

Acknowledgements

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Index

1. Outdoor play is serious business - an introduction to the research.....	3
1.1 Research objective and questions	5
1.2 Relevance.....	6
1.3 Reading guide	9
2. Understanding outdoor play experiences - a theoretical framework.....	11
2.1 Experiences.....	11
2.2 Children.....	15
2.3 Parents.....	17
2.4 Environment.....	21
2.5 Conceptual model	23
3. Draw, craft, and speak - methodological considerations.....	24
3.1 Tilburg as context	25
3.3 Research design parents	34
3.4 Data analysis	36
4. Local playing grounds - introducing the school's environments	37
4.1 OBS De Sleutel.....	39
4.2 Kindcentrum Antares	41
4.3 OBS Panta Rhei	42
5. Truths and tensions - empirical data from children and parents.....	46
5.1 Safety vs threats	48
5.2 Social inclusion vs exclusion	52
5.3 Independence vs parental supervision.....	56
5.4 Materialities influencing outdoor play	60
5.5 Notable elements.....	62
6. Towards a deeper understanding of children's experiences - a discussion and conclusion	67
References.....	73
Appendices.....	88

1. Outdoor play is serious business - an introduction to the research

June 11th was this year's national outdoor play day in the Netherlands. This collaboration between tv-station Nickelodeon (who presented a black screen throughout the entire afternoon) and Jantje Beton is a yearly event aims to increase awareness for the importance of outdoor play. Every year in more than 1.000 neighborhoods, streets are closed for cars, providing plenty of space for children to play outside (Jantje Beton, 2025).

Outdoor play is a right that should be guaranteed by governments - playing outside is not child's play, we have to take it very seriously (Bankes, 2023; Bergiers, n.d.). There are numerous studies conducted on the positive effects on outdoor play, improving physical, social and cognitive child-development (Dodd et al., 2022; Erickson & Ernst, 2011; Loebach et al., 2021). Outdoor play gives children the opportunity to discover themselves and the world around them (Norga, 2024). Stimulating outdoor play is not only beneficial for children themselves, but also for our future (Bankes, 2023). After all, children *are* the future.

Regardless of the importance and benefits of outdoor play, research from Dutch organisation Jantje Beton has shown that the amount of children playing outside is decreasing. Other studies confirm this trend (Brussoni et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2021; Nigg et al., 2021; Charan et al., 2024). According to Jantje Beton, the amount of children (6-12 years old) that play outside every day has been halved since 2022, meaning that only 13% of them do so. Additionally, the time spent playing outside has diminished with 2,5 hours per week. The same study has also found 11% of the children in the same age-cohort to *never* play outside and 30% of the children (almost) never plays outside without supervision from an adult (Jantje Beton, 2024). Reasons for this decrease can vary, such as parents squeezing outdoor play out of their children's schedules (limiting time for unsupervised, unstructured outdoor play) by enrolling them in one or more sport's clubs, parents prioritizing homework, or children spending more time behind a screen nowadays (Bouma, 2024; Loebach et al., 2021; Solomon-Moore et al., 2018). Bankes (2023) questions out loud: if this decreasing trend continues, will we still see children playing outside in 2040?

Outdoor play is different from sports or 'hanging out', in various ways. Below, these will be elaborated upon, which will constitute the definition of outdoor play used throughout the research. First of all, outdoor play happens in the neighborhood. Streets, yards, squares, formal playgrounds and public spaces close to children's homes are places where the majority of children play outside (Lambert et al., 2019). Second, a crucial characteristic of outdoor play

is its unstructured nature. In other words, children take their own initiative to go play outside. Aminpour and colleagues (2020) write that self-directed autonomous play evolves when children freely choose when and what to play and “make up their own rules for how to play based on their own interests” (p.3). Outdoor play, in this sense, is different from playing outside – for instance during a school break – as this is planned and mandatory. A third characteristic, which is intertwined with the second, has to do with supervision. Many outdoor play takes place in the after-school period. Loebach and colleagues (2021) argue that, especially in Western cultures, children are more and more expected to spend the time after school with “more structured, supervised, or indoor activities” (p.4), which could lead to less time outside, where no supervisors are around. This also distinguishes outdoor play from, for example, sports, where children are still outside and possibly close to home, but still under supervision of an instructor who gives the class. Taken together, outdoor play can be defined as time spent outdoors in the neighborhood, without supervision, and on a child’s own initiative.

Linking outdoor play to a wider academic debate in the field of geography, it positively contributes to livability. This is a widely researched topic, consisting of various criteria and sub-criteria. Because of different definitions of the concept, it is also measured in varying ways by different authors (Khorrami et al., 2020). However, one dimension of livability that various authors seem to agree on, is that it increases when children are prioritized, for example by ensuring they can play outside safely (Efroymson & Shama, 2007; Karsten & Van Vliet, 2006). In other words, a liveable, and healthy, environment is one where children can play outside (*Gezonde Stad Index*, Arcadis, n.d.). In their daily work, organization Companen incorporates ideas of livability, aiming to find creative solutions to problems relating to the increasing pressure on livability on a neighbourhood scale (Companen, 2025). An internship at this organisation gives relevant insights and provides for an inspiring environment to write this thesis.

Knowing that outdoor play is healthy and important but that it is decreasing, and knowing its researched positive impact on livability, it becomes pertinent to explore how children themselves *experience* outdoor play. To gain deeper insight into this matter, this research focuses on the lived outdoor play experiences of children, as well as on the influence of their environment and the role of parents.

1.1 Research objective and questions

The research aims to shed light on children's outdoor play experiences. Generally, outdoor play behaviour changes as soon as children attend high school, presumably because of new interests that they develop during puberty (Van Stam et al., 2021). This is also why the vast majority of outdoor play research does not consider children older than 9 (Amholet et al., 2022).

Additionally, because of the decrease in outdoor play, the research aims to complement the research done by Jantje Beton and others, by investigating what the value and importance of outdoor play is for children. In this way, the research can contribute to increasing awareness and provide useful arguments that help put outdoor play on the agenda of those in positions to make a difference.

This research aims to delve into the motivations and reasons of children, using a creative, participatory research design. The following research question is formulated to structure and guide the research: *What are the lived outdoor play experiences of children aged 9-12 in Tilburg, and what influence do parents and the environment have on these experiences?* Additionally, sub-questions will help answer the question, which all relate to a specific dimension of the conceptual model presented at the end of chapter two.

A) How do children visualize their outdoor play experiences?

This question aims to gain insight into the motivations and reasons why children do or do not play outside. Urban legibility, a term used by Kevin Lynch, refers to the idea that city dwellers can *read* their environment through recognizable mental images to navigate it with ease (Constantinides et al., 2021). This concept is also called *imageability*, and according to Lynch there are five urban qualities that contribute to the readability of a city; paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. Lynch tested the importance of each quality by asking participant to draw psychological maps (mental maps) from their minds. This methodological approach was an inspiration for the ones used in this research, which translates into the formulation of sub-question A.

B) What role do parents play in children's outdoor play experiences?

Parents have influence on their children's outdoor play (Visser & van Aalst, 2021). The same study found that combined research on parental and child

perspectives on outdoor play is lacking. A cohesive overview of the topic has to entail both parents and children.

C) To what extent do the physical and social environment play a role in lived outdoor play experiences?

Apart from parents, previous research has also identified the physical- and social environment as important influences of outdoor play (Zhao et al., 2023), which is why they are incorporated into sub-question C.

1.2 Relevance

There are several reasons why the research is relevant to conduct. These can be grouped and divided into three main categories; methodological reasons, content-related research gaps, and geographical reasons (i.e. relating to the location of this research). Below, each of these categories will be elaborated upon.

Methodological relevance

The research is scientifically relevant in the first place because of methodological reasons. Participatory research (PR), more elaborately introduced in chapter three, is one of the research methods included in this study. The technique originated in Scandinavia, and is proven to be successful in various research domains (Wacnik et al., 2024), one of which being urban planning (Paracha et al., 2019). Even though PR is an established method, urban spheres are facing increasing complexity and multiplicity, which also has implications for participatory processes (Rasmussen, 2012). There is also evidence that participatory research in urban geography mostly focuses on large, affluent cities, thereby underexposing medium-sized cities and towns (Robert Bosch-Stiftung, n.d). Additionally, according to Freire and colleagues (2022) there is limited research on the use of participatory approaches with children. Using a participatory research design, this study aims to contribute to increasing the knowledge about the above-mentioned gaps identified in the literature.

Participatory methods' research gaps can also be connected to ones about the lived city. This framework is getting increasing attention in literature, which emphasizes the importance of subjective experiences in addition to more objective descriptions of the physical- and social environment (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). However, a research gap can be identified in studies addressing citizen's own experiences of their cities in ways that are not formal participation.

Citroni (2017) writes that these formal processes of participation, even though engendering social inclusion, produce new forms of social exclusion. Indeed, it is oftentimes the marginalized, local perspective -from children for example- that is excluded from these forms of participation research, or more broadly any research at all (Fox et al., 2021).

It is important to empower children's voices and listen to their ideas on the environment they live in. This cannot be done without working closely together with them (Martin et al., 2023). Previous research was fundamentally based *on* children, and not *with* or *for* children (Fargas-Malet et al., 2010). A lot of urban planning decisions are based on adult's perceptions of children's behavior (Helleman et al., 2023). Research by Jelic and colleagues (2020) emphasizes the need to see children as active agents in the design and creation of spaces, which tends to be not considered (Aytac, 2021). Children are a marginalized group that is ignored, and so are women, according to Wilson (1992). Among other fields, this also holds for the research within geography about the design built environment. One of the reasons why this is deemed important, is described by Sewell (2011), who states that environments not designed for certain groups can constrain their movement through, and use of the space. In other words, when children are ignored in the design of the built environment, this can negatively impact their use of it. Not knowing what children actually wish for in terms of their environment, or only relying on *assumptions* when designing spaces can lead to a mismatch between what is designed and what children actually want (Helleman et al., 2023). In this light, there is also a societal relevance and responsibility to include children in research about their environments. Another reason why it is important to include children in research and big decisions that affect them is described by Holloway (2014): "*Children's voices have something valuable to add to debates about their lives and we need to continue to insist on the importance of listening to them, even (perhaps especially) where their views challenge conventional academic and activist wisdom*" (p. 382).

Content-related research gaps

Research gaps related to the topic of this research can also be identified. They highlight the relevance of studying outdoor play experiences. Previous academic research has extensively elaborated on the benefits of outdoor play. Playing outside can improve one's mental- and physical health, stimulate motor development, increase resistance and improve sleep, to name a few (Dessing, 2025; Mind, 2018). Taking the research one step further seems to be lacking so far; it is hard to get a grip on the *experiences* of outdoor play in the Netherlands (Lucassen

et al., 2020). When reflecting on the findings from research showing a decrease in outdoor play in the Netherlands, it seems relevant to know how children experience their time outside to be able to effectively reverse the alarming trend that was identified. After all, previous research has concluded that investigating experiences are essential to improve and develop for the better (Kolb, 1984). This also ties in with ideas from Purcell (2013), who argue that environmental and geographical issues can only be understood if the perspective of local, lived experiences are taken into account.

Another research gap, specifically related to outdoor play, can be found in the lack of studies incorporating both formal- and informal play spaces. Formal play spaces are playgrounds, sport fields and schoolyards. Informal play spaces are perhaps not designed to serve a playing function, but nonetheless do so, such as the street, pavement or a lawn (Nederlands Jeugdinstituut, 2024). Informal play does not get enough attention in research (Helleman et al., 2023), even though they are equally, if not more, important as formal versions. This is because they are unmanaged, unofficial and often unsupervised (Handy et al., 2008). This study aims to not limit itself to either of these categories, and instead opt for an attitude that is open for any input given by children themselves. In this way, the study can contribute to the broader research agenda on informal play spaces.

Geographical relevance

Geographically, a lot of research in urban studies is based on data from the United States, Canada and Australia (Loebach et al., 2021). Research in the Netherlands has been done, but not as extensively. Moreover, the results from studies abroad should be interpreted and situated within their own contexts - particularly the physical environments may be substantially different. For example, infrastructure in the United States is designed in a different way, focussing on cars instead of bikes, which may relate to the bigger distances between various facilities (Strauss, 2023). Also, greenery and nature are to be situated, which is very different - in terms of quantity *and* use- and therefore may have a different impact on outdoor play abroad than it does in The Netherlands. For instance, parks are used differently by different ethnic groups; people from Turkey generally relax and picnic in parks, whereas people from Western countries use the same space for physical activities such as (dog) walking or exercise (Özgüner, 2011)

Additionally, the Netherlands provide an interesting context to base the research on because of recent developments in the policy field. In 2024, a new act was introduced in the

Dutch system; the *omgevingswet* (the environment act). An important element of this act is participation, which stimulates anyone who aims to change the built environment to actively let others think along in an early stage of the project (Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Waterstaat, 2025). Because of the *omgevingswet*, participation from anyone is encouraged, including children. This research can provide unique insights that can stimulate municipalities to cooperate with children in this process. Specific reasons as to why Tilburg in particular is chosen to base the research on will be provided later in this thesis.

1.3 Reading guide

The structure of this thesis will be as follows. The introduction, research questions and relevance provided information on the topic and research aims, which will be followed by chapter two. That chapter describes the current status of literature relating to experiences and various variables influencing outdoor play.

Following this, the methodology is presented in chapter three. The methods used in the research are twofold; mapping/collaging and focus groups. For the included children, a combination of mental mapping/collaging methods and focus groups is used, and for the included parents focus groups are conducted. The scope of the research includes three classes from three different schools located in Tilburg. From each school, a different group was selected, which led to a diverse set of children in terms of ages (yet all within the cohort 9-12). In total, 68 children were included, and 6 parents form the sample upon which the research is based.

After that, chapter four contains a description of the local contexts of each school that participates in the research. This information provides the reader with an idea of each environment, which helps to situate the results that follow in the chapter after that.

Evidently, chapter five presents the most important results. This chapter is divided into sub-paragraphs, each describing an important theme or tension between themes that can be found in the data. The chapter includes raw data in two distinct forms; visual images of the maps/collages made by children, and quotations directly imported from the transcripts of conversations with children and parents.

In the final chapter, the discussion of results can be read, as well as the conclusions. The main research question is answered, and some reflections and implications are shared. Additionally, some recommendations for future research are presented in this chapter. After that, a bibliography according to the APA style follows. Finally, the appendices provide additional information; interview guides, a summary of the content analysis, and an overview of all the visual products that the children made.

2. Understanding outdoor play experiences - a theoretical framework

What are the lived outdoor play experiences of children aged 9-12 in Tilburg, and what influence do parents and the environment have on these experiences? Aiming to get insight into established theories on this topic, this chapter presents a framework of relevant literature on outdoor play and on experiences. Section 2.1 explores on a theoretical level the notion of (lived) experiences and how this can be linked to geographical, urban, research. This constitutes the backdrop and overarching theme, having a dedicated place in the research question.

Paragraphs 2.2 to 2.4 explore three distinct influences on outdoor play experiences identified in previous research by Visser and van Aalst (2021). For each, relevant variables are discussed that, each in their own way, influence children, parents, and the (physical and social) environment respectively.

Integrating the three elements, the chapter will end with a conceptual model, showing the relation between the discussed influences on outdoor play experiences that will help to structure the literature.

2.1 Experiences

Experiences have a highly subjective nature; the same thing can be experienced in various ways depending on a person's characteristics and on the environment. Subjective experiences may be hard for others to understand, and *“even more difficult to capture and reflect on in research.”* (Cele, 2006, p.14). An experience always stands in relation to something else - an experience *of* something. Moreover, experiences are always embedded in a context (Carlsson, 2001), they are situated. Khosravi (2018) defined experience as “to go along a way” (p.2), and explained that the term can be understood in relation to traveling (i.e. moving around). When translated into German, experience means *erfahrung*, in which *fahren* means to journey (Khosravi, 2018). To journey, to wander around is also a part of outdoor play. Inextricably linked to the subjective experience of a place is the sensory experience, which is a topic that has been neglected and ignored in scientific literature, at least up to 2006 (Cele, 2006). Senses are spatial, and each sense contributes to people's orientation in the city, and to the experience of places and objects (p.51). Compared to adults, children make more use of their senses during interaction with their environment. Cele (2006) explained this in the following quote:

It is socially acceptable for children to use all their senses when interacting with place, in comparison to adults. Children are allowed to touch and physically interact with

place: to lie down on the ground to feel the grass towards the cheek, to strike a statue to feel its material, to taste a flower, to follow a scent or even to walk barefoot on the pavement. (p. 53).

There is an extensive body of literature focussing on the importance of lived, bottom-up experiences in a geographical context. For instance, Hubbard (2017) highlighted that the essence of a city cannot be captured from one single perspective. Rather, different viewing angles and vantage points show unique parts of the city; “to ignore this diversity of perspectives, is to ignore a key dimension of urban life” (p. 208). In other words, to describe outdoor play purely and solely based on environmental characteristics such as greenery or traffic safety would overlook the experiences from the human perspective.

A city might be experienced in various ways; a *lived* city may be different from a *planned* city. The planned city represents the perspective from above (like a map), which is often employed by planners (de Certeau, 1984). The way that the city is represented from this panoptic view is from a dominant, privileged, mostly male perspective (Hubbard, 2017). Feminist urban studies confirm the man-made nature of cities, which goes beyond the fact that many professions in the field are done by men (Hudson & Rönnblom, 2008; Shivani, 2021). Instead, the city is infused with male ways of seeing (i.e. the male gaze). By relying on one single, male perspective, other points of view, often from marginalized groups, such as children, are excluded. Wilson (1992) even describes that urban planning is a “profession designed to exclude women and children”.

Contrary to the planned city, de Certeau (1984) also writes about urban life on ground level – experienced from below, from the perspective of the ‘ordinary’ people. This is also what Jan Gehl meant when he argued that the ‘streets are for the people’ (Gregg, 2022). He believed in the pedestrian perspective, which puts the pedestrians and their needs at the centre of urban planning; the people that live in and move through the city. Also against the modernist, masculine view from above, and in favor of planning for a diverse set of people experiencing the city is Jane Jacobs. Her famous motto “eyes on the street” emphasizes the need for planning initiatives that put human experiences (from below) as a priority. With the idea that multiple viewpoints show a more complete image of the city than one can, it would make sense that all research incorporates different angles. However, the perspective from below is often repressed and ignored, taking away “the agency of those who live and experience the city at ground level” (Hubbard, 2017, p. 208). This results in an inaccurate and incomplete image of the city, leaving

out the real, nuanced lives of inhabitants. The lived city, then, becomes a theory of giving a voice, power and agency to those who live and experience the city in their everyday lives. Including their perspective in city design and management would create a more livable city (Hubbard, 2017).

