BRIDGING DIVERSITIES

THESIS REPORT

AUTHOR: MARYAM BEHPOUR

1

BRIDGING DIVERSITIES is a research and design project about the correlation of social and spatial diversities in an urban public space, the Rembrandt park in Amsterdam. This project brings together the physical diversity of the park with the diversity of its users and questions the compatibility of both.

How diverse is the design of the park? How diverse are the park's users? Which groups are seen more or less in the park? If they are not present in the park, where and how are their social spaces? How can their social spaces be extended to the park?

BRIDGING DIVERSITIES
Thesis Report

Author: Maryam Behpour 4421779

Department of Urbanism
Faculty of Architecture
TU Delft

1st mentor: Maurice Harteveld
2nd mentor: Arie Romein

Contents

Bridging diversities is a research and design project about the correlation of social and spatial diversities in an urban public space: The Rembrandt park in Amsterdam. This project brings together the physical diversity of the park with the diversity of its users and questions the compatibility of both.

The topic of diversities and in particular, socio-cultural diversities, is one of the main debates going on in today's societies. Being a multicultural city, Amsterdam has always been dealing with social issues related to cultural diversities. Besides the presence of different characteristics, public space itself is also presented in different forms, each with its different symbolic meanings.
Within this context and focusing on the socio-spatial perspective of urban public space, this thesis looks at the question of 'How can urban planning and design enhance the socio-spatial affordance of public space in relation to users with diverse backgrounds and expectations?'

By applying experimental and participatory methods, this study illustrates the potential of valid methodologies in further examining people's perception and use of public space and putting such knowledge into designing diverse interactive social spaces.The result of this study, except for the design clues dedicated to the design site, is aimed to provide a helpful insight into the live debate about socio-spatial diversities in public spaces of a diverse city like Amsterdam.

I live in the multicultural city of Amsterdam.
Every day, I see and experience the reflection
of social diversities within the spatial setting
of this city. I see how different people with
different cultural background perceive diverse
urban space and how the city leads them for
diverse kinds of interaction with the city and its
inhabitants.

I know the public space as it is named: a
place for everyone, where people with different
backgrounds get together, interact and learn
from each other.
I am fascinated by the diverse experience that
different groups bring to public space and
how we, as urban designers, can employ this
knowledge as a new input for the design of
public space.
My main intention for this study is to examine
possible methodologies that can help first
translating people's perception and use of public
space into readable maps and further bring more
diversity in the design of public space to bridge
diversities.

I hope my intention helps improving the
knowledge in this area and the coexistence of
different cultural group in diverse urban public
spaces.

Diversity as a general context and socio-cultural diversity specifically, is of the main debates in today's societies. Within multicultural cities, diversity has challenged the design of the city and its public spaces.
Public spaces are crucial as they allow people of different cultures to get together in public space, meet and interact. In this manner diversity goes beyond a social and cultural representation.

In a socially diverse city like Amsterdam, users of public space have various backgrounds and therefore a different meaning of public space and how it should be used. In the city they try to find their perceived public space and if they don't find it, they try to make it in any possible ways.
Consequently, the public spaces are presented in different forms, scales and through different symbolic meanings: some support the perception of different groups whereas others are used by limited users.

My hypothesis is that by understanding the perception and meaning that people bring with them to public space, we can create diversified spaces which support the presence of diverse perceptions and promote social interaction. Within this socio-spatial context,

For this purpose, this project focuses on a city park called the 'Rembrandt park' and its immediate neighborhoods, at the border of Amsterdam New West. The selected area illustrates a good example of a multicultural neighborhood comprising mainly non-western inhabitants
Consequently, the project site provides a unique context for examining the socio-cultural and socio-spatial diversities.

The explorative method selected for this project is composed of the steps: analysis, reading, bridge and design (vision). The experimental and participatory method examines the affordance of public space in relation to the diverse use and the users of public space. Within this context, the final

The challenge of this thesis is to understand the div
use and users for a possible integrated developmen
To the spatial layer for a more diverse but inclusive
To guide the research towards these objectives, the
How urban planning and design can enhance the socio
users with diverse backgrounds and expectations?

design promotes the necessity of having a diverse, flexible and adaptable design due to the diversity of its users and thus the patterns of its use. Likewise, the design proposal allows for bridging diversities, the presence of different groups as well as their social interaction.

1. According to Oxford dictionary, Affordance is an aspect of the environment, especially relating to its potential utility, which can be inferred from visual or other perceptual signals; (more generally) a quality or utility which is readily apparent or available.

verse characteristics of space,
nt of the area. And to add a quality
social space.
e main research question is:
-spatial affordance[1] of public space in relation to

1: Share and development of non-Western immigrants in the Netherlands-2010 (own image)
Data Sc: CBS/www.zorgatlas.nl

During the history of the Netherlands, social diversity-also refereed to as 'multiculturalism'- has been one of the crucial social, political and economical debates; in particular after the Second World War with the arrival of new groups of immigrants.
Post-war immigrants can be divided into three main groups: immigrants from former colonies (such as Indonesia, Suriname and the Dutch Antilles) in the 1950s and 1960s, a second group of immigrants who came to the Netherlands as guest workers (mainly from countries like Italy, Spain, Portugal, Turkey and Morocco), and more recently, refugees and immigrants from various countries (Zorlu & Hartog, 2001).

