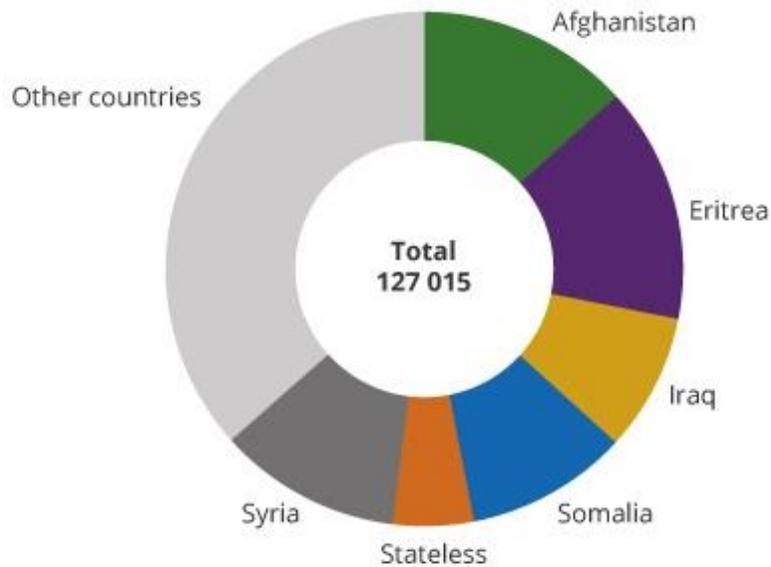
³ <https://www.ssb.no/en>

around 10-20 percent of all immigrant were counted as refugees including the family members coming later. They were only categorised as refugees after applying for asylum seek and then being accepted, here is when they are being included in the immigrant population. In other words, Statistics Norway includes these refugees to the population statistics as large groups of immigrants (Østby, 2016). There are lots of things to be clarified for both sides before all the procedures take place such as the idea of settling to a new country, being active in labour market, are the arrivals educated or will be getting any education, financial issues.

Before 2015 the largest number of asylum seekers arriving in Norway was in 2002 with 17 480 individuals covering the entire year, then in 2015 this number grew a lot and reached a total of 31.145. These people applying for asylum mostly came from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. (all this date is taken from the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI), the recordings in 2016). The figure1 provided below is from Statistics Norway showing us how many asylum applications are received by their citizenships and which years. Just by looking at the line chart we can easily see that with the maximum number of Syrian citizens there was a big rise in 2015.

Figure1: Asylum applications by citizenship and year





Source: Population statistics, Statistics Norway.

After the large influx in 2015, by far Syrian citizens are the largest group in Norway's asylum reception this doesn't include the waiting list but only the ones receiving a positive result and settling in the country. The ones waiting for a result is another issue here we specify the ones which are accepted to the country.

Talking about people in the moment of seeking protection we should easily know that there is a wide range of perspectives we must look for it. There are so many things which must be thought about them, psychological, educational, sociological, financial, and political are just some of them. Sociology is one of the fields which has mastered in migration and refugee studies where they ask for a mutual engagement instead of dividing the fields into two separate parts (FitzGerald & Arar, 2018). Each study field has its own way of focusing areas where sociology focuses on how these refugees will affect the society and all about their integration process. The science/social science areas focus more on facts and reality regardless the intense of the situation but in religion this might differ a little.

Religion is a part of our everyday life, regardless if your own faith you interfere any kind of religious facts in your daily life this may include seeing a church on your way to school or seeing a lady with her hijab in the metro station or a homeless seeking for help. Europe had so many refugees during 2015 and one's religious identity and practice was associated with their attitudes towards refugees. This differ from belief to belief of course but at the same time culture and economic contexts also influence this attitude. The immigration is not directly

referring to religion, but it is indirectly related such as the nation's conformity rate of religiosity where it could be associated with the cultural and economic consequences of immigrants where religion reflects the cultural conformity (Storm, 2018).

1.1 Personal Interest

Before starting the Masters' in Religion, Society and Global Issues (RSGI) at Det Teologiske Menighetsfakultet (MF) I was really excited to start studying at the faculty. The content of the studies was really rich and I always believed that it was going to teach me a lot and widen my perspective to the area of study. Since 2015 the refugee crisis has become focus point of medial and political attention all over Europe. As a result of civil war, social and economic inequality and discrimination the people who were living in their home countries were forced to escape their countries and try to find a better and safe place to continue their lives. Of course because of ethnic background differentiations this process leads to different challenges in society.

One of the main inspiration point that, I wanted to write this thesis about the refugee crisis was, on summer of 2016 when I applied for a training course and was granted to participate to it. The training course I participated in June 2016 at Berlin, Germany. The training course was called, Let's explore- Refugees today in Europe. Educational challenges and opportunities for youth workers. It was learning opportunity for the participants who want to develop the capacity to raise awareness and address refugee related issues.

In the training course we had a study visit to a local church in Berlin and we had the chance to see and understand the approach of the church toward the refugees. How the church allowed the rooms to be used by the refugees in order them to have language courses or how the church allowed for the refugee youth to use the church's garden in order to plant, grow vegetables and use the garden to make activities. These all made me to become more aware off the mass work of the crisis and gave me motivation to do something towards them.

When I came back from the study visit with the help of my volunteer work beside my studies I had a chance to meet a couple of refugees and had a chance to listen to their stories. The study visit, and the stories I heard those days emotionally affected me and brought a will to do this studies. Afterward speaking to professors at Det teologiske menighetsfakultet (MF) and

my supervisor Dr. Gunnar Harald Heiene, I decided on researching the approach of religious organisations in Norway to the refugee crisis.

1.2 Research Question

The overarching aim of this thesis is to explore how religious organizations in Norway approach to refugee crisis which has been going on since 2015. To understand this main starting point of the research, I attempt to find an answer to the following questions:

- How have the different religious organizations in Norway responded to the refugee issue with their activities?
- Is there a systematic pattern in their approach and practice in dealing the issue?
- What are the factors shape the religious organisations approach and practice?

To address these questions and examining the factors shaping diverse approaches, I focused on selected Christian and Muslim organizations in Norway.

The contributions of this study may have implications for understanding the interplay between philosophical and practical foundation of the involvement of religious organizations' in refugee issue.

1.3 Literature Review

Europe was the focus area during the 2015 refugee crisis and especially Germany took most of the attention whereas Norway contributed one of the largest humanitarian aids to Syrian refugees quietly (Kim, & Valeria, 2016). First, I would like to point out that Kim and Valeria calls Norway as little Norway in their writing because of its population. They say that Norway with a population of 5 million pledged \$1.2 billion for whom fled Syrian`s over the next 4 years from nearly 5 years old civil war. There are countries which have committed larger numbers but with larger populations. Looking from the population perspective Norway is donating \$240 per person whereas with a larger donation Germany donated \$32 (Kim, & Valeria, 2016).

All around the globe migration flows are defined as socio-political conditions (Boomgaarden et al., 2018). Especially from the perspective of the receiving country they associate migration with a treat towards native population, where religion is a triggering factor in such case. This is not only related to the receiving country`s status or religion, but it also has to do with the

comers' religion as well. In raising awareness or forming hate towards immigrant's social media or media in general plays a very big role. This include politicians' attitudes on TV or trend topic hashtags.

Bill O'Keefe is the vice president for Catholic Relief Service⁴ (CRS), for government relations and advocacy. He held this position for 13 years (the article provides the information) and he is working with the local organizations in Baltimore, to aid the Syrian refugees. O'Keefe and CRS have a major focus on this issue where he also visited countries like Greece, Serbia and Macedonia to assess the situations of the refugees which travel to Europe especially more north ones such as Germany though these countries. After his visit they ask O'Keefe if these Syrian refugees want to turn to Syria after the war ends and the result is; ` two years ago when I travelled to Jordan and Lebanon all the refugees I met told me that they want to return to Syria after everything ends, but the ones I met in Europe were not quite thinking the same. They have faced so many horrible things in the past 5 years that they don't even think they will ever be able to go back (Graves,2016). `

From the 21st century issue; Syrian refugee crisis we can point out a term which has its roots since the 19th century which is `humanitarianism`. Humanitarianism is the activities promoting human welfare, relieving victims of conflict (such as the war in Syria) and natural disasters (Gabiam, 2016).

There are several case studies focusing on specific actions or attitudes taking place and one of them is the Church leaders facing criticism towards refugees in Eastern Europe. Church leaders from Slovakia and Czech Republic came together at the Catholic seminary taking place in Bratislava, Slovakia, in February 21st to discuss the refugee crisis in Europe and criticized Ester European bishops due to a failure for defending the right of refugees. Eventually, this did not bring any sign of change in the attitude. Cardinal Dominik Duka of Prague said that throughout the history they have witnessed how the uncontrolled migration affected the culture and economy and caused conflict and violation. Archbishop Stanislav Zvolensky referred to the several attacks Europe faced by `adherents of Islam` and stated that mass Muslim would cause a fundamental change in their civilization. On the other hand, Catholic organizations such as Caritas Europa and Jesuit Refugee Service insisted that

⁴ <https://www.crs.org/>

refugees and migrants deserve protection. In addition to this, the Brussels-based commission which is representing the EU's Catholic bishops warned Christians about the duty they have which is to help. Some Catholic bishops took a step and asked for all parishes to 'convey the Gospel in concrete terms' to take at least one family. According to the estimated church sources, there are over 20,000 refugees which are still being housed by religious orders and parishes in Germany with the help of 10,000 Catholic volunteers, and the church's 27 dioceses have paid out over 300 million Euros for the refugee aid since 2014 (Luxmoore, 2017).

Since the war in Syria started Greece turned into a chaos and doesn't have the resources to secure its borders nor process immigrants. Traveling through Macedonia and Serbia coming from Greece eventually arrives to Hungarian borders. These arrivals started with hundred arrivals per day and by September 2015 turned into 10,000 per day. After registering almost 400,000 arrivals Hungary took decision for sealing their borders with Serbia and erect a wire fence along the entire borders between the two countries. It is now a fact that there is a need for more volunteers and more resources. The rising ultra-nationalism and politics of fear in Europe keeps away many people even from caring about the ongoing situation. Many of these refugees heard about Christianity and Christians but it's the first time that they are having the chance to see one. In the Old Testament, God calls his people to show compassion and kindness to foreigners and strangers and the New Testament supports this call with several injunctions for caring about orphans, poor, widows, and the oppressed (Winckles, 2016). The Free Methodist Church in Hungary affirms the stated biblical position and encourages its members and congregations to spread the love of Christ towards any kind of immigrants.

1.4 Outline of Thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters. The first, chapter is the introduction part where the personal interest, research question, literature review and outline of thesis is presented. Where it follows up with the methodology chapter, where I explained the methodology used in the study and explain the interview and the process. Afterwards I clarified the data analysis with explaining the coding and categorising method I uses and continued with the rationale of interview choice where it is written the purpose behind me interviewing the two chairmen from the mosque and interviewing a deacon. Followed up with limitations that I faced during

conducting the interviews and lastly in this chapter I do speak about the ethical considerations.

Chapter three, reflect the background of the interviewees and give information about their position in their religious organisations. It will also enlighten us about why the interviewees chose to do this job and lastly it will present an ordinary week in the church and in the mosque. Whereas in chapter four, I did give information about the churches and the mosques where the interviewees were working and the member numbers of the religious organisation and if the organisations whether belonged to a specific group, people or country. Which is followed by the ongoing activities in the organisations. To the end, spoke about, whether there are immigrant families visiting the church or mosque and finally concluded the chapter with giving information if there are any refugee families that visit the church or the mosque and if they seek help from these religious organisations.

Chapter five is where data presentation and analysis takes place. Where the data gathered through qualitative interviews are presented in a detailed format. The interviews were created and through the process of coding the important points in the interviews were generated and presented in the three main categories. The three main categories which I formed are; activities and support for refugees, perception of civic duty, obstacles and duty, and the strategy and proprieties. The data given in these three categories brought out the perspective of looking toward the topic which has been made by broad quoting of the interviewees.

Chapter six, is the result chapter. Where I did describe the three categories which were presented in the data analysis chapter and clarifying how these categories are connected. Which I used a neutral voice in this chapter and did not interpret in to the results. Discussion will be chapter seven and in this chapter I did write down my interpretations and discussed the results. I did interpret the results, in the light of results from similar studies published in relevant scientific articles, theories and in relevant aspects within the light of the literature review.

The last chapter which is eight, the conclusion part of the thesis. Which will be a quick summary of the thesis and responds to the research questions and give suggestions for further research.

2 Methodology

In this chapter of the thesis I will enlighten the readers about the path I have followed, which will also include the method I chose, selecting the participants, forming a guideline for the interviews for both Church and Mosque members, getting into contact with the interviewees, taking appointment, conducting the interviews, limitations, and difficulties I faced and lastly the ethical consideration. In this thesis, the qualitative method is used. There was not a specific period which was only reserved for the interviews, the times for the interview were arranged according to the interviewees there for this was spread in time.

The interviews happened in different times, this was due to the interviewees schedule, but in total I have interviewed six participants, where three of them had a Christian background and three Muslim backgrounds. Interviews are conducted in order to reach a better understanding of the topic through the interviewees experiences. Qualitative interview is suitable in this case because the main idea here is to understand and get the opinions of these interviewees upon a very hot topic refugee crisis starting in 2015 and still ongoing. Even though the interviews are conducted among members of two different religions; Islam and Christianity this study is not categorized as a comparative research because the aim here is to understand the ongoing procedure how they did respond to the refugee issue, and view of the institutions and representatives of the religious organizations rather than trying to generate or illustrate theoretical insights through comparison. The aim of qualitative research is to involve a naturalistic and interpretive approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The qualitative research is a distinctive strategy focusing on the relationship between the research and theory (Bryman, 2016, page.378-379). Rather than numbers, focusing on text within qualitative data is the basis in qualitative data analysis (Chambliss & Schutt,2015). When stating text here it is referring to the interviews conducted and their transcription. This thesis is following the main steps listed in Bryman's book were starting with generating the question, selecting relevant subjects, the collection of data which are relevant to the subject, interpreting the data including the conceptual and theoretical work, and finally writing down the findings and the conclusion.

As being used in many areas in social sciences (Bryman, 2016) the conducted interviews were semi-structured where the questions were prepared in advanced including specific questions.

A semi-structured interview is a general form of interview guide which could also be varied. The questions are more general compare to a structured interview where the questions can open-ended and allow the interviewee to choose what they want to talk about. The set of questions (shown in the Appendix) are all cover during the interview and came in the order listed, no additional questions were asked besides the personal information of the interviewees which took place in the very beginning before starting. Freedom is given in interviews which are semi-structured where the interviewee chooses the way how to answer to give a question and the answer she/he wants to give (Bryman,2008. Page-438). The questions were open-ended and flexible up to some extent for being able to get more information on the topic.

The participants to the interviews are presented in the background section in a detailed way but I would also like to give brief information about them in the order of the interview day. I firstly interviewed Øyvind Ådnøy Remmen, who is the minister of Tonsen church. secondly, Arshad Jamil, who is the chairman for Islamic Cultural Centre Norway (ICC mosque). Thirdly, Shahid Kahoon, Imam of the Ahmadiyya mosque. Fourthly, Basim Ghozlan, the chairman for Rabita mosque. Fifthly, Kjersti Langås Hvalen, the minister of Sinsen church, and lastly, Sigrid Flaata, Senior Adviser, Section for Diakonia and Society at the Norwegian church.

2.1 Interviews

While forming the interview questions I mainly wanted to divide the questions into groups and ask them to separate instead of asking questions by different things at different times so that it could be more organized for me later while transcribing and for keeping the conversation flowing during the interview. I have two different guidelines one for the church members and the other one for the mosque members. Both have the same questions but formatted specially for the religious background. Three parts for the church members in the interview questions consist of; Background, church, Role of The church. Like the church the mosque`s sections during the interview consisted of; Background, mosque, Role of The mosque. Before starting the interviews, I introduced myself as well as the interviewees. Background information section included; how the job differed from other jobs, what are the differences it brings compared to a 9-5 daily job, why and what made you choose this job, how an ordinary week in church or mosque is.

The church section included questions about church and the congregation, events taking place, the visitors nationality, immigrant families visiting the church, refugee families participating in the events, visiting the church and seeking for help.

The third section goes more into detail and questions are related to the role of the church towards the refugees. Events and charity done for the refugees, does the religion the refugee follows matter for the minister or the church related to integration, actions or steps taken in order to motivate them, shared stories, experiences inside and outside of the church, churches help during the adaptation period, church members inviting families to their houses for dinner or any other purpose, helping children for not being discriminated and bullied, the church working with the asylum reception centre (Asylmottak) for giving extra language courses or religious courses, and involvement of the religious organizations towards the refugee crisis.

When it comes to the background information about the mosque members it is less or more the same as the church. It includes the job, its details and differences, and an ordinary week in the mosque.