Based on the idea that inhabitants on ground level have unique and valuable experiences that contribute a new perspective to the image of the city, children are arguably the best example of a, literal, view from below. Often overlooked in the planning and design of urban environments (Cele, 2006), this group uses the city in their own way; for example when they are playing outside or when they are commuting to school. If we consider that *everyone* has been a child at the beginning of their lives, it is remarkable that all too often they and their needs are unconsidered (Helleman et al., 2023). When compared to the top-down, panoptic, masculine view from the top, the bottom-up perspective from children seems to be the exact opposite.

Just as everyone else, children have a *right to the city*, a term coined by Lefebvre. This right would enable all inhabitants of the city to adopt a “mode of living that best allow us to flourish as persons, together” (King, 2019. p. 84). King (2019) continues to write that this entails that all inhabitants gain access to, and influence over, the spatial and institutional dimensions essential to realizing vital needs that require social elaboration (p. 84). In other words, a right to one’s city is a means to be able to “participate” in city life (in public spaces, transportation for example) , which is essential - or vital - for humans’ social nature. The right to the city is about occupation and the use of urban space, which can empower people to gain control over the city (Aytac, 2021).

Reacting on Lefebvre’s work, Marcuse (2009) asks critical questions, one of which being: *whose* right are we talking about? This is a question to which no simple answer exists, as it is highly dependent on the context - it will vary from one part of the world to another (Harvey, 2009). Aytac (2021) noticed that none of the answers given so far include a direct reference to children as agents living in urban spaces. More research seems to be needed that includes a perspective that positions children as active agents making decisions about their own lives and the formation of urban space (Aytac, 2021).

Related to the question on *whose rights are we talking about?* is also the question *for whom do we design a space?*, which can be reflected on by simply viewing who we see using the space. However, a possibly even more interesting question, especially in a discussion on inclusive city design, is *who do we not see using the space?*. It is much more difficult to answer

this question, and can be linked to a concept used by McKendrick and colleagues (2022). They wrote an article on *absence presence*, which can refer to the idea that influence is exerted by something - an idea, object or person - that is not physically present (anymore). Absence can speak louder than presence. The authors argued that children and young people can have an absent presence in the public realm - an empty playground is raised as an example. Absent presence, in this sense, can be a sign of an urban space that is not (sufficiently) designed to meet the needs of, in this case, children.

Within geography, experiences of children have not always been on the radar. Cele (2006) describes that it is only roughly 50 years ago that research found that children could be oppressed by the built environment (p.34). With the knowledge that it is important for children's health and well-being that they have access to an outdoor environment to, for example, play, it automatically becomes important that cities are designed and functioning in a child-friendly way. This, according to Cele (2006) was traditionally done by designing enclosed areas (playgrounds and schoolyards) where children were, quite literally, fenced. However, this is a simplification of children's lived experiences in the city: "*Children's use of places is so much more complex since their playful exploration of place is a continuous action that cannot be restricted by fences*" (p. 40).

Academics that have written about children's geographies argued that children deserve to be included in discourse and dialogue about their environment. All too often, their views and opinions are ignored, describing children as *unready, immature, unformed, citizens-in-waiting* (Skelton, 2022, p. 171). Children may use their voice but not be listened to (Skelton, 2022) - and research can, and should, empower children by giving them a voice in the 'adult world' (Cele, 2006).

It is important to notice that, whatever response we receive from children, we should not be influenced by our own prejudices; Harker (2005) advocated for a modest view on (outdoor) playing as an activity, as all attempts to define it have only been able to capture *part* of the experience. In other words, current approaches to learn about children's lives by looking at play only show half of the story. He explained this with the following anecdote

"I saw a girl sitting quietly reading in the corner of the Hilltop playground one lunch-time. Her playing was not energetic, irrational, or opposed to 'work', and the form of

embodiment it took was closer to rest than motion. It is because of moments like this that I want to leave playing a conceptually open category.”

This example showcases that outdoor play can occur in many shapes and forms. Our preconceptions and ideas on how outdoor play is exercised are, and will always be “spatially, temporally, and culturally situated” (Harker, 2005, p.31). The simple fact that play is difficult to simplify it to one definition also means that play *experiences* are diverse and have to be seen in spatial, temporal and cultural contexts too.

To sum up, experiences (i.e. a bottom-up, lived perspective) have a great additional value to more traditional, top-down viewpoints in giving a more complete image. Children’s geographies are an important topic to focus on, and it is getting increasingly more attention in literature. The next paragraph will highlight factors that influence outdoor play experiences for children and the factors that influence parents’s ideas about outdoor play.

2.2 Children

To be able to answer the first sub-question - *How do children visualize their outdoor play experiences?* - insights into children’s outdoor play behavior are essential. Different traits of a child influence whether, where, and how often it plays outside. Age, for instance, is an important factor; younger children tend to play more, and the older they grow as they become teenagers, their time outside is spent ‘hanging out’ (van der Meulen & van Melik, 2019). Willeboordse and colleagues (2022) also recognized that age is a factor that influences outdoor play, making an additional distinction between different stages of puberty that might have an influence. The design of outdoor space is often not inviting for a diversity of age-groups at the same time, as they have different needs and wishes. Formal playgrounds are often made for specific target groups, which encourages the children that are ‘targeted’ to play outside (Helleman et al., 2023). However, other, often older, children seem to find these playgrounds less attractive to spend their time in (Visser & van Aalst, 2021). This is not to say that this group does not enjoy outdoor play, perhaps they just have different play preferences (Amholt et al., 2022).

Another study on outdoor play and age found that living on a cul-de-sac is, in particular for young children aged 6-12, positively related to outdoor play. Again, for older children this is not the case (Handy et al., 2008). In general, the environment where children play outside

grows bigger as children grow older (Holt et al., 2007). Younger children play outside in close proximity to their home, while older children go to designated spaces to spend their time – for instance in a mall (van der Meulen & van Melik, 2019). Together with this, the strictness of rules that parents set for their children loosens as children grow older (Visser & van Aalst, 2021).

Another factor that plays a role in outdoor play behavior is gender. There is much research on the relation between these two variables. In general, boys and girls show some differences in their outdoor play behavior and activity. In their literature review, Visser and van Aalst (2021) summarized some of the findings. For example, boys are more likely to play in green spaces and on streets, whereas girls play more close to home and in gardens. Moreover, the activities that boys and girls do during outdoor play are different, as well as their time spent in public spaces – boys seem to dominate them most of the time. Additionally, girls are more restricted in their outdoor mobility by their parents than boys. When there are older children in a public space, girls seem to be more constrained to join them compared to boys.

Cultural background can be considered as a third factor that seems to influence outdoor play. This topic has been researched by Yoon and Lee (2019), who wrote that children from different cultural backgrounds may show different outdoor play behavior - for instance if and where to play. Cultural background influences preferences, norms, and values, which can result in different outdoor play patterns and behaviours.

It has to be acknowledged that the above mentioned factors - age, gender and cultural background- are not isolated from one another. An intersection of them can amplify experiences in a positive or negative way. Intersectionality, Wyatt and colleagues (2022) explained, reminds us that people's lives cannot be explained by only considering a single category, such as gender, race, sexuality, or socio-economic status. The multi-dimensional and complex nature of our lives and lived realities are shaped by different factors and social dynamics at the same time. This means that individual experiences can differ, they are unique to each person: "When someone occupies multiple marginalized intersections, their individual experiences reflect social and structural systems of power, privilege, and inequality" (Wyatt et al., 2022). In the context of this research, an intersection between factors has been identified by Slot-Heijs and colleagues (2021). They wrote that girls with a migration background

experience the most barriers in outdoor play, which relates mostly to social safety concerns (Slot-Heijns et al., 2021; Visser & van Aalst, 2021).

Additionally, attitude also seems to influence outdoor play; to like to play outside and to feel safe outside. It seems evident that, whenever one expresses a negative attitude towards something that is not obligatory, they will most likely not do it often or at all. Ernst (2017) wrote that children's attitudes on outdoor play may be strongly influenced by the attitudes expressed by their parents, as they are the ones children see as an example. Following this reasoning, a positive attitude towards outdoor play from parents will also lead to positive attitudes from their children, partly because this will lead to a positive response from their parents. Simply going outside will not automatically create a positive attitude.

Screen use is another factor that influences outdoor play. In fact, Charan and colleagues (2024) attributed part of the decline in outdoor play to increased technology usage in "today's digital era" (p. 11). In the United States and in India, children's screen time is both more than two hours a day (Charan et al., 2024). The same study argued that limiting screen time can encourage children to play outside, which is parents' responsibility. However, it is not only parents that are in a position to help children "reclaim their outdoor playtime in the digital era" (p.15), also educators, policy makers and society as a whole are needed to make sure screen time does not replace time spent outdoors.

Next to the individual traits such age, gender, cultural background, screen use and attitude Willeboordse and colleagues (2022) identified other factors that can have an influence on outdoor play, relating behavioral characteristics, such as autonomy (i.e. being able and allowed to be alone).

2.3 Parents

Research about outdoor play, especially focussed on young children, must also include parents' views, as they have a big influence on their child's behavior (Helleman, 2024). This is why the following paragraph presents a selection of literature that helps get insight into the role parents play in children's outdoor play experiences (i.e. sub-question two). Visser and van Aalst (2021) stated that "parents have a direct influence and may limit or stimulate the ways in which they [children] can engage in outdoor play" (p.92). Moreover, parents, just as much as children themselves, are influenced by the neighborhood factors (they also have a *lived experience* of it), but their final conclusion about the neighborhood might not be the same. It is

for this reason that the authors advised researchers to include both parents and children in research about outdoor play; the parental role is of great influence. Lambert and colleagues (2019) wrote about the importance of parents as a predictor of play behavior, influencing independent mobility. This concept is often mentioned in literature on child-friendly cities, emphasizing the importance of children being able to go places independently (i.e. without a supervisor) (Cushing & Miller, 2019). Gill (2021) called this the right to roam around, which has shrunk enormously throughout, at least, the past four generations. Figure 2.1 shows the range where children aged eight were allowed to roam, each child grew up in a different generation but was part of the same family and lived in the same city.

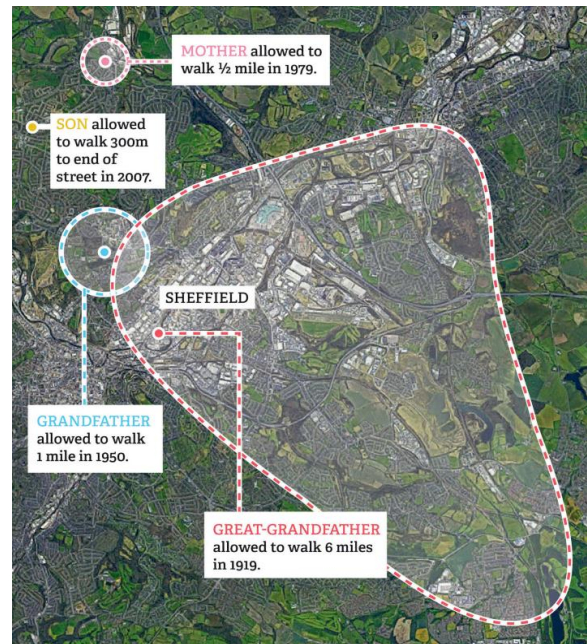


Figure 2.1: Roaming distance of children (Gill, 2021)

A first factor that is distinguished, related to independent mobility and general outdoor play experiences, is the level of safety that parents perceive in the neighborhood. A positive relation was found between parental perception of safety and outdoor play (Willeboordse et al., 2022). In other words, if parents perceive their neighborhood as safe, children are more likely to play outside. Parents' perception of safety in the neighborhood can relate to their own experiences, such as the presence of roads with a lot of traffic, the ability to safely cross the street, the ability to leave an unlocked bike unsupervised, or traffic hindering outdoor play or mobility (Willeboordse et al., 2022). Independent mobility can be limited if parents feel the area is not safe enough, for instance in terms of traffic (Cushing & Miller, 2019; Galaviz et al., 2016; Kalish et al., 2010). Miles (2008) found that feelings of safety are dependent on various physical variables, such as signs of litter, graffiti and lack of greenery. Her research found that in neighborhoods with high levels of litter and graffiti, and lack of greenery, parents are less likely to encourage children to use local playgrounds - i.e. to play outside. Outdoor play can, therefore, be promoted by targeting and improving the physical environment, which influences parental safety concerns (Miles, 2008). Another strategy to improve outdoor play by addressing parents' safety concerns is to improve street lighting (Galaviz et al., 2016). Relating to the definition given in the introduction, an important part of outdoor play is the unsupervised

aspect, which can be in danger when parents feel it is not safe for children to be outside alone, be it for mobility or play purposes.

A second variable influencing the role of parents in outdoor play is their parenting style, which is a predictor of a parent's own behavior. Akdemir and colleagues (2023) investigated different parental styles and their thoughts about risky play. The authors distinguished between four different styles; democratic (children are independent yet with some form of parental control), authoritarian (strict rules and discipline), overprotective (restricting and focus on physical safety), and permissive (few boundaries). Perhaps not surprisingly, an overprotective parenting style was related to less risky outdoor play. Moreover, less parental supervision was found to be related with higher levels of physical activity during outdoor play, which indicates that children's outdoor play activities are different when a supervisor is around. Also relating to outdoor play are parent's attitudes towards risky play, which is influenced by parenting style, gender, education level and number of children (Cevher-Kalburan & Ivrendi, 2015). Risky play, defined as a thrilling and exciting activity that includes a marginal risk for injury, gives children opportunities to develop skills such as autonomy and decision-making (Waddington & Pearson, 2022; Akdemir et al., 2023). Moreover, risky play can be fun, give children confidence and feelings of pride and accomplishment (Waddington & Pearson, 2022). Related to the topic of risky play, as well as to independent mobility, is also the term *bubble-wrap generation* referring to the tendency of parents to bubble-wrap their children. In doing so, they do not allow their children to “build the resilience and skills critical to be competent and independent environmental users, which ironically puts them at a greater risk of falling victim to the dangers that these parents strive to protect their children from” (Malone, 2007, p.513).

A third parental factor that is positively related to outdoor play is the socio-economic status (SES) of the family (Willeboordse et al., 2022). The SES of any given environment is based on three factors: financial wealth, education level and recent job history (CBS, 2022). Bankes (2023) wrote an article on the importance of outdoor play and argued that children from families with lower incomes access nature less often compared to children from families with higher incomes. Yoon and Lee (2019) discussed that children in families with a lower SES have limited access to formal and safe play spaces in their direct environment, which means that they have fewer opportunities to enjoy recreational physical activity after school (at least in a formal playground setting). Possibly related to the fact that they have fewer outdoor play opportunities, Molnar and colleagues (2004) wrote that children from families with a lower

SES engage less in leisure time physical activity (PA), which could be the result of a less safe neighborhood. Instead, sedentary activities are increasing. Smith et al. (2018) defined sedentary activity as behaviour characterized by low energy, while in a sitting, reclining or lying posture. Sedentary activities can include a screen, but this is not always the case. Examples are watching tv, lapping or playing board games. According to a study by Bhurosy and Jeewon (2014), physical activity is partially influenced by SES. For example, a higher SES is associated with improved health.

Tine Bergiers (n.d.), who is chairwoman at Goe Gespeeld - a Belgian organisation advocating for more outdoor play - argued that not all children and families have a private garden where they can play outside. A lot of those families rely on public spaces to play outside. However, in the shared public space, Galaviz and her colleagues (2016) found, there seems to be an additional difference between children depending on the SES of their parents. The authors found that children from less affluent families, in both rural and urban contexts, have half the odds of using *recreational facilities* compared to their peers with wealthier families. In this research, recreational facilities refer to supportive environments for outdoor play, such as parks and playgrounds (Galaviz et al., 2016). With the knowledge that outdoor play has many benefits, including many relating to good health, it seems concerning that SES has an influence on the outdoor play opportunities children have. However, more research must be done on the relation between various factors such as gender, SES and ethnicity to better understand their influence on outdoor play behaviour for different groups of children (Yoon & Lee, 2019).

The fourth and last parental factor on outdoor play is their attitude towards outdoor play in general, for example their attitude on the importance of it. Also, parental attitudes on social norms regarding outdoor play and the idea that siblings or friends have to be outside at the same time are of influence (Willeboordse et al., 2022). Yalçin (2015) wrote that there is not much previous research on parental beliefs on outdoor play, and the ones that do always look at risky play. Moreover, these studies were conducted in the context of playgrounds and public spaces. However, outdoor play cannot be captured *just* in these places, so the scope of these researches do not cover all that is outdoor play.

Next to the factors highlighted in this chapter, other factors related to parents' behavior that positively influence outdoor play are: encouragement from parents to play outside, parents playing along with children, having rules about outdoor play (f.e. children being allowed to go outside alone, which area, which times), and exemplary behavior from parents and siblings (Willeboordse et al., 2022).

2.4 Environment

Outdoor play happens outside, in the environment where children live. The environment can be described, but this does not necessarily mean that we know how the area is *experienced*. In the context of this research, two distinct categories of environment can be made: physical and social. Variables that influence the role of the environment are described below. Note that this is the third and last element of the three influences of outdoor play experiences, aligning with sub-question three.

Physical environment

The most important physical factors that influence children's outdoor play are traffic safety, green space, presence and quality of play facilities and weather circumstances.

First, traffic safety is an important indicator of outdoor play (Visser & van Aalst, 2021). Places with minimum traffic, such as a cul-de-sac, are most appropriate for outdoor play, in particular for younger children. The traffic safety variable is closely related to the perceived safety from parents; if parents estimate traffic safety to be low, children internalize this which limits their independent play (Visser & van Aalst, 2021). Similar to a cul-de-sac, the Dutch *woonerf* concept is positively related to more outdoor play because cars are expected to give priority to pedestrians, bikers, and children playing (Cushing & Miller, 2019).

Second, the presence of green space has an influence on outdoor play. Especially in highly dense urban environments, green space is an important predictor of play (Cushing & Miller, 2019). Research on compact cities showed that, especially for children, quality of life is highly dependent on outdoor space and greenery, and newly developed areas all too often overlook this aspect in their design (Haaland & van den Bosch, 2015). Green spaces are fun to play in – “Children are able to hide in the bushes, climb trees, and play with their pets. Natural materials support imaginative play, as grass or branches can be used for building and construction” (Visser & van Aalst, 2021, p. 86). The same literature review also found that green spaces are not evenly distributed across municipalities – neighborhoods with a lower socio-economic status have less of them. This means that the benefits of green play areas are also unevenly distributed. Erickson and Ernst (2011) highlighted that nature play (playing *with* nature) makes children healthier, smarter, and feel better.