While the chain migration from Turkey and Morocco has continued, the number of south European immigrants did not grow much and has even experienced a decrease (2001, p.5-7). Eventually, Surinamese, Turks and Moroccans immigrants have become the largest ethnic minorities in the Netherlands.
The immigrants who arrived after the Second World War, as guest workers or from previous colonies, were from the beginning encouraged to preserve their own cultures, even after it became clear that they would permanently stay in the Netherlands ("Ersanilli", 2007).
In this respect, after 1998, the Dutch government has introduced many integration laws in which the cultural belonging and cultural difference are presented as essential. Thereafter, immigrants have been perceived as diverse groups with diverse cultures (2007).
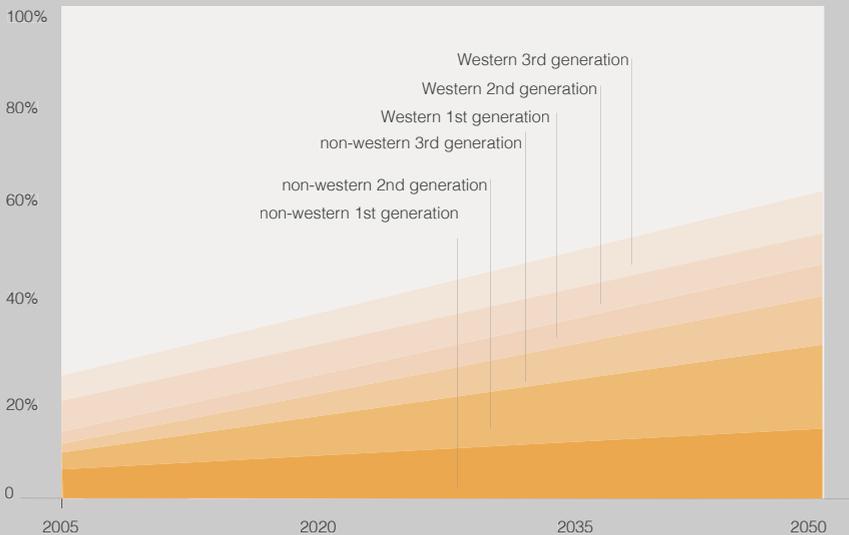
The Netherlands' population currently represents people from different cultures (F2). The immigrant population is distributed across the country but mainly concentrates in large cities, such as Amsterdam (F.1). Amsterdam's population ,consisting of over 50% immigrants, are distributed all over the city but mainly over the A10 city ring. (F.5)

FACTS THAT MATT

NEARLY 17,000,000 INHABITANTS

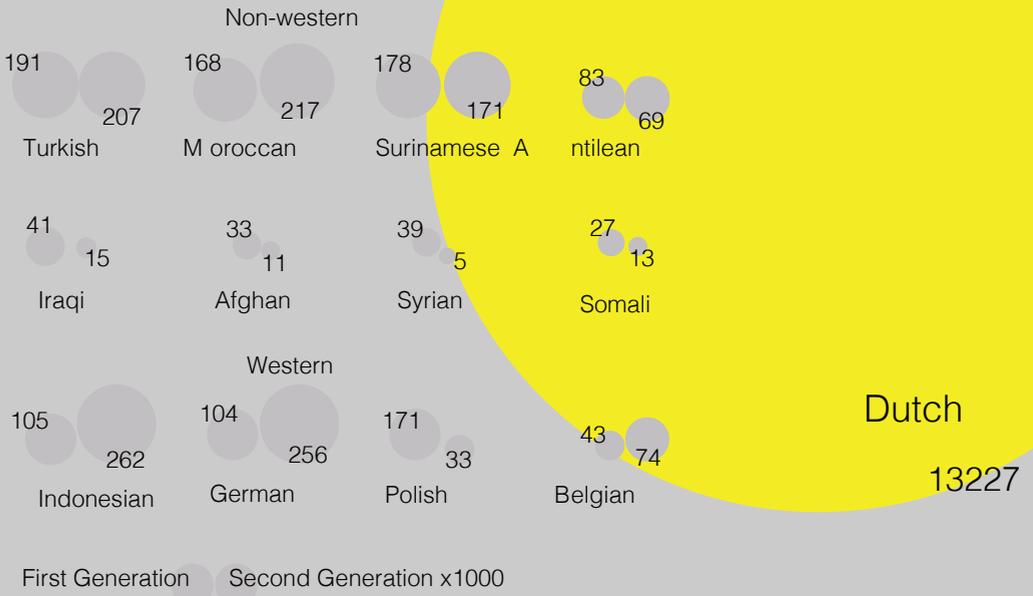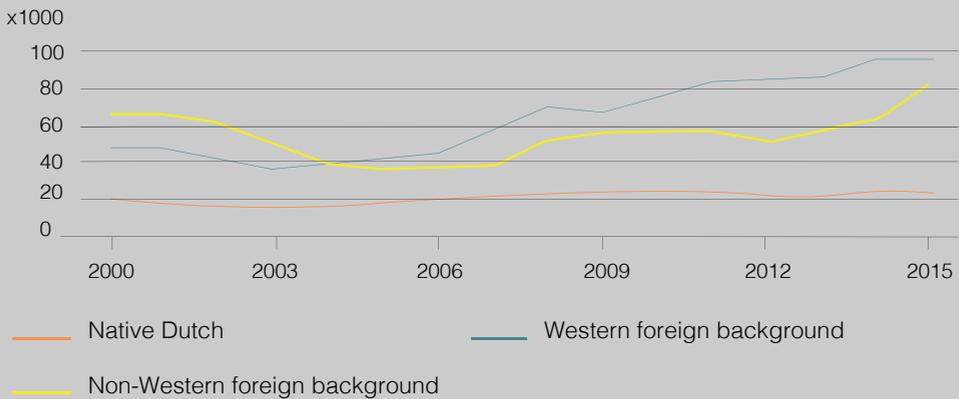OVER 50% IMMIGRANTS