The second includes questions related to the mosque such as the events, mosques or centres belonging to a Group, country or people, immigrant families visiting the mosque, refugee families participating to the events, visiting the mosque and seeking help.

The third section here is related to the role of the mosque or the Centre. Mosques help towards the refugees including events and charity, the matter of the refugees religion for the Imam and the mosque, steps taken for motivating the refugees, shared stories and experiences inside and outside of the mosque, what the Imam's or chairman's face, mosques support during the adaptation and integration period, mosque members support to the refugees, inviting them for dinner, help and fund to the refugees, actions taken in order to help the refugee children for not being discriminated, mosques work with the asylum reception centre for helping them with religious support and language courses, and lastly the involvement of the religious organizations towards the refugee crisis.

In the interview process, I contacted all six interviewees in person. I did call four of the interviewees by phone and contacted two of the interviewees by email. I asked for an appointment of one to two hours if they can arrange for me in order to interview them about

my thesis. I also did give a little information about the thesis while asking for the appointment. We mutually agreed on a date and time and with all six of the interviewees we decided on meeting in their offices which were either in the mosque, church or in Kirkens Hus (The House of the church). I met all the interviewees in person in their offices to make them feel comfortable. Before we started the interview I asked if I could record the interview in order to use the answers and information given by the interviewee in my thesis. All of the interviewees did agree and I did start recording the interview.

While conducting the interviews first I introduced myself to the interviewees with speaking about my background, what and where I was studying and asked a couple of simple questions, where they were from or what they have studied. This is a technique which developed from my personal experiences. People who got to know you a little speaks more freely and when there is a small connection between people it more encourages them to talk.

2.2 Analysis

While analysing the material I had from the interviews I did use the process of coding and labelled the relevant phrases and sentences or the sections of the interview question. While finding the relevant phrases, the most important steps I followed was to see if the phrases were repeated in several places or if it was something that surprises me. I also coded the parts that the interviewees explicitly state that these phrases, occasions, activities were really important. I also found out the phrases which I was familiar with from the relevant articles I read about the thesis topic and while I was writing down my literature review. In the end of coding process, after deciding which codes were the most relevant, I did come up with categories with bringing several codes together. The categories are; activities and support for refugees, perception of civic duty, obstacles and duty, and the last category which is strategy and proprieties. With the categories created, I did describe the connections between those themes, in which the main results of the study were reflected. Then it brought down the core of the thesis based on the interview data. Then in the part I have discussed the presented and categorised data in the conceptual framework.

2.3 Rationale of interviewees choice

In the beginning, after talking to my supervisor we have agreed that six interviewees in total would be enough to interview from the religious organisations in order to be sufficient with

the work. Where my plan was to interview three ministers and three imams. Before conducting the interviews when I got in contact with the mosques in order to make interview with the imam regarding my thesis, but when I contacted ICC mosque the respond was that Imam, is just a theological hired person and the styreleder (chairman) would be the best choice to interview regarding my interview questions. Where in Rabita mosque it was the same issue and I did interview styreleder (chairman) instead of the imam. But when I went to the Ahmadiyya mosque the imam was the one to welcome me and ask my questions.

When I did the interviews with two of the ministers of Tonsen and Sinsen kirke (Tonsen and Sinsen church) I couldn't find the third interviewee despite efforts. Then after several attempts, email exchanges I managed to find the third interviewee, a deacon who had the perspective from congregational level and had the overview of the national approach to the refugee crises. This national and general perspective has contributed to widen the scope of the thesis and brought an added value to the local perspective which was shared by the other interviews.

2.4 Limitations

During the procedure of writing my thesis, I did face a couple of limitations which I will be presenting here. There are 1200 congregations and 126⁵ mosques in all over Norway. Which you may understand that in a 2 years' master program which only one-year is for the thesis, wouldn't be possible. The first limitation I faces was, because I haven't been living in Norway for long time and the limitations of the connections I had, did challenge me to find the best candidates to interview for my thesis. Where I used a technique to find out from the geographical positions of the organisations to reach out to the most convenient interview candidates. After finding the convenient ones the second limitation happened was the struggle to reach out to them and get an appointment for the interview. Which they needed to have a spare time for the interview and kind of be interested in to the topic. Unfortunately, because of some technical problems and people being on their sick leave or their paternity leave and not everyone wants to make an interview because they don't feel comfortable with their English, I couldn't get appointments for my interviews.

⁵ <https://www.nrk.no/norge/mange-nye-muslimske-menigheter-1.6952308>

After I was done with two interviews the interviewees suggested ministers and imams for me in order to interview and which they had relations with my thesis topic. Hopefully, in the end with their help and their connections, I managed to find all six of the interviewees and made interview with them. The third limitation I faced was that, one of the interviewees wanted to speak and answer the questions in Norwegian which afterwards took a lot of time to transcribe and translate it from Norwegian to English. I did this with the help of my Norwegian speaking friends.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

There are 4 areas a social researcher should keep in mind about the ethical principles while conducting a research; harm to participants, informed consent, invasion of privacy, and lastly the involvement of deception (Bryman, 2016, p.125). If there is anything which can harm a participant, it is usually unaccepted, asking a very personal question can be an example for this. An inform consent is always required because the interviewee should know where the information they give will be used and he/she should give you permission for this. Privacy and confidentiality are a very sensitive issue due to its connection with personal information's. lastly deception refers to representing a work which doesn't belong to you (Bryman, 2012, p.135-143).

Before starting to record the interviews I did ask the permission of all the interviewees, whether if I can record the interview and asked for the consent of the interviewees in order to use the information, personal data and background information to be used in the thesis. They did agree and give consent to this request.

3 Background

In this chapter of the thesis I will be speaking about the interviewees and giving information about their position in their religious organisations. I will also be speaking about how the job of interviewees differ from other jobs and what differences does it bring in life according to a '9-5 daily job'. Job as a minister or as an imam includes more time than a 9-5 daily job.

Which prayer times in mosques change according to the sun during the whole year and in churches as a minister when you hold the service that takes place on Sunday is pretty different working hours according to the people who work outside in another organisation or in a job were you work from 9 to 5.

Øyvind Ådnøy Remmen, minister of Tonsen kirke (Tonsen church). He will be speaking about the Tonsen church and the Tonsen congregation⁶ from a minister perspective.

Arshad Jamil, styreleder (chairman) for Islamic Cultural Centre Norway⁷ (ICC mosque). He will be speaking about the ICC mosque from styreleder (chairman) perspective.

Shahid Kahoon, Imam of the Ahmadiyya mosque⁸ in Oslo. Will be speaking about Ahmadiyya mosque from an imam perspective.

Basim Ghozlan, styreleder (chairman) for Det Islamske Forbundet – Rabita mosque⁹. He will be speaking about the Rabita mosque from styreleder (chairman) perspective.

Kjersti Langås Hvalen, minister of Sinsen kirke¹⁰ (Sinsen church). She will be speaking about the Sinsen church and the Sinsen congregation from a minister perspective.

Sigrid Flaata, Seniorrådgiver, seksjon for diakoni og samfunn (Senior Adviser, Section for Diakonia and Society) at Den Norske Kirke¹¹ (Church of Norway) will be speaking first about Tanum menighet (Tanum congregation) in the chapter four and in the fifth chapter she will be speaking from national perspective.

The answer I got from Øyvind (Tonsen kirke – Tonsen church) how is his job as a minister different from other jobs and being a minister, what differences does it bring from 9 to 5 daily

⁶ <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/fellesrad/kirkeneioslo/menigheter/tonsen/>

⁷ <https://www.islamic.no/om-icc-2/>

⁸ <https://ahmadiyya.no/>

⁹ <https://www.rabita.no/>

¹⁰ <https://kirken.no/sinsen>

¹¹ <https://kirken.no/>

job, his answers were; first speaking about the Tonsen kirke (Tonsen church) saying that as a staff the Tonsen church has seven full job positions. Where three of these jobs are position of the ministers working in the Tonsen church. Which Øyvind is one of those three ministers.

His main task in the Tonsen church is to work with children and families. The the other minister works with the youth and the third one is the head minister where, who kind of has the responsibility for everything. Sitting on the board and has some of the representing tasks. But, Øyvind underlines by saying that ‘we all the ministers do the same things’, all three of the ministers have funerals, all of them have the services and all do baptisms and marriages. Also travel around having small sermons, if people wants them to come and speak. But then of course as I said before all three of the ministers have their specific focus which Øyvind’s are children and families.

Then Øyvind continues as saying that;

- *The short answer is saying that of course my job is not a nine to five job, partially because if you have things going on in church it has to be outside of working hours which that would be weekends and that would be the evenings. Every week I have one, two or three nights and I basically work every other weekend. I do most of them as my job but I also do somethings voluntarily and don't write hours for them, but most of it is done as my job.*

Rabita mosque, the styreleder (chairman) of the Rabita mosque, Basim while answering my interview questions about his job he says that, his job is not in the mosque. He is working in a completely different place. This job here is not a paid job, but it’s a volunteering job. We are doing all the work in our spare time here in the mosque. Which is done mostly in the weekends and after our daily work. So it depends, but this is how volunteering is saying, Basim.

Arshad the styreleder (chairman) of the ICC mosque. He is actually educated as an engineer and has been working I different consulting companies earlier and now trying to start a quite new concept in Norway which is running his own tuition centre. Has been also volunteering in the ICC mosque for 20 years. When I asked him what his current position bring differences to him he said thath not maybe physically but of course he needs to be visible in the ICC

mosque and virtually a lot of times usually a lot of the time. The reason for this he explains is that there are almost 80 to 90 volunteers in the ICC mosque and they all have different interests, different age groups, different gender so the ICC mosque has a lot of activities going on.

Sinsen kirke (Sinsen church) minister Kjersti. Being a minister is a very flexible job which she can form it pretty much according to the congregations wishes. There are very many ways to be a minister and often you can have a short day just working for two hours and you can have for a long day working 12 hours tells me Kjersti.

One of the responsibilities that Kjersti has is to meet the volunteers in the evening to talk to them. What she likes about her job is that it is very flexible. She does not need to be in the Sinsen church nine o'clock in the morning. She says that she can come later and can go before and according to her will she can work on Saturday or Thursday evening. Expresses that it is also a creative job it's sometimes works in the mind, when she has a sermon and need to preach, she reads the texts on Monday and then it works in the mind during the weekend and Sunday it pops up to your mind during the sermons. These are the information that Kjersti is giving me according to the question I asked about what differences being as a minister has according to daily routine job.

When we look have look at answers which was given by Sigrid as an interviewee we will be able to see the diaconal perspective of the all answered questions in the interview.

- *“Diakonia is the caring ministry of the Church. It is the Gospel in action and is expressed through loving your neighbour, creating inclusive communities, caring for creation and struggling for justice¹²”*

A 'deacon' is responsible for, what Sigrid calls it 'the social service or the carrying minister'. The reason why she calls it social work is because she identifies that she is a social worker. When we further on speak about the differences Sigrid tells me that her kind of attitude will be different because she had a different education. She did have theology and pastoral subjects but not the same as a minister. But Sigrid adds that we will have the same length of education. When it comes to the minister Sigrid speaks out that a minister will kind of always

¹² <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/church-of-norway/resources/plan-for-diakonia/>

be focusing on keeping up the tradition and keeping the services on Sundays and this kind of church activities, but as a deacon Sigrid will always be focusing on to the people excluded from community. The people kind of being left out of society and bringing back into the society. The inclusiveness and of course fighting for the justice. And working for creation says Sigrid.

Additionally, when I continued on listening to Sigrid, I learned that what a deacon can't do in the church is marry people, we also can't conduct the 'nattverd (Eucharist)', can participate in it but there will always have to be a pastor or minister. The deacons can burry people. Deacons also can hold a service and hold sermons.

Moreover, when Sigrid speaks about diakonia and the congregations in Norway, she states that there are 1200 congregations in Norway. Which there are 250 to 300 congregations now which have deacons. Where they do have a deacon we will see that they're caring ministry will kind of be more developed. In the sense that they will be engaging more with other NGO's or local authorities or they will kind of be a more professional way of working locally. That time when I was following up the answers that Sigrid was giving me, I had a question in my mind which was the limitation of having deacons in the congregations. Likewise, she said and opened the topic more that there are 300 deacons in Norway and one congregation has one deacon or there can be three congregations who have one deacon. However, on the total amount of 1200 physical congregations there will be 300 of them having one deacon or maybe two.

To see the Imam perspective will be looking at the interview asnwars of Imam Shahid in the Ahmadiyya mosque. When I asked the question to Shahid about his job being an Imam what differences it brings in life, his first respond was to say that my job is very different from other jobs. There is no understanding of 'time' in my job is what he adds afterwards. Because the sun rise and the sun set is different here in Norway than the other countries, being an Imam in Norway is really different than the other countries.

In addition to the prayers and other duties he has in the mosque one important for him that he adds to the interview is that, 'I must be one good example and be a good person for everyone. I must be helpful to everyone in every kind of matter.'

Occasionally it could be a person coming to the mosque or to the Imam directly, with financial problems. The duty of the imam is to listen to them and make able to contact them with another person who could help them or solve their problem. As an Imam to all what we have said in addition to it he says that, he needs to hold the Friday ceremony and attend the school classes in the mosque. Also underlines that there are a lot of university and school classes come to visit the Ahmadiyya mosque in order to see the mosque and ask questions about Islam and Shahid says that he also needs to do his missionary work by stating that, because ‘we Ahmadiyya’s are missionary organization and we believe that if we have anything good we have to spread it so we are doing our missionary work.’ Also not every day is the same in Shahid’s job.

3.1 Why this job?

To clearly understand and to search for the story behind, I asked the interviewees why this job and what did make them to choose this job. In this part of the thesis, from the answers which the interviewees gave me we will have a clear understanding that one of the reasons behind the choice is inspiration. Being inspired from the previous people working in those positions. We will clearly see that how inspiration can change people life style.

Basim the styreleder (chairman) from the Rabita mosque is saying that ‘it is a principle, idealistic as they say. I have ideals, a belief and that belief which I have makes me spend efforts on what believe.’ Basim, believes that when they are going to work for a good case, he says that instead of using his spare time watching football, going to cafes, going to theatres to watch movies he prefers to come here to the Rabita mosque. It’s idealistic he adds.

The inspiration point when we look in to Sigrid’s answer we clearly can see that she wanted this job since she was small and we understand this by looking at her saying that says, ‘when I was 14 I thought of diakonia all way actually. I met a fantastic deacon and the way he was and the way he was working in the church made me choose diakonia, which diakonia is the social work.’

When we go more into personal reasons she articulates that the personal reason for her not becoming a pastor but actually becoming a deacon is in fact that, she believes that this is a bit black and white. From her own words, ‘I say it like this but I don’t believe in preaching but I believe in doing. I think God acts through doing more than talking’ and more clearly explains

this with, 'I can talk to you okay, but if you are thirsty I can talk to you about it but it doesn't help you if I don't give you a glass of water.' Actions speak louder than words and from her perspective God works through actions. For her that's the most powerful way of people getting to know God exists. It is not important for her as a deacon that people become Christians or start believing in the Christian God what she likes about diakonia is that the ministry is for everybody it's non confessional and the goal for diakonia is to help anybody. On the contrary she says that, 'when we meet Muslims we will be eager to help Muslims, to be able to conduct their own way of praising God.

When I asked the question about why this job, to Kjersti the minister of Sinsen kirke (Sinsen church) her answer was also from an inspirational point. She says that her father was a minister as well. So she always had a positive view of the job. As time was passing she saw that people were very thankful to him with gratitude and they came with flowers after a funeral or after a wedding or so which made her to feel always positive about the job. She says that her plan was to have one year in MF (Det teologiske menighetsfakultet) to study Kristendom / KRLE (Christianity, Religion and Ethics) just one year and then have a three year of Social Work. Afterwards Kjersti really liked MF (Det teologiske menighetsfakultet) and thought it was very interesting and fun and did her studies there to become a minister.

The teachers there they encouraged us to continue to theology and at that time there were not so many women so they especially encouraged the girls the women to continue. Every time they did my heart started pounding and I felt this is what I should do this is the right to do so now I had a calling to continue says Kjersti and explains us why she has chosen to become a priest.

Another inspirational story about why they have chosen this job is from Shahid, the Imam of the Ahmadiyya Mosque. He says that there are two reasons why he has chosen to become an Imam. The first one was that his father as it is similar to the inspiration that Kjersti Sinsen church Minister had. Shahid says that his father was an Imam and a missionary also but comments on that this was one of the reasons but not the real one. When he passes on to the real one he emphasises that,

- *'one day I was in the Mosque. In to the Mosque an Imam came and in the Mosque he held his speech about prophet Muhammad. The Imam talked about his life, where I*

was a child that time. I saw that a well looking person with well dressed, very clean and his talking's were very good things. He was telling us about prophet Muhammad, very good things about him, which people were also respecting him which I thought that I is a good person.'