Third, the presence and quality of play facilities determine outdoor play. For girls, playgrounds with few play objects or ones that are in a bad condition (i.e. bad quality) are not appealing (Visser & van Aalst, 2021). There are different types of play facilities; formal and informal. Research suggested that formal play areas are not necessarily leading to more outdoor play (Visser & van Aalst, 2021). In fact, urban planners focus on formal play spaces and use their own perception of children's playing behavior instead of observing their *actual* behavior (Helleman et al., 2023).

A fourth and final factor that influences outdoor play is weather or climate circumstances. Willeboordse and colleagues (2022) wrote that specifically season and amount of daylight are important predictors; children tend to play outside more when days are warm and sunny, and when it is dark less children play outside. However, Elliot (2021) noticed that each type of weather can present a new range of possible outdoor play activities: "children need to be allowed opportunities to experience a range of weather and seasonal changes in a space with which they are familiar" (p. 39). Encouragement from adults to discover outside, especially in cold and wet weather, could help this - which is often neglected when they prohibit their children from going outside simply because they do not wish to be outside themselves (p. 39). Elliot (2021) emphasized that giving children some agency in making a choice is important, especially when the request to play outside comes from them in the first place. Katapally and colleagues (2015) found that weather circumstances play an important role in determining physical activity, and boys are more likely to achieve the desired level of physical activity (which could be done through outdoor play) than girls in this context. In other words, weather circumstances can prevent girls, more than boys, from playing outside.

Social environment

Next to the physical environmental factors, social factors also play a role in childrens' outdoor play experiences, which include social safety, norms and social cohesion, and the presence of other children.

Social safety, which also relates to parents' perceived safety and traffic safety, can be understood in terms of strangers, older children, bullies, drug dealers or dogs (Visser & van Aalst, 2021). As mentioned before, older childrens' presence has a bigger effect on girls' outdoor play. Fear among parents (mostly mothers), whether realistic or not, influences when

and where children are allowed to play outside (Solomon-Moore et al., 2018). Interestingly Brockman and colleagues (2011) reported that a mobile phone encouraged more outdoor play, as parents felt that their children were safer and could call in case of emergencies. It has to be noted that mobile phones have changed enormously since 2011, so future research must focus on the accuracy of this argument in current times. Another predictor of safety, for both children and parents, is proximity to home.

Also, social norms and social cohesion are of importance for outdoor play experiences. Social cohesion in a neighborhood means strong social bonds and infrequent social conflicts (Loebach et al., 2021). A positive social environment with strong bonds facilitates more outdoor play (Loebach et al., 2021; Visser & van Aalst, 2021). Here, the *eyes on the street* concept from Jacobs plays an important role; which means that multiple supervisors, though not participating in the outdoor play, keep an eye out from inside, which gives a sense of safety. Loebach and colleagues (2021) argued that increased trust and communication among parents is key in this context.

Finally, the presence of other children encourages outdoor play. Especially friends living in the neighborhood increase outdoor play, but only to a certain age. Visser and van Aalst (2021) found that older boys and girls do not necessarily spend more time outside if their friends live around. Reimers and colleagues (2018) reported that the presence of other children leads to more physical activity in public playgrounds. Interestingly, they also found a gender element in this context; whenever boys are present outside, girls' physical activity seems to be suppressed.

2.5 Conceptual model

Based on the literature described above, a conceptual model was designed (figure 2.2). The two main influences of outdoor play experiences (1) are the characteristics of the child (2a), and its parents (2b). These two groups, note that they align with the sub-questions presented in the first chapter, experience their part of the city in a certain way, which is also linked to their experiences with outdoor play. The complete experience is always situated within a certain environment (3); a neighborhood with certain characteristics that make it more or less attractive to play outside for children. The environment can be divided into a social and physical one, which are both important in facilitating outdoor play. To be able to understand

and situate the data derived from children and parents in Tilburg, some knowledge on the environment of each school - i.e. the places where children play outside - is desirable. Therefore, a local context is presented in chapter four, which gives insight into the status of the important variables relevant for outdoor play experiences in Tilburg.

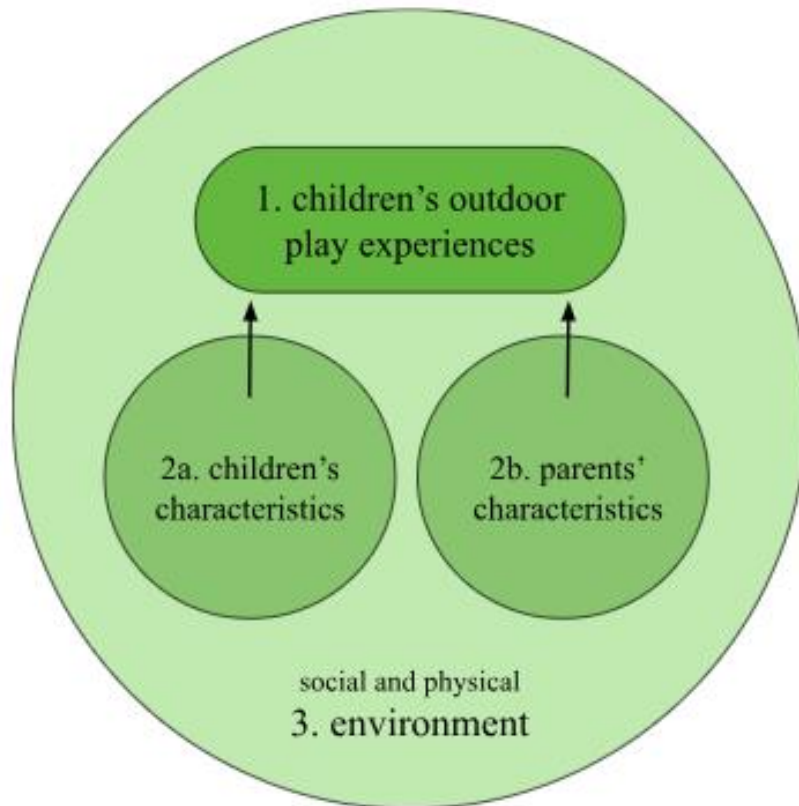


Figure 2.2: Conceptual model

3. Draw, craft, and speak - methodological considerations

To be able to answer the research- and sub-questions of this study, various qualitative methods were employed. The nature of this research was exploratory, as its aims were to provide insights into experiences. When conducting exploratory research, it is key to “adopt a flexible attitude toward collecting information and be constantly asking oneself what lies beneath the surface of what can be seen” (Stevens & Wrenn, 2013, p. 53).

The chapter starts with an introduction and justification of the geographical context that was selected for the study. After that, two main parts can be distinguished; the research design for the participating children and the research design for the participating parents. Each will touch upon various methodological considerations, including participant selection, data collection and limitations. The final part of this chapter will elaborate on the way the data was analysed.

3.1 Tilburg as context

The Dutch city Tilburg was selected as a geographical context within which the research was situated. Consisting of roughly 230.000 inhabitants, Tilburg is the seventh biggest city in the Netherlands. There are a few reasons why Tilburg in particular was chosen.

First, the amount of outdoor play in any place is inexplicably linked to the extent to which a ‘play-friendly’ environment is within the scope of a child’s movement possibilities (Islam et al., 2016). Research has found that open spaces, location to residences and dead-end streets have a positive effect on children’s outdoor play (Islam et al., 2016). Additionally, proximate greenery, such as parks, is positively associated with time spent playing outside (Lambert et al., 2019). In this light, Tilburg seemed to be an interesting case as the city is currently in a ‘stone age’. Organisation *Natuur & Milieu* researched the amount of green in Dutch cities, and among the five cities with the lowest amount of green was Tilburg (Omroep Brabant, 2022). This raises the question whether outdoor play experiences are (partly) influenced by the more concrete neighborhoods.

Connected to the amount of public green is also the second argument why Tilburg was selected; the amount of play facilities. Even though outdoor play also happens at informal areas, a substantial part is still done at playgrounds. Tilburg has about 530 public playgrounds, however not all meet today’s standards (Gemeente Tilburg, n.d.). That is why, Alderman Kostermans explains, the municipality aims to renew at least 100 playgrounds, as well as to add more green as Tilburg aims for “healthy and inclusive play areas” which also replace

concrete with green (Faas, 2025). Especially with the outcomes from Natuur & Milieu's research this initiative seems welcome and forms an interesting case for this study on outdoor play.

Third, as became clear in chapter two, the socio-economic status (SES) of a neighborhood is one of the factors that influences outdoor play (Willeboordse et al., 2022). Even though it is difficult to grasp in a number, the SES can be measured based on wealth, income and recent employment history (CBS, n.d.). The scores can range from -7.0 to +3.1 Tilburg's average score is -0.09, whereas the average of the Netherlands is 0. This means that Tilburg, roughly, resembles an average Dutch city in terms of SES.

Because Tilburg is arguably an average Dutch city, it can be used as a sample to get an idea of a broader trend in outdoor play experiences in the Netherlands - even though it must at the same time be recognized that experiences are subjective and situated.

3.2 Research design children

Because the research aimed to understand the outdoor play experiences of children, a qualitative research design was chosen. Fossey and colleagues (2002) wrote that qualitative research is about understanding meanings and experiences of humans' lives and social words. In this research, the qualitative nature enabled a deeper understanding of the livelihood and experiences of children playing outside in Tilburg.

Participatory research (PR), an umbrella term for multiple research designs, is about research in direct collaboration with those affected, for the purpose of action or change (Vaughn & Jaquez, 2020). Participatory approaches pose an appropriate method to investigate "people's relations with and accounts of space, place and environment" (Pain, 2004, p.653). In the context of this research, PR enabled direct engagement with local perspectives and ideas of the included children. By involving 'those affected' in the data gathering process, meanings and insights *behind* the data could be discovered and researched.

A way of conducting such a participatory research is by making *mental maps* together with the participants. Mental maps cause a "collapse in the distinction between designer and user", which creates opportunity for visual accounts of lived experiences - the designer of the map is the one experiencing the story they tell. In a study on urban unsafety experienced by homeless women, Robert (2022) found this method could help participants owning and sharing their stories; it gave them agency and power "as they helped to create the research with their

stories and maps” (p. 102). Similar to story maps, Roth (2020) explained that these techniques invite a “diverse and non-expert user group to participate in the mapmaking process, to tell their own place-based stories” (p. 83). Storytelling, in combination with making (mental maps), is an interesting method to learn more about children’s geographies and uncover urban narratives (Horton & Kraftl, 2017). Because of the ability to stimulate storytelling, mental maps were chosen as an appropriate method. Another reason why this method was selected relates to the benefits related to using a paper map (as opposed to an online map). Clark (2011) used map making in her research with young children and argues that the term map *making* puts emphasis on the active process that occurs as children *create* maps. The emphasis of the creation process enabled the researcher to not only consider the end-product, but also to walk around during the activity, ask questions and observe the process from a distance. All children were aware that their map needed not to resemble an accurate topographical image, as maps in this research were used as a way of documenting children’s feelings, thoughts and association about outdoor play in their spatial environment. The creation of a map on paper enabled “different intertwined languages of image, speech, drawing, colour and texture” (Clark, 2011 p. 316) to work together in creating a visual product of children’s experiences. Additionally, by drawing, the children were able to exercise control without dependency on adult intervention. In other words, they could autonomously express their own understanding of the environment (Clark, 2011).

In the context of independence, agency and encouraging self-expression rather than enforcing one single method upon the participating children, a second methodology was selected: collaging. This gave the participants a choice between producing the aforementioned mental map or a collage. Similar to mental mapping, collage-making gives the participant the position of expert. Barron (2023) described that collaging as a method refers to the process of creating a visual representation of a topic through the assembling of materials - paper, images, photographs etc - onto a backing, which was an empty a4 paper in this case. The collage is arranged in such a way that is meaningful to whoever is creating it. Collaging can stimulate imagination and encourage reflections, which was helpful for the young participant group to let them think about their outdoor play experiences. Barron (2023) also mentioned that collaging is an accessible method that can appeal to a diverse range of participants, which she described as “including those who are confident in their creative abilities and those who are less confident” (p. 4). This gave children who were not appealed to drawing themselves the opportunity to use the collaging method to express their experiences.

Van Melik and colleagues (2024) explain that zine making, a similar method, attributes more importance to visual elements as opposed to an ‘over-focus on text’, which makes it a more accessible method to use for a non-academic audience. This made collaging a suitable second method for children to use. Both methods had enough overlap to ensure that both activities could be performed in the same time-frame, location and with a similar set of materials.

Participant selection

The group that was included were 68 children aged 9 to 12, which means that they attended either group 6, 7, or 8 (based on the Dutch school system). Three primary schools in Tilburg were contacted. The process was fastened by use of a personal network, which also increased the likelihood of positive response and agreement to participation. After agreeing to participate in the study, the school’s directors contacted a colleague teacher who they estimated would have time in their schedule. This also meant that the schools themselves decided which group joined the research, as long as the children fit the age cohort of 9-12 years old. By using schools as gatekeepers it was ensured that all children were in the selected age-cohort. Additionally, it gave the researcher an opportunity to organize an in-class activity, which led to a substantial amount of data. The in-class activity created an environment where students could inspire and learn from each other, which had the same positive effects of a focus group; inspiration from other participants, a shift in power away from the researcher instead to the participants to name a few (Wilkinson, 1999). The sample size was determined by using a minimum of three classes in Tilburg, as this provided a large group with enough children to be able to do some comparisons. The table below gives insight into the sample group.

Table 3.1

Summary of Sample

	Boys	Girls	Total students
De Sleutel	12	8	20
Antares	16	10	26
Panta Rhei	11	11	22

Wang et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of justifying which type of naming - numbers, pseudo names or real names - suits a study. Because of the large sample size, a conscious choice was made to refer to the children by giving them a number from 1 to 68 (i.e. not assigning

pseudo names). These numbers correspond with the numbers on the visual products, which are enclosed in the appendix. To be able to better understand the quotes presented in the results chapter, information that is relevant was mentioned together with their number, such as the school they attend, and their gender.

Data collection

As indicated in the conceptual model, the physical and social environment served as a backdrop in which outdoor play experiences are researched from both the perspective of children and parents. To be able to effectively understand the context in which children play outside, an overview of each school environment was constructed in a local context chapter (chapter four). Each environment was analysed according to the variables presented in chapter three, using public data from digital monitors (such as Lemon or the T-meter).

Holt and colleagues (2007) conducted research with children using a mental mapping exercise, which was a direct inspiration for the method applied in this research. The data collection consisted of two: a creative exercise in class, and a conversation about the products made in the first activity.

1. Creative exercise

Two options were given to the children, which gave them some agency in the process:

- Make a collage about your outdoor play experiences, or
- Make a mental map about your outdoor play experiences

Before the activity could start, an example of both the collage and the mental map were provided. Even though this could influence the outcomes, the risk of getting a lot of unworkable results seemed bigger. The example ensured that all participants knew what was expected from them. To make sure that the children could not directly copy the example, a different topic was used: *how I experience my vacation*

experiences. In such a setting, the researcher was able to listen to similarities and differences, which brought more depth into the findings (Barron, 2023).

At the first school, De Sleutel, almost all children participated in this phase of the research (16 in total). However, due to time reasons - the children have a busy schedule at school - the focus groups organized at the other two schools were done with a selection of children. On both Antares and Panta Rhei, 11 children divided in two groups were participating. The researcher made a quick selection based on the maps, and made sure genders were divided somewhat equally. This means that in total 38 children were included in the second phase of the research.

The second activity was organized in small-groups, which allowed children to react to each other and complement stories from others with their own experiences. The conversations were semi-structured, leaving enough room for children's own input, yet also ensuring that some key topics were covered. With permission from the children, the conversations were recorded. Notes were made on paper by the researcher to have a back-up and to structure thoughts during the process. The original (i.e. Dutch) semi-structured interview guide can be found in the appendices.

Ethical considerations

Because the research aimed to learn about children's outdoor play experiences, the participants were minors. This called for particular emphasis and attention on ethical considerations. Organisation ERIC (Ethical Research Involving Children) and authors Miers and Murphy (2004) have written about such considerations. For example, choosing a research method that fits the children's age and cognitive capacities. In this context, doing a creative exercise - as opposed to a formal interview - fitted the age-cohort and was similar to other in-class exercises they had to perform in school, hence the cognitive level was also appropriate.

Additionally, consent was important to pay attention to, which could only be received after giving a clear, understandable introduction of the research. According to Miers and Murphy (2004), there are multiple ways to inform a young audience, such as via a poster or video. They also emphasize that attention should be paid to using appropriate language that children understand. In the context of this research, a small poster was designed to introduce the topic and method (see appendices). The design of the poster was a conscious process where more emphasis was put on visual elements rather than text. The that *was* included in the poster was easy to understand. Moreover, during the explanation of the exercises to the children, they

were asked to explain difficult words (such as *ervaring* or *collage*) to each other. In this way, all children knew what was expected from them.

As most participants have a young age, consent from a gatekeeper had to be received, but it had to be given independently from the child's consent to ensure no coercion was used (ERIC, 2024). The gatekeepers in this research were primary school teachers, who carried the responsibility for the children during school hours. All children were asked to participate, since the assignment was during their regular school schedule, no one denied cooperation. Consent was asked for both participation in the research and for permission to record the second exercise (for transcription purposes).

Related to consent was also the issue of power-dynamics, as there is a substantial age gap between the researcher and participants (at least between the children participating). This could make it harder for children to decline participation, which is why it is advised to ask for consent more than once (Miers & Murphy, 2004). For this reason, consent was asked for a second time; when the children got the opportunity to explain their map or collage. Relating to power-dynamics, Miers and Murphy (2004) wrote that "if a good relationship is built up between the interviewer and child, this will encourage more forthcoming responses, more confidence in the use of language and, perhaps most importantly, give the child a sense of power in the situation" (p.14). A good relationship can be established by investing time into the child to build a friendly and informal connection. During the activities, all children wore a name-tag which enabled the researcher to address each participant by their name. Additionally, sharing some personal information myself - for example, I am also born in Tilburg - was beneficial in building a connection, and so was asking some follow-up questions that showed my interest in their hobbies. Allowing the participants to exercise some control over the process can also help building a connection. Especially during the first activity this was practised when all children could make their own product, which helped giving them some type of agency and control.

Ethical research must at all times prioritize the well-being of children during participation: "[...] whether they feel completely free to say they don't want to take part; whether they feel research does not intrude on their lives, and that they are reassured and trust us with the data they have given us" (p.196). The way this was practically executed was by

ensuring anonymity and explicitly mentioning that the children were not obliged to answer a question if they did not want to.

Limitations

Roth (2020) highlighted some limitations of mental mapping - also applicable to the collaging method. For example, the personalized maps could provide poor, 2D quality data or have incoherent narratives. Additionally, the situated nature of a personalized map could impose concerns around privacy and power. Holt and colleagues (2007) added that the method does not work optimally if children express a lack of motivation or lack the ability to draw. Using creative methods in an in-class setting can increase the risk of copying among children, which decreases individual, unique ideas (Fargas-Malet et al., 2010)

Additionally, the type of drawings that the children made were strongly influenced by the instruction of the researcher and teacher, as well as by examples that were given beforehand. In this context, giving no example at all could have been beneficial because of less interference from the researcher and instead children were given full freedom. However, a conscious decision was made to give an example, as this led to better insight in what was expected from the children (Holt et al., 2007).