Western 3rd generation
Western 2nd generation
Western 1st generation
non-western 3rd generation

non-western 2nd generation
non-western 1st generation

100%

80%

60%

40%

20%

0

2005   2020   2035   2050

3 Forecasts of the population with a foreign background in the Netherlands.
  (own image) Data sc:CBS

TER

Non-western

191
207
Turkish

168
217
M oroccan

178
171
Surinamese A ntilean

83
69

41
15
Iraqi

33
11
Afghan

39
5
Syrian

27
13
Somali

Western

105
262
Indonesian

104
256
German

171
33
Polish

43
74
Belgian

Dutch

13227

First Generation   Second Generation x1000

2 Largest poulation groups by background-The Netherlands
(own image) Data sc: CBS

4 Share and development of native Dutch and foreign background, in poulation growth,
2000-2015, The Netherlands . (own image) Data sc: CBS

x1000

100					
80					
60					
40					
20					
0					
2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015

——— Native Dutch   ——— Western foreign background

——— Non-Western foreign background

17

10 30 45 60 80

Data/Map Sc: kaarter

Amsterdam's population consists of over 50%
non-western

RHOOD IN AMSTERDAM%

of immigrants, more than 30% of which have a
n background

In Amsterdam,

the increasing issue of immigration and at the same time the distribution pattern of immigrants across the city has shaped parallel societies (F.6). The proof for this can be seen in the way people with different nationalities, even second or third generation, try to establish their own community within a neighborhood where they all speak their own language (Yücesoy,2008).

In this respect, recent studies performed by Ünlü Yücesoy (2008) show that some immigrant groups, mainly of non-western origin, have a strong orientation towards their own ethical group. They tend to have their own societies for different purposes and are rarely seen in mixed social spaces with other cultural groups; even when they share the same space, there seems to be no interaction between them. The tight network and social characteristics of cultural groups has defined new types of public space around the city (Nell & Rath, 2009, p. 23-31).

People who arrived to the city from all over the world have defined new types of public space. In this respect, a recent research (Nell & Rath, 2009) performed across public spaces in Amsterdam shows that the use of public space is influenced by ethnical identity. This is particularly the case in the west side of Amsterdam where many Turks and Moroccans live (2009, p. 31). This way, the influence of different groups has extended beyond being a cultural representation in the city. It has, in fact, reflected on the build environment, its social setting as well as public spaces.

In this thesis, the abovementioned issues are studied within the neighborhood of Amsterdam New West. Amsterdam New West is a post-war neighborhood located across Amsterdam's A10 ring road. This neighborhood has a diverse ethnic population. Further, it covers a large restructuring area in the Netherlands, comprising social rental housing and, as a result, creating also a hotspot for social problems (Metaal, Delnoij, & Jan Willem, 2006, p12-14).

To better understand the issues arising from a social perspective of the city planning and urban design, I have conducted an interview with Helma Hellinga[1] about the history behind the current socio-spatial setting of the area.

Historical inner city
Canal belt
First extensions
Belft20-40
Postwar stamps

6: The focus location with over 30% non-western immigrants in Amsterdam
(own image)
Data Sc: CBS
Mapdata:openstreet map
7 :The focus location   within Amsterdam's Urban typology
(own image)
Data Sc: map.amstrrdam.nl

1. Helma Hellinga is the writer of the book 'onrust in park en stad' which criticized the social dimension of urban planning in Amsterdam new west.