Actually that time, with referring to himself he said that this child saw that it was a good job to be Imam, it was a good work to do like him and to be a good example. He thinks that, that did motivate him a lot when he was a child and seeing a good example which was nice a person, a good person talking always about good things made him to choose this job and he became Imam.

A different story every time I asked an interviewee. There are some similarities of course, but always a different calling, different inspirations or seeing that something good needed to be done.

Arshad the styreleder (chairman) of the ICC mosques, after I asked him the questions the answer I received was saying that, 'I volunteered her because of things are not perfect, if things were perfect I have a lot of other things to do', I wouldn't have done this job but because he wanted to make a change he choose this run for this position. Which his position is an elected position which he was elected after running. Emphasises more on things like saying that, 'here in the ICC mosque things are not perfect and the image outside in the markets for the Muslims specially is not good so somebody had to do something' and that's one of the main reasons why he ran and choose this job.

Øyvind the minister of the Tonsen kirke (Tonsen church) first to give a simple answer he said that, the reason he chose this job is because of he felt a calling to it in the way that he thought it was really nice when the minister did the blessing at the end of the service and says that, 'I think that was my first fascination when I was a teenager still in like 14 or 15 years old.'

Further on when Øyvind spoke about the inspirational point of this feeling he said that;

- *'I looked at Ellen Kari, it was really nice to do that as a minister, but then later on and it was more like I wanted to do something that felt meaningful and important. I was*

also evaluating my own personality and what my gifts could be and so I just thought that I'd try it out.'

When the time was passing Øyvind said that he was never really decided on what to do and he was going to become a teacher or something else, as well as maybe going in to business. At the end he guesses that he was either going to become a minister or he was going to become a teacher and in the end he says that 'I became a minister'.

He then continues explaining me how does it feel to be working as a minister; I started out and I like it basically because you get to work with people and you get to do a lot of things not very often but some days you have a kind of a quiet day at the office and other days you don't see your office at all. You're around and you are meeting people and talking to people and you get to do many different things says Øyvind.

3.2 Ordinary week in the Church & Mosque

My last question in the interview regarding this theme was to ask the interviewees to describe an ordinary week in the church or in the mosque. A weekly explanation in order to understand roughly what was going on in the church or in the mosque. To more find out, what kind of stuff was happening beside the meetings and all the paper work.

Imam Shahid did explain me an ordinary week in the Ahmadiyya mosque. He said that, first of all there is the 5 times prayer and the Friday prayer. Every day the Ahmadiyya mosque has the youths coming to the mosque playing badminton and other playing other kinds coming to the mosque playing badminton and other playing other kinds of games. University and school classes are groups which visit the mosque time to time. He articulates that some times in one day there can be four or five classes coming to visit the mosque and other times in a week not a single comes to visit and it's only the locals left in the mosque those days. The day when we were doing the interview he said that now two weeks ago there was a group of students who came from Bergen. So students and people also come from long distances to visit the mosque. He said like me people also come a lot to make interviews with him and other people from the mosque.

When Øyvind speaks about an average week in the Tonsen kirke (Tonsen church), he talks about that he won't be working on a Monday because he would just have made way too many

hours. Like that Monday when we had the interview he said that he does work anyhow. Then, a Tuesday morning there is a staff meeting where the staff plans the rest of the week and they evaluate the week that was passed.

In the church on Tuesday or the Wednesday, they would go into groups on planning and organizing the things that are going to happen in the church or outside the church so if Øtvind has a service by Sunday he would have a meeting to decide which songs to play and or sing. So typically that weekend they were going to have something going on for eight to nine year olds by on Saturday and then they are going to be involved with the service on that Sunday when we had the interview.

Here Øyvind speaks about what happens if he typically has a funeral;

- *So typically, a bit of planning and at the start I would typically have a funeral so I would need to meet a family and I spend typically two maybe even three hours with this family just to talk about how they have experienced the recent death and to plan the funeral and the story that we want to tell about the person who is dead.*

Right before I went to the church for the interview he said that, he was out just talking to a person, which the person wanted to talk to a priest and Øyvind typically do that a couple or maybe three times a week.

Basim start by saying that It happens a lot in the Rabita mosque during a week. First of all, there are prayers 5 times a day and the Friday prayer. On the weekend tutoring activities and classes, Saturdays, where children come and learn Arabic and Quran. Rabita mosque also has the Quran school on Sundays, which lasts for a few hours only not the whole day. After that when he continues speaking about other events the next one is the ladies having Quran lessons which most often happens during the weekends. In addition to all these events the Rabita mosque has seminars, conferences and events which those occur periodically. But some of them happens on the specific weeks, for example when we organize conferences and seminars says Basim.

One of the things that always happen in the Rabita mosque is what Basim talks about which is, they in the mosque also they do collect money. Which is for example for a mosque which

is going to be built somewhere. Those days when we had the interview the money was collected from Myanmar.

The interviewee Kjersti, did explain an ordinary work in the Sinsen kirke (Sinsen church). She did start speaking about several activities which were, Tuesdays the church often has something that they call it as the 'prayer and lunch' which they do start with prayer and then all the participants eat which is an event open for everyone underlines Kjersti.

The biggest stay here in the church is on Wednesdays which they call it 'open church'. Which they start with two rounds of baby song and which a lot of people come to this open church. Maybe if she were to give us a number it would be, 60 to 70 babies plus parents so they prepare lunch for all these participants and waffles. Afterwards there is a children's choir and then an open dinner and at 6 o'clock prayer. On Mondays she says that they have club for twins and adds commenting and saying the weeks are very different but Wednesdays are always the same and Sunday service at 11 o'clock.

Lastly in this chapter the Arshad will be speaking about an ordinary week in the ICC mosque. Arshad says that there are approximately more than 5,000 visitors in a week, who just pray in the ICC mosque and so that's not a unique number but you have five daily prayers. Two to four hundred people come to every prayer then there is the Friday prayer addition to it. He also talks about that they have a lot of schools visiting the ICC mosque.

The number of students that he thinks and tells to me is that, almost ten thousand school students who come to visit the mosque. He explains this as saying that they won't just come to see the mosque they will be coming because in Norway it is mandatory for the students to visit a mosque, a temple or a church. These 10 thousand students as a number is the students visiting the ICC mosque yearly and it's all from the kindergarten to the university students. Just yesterday the day before we had the interview with Arshad he says that he received a student class who were going to be 'sosionom' (social workers). Which they will be working with different communities in their work so they were almost finished with their studies and so they just wanted to learn more about the mosque and Muslims. What to do or what not to do when they were dealing with Muslims says Arshad.

4 Cases: Religious Organisations in Norway

This category of the thesis will be giving information about the churches and the mosques which the interviewees are currently working in. The number of the members they have, when the church or the mosque was built. They will be speaking about the ongoing activities in the church and the mosque. They will also be speaking about, whether if the organisation belongs to a specific group, people or country. Will be following up with, if there are a lot of immigrant families visiting the church or the mosque. Finally, to this part of the chapter we will see if there are any refugee families that visit the church or the mosque and if they seek help from the religious organisations.

4.1 Tonsen Church

Tonsen menighet (Tonsen congregation) where Øyvind is working as a minister in the Tonsen kirke (Tonsen church). According to Øyvind's data there are twenty-four and a half thousand (24500) people living without within its parish borders and then twelve and a half thousand (12500) of them are members in Church of Norway. It's still a predominantly white congregation that visit the church but underlines that they also have families who come from Africa, Asian and some very few coming from the East European countries which attend here time to time.

While we look at the immigrant families that visit the church Øyvind shapes an image in our mind which stating that, if you don't include the Europeans the immigrant families which visit are from the non-western countries. From the African nations and from the South Americans he thinks that there are around 10 people or maybe a little bit more who is visiting the church. In the end he adds that 'we are still a quite white congregation'.

Yes, but only sporadically is the answer I received when I asked the question about 'the refugee families that visit the church or if they seek help', from Øyvind. The reason why he is saying sporadically is that even though they spoke about this situation on their staff meetings he does not have any statistics or a specific number to give us.

Afterward he did speak about what he met on the church his own one day after the Sunday service. A small story he faced with refugee family that came and seek for help from the church;

- *Typically, after a Sunday service there will be someone waiting for me who wants to talk to me or maybe even it's at times someone is just you know ringing the doorbell here. Norway's a cold country and it's kind of a rural country as well so churches don't typically stay warm and open all the time but in other countries people are used to that. So we can see that people come here on hours where they typically wouldn't be anybody but let's say if I stay behind which is the last encounter with a situation like this. I stayed behind after a Sunday service I think probably it was like 15:00 hours in the afternoon. Then a woman came with three children ringing the doorbell and asking for help because they were at the transit at "Refstad transitmottak" (Refstad Transit Centre) and they were told that they were going to be shipped out now.*
- *Because they had lived for more than a year close to Drammen and then they have been moved from there because their Asylum was declined and so they were moved to Refstad and from Refstad they were being shipped out of the country probably back to Italy. They were Muslims. Well you know people who need help they go to whomever they can find help from, it was a really sad situation. I was heartbroken by them. There's not much you really can do if the government has made their decisions that they have had time to evaluate this family situation. Of course they have done a desperate thing that father had left his family here in hope that the rest of the family would be able stay here since he was gone.*

Was the story of Øyvind which he met in the church with this refugee family trying to ask for help to whom she can find no matter the religion or other things.

4.2 Islamic Cultural Centre Norway (ICC Mosque)

ICC mosque was established in 1974. Was also one of the founders of IRN (Islamsk Råd Norge 1993) which this is umbrella organisations for all Mosques in Norway, but it is not so relevant in the community anymore and we also separated from them. ICC mosques almost has about 4500 members. When it comes to if the mosque belongs to any group or people Arshad's answer is 'it's a Norwegian mosque, I use to say'. But when we ask to a person who is 75 years old person we will get a little bit of different answer. The reason he thinks to this is

that, the person which is 75 years old has still one leg in Pakistan and still she or he is Pakistani based. For Arshad and his children, he says that it's a Norwegian mosque and therefore the official language in the mosque is also Norwegian. According to him he thinks that it is one of the few mosques in Norway which has the official language in Norwegian. ICC mosques has a young executive committee and 40% of ICC mosque's leading group is women. The administration is more or less 80%, 90% Pakistani-based but in the younger generation we have a different ethnicity.

Arshad states that the mosque users in the week days are 90% non-Pakistani people. In the youth organization for example, there are different ethnicities which are; Somalians, Bosnians, Turks and etc.

When we come to the activities that take place on the ICC mosque the one who answers the questions is Arshad. He says that in addition to the ordinary Mosques things we have a women wing and a youth wing. Which do activities both in the name of religion and just pure social activities. Skating, skiing and overnight trips are a couple of these activities. Physically in the mosque we have a table tennis and a PlayStation which once a month youth come together and just have fun in the mosque.

Additional to these there are religious guidelines also he adds. These religious guidelines are kind of seminars (ex. Religious seminars, marriage seminars, etc.) and conferences for everyone he also says that every event which is done by the ICC mosque is open for everyone.

4.3 Ahmadiyya Mosque

Imam Shahid is the one speaking for the Ahmadiyya mosque. The mosque was planned to be built in 1990s but because it is a huge project and we 'are not a very big community which only is 1700 to 2000 members he adds', the mosque was finished and opened as a mosque in 2011. Which the 5th Caliph (Mirza Mansoor Ahmad) visited the mosque and Norway. Shahid says that the mosque does not belong to a specific country but it belongs to a specific group. He also adds that this mosque is open for everyone but belongs to Ahmadiyya.

When we come to immigrant families Shahid's answer is, actually the Ahmadi's are also immigrant which they immigrated from Pakistan to here Norway because of the persecutions. There is about six families which time to time visit the mosques but they don't live in Oslo they live in Arendal.

In Ahmadiyya mosque Shahid answered the questions. These are the few activities which is taking place in the Ahmadiyya mosque in 2011.

- *Every year the 1st of January they start the year with cleaning the 'Frogner Parken' and other places in the country. He says that last time last time this activity happened we did clean-up six different places in the country, he also adds that in all over the world the Ahmadi people start the year with clean-up.*
- *We are holding a peace conference once a year he says. Representatives from different religions are invited and everyone has the same topic and it is 'what my religion says about peace'. Every year the topic is changing and one of the topics was 'what my religions says about my neighbours and how to act toward the neighbours' which the refugees are a part of this as they live in this country and they are our neighbours. He ends this topic with adding that this year the conference will start taking place in Kristiansand and Trondheim.*

There are refugees which time to time visit the mosque ask stuff participate in to the events and come to speak with us. Also the Ahmadiyya mosque is and try to be in good contact with the refugees.

4.4 Rabita Mosque (Det Islamske Forbund)

When I had the interview in Rabita mosque we did speak with Basim and asked him to give us a little information about the Rabita mosque. Association in Arabic means 'Rabita' he says and it was built in 1987. Right now Rabita has 3500 members. Most of the people coming here speak Arabic and among those people most of them are from Jordan, Morocco he says. The mosque is not only for just one group but because most of the visitors are Arabic some people say that it is the Arabic mosque, but even though most of our board members are Arabic because we have one in our board which doesn't speak Arabic we hold our board meeting in Norwegian.

To the question about the immigrant families visiting the mosque his answer is that; we have many immigrants. Our imam is from Syria, we have Palestinians Iraqis and Somalians which mostly visit the mosque.

As we speak with Basim about some of the ongoing activities towards the people in the Rabita mosque he has been listing us the following activities.

- *Weekly we have seminar/ study circles where the members come together and read book, a surah (write down what surah is) from the Quran and tafsir (write down what tafsir is). This also happens towards the younger students and he says that it is open and anyone that wants to join can join. In the holy month Ramadan (write down what Ramadan is maybe in the bottom of the page) there are events which take place but this is a specific thing for the month of Ramadan. Once a year we organise conferences which usually takes up to 2 – 3 days. To this conference we also receive guests from abroad. Basim says that in Easter we have an event which is called 'A week with the Quran' which is held the whole year.*

When it comes to refugee families visiting the mosque or seeking for help we can see a couple of events that occurred and asked if they can have an event and that they asked for support. For example; Basim is saying that in the previous weeks when we had the interview, there was a demonstration for Syria. People came and asked support from the Rabita mosque. They asked for people as the support to be in the demonstration not for money. They do also attend to the seminars and conferences and all these requests came from the refugees he says.

4.5 Sinsen Church

Sinsen kirke (Sinsen church) minister Kjersti is the one who answered my questions from the church. Kjersti states that 44% of the people who live in this congregation are the members of Den Norske Kirke (Church of Norway) which is approximately 5000 people. Kjersti says that Sundays maybe who come every Sunday may be more like 30 to 40 people. During the week or during a year the church has a lot more people coming and visiting. These vary from people coming only for one time to people coming and going for a couple of times. To the question with immigrant families visiting the church, Kjersti's answer is that not so many, maybe 10% people who visit the church are from other nations.

Lastly in this part of the interview as previously I asked other interviewees I asked Kjersti the same question as well, whether if there were any refugee families that visit the church or if there are any of them which seek help from you or your church?

Kjersti starts her answer with saying that; in 2015 all these people coming then we directly got in contact with “Refstad transitmottak” (Refstad Transit Centre). Back in those days the Sinsen church had a lot of people coming seeking for help. Suddenly people just came to the door. People which needed food or needed a work. We also helped them with the language and helped them to learn Norwegian. In the following year they started asking if we had some activities for youth so they could send their children for the activities says Kjersti.

If I am to list a couple of activities of the Sinsen church, they would be as the following:

- *There was a woman from the Sinsen congregation which went up to Refstad transitmottak, every Monday to knit. This lady bought all the necessary equipment for knitting and took it up to the transitmottak and help the activity there. Kjersti and the lady thought and agreed that it was better to do it in Refstad transitmottak than doing it in the church and they just did it there.*
- *Secondly, the church had a Norwegian language course which was done by a woman in the church and three to four woman participated to the Norwegian language course. This continued for a period of time but in the end because the participants stopped coming the ended the language course.*
- *Every autumn there is an International party which is done by the Sinsen kirke says Kjersti. This international party started in 2014 where the church invited people to come with their own traditional food. Kjersti adds that they especially went up to the Refstad transitmottak with posters and brochures to specially invite the people there. Afterward some of those workers working up at the transitmottak came to the international party with groups of refugees. Which continued afterwards in the following years 2015 and 2016.*
- *They also had a carnival where the refugees were specially invited and the first year of the carnival because there were a lot of participants which were happy to participate even from the outside and the transitmottak we needed to move the venue from the church to a bigger hall which is ‘Kanonhallen’.*

Briefly explains Kjersti about the ongoing activities in the church and the activities which were done toward the refugees inside the church and outside the church in the transitmottak.