Another limitation, related to both mental mapping and collaging, is the possibility that some images could be misinterpreted. This chance is bigger when just one researcher is responsible for the analysis, which was the case in this research. The risk of misinterpretation was minimized by actively asking questions during the creative process, as well as by organizing conversations in small groups where children had to explain their work and some additional questions were asked. This was also done to prevent poor quality data, as it allowed for a more in-depth conversation about their outdoor play experiences.

Moreover, a methodological limitation of focus groups is the increased chance of socially desired answers (Bergen & Labonté, 2020). Because of the group setting, it was not unthinkable that some participants, to a greater or lesser extent, exaggerated or adjusted their stories. Children are known to have great imaginary abilities, which increases the risk of *storytelling* instead of telling the exact truth. This is not always a conscious process as “stories told by others may find their way into children’s recollections of their experiences” (Principe & Schindewolf, 2012, p.2). This posed questions concerning truth and credibility. However, a

conscious choice was made to believe children's stories and not let normative ideas on outdoor play take over. After all, the aim of the study was to take children's voices seriously, which could be endangered when they are not believed by the researcher.

In the context of ethical research, a final limitation laid in the organisation of the data gathering process. Because the activities were organized during school hours, all children participated - the same way they participate in other school activities; they have to! This raises the question whether all children truly wanted to participate, which would be most ethical in an ideal case. Multiple times during the process the children were asked if they wanted to participate, but the question remains whether they felt enough room to decline.

3.3 Research design parents

For the inclusion of parental - a different type of interludes - views on the topic, new methodological considerations had to be made. Whereas a more formal interview-format might not be suitable for a young audience, parents are substantially older and therefore an interview might be more successful. A semi-structured interview in small focus groups is a method that fits the subquestion. The semi-structured method enabled the researcher with some guidelines, but also left room for parents to bring in their own independent ideas, thoughts and additions (Adams, 2015). This was a suitable method because it facilitated the conversation to go into unexpected, yet very relevant directions. The open nature of the conversation was positive as it also led to some topics different from what the researcher could think of in advance.

Participant selection

The parents were easier to reach via the schools that confirmed their cooperation. The parents were reached in different ways, depending on preferences and meetings that each school did or did not facilitate. For example, two schools organized an informal coffee-hour for parents to join each week. This enabled the researcher to include parents who had time and were open to speak to other people. Due to time-constraints, only one of the two coffee-hours was visited by the researcher. Everyone who attended the meeting was asked if they wanted to join the conversation. After consent was received, the hour was spent discussing outdoor play (from a parental perspective) in a group conversation. Because it was hard to include parents that directly matched the children that were included in the research - older students usually go to school alone, hence parents are less present at the school - no strict criteria was tied to their

inclusion. It was assumed that all parents have some thoughts about outdoor play, as they all have children who, some more than others, play outside sometimes.

One school did not facilitate such a meet-up, so instead parents were invited to join a meeting organised solely for the purpose of this research. The school preferred to only invite parents that had a child in the participating group, so the group of possible participants was smaller. Via a letter formulated by the research and sent by the teacher, parents were invited on a specific date and time. Only two parents replied, which means that the group of participating parents is very small. The conversation took place in an empty classroom at the school and lasted approximately 45 minutes.

In total, six parents were included; four from De Sleutel and two from Panta Rhei.

Data collection: focus groups

After the in-class activities were held, another visit to each primary school was made, but this time the main focus lay on gathering information about the parental perspectives on outdoor play. A purposeful decision was made to meet the parents *after* having talked to the children, as the outcomes revealed some interesting and unexpected outcomes which were included in the interview guide designed for the conversation with parents. The focus groups provided a useful method for learning about parental perspectives on outdoor play, as the informal group setting created a nice atmosphere where ideas were exchanged. Also, parents could complement each other's stories and experiences.

Limitations

Some of the limitations of the focus-group discussion method were already addressed earlier in this chapter (when discussing the children's methods). However, some additional limitations could be mentioned.

One limitation is the (indirect) selection of parents that were included in the study. Parents who voluntarily visit a coffee hour or positively respond to a request by letter to participate in a study might be more involved and therefore the sample did not reflect an accurate representation of the total group of parents. This is called a selection-bias (Zhao, 2020).

Another limitation of focus group discussions - one that also holds for children - was the influence of group dynamics on answers (Smithson, 2000; Lim, 2024). More dominant participants answered faster and generally took up more time in the conversation as a whole. Because of this, other participants might have found it more difficult to share their perspectives.

Finally, because of the group setting, less attention could be given to each individual participant. This means that it was harder to identify whether the answers represent individual opinions or whether they were a product of a collective voice (resulting from group interactions) (Smithson, 2000). It is for this reason that the data must be interpreted with caution and cannot be generalized across a wider group.

3.4 Data analysis

After all the data was collected, the recordings from the conversations were transcribed. The transcriptions were made anonymous, and children were assigned a number from 1 to 68. Consequently, all transcriptions were deductively coded using an online programme called Delve. A close reading of the transcripts enabled a long list of very specific codes. During a second round of coding, the specific codes were grouped together under a bigger umbrella code, which gave insight into the data for one specific theme (such as 'safety'). The codes can be found in the appendices. Next to the textual data resulting from the focus group conversations, the visual products of the creative exercise were also used as data. However, because the visual data had a larger risk of misinterpretation, they were consciously used as superficial data that formed the basis for the follow-up conversations. The maps and collages were analysed with a content-analysis (see appendices). This was done manually, as Delve did not enable a function to include visual material. A content analysis is a method that can identify meaning in recorded data by isolating small pieces of the data (Kleinheksel and colleagues, 2020). Originally a quantitative method, the type of content analysis in this research was very basic consisting of counting the 'isolated pieces of data' that can also be referred to as codes.

The combination of the content analysis and the coded interviews rendered meaningful insights into the data. These are presented in the fifth chapter. However, to be able to fully situate all the responses, some knowledge of the local context of each school is needed. Therefore, the next chapter provides a short overview of the physical and social environment in which most of the children participating in this research live (or at least spend their time at school).

4. Local playing grounds - introducing the school's environments

The theoretical chapter described some environmental characteristics that influence outdoor play experiences. These were divided into physical and social characteristics. To be able to understand and situate the experiences from children and parents, it is important to reflect on the local environment in which the schools lie - these are presumably also the neighborhoods in which the majority of the participants live.

According to *Scholen op de Kaart*, there are currently 56 primary schools in Tilburg. Three primary schools were included in this research: De Sleutel, Antares, and Panta Rhei. In this respective order, the local context of each school will be elaborated upon below. Each context is solely based on the variables that are relevant to outdoor play. This means that it is only a partial and highly selective description of each neighborhood. Needless to say, the full complexity of each environment reaches beyond the scope of this research and was not the goal to be communicated through this chapter.

The three schools were purposefully selected because of their different locations, covering a school in respectively the northern, western and south-eastern part of Tilburg. The map below shows the exact location of each school in Tilburg, as well as the neighborhoods where most children attending each school live (Scholen op de Kaart, 2025).

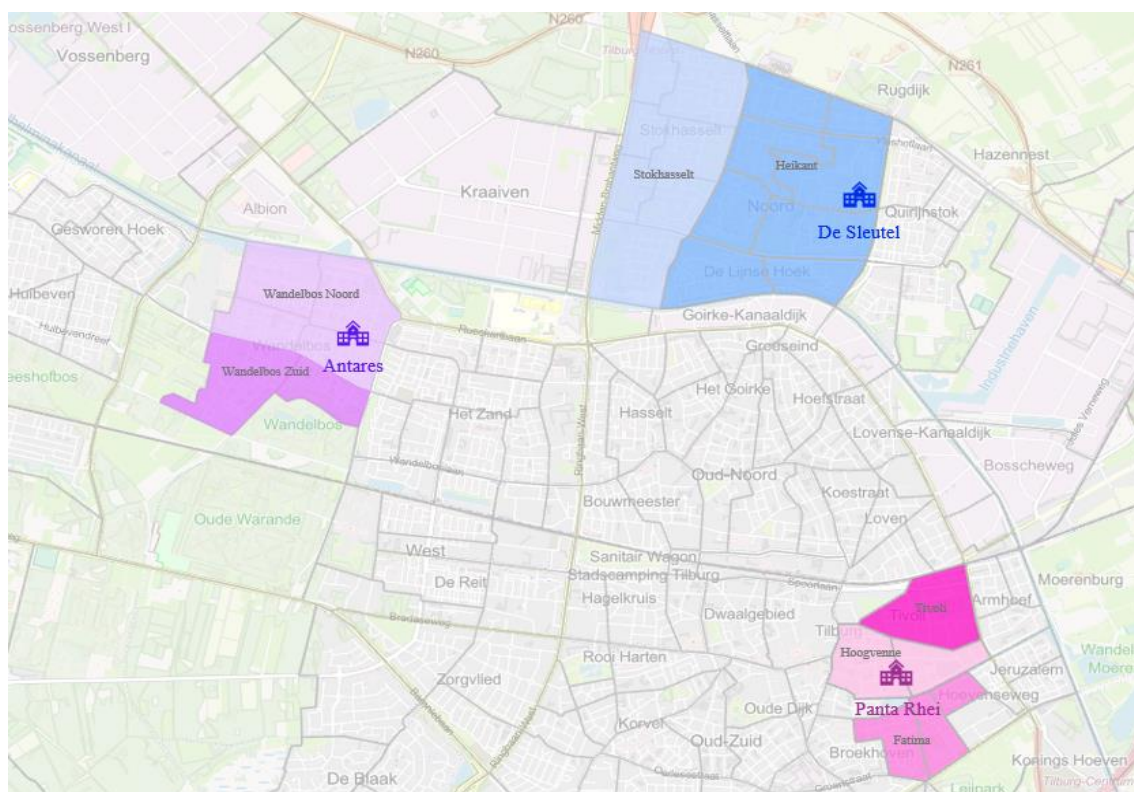


Figure 4.1: Map of locations of included

The data that is presented below originates from two main sources; Lemon and T-meter. Lemon, short for *leefbaarheidsmonitor* (i.e. livability monitor), is an instrument used to measure and summarize experienced livability. The municipality of Tilburg collaborated with Lemon in 2023, for which all residents of Tilburg were asked to fill in a questionnaire rating their neighborhood environment on various livability categories. The T-meter is an instrument that combines objective (from police, municipality and CBS) and subjective data on a neighborhood scale (Gemeente Tilburg, 2022). The relevant factors indicating the status of the environment are categorised into three themes: living environment, safety, and resilience. The data from the T-meter can be found at the end of this chapter.

Table 4.2

Physical Environment of Neighbourhoods in Tilburg

	Traffic	Green space	Play facilities
Area around De Sleutel	5.9	6.9	6.4
Area around Antares	6.1	7.4	6.7
Area around Panta Rhei	5.6	6.2	6.1
Tilburg	5.9	6.5	6.3

In the table above, traffic was operationalized by the question: Do you experience disturbance from traffic in your neighborhood? 1= a lot of disturbance and 10= no disturbance at all. Green space was operationalized in the following way: What do you think of the green facilities in your neighborhood, such as trees, parks and gardens? 1= very bad and 10= very good. The question about play facilities was formulated: What do you think about the play facilities in your neighborhood? 1= very bad and 10= very good.

Table 4.3*Social Environment of Neighbourhoods in Tilburg*

	Social safety		Social cohesion	
	Safety at daytime	Safety at night time	Involvement neighbours	Interaction with neighbours
Area De Sleutel	7.3	5.8	5.3	6.4
Area Antares	7.4	6.2	5.4	6.8
Area Panta Rhei	7.8	6.5	5.7	7.1
Tilburg	7.7	6.4	5.6	6.4

Safety was operationalized in two separate questions, each referring to the feeling of safety at different times of the day. The respondents answered 1 if they felt very unsafe, and 10 if they felt very safe. A way to operationalize social cohesion was by combining data from two different questions. Involvement with neighbours was measured with the question: what do you think about the level of involvement that inhabitants show in the neighbourhood? 1= not involved at all, and 10= very involved. Interaction with neighbours was measured with the question: do the local residents interact in a nice way with each other? 1=not nice at all, and 10= very nice.

4.1 OBS De Sleutel

De Sleutel is located in the northern part of Tilburg, it is a relatively small public school, with 204 students. Part of the *Quirijnboulevard*, De Sleutel is located in a green environment. Their schoolguide explains that this boulevard has only recently started to be used to its potential - before that it was a vacant part of the district (OBS de Sleutel, 2024). Part of the renewal of the boulevard was adding a Multifunctional Accommodation (MFA), which is partly used as a primary school. With the relatively new design of the school building came also a generous schoolyard with, according to the schoolguide, plenty of space and greenery. Based on the website *Scholen op de kaart*, approximately 80% of the students attending De Sleutel live in either Stokhasselt or Heikant. It is for this reason that this district is chosen to evaluate, based on various physical and social variables.

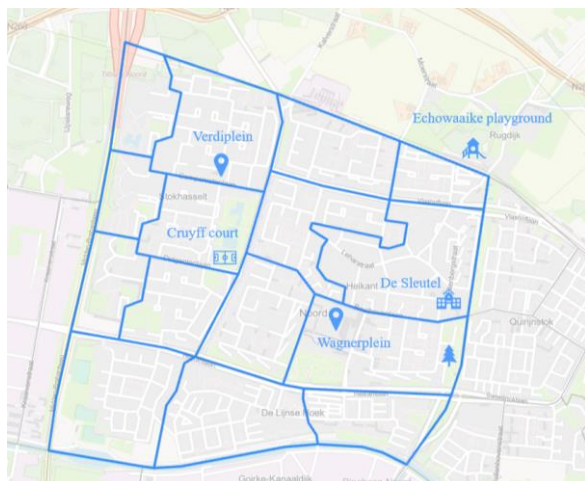


Figure 4.4: Map of environment De Sleutel

On map 4.4, a closer image of the context of De Sleutel is provided. The school is located on the right part of the blue area. Some important squares, parks, playgrounds and sport fields - where outdoor play might take place - are marked on the map.

The exact scores on each component, as well as a comparison with the average of Tilburg as a whole are presented in tables 4.1 and 4.2. The physical environment is evaluated in terms of traffic, green space and play facilities. The neighbourhoods surrounding De Sleutel are rated average in terms of traffic, and seem to be a bit greener than the whole municipality. The play facilities are rated a 6.4 out of 10, which is sufficient but not extremely high.

For the social environment, safety, social cohesion and presence of other children seem to be the most important factors influencing outdoor play experiences. Safety was measured at day- and nighttime. Both are considered as relevant, especially because the difference between them in the context of the research was not clearly defined. If we assume that nighttime starts as soon as the street lights go on, it could be argued that some outdoor play experiences happen at nighttime (especially in summer when temperatures are high). The experienced safety in the environment of De Sleutel is the lowest one compared to the other schools and Tilburg. Especially at nighttime the environment seems to be unsafe, given the average score of 5.8. Social cohesion was not directly measured but will be considered as the result of the outcomes of two other variables; involvement and interaction with neighbours. Based on this, the social cohesion in the environment of De Sleutel is average. The scores are not very high, indicating that the social cohesion in this context is also not that high.

When considering the three figures from the T-meter, the environment of De Sleutel has a living environment that scores, for the most part of the district, below average (figure 4.7). Compared to the environments of Antares and Panta Rhei, De Sleutel has the worst experienced living environment, which is based on various indicators such as: distance to facilities, average WOZ-value, judgement of the neighborhood, attractiveness of public spaces, and satisfaction with the play facilities. The map about safety (figure 4.8) clearly shows more red and orange spots in the environment near De Sleutel, which indicates that it is less safe, especially in the western neighborhoods. The last map (figure 4.9) shows the resilience of neighborhoods in Tilburg, which in this case refers to the self-reliance of inhabitants and their involvement with their physical and social environment. In particular, the indicators relating to social cohesion are relevant to compare. Those are, 1) having social contacts in the neighborhood, and 2) having the feeling that those contacts are useful to have. The inhabitants

of the neighborhoods close to De Sleutel generally score below average at the indicator that measures whether they have social contacts in the neighborhood. The second indicator, feeling that the contacts they have are useful, scores in the majority of the cases higher. This indicates social contacts are attributed important, but that they are not always there. Based on this map, the context of De Sleutel is less resilient than the rest of Tilburg. This score is influenced by other (objective) factors. For instance, the area seems to house a large group of low-educated people, as well as families dependent on allowances.

4.2 Kindcentrum Antares

Antares is a public primary school located in Tilburg West, originating from the period before *De Reeshof* was built (which is technically more western now). Antares has 256 students and is, similar to De Sleutel, located in a MFA. The fenced schoolyard of Antares is average, however, directly in front of the school is a generous, green area where children, at least the older ones, are also allowed to play during breaks. The district where Antares is located, Wandelbos, consists of two parts, the *Kruidenbuurt* (Wandelbos Noord) and the *Auteurs-* and *Kleurenbuurt* (Wandelbos Zuid). These two areas house more than 80% of the students from Antares (*Scholen op de kaart*, 2025). This is why Wandelbos is chosen to base the evaluation of physical and social variables upon.

On map 4.5, a closer look of the context of Antares is provided. The school is located on the right half of the purple area. The play facilities in this neighborhood are located in the Northern part; two sport fields and one playground.

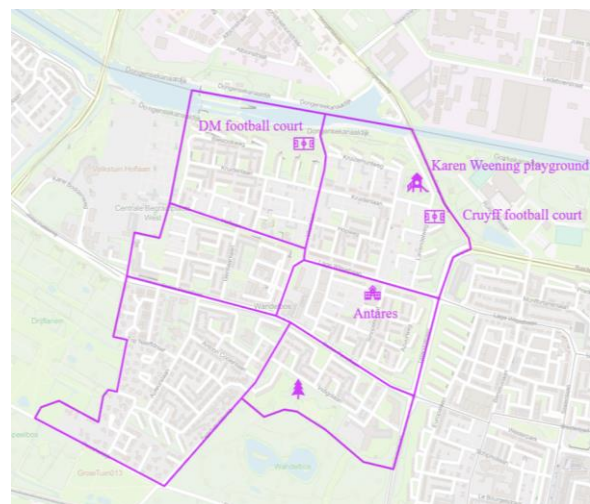


Figure 4.5: Map of environment Antares

The physical environment around Antares seems to be the most favorable in terms of traffic receiving an average of 6.1 which is the highest score of traffic in the table. Green space seems to be more than sufficient, getting a 7.4. This might have to do with the presence of a big forest *Wandelbos* bordering the neighborhood (not coincidentally named after it). Following the trend of high scores, also play facilities are graded the highest among residents. However, the difference with the contexts of

the other schools is less big this time. Based on the outcomes, one could conclude that the context of Antares is the most favorable, at least when considering the variables that matter to outdoor play experiences. Yet, it must be noted that the scores show an average of the two parts of Wandelbos (north and south) that seem to be quite different. Inhabitants of the southern part consistently rate their environment higher (i.e. more livable) than the residents of the northern part, which could be explained by differences in populations.

