Children's involvement and experience of public (play-)space in two different neighbourhoods

A comparative case study of the representation and the lived experience of children in public space in Amsterdam

Veere Snijders

2

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Children's involvement and experience of public (play-)space in two different neighbourhoods

A comparative case study of the representation and the lived experience of children in public space in Amsterdam

Student: Veere Snijders
Student number: s1083599
Mail: Veere.snijders@ru.nl
Master thesis
Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen
Thesis supervisor: PhD candidate Emil van Eck,
& dr. F. Friederieke Landau
Second reader: prof. dr. Huib Ernste
Date: July 8, 2022
Word count: 24592

Foreword

As Friedmann (1999, p.90) says in his article about the city of everyday life:

"We usually outgrow the meaning of place where we have passed the years of our childhood, but later we may be drawn back to them to re-experience them with the eyes of an adult."

I spend my entire childhood living in a small house right in the centre of Amsterdam, in the Nieuwmarkt. With no garden and a busy street, my parents put garden netting around the *Amsterdammertjes* to claim the pavement for us to play safely outside, see photo. When older, the rest of the streets became my garden. A small gap in the fence of playground *de Waag* was made so that we could go there after dinner and closing time, playing football together with the junkies hanging there. It was a neighbourhood which forced you to grow up a bit quicker than maybe in other places in the city, with problems with tourism, heroin addicts and street dealers and barely focusing on the well-being of children. But it did not matter, because we played outside anyway.

Coming back to this neighbourhood for this thesis, and finding out that things have not changed that much, that the square with many addicts is still called *rode pleintje* and that the feud between the two primary schools is as strong as ever, weirdly warms my heart. And it breaks my heart at the same time that in the Bijlmer, no matter how hard you try, a stigma created more than 50 years ago still determines children's experiences in the neighbourhood nowadays.

Familygathering in the Nieuwmarkt with a 'DIY' fence (van der Schoot, 2001)

3

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Abstract

In this thesis, I will look at the tension between children using public space and their (in)ability to be seen as actual stakeholders in the governance process regarding public space. I use Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the production of space as a guideline in finding children's spatial practices, representations of space and lived experiences in two contrasting neighbourhoods in Amsterdam and how they might be linked to each other. Based on my theoretical framework and empirical research, my findings show that children in Amsterdam are differently involved in public space governance depending on the context. Negative aspects of how a neighbourhood is portrayed, seen and stigmatized and with that, experienced, influence the representations of space and could increase their involvement. Though in both neighbourhood contexts, regardless of stigmas or valence, children wish to be more involved and have more agency.

Abstract for children

This study looked whether children can and want to be involved in deciding on public spaces in two different neighbourhoods in Amsterdam. I tried to find out whether they knew who and how decisions are made about public places. I also asked what children themselves think of their neighbourhood and whether they often play outside or walk through it. I also wanted to find out if there might be a link between how many children are outside and if they are allowed to make decisions. My research showed that it is especially important that children and their parents feel it is safe enough in the neighbourhood to be outside and play. If that is the case, children can play much more on their own in the neighbourhood. How safe the neighbourhood feels is also a result of everything that is said about it via media, school and official documents. If only negative things are said about the neighbourhood, children will take over this feeling and feel less comfortable.

Abstract voor kinderen

Deze studie zocht uit of kinderen mee mogen en willen bepalen over publieke plekken in twee verschillende buurten in Amsterdam. Ik keek of ze wisten wie er over publieke plekken besluiten maakt en hoe ze gemaakt worden. Daarnaast onderzocht ik wat kinderen zelf vinden van hun buurt en of ze vaak buiten spelen of door de buurt lopen. Verder wilde ik graag weten of er misschien een link is tussen hoeveel kinderen buiten zijn in de buurt en of ze over dingen mogen mee beslissen.
Uit mijn onderzoek is gebleken dat het vooral belangrijk is dat kinderen en hun ouders het veilig genoeg vinden in de buurt om buiten te zijn en te spelen. Als dat het geval is dan mogen kinderen veel meer zelf in de buurt spelen.
Hoe veilig de buurt wordt gevonden wordt ook bepaald door alles wat er via media, school en via de officiele documenten over wordt gezegd. Als hier alleen maar negatief over de buurt wordt gepraat gaan kinderen dit gevoel overnemen en zich minder prettig voelen.

4

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Table of Content

5

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Introduction

"If there is any question of being half-fledged it is certainly not the child who deserves to be thus qualified. Look at the child and unfold!" (van Eyck, 1963, p.21)

Public spaces, conceptualised as shared spaces accessible to all citizens, play an important role in providing opportunities for meeting new people and cultures. It is here that fleeting and extended forms of interactions take place that can help breach differences between various sorts of people living in cities (Valentine, 2008; Lefebvre, 1991). Public spaces in cities are often where the rhythms, footprints and transitivity of humans shape the city. (Amin & Thrift, 1994). Throughout the experiences and perceptions of these public spaces, the places can take on their form (Lefebvre, 1991). Moreover, identities are continuously formed and transformed in and through these public spaces. Especially children's identities who are still primarily to be formed, are being constituted here (Holloway & Valentine, 2000). Public spaces facilitate play opportunities for children to form friendships with others, practices that encourage cooperation and communication, as well as monitoring and enforcement of social rules. It is in these spaces that children learn to play and get along with those who are not the same as them, had a different upbringing or have a different view (Lofland, 1998).

It has been argued that many public spaces have become domains for adults only over the years (Helleman, 2021; Karsten, 2005). Parking spaces for cars, public squares occupied by markets almost every day of the week, and terraces on sidewalks make it hard for children to find their place in the city. Where there is a place for them, in parks or small public gardens, residents often experience children as nuisances or disturbances. Sometimes it can even go as far as a sort of transformation of some of these public spaces into places that feel private when they officially are not. Residents then appropriate the space as a private space by creating for example DIY little fences or signs saying where and what is allowed (Finn, 2014; Warner, 2012). This can result in fewer chances for children to have meaningful encounters, form identities and

friendships and create their own social world (de Jong, DeJong, Mertens & Wasley, 2005; Dekker & van Kempen, 2004; Holloway, Valentine, 2000).

It seems that although children need safe spaces to play and develop themselves and their social worlds, they are often regarded as a 'disturbance' (Helleman, 2021). In public spaces, meant to be accessible for everyone, either, they are often not wanted or there is no place for them, resulting in children being pushed into the only spaces they do seem to be both allowed and wanted; official playgrounds, specially designed for them or their home. In the Netherlands, public space in the city (re)develops through de-central-decision-making processes, also conceptualized as 'governance'. Within these governance structures, children are primarily viewed as 'not yet adults' meaning 'not yet actual citizens' instead of important actors to include in this decentralised and multi-facetted policymaking process (Matthews, Limb, 1999). They are thus both excluded from the physical and from the institutional space, and the question is whether this affects children's lived space; the space they experience and appropriate as their own (Lefebvre, 1991).

In this research, I will look at this tension between children using and being able to access public space and their (in)ability to be seen as actual stakeholders in the governance process regarding the transformation of public space. I argue with Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the production of space, that the lived experiences of spaces are a way for the voiceless to create agency. Living and experiencing public places could be a form of governing these spaces. I will do this by researching this tension and thus how children's governance of public space and the lived experiences of children are related to each other. In this tension between the space and agency of children, my research will add to the existing literature and research.

The main research question that guides this argument is: How have children aged 10 to 14 been involved in public space governance processes in two neighbourhoods in
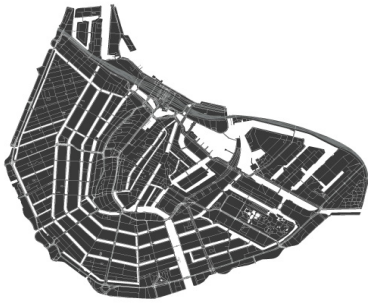

Figure 2, Amsterdam Centre, with Nieuwmarkt in the middle (Kunst in kaart, 2022)

Figure 2, Amsterdam Zuidoost with Bijlmer in the middle, (Kunst in kaart, 2022)

6

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Amsterdam and how is this related to their own reflection and lived experiences of public space?

To answer this question and study the tension mentioned above, I will compare two contrasting neighbourhoods in Amsterdam. The Nieuwmarkt, see figure 1, located right in the centre of Amsterdam, where the majority of the residents are quite well of in terms of for example cultural capital, yet rarely participate, and where because of its spatial design, public spaces are scarce and under a lot of pressure (Bourdieu, 1994; Niemantsverdriet, 2022). The other neighbourhood, the Bijlmer, see figure 2, is on the outskirts of Amsterdam and has plenty of public space and green space (Rottier, 1978). Yet this neighbourhood faces contrasting issues like crime and a negative stigma and residents not being recognised as valuable neighbourhood participants (Pinkster, Ferier & Hoekstra, 2020; Hoekstra 2019). The neighbourhoods will be studied by using various qualitative research methods including and using most prominently a creative method also known as mental mapping.

First, in the theoretical framework, Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the production of space will be discussed and in particular his triad of spatial practice, space of representation and lived space will be used as a guideline for the theories about governance, public space and lived experiences, see figure 3. An explanation of the methodological design follows ending with the analysis of the results of the empirical and a concluding chapter, where Lefebvre's triad will again act as a guide.

Public governance through:
Policy documents
Webinars
Neighbourhood

Representations
of space

Rhythms:
Daily passages
Outdoor play

Children in public
space

Lived experiences:
Home
Safety
Outdoor play
School

Spatial practice

Lived space
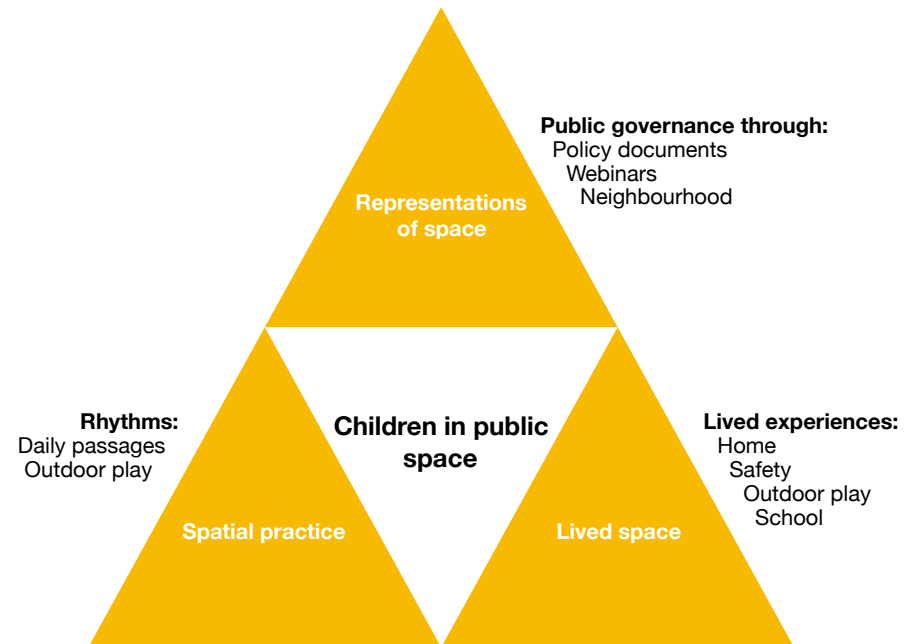
Figure 3, children in public space in Lefebvre's (1991) triad (Snijders, 2022)

7

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Theoretical Debate, Research Gap and Objective

Due to privatization processes in some often Anglo-Saxon counties, public spaces there are under pressure. Where they used to be central nods for social interactions between people, they have been transforming into the centre of services and commerce and some scholars argue that these spaces are under threat (Sorkin, 1992, Karsten, 2005, Moravcová, 2020). Privatization caused public spaces to be designed less accessible and user-friendly for every citizen, therefore reducing their role (Punter, 1990). Governance has been studied in various contexts, including the Dutch, and it was first very welcomed with open arms (Melik & Van der Krabben, 2016. Lefebvre (1996) saw citizen participation at the heart of resistance to governing bodies as the key to showing what is actually of importance in the city of everyday life (Friedmann, 1999).

Lefebvre's triad (1991) of the production of space has been used by scholars in literature many times as it was his most famous work. Yet parts of this triad were often only used when looking at space created by more traditional forms of government. Especially one of the dimensions by Lefebvre of the representation of space focuses in his book on old-fashion planning ways, whilst nowadays, especially in the Netherlands, this form of planning and transforming of public space is no longer a given. In the Netherlands, transformation and privatisation of public spaces, if happening, develops mostly through governance in de-central decision-making processes, in which besides or instead of the local government non-profit organisations, residents and the private sector are involved (van der Heijden, 2014). Often, various stakeholders can participate in these processes, but the reality is that not all important stakeholders can be heard. Children constitute one category of important stakeholders that is often not heard and not included in this governance process (Mak, Gilsing, Wróblewska, 2016; Matthews & Limb, 1999). Because of this, the representation of public spaces in cities is designed by and evidently for adults only. This modern take on Lefebvre's triad with a focus on governance and children can make this study especially scientifically relevant.

Outdoor space is especially important for children, as it forms a prime source of exercise, but also encourages encounters that can be viable for the development of children. In the Netherlands, children have been playing outside for half an hour less than 10 years ago, it now being around 2,5 hours a day (Meijer, Sleurink, Hakvoort en Gadet, 2016). In urban areas in the country, only around 18 per cent of children play outside (TNS Nipo, 2013). This could be because of traffic and social dangers existing in the cities, making outdoor space not always easily accessible for children, but it can also be linked to the growing problematization of the presence of children in public spaces.

Some public spaces, although accessible for all citizens, often feel public for everyone except the children, because their presence is often problematised. Public space is sometimes created to feel privatized to such an extent that children's feeling of freedom to play outside is negatively affected. Children being chased away from playgrounds and parking spaces being sought after are the conflicting interests involved in the use and policies of public space (Oudenampsen, 2013). When Helleman (2021) studied a fenced green patch in the old historic town of Delft in the Netherlands, some residents living around the green patch felt that the children playing there were mainly a nuisance and only breaking things. In the United States, a study by Ro (2019) also showed that some residents prefer child-free spaces and want to keep these and other places adult-only. These adult-centric public spaces for young singles are trending in many big cities in the United States, whilst families often provide more long-term economic growth. While some see them as troublemakers, or potential damaging parked cars or other things, parents just want their children to play safely somewhere in the street. At the same time, of the estimated 70 per cent of the world's population that is slowly starting to live in urban areas, by 2050, most of these residents will be under the age of 18, and therefore not adults (Gill, 2017). Already, more than a billion children are currently living in urban areas (Brown et al, 2019). As a result, urban spaces have

8

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

become denser and with that, the pressure on public spaces in cities has increased. The cities are more crowded than ever and there is not much space left for children. It is mostly children growing up in the city who are in a jam when finding a safe place to play in the midst of the parked and driving cars (Helleman, 2021; Karsten & Felder, 2016).

In Amsterdam, where the housing crisis is big, high-rise towers are being built which often means houses without a garden or outdoor space, meaning the pressure on public spaces is increasing, as it is often the only outdoor space people these residents can use (Karsten, 2019). Whilst Amsterdam has around 2700 playgrounds, in the centre of Amsterdam, children only have a relatively small choice of playgrounds, resulting in them relying more on other play opportunities, like a city square, park and the sidewalks and streets, which thus puts more pressure on public space there. Furthermore, in the capital, the sidewalks are often full of bikes, tiny gardens or other obstacles that can prevent play opportunities. Children are pushed out by cars, bikes, litter bins etcetera (Karsten & Felder, 2016). On top of that, parents often do not let their children play outside independently because of a lack of perceived safety and the risk aversion that is trending in parenthood (Helleman, 2021).

It has been shown that enough exercise at a young age is good for the health in a later stadium. Young people should ideally be active for at least half an hour daily (Mulder et al, 1998). Yet, children aged 10 in the centre of Amsterdam have been found to exercise little compared to five-year-olds and compared to 15-16-year-olds. Children in southeast Amsterdam of both ages 10 and 15-16-year-olds are exercising very little as well and this amount is even dropping.

One of the correlated consequences of this drop and little exercise in Amsterdam is that the children of the city are, compared to the average weight of their peers in the country, more often too heavy. This overweight can in time

lead to higher chances of chronicle diseases such as diabetes and heart diseases (Meijer, Slurring, Hakvoort en Gadet, 2016). Amsterdam as a municipality is partly responsible for the collective health of its residents, as written in the WPG, Wet Publieke Gezondheid, so making sure that the amount of overweight children in the city goes down is of high priority (Veldhuizen, Verhoeff, 2018).

There seem to be a multifaceted problem in urban areas in the Netherlands with children and public space. On the one hand, whilst research has shown outside play and exercise is very important, children in cities do this scarcely, mainly because children have little space besides playgrounds to play in cities, without them being a disturbance (Helleman, 2018). On the other hand, it seems that children have little to no voice in the governance processes that transform and (re-)develop public space in the Netherlands. Children in Amsterdam and other big cities in the Netherlands between the ages of 10 to 14, a precarious age, as puberty usually is around this age, exercise (outside) very little making their use of the public space scarce (Steffens, 2018). Yet children in this age group are often also in their transition from primary school to high school, which means their use of public space should a least be extended to travelling to and from school (van de Werfhorst, 2019).

With this research, I thus hope to broaden the knowledge about where children stand in the governance process, their lived experiences and how these are related to each other. With this, I hope to also figure out if the decline in exercise and outside play by children in Amsterdam is related to the governance structure in the city.

9

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Research Questions

The research question that will guide the tension mentioned in the chapter before is as followed:

How have children aged 10 to 14 living in Amsterdam been involved in public space governance in the two different neighbourhoods and how is this related to their own perspective and their actual use of public space?

Three sub-questions have been formed to support the main research question and also narrow the focus:

- *How are children's agencies involved in the governance of public space?*
- *How do children feel about their involvement in public space*
- *What are children's lived experiences of public space?*

I will look at the Nieuwmarkt, a neighbourhood in the centre of Amsterdam, where children are quite well off socio-economically speaking but have the smallest choice of playgrounds and therefore might rely more on other public spaces, which are already under great pressure (Niemantsverdriet, 2022). This neighbourhood will be compared to a stark opposite neighbourhood called the Bijlmer on the outskirts of the capital and officially a district and not a neighbourhood, but for the residents living there often seen as one neighbourhood. This contrasting neighbourhood does have a lot of playgrounds and public space but is often experienced as an unsafe place to live further fueled by the ongoing stigmas about it (Rottier, 1978; Pinkster, et al 2020).

The research will focus on the governance and lived experiences of public spaces in these neighbourhoods for children. Children aged 10 to 14 living in these neighbourhoods in Amsterdam are chosen as they, as mentioned before, are the age group that exercises on average the least in big cities (Meijer, Slurring, Hakvoort en Gadet, 2016). Furthermore, this age group is usually in their puberty, also known as the transition of becoming

teenagers (Steffens, 2018). Because of this transition and the transition of going from primary school to high school, which also happens at this age, this age group sometimes can get more freedom from their parents to go to places on their own, use their neighbourhood and the city more independently. Simultaneously, this transition makes them less confident about themselves and where they stand in the world, making them an interesting, slightly independent, but also vulnerable group to study (Steffens, 2018).

10

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Literature Review

In the following chapters, I will dive deeper into the concepts relevant to this study, all connected through Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the Production of Space. Within this abstract theoretical framework, more concrete concepts will be discussed, starting with an explanation of Lefebvre's triad, which will function as a tool for this framework and the empirical study. The three dimensions of his triad used as guidelines are respectively: spatial practice, representation of space and lived space. The latter two will be discussed more in-depth. Governance in the Dutch context forms an example of a representation of space. Spatial practices and lived space will be explored when talking about the importance of public space and lived experiences.

Lefebvre was a French Marxist social theorist and philosopher who published at least 72 books about space, marxism, urban theories, everyday life and much more. One of his most important works was Production of Space, published in French in 1974 (Fuchs, 2019). In this book, he dives into his theory of the representation of space, about the complexity of space. Space is, dividable into three levels, physical, mental and social, or as stated in his theory; a spatial practice, a representation of space and a space of representation, also referred to as 'lived space'. These three conceptualizations of space are also very intertwined and not separate by their division.