4.6 Tanum Church

Sigrid will be speaking on behalf of the Church of Norway (Den Norske Kirke) but in this part of the thesis and in this part of the interview she chooses to answer the questions according to her last job which was at Tanum menighet (Tanum congregation) as a Deacon. She refers Tanum menighet as 'it is a typical white middle class congregation'. Sigrid says that Tanum, it's a very traditional ethnic Norwegian menighet. One of the oldest churches of Norway, a stone church from 1200. To the question with the immigrant families visiting the church the answer of Sigrid was not so many but we have some Western immigrants visiting the church.

When it comes to the refugee families that visit the church or if they seek help from them, we see that Sigrid found that a big problem and there were no refugee families. Tanum menighet is in the Bærum prosti (Bærum Deanery) which has 10 churches in th eprosti and thirteen deacons. This is something that Sigrid was developing while she had the job there where it went up to thirteen deacons from five deacons. During the crisis, because of the geographical position of the church might be one of the issues but because the Asylmottak (Reception Centre) was at Fornebu many kilometres away these might be the main reasons why we haven't seen refugees there says Sigrid. Important information Sigrid adds is that, there used to be Asylmottak at Tanum menighet and when there was an asylum attack there, they were very much engaged in to the refugee crises. But it did shut down long before the crises in 2015. When it comes to the focus point of the church Sigrid emphasis that Tanum church is a church that actually engages in their local community so when there was an Asylmottak they were highly engaged.

From Sigrid's answer we see that while she was working there, she tried to encourage or to motivate the other Deacons in order to help the Asylmottak, because it was really hard for Fornebu menighet (Fornebu congregation) to do all the work all by themselves. This was in 2016 and adds that she couldn't manage to do it because that year Sigrid was not able to kind of get the Deacons altogether because we were kind of heavily organized to be able to turn quickly and assist. So what happened with the church in the crisis period Sigrid speaks about

is that when the crisis has kind of gone down and people turned back to whatever they were doing before, the church still continued to work. The church was already working with the refugee question, kind of didn't raise the activity during the crisis but they were kind of working before and after. Now the focus is the longer picture Sigrid highlights not just the crisis picture. There were enough NGO's and others kind of engaged and 'so we are kind of there when the others lose interest'.

5 Data Analysis

As I did state in the introduction chapter, here I will be presenting and analyse the data. While speaking about the role of the religious organisations in the refugee crisis, during the interviews I did have received four perspectives from the positions of the interviewees. From the church part I did interview two ministers whom were Øyvind and Kjersti which did speak about the role and approach of their congregations and I did interview Sigrid which did speak nationally about the role and approach of Den Norske Kirke (Church of Norway). When we come to the mosque part I did interview two chairman's (styreleder) which were Arshad and Basim whom spoke about the role and approach of their organisations the mosque's from a chairman's (styreleder) perspective and the lastly, I did interview Shahid which did speak from the Imam's perspective about the role and approach of the mosque he was working in.

5.1 Activities and Support for Refugees

5.1.1 Activities

Activities here, refer to the activities done in the church and the mosques towards the refugees. To analyse if there were any activities which took place in the religious organisations toward the refugees. Or the organisations choose not to do anything and just involve them to the existing activities.

In a national level Sigrid did answer my questions in the interview. One of the reasons that Sigrid describes why she was wanting this job and position is because she felt that she didn't know what to do when she was standing there and had all these refugees coming. She wanted to be able to see what can she do nationally to help the local congregations. When the refugees were coming to Norway and didn't know what to do and in the other hand you could actually see that other NGOs were turning much quicker than our congregations says Sigrid. This was a surprising issue for her because she didn't actually understand how that the local churches were not able to act quicker.

Then in her own words she explains what she did realize which is;

- *What I realized is that being a local church in Norway, where such a lot of people engaged weekly and NGOs turned quickly to help in the emergency situation, I realized that the church has a very long tradition of being a stayer in inclusion.*

After starting the job in the office at January 2017, Sigrid has been hearing a lot and everybody was spacing about ‘how local congregations were doing a lot of stuff (activities, events, charity) to help the refugees all over Norway’ but nobody knew what exactly the local congregations were doing. She said that ‘we need to find out’ and made a survey and send it to all over Norway to the local congregations. She specifically underlines that;

- *this survey was not academically done to make a proper research and you can’t kind of work on the results and compare all the questions like you can do when you do a proper job but it gave a kind of very simple overview of what was happening in Den Norske Kirke (Church of Norway) all over Norway.*

Shortly if I were to explain how the survey had been done to give an overview understanding towards the work that was done by Den Norske Kirke (Church of Norway) in order to understand and find out what kind of activities, events, charities were done by the local congregations towards the refugees, I can say that; from the Central Church administration to every congregation there was the survey sent. It was a quantitative research where the centre tried to get congregations not doing any work to answer and that’s why it was sent on email. The email was sent out to Dagligleder (Administrative Director), it was sent to the ministers and the leaders of the ministers locally and finally it was sent to the deacons, where ever there was a deacon. According to centre’s results what Sigrid told me that there has been nearly 500 people looking into the survey and about 300 congregations answering the survey and from these 300 who answered about 150 of the congregations had activities. Sigrid comments on this result as;

- *this is kind of the minimum result of what we know and also we think that there are more activities than we managed to find. At least now we know that, for a certain that these activities existed in the autumn 2017.*

Which to a result of this survey there were a lot of data collected and Sigrid thought of making a report out of it. It took several months to prepare this report because she was also doing a lot of stuff meanwhile. After looking at the data was which was collected and seeing

that there was a lot of good stuff going on and thought that it would they needed to gather all these people together in order to give them the possibility to meet each other. Which she held a national conference¹³ in 6th of April¹⁴ this year.

After Sigrid managed to finish the report, they called the report as ‘Frygt og felleskap – menighetersmøte med flyktninger (Fear and Fellowship – Congregations meeting with refugees) that was kind of the topic of the conference¹⁵. Sigrid, they have had invited people and helped the poor congregations in the north to be able to send delegates so they could manage to have delegates from all over the country. From all those congregations which actually have activities about 150 of them participated and did also have the chance to exchange experience.

The second thing that Sigrid thinks that will be useful to use and understand how to approach to the refugees. The research lab material that was produced by Den Norske Kirke (Church of Norway) was ‘Hva er flyktninger¹⁶? (What is a refugee?) booklet. Which will help the congregations to be able to understand the difference between ‘refugee’ and ‘asylum seeker’. On the topic of events done in the mosques towards the refugees, Arshad (ICC mosque) said that had such events in a matter. Which one was the Table tennis tournament which wasn’t specifically done for refugees but the refugees were invited specially to the event. Which the ICC mosque and Arshad believes that when they do things specially just for the refugees then it will not have the same effect, they have to be included to the society instead of being excluded from the society. That is because, so when the refugee families and the refugee children meet other people maybe they will forget about their own situation says Arshad and supports his comment.

The Eid prayer and the Eid festival that ICC mosque had are other events but when Arshad speaks about these two he has that there was a lot of bureaucracy while inviting and bringing the refugees to these events. Arshad also adds that they do send their own people to the centres or other places to do the managing stuff there. Just recently when we had the interview with Arshad he said that, some of the youth groups there they have just arranged a special

¹³ <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/om-kirken/aktuelt/frykt-og-fellesskap/>

¹⁴ <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/om-kirken/aktuelt/frykt-og-fellesskap---hvordan-moter-vi-flyktninger/>

¹⁵ <https://www.vid.no/arrangementer/erfaringskonferanse/>

¹⁶ <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/om-kirken/diakoni-og-samfunnsansvar/flyktninger-innvandring-og-integrering/hva-er-en-flyktning/>

event just for the refugees and the ICC mosque sent their youth to help them to organise and to do the other practical stuff in the event. Lastly he supplements to his answers by saying that whenever they get a chance or whenever they become aware of anything, such as order centres organisations needing help or any kind of stuff toward the refugee families and their children, the ICC mosque have tried to be a part of it.

Moreover, when we continued speaking about the activities and events which were made in the ICC mosque towards the refugees Arshad continues by adding points from the past. Back in those days when the refugee crisis happened he has seen a lot of refugee families coming to the mosque for different kind of occasions, then the past six months there hasn't been that much refugee families coming to the mosque. They are participating in the programs that are happening here in the ICC mosque says Arshad. Afterwards giving an example of the activities which was done by the women wing that week when we had the interview and Arshad said that there will be different kind of sisters coming and participating to the program.

Arshad continues as explaining the fun family day mostly for new immigrants and refugees and speaks about this specific table tennis tournament which ICC mosque contacted Røde Kors (Norwegian Red Cross) to organise the Asylmottak (Reception Centre) in order to come together and participate in to the event. All the participants had to pay a participation fee but the refugees which participated did not pay any fee. Nobody knew about this because it was a gesture from the mosque. So finally Arshad added that 'we as the mosque try to do what we can do'.

Here in the question with events which are made in the mosque or by the mosque toward the refugees, Shahid here when he talks about the Ahmadiyya mosque tells me that, No, there is not any event which is directly towards the refugees. Afterwards he adds that for example, some of the events that they have are Quran classes and religious classes which take place in the Ahmadiyya mosque given by the Ahmadiyya mosque to everyone. Such as the Urdu classes and math classes, but these all are open for everyone which the refugees can participate in any of the activities. Where which they did participate in the previous years. Friday prayers is open for everyone as well and there has been refugees attending there which every day the youngsters come to the mosque to play badminton and other kinds of games

which is also open for whom ever participates and again Shahid underlines that the refugees are always and always welcomed.

Sinsen kirke (Sinsen church) minister Kjersti, while she was answering my questions regarding the events and activities that the church is doing towards the refugees she did speak about a march that they organised and made the march with in cooperation with other churches and organisation. The march took place in October 2015. They called it 'Solidarity March'. Start of October, one day when Kjersti was on her way to retreat she reads a news on the paper¹⁷ that the organization Redd Barna (Save the Children Norway) they were alarmed because there were 300 children living in Refstad transitmottak (Refstad Transit Centre). Children were traumatised and they had no activities, no school and nothing to do. So she expresses her feeling by saying that 'I couldn't stop thinking about it' it was so close to us, Refstad transitmottak (Refstad Transit Centre) they were so close they were our neighbours are the words that Kjersti used.

When she was back at work she told this news to her colleagues and they all agreed on that they needed to do something and called Redd Barna (Save the Children Norway) and decided on doing this Solidarity March.

One of the most important part in this march was that first they thought of having banners or flyers but they thought that 'we need to have children' in order to bring awareness and to emphasise the importance of children which were trying to live at the centre. They did talk to the neighbour schools and they were positive about and helped them with giving out information and the march.

As a number she gives me 150 people who participated in to the march. Right across the church in the park first they the speech. Redd Barna (Save the Children Norway) had the speech first and then the other minister at the Sinsen kirke (Sinsen church) Henning Vik had a speech and an organization called 'freedom' had its speech lastly and afterwards she says that 'we started walking up to Refstad transitmottak (Refstad Transit Centre)' with ballons in our hand and with children walking with us. When they arrived there she says that there was a bus waiting with full of refugees to take them to a bigger reception centre which was Rogaland

¹⁷ <https://www.vl.no/nyhet/redd-barna-sterkt-bekymret-for-mindrearige-pa-refstad-transittmottak-1.400960?paywall=true>

Asylmottak (Rogaland Reception Centre). When they arrived to the centre they met the refugees and all those refugee children which spend time in the centre. The people and children who marched for them met, spoke and all together everyone freed the balloons in their hands and Kjersti refers it as 'it was kind of like a prayer for the refugees'.

Previously when I did interview the minister of Tonsen kirke (Tonsen church) Øyvind, besides the events and activities they were doing towards the refugees he talked about the Solidarity march. When Øyvind was speaking about the march his words were;

- *For the March I think I was quite personally engaged in it. I didn't have to go but I wanted to be there and I did put on my priest shirt and I opened the collar so everybody can see that I have a priest and I'm with this idea that we need to receive people / refugees in need, in a good way.*

Further on to the question about the events done by the church toward the refugees Kjersti adds that there we language course that the church was doing it directly towards the refugees. She speaks especially about one volunteer that they have in the church where he is very actively helping the refugees and a lot of people around here.

Throughout the answers we clearly see that instead of directly doing activities or events for the refugees the religious organisations kind of chose to include the refugees in to the activities which currently exist and psychologically try to achieve that in this way the refugees might be included easily to the society.

Rabita mosque the syreleder (chairman) Basim when he was answering the interview question he said that, 'not that I remember' when I asked him If the Rabita mosque was doing event's directly toward refugees. He supplies 'not that I remember' answer by saying that 'it was simply has not been a need or any demand from the government that came towards the Rabita mosque'.

But then again Basim speaks about that there have been a few occasions of refugees which come to the country needing a place to spend the night or a couple of nights. Which happened with Rabita mosque a couple of families needing a place to stay for a couple of days. Basim add's by saying 'of course' they are always and were allowed to stay here in the Rabita

mosque. Where the Rabita mosque had a place for such matters and the refugees were allowed to use that place.

5.1.2 Charity

Charity, helping others, sharing all these are meaningful words which explain a lot about humanity. To the interviewees one of my question was ‘if the mosque or the church or you in person done any kind of charity towards the refugees?’ here we will be able to see the kind of charities which were done toward the refugees and which the religious organisations tried to help the coming refugees here in to Norway. We will also have a look at the thoughts of the interviewees about the importance of helping the refugees.

When we look at the charities or campaigns done towards the refugees we can start seeing the campaign examples done in the Rabita mosque. While I spoke with Basim he’s been telling me the incidents that he has been witnessing throughout the crisis period. He’s been saying that sometimes many of the refugees newly coming to Oslo did spend the night out in Tøyen.

These refugees did not also have much clothes with them. After seeing these issues Rabita mosque did not close their eyes and started a campaign in order to help these refugees.

This was a campaign he says which they have been collecting clothes and given it to the newly comers. Money and clothes has been collected and all these clothes were collected in a warehouse. He underlines that most of the workers who worked with this campaign was the youth, also there has been times where they worked day and night. The numbers of youth helping in the warehouse sometimes reached 100 says Basim. The clothes were washed and sorted out and distributed to the ones in need in Tøyen and in other places. Some of the charity also was sent abroad in truck says Basim. Once it was taken to Greece and the other time it was to Jordan. Other than the youth the ones who contributed to this campaign were volunteers, leaders from the mosque and all the coordination of this campaign was held in the mosque.

When we continue on, we can see the charities made by the Ahmadiyya mosque towards the refugees. Shahid first spoke about the mosque and what kind of charity has been done in the

mosque or by the people in the mosque. When the refugees come here and get in connection with an of us from the mosque Shahid states that we try to meet them and try to help them.

Also couple of times we have helped financially says Shahid. He continues with stating that when we meet with them they are sometimes having translation problems we try to help them and in any other kind of needs we help them. Shahid also speaks about his personal occasion which his wife donated some clothes and helped with small needs last year to the Syrian refugees.

Afterward speaking all about these he suddenly made a phone call and he called Majid, which is the chairman of Humanity First in Norway¹⁸. Humanity First¹⁹ is a Global charity organization, the headquarters is in London/UK. Is internationally and it is registered in 50 countries worldwide. It started working in 1995 and it expanded to all these countries in the last 4-5 years. The main purpose for us is to help mankind who are in need of help, any kind of help. Because it is a part of our religion to help others in need.

To the question about what kind of charity, Humanity First has been doing here in Norway towards the refugees Majid's answer was, Humanity First has been helping the refugees staying at the Refugee camps in the border of Jordan and Turkey, with running educational schools for the Syrian refugees. Money was collected in Norway and sent to the Headquarters and they distributed to the Syrian families in Turkey and in Jordan. We also did arrange some local funding as well.

When he said that I asked Majid why this collected money was not distributed among the refugees here in Norway? His answer was, because the we have Norwegian officials here who do the work, but for example in Turkey the government does not help that much, they rely on funds from other countries and ask for help from the organisations. But here in Norway there is a system which takes care of the refugees; the camps, etc. he lastly adds that the main reason why in Norway and Western countries the charity organisations they don't do the helping because the government takes care of the refugees and those people who are in need of help. This is one of many opinions I received while doing the interviews. More opinions like this are said by the other representatives from the mosques.

¹⁸ <http://no.humanityfirst.org/>

¹⁹ <https://humanityfirst.org/home/>

After talking to Majid, Imam Shahid added a couple of more stuff like there has been more helping towards the refugees has been going on in the mosque they have in Kristiansand, which he states that there has been more Syrians coming to the mosque in Kristiansand according to the mosque here in Oslo and in Kristiansand there has been more charity stuff going on. Before forgetting to mention he says that there has always been Syrian Ahmadi's coming and we have been helping them. They have also been hearing that other refugees didn't try to contact with them because they heard that they were not Muslims, but even though if they came and visited us or asked help we did help them says Shadid and ends his words about campaigns, charity and helping towards the Refugees.