Socio-spatial characteristics of the focus area

In this chapter, the characteristic of the area as the consequence of the post-war situation and the priorities of those days is explained. It reflects on what is presented today in Amsterdam's New West area as well as the hidden social dimension of this area which has been neglected in renewal planning.

Town planning in Amsterdam New West was based on the early modernist ideas and the implementation of the general extension plan (AUP) of 1935 (F.9), generated by the management of 'Cornelis Van Eestern[1]', as well as the influences of Howard's Garden City[2]. The garden city of 'Ebenezer Howard', adapted in Amsterdam after the Second World War, was applied to the discipline of Eestern's general structural plan also with the influences of the functional organization of CIAM.

This way, however, Amsterdam New West had never become an original Garden City, neither the CIAM's functional city. For its survival, Amsterdam New West has gone through different town planning disciplines, not to create a happy city but rather to make room for the post-war city (Hellinga, 2016).

The one crucial aspect of 'Garden City' which is radically different from AUP, is that Howard's ideal city is not merely concerned with the physical aspect of urban planning, rather it is a sociable city with a specific attention to the life of its inhabitants (Body-Gendrot & Carre, 2008). The garden city was planned to be people-sensitive, offering a social-spatial system (2008, p59-62).

In contrast, the AUP entitled a different story: the rough general expansion plan was created to make more room for the increasing population rate in Amsterdam, especially after the Second World War. The general expansion plan was the necessity to facilitate the predicted future which was focused on the basic needs of the growing population and not more.

8

9

10

23

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1. Cornelis Van Eestern (1897-1988) was a Dutch architect and urban planner. The Amsterdam General expansion plan and Lelystad town planning are two his prominent projects.
2. Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928) was a British urban planner and the founder of the 'Garden city concept'. His book 'Garden cities of tomorrow' proposed the idea of affordable housing surrounded by nature.
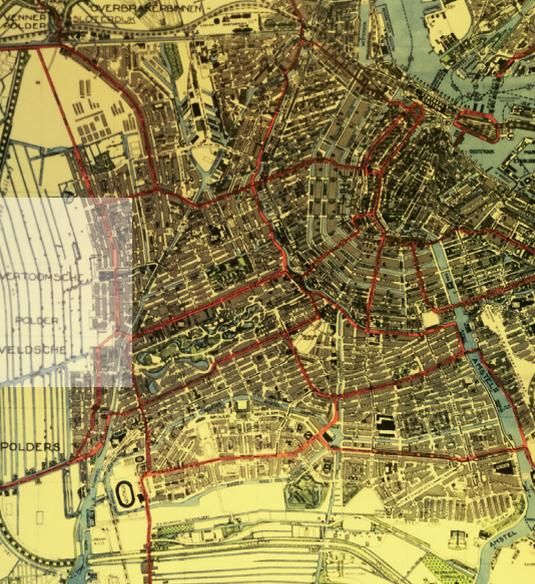
After the Second World War, most of the European cities had to deal with the shortage of housing on the one hand and, on the other hand, the rise in population of the major cities: In the Netherlands these were Rotterdam, Utrecht and Amsterdam. The Germans left the Netherlands with thousands of destroyed and damaged houses and consequently, big waves of migration and immigration to major cities such as Amsterdam.

In such situation, the only solution was to create-better to say "produce"- small tiny dwellings which facilitate the housing demands and are affordable for the working classes of that time. For the described complex condition, the social ambitions had no priority in the city planning and people were considered only as users of the fixed isolated structures of those days.

After the 1960s, with the influences of modernism, urban planners had taken different perspective on what had been missed in the previously applied structures. As a result, within two decades, a large reconstruction plan was adapted in Amsterdam New West. .

The renewal plan although aimed at improving the area by creating bigger houses for families and more space for social contacts, but it led to different problems. It resulted in the alteration of population itself, rather than enhancing their living condition

Hence, shortly after the 1990s, the area had become known as problematic, disadvantageous and, more positively expressed as "the area under attention". Thereafter, the area has experienced different reconstruction plans as well as diverse population.

THE WORLD OF EXPERINECE IS FORGOTTEN

"The town planning of 1950 and two decades after characterized by rigid standardization, the reduction of the number of floor plans and size and a very limited range corresponding to types of families and symbols of social ambitions. The produced apartments were too small and squeezed into an urban layout with an abundance of green space that fostered feeling of insecurity rather than the pleasure of outdoor recreation" (Wagenaar, 2016, p.557-558).

8. VINTAGE MAP AMSTERDAM -1944
9. General expansion plan-Amsterdam 1935
10. VINTAGE MAP AMSTERDAM -1975
SC:PERSONAL COLLECTION
(HELMA HELLINGA, 2016)

The situation, very soon, made it clear that it would not be possible to maintain postwar housing by simply continuing the practices developed for pre-war neighborhoods (Wagenaar, 2016). The main feature was distinguished as mono functionality; they offered housing and very little else (2016, p. 558). Their design qualities proved problematic; the postwar neighborhoods were made up of large buildings, often distributed in large open spaces (p. 558).