The social environment of the area around Antares does not differ a lot from the average social environment in Tilburg. In line with expectations, the experienced safety is lower at nighttime than at daytime. Interaction with neighbours is rated slightly above average. Yet, the involvement of neighbours seems to be lower - even insufficient according to the respondents.

When looking at the outcomes of the T-meter, the differences between the northern and southern part of Wandelbos become visibly clear too. Living environment, safety, and resilience score differently according to the division of north and south mentioned before. The biggest contrast was reported in the map about resilience, showing that especially the eastern part of *Wandelbos Noord* has the least favorable score and the eastern part of *Wandelbos Zuid* the most favorable. These results indicate a diverse district, which could possibly also lead to a diverse set of outdoor play experiences depending on one's address in either the northern or southern part of *Wandelbos*.

4.3 OBS Panta Rhei

Panta Rhei is located in the south-eastern part of Tilburg. The school is public and has 480 students, making it the biggest school included in this research. Divided across separate buildings in even different districts, Panta Rhei has multiple playgrounds and playing opportunities might differ from place to place. The location at the *Lancierstraat* was visited for data collection, so data from that location will be analysed. Opposed to De Sleutel and Antares, where the majority of students live in a fairly concentrated area, the data from *Scholen op de Kaart* (2025) about Panta Rhei shows that the students are more scattered across different neighbourhoods. A small majority (53%) lives in *Tivoli*, *Hoogvenne*, or *Fatima* which is the geographical region where the data in the paragraphs below is based upon.

Map 4.5 shows a closer look of the area around Panta Rhei. Within the pink region, the school is located quite centrally. The closed play facilities are also marked on the map; three playgrounds and a park on the Northern part just outside the pink area.

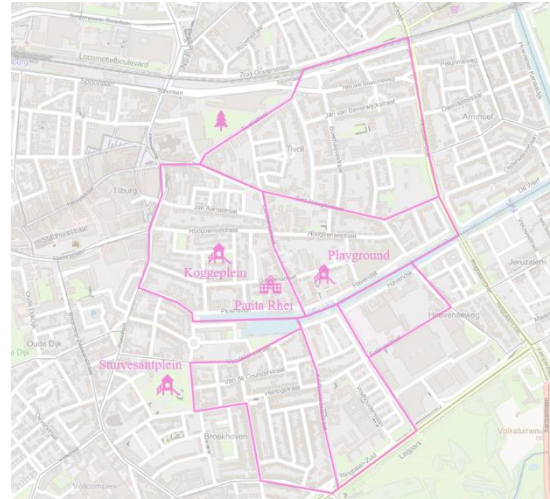


Figure 4.6: map of environment Panta Rhei

In terms of physical environment, the area where Panta Rhei is located scores lower than the average physical environment in Tilburg. Also, in comparison to the contexts of the other two schools, the environment, or at least the variables relevant for outdoor play, is graded the lowest by its residents. In particular, traffic nuisance seems to be a bigger problem in this area, which could be explained by its location in the city centre. Additionally, the lower scores on green space and play facilities may also be rationalized by the location of the area.

Contrasting the lower scores on aspects relating to the physical environment, the social environment of the area around Panta Rhei is rated higher than average. In fact, not only compared to Tilburg's average, but also compared to the areas surrounding De Sleutel and Antares, the social environment is experienced more positive. In particular, the score of interaction with neighbours is higher than the average, which indicates a higher social cohesion.

The outcomes of the T-meter show the most blue parts in the square marking Panta Rhei's environment. For living environment and safety the maps show that the neighbourhoods closer to the city centre (i.e more western in the square) have lower scores than the neighbourhoods that are located a bit further from the city centre. The map about resilience indicates that the inhabitants of the neighbourhoods close to Panta Rhei are more resilient than average. The difference is even bigger when compared to the resilience of the other two contexts. The data behind the map also shows that the inhabitants of neighborhoods around Panta Rhei attribute more importance to social contacts in their neighborhoods than residents living closer to De Sleutel or Atares. The results do not give insight into the quantity of social contact, or the quality of the connection. In other words, the social cohesion may be higher than the indication given in table 4.2 based on the selected indicators.

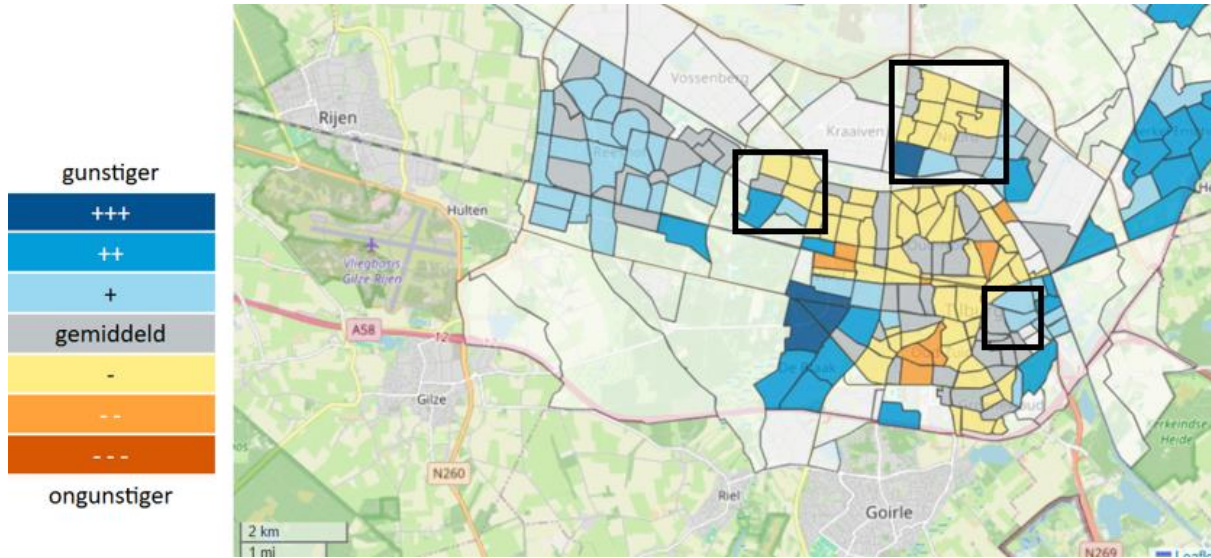


Figure 4.7: Living environment (T-meter, 2024)

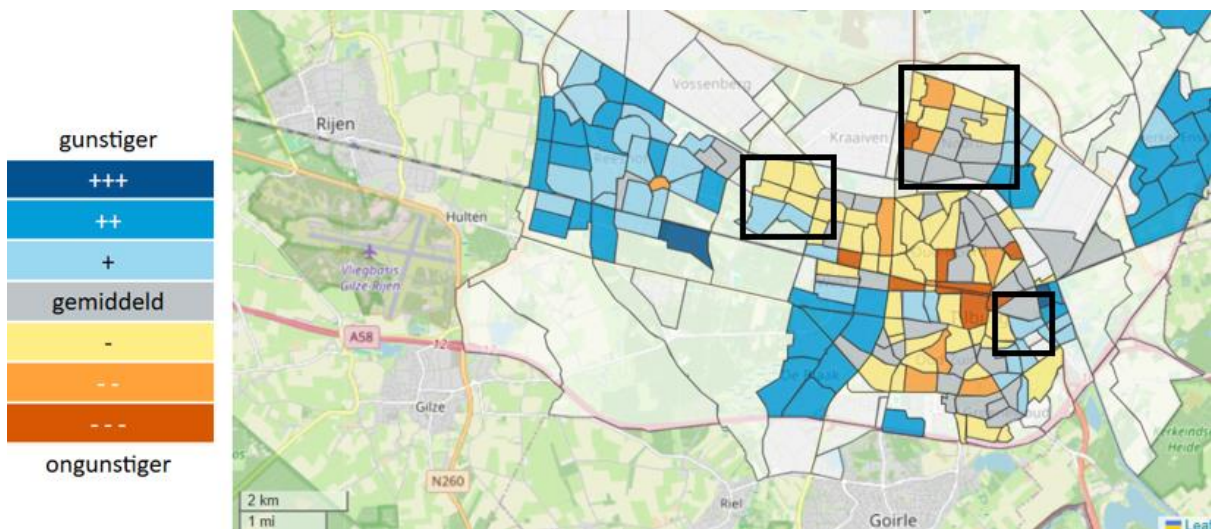


Figure 4.8: Safety (T-meter, 2023)

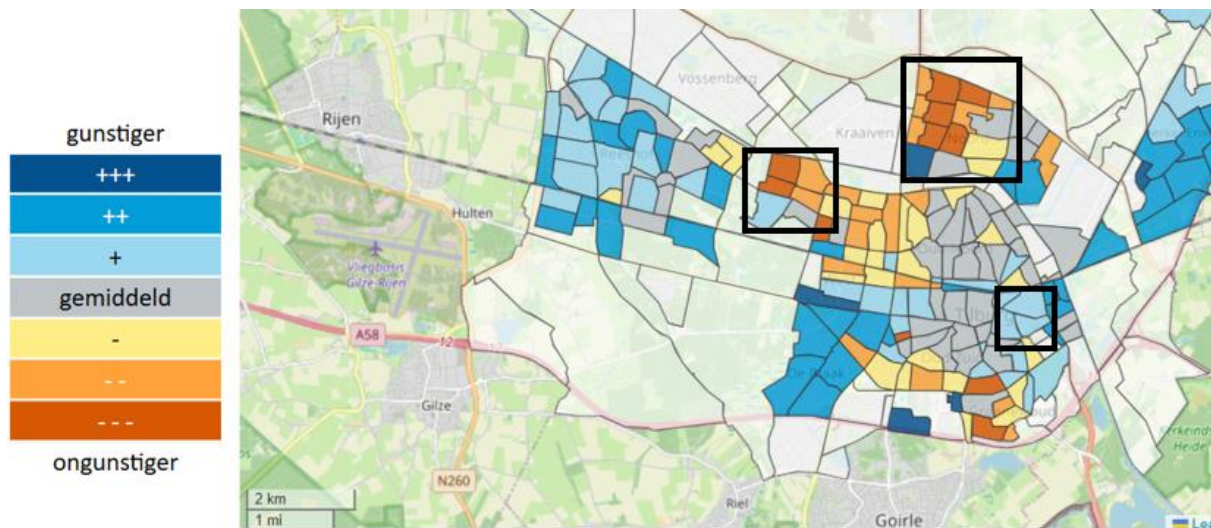


Figure 4.9: Resilience (T-meter, 2024)

Based on the scores of Lemon and the T-meter, outdoor play experiences, considering only the variables that arose from academic literature, would differ in the three different contexts. More specifically, apart from the physical environment, the contexts of De Sleutel and Antares score generally lower than the environment where Panta Rhei is located. This could mean that children growing up in the first two environments have less outdoor play opportunities, or less positive outdoor play experiences. However, the *lived* experiences situated within the environmental context require a qualitative, participatory approach where children, as well as parents, are asked to share their perspectives. The next chapter will reveal important themes that arose from the data, giving more insight into the experiences of children living in each of the three contexts.

5. Truths and tensions - empirical data from children and parents

This chapter highlights the outcomes of the research methods described in chapter three. The most important themes are selected and discussed, using data from both children and parents who participated in the research. The framework, or structure, that is employed in this study is in analogy to previous work by Isaac and Bernstein (2021), who used a combination of visual elements and quotes and structuring their data by theme. The results of the creative in-class exercise are used as visual support that clarify the findings and give an impression of the respondents' experiences. After each paragraph, a summary of the most important findings is presented. At the end of this chapter, the sub-questions raised in the beginning of this thesis are answered. These respectively relate to the ways children visualize their outdoor play experience and what role parents and the environment have in these experiences.

When mentioning the word 'children' throughout the results- and conclusion sections, the 38 participating children in the focus groups are referred to (as this is where the depth in the data was found). Because of the scope of this research, the expressions and findings are not generalizable. This means that they are not applicable to all children living in Tilburg. In the same vein, when using 'parents', the six participating parents are referred to. Even more so than children, the group of parents is very small and results therefore are not to be generalized to all parents in Tilburg.

Next to the maps, quotes are also used in this chapter. They serve as data that support the findings. A conscious decision is made to present the quotes in their original language (i.e. not translating them). Research found that translating influences the validity of the study, as well as increases risk of misinterpretations (Younas et al., 2021). Moreover, the original language gives a certain depth, vividness and (cultural) context in which the findings can be placed. Younas and colleagues (2021) therefore stated that "if the participants shared their experiences in their native language, it seems reasonable that the quotes are presented as such" (p. 171). Apart from keeping the quotes in their original language, they are also as much as possible presented in their original form and structure. This is to say, some sentences are grammatically incorrect - in any case still legible - but are not corrected because these sentences are part of the way children express themselves.

In this chapter, quotes from both children and parents are used interchangeably. Because of differences in their positions and relations to outdoor play, distinct colours are used to separate them; green quotes come from children, and yellow ones come from parents.

The chapter contains as little numbers as possible. All data is equally relevant and unique. After the analysis, some patterns and themes arose that seem to be shared among a wider group of participants, which will form the guiding thread of the chapter.

A large majority of children expressed they like to play outside and do so regularly. When asking the children about their outdoor play experiences, almost all of them gave a positive first response. They reported feelings of joy and excitement, as well as the more neutral yet positive expression: 'I just like it'. The positive associations with outdoor play were visible in the creative products (i.e. mental maps or collages), but also in the conversations held afterwards with the children. For example, the content analysis counted eight smileys in total, which usually can be interpreted as positive (see map 48, lower left), but also signs as hearts (see map 16, right) and cut out smiles from magazines (see map 62, upper left) gave an impression of a positive outdoor play experience.



In a few exceptional cases, children answered in a more reserved way when asked about outdoor play. However, in those cases a few follow-up questions helped to give more insights that in all cases led to a more rich description of their outdoor play experiences.

The data shows patterns of both positive and negative stories. These seem to be inseparable, as in all stories from children and parents both positive and negative elements

could be detected. This makes sense because a real experience is always nuanced and never as one-sided as may be thought after a first response. The balance between negative and positive is therefore a common thread throughout the entire results chapter. The chapter is divided into five main themes that arose from the data.

5.1 Safety vs threats

A first insight into the data revealed a tension between the positive feeling of safety and freedom associated with outdoor play and the negative threats and feelings of unsafety that almost all children had experience with. On map 54 (left), the word freedom - *vrijheid* - can be found, and the participant who made map 15 (right) explained that the image of the climber, for him, means freedom and joy.



Safety does not seem to be evident for all children at all times. It is a topic that caused a lot of fast responses, which were given in a split-second after asking ‘do you feel safe when playing outside?’. For many children, safety is related to having company of someone they know - such as a friend or sibling. Knowing that familiar people are around, even though they are not outside, also gives a feeling of safety. The quotes below show the reasoning that many children gave.

“Ik voel me veilig, want als ik met iemand ben, dan voel ik me veilig. Als hij ouder is, dan voel ik me veilig. Maar als ik alleen ben, of ik ben met iemand die jonger is dan mij, dan voel ik me een beetje veilig omdat ik niet zo oud ben, en ik kan ook helemaal niks doen.” - Participant 32 (Antares, girl).

“Bij ons is zo ’n speeltuintje, er zijn gewoon heel veel huizen eromheen. Mijn vriendinnen wonen altijd zo heel dichtbij die park, dus dan kan ik wel naar hen toe.”

-Participant 18 (De Sleutel, girl).

There are no big differences between boys and girls regarding feelings of safety, both reported a mixture of them. However, it was noticeable that children attending Panta Rhei mentioned their phones in relation to safety more often than the other participants. This also held for the parents that participated in the research - one from Panta Rhei explained the safety aspect that is related to having a phone when playing outside for her daughter. In this particular case, a phone gave the needed support to stimulate outdoor play, which is a positive effect that receives limited attention in recent literature (Brockman et al., 2011).

“Ja, ik voel me altijd wel veilig. Omdat meestal ga ik met mijn broer of met een vriendin buiten spelen. En als ik buiten ga spelen, dan moet ik vaak van mijn moeder ook wel iets meenemen waardoor ik haar kan bereiken. Dus dan voel ik me altijd wel wat veiliger ja.”

-Participant 62 (Panta Rhei, girl).

“Ja, ik vind het wel prettig dat ze nu een mobiel ook heeft zodat ze als er iets is toch kan bellen. En dat heeft haar ook wel makkelijker doen durven buiten spelen. Een aantal jaar geleden was zijn niet zo heldhaftig, ze vond veel dingen spannend. In de wijk zaten ook wat jongeren waar ze een beetje bang voor was, dus dat weerhield haar altijd wel om buiten te spelen. Dus daar heeft die mobiel toch wel in geholpen. Voor onze dochter wekte dat toch net dat gevoel van een extra veiligheidje.” -Parent 6 (Panta Rhei).

Related to safety is also location, at least for some parents from De Sleutel. Some neighborhoods in Tilburg are experienced and judged as unsafe, for instance because of drug use and crime. For at least two parents, this played a role when moving towards a new house. In the conversations with children, specific locations were seen as unsafe. These places were known for trouble. However, this did not always withhold them from playing there.

“Ik merk wel echt verschil [tussen wijken]. Sommige speeltuinen zijn niet veilig, en waar ik nu woon zijn ze veel veiliger.” -Parent 1 (De Sleutel).

Even though a lot of initial responses regarding safety indicate that children felt safe when playing outside, the times they felt unsafe seem to be remembered more vividly. The coding process showed that experiences of unsafety were mentioned about 40 times in the transcripts, whereas experiences indicating a feeling of safety are mentioned 18 times. It also seemed to be a topic that was harder for the children to visualize on paper, there are only a few maps or collages where hints to feelings of safety or unsafety can be spotted. For instance map 11 (left) showed that Participant 11 did not go to a football field in ‘West’ because of bigger [and older] children. Also map 7 (right) indirectly referred to an unsafe area when Participant 7 wrote down that he was not allowed to go into the woods because of scary stories. It is interesting that the outdoor play experiences from almost all children are positive on their papers (based on interpretation), whereas the stories shared in the follow-up conversations are much more diverse regarding this topic, also containing unsafe experiences.



