Chapter 7
Jewishness and Space: Negotiating Jewish Identity and the Jewish Cemetery in the Local Context of Trondheim, Norway

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7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the connection between Jewish identity and place in a Jewish community. The focus is on the Jewish cemetery in Trondheim and the aim is to explore how Jewish identity affects preferences for cemetery space. The way the Jewish cemetery may mobilise or immobilise Jewish identity and belonging to the Jewish community is a multifaceted topic that relates to such wider experiences as mobility, relations to places of origin and Jewish networks. As discussed in this chapter, several aspects, religion, the Holocaust and their Jewish kin relations are in play for the participants.

The Trondheim Jews, together with the rest of the Jews in Norway, constitute a small part of the Norwegian population with almost 170 years of residence in Norway. Despite being a small minority, they are an active and established minority that has managed to continue Jewish life after the Holocaust – in a cultural-religion sense within national regulations, norms and practices. Approximately 1400 Jews live in Norway (European Jewish Congress, 2022), and most live in the Oslo area. They run several Jewish cultural institutions which attract much attention and are attended by Jews and non-Jews, including festivals, museums and Holocaust memorial days.[1] A total of 741 Norwegian or foreign-born Jews are affiliated with one of the two Orthodox congregations, the only congregational alternatives in Norway.

[1] The Jewish Museum in Trondheim (established 1994), the Jewish Museum in Oslo (established 2008) and the Centre for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities organise an annual cultural festival in Trondheim (since 2010), a Jewish film day in Oslo, and mark the International Holocaust Day and the deportation of Norwegian Jews.

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Delays in establishing families, having fewer children, intermarriage and weaker bonds to the Jewish culture have made it difficult to preserve a cohesive community based primarily on Judaic tradition. However, Jews in Norway have proven to manage various social networks that maintain Jewish belonging in different ways (Banik & Høeg, 2022).

The Jews in Trondheim are a tiny but established minority with 140 years of history in the city. Their cemetery is located in Trondheim at the Lademoen Cemetery, one of the twenty-two cemeteries in the municipality, and is considered to be a community cemetery, bought and owned by the Orthodox congregation, *Det jødiske samfunnet i Trondheim*. Modern Orthodox Judaism is the official religious line of the tiny congregation with its 132 members (see Regjeringen, 2022). As the members' worldviews range from religious to secular, the congregation can be described as a community congregation where the members' different levels of observance are accepted. Even though most of the members are secular, they maintain the traditional funeral practices at the Jewish cemetery in Trondheim.

The Jewish response to death and dying reveals a story of cultural change and continuity. Mobilities and adaption to changing communities with diverse needs impact the heritage of the Jewish burial culture (Golbert, 2006, p. 65). Mobility in a Jewish context is not a new phenomenon. Jewish history is full of upheavals, wanderings and new beginnings. International relations have brought Jews to Trondheim but have also taken them away (Reitan, 2005). The Jewish minority community in Norway and Trondheim encompasses the mobilities of a historic diapsora, influx of refugees during the interwar years, Holocaust transport, and more recent international migration; different trajectors have resulted in Jewish residents in Trondheim encompassing a diverse range of perspectives deriving from national backgrounds, a history in Norway, and for some, also strong connections to Israel (Høeg, 2022). Thus, the Orthodox congregation in Trondheim is a diverse national community with Norwegian-born and foreign-born Jews. Almost all Norwegian-born Jews, converted Jews and Jews who are married to Norwegian-born Jews who live in Trondheim and the central and northern part of Norway (Nordenfjellsk) are affiliated with the congregation. Many Jews who have immigrated in the last decades are also affiliated. In a globalised world, the creation of sites of belonging and the association with people's roots in both their new home and place of origin are vital themes in the discussion of migration (Halvik et al., 2018, p. 1). Migration raises questions relating to family division and transnational communication but also about where to find a place of burial, comfort and remembrance (Maddrell et al., 2018). In this context, cemeteries are contemporary meeting places for mobile and non-mobile people of the same race, ethnicity, religion and native place.

Transnational migration extends social relationships beyond the local one. In the same way, transnational activity links migrant communities with places of origin (Kivisto, 2014). Alternatively, the host country can be continuously produced by the very fact of being and becoming a part of the migrants' specific location (Hunter, 2016). Many Jews also have a strong social link to Israel, having lived there for a while themselves or having relatives and friends living there permanently. Thus Israel becomes a central location for providing ties to their Jewishness. Place is thus

subjected to revision as it is vulnerable to changes relating to the person who embodies it, both on personal and community levels. In the complex interrelation of places, a place of origin can be exchanged with a new homeplace, or the homeplace may not be permanently fixed in a single location (Ahmed et al., 2003). Cemeteries of both minority and majority groups convey history and signs of inclusion and exclusion. Thus, burial grounds reflect and preserve cultural and collective identity, as well as create a way to claim belonging or stability in a new country (Saramo, 2019, p. 8). Death rituals and other mortuary practices related to death often solidify the attachments to place held by those who have died and also those who mourn them (Høeg, 2019, 2023a). In one way, death may be the occasion for what Alistair Hunter describes as the deepest foundation for homemaking in the diaspora, through funeral rituals and memorialisation (Hunter, 2016, p. 249). At the same time, the cemetery may serve as the site for working out interethnic conflicts, while the invisible and visible borders built around the group suggest the negotiation of differences (Amanik & Fletcher, 2020, p. 4).