The wide endless public spaces had no significant function and thus they were not used often by inhabitants. Very soon, it became obvious that the social dimension of urban development had been missed and should be further explored (Body-Gendrot & Carre, 2008, p60).

"**Very soon, the housing estate discove[r]
not have any substantial influence on s[...]
They found that something was missing [...]
inhabitants**" (Hellinga, 2016).

That time, the problem had been reported to Cornelis van Eestern, designer of the general extension plan to ask for his idea and possible solutions. In reply, Cornelis made it clear that, from his point of view, there is no need to create meeting places. If people want to meet and interact, they will make their own meeting places (Hellinga, 2016). From his experience, social space was not a necessity of the initial urban planning but rather, the result of the accidental social encounters.

From the beginning, there has been no social organization of planning, when you make such a structure, you want to divide people. In short, no social participation (F.16) had been ever expected (Hellinga, 2016).

As a consequence of underestimating the social values, in the current socio-spatial setting people only know each other within the building they live; not even the street. This is the reflection of defensive architecture, closed or very open (undefined) public spaces which lead to these types of isolation (2016).

ERED THAT THE PRESENTED PLAN DID

SOCIAL CONTACT OF INHABITANTS.

; THERE WERE NO MEETING PLACES FOR

SOME OF THE MISTAKES OF THE
MODERNIST URBAN PLANNERS
ARE NOW STILL BEING REPEATED,
BY PAYING LITTLE ATTENTION TO
INHABITANTS AND THEIR USE OF
SPACE (OUDENAMPSEN, 2013).

In Today's Amsterdam New West, people wear
and live in closed urban blocks. They have
social contacts. Meanwhile the built area and
inhabitants, are closed
As it had been mentioned over 30 years ago,
the social use of the space. Todays, inactive
consequence of the lack of p

bring people together in a center or c
walls and defens

Even now, after many reconfigurations of the are
isolated or very open and undefined. The appe
not many improvement in the social life of the inh
city was to create open spaces, freedom and
exhibits fixation in form

different dresses, speaking different languages
a diverse meaning of public spaces also for
open spaces, instead of being diverse as the
and mono functional.
something is missing, the meeting places and
, problematic and isolated New West is the
proper planning in which can.

enters, and create bridges instead of
sive structures.

ea, its public spaces are still inactive, close and
earance of buildings is improving, but there are
habitants. Although the ideas behind the Garden
"a world to experience", in reality the outcome
and the lack of liberty.

11. ISOLATED, CLOSED, DEFESIVE PUBLIC SPACE
   Sc: http://www.earth.google.com

12. REMBRANDTPARK: UNDEFINED OPEN PUBLIC SPACE (own image)

As explained above, the area of Amsterdam New West is a socially diverse area, having been mentioned as problematic with "closed, defensive" or "open, undefined" public spaces. There have been many changes in the appearance of buildings but not that much attention has been paid to the meeting places for inhabitants, which are based on their diverse perception. The area is diverse but its public spaces do not reflect the diversity of its population.

To further analyze the current situation, an area of 1.5 km2 (F.13) is selected. The targeted location consists of the Rembrandt park and its immediate neighborhoods. The final design proposal is mainly focused on the south side of the Rembrandt park.

The main motivation for selecting the park as the main research and design site, except for its potential as a socio-spatial setting, goes back to my first visit of the neighborhood when I was biking from the center of Amsterdam (through Vondel park and Rembrandt) towards the A10 ring road. The city center was busy as usual and also in the Vondel park different people were engaging in different activities. In contrast, the Rembrandt park was silent, with less visitors, less diversity and less activities. This difference struck me and, following