Unsafety can relate to a wide range of things, such as parental opinions, gangs, violence, (risk of) accidents, theft or intimidating people (often adults or older children). The quotes below give an impression of the reasons why children felt unsafe outside. All experiences are equally valid and experienced in a unique way, yet some were more occurring than others.

“Er zijn ook heel veel gangs enzo daar. En gevaarlijke vuurwerken. En er roken ook veel mensen daar. Vapen. En ruzie maken.” -Participant 17 (De Sleutel, girl).

“Je moet eigenlijk je spullen in het goaltje leggen. Anders, als het op het bankje wordt gelegd, pakken ze het gewoon af. En dan rennen ze er gewoon mee weg. En ze hebben altijd zo’n trainingspak aan, dus dan kan je niet precies zien wie het is.” -Participant 61 (Panta Rhei, boy).

“Ik was gewoon aan het voetballen bij DM en toen was er woorden. Iemand tegen mij zei ga naar huis want hij was geschoten. Dus ik ren naar huis, en toen ging ik naar Antares. Toen zag ik die jongens daar, maar ik weet niet wie het zijn. Die zijn allemaal ver weg van hier. En toen gingen wij bij de flats staan, en toen zag ik een jongen gaan spelen met een pistool. En toen kwamen ze naar het voetbalveld en toen kwam de politie. Toen was ik meteen weggegaan.” -Participant 24 (Antares, boy).

A specific group of experiences can be identified within the broader context of feeling unsafe or experiencing threats when playing outside. In conversations with children of all three schools, the topic of being followed by strangers was brought up. These experiences were in almost all cases shared by girls, with one exception of a story from a boy. The girls expressed feeling threatened and scared outside because they felt like a man was following them. In these stories, the girls all shared that they tried to escape by running away through small streets and alleys, which eventually caused the man to lose track of them. Even though the stories had a positive end (i.e. no one was hurt or caught), the mere experience of them gave the girls a feeling of unsafety. According to the data, this phenomenon is not bound to a single area or neighborhood in Tilburg. The fact that the stories came up in all conversations indicates that this can happen anywhere. Below, (parts of) two of these stories are shared. In total 11 cases could be found in the data.

“Ik voel me niet veilig. Heel vaak wanneer ik naar buiten ga, is er altijd dezelfde man die naar mij komt. En dan zegt hij van ‘kun je met mij meekomen naar huis?’. Ik zeg altijd nee, ik zie hem bijna elke dag. Een keer in die gang met allemaal achterdeuren [steegje] moest ik mijn fiets parkeren. Die man was daar aan het lopen, maar hij woont niet in de buurt. Hij keek mij aan echt in mijn ziel. Ik was echt heel bang. Dus nu als ik naar buiten ga, ben

ik altijd bang. Soms als ik naast hem loop dan pak ik mijn telefoon en doe ik alsof ik met iemand aan het bellen ben, maar ik bel dan met niemand.” -Participant 9 (De Sleutel, girl).

“Ik ging zaterdag met een vriendin voetballen. En we hadden dus net gezwommen dus we waren nog in onze bikini’s. En toen gingen we dus naar buiten en daar een beetje spelen in het speeltuintje. Maar toen kwam er dus zo’n man die een kind in zijn hoofd is. En die deed dus heel eng zwaaien naar ons. En toen keek hij naar onze buiken en naar mijn zus haar tenen. En toen renden we weg want wij vonden het echt heel eng. En toen ging hij ons dus achterna lopen. [...] En hij keek me recht in mijn ogen aan, en ik rende keihard naar mijn huis.” -Participant 66 (Panta Rhei, girl).

Based on the data, it could be concluded that for the children participating in this research outdoor play had safe and unsafe aspects to it. The outcomes seemed paradoxical, as they show that children felt safe when playing outside, while, in the same conversations, they also reported stories of men following them, getting involved with the police, or being robbed of clothing items or phones. Additionally, there were stories going around that are not directly experienced by the participants (and therefore confirmed to be true), but that still influenced children’s feelings of safety. This seems to be inevitable and a phenomenon of all times, not specifically bound to age, gender or geographical location. Such a story, or rumour for all we know, went around in the environment of Antares, a part of it can be read below. Note that the story itself was very intense, while the real situation turned out to be much more nuanced and less scary.

“Ik ben in Tilburg een beetje veilig, want vaak in de nacht [avond] als ik met iemand van groep 7 praat, dan zegt hij zo ‘mijn vrienden zijn gekidnapt’. En dan denk ik zo, waarom moet je het eigenlijk zeggen? Want nu ben ik bang door jou dat ik word gekidnapt. Maar eigenlijk gingen die dan naar die andere kinds zn moeders huis.” -Participant 29 (Antares, boy).

5.2 Social inclusion vs exclusion

Two other themes that arose from the data are social inclusion and social exclusion. According to research by Burkholder and colleagues (2020), everyone experiences this in their lives. Part

of growing up, children learn to evaluate different forms of inclusion and exclusion as fair (based on skills for example) or unfair (discriminatory). In childhood, social inclusion and exclusion often take place in child-centered activities such as games, birthday parties. Outdoor play, in this regard, may also be seen as a child-centered activity where patterns of inclusion and exclusion can be found.

Similar to the previous themes, there was also an interesting tension between these topics, which gave a nuanced and raw impression of the contrasting experiences children had when playing outside.

For almost all children, outdoor play was something they do not do alone. Playing company varies from friends, which was mentioned most, to family members and to children who are not friends but rather neighbours. Playing with family often referred to siblings or cousins. In particular this last category was only mentioned in the conversations with children attending either De Sleutel or Antares, indicating that children attending Panta Rhei never or rarely played with their cousins. There might be a cultural element at play here. However, no specific answers supporting or rejecting this guess were found in the data, so it remains a guess.

“Ik ga best wel vaak naar mijn neefjes toe, want zij wonen heel dicht bij mij. De vorige keer ging ik met zijn burens en mijn neefje naar de speeltuin waar hun wonen en daar spelen.” - Participant 20 (De Sleutel, girl).

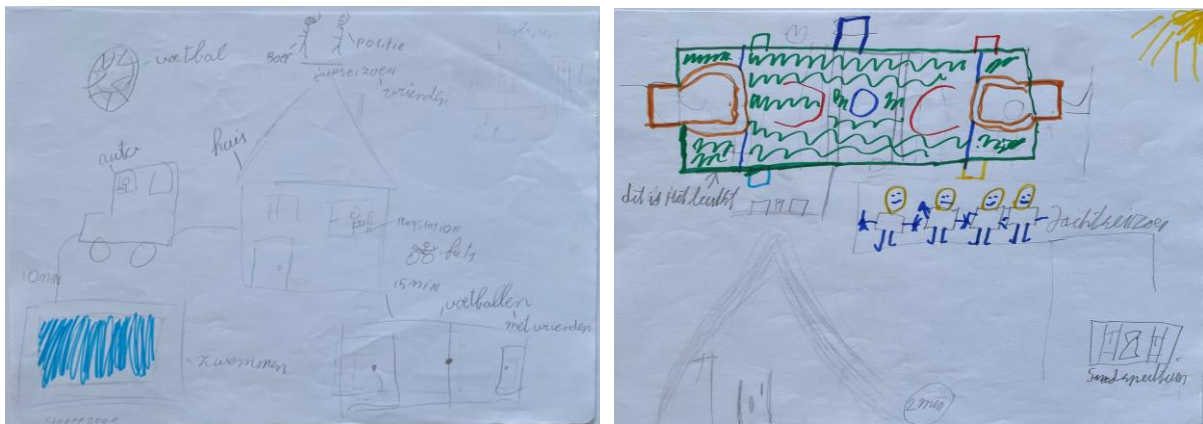
From the 33 times that the participants mentioned playing with friends, the majority referred to friends from the same gender. In other words, girls played with other girls and boys played with other boys.

What activities are then done when playing outside also seemed to have a gendered element, of course with exceptions. Perhaps unexpectedly, a lot of boys played football with other boys when they played outside. Even though boys sometimes also mentioned other activities, such as playing basketball or swinging, football seemed to be the most important for the majority. Girls, on the other hand, reported a much more diverse scale of activities that they like to do outside, such as playing hockey, chatting, walking around, hobby horsing, inventing an own secret language, and dancing (TikTok inspired).

However, there was one example of an activity that stood out that boys and girls seemed to do *together* - in a mixed composition. This activity is called *Jachtseizoen* and was

popular among the children attending Panta Rhei - at least 6 children mentioned it in the conversations. Originally based on a YouTube series, participants explained that Jachtseizoen is a game where children are divided into two teams and play tag (very simplified version). On map 52 (left) and map 57 (right), Jachtseizoen can be identified. The unique ability of the game to attract both girls and boys and to let them play together was also noticed by parents from Panta Rhei.

“De laatste tijd spelen ze vaak in Jeruzalem, met dat jachtseizoen. Dan komen ze allemaal samen. Dat is grappig, dan treffen ze elkaar. Mijn dochter heeft nooit echt afgesproken met de jongens uit de klas, maar sinds dit jaar zie je dat ze toch weer meer samenkomen ofzo.” - Parent 5 (Panta Rhei)



Opposed to the outdoor play experiences with friends or family, there were a few cases where children expressed to prefer playing alone. Different reasons for this preference were given, such as finding it annoying that everyone wants to do something else, just liking it better to be alone, or friends not being available.

Whereas the group of children that preferred to play alone does so because they *want to*, the data also revealed stories of children who were more or less *forced* to play alone because they felt socially excluded. Even though these experiences came from a very small group - they are exceptions - they are still worth mentioning because of the contrast they formed with the idea that outdoor play is always a fun experience shared with peers. For example, Participant 13 below explained a situation in which she felt left out.

“Dat er naar mij vies wordt gekeken en naar anderen wordt gelachen. Dan voel ik gewoon een beetje net alsof ik iets fout doe, maar dan weet ik niet wat. Soms heb ik eigenlijk niet zo veel zin in hun, of dat ik dan eigenlijk met andere kinderen wil buitenspelen. Als ik al met hun buiten ben dan zeg ik gewoon als smoesje dat ik naar huis moet ofzo. En als ik thuis ben en ze vragen of ik naar buiten mag, dan zeg ik gewoon 'nee, het mag niet'. Maar eigenlijk heb ik dan geen zin, snap je?” -Participant 13 (De Sleutel, girl)

This example shows a difficult situation in which some children found themselves at times when they were playing outside. The solution that Participant 13 came up with, finding an excuse to go or stay home, was a way of coping with the feeling of being laughed at. A bigger group of children did not experience social exclusion at such a scale, but still has some experiences with disagreements and sometimes even physical violence when playing outside. Indeed, playing outside sometimes also contained elements of (small) fights or bullying behavior. In some cases, this also led to children becoming emotional (eg. crying), but not all participants shared such a reaction. This could mean they either did not feel those emotions, or they did not feel like sharing it in a group setting where the conversation is recorded. Moreover, in the story by Participant 22, it seemed like she and her friend were the ones provoking, which indicates that it is not always ‘the other child’ that causes trouble.

“Soms wordt het ook echt harde ruzie. Want soms zien verschillende teams dat ze heel stoer en goed zijn, maar de teams die een beetje slechter zijn staan 5-1 voor. Dan worden ze jaloers en beginnen ze ruzie te maken, schelden, elkaar slaan.” -Participant 31 (Antares, boy)

“Als ik met mijn vriendin gaan naar buiten, dan gaan we allemaal stoer doen. En dan gaan we niet aan de kinderen kabelbaan geven. Hun zijn altijd pussy.” -Participant 22 (Antares, girl)

That playing outside does not always go peacefully is also something that some parents expressed to be concerned about. For one parent, it seemed to be a reason why her children were not allowed to play outside without supervision from a grown-up.

“Kinderen zeggen vieze woorden, dus door anderen ben ik voorzichtiger. Het gaat er ook om dat andere kinderen elkaar slaan.” -Parent 2 (De Sleutel)

In terms of social inclusion and -exclusion, the majority of children did not mention to feel excluded. However, the ones that did report such an experience pose a stark contrast to the idea that playing outside is always fun and positive - which was the initial response from almost all children. In this sense, the follow-up group conversations gave insight into a perhaps deeper layer of their experience, one that seemed harder to visualize on paper but that nevertheless still impacted their outdoor play experiences.

Additionally, the data seemed to reveal that the social aspect of outdoor play is arguably more important than the physical space itself. In other words, the space is important but even more so are the relations within the space: who is around? In the end, the children named a diverse set of playgrounds and informal play spaces but the experience was shaped *most* by the company they have. Participant 28 confirmed this in a way, when she stated that she does not play outside when she lives at her father’s because she does not have friends there.

“Ik heb mijn huis getekend omdat ik nooit bij mijn vader naar buiten ga. Maar wel bij mijn moeder omdat ik daar veel meer vrienden heb dan bij mijn vader. Zo, dat is het enige wat ik had.” - Participant 28 (Antares, girl).

“Heel vaak ben ik binnen eigenlijk, vroeger vond ik buitenspelen niet zo leuk. Maar sinds een maand ga ik vaker naar buiten met participant 10 omdat zij graag naar buiten wil. Daarvoor ging ik nauwelijks naar buiten.” -Participant 9 (De Sleutel, girl)

5.3 Independence vs parental supervision

Another pair of contrasting themes that formed an interesting lens to view the data from is independence versus parental supervision. According to the definition used throughout this thesis, outdoor play is unsupervised (Loebach et al., 2021). The authors explained that, especially in Western cultures, children are increasingly expected to use the time after school with organized, supervised activities. Only one case in the data could be identified that

supported this claim, which was shared by Parent 1. The remainder of the children or parents did not mention being ‘too busy scheduled’ to play outside. A possible explanation for this could lay in the culturally diverse sample, which had a large proportion of children growing up with a non-western culture. So, the highlighted example confirms the aforementioned finding from literature. However, because the majority of the participants do not share this, it seems to be an exception rather than a solid finding from this research.

“Op dinsdag en donderdag heeft mijn zoon kickboksen, op woensdag voetbal en op vrijdag zwemmen. Tussendoor kan hij buitenspelen.” - Parent 1 (De Sleutel)

During the conversations with both children and parents, it became clear that a substantial group of children played outside with, rather than without, supervision from their parents. For example, participant 17 explained that she can only play as far as she could be supervised by her parents. This is in line with research by Lambert and colleagues (2019) about independent mobility. Moreover, in some cases there seemed to be a gendered element when it comes to supervision and rules made with parents about outdoor play. For example, participant 20 shared that her brother had different agreements with their parents.

“Ik mag alleen maar waar mijn moeder me kan zien. Het parkje voor ons haar kan ik gewoon naar toe. En dan kunnen wij ook gewoon daar in de gaten gehouden worden.” -Participant 17 (De Sleutel, girl).

“Ik en mijn zus hebben wel dezelfde regels, maar mijn broer niet. Hij mag alleen naar de speeltijd gaan, maar ik mag dat niet. Mijn zusje mag dat ook niet. Hij moet wel zijn telefoon bij zich houden om mama te bellen, hij is met zijn vrienden.” -Participant 20 (De Sleutel, girl).

Also from a parental perspective, in both the conversation held at De Sleutel and Panta Rhei, gender differences played a role in the degree to which parents felt they had to supervise their children.

“Bij mijn straat is een speeltuin, maar daar mag mijn dochter niet alleen naar toe. Meisje is toch anders dan jongens.” -Parent 4 (De Sleutel)

“Ik denk, zeker in het geval van meiden, dat ik natuurlijk wel altijd een soort van bezorgd blijf of het allemaal goed gaat. Bijvoorbeeld bij het Stuivesantplein, dan ben ik toch nooit helemaal gerust dat het goed komt.” -Parent 5 (Panta Rhei)

The data revealed that children navigated between the rules and boundaries set by their parents, but also grew up and became increasingly independent. In some cases, this led to a conflict. In these situations, children surpassed the boundaries of the area they are allowed to play and decided to play somewhere else. For some parents, this was a reason to punish their child. Other parents explained that they discussed the situation together with their child, but did not imply restrictions. Related to this is also the research by Gill (2021), who discusses the distance children are allowed to roam around. The area where children are allowed to play is shrinking. This could also be found in the data, coded as ‘playing close to home’ and mentioned in 8 out of 10 conversations (both children and parents). Participant 18 mentioned that she is only allowed to play in front of her house during the week, on weekends she was allowed to go to playgrounds with her cousin. For Participants 66 and 67, playing distance shrunk as the day progressed.

“Ik woon heel dicht bij het Stuijfe [Stuivesantplein], en na zes uur mogen we alleen maar voor bij ons spelen. En niet verder.” -Participant 67 (Panta Rhei, girl)

“Ik heb ook regels. Als het wat donkerder wordt, dan moeten we naar huis. En dan doen we ook bijvoorbeeld je mag tot het veldje ofzo. Niet verder.” -Participant 66 (Panta Rhei, girl)

Another example showcased a different form of crossing a boundary set by parents, namely one relating to hygiene. Parent 4 explained that her daughter came home very dirty, and because of that she was not allowed to play with sidewalk chalk anymore.

“Meestal gaan mijn kinderen skeeleren, fietsen of stoepkrijten. Ofja, laatst was ik boos omdat ze helemaal onder de stoepkrijt zat. Haar hele gezicht was wit, ik zei ‘je lijkt wel een spook’. Dat gaan we dus nooit meer doen.” -Parent 4 (De Sleutel)

Despite the above mentioned rules and boundaries between which children have to navigate, a lot of data also highlighted some aspects of outdoor play that could be grouped as becoming more independent. By discovering new things and dealing with unexpected or difficult situations, children practiced independence and developed themselves. This is in line with the research by Dodd and colleagues (2022), who described the cognitive social development that outdoor play can stimulate. Parent 1 explained that her children are curious, and Participant 17 described that she likes to play in the woods because there are a lot of things to discover.

An interesting contrast to the tendency to supervise children could be found in a response from Parent 6, who described that she regards it positive that her children were unsupervised when playing outside. For her, this gave an additional dimension to the conversations she has with her children during dinner. Additionally, Parent 5 mentioned the social element of playing outside, which she reflected to be especially important these days. She also mentioned an increase in resilience, which is in line with the article by Malone (2007).