Taking all of these aspects of ethnic minority, space, migration and mobility into account, the guiding questions for this chapter are: How do the Jews in Trondheim negotiate the decision of being buried in the fixed space of the Jewish cemetery? How does belonging to the Jewish community and changes and variations in Jewish identity affect the wish for or wish against being buried in the Jewish cemetery? Do the physical boundaries in the burial space coincide with conceptions of what a Jewish community is or should be? Using qualitative studies of Jews living in Trondheim, or who have grown up in Trondheim, this chapter will focus on the informants' narratives of burial preferences for the local Jewish cemetery or elsewhere. As some background is needed to apprehend these questions, the following section provides an outline of the history of the Jewish community in Trondheim. Second, the chapter provides an overview of the history of the Jewish cemetery. Subsequently, I describe the site and how, in the cemetery's physical layout, the short history of Trondheim's Jews is visible in several respects, and I analyse in-depth life-story interviews about the role of the cemetery and negotiations around informants' attachments to the cemetery and burial decisions.

7.2 The Jewish Community

In a small quiet corner of the Lademoen neighbourhood one will find Trondheim's Jewish cemetery and burial chapel. The elderly people and infants who found their resting place here were among the first generation of Jewish immigrants to Trondheim and the surrounding area (the west-central region of Norway) in the late-nineteenth to early twentieth century. After the Norwegian constitution was amended in 1851, granting Jews permission to settle in Norway, about thirty Jewish families immigrated to Trondheim between 1880 and 1890 (Reitan, 2005, p. 40). They formed a local Jewish community, and after some years established an Orthodox congregation. They initially rented synagogue rooms and, in 1903, after years of

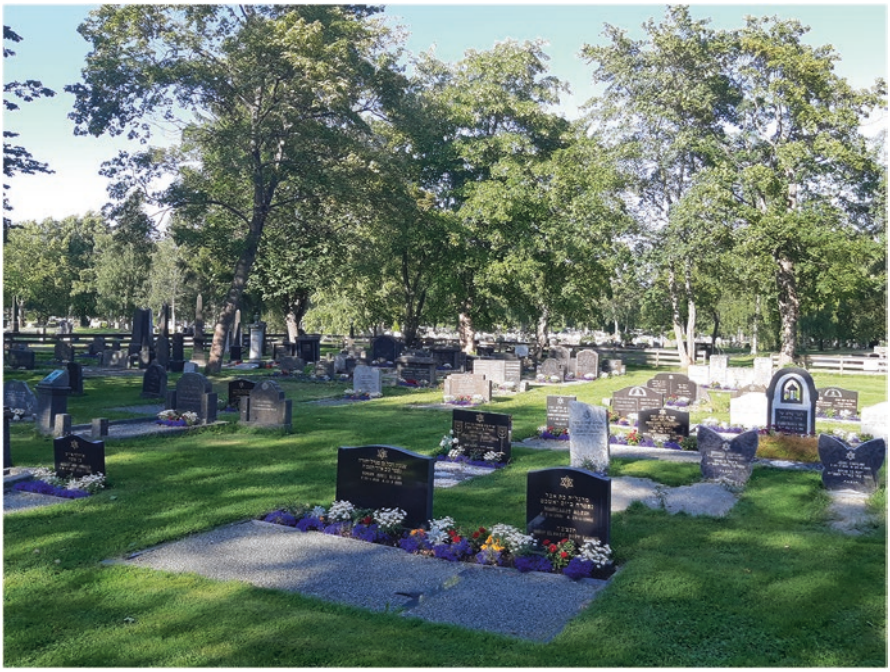

Fig. 7.1 The Jewish Cemetery in Trondheim. (Photo by Ida Marie Høeg)

negotiations with the local authorities, they established their separate and distinct burial place (Mendelsohn, 2019, p. 300), permanently marking Jewish religious and cultural life in the city and region (see Fig. 7.1).

Trondheim was, at that point, experiencing a remarkable transition when, after many years of demographic, cultural and economic stagnation, the city was transformed into a regional trading hub (Danielsen, 1997). The city's population increased almost threefold, from 25,000 in 1890 to 70,000 in 1910 (Reitan, 2005, p. 38). This increase was due not only to rapidly increasing birth rates and decreasing mortality, but also to immigration, mostly from the greater region. The Jews who immigrated to Trondheim from Estonia and Poland were poor but also marked as 'foreign,' with their own languages, religion and culture – which differed from the Norwegian norm. They were 'Eastern Jews' from the Shtetls in Estonia and the northeast of Poland. For some of these economic migrants, the migration process started in Sweden, where many Jewish men spent a period working as travelling traders before crossing the border to live and work in Norway (Reitan, 2005, p. 79). After years of itinerant living, travelling the countryside and coast selling homemade (and eventually, manufactured) products to farmers and fishermen, most of the men later settled down in Trondheim or other small cities in the region. Finally, they could reunite with their wives and children, or establish families.

Jews settled primarily in the northern part of the city centre, close to the docks for both short and long-distance ferries and, later on, where the railway station opened in 1909 (Reitan, 2005, p. 44). Here they opened shoe and watchmaker's workshops and shops. In early 1900, some moved to the newly established working-class area, east of the city, where they bought houses. It was in one of these areas, Lademoen, where the Jews of Trondheim purchased a long-awaited Jewish burial place in 1902, and it is notable that this was three years before their congregation was formally established. Instead of dealing with the practical challenges and increasing financial expense of sending their dead south to the community cemetery in Kristiania (now Oslo) or to Sweden, representatives of the Jewish community applied to the municipality to buy a burial ground in 1897. In response to this application, Haakon Løken, left-wing politician and editor for one of Trondheim's newspapers, argued: "Civil rights should not be conditional for an organised faith community" (Mendelsohn, 2019, p. 299). Even though there was little cemetery space in Trondheim, Løken was of the opinion that the municipality had to hand over part of one of the cities' cemeteries to the Jewish community. When Trondheim established a new cemetery, Lademoen Cemetery, it provided the opportunity for the Jews to buy their own land, ensuring perpetual grave rights (i.e., no requirement to reuse graves after twenty years as was the typical practice) and avoiding the potential risk of a decision from the city government to discontinue the cemetery (Mendelsohn, 2019, p. 299). Even then, some officials objected on the grounds that a group of individuals should not be the owners of a cemetery. Mayor Rostad came to the Jews' aid as he believed that it was unreasonable to deny them a burial ground. Even though they did not have an established congregation, Rostad permitted the Jews to own the cemetery as long as their burials were performed according to ritual regulations by an "educated man." At that time the community did not have a rabbi, but a religious teacher who taught the children and performed religious functions (Mendelsohn, 2019, pp. 299–300).