13. Amsterdam new west and the focus location
Map sc: map.amsterdam.nl
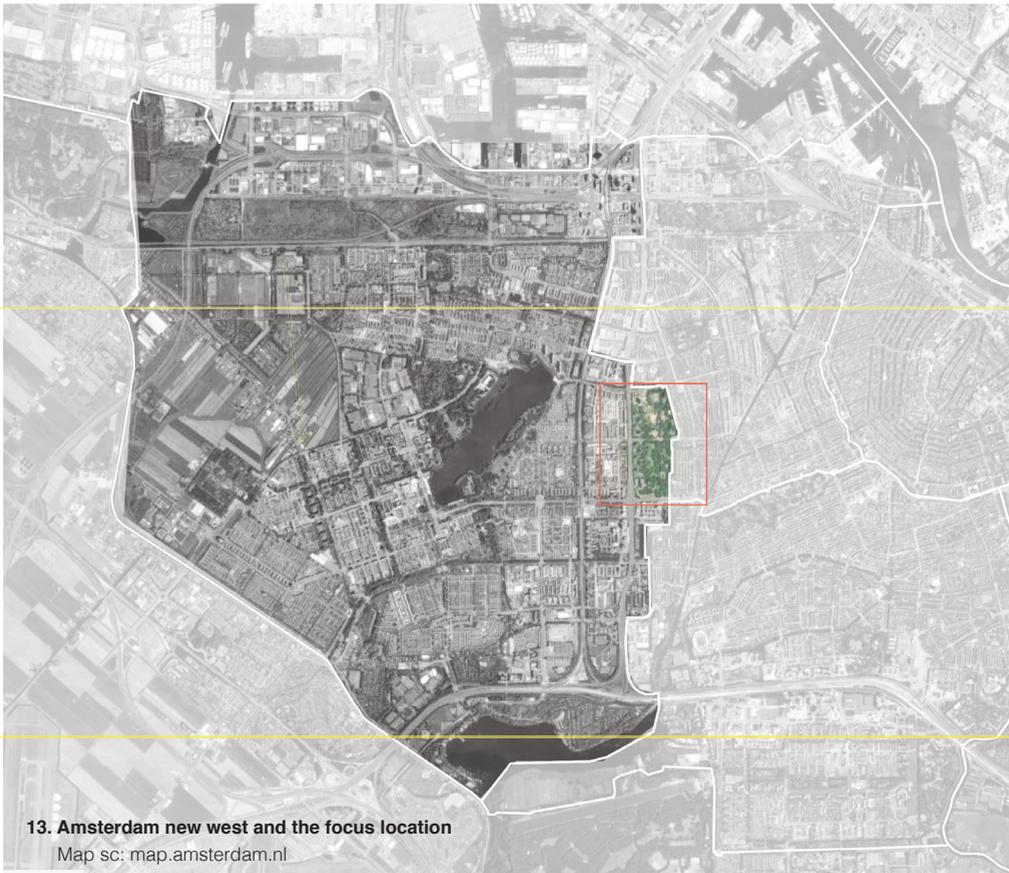
subsequent interviews with inhabitants from this area, I had decided to select the park and the surrounding area of 1.5 km as the main research area for this project. Within the selected area, the Rembrandt park is situated in the middle of "social diversities".
In this way, it is potential to be presented as a center or centers for diverse groups of people living in the surrounding area to meet and interact. However, in practice the Rembrandt park functions in an opposite direction: instead of being connective and interactive, the park distracts the spatial and social flows. The park is surrounded by diversities but does not offer compatible spatial diversities. This is partly due to the level of visual porosity of the park and mainly due to the lack of diversity in the presented spaces and activities (form and function) in the park. Since the park in its current form is not capable to facilitate different activities for different groups, it has not attracted visitors from the wider range of the city.

In addition, there have been some reports issued in relation to the inhabitants perception of the park. As claimed by the report 'Het Grote Groenonderzoek' (2013), the perception of residents about the Rembrandtpark, comparing with other parks, has been reported as below average (F14).

14

14. Image Of parks comparing to Rembrandt
Data sc: Het Grote Groenonderzoek' (2013)

Average image of parks

Image od Rembrandtpark
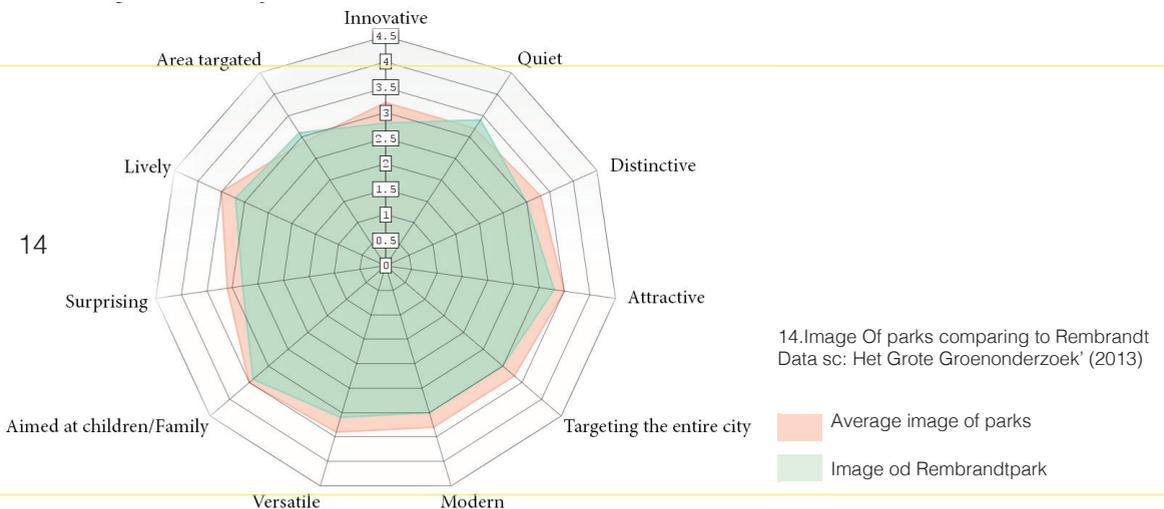
MORE OF SOCIAL DIVERSITIES