The third mosque interview which took place was the ICC mosque. Arshad here answered to my question when I asked him, what kind of charity was done in the mosque towards the refugees. He stated his answer by giving a couple of examples as, saying that; Yes, we did collect money and we did collect clothes for the refugees. Towards the children he says, that the mosque has collected clothes two times for the refugee children. He continued with saying that the mosque was open in the media just to say that 'we are here, we are open for you and we exist'. After saying this he reminded me the obstacle that they faced and that they received a no when they wanted to offer the refugees to sleep in the church. Because the mosque was not approved for overnight stay. He speaks about the funding they do and state that most of the funding the ICC mosque is doing they sent it directly into the areas in need.

Also adds that if we speak about the refugees here in Norway or here in Oslo specifically, a couple of days ago before we were doing the interview, he says that he just saw a post on Facebook which was posted from Kirkens Bymisjon²⁰ (Church City Mission), which the post was saying that 'maybe the Mosques should be opened for the homeless, because it was very cold now an maybe they need some help and the Mosques can help them this way.' Then Arshad just told them okay, just contact me so maybe we can find out what we can do in the following time period.

Arshad brings up some information about the Mosque and saying that, that the Mosque is always open, but we haven't been helping that much because of maybe the capacity (not

²⁰ <https://kirkensbymisjon.no/om-oss/>

100% sure) and underlines that everything here is working volunteer and the limitation is not the idea the limitation is the implementation. Also emphasises on a couple of his own opinions. Which are; we, the people in the Mosque think a lot of things but maybe we haven't done that much that we should do or we could do towards the refugees, people in need. On the other hand, Norway is one of the richest country in the world says Arshad and link this to the welfare system of Norway. With stating that maybe these things come in the lower priority. This is because Norway has a very functioning welfare system.

Continues with going back in to year 2014 and year 2015 when the Mosque did a lot of things, collected a lot of clothes and needs and paid twice. But the refugee houses have very strict controls they have a very strict policy.

They are stating that the food should not be prepared any other place. They have very strict rules he adds and gives me an example of the strictness he did face;

- *I remember very good that we did invite the refugees which were staying in the camps for the Eid prayer here in the mosque, but it was a lot of bureaucracy and a lot of hassle.*

When we move on to the churches that I have been interviewing the ministers we see that there has been quite ongoing charity or campaign towards the refugees by the church or the church workers. First we will have a look at the Tonsen kirke (Tonsen church) about what kind of charity they did towards the refugees. Øyving states that in spontaneous side we see a lot of charity going on in the church. When we look in more to the refugee crisis of 2014 for Norway's part, Since Refstad transitmottak (Refstad Transit Centre), is not in our parish here but it is like one kilometre from the Tonsen kirke (Tonsen church) we could see and experience what was going on in the transitmottak (Transit centre).

A lot of refugees came in, and he thinks and says that there were like two or three spontaneous actions going on in that time. Firstly, people first they collected a lot of children's toys, clothes, toilet paper, shampoo and those kind of needs. After collecting these goods, they went down with the members and volunteers doing this, to give it to the people who were in need and come to the transitmottak (Transit Centre). Afterwards we did this kind

of charity campaign one more time. The third time they did have more specific needs later on and the church did attend that one as well.

I wondered and asked Øyvind if this need of bringing goods were asked by the government to the church or was it done spontaneously by the church? His answer was;

- *This was spread to the news media, that refugees were in lack of towels and other basic needs. A couple of mothers from one of our children's choirs here in the church. Who said 'hey, I heard about this and why don't we' and so they organized it through Facebook and they used our church to come and collect everything here made the Church a gathering point for the campaign. So we made one trip from here and down to the transitmottak (Transit Centre) to give it to the people there. They were distributed there amongst the people who needed.*

When I did ask the charity question to Kjersti in Sinsen kirke (Sinsen church), she's been giving examples of the charity which was done inside the church and from the Church member trying to do campaigns outside the church with the church's help. Kjersti says that in the sermons you collect money and when we collected that money with that money we helped the refugees. In 2015 the church members had an idea of meeting with other churches around and going to the schools and before Christmas at the service people can bring gifts, mark them according to their age groups and drop it under the Christmas tree and we can afterwards take those gifts to Refstad transitmottak (Refstad Transit Centre). The schools were positive and we did this says Kjersti, they were a lot of gifts with the help of friends, church members and another minister.

In the same year October 2015, they also had a charity in Halloween with church member and went up to the transitmottak (Transit Centre) with candy bags and bakeries. After the deacon visiting the transitmottak (Transit Centre), he bought a ping-pong table and its equipment because the youth in the transitmottak (Transit Centre) they were very much playing computer games and not doing physical games that's why deacon thought this could be a good idea and bought the table.

There was also a request from the workers in the centre if the church could help them to get to play football. Kjersti sadly says after contacting the football schools and sports club because it was very booked the playgrounds we couldn't manage to do it.

5.1.3 Involving the members

The church and the mosque consists of having members. There is a decent number of members in each organisation I've been interviewing. The number of the members as you can see the numbers in the previous chapters. The thing what was wanted to be indicated here is whether those number of members were involved in to this approach by the religious organisations towards the refugees or not. If any how the members were encouraged by the church or the mosque, in order to invite the refugee families to their comfort zone to their homes or if there was a request which the church or the mosque received from their members. This could be understood if the organisations which were in cooperation with the church or the mosques made have done this kind of requests.

The reason behind this is because if the number of requests increase there could be a burden on the shoulders of the religious organisations and by asking the help of the members they could get rid of the loads of weight on their shoulders.

When I asked Basim from the Rabita mosque, if there were any kind of occasions that he could explain me towards the 3500 members or himself, anyhow getting in action and for example inviting the refugee families to their homes. He didn't have the exact overview but told me that there has been this kind of events happening and adding that it also happens often. Basim is telling us that in the mosque there isn't anyone centrally that encourages everyone in the mosque to do this kind of events we kind of don't have the coordination to this stuff. Personally he says that he has been inviting refugee families to his house and been trying to help them if they were in need of any kind of help.

- *After the events and activities held in the mosque I started meeting the refugees. When they started on participating to the events. I got to know them through the mosque and the mosque kind of became the meeting point for us, the members and the refugees. After meeting them in the mosque and speaking to them I did start inviting them to my house and accepting them to my home.*

- *Help the families with some cases that they had to do in the city. For example, with one family together we went to the Turkish embassy to get a visa. Because of the language barriers and not knowing the procedures and the city they asked help and I did try to do my best to help them.*
- *The last incident with the refugee families was that me and my wife were invited to one of the family's house. We were invited to eat dinner and me and my wife contributed to the invitation, which made us and the family very happy.*

Kjersti the minister in the Sinsen kirke (Sinsen church) did speak about a several activities which happened. In the mosque after speaking to the members she did learn that several members of the mosque did invite refugee families to their house for dinner. The refugee families which they did meet from the events or the families they met at Refstad transitmottak (Refstad Transit Centre). Kjersti emphasises that;

- *I think something are the most important things we did were maybe the women that came to Refstad transitmottak (Refstad Transit Centre) with knitting equipment's so they could use their hands now in or to be more productive and to produce new things. Which I believe that this activity was one of the issues that kind of made the adaptation period easier of the women spending all their time in the Refstad transitmottak (Refstad Transit Centre) without doing anything productive.*

Arshad styreleder (chairman) of the ICC mosque. Whether the mosque and the mosque members were doing any kind of occasion which made the adaptation period of the refugees easier his answer was, to be very hones no. he also said that I don't know the reason why not. Again comments on telling me that 'this was not been the mosque priority. But beside that when there was any kind of help needed or anyone coming and appealing for help from the mosque we tried to do our best to help them and we did include them among the us in the mosque'.

5.2 Perception of Civic Duty, Obstacles and Motivation

5.2.1 Opinions

In this part I will be reflecting the opinions of the interviewees which they did comment on different types of occasions. The first part of this code will be reflecting the opinions about

motivation and the interviewee questioning himself about why there has not been more stuff done towards the refugees. afterwards we will see that kind of the two interviewees think in the same way by saying that the refugee crisis is more of an issue of the government and the government has the control of it.

After and while doing the interviews different kinds of opinions came up and the interviewees spoke out during the interviews. One of the opinions that I received was from Shahid (Ahmadiyya mosque), which was the period when I asked the question about the motivation. He said that, when I asked him these questions he said that I made him to think about it. Think about ‘why we didn’t do any event, activity or program that much towards the refugees. But immediately adds that, because we in Norway didn’t feel it that much here and this could be one of the reasons. The refugees who came to Norway didn’t need our help because the government is doing their job. In the other hand saying that for example, in Turkey we were helping them because the government is not doing their job.

The other approach that Shahid reflected to me about helping the refugees was stating that, because the government did not ask help from the Ahmadiyya mosque, that’s why the mosque did not help that much towards the refugees. Accentuates that ‘if the government asked any kind of help from us, the mosque we could have given the whole mosque to the to use it for the refugees’.

The other opinion I did receive was while I was speaking to Arshad from the ICC mosque. He explained to me the reason behind that no motivation by speaking about his personal opinions. He started his sentence there with saying, ‘I can talk just for myself now’;

- *I don’t think that the crisis has not been a big issue for the Norwegian government. People have earned a lot of millions of kroners through the refugees. People here in Norway just bought buildings and rent it to the government. they got huge amount of money for accommodating one person there. Some hotels chains did the same and rent out their rooms to the government. we even thought about just buying a building and renting out to the government but it was only a temporary thing for two years and it has been gone now.*

- *My personal feeling is that the government has control over the refugee crisis and it's a governmental issue. I do pay my taxes from my income and I think that's where I help them.*

When Basim (Rabita mosque) did speak about his own opinions during the interview, he spoke about the following information. Every refugee that arrives to the country is taken care of, by the governments and afterwards the paper work etc. they do spread around the country says Basim and add that, so most of the refugees that arrived are now spread all around Norway. When he continues on telling his own ideas he talks, when the refugees are ready to come to Oslo, they already have received their residence permit. So there has not been a need for extra management that the Rabita mosque needed to do in or outside the mosque towards the refugees.

After speaking about a couple of families using the mosque to stay for the night, then he continues speaking about his opinions. He expresses himself as saying that the Rabita mosque is not Red Cross, Blue Cross or Red Crescent. The Rabita mosque is a religious community and it has its own specialties. Whenever there is a crisis we do and try to do our best to help them, but this is not our first obligation or our first priority says Basim. Continues as speaking, not our priority, but we don't have competence and everything demands competence. We don't know maybe we don't have the opportunities in order to take an act r in order to help. Therefore, people which are in such needs (refuge needs, shelter needs or food need, etc.) they do not come to Rabita mosque they do go to Red Cross or somewhere else which is an assistance or fund organisation that will full fill their needs. Even if we have done something in the refugee crisis period or in any other crisis time it has been on our own initiative, but it has not been extremely much.

In the last part of all the interview I asked an open ending question to understand the opinions of the interviewees about whether, in a strong welfare system like in Norway, if the involvement of the religious organisations towards the migration crisis matter or not.

The answer the Shahid (Ahmadiyya mosque) gave me for this questions was saying that, he thinks that it should matter, because religious organizations they are also working for people and with the feelings of people. by giving example to his previous answers he said that every religion is to be good with creator and to be good with creation. So when we say that we must be good with his creation we must be good with people, with mankind, with all kinds of

beings. So I think says Shahid that it is connected with helping these refugees. It is connected with government also it also it is connected with helping each other, so we as a citizen of this country we must give the message to the government and we must be helpful in order to help the government and be there when needed. Government is our and the government is made by us, the people living in. So it is our duty to be loyal with the country and to help the country in all the ways we can.

Arshad styreleder (chairman) for the ICC mosque, while he was talking about his opinions about the involvement of the religious organisations toward the migration crises, first comment on the questions was, Yes, he thinks that the role of the religious organisations will always matter. Afterwards he specifies that, they want to help not because of any other is expecting help from then. To those people who are in need of help, we have to help because it's a religious duty. We have to take care of our neighbourhood we have to take your local community and that's our religion that's what our prophet Muhammad teaches us. So the refugees are also as part of a local community.

As Arshad underlines and says that, I mean it should matter and it will matter that's another story that we are not there yet the potential is there and but again because of the priorities we are still not there.

Kjersti the minister of Sinsen kirke (Sinsen church) she thinks in the same way as the previous two interviewees and articulates that, yes, I think it's really important that religious organizations, churches, mosques are active and playing a central role. Because it's about people and God and everyone's values, being created and being human. It is always important for Norwegians to speak highly. The politicians can speak a lot about money rules, etc. But, I think says Kjersti that it is very important, otherwise we will lose credibility if we are totally quiet and passive, don't say anything or don't do anything when this kind of crisis happen in our country or the world.

Later on she adds, a lot of Families are now refugees. We talked about it a lot and we also did speak about it in the sermons and prayed about it and we still do it. It would be very wrong if we haven't done it.

Now when Sigrid answered the question her first comment was to say that I think it's very important and it does matter. Religious literacy is what she emphasises and continues, religious literacy which is very interesting when I found that expression, I was very happy because it describes something that I was looking for that and I can see it in the society. Norway is getting secular as the rest of Europe there is a high number of people becoming more secular.

Sweden is the most secular country in the world and in Norway secularism is so important that, it's kind of challenging to be a religious organization in Norway. This is in the sense that when the religious organisations approach the local authorities to cooperate, for example by welcoming the refugees like Asylmottak (Reception Centre) they will say that no, we don't want to cooperate with you because you are the church, we just want to cooperate with secular government. They will be getting suspicious that we are trying to get new members. This is very sad in a very black-and-white way.

At the same time most of the refugees and immigrants themselves are believers of some kind of religion. Where the religious lives that they are bringing with them. Either it was before they were refugees or it has been during the refugee travel they do become more religious. That believing is an important part of the lives of the people coming. They will then meet in the Norwegian society and the authorities helping, that will kind of help them in every way but not give them the possibility to use the religion as a resource in integrating themselves or in motivating themselves to kind of be integrated.

The Norwegian society does not see religion as a resource they will see religion more as a problem. Now I'm talking about authorities and the governmental plans and also in the media the way that religion is talked about in the media kind of is more making it a problem than a possibility.

Then Sigrid continues speaking and saying that, as a religious organization of course we see religion as a resource. I think it matters in society in the sense that we are able to, for instance when you believe there's a God you can, 'this is what I think' says Sigrid again and underlines that, she can easily understand and talk to a Muslim as a Christian, to a Muslim then if I didn't believe God existed at all to a Muslim. Because she emphasises that she knows that rituals are

important that moral and ethics and certainly it kind of there are things to religion that we would then be sharing although we don't share the same religion.

To understand the importance of religious practices and I think that it's important that religious organizations are approaching to the migration crisis because they will understand the need. For example, enabling refugees to be able to conduct the religion that they belong to. Also to talk into society that religion is important per se into this secular country where everything is kind of secular. That religion and the right to practice your religion is so important and to speak up about it generally as well.

So lastly Sigrid thinks in this sense, religious organizations are very important and matter in a crisis, of course there are other sides of it too and it's the network of the Lutheran churches. There are Lutheran churches all over the world and for a refugee or a migrant to approach a local church it's a strength. The local church can say that to get in touch with local Lutheran church if you're Lutheran or get in contact with the church if you're religious. In this sense this network is very important.

Basim from the Rabita mosque comments on this question by saying, there are several special areas. You have to specialize in something. In Norway everything is regulated by the law, and who does what. As a human being you engage mentally in all that happens around you, but in an organizational way you have your limits.

So what Basim says and what Basim thinks is how he explains that, I think basically it is the government who should have this task, but the civil society also have responsibilities. So when it escalated and became big, the authorities were not enough and the others had to help out. Basically the authorities, but when there is a crisis like this, then it is the civil society.

Øyvind the minister of Tonsen kirke (Tonsen church), while he speaks about whether the involvement of the religious organisations towards the migration crisis matter or not he thinks that it is obvious that the church should take a stand on an issue like that. This is simply because the Bible has quite strong meaning about it but historically you would probably see all kinds of church people coming out saying both things says Øyvind;

- *So I guess if you want to go with the story about the tower in the town of (Babel) Babylon, you would have an argument for nationalities and language borders and you shouldn't mix people too much up and stuff like that. The prophet of Isaiah, Isaiah for example it's very concrete you know take care of the orphans and the widows and the refugees or the immigrants yeah the people who move into your country, to translate it directly. So you're supposed to receive everybody well and you need to attend extra to the people who come from a different culture and a different country so the Bible is very explicit about this. There are some politicians who from time to time come out and say that the church shouldn't take political stands, I believe this isn't a political stand up believe this is a stand for society and a way of understanding what human is.*

Moreover, when Øyvind speaks he also touch to history, the history of Norway as well. Anybody reading history would see that pretty much every nation has needed another nations aid and help in a certain time. The Norwegians have needed help not that long ago since lots of us ran off to Sweden during the Second World War or to England and getting help from these countries to get through the war and America after the war through the marshal helped you know I mean it's its recent history.