Lefebvre's key idea in the *Production of Space* is that humans not only produce social relations and use-values but in doing so also produce social space. Lefebvre's (1991) theory is therefore also mainly about this intertwining and in particular, the relationship between 'representational space' and the 'lived space'. He defines representational space as the space how it is perceived mostly by policymakers, planners, and governmental bodies. The 'lived space' he defines as the space that is actually lived by the ordinary bodies using the space. The 'spatial practice' dimension focuses on the acts and rhythms of bodies within a space, but this dimension is also not separable from representations of space or lived

experience. As said before but again emphasized, the dimensions in the triad are all connected and influence each other.

Because his conceptual three-dimension aspects refer to the relationship between the physical space and the lived experience, each aspect can be seen from either the physical standpoint or from the standpoint of the lived experience. Space is produced and experienced but simultaneously, through experience, producing of space takes place. The conceptual triad by Lefebvre (1991) can help see and recognize aspects of everyday life hidden in mainstream policies, maps, graphs and other more quantitative data collection about the city, which is why it is such a suitable tool for this research (Friedmann, 1999).

A representation of space

Lefebvre (1991) conceptualizes a representation of space as the hierarchal power relations, and mental structures forming space. Throughout this space, the social space is wished to be controlled and seen as non-human and more in terms of quantities, commodities and categories. It is especially the power dynamic that is a focal point within the representation of space that makes Lefebvre's theory stand out compared to other theories about space (Gottdiener, 1993). Space has a framework of power. Policies and other documents can be seen as tools within that framework trying to control and influence the space. Most representations of social space are significantly limited by the distinct purposes of discipline, expertise, and policy domain and are not stretchable or flexible towards un-planned purposes. Oftentimes this representation of space is seen by governmental structures and planners as the one true space, ignoring the actual lived space. Yet representations of the truth of space actually are not authorized or controlled by a dominant group of bodies or political agenda, which is where the lived space or space of representation is situated and which will be discussed later on (Lefebvre, 1991).

11

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Public spaces, especially in western Anglo-Saxon cities under capitalism Lefebvre states, have been transformed over the past decades. The public space of the city here has been divided up into isolated parts by the system of private property. Thanks to this, property rights dominate all other claims to the space of the city. The production of space is therefore driven by the needs of the property owners, not by the public need. Capitalism then manages that commodified space in a particular way. It segregates uses into discrete zones by producing detailed plans for land use. This functional separation of uses, in addition to various forms of residential segregation, separates users from each other and prevents them from coming together in spaces of encounter, play, and interaction.

The urbanization of the last century has put a lot of pressure on the public spaces in cities, as this is often citizens' only closely outside space (Rottier, 1978). Furthermore, where public spaces used to be central nodes for social interactions between people, they have become the centre of services and commerce and some argue these spaces are under threat (Sorkin, 1992; Karsten, 2005; Moravcová, 2020). This is partly because of the car-centric policies, and market-based conditions, but also in line with general growing privatisation within cities (Warner, 2012). More and more the question arises of; who has the right to the city and the public space (Iveson, 2013)? Privatisation is the process by which ownership of for example public property is passed from the government to the private sector (Stellinga, 2012). The process of privatisation started in the late 1970s as a more market-based form of governing, where authority is not that directly involved but does try to steer organisations, where necessary, in the right direction (Warner, 2012). The idea was that market forces would make work and services more efficient and cheaper. But especially in cities in the United Kingdom, where it started around the 1980s, and in the United States, privatisation has negatively affected especially public spaces. It was often unclear who was responsible for the quality and care of public spaces, which caused them to regress. Furthermore, planning rules and

agreements about public space were vague and not very strict, making the way for urban design not always accessible and user-friendly for everyone. This resulted in a vast majority of public spaces in British cities being unsatisfying and dysfunctional for the citizens (Punter, 1990). Moreover, scholars argue that with privatisation comes the end of public space (Sorkin, 1992). Yet in this literal sense, it has been found not to actually happen (Langstraat & Melik, 2013). It can, however, be read as the exclusion of some and the inclusion of other citizens, meaning the public space is not public for everyone anymore. Mitchell (1993) states that the privatisation of public space starts with who is defined as the public, meaning in current representations of space some groups and/or individuals are not seen as public and therefore not allowed in public space.

Lefebvre, in his theory, when speaking about the representation of space focuses on how this representation of space is created. Transformation of society, he state, begins with collective ownership where there is permanent co-participation of all stakeholders, even when their interests are contradictory (Lefebvre, 1991). Mainly because of financial reasons, cities often lack the budget to maintain the public space. In Anglo-Saxon cities, this often leads to privatisation and/or co-production of public spaces in hopes of upholding their qualities (Melik & Van der Krabben, 2016). In the Dutch context, with the arrival of the Omgevingswet 2021, co-production of space makes its appearance through governance.

• Public space governance in the Netherlands

Whilst it can be said that the cities in the European mainland have largely been able to avoid this privatisation trend, as extremely as it hit the Anglo-Saxon countries, some forms of privatisation of public space, although less severe, have still taken place (Uitermark, 2005).
In the past 30 years, there has been a change in the pattern and exercise of state authority from the government to governance or government-based to multi-level-based

governance (Rhodes, 2012). The government primarily refers to the formal institution of the state. It can be characterised by its ability to make clear decisions in the public best interest and more importantly, enforce those decisions and maintain order (Stoker, 1998). In the Netherlands, some form of privatization mostly occurred and is occurring through the policy-making process of public space governance, where the owner of the public space is still mostly the local government, but many of its responsibilities and services have been outsourced to various actors not rarely via bottom-up principles. Relatively independent organisations thus take over the tasks formerly done by the government (Punter, 1990; Warner, 2012).

Governance can be defined as the change in the meaning of government, or a new process of governing where different actors from and beyond the government work together in decision-making processes (Tasan-Kok, 2010). Buckley & Kern, (2009) also define multi-level governance as a process of restructuring. This often comes with new methods of governing where the conservative government takes a less active guiding stance and a network of actors is autonomously getting things done (Stoker, 1998). Rhodes (2012) uses governance to refer to the changing boundaries between public, private and voluntary sectors, and the changing role of the state. Hereby important to recognise are the power relations between these sectors together with the lack of power some sectors might have. Sectors involved within governance are voluntary groups, non-profits, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, market-driven organisations local councils, citizens and so on (Stoker, 1998). For this thesis, governance will be referred to as the process and development of various governing styles and policies for tackling common issues in which boundaries and responsibilities between and within public and private sectors are blurred (Stoker, 1998). All these policies created through the governance and the governance structure itself can be seen as a dimension of Lefebvre's (1991) triad, namely that of representations of space. The

12

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

centre of gravity in policy-making processes in the Netherland has thus been changing over the past decades. The government no longer determines the spatial planning from above, but space is given to critical citizens. Since the 1960s, there has been citizen participation to contribute to this governance. Recently, with the introduction of a new law called the Omgevingswet in 2021, governance has gained an even more prominent role in the Netherlands. The law desires to involve citizens and businesses more closely in policymaking about their living environment, thus giving them more influence (Peeters, 2019). An advantage of this is that actors closer to citizens often understand better what is going on and how they are feeling about certain things (Loft et al, 2015). Furthermore, when residents feel that they are allowed to be part of the development process, this results in greater involvement in the process and awakens the residents' interest (Peeters, 2019).

Yet the Omgevingswet 2021 could also cause certain public spaces to be privatized to some extent if the actively participating residents living there feel it necessary, for example, because of the nuisance. This can mean that certain areas are transformed because neighbours wanted it, and thanks to the law are given the tools to do so, but it raises the questions of for whom the transformation of that area is not beneficial and whether the not actively participating residents agree with the transformation. With governing comes contracting-out and collaborations between public and private sectors to make decisions and create policies. A disadvantage often seen by scholars is the pushing away responsibilities onto various less powerful sectors and sometimes even citizens, resulting in fewer things getting done when interest in a project or, more relevant for this study, in a public space is low (Stoker, 1998). Many residents do want to be actively involved in their living environment, but not everyone wants and does so to the same extent.

Moreover, citizens are given a more prominent role in this co-creation, but the question is whether this participation is properly guaranteed (Bijker, Van Leeuwen & Koster, 2018).

Lefebvre (1996) argued that participation is often not practised seriously. He saw it as a facade for the powerful to unashamedly keep on pretending to think of the powerless, pretending to give them a voice. Furthermore, too much focus on participation can even fuel existing social problems such as social inequality (Uitermarkt, 2012). Guarneros-Meza and Geddes (2010) see this fueling of existing social structures in favour of middle and higher-class citizens too with what they define as the neo-liberalisation of local governance. They conceptualize this as governance in which neoliberal and more state-sponsored participation can undermine other maybe more emancipatory true grassroots forms of participation. Governance in the form of participation and citizen initiatives also has no clear rules and instead of having one obvious bogeyman in the form of a government to blame things on when things go wrong, the bad one can now be one of their own, a citizen (van der Sanden, 2018).

Governance can thus foster social problems, transform places only for specific active residents and cause certain uninteresting things to degenerate while they need attention. However, when governance is done right, it can also create more interest and involvement in processes of places by citizens. The municipality can play a role in this by promoting local involvement, for example by better facilitating meeting places and venues. It can be argued that involving children in the governance processes can result in interest and maybe even more use of certain places. However, research has shown that governance with the involvement of children is more of a rarity than the norm, which will be discussed more in-depth in the following chapter.

- **The lack of children's voices in governance**

"Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody." (Jacobs, 1961, p.238)

As mentioned in the last chapter, a risk that comes with governance, is that some stakeholders within the process, do not have a voice or have too little power to make the changes they want to see (van Der Heijden, 2014). One of these stakeholders risking not having a voice is children, who will be the focus of this study. Children do not bring any direct economic gain to a city, as they are not able to make big purchases and do not pay taxes. Furthermore, as primary school is free in most countries and public high schools are not priced at the actual cost, some scholars argue children even bring a net loss and want the urban design to prioritise adults without children (Ro, 2019). They are often seen more as a disturbance than as a gain for a city because they for example 'ruin' fragile green areas by playing there (Helleman, 2021). Yet, it also turns out that children and families live in one place more often, creating more long-term residents rooted in a city (Ro, 2019). Still, whether they bring gain or cost to the city, they are part of society and thus have a right to public space, but policies lack a children's point of view (Helleman, 2021). Policies in countries like the United States are from a grown-up perspective; the knowledge and field of vision of children there are often not taken into account or seen as important when making these policies (Haraway, 1988). They are not seldom overlooked when it comes to public space and policy and although important stakeholders have little to no power, they are not allowed to vote or pay taxes (Brown et al, 2019). In the Netherlands, a new law was implemented in 2015, called the Youth law, which was to promote youth participation. With this law, the first steps have been taken but other than that, youth participation in many municipalities is still minimal (Mak, Gilsing & Wróblewska, 2016).

With a demand-oriented approach within governance, the wishes and possibilities of children can arise (Helleman, 2018). This is called child-friendly planning, which is about designing cities with and for children in a specific way so that children are active and visible in the public space. Within this form of planning, the experiences of children are the most important and taken very seriously. This can help make children feel like part of the city, as citizens, and

13

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

could result in greater involvement in the policy-making process and urban renewal processes. A consequence of that could in time be a greater interest in the city and the public space itself and, in turn, might increase these children's use of public space (Peeters, 2019). Child-friendly planning is also about expanding the play area outside the playground, where a child can and may play safely with or without a parent watching (Gill, 2017). Especially in the design and layout of public space, the human dimension should be central to keeping the public as public as possible (Helleman, 2018).

Lived public space

Lefebvre (1996) states that in western cities under the capitalist regime, all representations of space that are not officially within the political system often appear to be invalid, meaning that any representation without power barely or does not exist. He says that appropriation of space by the powerless is the way to take back that space, a certain claiming of right to the city. By living in the space, and using it, it becomes a space of representation for those unable to participate in the creation of the representation of space. That is why Lefebvre (1991) was such an advocate for analyzing these lived experiences when researching (social) space in cities. Because he goes on to state, that social life creates social space and vice versa, thus studying one, creates understanding for the other and how the other is formed. Social space, or the lived spaces of representation, he defines as the space produced by the lived society, by living things, and by lived experiences (Lefebvre, 1991). Furthermore, he argues for participation through and for the urban, which he defines as the space for encounter, connection, play, learning, difference etc, and the space that in this research is defined as public space. It is this lived space that truly can nurture the need of the citizens (Lefebvre, 1996).

In this urban, public space, citizens engage with each other and have meaningful interaction which creates less separation as they learn from each other and so on.

Public spaces in a city are almost always the lived spaces of everyday life (Friedmann, 1999). Bodies produce themselves in and simultaneously produce the public space itself, as they are social beings producing their own world (Lefebvre, 1991). The public space is important both for citizens and the development of society as it is a common site for sharing, constructing and exchanging cultures among people (Sun, 2009). It is here that bonds between people can be created (Micek, Staszewska, 2019). Encounters between various people with different backgrounds can take place and if these encounters are not just fleeting but meaningful, changing values and creating positive respect and not just tolerance for others, they can breach the gap between differences within society (Lefebvre, 1991; Valentine, 2008).

Different types of public spaces known can be split into two groups. There are paved spaces like traffic spaces, commercial spaces, town marketplaces, ordinary spaces, and church spaces. Secondly, there are the non-paved areas, predominately existing green areas, such as parks, parks squares, city gardens and recreational spaces (Micek, Staszewska, 2019; Moravcová et al, 2020). Because children are often not bound to one specific type of public space, in this study, a general definition by Moravcová et al (2020) will be used, which is that public spaces are the spaces between the buildings that are for everyone to use, without restrictions (Karsten and Felder, 2016).

• **The importance of public space for children**

Play is seen by Huizinga (1938) as the base of cultural and societal development, the core of our daily actions, choices and future. Furthermore, it is an essential element of the development process of children. Active play often happens outdoors in public spaces, such as running, biking, climbing official and unofficial play equipment and is, therefore, the most prominent form of movement for children (Meijer, Sleurink, Hakvoort en Gadet, 2016). Playing outside stimulates the brain and helps develop social skills.

It also reduces the chances of disorders like near-sightedness (Rose et al, 2008). Not only is playing outside healthy and good for children's development, but it is also primarily and most importantly exciting for them and it makes for a fun pastime (Helleman, 2018).

Public space and their play environments can help form friendships by providing places for children to isolate themselves from others, space to play with others, actions that encourage cooperation and communication, and monitoring and enforcement of social rules (Omgevings-psycholoog, 2021). Furthermore, public spaces that are in some way supportive of the nurturing care children can receive from the community and family, will positively influence their current and future health (Brown et al, 2019).

The usage of public spaces, playgrounds and places by children and their parents depends on the quality of the place, traffic or social safety, with for instance sufficient eyes on the street and of course, accessibility. Often sidewalks, if wide enough, and alleyways, are used by children to play, hang and explore. Alleyways, because of their lack of traffic and sidewalks because of the social control it can provide (Jacobs, 1961). On an urban scale, municipalities must provide enough public spaces that are easily accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. If playgrounds and important facilities for children like schools, shops, and parks are too far away, children will not be allowed to go there on their own (Helleman, 2018). The research by Karsten and Felder (2016) showed that issues both physical, like having enough greenery and play equipment, and the basics like cleanness are important for both parents and children. Furthermore, children learn and develop through manipulating, appropriating and interpreting objects within a space, when these objects are given room for this (Lange, 2018). Diversity is especially crucial for children (Helleman, 2018). Traffic safety also plays a very important role in letting their children play somewhere. Especially the fear of traffic accidents plays a big role. Furthermore, social safety is important, thus the amount of drugs alcohol, bullying and social control

14

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

(Karsten, Felder, 2016; Helleman, 2021). Cities, as vibrant and exciting as they may be for children, present many of the risks just mentioned, but also things like polluted air and many parents of today view playing outside in the city as dangerous (Helleman, 2021). Moreover, in cities, children often experience a lack of physical activity and alienation from nature (Brown et al, 2019). In the Netherlands, social and traffic safety is most important, followed by social cohesion and a clean environment (Woudenberg & van den Berg, 2015).

• **Lived experiences**

Public space is often the lived space that is created by lived experiences of the common (Lefebvre, 1991). To understand how children in particular experience public space, the space of representation of Lefebvre's theory will be connected with Amin & Thrift's (2002) theory about everyday life. With the space of representation, Lefebvre (1991) tries to understand the relationship between the representation of urban and the used urban space. How are social constructions projected onto the city and more specifically how is this experienced? He argues that you can create and shape an (urban) public space to a certain amount, but how this space is further appropriated and experienced by the bodies living in it, during everyday life, is a fluid ever-changing and uncontrollable shaping of that space (Hubbard, 2018). This reproduction of space is the lived experiences of that space. These lived experiences are those of everyday life as Amin & Thrift (2002) describe by three metaphors. They see the reproduction of space through the repetitive actions humans go through day to day, for example; walking to and from the supermarket, and their daily commute to work, which they describe as footprints. But also through daily encounters, described as rhythms and transitivity, by which they mean temporal and improvisational aspects of the city. It is in these often 'mindless' repetitive footprints, rhythms, collective and individual, that the urban spaces are truly shaped. Lefebvre's (1991) theory is not about the uncommon, peculiar and special moments and places that change or

construct citizens, it is very much about the spatial practices: rhythms of the common. He focuses with his space of representation or lived space on the voiceless and powerless bodies using and appropriating the space in the ways they see fit, ignoring the space of representations, which is why it is so suitable for researching children, who are often seen as powerless. As discussed in the previous chapters, children can be seen as often powerless actors who have little to no say in decisions in public spaces. To see this everyday experience of children and find their voices, de Certeau (1984) argues that it is important to look at it from their point of view, not from above, but from below, at their eye level. Children experience and make use of space differently than adults. Their freedom in sense of time and often few obligations they have could make for more transitivity, and their footprints and rhythms can be viewed more through play.

With Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the production of space, looking at and studying children's spatial practices/ everyday rhythms but especially their lived experiences could be a way of looking at their production and appropriation of space.

15

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Research Methodology

Case description

For this research, a comparative 'most different' case study design is chosen to see how all kinds of different independent variables affect the tension mentioned before (Gerring, 2007). I chose two neighbourhoods in Amsterdam that had the biggest difference in issues and problems that characterised them, in demography, and the amount and sort of public space: the Bijlmer, a suburban neighbourhood located in the Southeast and the Nieuwmarkt, an inner-city neighbourhood. The two neighbourhoods in Amsterdam are connected by the oldest metro line in the city, east line number 54, figure 4 (Strauven, 1994).

In the '70s, the first metro line of Amsterdam, the east line started was starting to be built. The East line would be a metro line from the neighbourhood Bijlmer to the central station. Because building tunnels was done above grounds, this meant that from Weesperstraat, the entire city centre had to be demolished, see figure 5.

- **Nieuwmarkt**

When the construction project approached the Nieuwmarkt in 1975, an old historic neighbourhood refurbished by squatters and artists who had settled there, it was met with a great protest from Aktiegroep Nieuwmarkt and other activists who were against the demolishing. The so-called battle for the Nieuwmarkt came to an end after a few intense weeks and the demolition of the neighbourhood eventually began in April. When the metro station of the Nieuwmarkt neighbourhood finally opened in 1980, it was decorated with remembrances from the protests. Thanks to the protests, three architects were chosen to design the renewal, and the designs of van Eyck were slightly preferred because of the way it kept the old centre the most intact (Strauven, 1994). Furthermore, not short after, it was officially declared protected cityscape by the state, which means a new development in the neighbourhood is always regulated (Amsterdamsebinnenstad, 2000).