The devastating events of the Holocaust forever altered the Jewish community and drastically reduced their numbers. In 1940, the congregation counted 260 members (Reitan, 2005, p. 131), and about 25 shops had Jewish owners (Bruland, 2017, p. 137). The Nazi occupation of Norway resulted in the appropriation of economic assets (Bruland, 2017, p. 659) and 133 Jews from Norway's central and northern regions (Nordenfjellsk) were killed as a result of Nazi genocide (Bruland, 2017, pp. 674–701; see Fig. 7.2). During Nazism, many Jewish cemeteries were destroyed, but none of the three Jewish cemeteries in Norway (two of them situated in Oslo) suffered this fate. In Trondheim, the occupying forces tried on several occasions to have the burial ground closed and made available as a building site. Thanks to a church trustee in Trondheim, who managed to delay these plans several times, the cemetery was saved. It would probably have been destroyed if the war had lasted a few more months (Mendelsohn, 2019, p. 640).

Fig. 7.2 The Holocaust memorial in the Jewish Cemetery in Trondheim. (Photo by Ida Marie Høeg)

7.3 The Northernmost Jewish Cemetery in Europe

In 1902, the community of Jews in Trondheim bought 1392.5 m^2 of land at Lademoen Cemetery. The Jewish cemetery became a key site for religious ritual and a sacred place. Serving as a culturally symbolic space, it expresses Jewish identity and community. The cemetery has 150 tombstones, the oldest dating back to 1903 and the most recent from 2021. All of the approximately two hundred graves fulfil the religious obligation to place a marker at the grave and bury the body in a direction pointing towards Jerusalem in a permanent grave (Rødner, 2014, p. 115).

The design of Lademoen Cemetery (see Fig. 7.3), as with many other Jewish cemeteries, was inspired by neighbouring non-Jewish burial places (Laqueur, 2015, pp. 296–298). In this sense, the cemetery bears witness to a dynamic Jewish history of collaboration and diversity. The Jews' long-term coexistence with Norwegian culture has contributed symbolic images to the Jewish cemetery, which means a colourful greenspace – grave flowers and short, mown grass – that has much in common with majority Norwegian cemetery culture. Some of the interred (about 25%) have a tombstone surrounded by grass, while the rest have stone kerbs filled with gravel, often with a Magen David (six-pointed star) placed in the centre. A small proportion shows evidence of the Jewish custom for visitors to place stones on top of the tombstones. Overall, the tombstones are well-preserved with legible epitaphs, except for the oldest ones, and serve as evidence of a Jewish community.

Fig. 7.3 The Jewish cemetery at Lademoen Cemetery in the southwestern corner by the gate from Thomas von Westens street. (Map by Ecclesiastical Council, Trondheim)

In the cemetery, Jewish identity is expressed in a number of ways. Symbols and epitaphs carved in Hebrew are the most common signifier of Jewish identity. In general, the tombstones are decorated with a widely recognised Jewish symbol, the Star of David, often with פג (here lies/here is buried) placed in the middle of the star. Other widely used inscriptions are the epitaph תנצבה (may his/her soul be bound in the bond of life) and פט (here lies). Most of the tombstones for members of the Cohen family are decorated with Chovin's hands. More recent epitaphs have shifted from Hebrew-only epitaphs to a mix of Hebrew and Norwegian, signalling integration into Norwegian culture. Among the oldest memorials, the Hebrew calendar is used to state the date of death without the date of birth, combined with

Fig. 7.4 On the middle tombstone epitaphs of family members who were victims of the Holocaust. (Photo by Ida Marie Høeg)

Norwegian epitaphs about the age of the deceased. In recent decades, some tombstones start to reflect typical grave formulations from the Norwegian majority culture, for example phrases such as "rest in peace," "deeply missed," "much loved," and "thank you for everything." The only tombstone with an epitaph in a language other than Norwegian or Hebrew, dated 2010, uses Cyrillic, which evidences a tie to the person's country of origin. Remembrance of the Holocaust is also noticeable throughout the cemetery, including several family graves which have inscriptions for those who were victims of the Holocaust with no demarcated burial site (see Fig. 7.4, middle stone).

The inscriptions, the shape and the artistic work enable every tombstone to tell a powerful story of those who crossed the nation's borders over time, observed their *mitzvah* and strived to have a dignified burial where they could place their loved ones in a Jewish grave. The tombstones are also witness to stories of Jews who were not themselves immigrants, but who were second, third or fourth generation Norwegian Jews educated in Norway, well-established in the community, who spoke Norwegian and the local dialect, and whose memorials reveal the intersecting between the Norwegian majority culture and Jewish culture. Moreover, Jews living in Trondheim and who were affiliated with the Orthodox congregation asserted their distinctive identity in death through their use of the separate burial ground defined by faith and ethnicity (Amanik & Fletcher, 2020, p. 4).