Afterwards, Øyvind touching a good point and says that we should always remember and come to each other's aid as people when we can. Of course, the trouble now is that the need is big there are so many people in need and Norway is still a relatively small population of less than six million people.

But I mean okay the numbers are a discussion on its own but for the church it's just obvious that, when people are in need you really don't discuss that if there's need then you just try to help.

5.2.2 Motivation

Motivation is a really important part of our life. Which is a source for our energy. During the interviews the reason why I chose to ask the question about motivation was because I wanted to learn the feeling that was behind while the organisations and the interviewees were helping the refugees. There might not be a motivation but to keep up fresh or be productive, motivation is one of the sources.

The question I asked was in two stages. The first stage was if the church or the mosque has done anything which was helpful or motivated the interviewees in order to get more in touch with the refugees or in order to help them. The second stage was if the interviewees wanted to share any personal stories according to these situations which they had experienced in or out the church and the mosque.

Øyvind (Tonsen church) chose to not answer not in order and stated that the march was his personal story that he could tell me and he was personally engaged in it. From his words I could have understood that, he was saying that he didn't have to go but he wanted to be there and that's why he did put his priest shirt on so everybody could see. From his own words when he was talking about the motivation, his words were;

- *But, I think it's both a personal thing and you feel good when you get to care about others together with lots of others. It's just that goodness in it that is shared that is it's a great motivation in itself. So I think if we weren't several people around here thinking in that way then I'd probably think even my engagement in it would have been less so it helps of course that there are other people as well who would care about these things and say 'okay, well let's, come on than'.*

The words that come out of Øyvind's mouth really explains that when the goodness itself is shared it gives a lot of motivation to the person her or himself and to those others who is near her or him.

Basim (Rabita mosque) when he starts talking about motivation the motto that he tells me is 'Human, to be human'. Important thing in life for him that he explains me is that when you see other people suffering, you can't just sit still, you have to do something. When we look at religion, his thoughts about this is that the religion itself says that you have to be human. As an example he speaks about the religion Islam. In Islam, it says that you must be human and a fellow human.

While speaking about being human and being religious the approach of Basim is really simple he says. He puts these two into same categories. He says, it is not a special thing to be a human or it is not a special thing to be a religious person. They are not two different things.

At the end, he ends with saying if you are a good human being, then you have a good faith and you are a good Muslim. If you are a bad person, then you cannot be a good Muslim.

Then further on he continued speaking about the ongoing stuff with in the mosque with people motivating and encouraging each other. When there was a refugee crisis this was a topic that the mosque often spoke about it during the Friday prayers. This was one of our topics which we talked in the board meetings and there was a kind of campaign says Basim. All these stuff which I did speak about above is meant that we encourage each other in order to do the best toward the refugees, highlights Basim;

- *The most motivated and encouraged act we did was when we actually sent several delegations to Syria in the middle of the crisis. Which we sent people food and medicine, in to the middle of Syria to those who were in need, it was dangerous I know but we needed to do something he says. This was done by sending trucks through Turkey right in to Syria says Basim.*

Kjersti (Sinsen church) went back to those days and spoke about December 2015 the crisis period saying; there was a politician ‘Sylvi Listhaug’ which spoke about one of her announcements²¹ towards refugees and immigration. Which she said that there is too much goodness in Norway. Later on Kjersti tells me what former bishop ‘Ole Christian Kvarme’ said and spoke against her, when she said it’s too much goodness, it’s like a nightmare in Norway now and he said that it can never be too much goodness.

Ole Christian Kvarme the former bishop, wrote this down and send it to the papers²² and also sent it to the congregations by email. Kjersti expresses her feelings as saying that when I read the email it meant very much for her where, she confirmed after reading the email that it’s right of us to use our time on helping the refugees. The email of former bishop Ole Christian Kvarme, got me motivated a lot and continuing to say that it meant very much for her that Kersti felt that they were together in this. Every person that she meets and the King and the congregations, other ministers and deacons around the area were all very motivated and wanted to engage or to do something towards this crisis.

²¹ <https://www.aftenposten.no/norge/i/y88E/Listhaug-foreslar-nye-innstramminger-for-innvandring>

²² <https://www.aftenposten.no/norge/i/0QpM/Oslo-biskopen-kritisk-til-Listhaug-forslag>

When I asked the question to Shahid (Ahmadiyya mosque) he brought attention to saying that we are mankind. If we are not helping the other human beings that needs our help which that means, we are not human beings are Shahid's words. 'To be a good person you must help others'.

When we come to the motivation Shahid says that mosque is God's house and people also believe in God and God tells us the importance of humanity, that's the reason why I am encouraged and motivated to do good things towards the refugees. When it comes to members according to Shahid's answer I understand that they were really in to it and that they were encouraging their members to make good relations with the new coming refugees and must invite them to their houses to make them feel better. Also adds that there has been some of the members doing this and inviting the refugees to their places.

When I asked Arshad whether the mosque did anything in order to motivate him to approach or do any kind of events towards the refugees, his answer was; the short answer is no. Because he thinks it's his role to motivate the others. He states that this work was not in their top priority list. Stuff happen like charity or other kinds of activities and events but this was not in their priority list. When the mosque makes their own priority list hundreds of things come up, we don't even come close to implement all those points in the list articulates Arshad. The explanation behind saying no and it's not in our priority list we can better understand it when we look at his personal opinions.

As we speak about motivation we can see that it has been an important part of the religious organization in the matter of helping the refugees. As we continue on to the diaconal perspective we see the answers that Sigrid gave me while we were conducting the interview. After asking the full question about motivation to Sigrid I used a technique which I believed that will give me a more concrete answer and that's why I narrowed to question and asked Sigrid as have you done something to motivate the congregation as a senior adviser?

Sigrid answer the question with yes, afterwards added the conference²³ was one of them²⁴. Then opens more and starts explaining what she means by this answer and in which ways was the motivation done towards the congregations all over Norway. According to Sigrid one of

²³ <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/om-kirken/aktuelt/frykt-og-fellesskap/>

²⁴ <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/om-kirken/aktuelt/frykt-og-fellesskap---hvordan-moter-vi-flyktninger/>

the source of motivation was the 'Survey' that was sent out to the congregations. Sigrid explains the survey as;

- *Survey that we have done in several ways; one was actually the survey that actually had the fact that, the church nationally asked local congregations what they were doing toward the refugee crises. What kind of events, activities they were doing? Which made them feel that they were seen, they felt that what they were doing did mattered in a way. This is because when you are local congregation right in the north, a very small place and you don't have that much of connection with the Central church administration which kind of makes you feel lonely.*

The second motivation she did speak was about the local congregations feeling treasured. From the small congregations in the north or other parts of the country it was really big issue to be asked by the central church administration, 'what kind of activities, events they were doing in the north or anywhere in Norway towards the refugees in the refugee crises' made them feel treasured. Sigrid points out that what the local congregations were doing actually did a lot of difference. Also supports the idea by saying that actually doing the survey was very important motivator for the local activities.

Further on when she continues speaking, the another important point that she underlines is that she also gave the congregations the possibility to complain. When the complaints arrived Sigrid says that; I could read the complaints in my material and when I read the complaints, I would call them up and say: 'I realized that you feel like this and like that and gave them to talk so they were able to express and explain the complaints and did have the chance to speak about the difficult parts of this work. To be treasured and seen from nationally was one of the ways this survey was motivating and encouraging. The second way was, the National Conference which was held on April. Which this was one way done that did nationally encourage to locally congregations.

While speaking for Den Norske Kirke (The Church of Norway), Sigrid says that;

- *Our motivation is done by making accessible material. For example, like this practical tools and whatever to help the congregations to know what to do locally while getting in touch with the refugees and how they can go about doing it.*

- *Nationally, developing this kind of material is a way which Sigrid and the centre is responsible. She continues by speaking about, 'then also to use internet and 'intranet' and also to post is one of the responsibilities and source of motivation among each other.*

In this was Sigrid will then maybe be able to attend the conference and then she will make a summary of that conference and be able to post it so all the congregations can have a look at it and make benefit of it. Why this is important is because, not a local congregation will have the resources to attend a conference and they don't have time to go to conferences. They don't have money to travel either so in the way that Sigrid will go to the conference and will give them information from the conference to the local congregations. What she explained about how motivating and encouraging is to use internet and intranet is. The portals that she is telling me is to;

- *Post it on the Internet so 'intranet'²⁵, 'netsiden'²⁶ and 'Kirkebakken'²⁷ and this is a way I'm working to motivate both by giving information and also by publishing whatever I know it's going around and might be useful to know locally.*

The last thing Sigrid adds about the importance of sharing the information internally is; Of course the information part also is very important internally in this house with all the different councils. They also need information so they can spread it in their networks.

5.2.3 Obstacles

While conducting my interviews with the interviewees from the churches and the mosques according to their answers it did arise that they did face some obstacles while trying to help the refugees. Where sometimes the obstacles were denials or sometimes the obstacles occurred because of geographical conditions. In this part of the thesis I will speak about the obstacles and will give some examples, regarding what kind of obstacles the organisations faced in order to help the refugees. The obstacles which took place in the media and the obstacles which has occurred by geographical conditions.

²⁵ <https://intranett.kirken.no>

²⁶ <https://kirken.no/>

²⁷ <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/kirkepartner/Forsideoppslag/kirkebakken/>

The first obstacle I found while doing my interviews is from the Rabita mosque. When I was interviewing the styreleder (chairman) of the mosque which is Basim Ghozlan, I asked him the question whether if the Rabita mosque did anything to help the refugees? Basim started answering the question. When there was a refugee crisis in 2015 he says that many people arrived to the refugee camps and the camps did not have capacity to host all the refugees anymore and they decided on doing something and helping that. Basim did speak about a building that they own around 150km outside Oslo in Brumundal. He says that it is suited for refugees so they can stay there. This was offered by the mosque to the Nes kommune (Nes municipality) that the building could be used to host the refugees. After I ask him what the answer was he said that the answer was no, they did not approve it. The Nes kommune had several demands and declined the offer.

Further on when we continue we will see one of the factors why the Nes kommune did decline this offer.

As the second obstacle I will be speaking about the part of the interview I had with the ICC mosque. When the same question was asked to Arshad, styreleder (chairman) of the ICC mosques he directly spoke about a news which was on Aftenposten (Norwegian newspaper) and shared that news with me. The reason why he did speak about this news was because, in that crisis time he says that they were a lot of people coming to the mosque leaving their bags in to the mosque using the mosque in the kind of that the mosque became the gathering point. Afterward he continues with saying that we applied for the asylum seekers to come to the mosque and use the mosque for overnight stay or 2-3 nights stay. In order to that application he sends me that news in Aftenposten²⁸.

The headline of the news was ‘Oslo-moské fikk nei til asylovernatting (Oslo-Mosque received no for asylum accommodation)’ The news was about the formal inquiry about that ICC mosque is temporarily available for housing of refugees. Further on in the news it continues as the Monday of that week when ICC mosque made the formal inquiry UDI utlendingsdirektoratet (Norwegian Directorate of Immigration), thanked and said no. The sub headline of the news was ‘Moskeer i Oslo får ikke huse asylsøkere. Utlendingsdirektoratet (UDI) understreker at

²⁸ <https://www.aftenposten.no/osloby/i/dP3z/Oslo-mosk-fikk-nei-til-asylovernatting>

overnattingstilbudet deres må være religionsnøytralt.²⁹ Which explained why UDI utlendingsdirektoratet (Norwegian Directorate of Immigration), said no.

Here we can understand and link this obstacle with the first obstacle that Rabita mosque faced with Nes kommune and clearly understand why they said no to Rabita mosque as well. Third and the last obstacle that I found while doing the interviews was an obstacle that came up while making the interview with Sigrid from Den Norske Kirke (Church of Norway).

As I have mentioned in the previous part of the thesis. When Sigrid explained the geographical position of the church. She says that because when the church was built it was built very central and today the centre Sandvica away from the church. It's kind of desolated church placed upon a hill only couple of farms around very hard for people to have access. You need to have a car you have to able to get yourself there. It's a church which is not easy accessible. Because of the geographical position of the church she thinks that this was an obstacle because the Asylmottak (Reception Centre) was at Fornebu many kilometres away.

5.3 Strategy and Priorities

5.3.1 Cooperation

Cooperation is kind of the thing that makes the events, activities, charities, etc. to be done in the easiest way. With the organisation you are cooperated with and working together will make the work done in a shorter and easier way. If you have a good idea but it wouldn't be spread to enough audience if you announce it, with the help of cooperation you can target the right audience and accomplish bringing awareness to the task you are doing. In the refugee issue if you cooperate with the key organisation it will make your job easier for getting in contact with the refugees and will make you take faster acts than usual.

The targeted information here was in order to learn if the religious organisations were working in cooperation with Asylmottak (Reception Centre) in order to help in any kind of ways to the refugees. which includes giving additional language courses, religious courses,

²⁹ Mosques in Oslo must not accommodate asylum seekers. Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) emphasizes that your accommodation offer must be religiously neutral.

entertainments, guidance or speaking any kind of struggles they have and try to find a solution to the problems.

ICC mosque styreleder (chairman) Arshad talks about that they have been in cooperation with Asylmottak (Reception Centre's). The ICC mosque Imam 'Hamid Ali Farooq' was invited by an Asylmottak (Reception Centre) to speak with the refugees. This was not any formalized cooperation. He was invited in order to speak to the refugees related to trauma and identity issues. Imam Hamid also been invited to another city on the west coast of the country to speak with the refugee's children in one of the refugee houses.

When Imam Hamid came back from the visits back to Oslo, he was very motivated and he saw that way a lot of people who were in need of help in the camps. He got very good feedback from who invited him to talk to their children in their house, says Arshad while explaining the cooperation's that ICC mosque was doing.

One of the cooperative charity events that I found while conducting the interviews was the charity fund raising event that NRK was doing. Which was called 'TV-aksjonen³⁰ – NRK³¹'. The ICC mosque helped during one of the events where the part of the collected money for charity went to help the refugees who have come to Norway³². The news which was related to this charity event on NRK was stating that six million kroners will be spent on the refugees³³. Arshad also adds that the ICC mosque has been actively helping TV-aksjonen – NRK (charity event) for over the past 10 years.

Kjersti (Sinsen church) the minister in the church she says that they have contacted Refstad transitmottak (Refstad Transit Centre) and since the crisis they have been in cooperation with them. The language course that was given in the Sinsen church by the women was one of the events which was made by cooperation and the second activity was knitting which was done in cooperation with Refstad transitmottak (Refstad Transit Centre) at their venue.

³⁰ TV-aksjonen is an annual national Norwegian charity fund raising event that since 1974 has been run by Norwegian public broadcaster NRK, in conjunction with selected organizations.

³¹ <https://snl.no/TV-aksjonen>

³² <https://www.nrk.no/tvaksjonen/arkiv/tv-aksjonen-2016-samlet-inn-over-230-millioner-kroner-1.13295488>

³³ <https://www.nrk.no/tvaksjonen/arkiv/bruker-seks-millioner-pa-flyktningguider-1.13177199>

Basim (Rabita mosque) explains that this kind of cooperation did happen a couple of times. That the mosque has been invited for cooperation and help them with misunderstandings which were happening in the centre's or in the municipalities. He highlights that they did show up to all the invitations. One of the incidences happened in a municipality which they had some struggles with a refugee family says Basim. Which was the municipality had some refugee families which they had children and the challenges were in the primary school related to swimming and similar activities. Later on they had people who went to that municipality and speak both with the employees there and with the refugee family and kind of solved the misunderstandings between them. Basim, italicizes that this kind of occasions does not happen often, it happens rarely but whenever it happens we try to do our best in order to help and cooperate with them whenever there is something asked from the Rabita mosque's side. There are several Imams in the Rabita mosque he adds. One of the incidents happened it was me who went to meet them and the other time it was it was the Imam which holds courses for the youth and the one who leads the Friday prayer.

Which explains us that while the Rabita mosque was in cooperation with the municipalities and centres, they not only engaged the styreleder (chairman) but did try to engage all the Imams working in the mosque to the activities.

Tonsen kirke (Tonsen church) they were discussion these kind of things back in 2014. Refstad transitmottak (Refstad Transit Centre) was actually the close down to the Tonsen kirke (Tonsen church). Øyvind underlines that the church was not specifically asked about anything in order to do or help with anything from the local government. He afterwards comments on it by saying 'maybe it wouldn't be natural either'.