Eventually, Aldo van Eyck and colleague Theo Bosch collaborated with the residents of the neighbourhood to design the new dwellings in the recently demolished Nieuwmarkt neighbourhood. Furthermore, they saw the residents as the clients and not the municipality or Stadsontwikkeling, to the latter dismay (Strauven, 1994, Inghels, 2013). The man was always a focal point in the work of van Eyck and thus for this renewal, where the residents were first completely ignored and quite literally pushed away, an architect who did look at the human aspect was not unwanted (Strauven, 1994). After years of discussion with the municipality and the Stadsontwikkeling, the urban renewal could finally take place and was mostly done by the designs of van Eyk and Bosch.

Figure 4, Both neighbhourhoods shown on a map connected by a metroline (Snijders, 2022, Edugis)

Figure 5, Nieuwmarkt demolished for the metroline (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2020)

16

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Figure 6, Greenery in the centre (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2022)

Van Eyck was not unfamiliar with the Nieuwmarkt neighbourhood, as he had been designing playgrounds in various places in Amsterdam where houses had been bombed away because of or demolished after the second world war. Especially the Nieuwmarkt neighbourhood which is geographically speaking about the centre of the seventeenth-century ring of canals in the city suffered quite a lot of blows in the second world war and therefore had plenty of space to create temporary playgrounds (Strauven, 1994). The last of van Eycks playgrounds or remnant of it disappeared about five years ago when the playground in front of the Sint Antonius school was renewed. And simultaneously with the disappearance of van Eycks playgrounds, so do the children in the neighbourhood. Only about nine per cent of the residents are under the age of 14. About 10 per cent is between 15 and 25 years old. In the whole centre of Amsterdam, the number of citizens under de age of 26 is 25 per cent, compared to the average of 32 per cent in Amsterdam (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2020). Since 2012 more and more households with young kids leave Amsterdam and in particular the city centre. These

are usually affluent families wanting a larger home as residents of the Nieuwmarkt are often highly educated with incomes (Couzy, 2019a; Gemeente Amsterdam, 2019). The biggest ongoing issue in the centre of Amsterdam and the Nieuwmarkt is caused by tourism. It causes overcrowded streets, noise pollution, litter and very angry and irritated residents (Niemantsverdriet, 2022). The lack of space and the nuisance from tourists in the neighbourhood sometimes results in participating residents and community councils claiming and (un)officially privatising public space, especially the scarce greenery, to protect it from being destroyed (Pols, Bijlmsa & Suurenbroek, n.d).
Whilst children in this neighbourhood are often well of in a socio-economic sense, their public play space is thus scarce due to limited physical space and pressure from tourism.

Figure 7, Playground de Waag (Wolterink, 2020)

The governance of public space in Amsterdam is generally the policymakers of Amsterdam City Council together with all essential stakeholders of each area. Every area in Amsterdam gets its Area plan, which contains long-term concrete actions and plans for each area created through this governance structure. Because of this ongoing issue in the Nieuwmarkt neighbourhood and the centre of Amsterdam in general, a different kind of policy document is created for this area, namely *Uitvoeringsprogramma Aanpak Binnenstad 2022* (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2022). This is the most important policy document about the environment and public space in the neighbourhood. The aim of the six concrete policies in this document is for the inner city of Amsterdam to once again become a place where all citizens of Amsterdam enjoy visiting and where residents feel at home (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2022). The essential stakeholders in Nieuwmarkt are Amsterdam City Council and in particular the area manager Nieuwmarkt and her companions together with the multiple residential councils, enterprises located in the neighbourhood and bottom-up organizations like 'Centrum Begroot' and 'Fonds voor Centrum' (Personal communication, 2022). There are two primary schools located in the Nieuwmarkt: the Sint Antonius and de Witte Olifant. The most used public playground in the neighbourhood is de Waag, see figure 7.

17

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

• **Bijlmer**

In the Bijlmer the metro line was very important for the district's accessibility to the rest of the city and therefore very much welcomed. This line would open up the new district in Southeast, which had its first houses completed as early as 1968 (Manenschijn, Smit, Beens, 2007). The part of the metro line in the Bijlmer was easily built primarily because the Bijlmer was inspired by urban planning theories from CIAM and le Corbusier's ideas, which meant that neighbourhoods in the Bijlmer, especially Bijlmermeer were built highly utilitarian (Rottier, 1978). Because of the spacious and car-centric design of the district, no buildings had to be demolished for the East metro line to be built. However, the metro line had to be constructed very high in various places in the neighbour-hood to be able to go over the car ways. This created a lot of space under the metro line for greenery at for example Maaiveld, see figure 9 (Hellinga, 1985; Parool, 2017).

Figure 9, Green void under the metro (Parool, 2017)

The neighbourhood generally adorns itself with a lot of public space because of its utilitarian utopian design. Pressure on public space and privatisation by residents and organizations is not a well-known process in the South-east thanks to its spacious design, see figure 8, figure 9 and figure 10 (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2022; Kleijn, 2021; Parool, 1017).

Bijlmermeer and the other neighbourhoods in the southeast of Amsterdam were mainly built as suburbs for Amsterdam families fleeing the inner city. Yet because of the district uniform design that came with its utilitarianism and the fact that the metro line was not completed when the first houses were done, it was not well of Amsterdam families that moved here but groups of underprivileged people. Especially immigrants from Surinam came to settle in the Bijlmer as the independence of Suriname almost coincided with the completion of the houses in the Bijlmer (Koolhaas, 2016).

Furthermore, the strict function separations created in Bijlmer made parts of the district almost ghostly empty at

Figure 8, Greenery in Southeast (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2022).

night time, creating breeding grounds for crime. This eventually led to a complete urban renewal of the whole district almost immediately after the first flats were completed in the '90s to create a less unbalanced living population composition and a more pleasant environment (Koolhaas, 2016). Despite this gigantic urban renewal, mainly wishing to create more homely neighbourhoods by demolishing many of the flats, the area still deals with and is categorized as the city's drain (van Engelen, 2012). Inhabitants and families of the Bijlmer often have lower-incomes, children are being underqualified and the biggest ongoing issue in the southeast of Amsterdam and the Bijlmer is violence and crime (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2020c). Especially feuds between gangs who associate themselves with drill rap have been fought for a few years now (Effting, 2021). These feuds and ongoing crime fuel the existing and further developing stigma of the Bijlmer as the most dangerous neighbourhood of Amsterdam that was partly created through the rich immigration history (Pinkster et al, 2020). There is a lot of prejudice in the Bijlmer and the repeating of this negative stigma even if
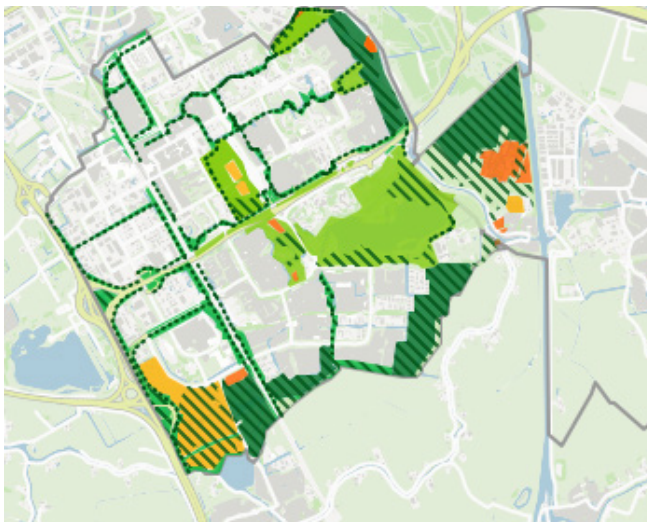

Figure 10, Playground in the Bijlmer (Kleijn, 2021).

18

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

residents of the neighbourhood do not recognize it, further reinforces the stigma. As Pinkster, Ferier and Hoekstra (2020) say in their article, stigmas stick.

This does not mean that families are moving out of the area. Bijlmer as opposed to the centre of Amsterdam and the Nieuwmarkt in particular does not see households with young children disappear. About 35 per cent of the citizens living there are under the age of 26, compared to 32 per cent in the whole of Amsterdam. Whilst children in this neighbourhood are less well off in a socio-economic sense, there is more greenery and children have more public spaces to play, but this is often not guarded are safe enough to do so.

As was the case with the Nieuwmarkt, Bijlmer also does not have an Area plan. The policy document *Zuidoost Masterplan* is leading in making the neighbourhood safe and comfortable to live in, getting rid of the stigma and proving to the rest of the city that it is not its drain. The document contains five ambitions to help this goal. This is therefore the most important policy document about the environment and public space in the neighbourhood (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2022). The essential stakeholders in the Bijlmer are the Amsterdam City Council and the area managers and companions together with the multiple residential councils, enterprises located in the neighbour- hood, housing corporations, youth support and bottom-up organizations like 'Zuidoost Begroot' and 'Fonds voor Zuidoost' (Personal communication, 2022). For three years there has also been a children's mayor in Amsterdam, which has come from Zuidoost twice so far (Couzy, 2019b; Het Parool, 2021). In the Bijlmer there are more than 10 primary schools around the whole district.

In both of the neighbourhoods, children aged 10 till 14 seem to play outside little, about the least in the whole city. Yet the reason for this could to related to different aspects of the neighbourhoods (Meijer, Slurring, Hakvoort en Gadet, 2016). Because where the old Nieuwmarkt is thus a historic, but therefore full and small cramped-up

neighbourhood, where (enough) space seems to always be an issue, the young Bijlmer at the outskirts, has plenty of, especially public, space.

Given these different neighbourhood contexts and pressures for children to play in public spaces, the empirical part of this study will focus on: How are children involved in decision-making processes about public spaces? And how do they experience public spaces? And how is this linked to each other?

19

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Strategy

The objective of this empirical research was to find out how children aged 10 to 14 living in Amsterdam have been involved in public space governance in the two different neighbourhoods and how is this related to their own perspective and their actual use of public space? As was with the theoretical framework, Lefebvre's (1991) triad was thus a common thread in the empirical aspect of this study. In particular, the representational space and space of representation of this triad were the two dimensions in the research questions. The dimension of representational space was sought mainly through policy documents whilst the space of representation was sought through the lived experiences of children, found via mental maps and interviews. Various research methods have been used to answer the research questions. Qualitative research was chosen to acquire various perspectives, interpretations and experiences about the topic and also find a certain nuance. Various quality strategies are also known as triangulation (Bryman, 2016). An advantage of this is that if one of the methods does not work, the researcher can always fall back on one of the other methods. It can also create more nuance and a better answer to the main question. Furthermore, some sub-questions are easier to answer via a certain method than others. Moreover, by doing all these different forms of qualitative research methods, a comprehensive and diverse amount of data was collected, which can increase the internal validity of this study (Bryman, 2016).

By doing policy analysis via desk research, participatory observations, semi-structured interviews and mental maps the main and subquestions were sought to be answered. Qualitative-primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews with important stakeholders, semi-structured interviews with children, mental mapping with children and participatory observations. Secondary data was collected from desk research done by analyzing various policy documents on public space in Amsterdam and in particular the two neighbourhoods.

1. Secondary (desk) research with policy documents

Secondary data is data that is produced by someone else for a specific purpose. This previously made data can if published or permitted, be used for other research. It is, however, possible that the purpose of the research does not correspond perfectly to the original purpose for which the data was collected; for this reason, secondary data has limitations and should be used cautiously. Further things to consider when using secondary data are to ensure that the data used is from a reliable source, that the data used is with the permission of the owner and how the data is used (Johnston, 2017).

Policy documents can be seen as valuable secondary data if generated from the official government website. Policy documents can be seen as representations of space and can often show underlying power relations (Lefebvre, 1991) Policy documents as representations of space can show which forces brought it about, how it came about, who helped create it and for whom the policy is intended (Cardno, 2018). Studying these representations of space could help understand how and why specific policies are used within structures like municipalities and national governments (Browne et al. 2018).

The secondary data for this research was gathered primarily via amsterdam.nl, the main website of the municipality of Amsterdam. On this site all valuable policy documents were gathered from the most recent years, to prevent the documents from being obsolete. To ensure the documents used were of the right fit before the extensive analyses would take place, a quick read-through was done with all of them. Furthermore, when interviews with stakeholders were done, they were asked which documents were the best to also read. Sometimes the stakeholders themselves already gave suggestions on which documents to read and analyse, either by mail or when the interviews were taking place.

Sample
The most important policy documents for the various neighbourhoods in Amsterdam are the so-called gebiedsplannen, also known as area plans. Every year, for 22 neighbourhoods, area plans are published which contain the long-term concrete actions and plans for each neighbourhood. As mentioned in the case description, both the centre of Amsterdam, where the Niewmarktbuurt is located and the Bijlmer does not have an area plan but a different document. For the Nieuwmarkbuurt and the centre, this document is called *Uitvoeringsprogramma Aanpak Binnenstad 2022* and for the Bijlmer it is called *Zuidoost Masterplan*. These can be seen as the most essential documents containing all policies about living in and public space of the neighbourhoods, which is why they were chosen. They are the most prominent representations of public space for these two neighbourhoods with is why they will be studied and analyzed the most in-depth (Lefebvre, 1991). The policy documents focus both very much on making the neighbourhood a better neighbourhood for the residents to live in, improving the residential quality and with that the public space.

Besides these two documents, 12 other documents were analyzed to have more general data and data over a longer period, almost all documents of Urban Development Policy, found on the official website of the municipality under the heading: *Omgevingsvisie* translated: *Environmental vision*. These where: *Omgevingsvisie Amsterdam 2050*, *Structuurvisie Amsterdam 2040*, *Strategisch Plan sport en spelen in de openbare ruimte*, *Amsterdamse Beweeglogica De bewegende stad*, *Visie openbare ruimte 2025*, *Stad in balans 2018 2022, Koers 2025 ruimte voor de stad versie april 2016*, *Amsterdamse gezondheidslogica*, *Concept stedelijk beleidskader horeca en terrassen*, *Aanpak binnenstad Uitvoeringsprogramma 2022*, *Knowledge Mile Masterplan, Gaasperdammertunne*l. The last two documents are specifically urban renewal plans for new parks in both the neighbourhoods. These were analyzed as examples of the urban renewal of a space which could be used for exercise and playing outside for children.

20

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

These policy documents can all show the underlying policies and governance structures that are in place in Amsterdam and the specific neighbourhoods. They are as Lefebvre states, representations of space and means of power structures over social space. They are not the true space, yet show the hierarchal dynamic trying to form a space.

Analysis

For this policy analysis, a content and discourse analysis was used. A content analysis is often used to quantify things in a systematic way using categories already thought out such as words and word groups. It is therefore slightly quantitative. Discourse analysis is more concerned with the underlying meaning of what is said (Bryman, 2016).

The reason for doing both content and discourse analysis is to see how many themes and words concerning children are mentioned in the articles. The themes of children per policy document are counted, see appendix III. Furthermore, three orientations to policy analysis can be divided: traditional; focussing on facts and quantitive data, mainstream, focussing on values, actors and political rationality and interpretive, focusing on meanings. For this policy analysis mainstream and interpretive orientations are used as the questions asked when looking at the policies are whose voices are heard, but also what does and who does it represent. All the policy documents were thus analysed by looking for the children's element in the policy if children and their opinions are in the sources if the policies focus or partly focus on children and so on. First, the words related to children in all policy documents are highlighted: this is the so-called content analysis part. Then the discourse analysis is done, looking at what and how things are being discussed. Photos and illustrations are also analysed in the discourse. During my analyses codes were often changed, as well as their interpretation, since analysing is a changing process.

2. Mental maps

A fairly new and slightly under-used approach in research methodology is mental or cognitive mapping, especially in research involving youth and urban spaces (White & Green, 2011). The term mental mapping or cognitive mapping is often used simultaneously in research and methodology literature, for this thesis the explanation of Downs and Stea (1977) will be the guideline. They state that cognitive mapping is a representation of how a person believes a place or the world to be. Important in their consideration is that this does not in any way have to be a correct representation. It is the understanding and reflection of how a world of place is perceived by a person that is the most important. This is what makes their interpretation of mental cognitive mapping interesting for this research specifically; children's perception of a place can be an illustration of their (lived) experience of a place. This lived experience is their reproduction of the space they live in (Hubbard, 2018). Lynch (1960) was one of the most prominent scholars to use mapping to visualize experiences of spaces (Friedmann, 1999).

When looking at the mental maps I focused on finding the rhythms, footprints and transitivity, although the latter is, as argued by Amin & Thrift (2002), hard to find via mapping. By doing mental maps with children, I thus tried to find their lived experience of the city, their everyday commute, and their important daily spaces. Their drawings served as a 'thick description' of their lived space (Duff, 2010; Geertz, 1973). Via the drawings they made of the neighbourhood, they expressed the places they are and go to daily. It showed the things they find notice, find important or use and places they have good or bad experiences with. Furthermore, this method helped me find the public spaces in the neighbourhood the children might use as those were the ones they would draw. An explanation of mental maps and how they can be made was done to eliminate confusion. Yet, a risk with doing a short explanation of mental mapping is that it can be a sort of intrusion by the researcher and thus influence the results

(White & Green, 2011). I tried to be careful not to use words like safe and nice but more abstract words like good or bad that can be more open for interpretation.

I created a colour palette to find the 'valence', referring to the attraction or aversion an individual feels to things or spaces (Friedmann, 1999, p. 93). Red for the place they find not so nice: negative valence and green for the places they find nice: positive valence. This way, the map showed a clear overview of their emotions and experiences of places within the neighbourhood. Another risk with doing mental maps with children of the same age group is that their drawing and graphic capacities differ greatly. Some children are further developed in their drawing skills than others, or prefer it more, making a more in-depth map than their peers (Saarinen & McCabe, 1995). Furthermore, children will often only draw what they can draw, risking them skipping places they find too hard to sketch. One way in which I tried to avoid this is by making sure children knew that their drawings and the mental map did not have to be accurate, complete or pretty looking and if children did not like drawing or found themselves too bad at it, they had the option to just write everything down.

Sample

More than 120 children aged 10 to 13 regardless of their socio-economic status or cultural background, were asked to first create a mental map of their neighbourhood and focus on the public spaces they play in. These mental maps were collected from children from de Schakel and de Morgenster in the Bijlmer neighbourhood and de Witte Olifant and de Sint Antoniusschool in the Nieuwmarkt neighbourhood. Both purposive and snowball sampling hereby was used. Starting with purposive sampling I chose primary schools in or close to the neighbourhood. For the Nieuwmarktbuurt there are only two primary schools directly in the neighbourhood but I was lucky that they both wanted to participate. For the Bijlmer, I emailed many primary schools as there are many in the neighbourhood and surrounding neighbourhoods, but only two primary schools wanted to participate, one of which was located in

21

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

the Bijlmer centre and one right at the outside border of it. Via snowball sampling, I was able to collaborate with more than one class at the schools, as teachers recommended me to their colleagues. At the Sint Antonius school in the Nieuwmarkt, I worked with a grade 7 class, which resulted in 26 mental maps. 25 mental maps were collected from one of the grade 7 classes of the Witte Olifant. In the Bijlmer, at the Schakel, I worked with two grade 8 classes, resulting in 33 mental maps. At the Morgensster I worked with one grade 7 class and one grade 8 class, resulting in 39 mental maps. This collaboration allowed me to have a very large number, 123 to be exact, of mental maps of children, which made my analysis a bit more conclusive and generalisable, see table 1.

Analysis
The mental maps were analyzed through a thematic analysis to look for patterns. Because tekst is less present, codes were created for the images and not for the words. To analyze the mental maps made by the children of the four different primary schools, different colours were used at the moment of drawing. Green stands for the fun places, but also the places children are allowed to go, like to go, go often etc. In general, green meant good, oke, liked and anything which triggered positive emotions. Red stands for the places that are the opposite, thus the places they do not like, or are not allowed to go, the places that triggered negative emotions. Some children asked if the colour orange was allowed for places they had mixed feelings

about. This was then incorporated further, and the colour orange was added to draw places they found hard to define as bad or good places or had mixed feelings about. Furthermore, children were allowed to write down any emotion thought, fact, or whatever they found necessary to write down. A couple of children indicated that they did not want to draw and asked if they could just write down everything they liked and did not like, which was allowed as it still created a lot of valuable information. All maps were analysed by first filtering out some that were not usable. A table was created to count the number of times certain things were drawn, see appendix V.