The difference in the level of social participation between the east and west side of the focus location
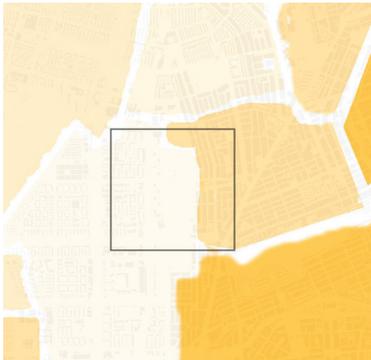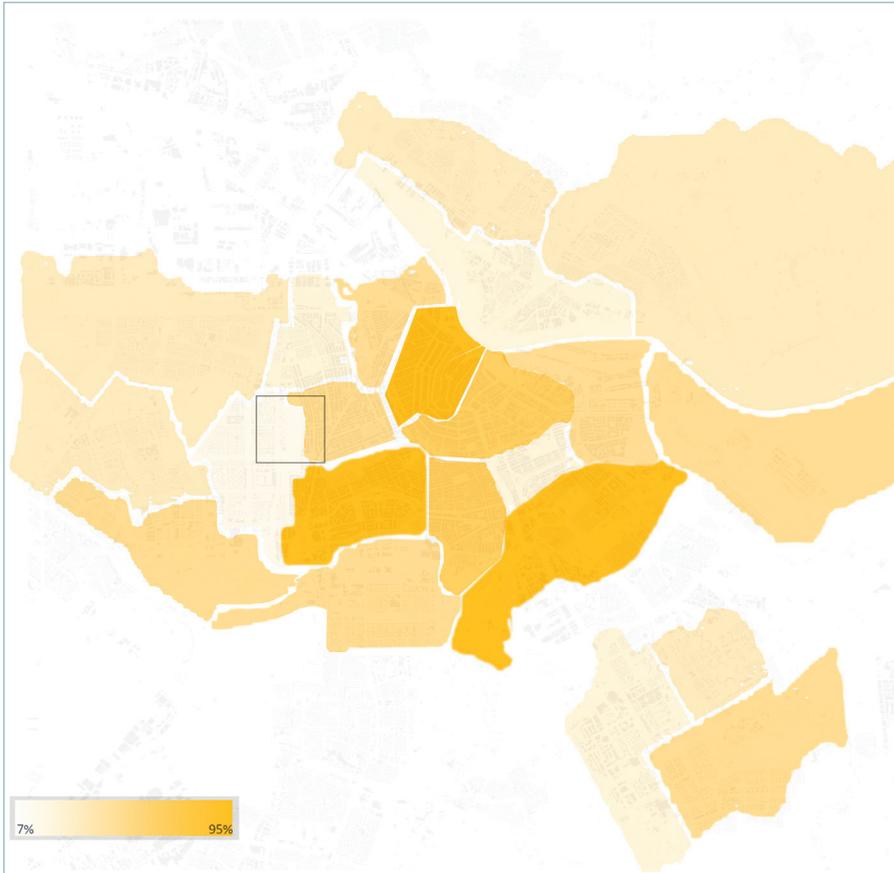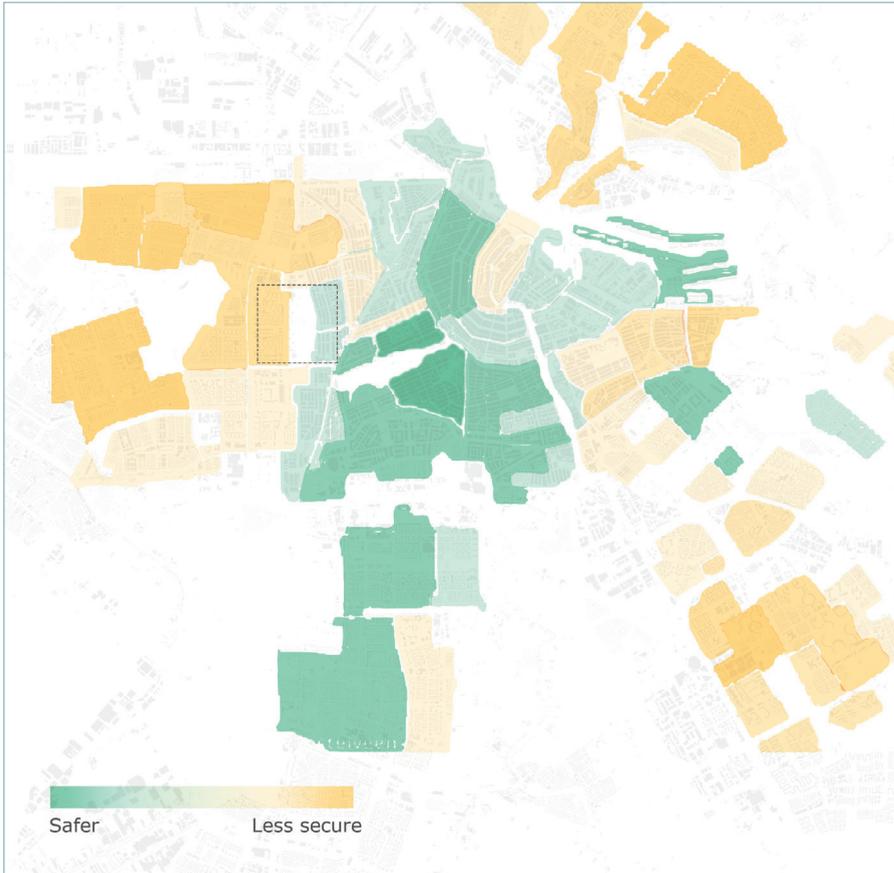
16. Level of participation (%) (Own image)
Sc: Open Street Map