7.4 Research Background and Method

The study draws on semi-structured, in-depth life-story interviews with twenty-one self-identified Jews that were conducted from 2019 to 2021 as part of the wider research project *Negotiating Jewish Identity: Jewish Life in Twenty-first Century Norway*.[2] All the interviews were digitally recorded, anonymised and transcribed. Nvivo7 was used to code and analyse the data. The participants in the study were recruited using my personal network, in combination with snowball sampling and some suggestions from the leader of the Jewish congregation in Trondheim. The participants reflect a variety of age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, geographical origins and levels of Jewish network. I have been particularly sensitive to in-group and out-group distinctions, such as active versus inactive, and observant versus non-observant. I also conducted interviews with the leader of the congregation, Ralph Buchmann, and the leader of the Friendship Association (*Venneforeningen*), Henriette Kahn.[3]

A narrative approach reveals patterns and themes through an individual's experience of concrete events, meetings and people, together with the placement of experiences in time and space (Riessman, 1993, pp. 1–7). Using a narrative approach to analyse Jewish identity produces a historically sensitive coupling between identity and agency (Somers, 1994, p. 635). The interview narratives revealed some tension between the commitment to Jewish tradition and individual agency in burial choices. Descriptions of affiliation with the congregation, ritual performance and other collective activities Jews in Trondheim perform at the cemetery are narratives about ethnicity-related behaviour that construct and signify the Jewish actors' changing social and spatial embeddedness. One can recognise different narratives, imbued with different spatial implications, that account for how Jews in Trondheim negotiate their identity and belonging to the Jewish community; these together influence their decision to be buried there or elsewhere. Before considering the informants' narratives, and particularly five informants' narratives that present different rationales for the cemetery decision, I will discuss the interrelation of religion, ethnicity and space in the next section, which will inform the discussion on the spatial mobilisation of Jewish identity and belonging.

[2] See https://www.hlsenteret.no/english/research/Minorities/negotiating-jewish-identity%2D%2D-jewish-life-in-21-ce/

[3] With exception of Buchmann and Kahn, for reasons of confidentiality, interviewees and other research participants have been given pseudonyms, unless there is a specific agreed reason to name a participant. At times, some biographical elements of participants were altered as well. The informant profiles given in this chapter are not very detailed, meaning they do not provide information about exact age, education, occupation, job fields and origins. Nonetheless, the tiny Jewish community means it is possible that third parties might recognise someone. Therefore, it was impossible to add more elements to the narratives being told without compromising the informant's anonymity.

7.5 The Social and Dialectical Process of Space

A spatial approach to the cemetery reveals how social relations and place are interwoven with each other. An important shift in spatial thinking has moved from the view of place as a stable fixed entity to a stronger focus on space as process (Soja, 1989). Space is no longer understood primarily in relation to locality, but rather seen as relational and processual, i.e., reflecting a group of relationships important to a study's subjects (Maddrell, 2016; Massey, 2005). The processual approach makes it possible to gain insight into social relationships and how they are shaped by the places people contact and embody. By moving the focus away from fixed notions of place, we can observe mobility in landscapes and communities, and at the same time, the processes that this mobility involves.

This theory on space resonates with Kim Knott's description of religious space as material and discursive space "that is meaningful for those within it" and is "important for individual and group identity and is a practical working environment" (Knott, 1998, pp. 283–284). Considering religious space as a set of relationships, rather than a specific site, provides the opportunity to examine the actors' social processes, such as relations to the Jewish community and relations to the Jewish space. Studies of religious places show that place regulates performance, attitudes and attachments, and vice-versa, that actors have the agency to alter spatial structures to satisfy new religious and social demands spatially (Brenneman & Miller, 2016; Christensen et al., 2018), such as new notions of Jewish community and community formations. Knott's critique challenges the concept of world religions as "unities focused on a discrete, systematic set of traditions, and normative beliefs and practices" (Knott, 2009, p. 159). Based on a relational, but also a processual understanding of space, religious space cannot be distilled into a religious doctrinal concept. Rather, religious space is expressed and shaped in everyday practices, memories, perceptions, beliefs and identities.

The relational approach to space provides the potential for seeing how both religious groups and ethnic groups establish community through everyday spatial actions and interactions. Ethnicity is a social construct that defines the "we-ness" of group membership and often involves connection to place (Barth, 1969). A particular sense of place or place attachment could be what is unique and therefore distinguishes 'us' from 'them,' and also influences how others within the larger society see 'them.' The relational approach to understanding space reveals the ways ethnicity and place co-constitute social relations.

Jewish cemetery space is more than consecrated ground established, owned and regulated by the Orthodox congregation in Trondheim. The cemetery has physical boundaries which define who has the right be buried there. However, who belongs to this space and where to set its boundaries are subjects of negotiation. The Jewish community – its members and others with relations to the Jewish community – negotiate the organisation of space for the deceased. The process of shaping and reshaping space is established in contact with their surroundings, including other burial places. Thus, the local Jewish cemetery in Trondheim, like other burial

grounds, is a social phenomenon (Maddrell & Sidaway, 2010; Saramo, 2019). Bearing the dynamic of the social and dialectical process of the space in mind, the Jewish cemetery is in this chapter understood as a social landscape, culturally marked by identity and belonging.

7.6 An Optional Jewish Burial Place

The narratives of Jews in this study are about life and death, which include the desire to maintain rituals and attachment to Jewish places. What to maintain and what to abandon is an ongoing negotiation both on the individual and community levels. In the narratives about the Jewish cemetery in Trondheim, the Jewish burial space is negotiated both spatially and socially.