The things that were drawn big and in the middle of the map were noted, as research has shown that these are often the places that are of most importance to the participants drawing the map. Next in the table were the green things, the amount of which things were drawn in green written down as was with red things, after a more in-depth analysis followed. Because it was almost impossible to analyse all the 123 mental maps in-depth, only very complete and extensive ones were chosen, which were to some extent generalisable to the other maps made. I made sure that I chose at least five of these maps from each school. Furthermore, five themes were chosen after the first analysis: home, school, passages, outdoor play and safety. All maps were again analyzed just focussing on aspects related to these specific themes. Lynch's (1960) distinctions of the five elements of a mental map; path,

node, landmark, edge and district, were used to further categorize some of the themes. Home and school can be defined as 'landmarks' of ordinary people, in this case, children and passages as 'paths'. The map itself, the whole creation will be defined as the districts of the respondents, making the edges of the paper simultaneously the edges as Lynch means them.

3. Semi-structured interviews and mini-interviews

Semi-structured interviews are interviews with a mix of open and closed questions which leave room for improvisation, follow up and how and why questions. The advantage of this method is that it is a very flexible method in which anything and everything can be left out or included if the researcher sees fit. Structured interviews can often be too narrow but a risk with unstructured interviews is that the participant talks about topics that are not valuable or key to the research, which is why a semi-structured interview can be seen as the perfect solution. The structured part of semi-structured interviews is usually created via an item list or interview guide. These provide the essential topics that need to be discussed and questions that could be asked with each topic.

For this research, two kinds of participants are interviewed and thus two kinds of topic lists and their questions were made, see appendix I and II.

The semi-structured interviews with adults were sometimes done via the telephone which can be argued to not be the preferred method, as expressions whilst talking are lost. However, since some of the participants had a tight schedule, this was sometimes the only way fit. Further-more, talking via the telephone sometimes gave some sort of anonymity to the participants which helped to talk about certain topics. It is also believed that not looking at each other, and not having eye contact can encourage honesty and help relax the respondent and also make talking easier (Matsumura & Sumi, 2014).

Neigbhourhood	School	Grade	Amount
Nieuwmarkt	De Sint-Antoniusschool	7 class	26 maps
Nieuwmarkt	De Witte Olifant	7 class	25 maps
Bijlmer	De Schakel	Two 8 classes	33 maps
Bijlmer	De Morgentster	7 class & 8	39 maps

Table 1, Schools I collaborated with (Snijders, 2022)

22

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

The semi-structured interviews with children were all done in real life, to limit any distractions. It was chosen, however, to do some of the interviews together as the children were more comfortable that way. The risk of this method of semi-structured interviews in groups is that participants are influenced by their fellow participants and will repeat or copy their answers. Whilst this is a very high and important risk, the comfort of children was of higher priority.

Semi-structured interviews were done with different stakeholders involved in policies on public space in both neighbourhoods. The main focus was on trying to figure out how they see children as stakeholders. Also if they felt that children are involved in the policy processes and if so, how. The interviews with adults were thus about their view on governance structures, the involvement of children within these structures and children in the neighbourhood in general. These interviews all took about an hour. Sem-structured interviews were also done with children living in the two neighbourhoods. The main focus here was to find out how and whether they view themselves as stakeholders, and where they see themselves and others in the governance process. It was also interesting to figure out if they even want to be involved in the governance process and what they would change in the neighbourhood if they could. Furthermore, these interviews were also about the experience of the neighbourhood, the way and when they used the public space within the neighbourhood and for whom they believe the public space is meant. The interviews with children took no more than half an hour as their attention span was shorter and they were easily bored. I asked the respondents about their neighbourhood and public space and how they experience these places but also questions that can relate to governance. When interviewing the minors I did anticipate the level of discomfort that could be present, which is why these interviews were structured more like conversations and less like a questionnaire (Adams, 2008). The mini-interviews I did can be best described as semi-structured questions that triggered spontaneous conversation. The semi-structured part lay in the mental maps that

provided inspiration and a guideline for the questions I asked the children. This is because the whole process of mental mapping can be encouraging and inspiring for the respondents, children for this instance, to think about their neighbourhood and their behaviour within it (White & Green, 2011). Furthermore, as I asked them things on the spot, in the comfortable setting they were in, the children often started talking about various topics about the map or the neighbourhood. Sometimes, other classmates or friends chimed in to confirm or disagree with certain things. Whilst these spontaneous conversations took place, I made sure to note down everything I found relevant. A big advantage of this method of data collection was the fact that it got rid of all the pressures created by a traditional semi-structured

interview. With adult respondents, this pressure and the power dynamic between interviewer and interviewee does not have to be an issue and will most likely not influence results in any way. Yet with children, who are often highly influenced by various external effects, any sort of power dynamic, pressure or discomfort of any sort can change the answers they give.

Who	Profession	Lenght	Format
Maaike Fleur	Program manager Duurzame ontwikkeling	44 minutes	Physical interview
Lesny Heiker	Social entrepreneur / Local coordinator Fonds voor Zuidoost	43 minutes	Phone interview
Marije Willems	Area manager Nieuwmarkt neighbourhood.	51 minutes	Physical interview
Anne Jet Niermeijer,	Project manager Knowledge mile park		Email contact
Gracia Glijdesdale	Area manager District Bijlmer EGK neighbourhood		Email contact
Two children from the Morgenster, Bijlmer	Primary school	20 minutes	Duo interview
Two children living in the Bijlmer	Highschool	15 minutes	Group interview
Two children living in the Nieuwmarkt	Highschool	15 minutes	Group interview
Child Nieuwmarkt	Highschool	33 minutes	Physical interview
Child Nieuwmarkt	Highschool	20 minuten	Physical interview
Nine children Bijlmer	Primary school		Natural occurring mini-interviews
Seven children Nieuwmarkt	Primary school		Natural occurring mini-interviews

Table 2, Respondents for the interviews (Snijders, 2022)

23

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

A disadvantage of the mini-interviews was the fact that are was still a little power dynamic, in the form of the teacher being present, which can be seen as an important authoritarian figure in children's life. Furthermore, for me as a researcher, it was hard to listen to and write down everything children said and was relevant as sometimes the conversation proved to be quite chaotic.

Sample

For the semi-structured interviews with multiple different stakeholders / local professionals, purposive sampling was used, as it was vital to interview people who could give the most information about the topic that was researched. For the interviews with the children snowball sampling was the basis. The teacher of the Morgenster chose two children and through them, I came across other children I could interview. Social media also provided a good source for finding respondents. The mini-interviews were conducted spontaneous and at random with children who felt that they were already done with their mental map and thus had time. I asked them specific things about what they were drawing and more general about their experience of the neighbourhood. The answers were all noted. In total five adults were interviewed or contacted via email, eight children were interviewed and about 16 children were asked questions in class, see table 12 on page before.

Both the semi-structured interviews and the mini/ spontaneous interviews were analyzed via the thematic analysis method. This is a way of analyzing data patterns through themes and codes. Themes are often the overlooking part, whilst the codes go more in-depth. For the analysis of the semi-structured interviews with local professionals, themes were: public space governance, participation, disturbance, children, sense of welcome, and right to the city. For the analysis of the semi-structured interviews with children, themes were: neighbourhood, sense of welcome, home, feeling of home, feeling of belonging, school governance, safety, scary, authority, passages, and power to change. Not all themes were eventually usable or provided sufficient data for this research.

Because the number of interviews was not enormous and different respondents were asked different questions, I chose not to use Atlas.ti. Coding was done via the computer itself and made for a suitable method to find certain overlapping themes and differences to facilitate the analysis.

4. Participant observations

Lastly, as a fourth method, I did participant observations. I participated in a webinar about the most important policy document of the Nieuwmarkt neighbourhood called *Uitvoeringsprogramma Aanpak Binnenstad 2022*. A similar webinar was also done about Masterplan Zuidoost, the most important document of the Bijlmer, but this webinar had already taken place before I started this thesis research. However, a recording of this webinar was on YouTube so I did some participant observations via this way. Participant observations can be a good method to show the discrepancy between what is said in for example interviews, and what is happening in real-time. During this webinar, I took note of who was present and who was talking often or asking questions. I also took note of the topics they talked about and if youth and children were a topic that was discussed. Via this method, I hoped to find certain governance structures, who were and who were not seen as stakeholders and who participated within these structures, what kind of organizations or people were invited to speak at the webinar and so on. Same as with the policy documents, these webinars show the policies about the neighbourhoods and through which hierarchal structures this representation of space is made.

I also did participant observations by going to the two neighbourhoods and just looking at where and how I saw children playing and the street and where they played or hung out. These observations also helped me get familiar with the neighbourhood. These observations were also a way of researching lived experiences. By really going into the neighbourhood, looking at it (to a certain degree) through the lens of a child, or at least at their eye level,

it tried to find the transitivity and children's footprints and rhythms (Amin & Thrift, 2002; de Certeau, 1984) Whilst I did these observations, I made voice recordings of my thoughts, as I was mostly walking whilst observing and writing was, therefore, a bit complicated.

Analysis

As was with the policy analysis, for the participatory analysis a content and discourse analysis was also used when analyzing the two webinars. Again the number of times certain words or themes surrounding children were examined and how and what whey these themes came about throughout the webinar, see appendix IV. Things like: who asks the questions, which stakeholders are mentioned? What is the average age? Are children talked about? With what subjects are children mentioned? Those were all examined. Furthermore, the way of speaking was also examined; is what is talked about very static, potentially boring for children if present etc and is street language or slang used, as it has been shown that slang is used by children often (Aitchison, 2006).

24

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Ethics

The most important thing I had to pay attention to during the research and the entire creation of this thesis is that I avoided harming my respondents (Bryman, 2016). In this case, these were the stakeholders and the children I interviewed and the children I made mental maps with. When doing qualitative research, the principle of beneficence, also known as the no-harm principle means that the researcher avoids doing participants psychological or physical harm by for example overstepping boundaries (Orb, Eisenhauer, Wynaden, 2000). I maintained this principle by focussing on confidentiality and anonymity and informed consent. Furthermore, I was transparent at all times about the purpose and content of the research and the whole process. Moreover, I allowed the interviewees and children to leave the research whenever they want, for example, if they disagreed with the way they are being portrayed (Bryman, 2016).

Since I was working mostly with minors, it was very important that permission was asked through out the whole process and that safe space was guaranteed. I ensured this by being in a place chosen by the respondent, with or without a parent or teacher, which was their own choice and that of the parent and teacher. The place chosen was always public and I ensured that I, as a researcher, was not completely alone with a child, to ensure safety and comfortability. Furthermore, because of the AVG law, transcripts of the interviews with children are not handed in and included. The mental maps are handed in because the information on those can be seen as a little less delicate, but the children had the opportunity to choose a different name and a surname was never included on the map.

It was also important throughout the process to be aware of my position in this research. I was working with a special population, namely children, which made my positioning as a researcher extra precarious (Agee, 2009). I am a young white woman from a suburban area, specifically Amsterdam, where I also grew up and thus had my childhood, which causes me to unintentionally look at things from a certain frame. By being open and neutral toward my respondents, I hoped to have prevented my position from having too much influence on the research. Furthermore, my research questions were adapted, once I reflected on my research process, but also, especially on my position, which is necessary when working with a vulnerable group like children (Agee, 2009).

25

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Results

In this chapter, the results will be reported which are retrieved from the various research methods used. Lefebvre's triad is once again used as a tool. However, as he states, the dimensions in the triad are intertwined, and I use the triad more as a guideline than as a factual diagram, which is why the dimensions are sometimes used interchangeably in the results. The following research questions will be answered through these results:

How have children aged 10 to 14 living in Amsterdam been involved in public space governance in the two different neighbourhoods and how is this related to their own perspective and their actual use of public space?

- How are children's agencies involved in the governance of public space?
- How do children feel about their involvement in public space?
- What are children's lived experiences of public space?

Children's involvement in public space governance

Both within the Nieuwmarkt and the Bijlmer, when looking at the various policy documents created about the neighbourhoods and the city in general, children are mentioned, but briefly. In the 13 documents that were analyzed. The words children and child were used 16 times on average. Furthermore, words like youth were used on average about 20 times. Words like play and playing were used a little bit more, with an average of 29, but this was mostly because of the document *Strategisch plan sport en spelen in de openbare ruimte*, which is mainly about play in the public space in Amsterdam and had a peak of 234 times the words play and playing. For both the neighbourhoods, the main policy document surrounding public space and living quality etc is analyzed in depth, together with a development document of a park situated in or close to the studied neighbourhood. Lastly, the webinars accompanying the main policy documents of the neighbourhoods are analyzed.

- **Nieuwmarkt**

The *Uitvoeringsprogramma Aanpak Binnenstad 2022* could be seen as one of the most important policy documents on public space in the centre of Amsterdam and the Nieuwmarkt. It is used as a guideline for all measures and implementations surrounding public space and other aspects of the district (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2021). The main focus of this document is mainly on creating a more livable city centre for its residents whilst still being open and welcoming to its visitors. The six concrete policies within the document want to create more space, space for living and spending time whilst still safeguarding the cultural-historical value that adorns the city centre and makes it so popular among Amsterdam residents and visitors alike.

One of the policies focuses on creating more function mix and diversity of supply. Whilst the city centre and Nieuwmarkt, in particular, have plenty of shops and restaurants and other economic functions of all different kinds the place diversity seems to not be ideal. Especially the number of shops specifically for tourists in the centre is in surplus and not in balance with other functions. This also involves another policy within the document, that of creating a more healthy balance of guests versus residents. One way of doing this is by targeting primarily tourism and street dealers, as these are found to create the most nuisance for residents. Campaigns like 'we live here' want to create more attention to the residents living right in what can feel like tourist attractions. The goal is to show that the centre is also a residential area. This is also done by the greening of the many alleys, the neighbourhood is rich. Furthermore, by doing this, the green spaces that are so scarce in the centre area are to be increased, as is done by removing parking spaces. Another way of greening up the concrete city centre is by redeveloping an important traffic artery into a park: Knowledge Mile park, which will still hold its function as a traffic artery but also add green space and create outside recreation space.

26

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

The policy document *Uitvoeringsprogramma Aanpak Binnenstad 2022* only mentions children two times in total, one being the word 'child' and one being the word 'youth'. Besides being mentioned exactly two times, children are in no way implemented in the most important policy document on the environment of the Nieuwmarkt. Whilst the focus is on creating more (public) space for residents and guests, there are no specific policies on creating more play space or space for children living there, let alone anything about the playgrounds in the neighbourhood. They are not mentioned in the policies focusing on the balance of function and the balance of guests versus residents, whilst children are also residents living in the area. They are also not named when talking about the greening of alleys or the removal of parking spaces to broaden up the sidewalks, whilst these are often the unofficial places children play in (Jacobs, 1961). Furthermore, greening up spaces can result in residents wanting to protect the green patches by preventing children from playing there, as they are often seen as the ones that destroy them (Helleman, 2021).

The one time the word 'play' is used in the policy document, it is for a measure of how the current play areas in the centre can be better utilised, meaning they focus here not on creating more space for children, but on strengthening and making more efficient the already existing play areas.
The cooperation of all measures and policies in the document is done via what they call the regular consultation structures in the district with residents, residents councils and entrepreneurs. Organisations with or youth itself are not mentioned as stakeholders.

An interview with a local professional of the Nieuwmarkt confirmed this lack of ideas and plans that involved children in the policy documents and in general in the Nieuwmarkt:

"There is also a lot of pressure on the neighbourhood, from tourism. And somehow that has been given much more space than young people." - F, local professional Nieuwmarkt.

She argues that the Nieuwmarktbuurt is busy with other things and that other things, like tourism and drugs and alcohol problems, are seen as more important and thus favoured in the neighbourhood and its plans. This is seen in the policy document, *Gebiedsagenda centrum 2022*, which talks mainly about tourism and enforcing crime, drugs and alcohol and their nuisance. The area manager also mentions how avoiding the nuisance of tourists is the top priority:

"Stereotype the tourist. And especially the blowing tourist. Yes, that's a group that doesn't get a warm welcome. And it's more logical for us, because they also cause a lot of nuisance, so it's understandable that we receive a lot of reports about that and have to do something about it. We want to make it more liveable. That's why we're working on the city centre approach." - M, area manager Nieuwmarkt

Knowledge Mile Park
A new park in the neighbourhood could be seen as adding to and creating more public space for residents and especially children, as they are essential users (Karsten and Felder, 2016). Yet when looking at the document for Knowledge Mile park, the traffic artery that is being redeveloped to function simultaneously as a public park, the same lack of focus on children as with the *Gebiedsagenda centrum 2022* can be seen. In total, in the 50-page document, 15 words that have something to do with youth, children and playing are within the whole plan of the Knowledge mile park. When emailing the project manager of Knowledge mile park, she talks about how the children are not of any concern within the planning. The park plan focuses primarily on diverse greenery and the sustainability it can hopefully bring to the neighbourhood. Only with the development of the east part of the park far away from the Nieuwmarkt neighbourhood and outside the centre of Amsterdam, where the park in the Eastside lies next to Cygnus Gymnasium and Orion college, do they have to take high schoolchildren into account.

"I can tell you that in the development of the designs, children/young people are not or hardly included." - N, project manager Knowledge mile park.

Webinar
When participating in the webinar of Aanpak binnenstad about the policy document Gebiedsagenda centrum 2022, it was observed that there were mainly older people present and speaking. Besides the somewhat younger host, who was still older than 30, the residents participating and asking questions seemed to all be at least older than 50. The area manager of the Nieuwmarkt neighbourhood confirmed that it was mostly older people who came to her with ideas or complaints:

"And, unfortunately, there are few young people who rattle the gates" - M, area manager Nieuwmarkt

Furthermore, the theme of the webinar Aanpak binnenstad was the same as its policy document: making the neighbourhood more livable for the residents and the way of going about this was again generally by restoring the balance between residents and tourists, as the focus was on tourists as the nuisance. It can be argued and interpreted that making the neighbourhood more livable for residents by restoring the balance between residents and tourists could very much apply to children as residents, and parents with children. Yet it was never mentioned that this is what is meant by it and thus besides an option to vaguely interpret this stance, children were just as with the policy document surrounding it, not an important theme within the webinar.

27

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

- **Bijlmer**

In the most important policy document of the Bijlmer, called the *Zuidoost masterplan*, children are mentioned quite a lot, namely 72 times (Alliantie Zuidoost, 2020). The master plan focuses on the beauty the district has to offer that many do not know about, because the stigma of the district is still very negative. By bringing it in such a way, using, in particular, the word 'actually' when describing that the Bijlmer is actually a really nice neighbourhood, the policymakers are inadvertently reinforcing the stigma they are so working so hard to get rid of (Pinkster et al, 2020). The policies in the document are about creating more opportunities for children en young people (teenagers), improving the quality of living in the area and improving safety. The document was created after a large number of violent incidents plagued the district in the summer of 2019 and residents, especially parents of children and teenagers, were fed up.

The master plan exists of five ambitions that are leading in all policies: 1: being a resident of Southeast should mean being a full-fledged citizen of Amsterdam, 2: growing up and living in Southeast should mean living and walking down the street safely, 3: growing up and living in Southeast should mean having all opportunities to become how and whomever you want, 4: Southeast is proud of its economic location creativity and job opportunities, 5: Southeast will have one board, one transparent government.

Two of these ambitions are very specific to youth and children in the neighbourhood, namely numbers 2 and 3. They focus on making childhood in the Bijlmer as safe and full of changes as any other place in Amsterdam. Ambition number 2 about making sure growing up and living in the Southeast is safe is both a result of the stigma but also at the same time a reinforcement of the stigma. Making the neighbourhood safe and fun for children is a way of making the neighbourhood safe for all the residents, so the ambition makes sense (Jacobs, 1961). Yet by writing and repeating that it needs to be safer, and talking about how it

is not safe enough, the idea of safety is unintentionally spread and bound to stick, becoming its own reality (Pinkster et al, 2020).