“Doordat ze zelf dingen meemaken zonder ons [ouders] erbij, kom je vaak weer tijdens het eten aan tafel tot hele mooie of leuke gesprekken. Omdat je er ook niet meer met je neus bovenop zit als ouder. Laatst ging mijn jongste flessen ophalen, want dan wilden ze iets leuks van het geld kopen. [...] Toen had iemand gevraagd, kom maar mee door het huis naar binnen, en toen hadden ze dus toch gezegd ‘nee, nee, we wachten hier wel’. Dus dat is echt wel verstandig. Ja, ze kunnen dat ook alleen maar leren door het te doen en te ondervinden, hè.” -Parent 6 (Panta Rhei)

“Wij speelden vroeger altijd op straat, nu woon ik in de binnenstad waar je lastiger op straat kan spelen. Ik moest daar ik het begin als ouder wel doorheen om dan ook los te laten, je kind te laten gaan. En nu zie ik dat ze er heel veel van leert. Ook sociaal, maar ook inderdaad in de zelfredzaamheid. Wat hier natuurlijk nodig is. Zeker in deze tijd. -Parent 5 (Panta Rhei)

In a similar vein, children's stories also revealed ways of coping with unexpected situations. The solutions they came up with might very well be different from what their parents would advise them to do, yet the mere fact that they had to deal with the situation by themselves taught them unique skills. For example, the way Participant 61 described he and his friends dealt with an 'annoying' neighbour.

"[...] En belletje lellen. Bij nummer zes. Dat is Pruim. Die is een beetje gemeen. En daar [in zijn voortuin] staan zo steentjes, en als de voetbal dan tegen een van die steentjes komt, dat kan die makkelijk hebben, dan komt hij zo door dat gordijn en gaat hij heel boos naar buiten kijken. En een keer had hij zelfs de bal afgepakt. Maarja, hij had een plantenpot staan, en wij waren met jongens van 16 ofzo, en toen hebben we die plantenpot gepakt." -Participant 61 (Panta Rhei, boy)

In short, there is an interesting relation between on the one hand the experiences where children are supervised and restricted to a set area to play, and on the other hand the benefits that arose from stories where children were unsupervised and could practice their independence.

5.4 Materialities influencing outdoor play

Apart from the three patterns found in the data that are described above, a final category can be distinguished, which consists of various experiences that all involve a materiality influencing outdoor play in a way. Even though the theoretical framework does not involve the influence of certain materialities, the data shows that these do have some influence on outdoor play experiences.



Even though these experiences are not mentioned by a large part of the sample, the mere fact that they provide new insights into the outdoor experiences make them worth mentioning. For example, two girls mentioned fatbikes in the context of outdoor play. Participant 67 explains that the fatbike plays a role in her social outdoor life, because she often fatbikes through the city (i.e. as an outdoor play activity). Participant 12 does not have a fatbike, but argues that she would play outside more if she would get one. Note that for this participant, the materiality of a fatbike also influences mobility and distance opportunities, which provides an interesting addition to the research by Gill (2021) on the right to roam around.

“Ik heb een fatbike en daar rij ik best vaak op. En dat doe ik dan ook met een vriendin, want zij heeft er ook eentje. En dan gaan we gewoon over de Piushaven brug, daar gaan we gewoon in een klein [laag] standje fietsen. Standje drie is 25 kilometer per uur. Ik heb geen helm, want er is nog geen helmplicht. Het is gewoon leuk, want ik hou best wel van snelheid. En omdat het nu ook warm is, kan je ook een beetje de wind voelen.” -Participant 67 (Panta Rhei, girl).

“Als ik een fatbike krijg, dan zou ik meer buiten zijn. Want dan kan ik gewoon met vriendinnen ofzo gewoon een beetje rijden. Bij een normale fiets moet je heel veel moeite in stoppen, het is gewoon saai. En je kan ook verder weggaan met een fatbike.” -Participant 12 (De Sleutel, girl).

From a parental perspective, an interesting response with a material dimension is given by Parent 4. She describes the added value of a small bench in the playground, which happens to be removed recently. Perhaps even more directly related to *children's* outdoor play opportunities in her opinion, is a fence around the playground. Because also this element was removed from the playground, the parent explains that her young children are not allowed to play alone anymore. Connecting this argument to the work of Cele (2006), who views the fenced playgrounds as a simplification of children's lived experiences, there seems to be an interesting contrast. For the parent, the fence gives the playground a sense of security, while, according to the literature, this fence might restrict children's playful exploration. This

juxtaposition shows that from different viewpoints, the same object can be seen as either stimulating or restricting outdoor play.

“Eerst zat er een hek om de speeltuin, nu is dat hek weg en kunnen kleine kinderen er niet meer veilig spelen. Mijn nichtje van twee stak daar zomaar de weg over, die mag dus niet meer alleen naar buiten. Een speeltuin moet veilig zijn.” -Parent 4 (De Sleutel)

5.5 Notable elements

The data also revealed two other topics that are worth mentioning but that cannot be classified under the four bigger themes discussed above.

Firstly, when children discussed their outdoor play experiences, a surprisingly often mentioned element in their answers was dogs. For some reason, dogs seemed to make an impression on children, often in a rather negative way. Even though not consciously focussed on, the topic arose in 5 out of 8 conversations with children, spread across all three participating primary schools. In multiple stories, dogs were perceived as intimidating and scary, sometimes even chasing the children in the public space. The children that mentioned dogs in their stories sometimes also referred to their owner, who did not always use a leash when walking with their dog in public spaces where children were present. Because multiple children mentioned that they found it scary, it seems like dogs make the space less safe in these situations. This presumption was also based on the fact that the police were also mentioned in some of these stories. One anecdote about an outdoor play experience where dogs play a role was shared by participant 18.

“Ik ging zo bij de Verdiplein, bij zo ’n hele groot schip, gingen we daar spelen. En toen was er zo ’n mens gekomen, en hij had zo ’n honden mee. Eentje met touw, en eentje was zo los. En toen gingen ze allemaal ruzie maken met die vrouw, omdat er heel veel kleine kinderen waren. Toen dachten ze dat die hond heel wild was en dat ze hier ging bijten. Toen gingen ze allemaal schreeuwen tegen die hond, gingen ze allemaal politie bellen.” -Participant 18 (De Sleutel, girl).

A second remarkable topic that arose from the data relates to the times that children mentioned to sometimes play outside. One can assume beyond reasonable doubt that most children play outside during daytime after school or on the weekends. In most cases, this is confirmed in the data. Children mentioned that they have agreements with their parents about what time they need to go home, and they did not go outside after 21:00.

However, unexpectedly, the data also contained several stories from children who spent time outdoors during nighttime. These stories did not refer to outdoor play right after dinner. Rather, the children described being outside around midnight, and sometimes even later than that. All participants that mentioned to be outside at night did say they were accompanied by someone, such as a friend or cousin. Moreover, it seemed that it was more an exception than a weekly habit. Participant 13 mentioned in her answers that, at times, she was outside late at night.

“Als wij gaan logeren, dan gaan we nog rustig om 02:00 uur naar buiten. S’nachts. Met andere mensen.” -Participant 13 (De Sleutel, girl)

The insights derived from the main themes found in the data helped answer the sub-questions that were formulated.

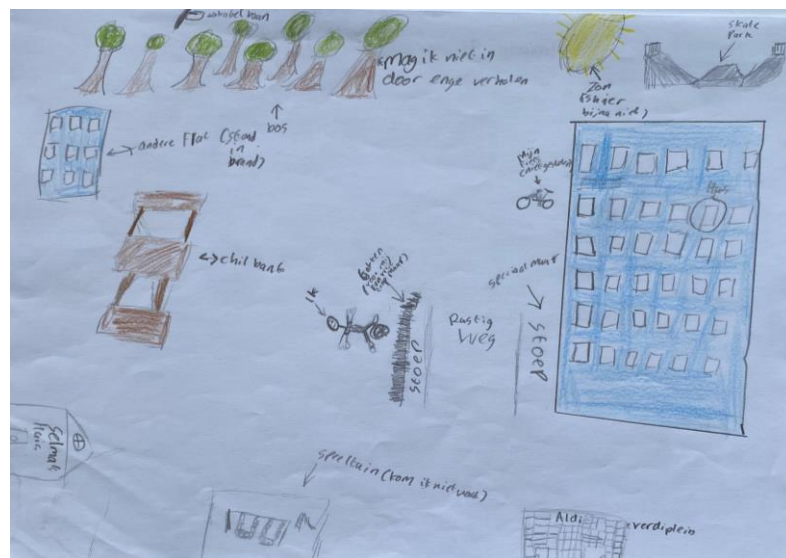
The first sub-question aimed to get insight in how children visualize their outdoor play experiences. The visual data, which are maps and collages, show a wide range of ways to visualize outdoor play. Also, outdoor play has a different meaning to the children, and a different substance is given to it. As mentioned before, the results show that boys often mention playing football when playing outside, whereas girls’s experiences are more diverse. Additionally, a conclusion made with caution can also be made in relation to gender and choice of product. In general, more children chose to visualize their experience by making a mental map (46 in total). However, the minority that *did* choose to make a collage instead was a group consisting of almost all girls (22 in total). Based on the content analysis, some insights into the visualisation of outdoor play experiences can be described.

For example, the element ‘home’ is identified most (39 out of 68 times) on the maps and collages. This could indicate that this is the geographical area around which outdoor play takes place. It could also mean that it forms the starting point from which children start to think

about their environment - this claim is supported by the observation that most children started with drawing their homes after the assignment was explained to them.

The second to first most-drawn element is a football field (32 times), which logically means that this is an important place for children when they play outside. Another reason, however, for the great occurrence of football fields is the fact that there simply *are* a lot of them present in the public spaces in Tilburg.

Another element that often occurs in the visual data is a playground (23 times). Related to research on formal versus informal play spaces, the data from this research goes against the existing literature. Helleman and colleagues (2023) write about the importance of informal play areas, yet almost all participants in this study mainly relate their outdoor play experiences to formal play areas. This is not to say that informal places are not used to play in, but it *does* indicate that it is not the first thing that comes to mind when children are asked to visualize their outdoor play experiences. Of course, there are exceptions, one of which is Participant 7 (see map below), who drew a ‘special wall’ which he always uses to play football with himself - this is a good example of a place that has meaning for him, but that is not designed as an outdoor play area. He also drew a more formal playground, but explicitly mentions that he does not go there often.



To conclude, the content analysis shows a wide range of topics that can be identified in the visualized products that children made about their outdoor play experiences. Some elements occurred in a lot of maps, others were more rare or even only mentioned once. It has to be noted that the content analysis is based on a superficial interpretation of the data, which means that it is likely that some deeper meanings behind the visualized products were not interpreted as such.

The second sub-question was formulated to discover what role parents play in their children's outdoor play experiences. Conversations with both children and parents shine light on this topic, which gives information from two different perspectives. However, the group of parents was a lot smaller than the group of children participating, so the conclusions drawn in this paragraph are not generalizable and need to be considered within this context only.

The data shows that most children are given boundaries by their parents. These boundaries can relate to the physical region in which outdoor play is allowed, but also to the times children are allowed to be outside or the company that is needed to play outside. Where parents determine the conditions under which outdoor play is allowed, children have to navigate within them, even though they do not always obey the rules. There is also a group of children that shares that they do not have any rules with their parents on outdoor play whatsoever and that they can do whatever they want. However, there was not sufficient time in the group conversations to verify or delve deeper into the topic.

When talking about the role that parents play in children's outdoor play experiences, the data also reveals that some parents treat boys differently than girls in terms of boundaries. This is shared by both parents and children, which indicates that the influence on outdoor play also has a gendered element. More specifically, some boys are allowed a greater area to play outside in. However, it cannot be ruled out that age also plays a role in the difference between siblings' play areas.

It can be concluded that the role of parents is, for some children more than others, of influence on the outdoor play opportunities, and therefore also affects the outdoor play *experiences* that are presumably richer when more opportunities are granted. Yet, no children spoke explicitly negative over their parents' control; they seem to accept it for the time being.

The third and last sub-question looked at the role of the physical and social environment in outdoor play experiences. The data shows that in particular the social environment is of great influence on outdoor play experiences. As stated before, it seems to be not so much the physical space in which children play outside that matters, but instead the company they play with that shapes the extent to which children play outside and the quality of their experience. No social environment whatsoever - like the girl who does not have friends near her dad's home - can lead to no outdoor play at all, while a rich social environment provides lots of opportunities to spend time with friends, family and neighbours.

The role of the physical environment is harder to extract from the data, as most children took their environment for granted and are therefore perhaps not able to critically reflect on it in the same way their parents can. However, a theme that did come up in conversations at all three schools was the weather. Most children mentioned that they only play outside when it is sunny (or at least when it is not raining), which is in line with research by Willeboordse and colleagues (2022). Based on the data, weather forms an important facilitating or restricting factor to play outside. Also related to the physical environment are materials. Research finds that natural materials such as grass or branches have a positive effect on outdoor play (Visser & van Aalst, 2021). Contrasting to this finding is the opinion of some participating parents, who express their dislike of wooden play facilities.

“Alles is tegenwoordig ook van hout. Ik vind daar geen moer aan. Daar raken mijn kinderen snel op uitgekeken. Ik zie liever een schommel of een glijbaan, liever wat standaard dingen. Die nieuwe dingen vind ik niks aan.” - Parent 4 (De Sleutel)

This chapter has given insight into the main themes and findings that arose from the data from children and parents. When combined, they give an answer to the main question posed at the beginning of this research, which can be found in the next and final chapter. Additionally, the findings are placed in the bigger academic context of literature about outdoor play experiences, and the reflections and limitations are presented.

6. Towards a deeper understanding of children's experiences - a discussion and conclusion

This study explored the lived outdoor play experiences of children aged 9-12 in Tilburg. Using a creative and participatory research design, combined with focus group conversations leads to new insights into the complex, sometimes paradoxical reality of outdoor play.

In the previous chapter, it became clear that outdoor play is an experience where freedom and restriction, joy and fear, and inclusion and exclusion can coexist. The three sub-questions were reflected upon, which help to answer the main research question in this final chapter of the thesis: *What are the lived outdoor play experiences of children aged 9-12 in Tilburg, and what influence do parents and the environment have on these experiences?*

The findings demonstrate that most children in Tilburg have a positive outdoor play experience. The conversations and content analysis show that some favorite outdoor play activities are football, biking and chatting. Jachtseizoen is popular among the children attending Panta Rhei, but apart from this, no big differences in activities can be detected in the data from the three primary schools participating in this research. The creative exercises confirm a sense of attachment to familiar, more formal outdoor play spaces. The children drew a lot of football fields, playgrounds and parks, and seem to find it harder to visualize more informal play spaces. This could point to a bigger phenomenon where the normative play spaces seem to be the first thing that comes to mind, but this reaches beyond the scope of this study.

The surface impressions of the creative products, however, often contrast with the deeper and more ambivalent narratives that emerged during the focus group discussions. The participants share stories where elements of exclusion, fear and conflict can be detected. Especially the stories of being followed by a stranger, feeling unsafe due to violence or animals support this finding. Girls, more than boys, describe feeling watched and vulnerable. These additional conversations highlight that outdoor play is not just and not always a joyful exercise, but also an activity where risk and uncertainty are actively managed. This is evidence of agency and bravery, which is a dimension of lived experiences from marginalized groups that is often taken away or ignored by literature (Annet, 2025). The outcomes make one wonder whether it is a bad thing that these 'negative' incidents happen. However, in line with research by Dodd and colleagues (2022), it can be argued that these experiences are part of the learning process that is outdoor play and positions children in situations they do not encounter in the protected area inside their homes.

Parental influence on children's lived outdoor play experiences lies mainly in the set boundaries they formulate with their child in terms of how, where and when children play. In this way, parents shape the spatial and social boundaries of their children's outdoor world. In some cases, the boundaries are not neutral. For example, gender plays a role in how freedom is granted or withheld, which is in line with the research by Visser and van Aalst (2021). The data shows that children internalize, accept these boundaries, while at the same improving their adaptive capacities by working around them with a mix of obedience, negotiation and creativity. This last part nuances the findings by Ernst (2017), who stated that parental attitudes strongly influence children's outdoor play behavior. The findings show that some children consciously choose to go beyond the set boundaries by parents and thereby not always simply follow their instructions.

The environment also plays a key role, mostly in a social sense. An empty playground is not inviting to play outside when no peers are around. Similarly, a football field becomes threatening if it is frequently used by intimidating, older teens. The data indicate that outdoor play is to some extent shaped by the place and facilities itself, but even more by the social dynamics within the space. Because of the three different primary schools included in the research, it is interesting to compare whether these environments produce distinctly different outcomes. The answer is more nuanced than a simple yes or no. On the one hand, core themes appear to be consistent across all contexts. This indicates that certain dynamics of outdoor play, the lived experiences, are to some extent shared. Because the scope of this study was limited, no statements and generalizations can be made to a wider context, such as Tilburg as a whole or the Netherlands. On the other hand, the data also shows that the local context *does* matter and *does* influence the lived experiences of individual participants. Often, a reference to a particular playground or area within the neighborhood was made by a large group of participants of each school. For children attending De Sleutel, Wagnerplein, Drieburcht, and the playground of this school are mentioned as local spaces where children play outside. For Antares, the specific locations are the Karen Weening playground, the Cruyff court, and the DM football field. Children attending Panta Rhei often mention Koggeplein, Were Di, and Stuivesantplein. For a lot of children, these locations provide the context in which all their lived outdoor play experiences take place; it would be naive to think they are not of influence at all.

In sum, the lived experiences are shaped by a combination of personal agency, social dynamics, parental norms and neighborhood-specific places. Outdoor play is not a universal

activity, even though some elements arose in all three contexts. Instead, the data shows that it is a situated practice that is inextricably linked to the context in which it unfolds and to the people that are around, which is in line with the literature about experiences by Carlsson (2001). Within the wider academic debate on outdoor play experiences, the findings of this study generally provide an extension of contemporary research on children's geographies. The data clearly show an experiential nuance; outdoor play is neither entirely joyful nor threatening. In most situations, it is both at the same time. This finding nuances in perspectives in literature that only highlight positive aspects of outdoor play and leave out the difficult or negative parts.

Also, the wider academic focus on more formal and informal play spaces is nuanced by the findings. Whereas Hellemand and colleagues (2023) emphasize the importance of informal play areas, the children participating in this study predominantly refer to formal play areas in their visual products. This could mean that formal play spaces, at least in Tilburg, are still the main areas where children play outside. However, as stated in the results chapter, it could also suggest that the formal play spaces are still the default place where children think about, even though they might also use informal spaces in practice.

What seems to be missing in academic literature, or at least the selection of it used in this research, is the influence of material objects (fatbikes for example). Limited research is available on how these objects play a role in shaping children's outdoor play experiences. Some children mentioned a fatbike as a mobility enabler that encourages them to go outside. In a way, this materiality is not a passive backdrop, but an active agent in shaping behaviors and experiences. A combination of an actor-network approach with children's geographies could provide more insights into the materialities influencing outdoor play.

Based on the findings, a revised version of the conceptual model presented in chapter two can be found below. Because the social environment played a bigger role in the experiences from the children in Tilburg, this got a dedicated place, putting the physical environment slightly to the background. Moreover, materialities are also of influence for some children and are therefore added to the model. Note that parents' characteristics are reformulated to boundaries, as this more accurately captures their role in the experiences of the children participating in this research.