The location of the final resting place raises the question of whom a burial place is for and whom it belongs to. The participants' notions of different burial places were considered along with whether their choices were considered an appropriate/ideal for them as a Norwegian- or non-Norwegian born Jews. The varying conceptions of the organisation of burial places were divided into an exclusive burial place belonging to Jews, a Christian place for the majority population, a neutral place for everyone independent of religious or worldview stance, and a place betwixt and between – an inclusive place for Jews and their non-Jewish spouses and children.

The Lademoen Jewish Cemetery has many of the characteristics of a public place. It is defined, visible and open to everybody. It can be accessed from the street through an unlocked iron gate, and there is a broad opening in the fence leading to the neighbouring municipal burial place. However, the boundary is clear: the fence symbolically marks and sets off the cemetery from its ethnic surroundings. The particularism expresses that the space is a Jewish ground where Jewish burial practices and customs are observed. A Jewish cemetery is consecrated ground where all those who are buried there are buried according to Jewish law. The law has been interpreted to make arrangements that satisfy it in practical terms. Consequently, no one other than Jews can be buried in the cemetery. Those who were born Jewish but do not consider themself as such, those who have converted out of Judaism or those who do not want to have a religious funeral must be buried elsewhere. Notably, several of the participants with a Norwegian national background referred to those who are buried outside of their burial ground as "Christians" and described the municipal burial place as "the Christian cemetery" in contrast to a Jewish cemetery.

Esther, an interviewee from a family with relatively deep roots in Norway, recounted that her great-grandparents were among the first Jews in Trondheim and the surrounding region. She considers herself to be Jewish and is affiliated with the congregation but pointed out that she is not religious but is Jewish *culturally*. Esther is married to a non-Jew; her son has not been circumcised and she does not think he will be enrolled in the Jewish educational *bar mitzvah* program. With the exception of a few years, she has lived in Trondheim her entire life. She currently believes she will likely be buried at the place where her Jewish family has been laid to rest.

However, she admits that her burial location is not a given. Her husband's family has a family grave in a cemetery outside of Trondheim and being laid to rest with him there could be a choice. Assessing the two options, to go with her Jewish family or her non-Jewish spouse, her conclusion is to leave it up to the next generation. Her son must decide where it will be most suitable for him to place her grave. This prompted her to reflect on the definition of a non-Jewish cemetery: "In fact, I have never explored whether you are allowed to lie in a Christian cemetery if you are not a Christian yourself."

Esther highlights a common assumption in the Jewish community in Trondheim – the difference between Jews and *the others,* even many of them who have little to do with other Jews except for their Jewish family members. Esther's narratives about her upbringing and adulthood shape her Jewish identity in relation to religion. She refers to the majority population as Christians, instead of Norwegian or any other term used to describe the non-Jewish population. She constructs the majority as those who are inherently Christian and belong to a Christian confession. At the same time, she also constructs herself as a minority, like others who are Jewish, Muslim or of any other non-Christian religious belonging. Esther's indicator of the difference within the Norwegian population is primarily identified in relation to religion. Religion functions here as an indicator of ethnicity which divides people into different groups: majority and minorities communities. Her cultural Jewishness in turn contributes to how she sees Christians: Christians are perceived like Jews, they are both a religious and non-religious group. Regardless of their actual religious beliefs, they relate to religion in significant ways: as cultural belonging. Esther's cultural belonging has consequences for her notion of a burial ground and to whom it belongs. From her perspective on the burial ground, religion is the marker. By distinguishing people living in Norway according to religious cultural belonging, the cemetery space seems to reaffirm such communal boundaries.

Esther's self-identification as a cultural Jew resonates with the identities articulated by other participants. Most of them identified themselves as a cultural or secular, rather than religious or observant Jew. A minority of the participants considered Judaism to be a key part of their lives, identifying with Orthodoxy and Orthodox observance, but admitted that the level of observance has to be solved pragmatically. Observance is related to what is possible within a tiny Jewish community in Trondheim. For those who consider themselves culturally Jewish, they are members of the Orthodox congregation in Trondheim and might attend the synagogue and religious funeral ceremonies, but they do not see religion as a key part of their lives. Taking part in religious rituals is not motivated by a belief in God, at least not the commanding Creator of the biblical tradition. Rather, they are secularised members of Jewish descent who want to enrich their cultural identity with Jewish tradition, narratives, customs and places. The cemetery and the Jewish burial customs and rituals are obvious parts of their Jewishness, but as we have seen with Esther's suggestions, and which I will elaborate on below, the modern religious affiliations and identification have become increasingly voluntaristic in nature rather than being certainties.

With the unique interweaving of religion and ethnicity, the construction of Jewish identity can take many forms. The varieties of Jewish identity within the Trondheim Jewish community do not comprise a group identified by a shared understanding of what it means to be a Jew. However, they do constitute a whole, albeit a vulnerable whole. The members seem to have a shared assumption of a Jewish local community, one which they would like to protect and maintain in some way. In terms of an institution, they embrace a social structure. Those who can satisfy Jewish law's definition of who is a Jew and who is a member of the Orthodox congregation, constitute an institution with no obligations but some rights. As members, they point out that they can choose whether or not they will be buried in the local Jewish cemetery.

7.7 Attachment Bonds to Jewish Family and the Holocaust

Despite the differing national backgrounds of Jews, the cemetery facilitates a common commitment to Jewish history, and provides ties to the Jewish family and the migrants' lived Jewish life in Norway. These aspects of spatial settings and attachment to the Jewish cemetery are not immediately obvious, but for most of the participants this seems to be part of an ongoing construction of Jewish identity.