Besides these two ambitions targeted at the youth and children of the area, in the other ambitions children are also mentioned and brought up various times. In all de different measures and policies within the document, they look at how these are important for children:
"... yes, of course, they (young people) are the future, and apart from all the nice stories and good things that are happening here in Zuidoost, crime also plays a role, of course, as do poverty and language deficiencies and I don't know what else. And the two-year-long corona has certainly not contributed to that. So I do understand the focus on children. And young people, of course, are the future." - L, Social entrepreneur, Fonds voor Zuidoost

It seems as though because of the stigma of the district as being a dangerous place, and part of the stigma still holding some truth, they want to focus on ensuring that it will lose its title of being the most notorious neighbourhood of Amsterdam. Yet as said before about ambition 2, this repeating of the negative does create its own reality (Pinkster, 2020).

Pictures and illustrations of children and youth are implemented greatly in the document. On the front page alone is a picture of children playing.
Furthermore, when looking at the stakeholders and organizations creating and working with the documents, some are in direct link with youth, like 'jeugdhulp' (youth support) and education. Furthermore, there is an active youth lobbyist group present in the South-east that according to a local professional is quite involved with policies and the Masterplan Zuidoost:

"Yes, that's why you now have the youth lobbyists here in South-East as well, and they work together with the district council of South-East. They are really, really only young people from the district. And they develop projects and are

connected to projects for young people in the south-east. So maybe that's good to know." - L, Social entrepreneur, Fonds voor Zuidoost

Brasapark
Whilst Bijlmer has quite a lot of green areas and space, a lot of car-centric aspects of the neighbourhood are slowly transforming into even more green space, which could be especially beneficial for children, who are frequent users of parks and greenery (Karsten and Felder, 2016). A new park called Brasapark is being developed over the Gaasperdammertunnel which connects the surrounding areas and adds green space.

In the policy document of Brasapark called Gaasperdammer-tunnel, children are mentioned quite a bit. 39 words like child or youth or play are within the plan. Playing options seem to be an important aspect that is implemented in the document, especially a place where children of all different can play or hang out. Illustrations of places where children could in the future play in the park are also included in the document.

Webinar
Participating in the webinar of Masterplan Zuidoost showed the stakeholders involved and the people asked to discuss the policies in the plan. The people present were diverse and most importantly predominantly young. No actual children were present at the webinar.
Furthermore, the way of speaking was less static and street language was used often, a language children are very familiar with and use daily (Aitchison, 2006). What is also noteworthy is that within ten minutes of the start of the webinar, the topic of youth was broached. The general theme of the webinar throughout the discussion seemed the be the youth, something noted but not immediately obvious in the Masterplan Zuidoost.

This active stance younger people seem to take in the Bijlmer was also confirmed by a social entrepreneur working for Fonds voor Zuidoost. She mentions that a lot of

28

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

young people come to her and Fonds voor Zuidoost with ideas for the neighbourhood and that her role is mostly to help these young people with their ideas. Furthermore, she argues that the ideas the young and sometimes older residents of the neighbourhood come with are not seldom ideas for the youth of the neighbourhood:

"The young people really come up with all kinds of ideas. It could be making a film about the neighbourhood, or it could be taking portrait photos of people in the South-East, to show people outside South-East what kind of beautiful things there are here. It can be a showcase of music, it can have to do with art and culture, so painting or a whole thing around it. It can be a sports event for young people in the neighbourhood, it really goes in all directions." - L, Social entrepreneur, Fonds voor Zuidoost

● **Conclusion**

In the Nieuwmarkt, children are not included in the most critical policy document about the public space and the neighbourhood itself. They are also not included in a plan for a new park close to the neighbourhood and are not present at the webinar. Furthermore, none of the policies, topics, or measures in the documents is about children in any way. This is all in stark contrast with the policy documents of the Bijlmer, where children are not directly involved but very included in all the measures within the document. They are not present in the webinar, but the age average of the people present is significantly lower than that of the Nieuwmarkt. The words and language used are also much more child friendly. This involvement is also in other parts of the governance structure in the Bijlmer: teenagers are active in the co-creation and ideas of plans in the neighbourhood, which they can submit for example to organizations like 'Fonds voor Zuidoost', resulting in many young people submitting plans and many plans for young people. In the Nieuwmarkt, this organization is called 'Fonds voor Centrum' and also invites active citizens to submit plans, but only older people seem to do so here, resulting in few plans for young people.

Gemeente Amsterdam

AANPAK BINNENSTAD

Uitvoeringsprogramma 2022

3 - 12 - 2021

Essential policy document public space Nieuwmarkt (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2021)

Essential policy document public space Bijlmer (Alliantie Zuidoost, 2020)

ZO = ZUID OOST

MASTERPLAN ZUIDOOST
PROGRAMMA 2021 — 2040

29

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

How do children feel about their involvement in public space?

In this chapter, the findings of children's reflections concerning their (un)involvement in representations of public space will be discussed.

● **Nieuwmarkt**

Children in the Nieuwmarkt expressed their idea of who decided and changed things within the neighbourhood, namely the municipality, or the mayor. They did not know exactly who the municipality was, who was in it etc and it felt almost like an abstract concept when they talked about it:

"Yes, I have no idea. There must be... Yes, no I don't know. I really have no idea, just people from the municipality or something?" - M, 14, Nieuwmarkt

None of the children that were interviewed had ever participated or remembered participating in something concerning the public space or even their neighbourhood in general. One child did do a sort of side job, making the flyers for Dock, an organisation active in the Nieuwmarkt that supports people taking initiatives and making contact with each other and other organisations (DOCK, 2022).

Besides not or barely participating, the children in the Nieuwmarkt that were interviewed, mainly, did not feel the need to change anything:

"Because I don't know, I don't really have a lot of things that I would like to change or anything." - M, 14, Nieuwmarkt

They all were quite content with their neighbourhood. Most of them could not think of any concrete things they would like to change in the neighbourhood, except maybe that the litter problem was fixed.

Furthermore, some even voiced a little distrust in the amount of actual power the municipality or the ones they thought were in charge had:

"Mmmh, maybe there's someone in the Boomspijker who deals with that and then I would just ask or go to Femke Halsema, no I don't really think that she could do anything" - M, 15, Nieuwmarkt

Another respondent mentioned that the municipality should come to them, the youth, instead of the youth coming to the municipality with ideas:

"People should just go more to the places where the young people chill. Outside or near the schools or something. Yeah, and then ask them what they want or something." - T, 15, Nieuwmarkt

He expressed that it is hard for children to know where to go if they want to change something because there are so many different people with different jobs and tasks. He rather also just have an adult arrange it, as in his eyes, they know better what to do and how to do it.

After the interviews and the mental maps in the classroom, various children asked me what I was going to do with the results and whether I was going to send this research and the results to the municipality. This could indicate that they do want their voice to be heard or at least that they want some information to come to the municipality, even though they might not know what they would like to change.

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

- **Bijlmer**

In the Bijlmer, the same response was given as in the Nieuwmarkt when children were asked who decides, develops and creates things in their neighbourhood:

"The municipality!" - J, 11, Bijlmer

"The municipality and the... what are those people called? So Mark Rutte and the other one, oh yes, the Prime Minister. "- E, 10, Bijlmer

When asked how, if possible, to change things in the neighbourhood a child in the Bijlmer did have quite a good idea of how he would go about it. This could show that the gap between governance and children is not that big.

Some children, they just go to the city council and then they just ask and it gets sorted out. And I think maybe I can do that too." - J, 11, Bijlmer

When talking with the children in the Bijlmer, participation was not something too unknown for them. Two of the children that were interviewed wanted to be part of the children's municipal council, but one of them was not elected and the other had not applied after all.

He and the child were not only confident about where to go and how, but they also already had some ideas of what they would like to change in the neighbourhood:

"I want the buildings to be prettier." - E, 10, Bijlmer

"Because I wanted to be on the children's municipal council, no, the Amsterdam children's municipal council, mmh, I don't know. And I also thought about what I want to change. For instance, if it's raining, then it's not convenient to just play outside, so I thought of nice equipment and a roof over it. "
- J, 11, Bijlmer

Thus although the municipality and the ones in charge do seem and feel like an abstract concept for the children, children in the Bijlmer still would reach out to change things. Furthermore, they really wanted to change things in the neighbourhood. They had various ideas of what they would add or get rid of, like making certain alleyways nicer etc.

Yet, one respondent did say that it may be also not the best idea to let children have a voice. Her concern was that a lot of important things that children maybe do not think about this will not be solved:

"Well, sometimes I think: yes, if there was a party where some things were regulated and yes, from a child's point of view you look at some things and think: for example, playgrounds must be regulated, this must be regulated, all to make it fun for the children. But I have also seen on the news that there are things that really need to be regulated, where children may think, yes, but that's no fun, while it is actually really necessary." - E, 10, Bijlmer

In the end though, same as with the Nieuwmarkt, after this interview, the children asked me as a researcher what I would do with the results. A couple of children, in particular, asked me more specifically if I would for example send them to the municipality:
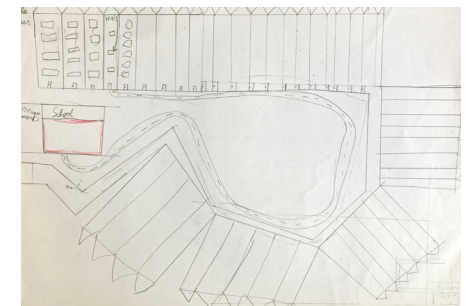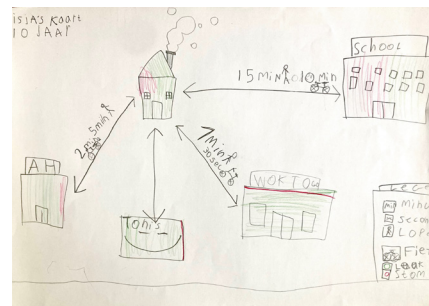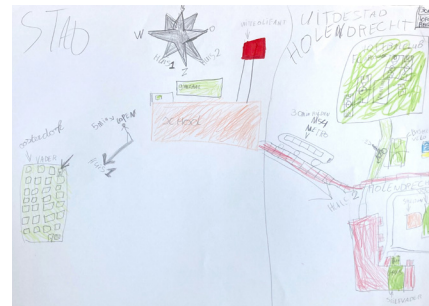
"What are you going to do with all that stuff? Are you going to send it to the municipality as well?" - E, 10, Bijlmer

When I asked if they would want that to happen: they all said a resounding yes. Also when creating the mental maps in the neighbourhoods, many children indicated that they would like their voices to be heard, especially because they had so many improvement areas.

31

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Children's lived experiences of public space

In this chapter, the results of the experiences of children
are presented. They are categorized through five themes:
home, school, passages, outdoor play and safety. Each
chapter starts with two mental maps of the to be discussed
neighbourhood, followed by snippets of maps and quotes
to illustrate the themes. All maps are included in a separate
supplementary booklet which I highly recommend you to
have a good look at as well. If only to step back in time and
enjoy the still unspoilt children who have the world to
discover!

Some examples of the 51
drawings made bij the children
living in the **Nieuwmarkt**

Some examples of the 72
drawings made bij the children
living in the **Bijlmer**

32

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods
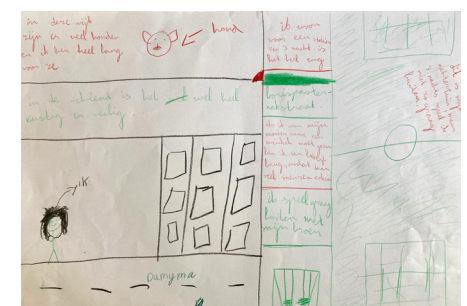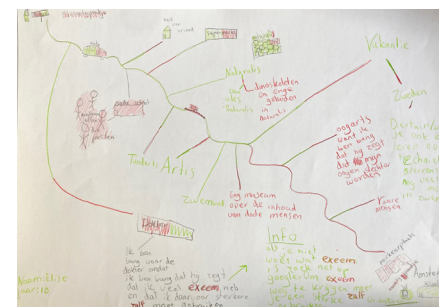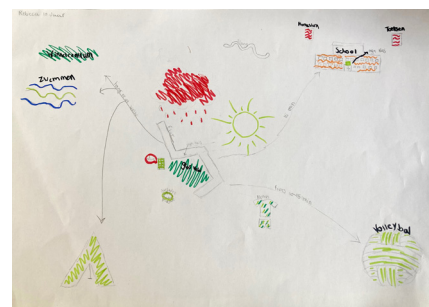
Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

**Figure 11, a bustling map
representing a busy
neighbourhood!
map of the Nieuwmarkt
(J, 11, de Witte Olifant,
May 2022)**

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods
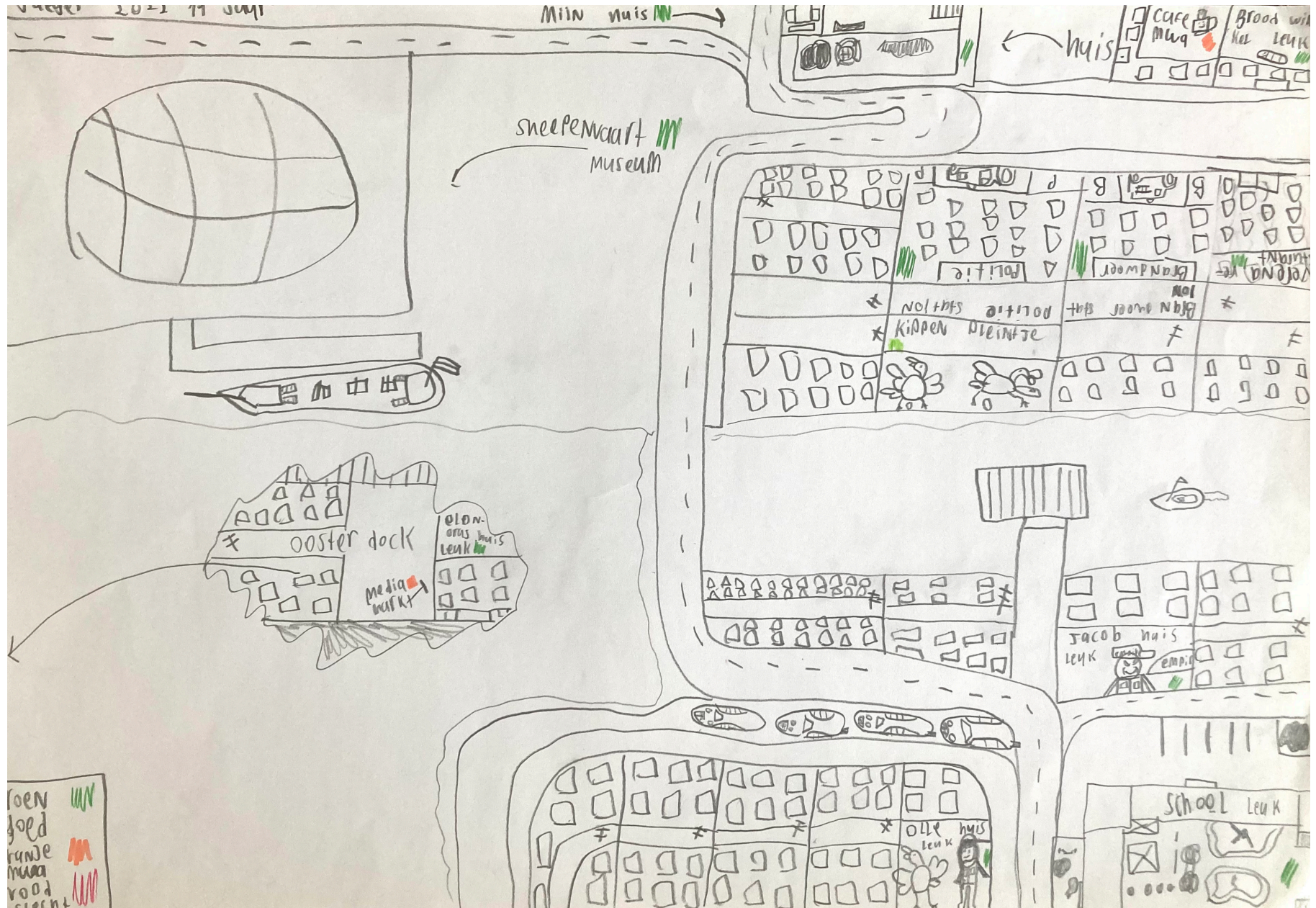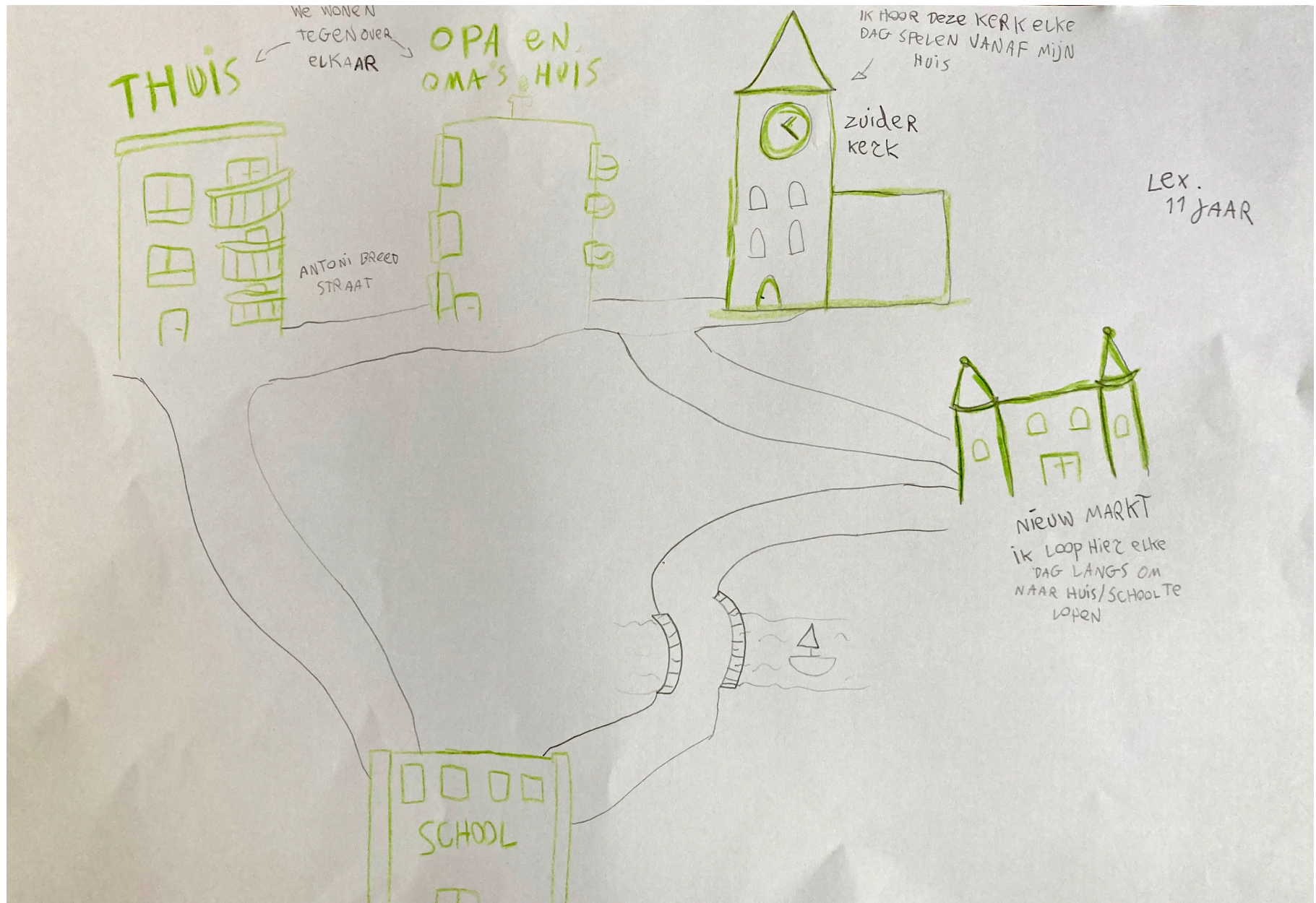
Figure 12, I would not know what to draw in red! map of the Nieuwmarkt (L, 11, Sint Antonius, May 2022)