The Tonsen kirke (Tonsen church) was aware that other congregations were engaged. As an example Øyvind gives Grorud menighet³⁴ (Grorud congregation) that they already did have specific groups and events for the immigrants and collaboration's with the centres. What did happen with the church was that the church maybe did two or three events inviting some specific groups to see if there was somebody who would be interested in to the church's social network. People going to the church of course some of them could think that this is a good

³⁴ <https://kirken.no/grorud>

idea maybe likely a teacher which is retired would think this would be a great thing to do says Øyvind. Then he gives us a concrete example which happened in the church as saying;

- *We have individuals who have accommodated people here on a shorter term, for example the Roman woman has actually had been able to have a flat here for a couple of months when someone was travelling and did give the flat out to be used by the Roman women who needed a place to stay. Also we have people here that gives small jobs toward who are in need which could be a cleaning job for example.*

In the interview Sigrid's answer to the cooperation activities was answering by saying that, not nationally, but it's just through the local congregations. Locally there has been cooperation's activities going on with the congregations and centres at those places but Sigrid says that, 'We are just an administration for the Church 'Kirkemøte'. Which we do not do practical things in my role I don't do that, but what I will do is, I'm working nationally with the national authorities and be in contact with the NGOs and I will be in contact with local congregations. I will be in contact with all the council, the different council's like Røde Kors (Norwegian Red Cross) or Norsk Folkehjelp (Norwegian People's Aid) and etc. in order to look for future cooperation's.

The Imam of Ahmadiyya mosque, Shahid says that other Imams did visit people which I also did and the Ahmadiyya mosque tried always to be in cooperation with the centres. When he explains the visit that he carried out he says that by the invitation I went to see and talk with a refugee. He went to visit him even though there were language barriers because Shahid speaks a little bit of Arabic they were still able to understand each other slightly and which made both of the sides to feel better. Which the refugee was under 18 as he describes him. Which he was residing in Asylmottak (Reception Centre). Also adds that the missionary Imam in the Ahmadiyya mosque in Kristian sand visits two to three times a most the Syrian refugee families there. By visiting them either in Asylmottak (Reception Centre) or if they live in an apartment he goes and visits them there.

5.3.2 Sensitivity

Sensitivity is one of the most important issues when people work with refugee issues or the issues involving children inside. Because there are always cultural codes and cultural barriers which are different from each other. While this crisis, throughout the that hassle moving from

one place to another, sleeping in the streets, the children are the most ones who get effected. Parents could be strong to an extend but children just want to play, eat food, rest and repeat this the next day.

In the sensitivity issue the question I asked to the interviewees was when the refugee families have children do you do something special to not make the children and the parents to not feel different or discriminated from the local people. Is there a special treatment from your side to the refugees?

Basim (Rabita mosque) while answering the question he said that here in the mosque everyone is treated equally. From his perspective he states that, everyone coming here is feeling welcomed. We haven't felt that people they have special demands. We have some Syrians here and they are like everybody else, they are satisfied and attending to the events. So there is nothing special says Basim.

Kjersti (Sinsen church) said that children here always have activities. Activities like drawing, painting or kind of activities which are similar to these and even though there is a language barrier then it still would be able for the refugee children to participate and be like locals while drawing and painting. Which is nothing special but seeing and treating them in the same was as normal member children. Regarding the parents, they are also welcome to be there together with the children if they want, adds Kjersti. Two more issue which takes place in the Sinsen church with the sensitivity issue is that, there is an immigrant Romanian girl at the church which the churches helped her a lot this year, where she first started to the kindergarten and then which she is the member of the choir. Where Sigrid adds that it costs money to be in the choir but there is always someone who doesn't and this is okay for us. Which explains that because of the sensitivity and the children to not feel uncomfortable sometimes the church workers here they do overlook things.

Øyvind (Tonsen church) looks to this topic in a way which he comments on it as;

- *I would probably say when it comes to the children I'd prefer not to differentiate between them. when it comes to parent maybe yes. We could do something special with them, because understanding the cultural codes and just having general information is complex.*

In the continuing of the interview he gives two more example in this sensitivity issue from the parent's perspective, stating two things which one of them is what he would do and the other one explains what he wouldn't do;

- *What he would do towards the parents is, I wouldn't typically go about asking them any more than anybody else so it would kind of have to be on their initiative but I would say 'hey how are you doing' of course but I wouldn't go around asking 'um how well do you feel integrated now' I would have never asked a good question like this says Øyvind.*

About the sensitivity issue lastly Arshad (ICC mosque) speaks and says that the Eid festival, Table tennis tournament was events mainly done towards the children and it was open for everyone. But they were invited specially and everyone paid a participation fee but the refugees didn't and this was not said openly there to not make them feel separated or treated differently from others.

None of the organisation which I did interview during my research was thinking in the same way of not treating the refugee children different from the others in order to keep in mind the sensitivity of the issue. Commonly is seen that there were locally events going all in all over the organisations towards the children and the refugee children was invited specially to these events. Where there was a fee for the event and that was covered by the organisation as a gesture to them but was never said openly.

5.3.3 Religious Background: A Matter of Issue

This code of chapter strategy and priorities I will be speaking about the question asked to the interviewees to find out, 'if the religion of the refugees matter in order to receive help either from the church or the mosque?' This was in order to search if religion was a factor in order to help the refugees or other humans. We humans do help people in our normal life, this act can be done with being aware of it or it could be spontaneously, just holding and preventing someone to not get injured just before she or he was going to fall down. Religion issue might be not important at all for some people and might be the most important issue for others. Here we will see if religion was a factor in order to the church and the mosque in order to help the refugees. This was asked to the interviewees if religion was a matter for them or for the

organisation that they were representing in order to approach the or integrate them while they were participating in any kind of the ongoing event in the church or the mosque.

As I asked the question to Sigrid (Den Norske Kirke – The Church of Norway) and ask her about her answer she directly said, NO! and continued with saying that it's not even a question but also commented that people outside the church will think that the church will ask for that but we don't.

When Basim (Rabita mosque) answered this question his answer was basically no, the religion of the refugees does not matter. He also added that;

- *If I see a person who is suffering, then it is my moral duty to do the best I can to help him.*

Shahid (Ahmadiyya mosque) answers with saying, all kinds of refugees, the Ahmadiyya mosque is open for everyone. Afterwards in his words he continues;

- *I always say that mosque is God's house and god is not Muslims God, God is God for everyone. Then he gives example from the Quran. When you read the Quran the first chapter of Quran and the last word is saying that; I begin with the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. All praise is to God, Lord of all the worlds (The Qur'an,1:1-2), and mankind (The Qur'an,114:6)*
- *Mosque is open for everyone and the religion and the background of refugees does not matter. Humanity is over religion. If they believe in God or not this does not matter, because God is giving sunlight to everyone. To ones who believed to him and to those who doesn't believe in to him.*

Øyvind (Tonsen church) the answer he gave me was 'Absolutely No!' then these words followed his answer;

- *The Bible have clear references on this and religion is not one of the criteria's. It's just really so simple, just help the people in need.*

Arshad's (ICC mosque) answer was also No, the religion does not and did not matter. Why he was using past tense was because;

- *He says that there were non-Muslims who have participated in to the precious events and activities. When we were in cooperation with Røde Kors (Norwegian Red Cross) and Redd Barna (Save the Children Norway) when they were bringing refugees to our events, foe ex: some of the children came to the table tennis tournament we didn't ask who was coming or to which religion they belong to we just invited them and they were welcome.*

Lastly I asked the question to Kjersti (Sinsen church) and her answer was;

- *No. God's love goes to everyone and in the Bible it says that we should welcome the strangers. Welcome those who come to us, people that come to our country people that are homeless. Towards the people in need we have a duty to help the no matter what.*

Here are some examples of verses from the Bible that Kjersti was speaking about at the interview that we should welcome the strangers;

5.mos. 10, 17-19

- *For Herren deres Gud, han er gudenes Gud og herrenes Herre, den store, den mektige og den forferdelige Gud,*
- *som ikke gjør forskjell på folk og ikke tar imot gaver, som hjelper den farløse og enken til deres rett, og som elsker den fremmede, så han gir ham mat og klær.*
- *Derfor skal også dere elske den fremmede. Dere har selv vært fremmede i landet Egypt. (5 Mosebok 10:17-19, NB Norsk Bibel 88/07)*

Jesaja 58, 5-9a

- *Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?*
- *Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?*
- *Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou sees the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?*

- *Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rearward.*
- *Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;³⁵ (Isaiah 58:5-9, The King James Version)*

Matthew 25,35

- *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:³⁶ (Matthew 25:35, The King James Version)*

Here we clearly see that even though the interviewees belong to a religion, represent a religion and practice a religion no matter what if there are people in need, they do help others without considering the religion of the people who is in need. We can understand and comment to this by seeing that the religious representatives from the religious organisations, use the religious scriptures in order to explain these acts.

While their working hours or during their working days and also could be in their private lives. Because they live and practice according to the ethical background of their religions in any humanitarian act they also get help from these scriptures. This could be done by spreading the message which is written in the scriptures to the others. Also it could be done by giving examples from the scriptures. For example, saying that, because this is the command written in the holy books we try to live our lives according to it.

³⁵ Da skal ditt lys bryte fram som morgenrøden, og din legedom snart spire fram. Din rettferdighet skal gå fram for ditt åsyn, og Herrens herlighet skal danne din baktrøpp. Er dette den fasten jeg finner behag i, en dag når et menneske plager sin sjel? At en bøyer sitt hode som et siv og reder sin seng i sekk og aske - kaller du det en faste og en dag som behager Herren?

Er ikke dette den fasten jeg finner behag i, at dere løser ugudelighets lenker, sprenger åkets bånd, slipper undertrykte fri og bryter hvert et åk?

Er det ikke dette at du bryter ditt brød til den som sulter, og lar hjemløse stakkarer komme i hus - når du ser en naken, at du da kler ham, og at du ikke drar deg bort fra dem som er av ditt eget kjøtt og blod?

Da skal ditt lys bryte fram som morgenrøden, og din legedom snart spire fram. Din rettferdighet skal gå fram for ditt åsyn, og Herrens herlighet skal danne din baktrøpp.

Da skal du påkalle Herren, og han skal svare. Da skal du rope, og han skal si: Se, her er jeg! Når du får bort hvert åk iblant deg og lar være å peke fingrer og tale ondt, (Jesaja 58:5-9, NB Norsk Bibel 88/07)

³⁶ For jeg var sulten, og dere ga meg mat. Jeg var tørst, og dere ga meg å drikke. Jeg var fremmed, og dere tok imot meg. (Matteus 25:35, NB Norsk Bibel 88/07)

6 Results

While analysing the data, the answers which were given during the interviews by the interviewees formed several results according to the questions which were asked. In the first category activities and support for refugees, all the three codes are connected in a way that they all reflect the activities charities and how the church and the mosque involved their member in to various numbers of charity programs and activities. These activities were held either in a way that happened with the Sinsen menighet (Sinsen congregation) where people did the 'solidarity march' with the guidance of minister Kjersti to bring awareness in to the refugee crisis and in order to make the refugees feel that they are not alone in this crisis and we people will always try to be there when there is a need. Where while doing the solidarity march as they were in cooperation with a couple of organisations we have seen that the other congregations for example the Tonsen menighet (Tonsen congregation) was always there in the march to help the refugee in addition to the activities they were doing in the church.

The other result from another perspective was to not separate the refugee parents and children from the locals and try to include them in to the society instead of excluding them from the society. Where this was given example in the ICC mosque case where Arshad said that they did invite the refugee parents and children specially to the events which were holding place in the mosque. Or else another result of activity was done nationally where Sigrid hold the national conference and gave opportunity to all those 150 congregation opportunity to meet each other and exchange and get experience. All these activities were done in order to make and give opportunities to the people to be more active and helpful in the crisis issues.

As one of the results I came up during conducting the interview was when I was interviewing Sigrid. While she was speaking about that, 'the NGOs were turning much quicker than congregations' repeatedly underlined this topic which she believes and I understand as a result that it will make the congregations act much quicker in order to take an act in another crisis. Which the result is; before Sigrid came to her position in Den Norske Kirke (Church of Norway), the Norwegian authorities they made agreements with the big NGOs, that the big NGOs have the access to Asylmottak (Asylum Reception Centres), Røde Kors (Norwegian Red Cross) and Norsk Folkehjelp (Norwegian People's Aid), but Den Norske Kirke (Church of Norway) did not have access to these organisations.

Right before she came to the office they made an agreement with UDI that Den Norske Kirke (Church of Norway) also can have individual access to Asylmottak (Asylum Reception Centres) which Sigrid an I, as a result believe that this access makes it easier for the congregations to actually approach and help the refugees.

All before these agreements when Sigrid was working as a deacon she says that she had to go through either Røde Kors (Norwegian Red Cross) or Norsk Folkehjelp (Norwegian People's Aid) in order to have access, but know after the agreement she has the access. Den Norske Kirke (Church of Norway) has its own Samarbeidsavtale³⁷ (Cooperation Agreement) with UDI utlendingsdirektoratet (Norwegian Directorate of Immigration).

Where I believe that at this moment as a result to all these agreements, there is a structure which makes it possible if there is another crisis that Den Norske Kirke (Church of Norway) and the congregations will be much quicker as being able to access to Asylmottak (Asylum Reception Centres) and actually offer help in a different manner to the crisis victims.

Whereas the second code charity is connected to the activities in the ways that both of these acts are either organised by the interviewees or by the volunteers of the religious organisations. The charity activities and acts were to full fil the basic needs of the refugees.

Activities, charities which are really important in the crisis parts but what was important as these two acts, was the people behind this. Because you need people in order to do all these activities and in order to hold and kind of charity event. Where this was fulfilled with involving members in to these ongoing activities. The interviewees appreciated and was happy that the members which are a part of the religious organisation, sometimes in return to a need which was asked by the organisation or sometimes without anyone asking for something from them, the members going and saying to their local church or the mosque they wanted to hold an activity or help these refugees which were living in the centres (mottak).

³⁷ <https://kirken.no/nn-NO/om-kirken/aktuelt/avtale-mellom-den-norske-kirke-og-udi/>

For example, to this I can talk about the members from Sinsen church going in to the Refstad transitmottak (Refstad Transit centre) and holding the knitting courses and members holding the language in the mosque for the refugees.

In the second category perception of civic duty, obstacles and motivation is where that all the interviewees thought that the refugee crisis was hard and all the acts were done towards them were done in the way that it was their civic duties. In the opinions part where some of the interviewees asked questions to them and thought about why haven't they done more in order to help the refugees where some of the interviewees talked about their own ideas and said that this refugee crisis is an issue of the government where they are in control and they need to take control of it and the religious organisations should try to help whenever there was a need. In the last part of the opinions code where I speak about the last question on the interview which is, in a strong welfare system like in Norway, if the involvement of the religious organisations towards the migration crisis matter or not.

The majority of the interviews answered in the same way and said that they think it is really important that religious organisations the church and the mosque play a central role and that they should take a stand. Which then continued on talking and giving examples from the recent history stating that the Norwegians have needed help not that long ago since lots of Norwegians ran off to Sweden during the Second World War or to England and getting help from these countries were the examples where interview gave me and said that the religious organisations should take a stand.

The third code in the second category was about the obstacles which the religious organisation faced during the time that they wanted to open the mosque facilities in order to allow the refugees to use these facilities. Then which these requests were denied by the government that the refugee issue is really sensitive and the accommodation offers must be religiously neutral. Whereas some religious organisations had the obstacles occurred because of the geographical conditions. Which in the end we understand that all these three codes in the second category are somehow connected to each other in order to understand the perception of the civil duty.

The third category strategy and priorities, here I did speak about the three other codes I manage to bring up during the data analysis which were, cooperation, sensitivity and religion

background: a matter of issue. In the cooperation part the information that was given was to explain the cooperation's done among the religious organisations and several other organisations which were specifically focusing on the crisis or aid issues. The cooperation between the ICC mosque and the fund raising event that NRK was doing which was called TV- aksjonen – NRK is one of the cooperation's done which Arshad bring up that the ICC mosque has been actively helping in fund raising and cooperation with NRK. The other cooperation's which was held nationally and planning to hold nationally which was done between Den Norske Kirke (Church of Norway) and Røde Kors (Norwegian Red Cross) or Norsk Folkehjelp (Norwegian People's Aid). While in the other hand there was cooperation's being done between the Tonsen kirke (Tonsen church), Sinsen kirke (Sinsen church) and the Refstad transitmottak (Refstad Transit Centre), which were the language courses, the Christmas activities and etc.

Sensitivity issue is one of the most important issue when children and refugees are involved in it. Where there were several different thought about this issue. For example, one of the interviewees said that in children we are being equal to all of them because it's one of the most convenient ways to include the children to the playgrounds and areas. Whereas the parents might need more attention than the children, which is because playing games most of the time can be done without talking for example painting and so kind of stuff but when it comes to adults you might need to give one more step of attention towards the adults.