Esther is an exponent of the changing bonds between individual and community where no position can be taken for granted, a voluntaristic attitude that she shares with several of the other participants in the study. In the participants' narratives about deceased relatives and parents, or siblings who have passed away recently, the cemetery is referred to as a particularly Jewish place. It is recognised as *their* place in the same way as the synagogue, which means that both were recognised as vital to their own and their Jewish families' Jewish life (Høeg, 2023b). However, interview narratives convey a clear awareness that they have an obvious right to opt-in and opt-out of the cemetery. The underlying logic concerning the Jewish cemetery for a congregational affiliate is that membership will grant the opportunity to choose whether or not to have the Jewish cemetery as one's final resting place. Among those who had little relationship with other Jews besides their relatives, they suggested it was essential to be a "supporting member" in the congregation to sustain the Jewish community in the city (Høeg, 2023b). In addition to the participants' understanding of being a supporter, both morally and financially, membership provides the option of having a Jewish funeral and a Jewish grave.

On the other hand, the cemetery also operationalises Jewish history. The cemetery is a place to memorialise the victims of the Norwegian Holocaust. For several of the participants, when they narrated their lives, the historical aspect of being a Jew in Norway was a key point. In this context, the cemetery expresses the history of those who lived in Norway when the Nazis invaded and occupied the country in 1940. For the participants with relatives who were victims of the Holocaust, which took the lives of 133 Jews in this region, their lives and deaths are materialised and visualised in the cemetery's Holocaust memorial and on several tombstones.

The cemetery's role in tying Jewish family and history together is represented in the life-stories. It is a middle ground between a family place (the private burial place where the family history is expressed; a community place), a community burial place (where the history of Jews in Trondheim and the central and northern part of Norway is expressed), and a public place (the public sphere represented by the Norwegian Holocaust). These dimensions of Jewish history both mirror and constitute social ties to the Jewish community in Trondheim. For some of the participants, their attachment to and notion of the cemetery was shaped by their history, which in turn was framed by considerations about the cemetery as a final resting place for them personally.

One participant, Joseph, a fourth-generation Jew in Trondheim, states that he was brought up in the Jewish tradition, with many Jewish customs and the Sabbath meal on Fridays. From an early age he attended Jewish *cheider* classes. Joseph feels that he has carried the Jewishness with him throughout his life, but that it has become stronger now that he has become an adult. Throughout his upbringing, he was constantly aware that several of his relatives fled the Holocaust, but also that several died in Auschwitz. Joseph explained being attached to the cemetery because several members of his Jewish family were buried there, and because of the presence of the Holocaust remembrance. Joseph's ancestors from Trondheim who lost their lives in Auschwitz have their names engraved on the memorial and tombstones at the cemetery:

> There's a connection to family, and then there's a connection to history. The cemetery is an identification with history. There is the memorial for those who were killed during the war. So, it's both the fate of the family, the family and the historical fate of the Jews. (Interview with Joseph)

The cemetery has family significance through blood and marriage. At the same time, the cemetery also attaches historical kin to this place, which is intimately connected to the history of Jewish people from Trondheim and the mobilities and genocide of the Norwegian and European Holocaust. The memorials and the cemetery mediate peoples' encounters with the family and Jewish history. Both Joseph's identification with his family history and his cultural self-awareness contribute to confirming social ties and shaping the bond to the spatial setting. The desire to maintain the bonds to the history and his family are ways to confirm and maintain his Jewish identity. Subject to how Joseph's life unfolds, he expects to have his final resting place there.

7.8 The Country for a Lived Life and for a Final Resting Place

But what about Jewish immigrants living in Norway who cannot link their families' histories to the locality or to the Norwegian and Trondheim Holocaust? Despite the diversity of geographical origins of the congregation members in Trondheim, their

connection to the Holocaust travelled with them through immigration. They and their families were *all* affected by the Holocaust. However, they did not all link the burial space to the history of the Holocaust. Their relatives were not connected to the cemetery as Holocaust victims. None of their relatives were honoured there at the Holocaust memorial.

A transnational or international perspective on immigrants is essential for their attachment to the cemetery. Set in the context of their daily lives in their host country or adopted homeland, spatial and social boundaries are bridged. The growing capacity for transnational activities and links to their places of origin did not influence the decisions of the Jewish immigrants in this study to be buried in their country of origin. With the exception of Noah, who did not touch on the subject in his narratives, the four other first-generation migrants (Magda, Ori, Martin and Lea) expressed that the local Jewish cemetery in Trondheim was the place where they want to be buried. Similar to Norwegian-born Jews, they have adopted the notion that the cemetery space is a particular Jewish place. For them, the Jewish cemetery is not only a place for Norwegian-born Jews, but a multi-national Jewish place for anyone who is connected to the congregation. Their perception of the Jewish community that the congregation formally administers is so open and changeable that there is room for them too. But in contrast to the Norwegian-born Jews, they did not question where to be buried. They even had the intention to include their Norwegian-born spouse and family there as well.

This choice must be understood in the framework of participants' investments in their host country and how these investments have shaped and reshaped them. Their life histories are marked by years of living in Norway and Trondheim, where they have settled and shared their lives with spouses (both Norwegian and non-Norwegian born) and where, for some, they also have children born in Trondheim. They expressed their preference to stay in Trondheim, and that the rootedness of their children and spouses have interrupted any plans to return to their homelands. To understand their choice of local burial at Lademoen, we must consider integration into the Norwegian Jewish and non-Jewish communities and their surroundings' ability to integrate them.