From left to right translated:

Home <- we live across from eachother-> Grandpa & grandma's house

I hear this church play everyday from from my house

Nieuwmarkt, I walk past this everyday to go walk to home/school

34

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

- **Nieuwmarkt**

Home
Almost all children in the Nieuwmarkt drew their house first. Furthermore, this was often drawn in the centre and/or relatively big, which could mean the house was of great importance for children, see figure 12. Furthermore, the children drew their house almost always with the colour green, meaning they found this place nice, likeable safe or just had a general good or pleasant emotion with the place, see figure 11, figure 12 and figure 13 .
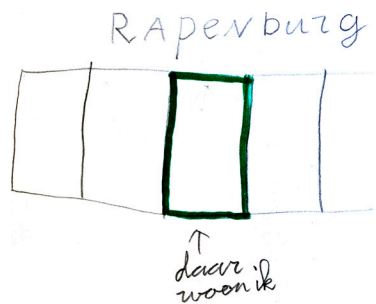

Figure 13, there I live
(H, 11, Witte Olifant, May
2022)

This was also confirmed in the various interviews done with the children. When asked what their favourite place in the whole neighbourhood was, they mostly and almost immediately answered:
"At home." - C, 12, Nieuwmarkt neighbourhood

Not only did their home turn out to be a nice place or favourite place, but children also explained that they prefer to play and be in their own home or that of friends the most:
"I prefer to chill inside. I used to too. But in the summer with friends, it is nice to be outside." - M, 14, Nieuwmarkt

School
In the Nieuwmarkt neighbourhood, children sometimes liked their school and sometimes did not, it varied daily. Sometimes it was coloured half green and half red, see figure 14 or orange to indicate them liking it half of the time. Most of the time, they gave as a reason for not liking school the fact that they had to learn things and had obligations, like homework and waking up at a certain time.
Furthermore, some wrote down certain subjects they found hard. Nevertheless, barely any child drew the school red.
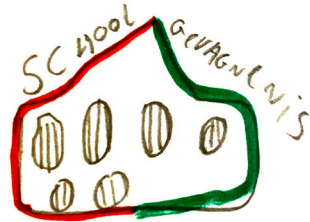

Figure 14, school prison,
(R, 11, Witte Olifant May
2022)

Passages
Passages were drawn relatively much, often streets and allways and such were also marked on the maps, see figure 11. Most of the streets and ways to and from places drawn by the children from the Nieuwmarkt were travelled via foot or by bike and took an average of five to 15 minutes, see figure 15 meaning for these children everything was very close by. The average child also did this on their own, without a parent or guardian with them, especially those who walked to school. There was relatively much spatial practice in the neighbourhood by children through their passages from and through places (Lefebvre, 1991). Passages to and from the supermarket were also drawn, as was the passage to and from de Waag, a playground in the Nieuwmarkt and the actual Waag building, see figure 12. Many children also strolled through mindlessly, just because they did not know what else to do, which can be a form of transitivity shaping the neighbourhood (Amin & Thrift, 2002).

Figure 15, detail of passage
'5 minute walk home (1)'
(L, 11, Sint Antonius,
May, 2022)

"And I also just live really conveniently close to everything." - M, 14, Nieuwmarkt
M here speaks about how nice it is to live close to what she defines as 'everything', indicating that for her, all the things she needs and wants in daily life are in close proximity.

Outdoor play
In the Nieuwmarkt, children, as mentioned before mainly spoke and drew about preferring to stay at home. If they wanted to, however, they were almost always allowed to play outside, except when it was already bedtime.

"I like that alley, that little alley between Rechtboomssloot and Korte Koningsstraat where you can walk through when you go to the Nieuwmarkt and so on. I always like that alley so much. There you also have a little, sort of, tile with those numbers on it, you know, where you hop over. Yes, I like that alley." -M, 14, Nieuwmarkt

On top of that, a lot of children mentioned being free to go anywhere as long as it was in the centre of Amsterdam:
"Well, I'm mainly here in the city centre but I'm allowed to also go around Amsterdam a bit." - C, 12, Nieuwmarkt

35

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

"In de Waag. and in the playground of Sint Antonius and just on the street actually. Just on the road and yes" - M, 14, Nieuwmarkt

De Waag M mentions here was drawn or written down very often in mental maps as well, see figure 16. This is a very old, relatively big playground right in the centre of the Nieuwmarkt and coincidently also right in between the two primary schools where the mental maps were being made. This playground is surrounded by houses and a fence which closes in the evening.

Figure 16, playground de Waag (S, 10, Witte Olifant, May 2022)

For the children of the Witte Olifant, the main reason for drawing this could be because they have their lunch break there, yet children explained that they sometimes like to go there after school as well. This was also the case with the children from the Sint Antonius, from whom a lot of them also say they like to go there sometimes.

However, whilst children did not specifically mention it, a local professional of the Nieuwmarkt spoke about how at a certain age, children are not as welcome in playground de Waag as before.

"Yes, the playground (…the Waag), at a certain point they are no longer welcome there because they disturb the smaller children." - M, local professional Nieuwmarkt

Especially when children turn the age of ten, a lot of parents of younger children and the keeper of the playground rather not have them play on the equipment or in the playground in general because of the disturbance they are seen to cause.

One child also mentions the disturbance children can be for some neighbours especially, those living close to a playground. She talks about a certain redevelopment that happened near her house which for her does not benefit the playground at all:

"Well, we have a piece of fake grass in the playground at Antonius. But it is really so ugly and there is a sort of concrete box built around it. First, there was a nice place to play football because on the wall there was some sort of graffiti with a sort of cave and that was the goal and so on and was very big and good and then they put a concrete box in it that was much smaller where everyone has to play football now but it is really, really bad." - M, 14, Nieuwmarkt

When asked what she thought was the reason for this redevelopment, she mentions that maybe the local residents were not always happy with children playing football there:

"Mmh. I think that yes, maybe they were disturbed by it but I don't know. Maybe the local residents were bothered, but I don't know." - M, 14, Nieuwmarkt

Furthermore, a lot of children draw or mention in their mental maps how places in the neighbourhood often do not smell nice or are too busy with too many people.

Safety
Children in the Nieuwmarktbuurt do not feel particularly unsafe or mention feeling unsafe. However. they do sometimes mention and draw 'hangmen' or people that could be under the influence of something. Especially the so-called red square and black square, het Rode pleintje en het Zwarte pleintje are two areas that children of the

Nieuwmarkt do not particularly seem to like because of the people that are often present there, see figure 17. The big red bridge that crossed the Oudeschans is also mentioned and drawn often as a red place, some children draw or mention a man who seems to be addicted and who 'owns' the bride.
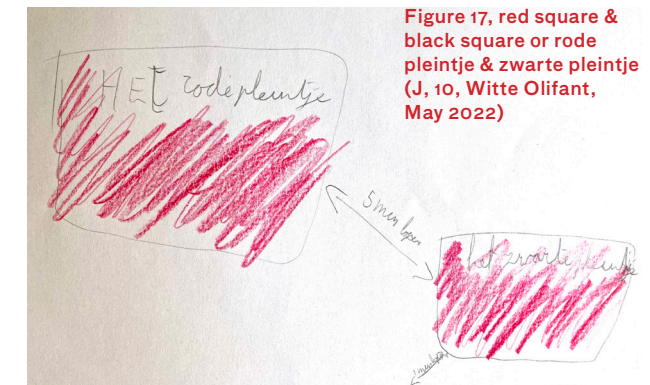

Figure 17, red square & black square or rode pleintje & zwarte pleintje (J, 10, Witte Olifant, May 2022)

In the Nieuwmarktbuurt children did not draw anything indicating a difference in the feeling of safety during the day and during the night. Furthermore, when interviewing the respondents of the Nieuwmarktbuurt and asking about this a feeling of safety during day or night and if this feeling changed, no such feelings were present. In general, the topic of safety was not or barely existed in the mental maps and the interviews with participants from the Nieuwmarktbuurt none of the children indicated that they felt unsafe in the neighbourhood.

36

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Figure 18, I cannot leave
without informing a parent.
map of the Bijlmer
(E, 12 de schakel,
April 2022).

From left to right
translated:

At home i feel safe

Playground at night

Tanger, in the supermarket
I feel safe

Little square (football
place)

Streets at night
I cannot leave without
informing a parent
Scared of big dogs, empty
places and insects

37

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods
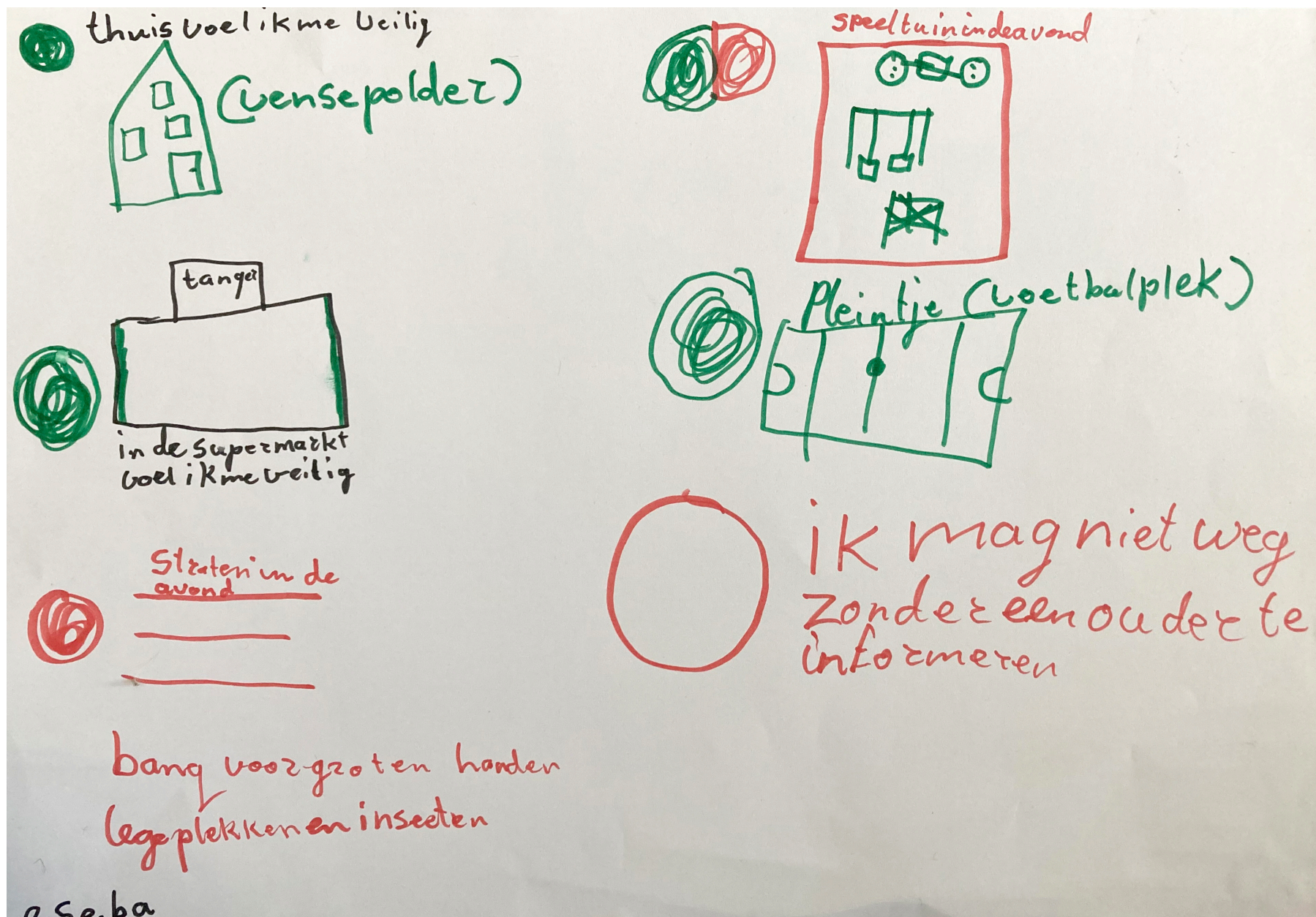
Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Figure 19,
map of the Bijlmer
(K, 10 de Morgenster,
April 2022)

From left to right
translated:

My grandma's, grandpa's
and uncle's house. No, big
house!!!

Alcohol voor addicts
My little home
Scary men: waah
Riding my horse
Wasp
Girlfriends
Teacher
Beer/Wine

38

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

- **Bijlmer**

Home

In the Bijlmer, the home was almost always drawn big, see figure 18 and figure 19 showing its importance to the children. Furthermore, it was always drawn with green as a positive place. Many children wrote things like 'safe' or 'comfortable' as an indication of why they had a positive experience with their home, see figure 18 and figure 20.

One respondent explained that he is most at home because he finds that there are little to no things to do outside. "*I am mostly inside because there is little to do outside.*" - L, 14, Bijlmer

He wished there were more activities and neighbourhood centres that did things for children and young people that he could go to. Furthermore, if these places had the same things, like games and a PlayStation, he had at home, he thought a lot of young people would probably go there.

Figure 20, my home is safe (L, 11, de Morgenster, April 2022)

School

The majority of the children in Bijlmer liked their school, drew it big and in the centre and coloured it green, see figure 19. Some children indicated that for them, the school felt like a safe space and they liked it because all of their friends were there. Furthermore, a lot of children were

quite fond of the teacher and gave that as their reason for colouring their school green or just wrote the teacher's name in green and the school in red, see figure 19 and figure 21.

Figure 21, teacher = Iris (D, 12, de Schakel, April 2022)

Passages

Relatively litte passages were drawn on the maps from the children of the Bijmler. If streets were drawn, they were quite often drawn in red, see figure, 18. Alleways were also not prefered. Children indicated they found those too scary. Furthermore, if drawn, children's passages and ways of transportation to and from places were relatively long, see figure 22. Some of the ways took at least 20 minutes and the average children were taken to and from a place by car. Moreover, a couple of children took the metro to school. Very few children did walk to school, but this was mostly because they lived right across from the school building. They did this often with their parents or guardian or with brothers and sisters. Some children indicated that they did found the cars driving on the streets a bit unpleasant, as they were often driving too fast making crossing the road scary.

The transportation to and from hobbies and extracurricular activities was also mostly done by car and sometimes by bike. These took 30 minutes for some children, as their hobbies were often in another district.

Whilst many children indicated that their most used form of transportation or passing to and from places was by car, barely any of these drew this passage or the car. This could mean that these car journeys are not of any importance to them or do not leave an impression.
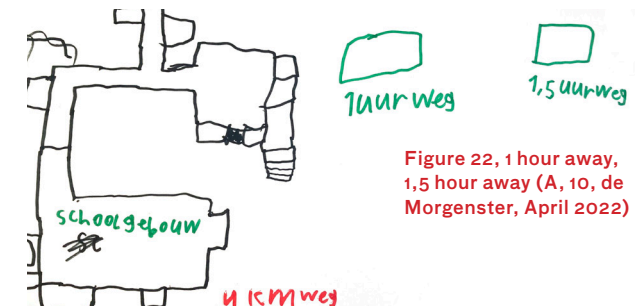

Figure 22, 1 hour away, 1,5 hour away (A, 10, de Morgenster, April 2022)

Outdoor play

In the Bijlmer, very few children of the Bijlmer drew a playground or a place they played outside. If they did draw a playground, it was the playground that was part of the schoolyard. When asked why many children explained that they were not allowed to play outside as their parents or guardians often view it as unsafe, see figure 23.

Figure 23, I am not allowed outside (S, 11, de Schakel, April 2022)

"*I am not allowed to play outside*" - R, 11, Bijlmer

39

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

On the sidewalks in front of the house, or courtyards between houses, some children were allowed to play sometimes. This was because parents and neighbourhoods could see them there and keep an eye out, creating social control via the eyes on the street principle (Jacobs, 1961):

"I can only play in the courtyard because my mother can see me from the balcony" - S, 12, Bijlmer

However, a lot of children did not have this social control benefit, because they often lived in high-story flats which made the eyes on the street principle not possible.

Some children played outside at the schoolyard, which they mostly liked, but many children did indicate that they found it quite boring sometimes, see figure 25.

Figure 25, it is often fun but sometimes it is boring (A, 12, de Schakel, april 2022)

Some children were only allowed to play outside during schooltime when a teacher is present:

"I only play outside at school, in the schoolyard at break time." - J, 12, Bijlmer

Furthermore, and in a combination with the preference for staying at home that was discussed before, many children did not like playing outside. There were children who sometimes found it scary in the playground, see figure 18. Some children mentioned that they found the equipment in playgrounds only for smaller children and a bit boring or unexciting to play on themselves:

"No, because I find the playground boring" - K, 12, Bijlmer

Safety
As mentioned before, in the Bijlmer, many children were not allowed to play outside because their parents deemed it too unsafe, see figure 23. This could be fueled by the stigma of the neighbourhood being dangerous and bad, which influences residents living there (Pinkster, 2020). Yet it was not only the parents that felt unsafe for their children, but many children themselves living in the Bijlmer reported that they often felt unsafe in their neighbourhood. Sometimes in the more subtle way by indicating where they felt safe, like their home, see figure 20. Again the traffic played a big role as well.

Figure 26, scary tunnel in the night (L, 11, de Schakel, april 2022)

"The street is very unsafe because there are a lot of cars everywhere" - M, 12, Bijlmer

"And more police on the streets, because sometimes you just feel very unsafe on the streets. Or small dark alleys, that something else is made of them so that it still, yes, feels safe" - E, 11, Bijlmer

The feeling of safety for children seems to change during the evening, especially when it is dark, see figure 26. There were various places that children drew that they did not feel comfortable or safe at, see figure 18. Some places differed during the day and night.

The mental maps often show places being coloured both red and green to indicate that they felt safe during the day but they did not during the night or when it was dark. Often these places were the metro stations, empty shopping malls and other areas that have no living function and are therefore deserted during the night, evening or even early in the morning when children go to school.

This feeling was also expressed in the interviews with several respondents:
"I do not like the metro station when it's dark because then there are a lot of weird people there" - S, 12, Bijlmer

"In the evening, I find the older youths a bit scary, I feel I have to look after my things" - L, 14, Bijlmer

" The shopping mall is really scary in the dark because it is very empty but there are strange people that make weird noises" P, 12, Bijlmer

Besides the darkness and with that, the emptiness of the nighttime being of influence on children's feeling of safety in the Bijlmer, 'weird' people or 'hangmen' also seem to negatively affect their feeling of safety:
"Sometimes it is a bit unsafe, sometimes people just sit on the floor everywhere and hang around a bit and then I am a bit scared" - E, 11, Bijlmer
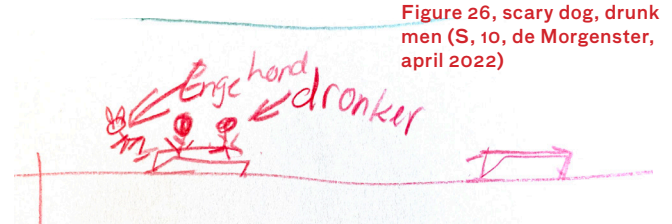
Figure 26, scary dog, drunk men (S, 10, de Morgenster, april 2022)

The people the children are speaking about are mostly residents or homeless people who linger in the neighbourhood, often in the public spaces near metro stations and shopping malls. They can be under influence or in need of money, see figure 19 and figure 26. Often times these hangmen are sitting on the public benches drinking and looking and shouting at the residents and/or children, see figure 19, figure 26 and figure 27. Their presence can be the reason for children not to go to a specific place, even if it is a playground or square they do really like, simply because of the men sitting there.