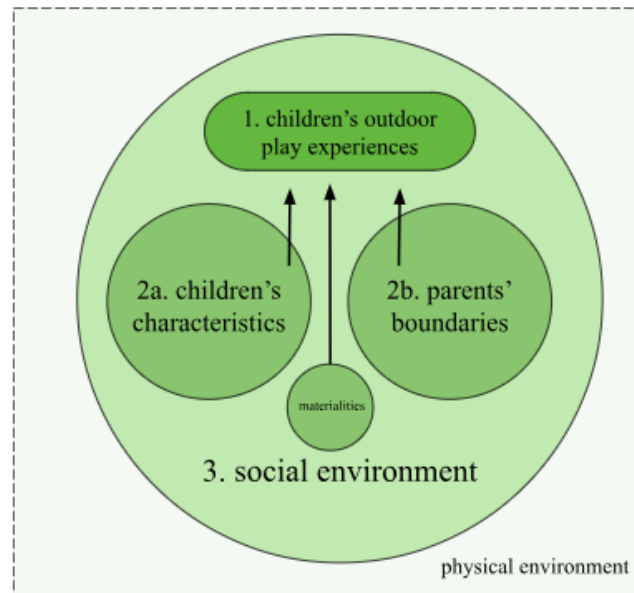


Figure 6.1: Revised conceptual model

While the research can offer valuable insights, it is equally important to reflect on its limitations. The sample of parents included in this research is very small and is therefore not representative of the broader parental population in Tilburg. The findings on parental influences, are therefore also to be interpreted with this in mind, and a cautious disclaimer needs to accompany any statements concerning their influence on outdoor play. Future research should include a larger and more diverse parental sample, enabling a more balanced representation between children and parents.

The findings extend the literature that writes about the importance of putting children's voices central in research (Cele, 2006; Younas, 2021). The data that is the result of children's visual expressions is in itself too superficial but provides a rich opportunity to form the starting point of deeper conversations. In other words, relying too much on visual data might simplify or romanticize children's experiences. Most visual products were legible and could be effectively used in the content analysis; one map was excluded (map 34), which points to the limitation of this method. The narrative method of focus groups, therefore, is found to be an essential part of doing research with this group. This is a methodologically important learning point, which future research could build upon when designing an approach.

Due to time restrictions, as well as due to children's limited concentration time, some conversations felt too short - not all questions could be answered by each individual participant at all times. Because of this, future research may benefit from either a smaller sample or a larger timeframe. Another consideration, in this light, could be to focus on just one age instead of

three, to control for variations due to age and to be able to make a more accurate comparison between different schools and environments.

Additionally, the group setting may have restricted some participants from sharing full experiences and opinions. Some children may thrive in an individual setting, future research could incorporate this lesson in its design. Building on this, a reflection on the current research lies in the experience of one participant becoming emotional (i.e. crying) during the focus groups. Explicit consent was asked multiple times, but such situations seem to always come unexpectedly. This might be prevented in future research when the teacher uses their insights and knowledge of students to estimate who might like to participate and who is able to formulate their opinion and experiences in a proper way.

Another limitation can be found in the analysis of the local context. To which extent does this clearly demarcated area fit the experienced and lived neighbourhood of the children? By using the boundaries provided by the municipality, separating one district from another, there is no justice done to the perhaps wider radius in which children play outside - after all, it would be naive to think that outdoor play stops as soon as a boundary of a neighborhood is reached. Rather, it is a more fluid, flexible activity located in different places (for example depending on where friends live and play outside, or where a nice playground is located). Future research could, therefore, spend more time on carefully selecting a physical context, preferably *after* gathering data from children. This would ensure a better match between the analysis and the data on outdoor play experiences.

Future research could also investigate nighttime outdoor play as this topic is underrepresented in academic literature. It could focus on parental awareness and look at different factors (eg. physical, socio-cultural) that enable or discourage nighttime outdoor activity. Additionally, a comparison between different urban contexts can provide insight into the robustness of the findings from this study, as well as investigate how different urban contexts are of influence on outdoor play experiences.

One of the research aims was to complement previous research on outdoor play, by shedding light on experiences and thereby showing the value and importance of playing outside. The research has given children the opportunity to share their lived outdoor play experiences, aiming to empower them by giving them a voice in the 'adult world' (Cele, 2006). The method results in a vivid presentation where a rich scale of stories, feelings and judgements are shared. This makes outdoor play a situated and relational practice, which is fun most times, but can also contain elements of tension, caution and boundaries. Both realities exist, often side

by side and always within the same person. This reveals the personal, emotional sphere that complements research solely focussing on numbers and statistics. The findings challenge to move beyond notions of outdoor play as inherently positive - the negative elements cannot be ignored and enhance the ability of outdoor play to stimulate development and resilience. Therefore, this research presents a nuanced, complex and above all child-centered understanding of outdoor play.

After all, only when we listen to children's stories can we begin to understand their lived version of the city, which is just as real and worthy as any version from adults in power positions and which should be taken very seriously if we aim to create a livable environment for all.

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Appendices

1. Flyer introducing the research

WAT?
Buitenspelen is gezond, leuk, sociaal en leerzaam – maar het gebeurt steeds minder. Naast de dalende cijfers, is er nog een ontwikkeling die aanleiding geeft tot dit onderzoek; kinderen worden nog niet altijd genoeg gehoord in wetenschappelijk onderzoek! Het uitgangspunt van dit afstudeeronderzoek is om met perspectieven van zowel het **kind** (9 tot 12 jaar oud) als de **ouders** een beter beeld te krijgen van **buitenspeelervaringen**. Hierbij speelt de omgeving (fysiek én sociaal) een belangrijke rol.

WAAR?
Als geboren en (deels) getogen Tilburger lijkt het me leuk om deze stad als uitgangspunt te nemen. **Tilburg** scoort niet altijd hoog op leefbaarheidsmetingen; des te meer reden om te onderzoeken hoe de ervaringen van kinderen de leefbaarheid kunnen vergroten. Door me op twee scholen in Tilburg te richten die allebei in een ander deel van de stad liggen, hoop ik een breed beeld te krijgen en diverse ervaringen te bundelen. Via mijn netwerk kwam ik op jullie school.

HOE?
Ik zou graag een activiteit in de klas (vanaf groep 6) willen organiseren waarbij ik kinderen de opdracht geef om hun buitenspeelervaring **visueel** te maken. De vorm die ze daarbij kiezen laat ik vrij, denk bijvoorbeeld aan een *mental map*, een collage of een tekening. In een tweede bijeenkomst voer ik een **kringgesprek** met alle kinderen over de uitkomsten en vraag ik ze om uit te leggen wat ze hebben gemaakt. In de tijdsplanning hoop ik de creatieve activiteit in week 15 of 16 te doen, en het kringgesprek één lesweek later, in week 16 of 19 (na meivakantie); alles uiteraard in overleg!

Ik zou graag eens langskomen om de mogelijkheden te bespreken en vragen te beantwoorden! Contact opnemen kan via janne.huijgens@ru.nl of op 06-53192432.

2. Interview guide children

Introductie

Ik stel me kort nog een keer voor - dit is de tweede keer dat ik alle kinderen zie. Het doel van het (groeps)gesprek is om een nog beter beeld te krijgen van wat de kinderen ervaren als ze buitenspelen. Er wordt benadrukt dat er geen foute antwoorden zijn en, als iemand zich niet fijn voelt om een vraag te beantwoorden, dat niet hoeft. Ook vertel ik de kinderen dat hun namen niet worden genoemd in het interview, en vraag ik ze toestemming om het geluid van het gesprek op te nemen.

Vragen

- Leg nog eens kort uit wat je hebt gemaakt. Welke dingen zijn er belangrijk voor jou?
Wat zie ik op jouw kaart?
- Kan je een standaard middag omschrijven dat je gaat buitenspelen?
 - Heb je een voorbeeld van een leuk moment?
 - Heb je een voorbeeld van een stom moment?
- Wat zeggen papa en mama over buitenspelen tegen jou? Wat mag jij?

- Mag je alleen buitenspelen? En alleen fietsen naar school of de speeltuin?
- Voel je je veilig buiten? Wanneer wel? Wanneer niet?
- Is er ook een speelplek in de buurt waar geen voorzieningen zijn? Bijvoorbeeld op de hoek van de straat?
- Mis je iets als je gaat buitenspelen?
- Was buitenspelen vorig jaar ook leuk? Deed je toen andere dingen?
- Doe je in het weekend andere dingen dan door de week?
- Wie zie je buiten als je aan het spelen bent?

Einde

Zijn er nog vragen? Of zijn er nog dingen die je graag kwijt zou willen? Ik bedank alle kinderen voor hun deelname en vertel ze dat ze op een later moment nog wat van me horen - als het onderzoek helemaal af is.

3. Interview guide parents

Introduction

Before the interview starts, the researcher introduces herself and her research. The aim of the interview is to get insight into parents' perspectives and ideas on outdoor play for children. There are no right or wrong answers, the goal is to learn about your personal perspectives. All answers will be treated confidentially, which entails that all data will be anonymous and only shared with those involved in the research process. If someone is not comfortable with answering a question for any reason, no answer has to be given. With permission, the interview will be recorded to ensure an accurate transcription and to ensure everything is captured accurately: may I record this conversation?

Questions

- Kan je me iets vertellen over je gezinssamenstelling?
- Hoe zou je een typische middag omschrijven als het gaat om buitenspelen en jouw kinderen?
- Wat betekent buitenspelen voor jou?
- Hoe denk je over buitenspelen (in de opvoeding)? - parenting style achterhalen
- Wat vind je van de buurt waarin je woont qua buitenspeelmogelijkheden?
- Heb je regels met je kind over buitenspelen? Wat zijn die?
- Waar speelt je kind meestal buiten? (Tuin, straat, park, speeltuin, etc?)

- Welke uitdagingen zijn er als het gaat over buitenspelen voor jouw kind? (Veiligheid, tijd, weer, buurt, etc.) Hoe ga je daarmee om?
- Zou je iets willen veranderen aan de buitenspeel kansen van je kind?

End

Are there any questions left unanswered? Any additions that feel relevant to you? Thank the participant(s) for taking time to participate today and for sharing experiences. Inform the participants about the remaining procedure, when they can expect some results and what will be done with their data.

4. Codes

Given that the data was transcribed in Dutch, the codes are formulated in the same language.

Theme	Codes	Frequency mentioned
Activiteit	Rondje lopen	2
	Chillen	4
	Skeeleren	2
	Stokpaard	1
	Eigen taal bedenken	1
	Zandbak	1
	Kabelbaan	1
	Tikkertje spelen	2
	Eendjes voeren	2
	Kletsen	5
	Rennen	1
	Fietsen	1
	Lezen in de hangmat	1
	Tiktok dansjes	1
	Kijken naar de lucht	1
	Basketbal	5
Schommelen	5	
Skaten	1	

	Buskruit	1
	Hockeyen	2
	Belletje lellen	2
	Honkballen	1
	Jachtseizoen	7
	Voetbal	22
Reden om wel buiten te spelen	Invloed van het weer	19
	Om niet te hoeven helpen in huis	1
Reden om niet buiten te spelen	Volle agenda	2
	Liever gamen	4
	Liever thuis	6
Materiële invloeden	Horloge / telefoon / tablet	14
	Fatbike	9
Locatie buitenspelen	Naar de supermarkt	15
	Spelen in de achtertuin	1
	Spelen dichtbij huis	1
	Specifieke locaties in de buurt	24
	Natuur	13
	Leuke speeltoestellen	13
Speelgezelschap	Geen vrienden	1
	Speelt alleen	6
	Speelt met buurkinderen	7
	Speelt met familie	14
	Speelt met vrienden	33
Ouder perspectief	Kind vies	3
	Zorgen andere kinderen	1
	Kinderen loslaten	5
	Mening over buurt	8
Regels	Niet alleen	7
	Tijden van buitenspelen	19
	Afspraken met ouders	26

	Afstand	13
	Niet aan afspraak houden	3
	Gender verschillen	11
	Andere regels jongens	3
Supervisie	Supervisie van ouders	10
	Geen supervisie van ouders	1
Wat mis je?		19
Positief over buitenspelen	Vertrouwen op burens	7
	Veilig	18
	Veel ruimte	1
	Verantwoordelijkheid leren	8
	Dingen ontdekken	4
	Voelt zich vrij	4
Negatieve ervaringen	Oudere kinderen	5
	Buitensluiten	8
	Achtervolgd	11
	Schelden	6
	Onveilig	37
	Intimiderende volwassenen	7
	Rare mensen	7
	Politie	7
	Huilen / ruzie	15
	Honden	10

5. Content analysis

The table below summarizes the identified elements that were found in the visual data (i.e. maps and collages) of children.

Content	Sleutel	Antares	Panta Rhei	Total
Football field	12	10	10	32
Hockey			2	2

Sun	15	4	3	22
Rain	2			2
Snow	1			1
Clouds/ sky	2	4	4	10
Water		4	4	8
Home	17	13	9	39
Friends	6	5	10	21
Swimming pool	6		2	8
Moon	1		1	2
Trees	12	6	8	26
Grass	5	6	2	13
Flowers	5	2	7	14
Shoes	2			2
Friends' home	9	1		10
Wagnerplein	3			3
Grocery store	6	6		12
Basketballfield	6	1	1	8
School	8	6		14
Playground	8	11	4	23
Swing	1	1	1	3
<i>Draaiding</i>		1		1
Sandboxd	1	1		2
Bike	9	4	3	16
Footballclub	5		3	8
<i>Kabelbaan</i>	2			2
Skatepark	2		1	3
Themsself	6	5	2	13

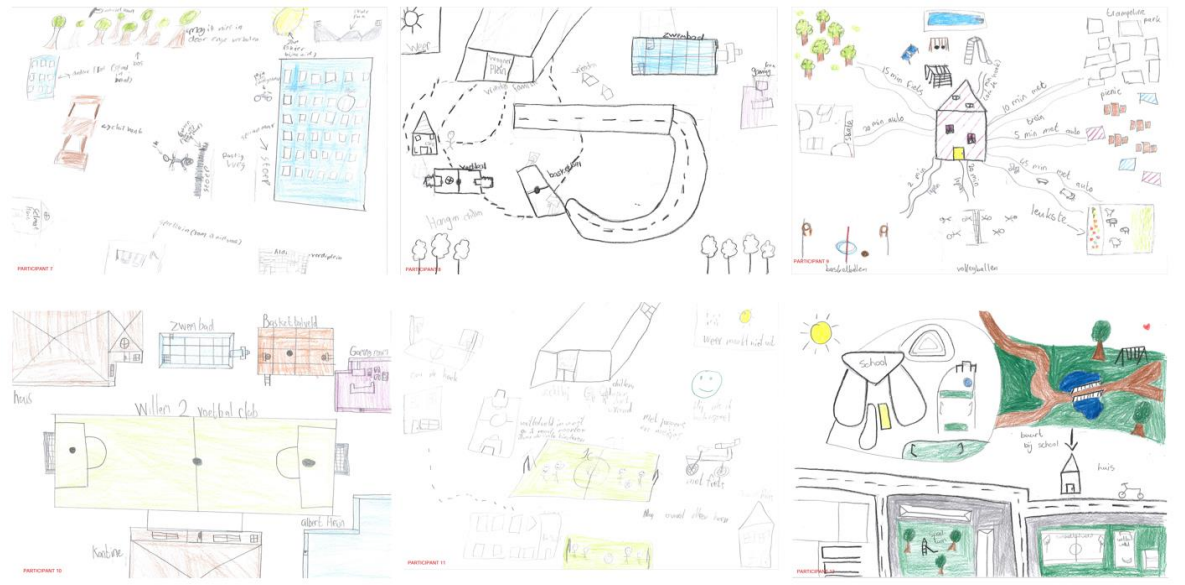
Bench	1	1		2
Treasure map	1			1
Picknick	4		1	5
Animals	4	3	1	8
Volleyball	1			1
Trampoline	1		2	3
Smiley	4	2	2	8
Heart	3		3	6
Car	2	3	3	8
Parking lot	1		3	4
Food/ drinks	1	4	6	11
Text collage		3	6	9
Clothing		1		1
Phone		1		1
Chatting		1		1
Skeelering		1		1
Hobby horse		1		1
E step		1		1
Mosque		1		1
Campfire		1		1
Gaming	1	1	1	3
Hide and seek		1		1
Karen Weening		5		5
Koggeplein			3	3
Bin			1	1
Book			3	3
Boardgame			1	1

Jachtseizoen	3	3
Smile	2	2
Fatbike	1	1

5. All maps/collages



De Sleutel



De Sleutel



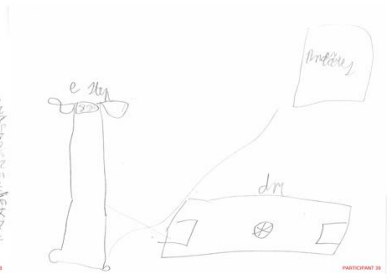
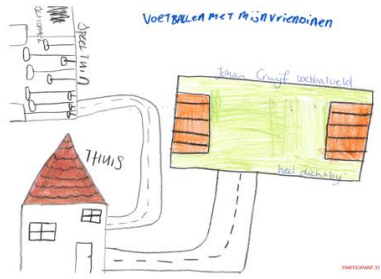
De Sleutel



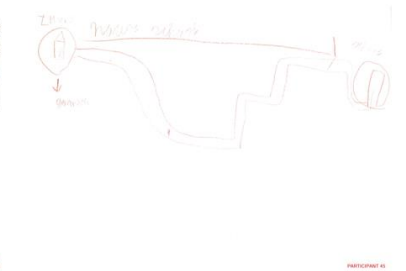
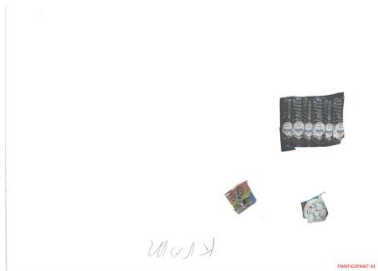
De Sleutel

Antares





Antares



Antares

Panta Rhei



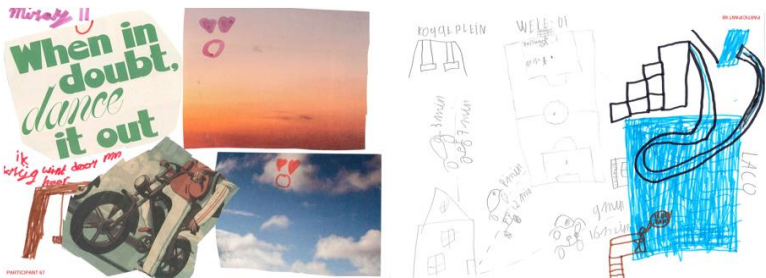
Panta Rhei



Panta Rhei



Panta Rhei



Panta Rhei