Another participant, Lea, lives in Trondheim but was born and raised in another country. She has been living in Trondheim for decades and is part of the Jewish community in the city. Lea has a Jewish family and many Jewish friends. But as she points out, she also has many non-Jewish friends and friends with the same national origin as her:

> It's very natural that I should lie here where I have lived most of my years. There's also a Jewish cemetery in Oslo, but it's much more unnatural for me to be buried in Oslo than here. (Interview with Lea)

A cemetery becomes a mediator of social relations and is a powerful means to assert belonging. Lea's explanation for where she wants to have her grave reflects her sense of belonging to Norwegian society and Norwegian Jewish life. When Lea talks about where she wants to be buried, she considers Norway as the location, despite disconnection from her wider family and childhood home. Having children living in Norway

and having Norwegian friends, Jews and non-Jews, make her birth country irrelevant when it comes to the final journey in a lifetime of travel. However, the burial place becomes the subject of negotiation between two Jewish cemeteries. Her son lives in Oslo where there also is a Jewish cemetery. When she considers the Jewish cemetery in Oslo, the cemetery in Trondheim has become more of a Jewish place of kin for her. Having her Jewish family in Trondheim means that the local Jewish cemetery is more of a relational place. Years in Trondheim spent together with in-laws and relatives bridge spatial and kin-belonging in the local Jewish cemetery.

7.9 A Neutral Burial Space

The multifaceted aspects of a burial ground create hesitation and a lack of certainty in relation to traditional funerary culture. Jews in Trondheim do not differ from the general Norwegian population in this respect (Høeg, 2019, 2023a). Influenced by Norwegian culture, they do not necessarily give traditional answers to where their remains will be buried. Five of the participants are considering ash scattering or a burial place in one of the new municipal cemeteries in Trondheim. This cemetery, Charlottenlund Cemetery, which has a natural landscape and park-like design, stands out as an attractive alternative to four of these five participants.

Nora, a young adult living in Trondheim, is married to a non-Jew and is a member of the Jewish congregation. She has not circumcised her son and, like Esther, does not think that the *bar mitzvah* is an option for him. She considers herself to be a non-religious Jew and underscores that she distances herself from religions and the religious part of Jewish culture:

> I've been thinking about [where I want to be buried] after they actually built that cemetery. There are no other non-religious alternatives than this. It's very strange for me to lie in such a Christian burial ground and there's no alternative than this for those of us who are non-religious. I don't know others besides this, and scattering of the ashes and things like that. But I want a place, but I don't know [where]. (Interview with Nora)

Nora's consideration of a proper burial place conveys a desire for a non-religious site and a detachment from the religious aspect of the Jewish cemetery. Still, her Jewish grandparents' burial place at Lademoen and the Jewish funeral rituals and memorialisation are highly valued. However, Trondheim's new cemetery with common memorials in a cemetery park are also something she appreciates. The references to the new cemetery and the new ash-scattering options contrast with the notion of a Christian and a Jewish cemetery. Nora considers Charlottenlund's municipal burial place to be a non-religious ground. She describes it as a cemetery cut off from religion and therefore "neutral." Charlottenlund's neutral design and burial places can also include her as a Jew, according to Nora.

Her interest in the notion of a neutral ground demonstrates that Jewish identities in Trondheim are differently constructed. By considering the two burial options she negotiates overlapping and valued identities: her non-religious identity and her

Jewish identity. But, as several other participants' life stories convey, the Jewish community also allows for several ways of belonging. Her positive notion of Charlottenlund expresses that she has a need to construct a Jewish community for death outside and in contrast to the "religious institution" the Jewish cemetery at Lademoen represents. For her, a Jewish community after death is important. She reports that she does not want to lie in the neutral ground alone without her Jewish family. Being isolated from her closest Jewish relatives is therefore no alternative. Weighed against the desire for a neutral ground, Jewish kin relations are given priority. Wherever her mother decides that her remains will be disposed, Nora says she will decide the same. Her reasoning behind her decision about where to be buried demonstrates that a burial place is relational. In this case the relational aspect is understood as collective space. Therefore, a decision by one individual about where to be buried may have consequences for others.

7.10 A Mixed Jewish Burial Space

Intermarriage is a crucial factor which impacts choices about burial place. But intermarriage does not leave Jews without agency, not even the agency to claim and enact a meaningful Jewish identity in spatiality. In the narratives about the cemetery, several participants refer to the plans to change the strict religious rules that determine who can be buried in the Jewish cemetery. They are optimistic about changing the rules at Lademoen so it could better reflect the Jewish community in Trondheim. This entails facilitating a separate space for non-Jewish partners and children, but not redefining the religious rules for the whole cemetery. None of the participants know if this has already been realised at the cemetery but presume the congregation leaders will soon welcome a proposal of a "mixed" Jewish space.

Ori, from Israel, is married to a Norwegian woman. His daughters are Jewish by conversion, but his wife is not. He has been working in Trondheim for many years and his greater family is in Israel, where he, together with his wife and children, spends much time. He does not want to be buried in Israel but at the local Jewish cemetery in Trondheim. He prefers that the physical and religious borders that have separated Jewish and non-Jewish spouses will not be maintained, and that the congregation will open a new section where there is space for him and his family:

> Yes, we have our own Jewish cemetery. There's still some space left there, so that isn't an issue. It's an issue that my wife and I are thinking about where to be buried. Because she's not a Jew. I think there's a kind of quasi-solution for the congregation, which is closer to the fence. Mixed family arrangements … I want to be with my wife. But we have not decided yet but talked a bit about it. (Interview with Ori)

One participant's narrative included that of a relative in Oslo who opted for the non-Jewish burial ground in order to be buried with his non-Jewish wife. Another talked about an uncle who was cremated and buried in an anonymous grave. Ori's wish for a separate section for Jews and their non-Jewish partners and family members

illustrates his sense of belonging to the Jewish community, even as a dead body, and the significance for a Jew to be buried in a Jewish cemetery, but also his desire to be buried with his wife. Instead of being separated from his wife or being buried with her on the other side of the fence, he sees that his dual belonging – to the Jewish community and his wife – can be satisfied through a "quasi-solution." The suggestion of a burial space for those of different or no faith within the Jewish cemetery indicates that a Jewish space does not have to be an exclusively Jewish place. It could be a mixed burial place which can reflect the fluidity of the Jewish community. By making space for the new forms of belonging and space continuity in Jewish life is ensured.