40

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Their attitude and manner can be very unpleasant for children:
"Sometimes at the Albert Heijn supermarket, for example, there are such people and they say: give me money, give me money, they shout." - J, 12, Bijlmer
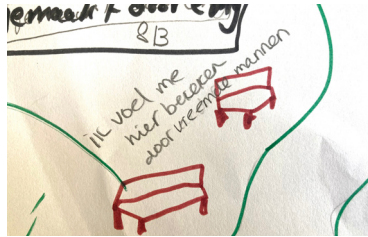
I really don't find the metro station safe because you can fall there or sometimes there are people I really don't like." K, 12, Bijmer

These hangmen are an ongoing issue in the Bijlmer. They are mostly older people who do not have anything to do besides drinking and sitting on benches in the Neighbourhood:

"It's more the older ones here, the hangers-on. So the loitering youth is not so bad, I think. But the hangers-on, people have a lot to complain about." - L, Social entrepreneur, Bijlmer

An older respondent did not feel particularly unsafe because of hangmen, but he did understand that younger children and people did not like them:

"I don't necessarily feel unsafe in Southeast because of hangmen, I'm used to them so I know they don't really do anything except shout" - L, 14, Bijlmer

Some children were also influenced by certain events or situations that happened in the neighbourhood. This did not have to mean that they witnessed something unpleasant

themselves; they could have also seen it on tv or the news or even heard about it in the classroom.

A somewhat extreme example was of a boy who coloured a whole block of houses red. When asked why he responded: *"Yes, I coloured it red, because someone was stabbed there, so I find that really scary"* - R, 11, Bijlmer

This boy lived close to the building block but luckily did not witness the incident himself. However, because of all the commotion, and the talks his parents and neighbours had about it, the place itself became a very scary place for the boy.

A slightly older boy had also had some contact with crime, although for him slightly more direct. He voiced his concern with young people hanging outside and getting offered high amounts of money for often small illegal tasks. Because they are often bored with the little there is to do in the neighbourhood, children and teenagers often accept the offer without much thought. He mentioned that it happened everywhere, on the street, on the playground, even at high school at the schoolyard:

"Crime is attractive to young people because there is little to do, man. Sometimes, there are boys at school who talk to me and say: if you want to do something, I will give you money. Everyone wants to make money because maybe they don't live with so much money, you know. It is easy to end up on the wrong path in the Southeast. The wrong path lurks." -L, 14, Bijlmer

L says that if you are not careful or are not brought up with the means to say no to offers, you can easily end up on the wrong path in the Bijlmer. He has a direct experience himself that does and could explain his viewpoint of the Bijlmer. Yet it is still interesting that this view of the Bijlmer as notorious bad is so fixed in his mind, once again showing how stigmas stick (Pinkster et al, 2020).

41

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

● **Conclusion**

All children both in the Nieuwmarkt neighbourhood and in the Bijlmer drew their house, and this was mostly drawn in the centre and quite big. Furthermore, the house was always a good place. For children in both neighbourhoods, their home meant a good place, a place they liked to go and feel safe in. Children in the Bijlmer especially seemed to emphasize the safe aspect of their home, which could read as a sign that they experienced other places primarily as unsafe.
Another often drawn place on mental maps was the school. This was quite logical as we were doing the mental maps at the schools, and also because besides home, usually school is the place children are most of their time. Although the school in both neighbourhoods was a mostly nice place, more often children in the Nieuwmarkt did not like it sometimes, because of homework or obligations and maybe even pressure to get a good grade.

Most of the mental maps both from the Nieuwmarkt and the Bijlmer were also illustrated with streets, passages and paths to and from places, but the mental maps from the Nieuwmarkt had more of these. These were often the ways to and from school and to and from various places. The fact that the children drew these paths and streets could indicate that these ways to and from places are of certain importance to them. Yet, the paths on the maps of the Nieuwmarkt were always short and walkable and done alone, whilst the routes of maps of the Bijlmer, if even drawn at all, were sometimes even longer than an hour and mostly done via a car with a guardian or parent, which could be utillitarian design of the streets and neigbhourhood (Rottier, 1978). This can elliminate changes for children to create their own footprints in the world (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Lefebvre, 1991).

Children in the Nieuwmarkt played outside relatively more, especially in the playground de Waag, but still preferred playing inside. There was a small reference of children sometimes noticing that they were a little bit of disturbance, only because their play equipment in playgrounds was slightly more fenced off. Children did indicate finding a lot of places too crowded or not clean enough for them to play at, which could be caused by tourists, also indicated and seen as a priority in the essentail policy document (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2021).

Children in the Bijlmer, however, barely played outside, mostly because it was not allowed due to a lack of safety, lack of eyes-on-the-streets, but also because they preferred playing inside (Jacobs, 1961). This lack of safety was very apparent in the maps of the children of the Bijlmer, fueled either by stigma, experiences with crime or hangmen shouting (Pinkster et al, 2020). Children of the Nieuwmarkt did not at all share this feeling. No one indicated a feeling of un-safety, not even when it was dark, during the nighttime.

The barrier in the Bijlmer to playing outside is not so much caused by tourism and lack of space as in the Nieuwmarkt neighbourhood, but more created by fear of unsafety; created by traffic by cars, hangmen and especially a feeling reinforced by the neighbourhood stigma that has developed in recent years.

42

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Conclusion

Lefebvre (1991) argues that there is a relationship or link between his triad of the physical space perceived as is, the conceived representation of space and the lived space of representation. To answer the main research question, the conceived representation of both the neighbourhoods was first studied, followed by research on the actual lived space, which brings me to my main findings.

In the Nieuwmarkt, public governance structures are existing in the neighbourhood; the Amsterdam City Council is working together with various organizations and residents' councils to create a livable inner city. These structures and co-creation and co-production via participation like webinars are forming and (re)developing the city. The focus of this public space governance is especially on the lack of livable space in the neighbourhood. The historical centre is in a sense already finished and not very flexible for (re)development which makes their policies focus more on small adjustments like creating green patches in alleyways and fixing the nuisance of tourism and street dealers. As a result, children potentially using public spaces in the neighbourhood are not visible in the representations and are not involved in the governance structure. They are not or hardly mentioned in the most important policy document of the neighbourhood and neither in a document about the development of a park, whilst it is generally believed children are high users of parks (Karsten and Felder, 2016). Furthermore, they are neither specifically invited nor present at a webinar about this policy document and are not mentioned in any of the discussions happening.

For the children themselves living in the neighbourhood, the whole creation of representations of space is something they do not seem to understand that much. They still see the local government, in this case; the municipality, as this 'all governing power' deciding everything in their surrounding concerning public space. The children do not realize they too can participate and are powerful stakeholders. Moreover, they do not know what to change or decide in their neighbourhood, they found everything

pretty nice, making their interest in governance little. Yet, even if their interest is little, they do seem to want agency, to have their voices heard. Because they do live in the public space and their lived experiences are generally of positive valence. Their spatial practice includes walking to and from school, making short trips to the supermarket and playing outside in the biggest playground in the neighbourhood, primarily because everything is so close and was walkable distance. They are allowed by parents or guardians and feel safe enough to make these passages on their own, creating their footprints, their rhythms and transitivity by just hanging and strolling around (Amin & Thrift, 2002).

It can be argued that these repetitive actions these children go through daily are their ways of appropriating the space in their neighbourhood. This can create thick places as Casey (2001) defines them and lived space as Lefebvre (1991) defines them, created by lived experiences and meaningful rhythms. Uncontrolled by the representation of space designed via the governance, the lived space is the true thick space of the children, in which their experiences and spatial practices through daily receptive actions form the space (Duff, 2010).

Where governance can lack the ability to have children be important actors, their lived experiences, via their spatial practices like their rhythms, footprints and play can be a form of creating a lived space and even governing the space (Lefebvre, 1991).

In the Bijlmer, governance structures are also prominent in the (re)development of public space. Here, children are involved to a relatively more extent. They are mentioned often in the most important policy document about public space in the neighbourhood, which also has two of the five ambitions specifically about the youth in the district. In the document about a new park, children and places for children to play are thought about and written down. Pictures and other illustrations with children are implemented greatly in both documents. They are not

43

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

themselves present at the webinar about the policy document, but touched upon various times and even within the first ten minutes of the discussion. Furthermore, the creation of the policy document is also from a governance structure of co-production between various organisations including at least two that involve children and youth. Children themselves seem to realize slightly more that they could be essential stakeholders and they have a lot of ideas of what to change or bring to the neighbourhood. The various things they did not like or wanted to change, in a way encouraged a little participation by some children.

However, different from in the Nieuwmarkt, the children mostly do not truly live in the public space in their neighbourhood. There seems to be a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy taking place. The still ongoing stigma of the neighbourhood as notorious and unsafe is embedded both in parents' view of the public space but also in children's own view and even trickled down to the policies of the neighbourhood which were partly created due to the stigma whilst also trying to get rid of it (Alliantie Zuidoost, 2020). Because of this, children seldom go outside (on their own).

When the representation of the stigma of a bad neighbourhood is almost everywhere in children's daily life, it often ends up sticking (Pinkster et al, 2020). This causes children to have a negative image of their neighbourhood which can negatively affect their lived experiences. Their lived experiences in the neighbourhood are not good, they often feel very unsafe. This feeling of unsafely is further fueled by 'hangmen' or other people that act a certain way, and empty places that lose their function at night. Furthermore, children in the neighbourhood often live too far away from their school or their hobbies to walk or go there alone. The spatial practice in the Bijlmer by children is little to none and they are not creating a lived space through this and their footprints and rhythms (Amin & Thrift, 2002).

Thus in the Nieuwmarkt, in its documents and webinars, did not seem to see children as important stakeholders, the Bijlmer's governance structure and its documents did so much more, involving youth organizations in the creation of the policies within the document and focusing more on children in general.

But where children of the Bijlmer are, partly because of an existing stigma, more involved in the governance structure, they are, partly because of that same stigma, very little involved in actually using and appropriating the public space, whilst children of the Nieuwmarkt are using and appropriating the public space. For children of the Nieuwmarkt, this living and using of the space thanks to the proximity and safe feeling, can make them visible and create lived space and a place for them within the governance structure. Children in the Bijlmer are thus more visible within the representations of space whilst children in the Nieuwmarkt are more visible within the lived space.

Looking back at my main research question: *How have children aged 10 to 14 living in Amsterdam been involved in public space governance in the two different neighbourhoods and how is this related to their own perspective and their actual use of public space?*

My findings show that children in Amsterdam are differently involved in public space governance depending on the context. A more negative context related to children could mean more involvement. However, in both context and in general, children are involved only little and wish to have more agency.

Looking back at the second part of my main research question, a link between the involvement and actual use of public space is harder to find, because the actual involvement of children in both contexts was so little. But my findings did slightly show that negative experiences and neighbourhood stigma can inspire the public space governance there, meaning negative lived experiences could thus influence public space governance.

The more positive context of the Nieuwmarkt did not show this clearly, however, some other interesting findings were made which I will talk about in the discussion.

Discussion and further research

My research looked at the link between two of the three dimensions of Lefebvre (1991), but whilst doing this study, links between all three dimensions on different levels were also found. My further findings are not specific answers to the research questions but are very interesting for further research. I argued before that the more children are outside, creating spatial practices through footprints and rhythms and transitivity, the more they appropriate a place and thus, again looking at Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the production of space, create agency and lived space. When children are not outside much, creating their rhythms and footprints and spatial practice they do not create lived space and agency. This can be further supported by the context of the Nieuwmarkt. In this neighbourhood in the existing public space governance, children have no or barely any agency. Yet because most of the children live close by school and hobbies etc and because it is deemed safe enough, children do go outside, alone by bike or by foot, albeit just for simple spatial practices.
Because of these findings in this study, I argue that these spatial practices by children creating lived space could be picked up by the current public space governance structures, who thanks to children using the space, could start seeing the children as important stakeholders in that space.

Already, this started to happen when Hoodlab came to the Nieuwmarkt in the summer of 2020. Active parents and other citizens saw the children, saw how they were playing in and using the public space in the neighbourhood and realized children too were residents who needed a voice and they thus invited Hoodlab. Hoodlab is a startup around helps residents participate in their neighbourhood. They facilitated the tools for children to find their voice and then the ball started to roll which created number nine, a

44

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

specific location in the neighbourhood where children are welcome two days a week to hang out, chill and play. I spoke on the phone with the local professional who invited Hoodlab to the neighbourhood. She told me how more and more residents and professionals are realizing children are also stakeholders, simply because they see them using the public space. This specific effect of children's spatial practices on governance is something that could be studied more in-depth in further research.
Children's (re)production of space through their spatial practice and experiences is a form of taking a certain power of the space, owning the place and creating, albeit very abstractly, a say in that space (Duff, 2017). Where governance can lack the ability to have children be important actors, their lived experiences, via their rhythms, footprints and play can be a form of appropriating and governing the space.

The participation and inclusion of children in the Bijlmer mentioned before could potentially influence their spatial practice. Making the children feel that they are allowed to be part of processes in the neighbourhood, could result in further involvement and interest in being and using the neighbourhood itself (Peeters, 2019).

Thus in some contexts lived experience influences spatial practice which then influences representations of pace, whilst in other contexts lived experiences influence representations of space which could influence spatial practice.

How the dimensions described by Lefebvre (1991) are related to each other and affect each other thus depends on the context and the negative or positive valence active. It mostly shows how important it is to look at children, their spatial practices and lived experience and also how the neighbourhood is represented and how these can influence and affect each other.

With the current (extra) findings of this study being that for

children, representation of space could play a role in how they use public space, it is especially recommended to be more careful when creating representations of space. Stigmas tend to stick and are thus important to not fuel by repeating and talking about them or a neighbourhood in general in a certain negative way. Furthermore, spatial practice and lived experiences by children can create an agency, so it is important to make sure children always feel safe to use and live in the public space as they please.
As it turns out, children do want an agency or a voice, even if they do not have anything specific to change or concrete ideas about public space, so it is about time we give them this agency by giving them the tools to and involving them more in the governance of public space.

Limitations

A limitation of this study primarily is Lefebvre's triad. This is not a perfect triad, and too much focus on this did create tunnel vision for me as a researcher in the end.
Furthermore, public space governance is a very broad concept, and maybe looking back at it, a little too broad. It would have helped to choose one urban renewal project in the neighbourhood, but these were not concrete in both the chosen neighbourhoods and especially not known by children. Also, whilst comparing two neighbourhoods did provide very interesting findings, and especially interesting links and intertwining, it made comparing quite difficult. The contexts of the neighbourhoods are so different that the focus with both was completely elsewhere. Generalizing for the whole of Amsterdam or the Netherlands simply is not possible as it is found in this study that context matters.

The privatization of public space was something this study started with, but this ended up being hard to research with children, as they did not experience it in any particular way, so whilst this is still very interesting, this is something to study somewhere where more concrete examples and experiences can be found.

Moreover, whilst I am incredibly proud en happy to have studied children and have them be the respondents, they were a hard group to study. For one, their childhood is ever-changing and things happening now or three years ago might not be applicable later on, as they would have already grown out of their opinions. Children, in general, differ even if they are the same age, as some grow up faster than others, and for example, girls often go through puberty earlier than boys (Steffens, 2018).

Also, one parent rightfully pointed out in a conversation we had after I interviewed her child: *"they do not know what they are missing"* (Personal communication, 2022). Where parents see the limitations and problems their children face in the neighbourhoods, often because they had it differently when they were younger themselves, children have no clue. Sometimes it is only later on when children are older that they realize the faults in their neighbourhood, exactly how I realized them and what inspired me to do this study. In further research, it might be interesting to interview both children and their parents about their neighbourhood.

45

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Literature

Agee, J. (2009) Developing qualitative research questions: a reflective process. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* Volume 22, 2009 - Issue 4 https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390902736512

Aitchison, J. (2006) Whassup? Slang and swearing among school children. *Education Review.* Autumn 2006, Vol. 19 Issue 2, p18-24. 7p.

Amin, A. & Thrift, N. (2002) The legibility of the everyday city. In: Amin, A. & Thrift, N. *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*. Polity, Cambridge. pp. 7-30.

Amsterdamsebinnenstad (2000) Waarderingskaart Beschermd Stadsgezicht, *Binnenstad 183*, juli 2000

Bijker, R. Van Leeuwen, E. Koster, P. (2018) Lokale inzet door ontmoeting. *Rooilijn* jg.51 / nr. 2

Bourdieu, P. (1994). *Distinction.* London, Routledge.

Brown et al (2019) *Special issue: child-friendly cities* Retrieved 25 November 2021 from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epub/10.1080/23748834.2019.1682836?needAccess=true

Bryman, A. (2016) *Social Research Methods* 6th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bulkely, H. Kern, K. (2009) Cities, Europeanization and Multi-level Governance: Governing Climate Change through Transnational Municipal Networks* *JCMS* 2009 volume 47. Number 2. pp. 309-332

Casey, E. S. (2001) "Between Geography and Philosophy: what does it mean to be in the place-world?" *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* , Vol. 91, No. 4 (Dec., 2001), pp. 683-693

Cardno, C (2018) Policy Document Analysis: A Practical Educational Leadership Tool and a Qualitative Research Method. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice* 2018, Volume 24, Issue 4, pp: 623-640

CBS (2021) *Jongeren*, CBS Retrieved November 20, 2021, from https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/visualisaties/dashboard-bevolking/leeftijd/jongeren

Couzy, M. (2019a) Steeds meer gezinnen met jonge kinderen verlaten Amsterdam, *Het Parool*. June 26, 2019

Couzy, M. (2019b) Amsterdam krijgt kinderburgemeester, *Het Parool.* August 30, 2019

De Certeau, M. (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life.* University of California Press, Berkeley.

De Jong, A. De Jong, D. V. Mertens, G. Wasley, C. E. (2005) The role of self-regulation in corporate governance: evidence and implications from The Netherlands. *Journal of Corporate Finance* Volume 11. Issue 3. June 2005. Pages 473-503 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcorpfin.2004.01.002

Dekker, K. Van Kempen, R. (2004) Urban governance within the Big Cities Policy. *Cities*, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 109–117, 2004

DOCK (2022) *Organisatie*, Dock. Retrieved June 23, 2022, from https://www.dock.nl/over-dock/organisatie/

Downs, R. M. and Stea, D. (1977) *Maps in Minds*, Reflections on Cognitive Mapping, Harper & Row: New York.

Duff, C. (2017) The affective right to the city. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 42, 516–529

Duff, C. (2010) On the role of affect and practice in the production of place. *Environment and Planning D: society and Space*, 28(5), 881– 895.

Effting, M. (2021) Amsterdam-Zuidoost is het geweld zat: 'De jeugd van hier is echt naar de klote' *De Volkskrant.* May, 17, 2021

Finn, D (2014) DIY urbanism: implications for cities, *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability*, 7:4, 381-398, DOI: 10.1080/17549175.2014.891149

Friedmann, J. (1999) The City of Everyday Life Knowledge/Power and the Problem of Representation, disP - *The Planning Review*, Volume 35, 1999 - Issue 136-137

Fuchs, C. (2019) Henri Lefebvre's Theory of the Production of Space and the Critical Theory of Communication, *Communication Theory*, Volume 29, Issue 2, May 2019, Pages 129–150, https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qty025

Gemeente Amsterdam (2019) *Gezinnen in Amsterdam, Gaan ze weg of blijven ze*? Factsheet / september 2019

Gemeente Amsterdam (2020a) *Factsheet Jeugd Stadsdeel Centrum*, Onderzoek, Informatie en Statistiek

Gemeente Amsterdam (2020b) *Factsheet Jeugd Stadsdeel Centrum*, Onderzoek, Informatie en Statistiek

Gemeente Amsterdam (2020) *De slag om de Nieuwmarktbuurt,* Amsterdam. Retrieved on July 8, 2022 from https://www.amsterdam.nl/nieuws/achtergrond/slag-nieuwmarktbuurt/

46

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Gemeente Amsterdam (2022c) *Concept Beleidskader Hoofdgroenstructuur* - Toetskaart, maps.amsterdam. Retrieved on July 5, 2022 from https://maps.amsterdam.nl/hgs2021/?LANG=nl

Gemeente Amsterdam (2020c) *Monitor schoolloopbanen voortgezet onderwijs*, Onderzoek, Informatie en Statistiek

Gemeente Amsterdam (2022) *Gebiedsplannen 2022*, Amsterdam. Retrieved on January 25, 2022, from: https://www.amsterdam.nl/bestuur-organisatie/gebiedsgericht-werken/gebiedsplannen-2022/

Gerring, J. (2007). *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Gill, T. (2017) *Tim Gill on Building Child-Friendly Cities*, Resite Retrieved 3 December 2021 from https://www.resite.org/stories/tim-gill-on-building-child-friendly-cities.