The last part of this category which is religious background: a matter of issue. Here the interviewees answered the question if the religion of the refugees matter in order the church or the mosque to help the refugees. Where all the interviewees answered with no saying that the religion does not matter in order to religious organisations or us to help the refugees.

Afterwards continued by interpreting that not only refugees, religion is not matter of issue in order to help anyone one said the interviewees. While speaking about this topic a couple of the interviewees did give example from the Bible and Quran as well.

We can see that all these three categories are somehow connected whether we speak about the activities done towards the refugees or whether we make cooperation's and motivate each other or even when we speak about obstacles they all are connected in a way that which all

the roads end up to humanity and helping each other in any condition without looking at their race, religion, identity or any kind of other issues.

7 Discussion

Activities which were done toward the refugees were important in a lot way. Instead of leaving them alone in the Asylmottak (Asylum Reception Centres) and make them wait throughout the application procedure, inviting them to the religious organisations would help them to overcome the traumas easier. After all the things that refugees faced during the period till they arrived in to a safer place is something which we can't understand until we face the same challenges. People might think that a small congregation in the North won't make a lot of change in the refugee crisis, but the examples that we see in the other countries Germany, Poland, etc. will either give us motivation to act towards the crisis or just will bring awareness to people.

One of the activities which took place recently after the refugees started coming to Norway was the 'Solidarity March' which took place in October 2015. Where, Kjersti the minister of Sinsen kirke (Sinsen church) couldn't stop thinking about the refugees who were in need of help and by the help of her colleagues and Redd Barna (Save the Children Norway) they decided on making this march with children from the neighbour schools in order to bring awareness and make the refugees feel that, we are with them and will do our best to help them.

We can clearly see that even a small congregation up in the North means a lot of people. Sigrid, while she was holding the national conference clearly showed us that these mean a lot.

You, not knowing doesn't give you the right to regret it, you cannot say that it does not exist without a proof. Unless you find something proofing against it, there is always a hope. The 150 congregations all over Norway having activities toward the refugee crisis shows us that there is a number of people who are aware of this crisis and trying to help them to overcome all the bad days, traumas they had while settling to those small villages or cities they are living in now. We just need to dig in more and find out the activities done nationally and present to the others in order to bring awareness to the crisis and motivate people to help others.

The NGO's turning quicker in to the crisis than the religious organisations show us that we have a lot to learn from the NGO's and it would always help the religious organisations, government and NGO's to cooperate and work together in the issues that concern us nationally. We belong to the same society, live in the same country and share the same world. The apartments, houses, rooms we live in might differ from each other but still, we inhale the same oxygen. The mosques and congregations/churches helping each other and working together towards the refugee crisis will help the awareness spread easily. With the spreading of the news eventually people will understand the situation in a shorter period and will work on this case. Religious organisations have their own members which are tied from heart to the institutions and can help in many ways when needed.

Røde Kors (Norwegian Red Cross) and Norsk Folkehjelp (Norwegian People's Aid) are kinds of aid organisations which will be one of the first intersection where people in need will get in contact. This is because these kinds of organisations are nationally, and internationally well-known organisations and they are the first stop when people need help in any kind of crisis. When the religious organisations are in touch with these organisations they can act and be more useful toward the needs faster than trying to find the people who are in need. The burden on the shoulders of the governments and the aid organisation will be lighter in this way.

Charity, helping others, sharing, are all meaningful words which explain a lot about humanity. From my perspective, this is one of the important topics in any kind of crisis happening all over the world. It does not need to be only in wars or any kind of natural disaster, I believe people always should help others when they are in need.

Charity and fund raisings are kind of good habits when people start doing for the first time. Helping others and trying to empathize will always help to overcome the crisis. The Rabita mosque taking a fast action and collecting clothes for days and days towards the refugees after witnessing that people spending nights outside in the cold days would mean a lot to the ones who receive the aids. Including the members and the volunteers will help in two main ways.

Which the first way will make the volunteers become aware of the crisis and will do acts in order to help towards the crises. Secondly outside that atmosphere they will always be thinking about that and will be speaking around about the issue which will make a lot of

people to be aware of the crisis and will give a feeling them in order to do the same kind of stuff or at least bring them the will to help the ones in need. The inclusion of the members will also reduce the amount of mass work which needs to be done towards the refugee crisis.

The perception of civic duty is important because to understand or to be aware of this duty will kind of be an icebreaker and accepting this ideology will help people to get started with stuff easier. Whenever there is a need or things to do toward the crisis victims the perception of the civic duty will help the people to act faster. Here in my opinion, this refugee crisis is a governmental issue and the government needs to take care of it. This is a really sensitive issue, people run away leaving their homes because of war, because their lives were in danger, all the approaches must be neutral. But the important issue here is that if we do help or act towards the crisis until the furthest limits and when we come to those limits we say that we took the responsibility, have done everything we can as the citizens and now the rest is a governmental issue where we will wait and see what the government does. This is kind of the best way to approach to the crisis issues which will cause the least damage.

Whereas, all the interviewees answered the question about whether, in a strong welfare system like in Norway, if the involvement of the religious organisations towards the refugee crisis matter or not, the giving answers stated that; yes, it does and it should always matter and have involvement. This is a point which I highly agree to. If I were to speak in the highlight of the verses given from the Bible and the Quran, the approach of the religious organisations matters a lot. Because we live according to those values written in the holy books and holy scriptures. There are clear commandments written to help those who are in need. Always take care of the neighbours or the ones who come and seek for help. As Øyvind said in his answers; the numbers can be discussed but for the church, it's just obvious that when people are in need you really don't discuss that, if there's need then you just try to help.

The information given about the recent history where the Norwegians needed help not that long ago since lots of Norwegians ran off to Sweden during the Second World War or to England and seek help from these countries. This is a good example to give in order to support and clarify that the approach of people and the religious organisation towards the refugee crises do matter and will always matter. Which I also believe that it will really be helpful and help the government do approach to the crisis and will help to overcome it in an easier way.

Motivation, being motivated is always important. The more you are into something the more motivated you will be and will always make you feel more worthwhile and your energy will be high towards helping others. We do not and should not always wait to be reminded by others. Seeing people doing stuff or the government doing things towards the refugee crisis also motivates us but the issue here is that how much are we aware of that motivation. We should learn to be fired from inside. Helping should be an action where everyone should be digested.

During the period of crisis, there will always be obstacles, because we are not perfect. We all have ideas and think about stuff in our own opinion, things we think about could be right but might not be the same for others. From a government perspective, the refugee crisis issue is a highly sensitive topic and all the approaches should be neutral. Which is to be agreed with.

When the Rabita mosque and the ICC mosque wanted to open their mosques or additional buildings the obstacles they faced from the government, were that its approach should be religiously neutral and understandable. But the most important point here is that when there are this kind of obstacles or any other kind the religious organisations no matter what continue in the same tempo and with the same energy to help the crisis victims then we can understand that this approach is not religious, and this approach is only for humanitarian values.

Strategy and priorities, are always important to be ready and to act in a strategical way because in any kind of obstacles face, if you have a strong strategy you can still continue your way. Instead of jumping into the middle of an occasion, if you have a strategy and plan all the things that can go wrong or think about the ways which might need more attention on it and this will always make you stronger. A good strategy is a good way to approach the goal or to the target.

The cooperation among the religious organisations and Asylmottak (Reception Centre) shows that there is always need for more. The ethnic background will always bring a challenge and the Imam's being invited to the Asylmottak (Reception Centre) shows that it is always healthy to have a help from outside who is kind of more expert in the issues which involve ethnicity in it. In addition to this, it is highly important to cooperate with national channels and help

them in fundraising events. It will help to bring awareness to the communities which are in connections with the religious organisations.

Røde Kors (Norwegian Red Cross) or Norsk Folkehjelp (Norwegian People's Aid), are organisations which try to work and do stuff for the good of the community. When refugees come to a country and their applications are accepted they become a part of the community. Which sometimes takes time to be involved in it or sometimes it could be easy. Depending on where you are and how your integration process takes place and here we can again refer to the duty of the government to help these asylum seekers during the integration process. These kinds of organisations have been and still working for the good of the community, to help people in the best way that they can do. That's why the crisis issues will be easier to approach than the other organisation will also meet the refugees for the first time in real after watching or reading about their conditions from the news.

They might not be the best option, it's hard to comment on that but because it's their job dealing with crisis, they will be more experienced than the locals and the religious organisations and will be able to face any kind of circumstances in an easier way. Where the cooperation of the religious organisations could be the next step, with helping these organisations after the first touch.

Sensitivity issue is one of the most important issues when children and refugees are involved in the approaching toward this period. For example, one of the interviewees said that for children we are being equal to all of them because it's one of the most convenient ways to include the children at the playgrounds and areas. The comment to this was when the child has activities it's either drawing or chasing each other it's mainly games and the games that children play most of the time don't need that much language and verbal communication. Children use their body language more actively in this cases.

Being equal to all children and not doing something special for one or another is really important in order to not make the children feel excluded, discriminated, or even bullied. This is because they are always more sensitive than grownups. Whereas the parents might also need as much attention as the children need. Attention toward the parents should be in a way that you should help or approach them without offending them and try to be as neutral as possible in binary relations.

One of the important categories of the thesis is religious background: a matter of issue, from my perspective. In the religious organisations or in people who believe in something, in their lives, religion plays a very important role. When you are a religious person you try to do your prayers, try to full fill your religious duties and the duties which you have toward other beings. You try to build your life on the religious ethical context. During the interviews, a couple of interviewees gave examples from the Bible and Quran which shows that in religious organisations we live in the harmony of the holy scriptures and try to live according to the commandments inside the holy books. Whereas all the interviewees added that religion is not a matter of issue in order to help refugees or anyone one said the interviewees. Also added that these religious organisations are open to all the people no matter their religion or identity.

These categories are important and helpful to consider while the religious organisations approach the refugee crisis. Whether we make cooperation's or we motivate is other or do activities and charities. All these acts will connect us in a way that we will be helping each other no matter anything. In the will bring all the thought to think that no matter what, it's only the human that matters.

During my literature review, I have noticed that there are people around the world travelling and keeping notes, making reports of the people in countries close to Syria which these peoples could escape to. This was a factor which made me focus on local issues in Norway because the views of Such religious organizations both Muslim and Christian were very precious.

In my opinion, what is recorded today about the Refugees which had the chance to survive and reach Norway or any other country it will be the peacebuilding for the future. Forget about all the cultural and traditional differences these people believed in a different religion and regardless of this factor many countries opened their doors to these people seeking for help. Norway is supporting the immigrants today both financially and socially in a very humanistic manner. Even though the refugee crisis is seen as a threat to some extends to the cultural and religious factors in a country due to a large number of arrivals Norway managed to keep the necessary balance for both sides.

8 Conclusion

This thesis examined how religious organisations in Norway approach to refugee crises. The role of the church and the mosque in Norway. Which is firstly, shown as the activities and support for the refugees. The interviewees were asked several questions to examine the activities, charity done in the church and the mosque and looking in to the involvement of the members to ward these activities. According to the answers, I did explain and looked more detailed in to these codes and did give a more concrete overlook to the activities and charities done in the religious organisations toward the refugees. With explaining the systematic patterns which the church and the mosque used in their activities, charity events and involving their members in to the approach while dealing with the crisis issue.

Second category, did observe the perception of civic society, obstacles and motivation. Opinion part is where I got answers for the question whether, in a strong welfare system like in Norway, if the involvement of the religious organisations towards the migration crisis matter or not. This code made it clear and supported the idea of the religious organisations should be more involved in to the migration and refugee crisis. Whereas we see more concrete examples from Europe written in the literature review. Where in Germany according to the estimated church sources, there are over 20,000 refugees which are still being housed by the help of 10,000 Catholic volunteers. With in addition to this the churches 27 dioceses have paid over 300 million Euros for the refugee aid since 2014. Where in Norway, we can see that actively there has been 150 congregations nationally been doing activities charities and financial aids toward the refugees living in their congregations.

As elaborated on the answers given in the main codes we clearly see that motivation is an important factor about work done towards the refugees. Where even a document or an information shared with the congregations and members could be motivating in order to increase the efficiency on the work done. Whereas the approaches and practices would be shaped according to the factors and shared information. Obstacles code clearly stated that there can be limitations barriers to the work you do but you should not give up and try to find new ways to help the victims of the crisis.

Lastly, the strategies where the religious organisations involved in to their work upon approaching towards the refugees where to build the activities or the help on the cooperation's. Which directly helped them to make people more aware of the crisis and made their voice to be heard from a wider audience. A result to this we have seen that the church leaders from Slovakia and Czech Republic cooperate and came together in a commonly organized at the Catholic seminary taking place in Bratislava, Slovakia in order to discuss the refugee crisis in Europe and criticized Ester European bishops due to a failure for defending the right of refugees. This was done in order to bring awareness in those countries and for problem solving. Where similar activity came together by The Church of Norway organizing a seminar in order to bring all the congregations which are doing activities in Norway in order to exchange knowledge, experience and to be more informed nationally. Another similar cooperation's which was done between the organisations such as; Norwegian Red Cross, Norwegian People's Aid, Reception Centres in Norway, Norwegian Directorate of Immigration and the religious organisations.

In this thesis I mainly explore how the religious organisations in Norway approach to the refugee crisis. As religious organisations I did focus three Christian organisations and on three Islamic organisations. As a suggestion for the further research, I believe that there can be two particular projects done. First, there could be a comparative study done to investigate among all the different sects in Christianity and the different sects in Islam in Norway. Secondly, the focus can be narrowed and the research can be on the congregational approach level to the refugee crisis. This could examine more specific regional congregations in all over Norway and present us an overview of the congregational approach in Norway.

Appendix: Interview Guide

Questions asked towards the Church

Background

- How is your job different from other jobs?
- Being a Minister, what differences does it bring in life according to a "9-5 daily routine" job?
- Why this job?
- What did make you choose this job?
- Describe an ordinary week in the Church?

Church

- Can you please speak a little bit (give us information) about the Church and the Menighet (Congregation)?
 - o Events you do in the Church?
 - o Is it only Norwegians visiting the Church or are there other Nations?
 - o Do you have a lot of immigrant families visiting the Church?
 - o Do you have any refugee families that;
 - Participated in the Church events
 - Visited the Church
 - Seek for help

Role of the Church

- Has your Church done anything to help the Refugees.
 - o What kind of event?
 - o What kind of charity?
- Are there any event's made in the Church or by the Church towards Refugees?
 - o If Yes, How?
 - o If No, Why not?
- Does the Religion of the Refugee matters in order you as the Minister or the Church to help the Refugees?

- In order to approach them?
- Integrate them?
- Has your Church, done anything that was very helpful / motivated you to get more touch with the Refugees. Or are there personal stories that you would like to share that you have had experienced in the Church or outside the Church.
- Has your Church done anything to make the Refugees adaptation period easier.
 - The Church members invite the Refugee families to their home for dinner, etc.
- If the Refugees have children do you do something special to make them not feel discriminated from the local people.
- Does your Church work in co-operation with the Asylmottak (Reception Centre)?
 - In order to give them additional language courses
 - Religious courses
- In a strong welfare system like in Norway does the involvement of the religious organisations towards the migration crisis matter?

Questions asked towards the Mosque

Background

- How is your job different from other jobs?
- Being an Imam, what differences does it bring in life according to a "9-5 daily routine" job?
- Why this job?
- What did make you choose this job?
- Describe an ordinary week in the Mosque?

Mosque

- Can you please speak a little bit (give us information) about the Mosque?
 - o Events you do in the Mosque?
 - o Does this Centre belong to a specific Group/Country/People?
 - o Do you have a lot of immigrant families visiting the Mosque?
 - o Do you have any refugee families that;
 - Participated in the events going on in the Mosque
 - Visited the Mosque
 - Seek for help

Role of the Mosque (Centre)

- Has your Mosque done anything to help the Refugees.
 - o What kind of event?
 - o What kind of charity?
- Are there any event's made in the Mosque or by the Mosque towards Refugees?
 - o If Yes, How?
 - o If No, Why not?
- Does the Religion of the Refugee matters in order you as the Imam or the Mosque to help the Refugees?
 - o In order to approach them?
 - o Integrate them?

- Has your Mosque, done anything that was very helpful / motivated you to get more touch with the Refugees. Or are there personal stories that you would like to share that you have had experienced in the Mosque or outside the Mosque.
- Has your Mosque done anything to make the Refugees adaptation period easier.
 - o The Mosque members invite the Refugee families to their home for dinner, etc.
- If the Refugees have children do you do something special to make them not feel discriminated from the local people.
- Does your Mosque work in co-operation with the Asylmottak (Reception Centre)?
 - o In order to give them additional language courses
 - o Religious courses
- In a strong welfare system like in Norway does the involvement of the religious organisations towards the migration crisis matter?

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