7.11 Discussion: Spatial Webs of Connections and Belonging

The participants' considerations and choices to have their final resting place at the Jewish cemetery in Trondheim reflect a Jewish identity that operates within social networks influenced by the living as well as the deceased. At the community level, the cemetery both safeguards and challenges Jewish particularity and continuity. In illustrating the different reasons for choosing the cemetery as a burial location, the Jewish cemetery offers an identity-based cemetery, but presents a dilemma for the non-religious and those with a non-Jewish partner. Nonetheless, Jewish particularity is expressed by having an obvious right as a Jew and member of the congregation to decide whether or not to be buried there, regardless of one's level of observance. In this sense, the cemetery represents a protected but also a limited ethnic space of Jewish Trondheim.

The notions of the cemetery are set in a network of close and wider relationships (Maddrell, 2016). Participants who are first, second, third and further generations Trondheim residents and have relatives buried at the Jewish cemetery have an intimate connection to them. Those who have relatives whose graves are marked with Holocaust inscriptions have a personal link to the place's historical meaning. In this sense, the cemetery has the potential to confirm its bonds to the Jewish family and its bonds to the Holocaust. This varies, as for some the Jewish cemetery actively affects the social processes and forms connected to the Jewish family, and for others also Jewish history. Consequently, the cemetery is shaped and reshaped, weaving intricate webs of connections and belonging.

An important aspect of changes to the cemetery, as reported by several participants, was the initial discussion within the congregation to change the cemetery to include a reserved space for children or spouses who are not Jewish according to the Jewish *halakha* law. The central point here is that Jewish identity and space are made in relation to one another. The initial discussions for a fixed spatial location for non-Jewish children and spouses, or an ethnically mixed section, may be understood as a wish for an inclusive cemetery space. The inclusivity challenges the doctrinal concept of space and rather defines it as shaped in processes (Knott, 1998, pp. 283–284). Ongoing discussions show that the traditional cemetery is

re-interpreted and adapted to how Jews in Trondheim today understand themselves as Jews. Their wish for an inclusive space seems to contribute to its shape and preserve an expression of Jewish identity that is not defined primarily by religious doctrines. Through this notion of an inclusive cemetery, the individuals take on a collective symbolic significance for their community. This creates a Jewish identity that encompasses a broadened Jewish community inclusive of those who are not Jews but are part of a Jew's family.

At the same time that each individual life makes a mark as part of something greater, this individuality comes at the expense of the collective, creating tension when the social decision to choose a Jewish burial place is contested. The participants find new meaning in other places and other available options, such as ash scattering and newly build cemeteries. 'Jewish' and other identities are held simultaneously, and understandings of the cemetery and burial practices allow for these to be reflected on in the choice to opt out of the Jewish cemetery in favour of a 'neutral' place that does not require any religious belief or practice. Participants challenged the notion that being buried in a Jewish cemetery is the only way of being a Jew in Trondheim. For them, Jewish identity does not come with any obligation to keep burial traditions. However, being a Jew seems to let the collective consideration that governs the decision to be laid to rest in a Jewish cemetery, particularly when their Jewish family members want to lie there.

For first-generation Jewish migrants, the Lademoen burial ground is connected to the processes of making Trondheim a new homeplace, and the right to claim the cemetery as a Jewish space for Jewish identity, no matter where you come from. The choice of burial in Trondheim seems to be heavily influenced by the biographical story of how a person and their family settled in Norway and Trondheim, and is reported by migrants who have been living in Norway for more than a decade. The duration of their residence has given space-time for expression, construction and assertion of Jewish identity in relation to Trondheim. For those who have lived many years in Trondheim, their narratives articulate strong bonds to the city, but commonly more relaxed attitudes to fixing their identity in the Jewish cemetery. These wishes seem to be a token of a gradual transformation of their identities in which their connections, and their relatives' and spouse's connections to Trondheim, bring their pre- and post-migration lives full circle in the Trondheim Jewish cemetery.

7.12 Conclusion

Burial decisions impact what a site can convey in terms of Jewish identity and belonging to Jewish people. The narratives about the Jewish cemetery in Trondheim demonstrate that a burial place becomes a mediator of social relations and is a powerful means for asserting belonging. The narratives express that the burial place is a particular Jewish space at the same time that the cemetery is voluntaristic in nature. Significantly, the cemetery activates Jewish kin relations for Jews in Trondheim and

for the first generation of migrants it activates belonging to the place where they have settled and lived for many years. The narratives show the deep-rooted connections to the legacies of the Holocaust, and how these are manifest in the Jewish cemetery. And lastly, the active narration of the informants' cemetery choices and stories reveals complex negotiations over the cemetery according to modern Orthodoxy's doctrinal concept and the borders for the Jewish community. In Trondheim, Jewish identity calls for a broader Jewish spatiality which can correspond with their understanding of a Jewish community. Several of the participants support a proposal for a more inclusive section within the Jewish cemetery that expresses a concept of a Jewish community that encompasses not only Jews but those with non-Jewish partners and family members.

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