Gottdiener, M. (1993) A Marx for Our Time: Henri Lefebvre and the Production of Space, Social theory, Mar., 1993, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Mar., 1993), pp. 129-134

Guarneros-Meza, V. Geddes, M. (2010) Local Governance and Participation under Neoliberalism: Comparative Perspectives *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2427.2010.00952.x.

Haraway, D. (1988) Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Autumn, 1988), pp. 575-599.

Helleman, G. (2018) Playable cities: a model and a toolkit, *Urban springtime.* Retrieved January 30, 2022 from https://urbanspringtime.blogspot.com/2018/07/playable-cities-summary.html.

Helleman, G. (2021) *Hoe openbaar is de openbare ruimte,* gebiedsontwikkeling Retrieved November 20, 2021, from https://www.gebiedsontwikkeling.nu/artikelen/hoe-openbaar-is-de-openbare-ruimte/

Hellinga, H. (1985) *Algemeen uitbreidingsplan Amsterdam 50 jaar*, Amsterdamse Raad voor de Stedebouw

Heijselaar, E. (2018) Aldo van Eyck artikel *openresearch.amsterdam* Retrieved January 25, 2022 from https://openresearch.amsterdam/nl/page/36835/aldo-van-eyck.

Het Parool (2021) Angel (12) nieuwe kinderburgemeester van Amsterdam: 'Is dit een droom?', *Het Parool*. Oktober 27, 2021

Holloway, S. and Valenine, G. (2000) *Children's Geographies. Playing, Living, Learning,* London: Routledge.

Hubbard, P. (2018)a. Chapter 9: Embodiment and The Lived City. In *City*: Routledge. London.

Huizinga, J. (1938) *Homo Ludens*, *Proeve Eener Bepaling Van Het Spel-Element Der Cultuur.* Amsterdam University Press.

Inghels, S. J. (2013) *De stad, het gebouw en de mens, een onderzoek naar het gedachtegoed en gebouwde werken van Aldo van Eyck & Theo Bosch.* Eindhoven University of Technology.

Iveson, K. (2013) Cities Within the City: Do-It-Yourself Urbanism and the Right to the City. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research.* 37. 10.1111/1468-2427.12053.

Jacob, J. (1961) The Death and Life of Great American Cities, Random House Usa Inc, New York. Jacobs, J. (1961) The Death and Life of Great American Cities, Vintage Books, A Division of Random House Inc., New York

Johnston, M. P. (2017) Secondary Data Analysis: A Method of which the Time Has Come, *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries*, [S.l.], v. 3, n. 3, p. 619-626, May 2017. ISSN 2241-1925.

Karsten, L. (2000) Mapping Childhood in Amsterdam: The Spatial and Social Construction of Children's Domains in The City. *Tijdschrift voor Economische Sociale Geografie* - 2002, Vol. 93, No. 3, pp. 231-241.

Karsten, L. (2005) It all used to be better? Different generations on continuity and change in urban children›s daily use of space, *Children›s Geographies*, 3:3, 275-290, DOI: 10.1080/14733280500352912.

Karsten, L. Felder, N. (2016) *De nieuwe generatie Stadskinderen* Nai010 uitgevers, Rotterdam ISBN 978-94-6208-289-2.

Kleijn, T. (2021) Tientallen speeltuinen geopend om Amsterdamse buurten leefbaarder te maken, *NH nieuws*, August 5, 2021

Koolhaas, M. (2016) *Vijftig jaar Bijlmermeer, omstreden woonwijk kreeg slechte naam*, Andere Tijden. Retrieved on June 13, 2022 from https://anderetijden.nl/artikel/4796/Vijftig-jaar-Bijlmermeer.

Kunst in Kaart (2022a) *Amsterdam-Zuidoost Wijkkaart*, kunstinkaart. Retrieved on July 8, 2022 from https://www.kunstinkaart.nl/product/amsterdam-zuidoost-wijkkaart-wit/

Kunst in Kaart (2022b) *Amsterdam – Centrum Wijkkaart*, kunstinkaart. Retrieved on July 8, 2022 from https://www.kunstinkaart.nl/product/amsterdam-centrum-white-wijk-map/ Langstraat, F. & Melik, R. van (2013). Challenging the "End of Public Space": a comparative analysis of publicness in British and Dutch urban spaces. *Journal of Urban Design,* 18(3), 429-448.

Leng, H. Li, T. (2016) Research on Public Open Space of Rural Areas in Severe Cold Regions based on Survey of Residents on the Behavioral Activity, *Procedia Engineering* 146 (2016) 327 – 334.

Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The Production of Space,* Editions Anthropos 1974, 1984, English translation Donald Nicholson-Smith 1991, Blackwell in Oxford, United Kingdom. Cambridge, United States

Lefebvre, H. (1996). *Writings on cities* (E. Kofman & E. Lebas, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Lofland, L. H. (1998) *The Public Realm*, Exploring the City›s Quintessential Social Territory, in New York NY, Aldine de Gruyter

Loft, L. Mann, C. (2015) Challenges in ecosystem services governance: multi-levels, multi-actors, multi-rationalities. *Ecosystem Services 16* DOI:10.1016/j.ecoser.2015.11.002.

Lynch, K. (1960) *The Image of the City,* Mit Press Ltd Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England

Mak, Gilsing & Wróblewska, (2016) *De staat van jeugdparticipatie in Nederland 2016, Resultaten online enquête 122 gemeenten en overzicht van goede voorbeeldpraktijken.* Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport. Verwey-Jonker Instituut, augustus 2016

Manenschijn, H. J. J. Smit, H. Beens, A. (2007) *Metronetstudie*, Gemeente Amsterdam Dienst Infrastructuur Verkeer en Vervoer.

Matsumura, K. & Sumi, Y. (2014) What Are You Talking About While Driving?: An Analysis of In-car Conversations Aimed at Conversation Sharing, *AutomotiveUI '14,* September 17 - 19 2014, Seattle, WA, USA http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2667317.266741

Matthews, H. Limb, M. (1999) Defining *an* agenda for the geography of children: review and prospect. Progress in Human Geography 23,1 (1999) pp. 61–90.

Meijer, A. Sleurink, M. Hakvoort, L. Gadet, J. (2016) Beweegatlas Amsterdam 2016, *Ruimte & Duurzaamheid Gemeente Amsterdam* http://spelenenbewegen.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Beweegatlas_Amsterdam_2016_concept.pdf.

47

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Melik & Van der Krabben (2016) Co-production of public space: policy translations from New York City to the Netherlands. *Town Planning Review* 87(2): 139-158.

Micek, M. And Staszweska, S. (2019) Urban and Rural Public Spaces: Development Issues and Qualitative Assessment. *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series*, 45(45): 75-93. DOI: http://doi.org/10.2478/bog-2019-0025.

Mitchell, D. (1993) The End of Public Space? People's Park, Definitions of the Public, and Democracy, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. Volume 85, 1995 - Issue 1.

Moravcová, J. Pecenka, J. Pekna, D. Moravcova, V. and Novakova, N. (2020). The Role of Public Spaces in Small Municipality, Sustainability in Urban Planning and Design, Amjad Almusaed, Asaad Almssad and Linh Truong - Hong, *Intech Open*, DOI: 10.5772/intechopen.89881. Available from: https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/69685.

Niemantsverdriet, T. (2022) De tsunami van feesttoeristen is terug. Wat nu? *NRC*, May 31, 2022.

Mulder, Y.M. Stiggelbout, M. De Winter, T.C. Hirasing, R.A. (1998) Jeugd in beweging: de gezondheidseffecten van lichamelijke activiteit. *JGZ Tijdschrift voor Jeugdgezondheidszorg*, 30 (30), 81-85.

Omgevingspsycholoog (2021) *Hoe kan de openbare ruimte spelen van kinderen bevorderen?*, omgevingspsycholoog. Retrieved November 25, 2021, from https://www.omgevingspsycholoog.nl/spelen/.

Orb, A. Eisenhauer, L. Wynaden, D. (2000) Ethics in Qualitative Research, *Journal of Nursing Scholarship,* 2000; 33:1, 93-96.

Oudenampsen (2013) *Aldo van Eyck and the city as playground* Retrieved December 22, 2021, from: https://www.google.nl/amp/s/merijnoudenampsen.org/2013/03/27/aldo-van-eyck-and-the-city-as-playground/amp/.

Parool (2017) 40 jaar metro: 'Zonder zou Amsterdam zijn vastgelopen', *Het Parool*. 16 oktober 2017

Peeters, K. (2019) sociologisch onderzoek als startpunt voor participatie, *Rooilijn* jg. 52/nr.2/2019.

Pols, L. Bijlmsa, L. & Suurenbroek, F. (n.d) Drukte in de openbare ruimte, *Ruimte en Wonen* #3 Aeneas Media. Retrieved June 23, 2022 from https://issuu.com/aeneas/docs/hr_rw03_boek/s/11087124

Punter, J.V. (1990). The privatisation of the public realm. *Planning Practice and Research*, 5(3), 9-16.

Reimers, A. K. & Knapp, G. (2017) Playground usage and physical activity levels of children based on playground spatial features, *Journal of Public Health,* volume 25, pages 661–669 (2017) https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10389-017-0828-x.

Rhodes, R.A.W. (2012). Waves of governance. *Oxford Handbook of Governance*, Oxford University Press, Oxford: 33-48. [15].

Rijksoverheid (nd) Beleid ruimtelijke ordening, *rijksoverheid* Retrieved 23, February, 2022 from https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/ruimtelijke-ordening-en-gebiedsontwikkeling/beleid-ruimtelijke-ordening .

Ro, C. (2019) *The major cities being designed without children in mind, Local officials often have a short-term interest in designing cities for high-spending adults, not families.* BBC, 17th September 2019.

Rose, K. A et al (2008) Outdoor Activity Reduces the Prevalence of Myopia in Children, *Ophthalmology,* Volume 115, Issue 8, August 2008, Pages 1279-1285.

Rottier, H. (1978) *Stedelijke structuren een inleiding tot de ontwikkeling van de Europese stad.* Coutinho BV, Muiderberg.

Saarinen, T., & McCabe, C (1995). World patterns of geographic literacy based on sketch map quality. *Professional Geographer* 47:196–204.

Sorkin, M. (Ed.) (1992). *Variations on a theme park: the new American city and the end of public space.* New York: Hill and Wang.

Staeheli, L. A. and Mitchell, D. (2007) Locating the public in research and practice, *Progress in Human Geography* 31(6) (2007) pp. 792–811.

Steffens, W. (2018) Pubertijd! *Kinderopvang* 28, 14-15 (2018) https://doi.org/10.1007/s41189-018-0289-9

Stellinga, B. (2012) Dertig jaar privatisering, verzelfstandiging en marktwerking, *Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid.* Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam.

Stoker, G (1998) Governance as theory: five propositions, *International Social Science Journal*, 50 (155), pp. 17-28 [12p].

Strauven, F. (1994) *Aldo van Eyck, relativiteit en verbeelding.* Meulenhoff bv, Amsterdam.

Sun, L. (2009) *Public Space and Peasants' Daily Life in Rural Community*, A case study in H village of Jiangxi Province in China.

Stadscahiers (2013) Stedenbouw als strategie, De transformatie van de bestaande stad. SUN Trancity/KEI, Haarlem.

Taşan-Kok, T. (2010). Entrepreneurial governance: challenges of large-scale property-led urban regeneration projects. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, 101(2), 126-149.

Uitermark, J. (2005) The genesis and evolution of urban policy: a confrontation of regulationist and governmentality approaches, *Political Geography* Volume 24, Issue 2, February 2005, Pages 137-163 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2004.07.009

Uitermark, J. (2012) *De zelforganiserende stad. Gevaren van een inspirerend ideaal.* Essay t.b.v. RLI-rapport 'De toekomst van de stad'.

Valentine, G. (2008) Living with difference: reflections on geographies of encounter, *Progress in Human Geography* 32(3) (2008) pp. 323–337.

Van der Sanden, J. (2018) De verborgen gebreken van burgerinitiatieven, *Sociale Vraagstukken* Oktober 11, 2018.

Van Eyck, A. (1962) *The Child, the City and the Artist. An essay on architecture. The in-between realm.* Sun.

Van de Werfhorst, H. G. (2019) Early tracking and socioeconomic inequality in academic achievement: Studying reforms in nine countries, *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility,* Volume 58, 2018, Pages 22-32, ISSN 0276-5624, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2018.09.002.

Van Engelen, M. (2012) Hoe een zwarte wijk nog zwarter werd. *De Groene Amsterdammer,* nr 12. March 21, 2012

Veldhuizen, E. and Verhoeff, A. (2018) Een geografische blik op de gezonde stad, *Rooilijn.* Jg. 51 / Nr.5 / 2018.

Warner, M. E. (2012) Privatization and urban governance: The continuing challenges of efficiency, voice and integration. *City and Regional Planning*, W. Sibley Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853, United States.

White, R. J. and Green, A. E. (2011) The Use of Mental Maps in Youth Research: Some Evidence from Research Exploring Young People's Awareness of and Attachment to Place. *Innovations in Youth Research,* Palgrave Macmillan UK pp. 58-76

Wolterink, E. K. (2020) Déjà vu: de Van Beuningenstraat in 1932 en in 2020, Het Parool, November 5, 2020

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

**Appendix I
topic list local professional active
in the neighbourhood**

Personal

Wat is precies je taak binnen Amsterdam/ binnen de buurt?

Governance

Wie hebben het voor het zeggen in de buurt/ in Amsterdam?

Wat verstaat u onder governance?

Zou u zeggen dat er binnen het Amsterdamse bestuur sprake is van governance?

Wie zijn de belangrijkste stakeholders wanneer er projecten/ontwikkelingen zijn in de buurt?

Zijn er stakeholders die belangrijk zijn maar toch over het hoofd gezien worden?

Hoe bent u betrokken met de buurt?

Hoe bent u betrokken met bepaalde stakeholders?

Wat vindt u van de buurt?

Hoe bent u bij deze buurt betrokken?

Public space

Wat verstaat u onder publieke ruimte?

Is deze ruimte voor iedereen?

Zijn er groepen die meer of minder recht hebben op de publieke ruimte?

Zijn er groepen die worden uitgesloten van bepaalde publieke ruimte?

Wanneer publieke ruimte wordt hervormd, of herontwikkeld, welke stakeholders, groepen worden dan als belangrijke gebruikers gezien?

Wordt de publieke ruimte voor een bepaald soort publiek gemaakt/ gecreeerd?

Welke organisaties zijn het meest betrokken bij de vorming of hervorming van publieke ruimtes in Amsterdam?

Youth/children

Wat verstaat u onder de jeugd?

Waar is de jeugd het meest na schooltijd?

Welke plekken zijn bedoeld voor de jeugd?

Welke plekken chille kinderen/jongeren het meest?

Zijn er plekken waar de jeugd duidelijk niet welkom is?

Bent u het daar mee eens?

Gebruikt de jeugd de publieke ruimte anders dan volwassenen dat doen?

Is er genoeg plek voor de jeugd in de buurt?

Is de jeugd een (belangrijke) stakeholder?

Zijn er momenten dat de jeugd mag bepalen over aspecten in de buurt?

Hoe is het contact met de jeugd?

Hoe is jouw ervaring met het betrekken van de jeugd?

Denk jij dat het belangrijk is dat de jeugd een stem heeft?

Zijn er ontwikkelingen in de buurt waar de jeugd bij betrokken is?

Denk jij dat betrokkenheid een invloed kan hebben op ervaring van jongeren?

Hoe zou de jeugd betrokken kunnen worden?

Waarom is de stem van jeugd anders dan volwassen?

Hoe kunnen we de jeugd meer betrekken bij de aanpassingen van de publieke ruimte?

Hoe ziet de betrokkenheid van besluitvorming van kinderen er uit in deze buurt?

Jullie zijn bezig met deze projecten, hoe gaat dat?

En hoe is de rol van de kinderen?

Op welk moment?

Hoe ziet dat er in de praktijk uit?

Wanneer wordt er vraag aan kinderen gesteld?

Wanneer zijn die plannen begonnen, wat zijn die plannen, hoe zien die plannen eruit?

Zou je een voorbeeld geven van een moment dat de jeugd betrokken was bij een project?

49

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

**Appendix II
Topic list child living in
the neighbourhood**

The neighbourhood

Wat is jouw buurt?

Waar stop jouw buurt, wat zijn de grenzen van jouw buurt?

Hoe zou jij je buurt omschrijven?

Voel je je verbonden met je buurt? (voel je je een Nieuwmarkter/
zuidooster?)

Wat is de openbare ruimte, weet je dat?

Wat zie jij als openbare plekken in je buurt?

Voor wie is de speeltuin bedoelt?

Voor wie is de straat bedoelt?

Voor wie is het plein bedoelt?

Wie mag er volgens jou in het park zijn? Voor wie is het park bedoelt?

Voor wie is de openbare ruimte bedoelt?

Waar mag je allemaal zonder ouders/ voogd heen?

Waar ga je allemaal zonder ouders/voogd heen?

Waar mag je niet zonder ouders heen?

Ga je daar soms toch heen?

Waar ga je met ouders/voogd heen?

Wat is je favoriete plek in je buurt?

Wat is je favoriete openbare plek?

Speel/chill je liever buiten of binnen?

Hoe verplaats je je het meest door de buurt?

(lopend, fietsend, auto, step, etc)

Zijn er plekken waar je liever niet komt?

Ben je wel eens ergens weggejaagd?

Zijn er plekken waarvan je voelt dat jij er niet welkom bent?

Zijn er plekken waar volwassen niet welkom zijn volgens jou?

Governance

Als jij iets aan de buurt zou kunnen veranderen wat zou jij dan veranderen?

Heb je wel eens iets mogen bepalen/veranderen in de buurt?

Ken je iemand die iets heeft mogen bepalen/veranderen in de buurt?

Zou jij willen meebeslissen over plekken in de buurt?

Als jij een plek zou mogen ontwerpen in de buurt hoe zou het er dan
uitzien?

Naar wie zou je gaan met je ideeën?

Wie bepaalt hoe de buurt er uit ziet denk je?

Denk je dat je zelf makkelijk iets kan veranderen?

Wie heeft volgens jou het recht om de buurt te veranderen?

Als er een nieuwe plek wordt gemaakt (ontwikkeld) moeten bewoners dan
mee beslissen?

Vind jij jezelf een bewoner?

Vind jij dat kinderen ook het recht hebben/moeten mee beslissen over
openbare ruimtes?

Park

Hou je van natuur?

Zijn er groene plekken in jouw buurt?

Vind je het belangrijk dat er plekken zijn met natuur in je buurt/ om je heen?

Vind je dat er genoeg natuurplekken zijn in je buurt?

Speel je wel eens op grasvelden?

Ga je wel eens naar een park?

Ga je dan in je eentje of met je ouders/voogd/school?

Zou je een nieuw park willen?

Waar zou je het park het liefst willen

50

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Master Thesis
Veere Snijders
RU s1083599

Appendix III
Policy documents codematrix

	Policy document
Kinderen (children)	
Kind (child)	
Jongeren (teenagers)	
Jong (young)	
Jeugd (youth)	
Spelen (playing)	
speel/spel (play)	
Stakeholders	
Belanghebbende (idem)	
Plaatjes kinderen jongeren (images/children/teenagers	`

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Appendix IV
Essential policy document codematrix

	Essential policy document Bijlmer	Essential policy document Nieuwmarkt
General theme		
Amount of children present		
Amount of people under 30		
Amount of people over 30		
Language use		

Children's involvement and experience
of public (play-)space in
two different neighbourhoods

Appendix V
Mental maps codematrix

	Big / middle of the map	Green	Red	Orange
Home (landmark)				
School (landmark)				
Passages (paths)				
Playgrounds				
Other landmarks				