Rembrandt park in the center of diversity

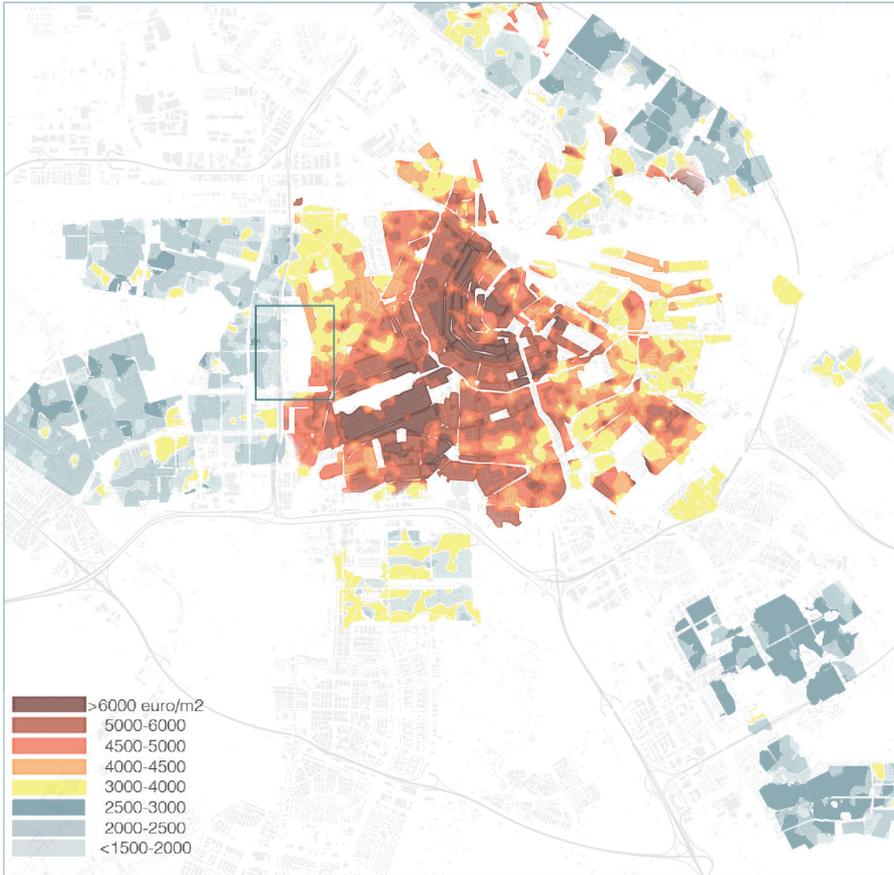The difference in the level of feeling unsafe between the east and west side of the focus location

Safer   Less secure

17. Livability index, feel unsafe, august 2015
(own image) Data source: nul20.nl

Rembrandt park in the center of diversity

The difference in property value between the east and west side of the focus location

Legend:
- >6000 euro/m2
- 5000-6000
- 4500-5000
- 4000-4500
- 3000-4000
- 2500-3000
- 2000-2500
- <1500-2000

18. Property value, data sc: Amsterdammap.nl

The general issue this thesis is dealing with is the diversity in use and users of public space in a multicultural neighborhood. And the main purpose is to enhance the physical condition for the presence of different groups in public space and their interaction.

On one hand, as described previously, the issue of immigration has been increasing. In this way, their influence on public space and simultaneously, the diversity of the meaning and use of public space is also increasing. Respectively, public spaces should be adaptable to serve the new type of transformations thereof as well as the presence of different cultures therein.

The current situation in the research area has offered social spaces, however there is no shared space. This can be due to the shortage of public spaces which have the capability of serving the needs of different groups simultaneously. The Rembrandt park as the main and sometimes the only public space can be improved to facilitate the presence and interaction of different groups.

Meanwhile, **due to the distribution of immigrants in th the presence of different cultures, considering th is significant; the public spaces which facilitate promote cross cultural interaction.**

By focusing on the abovementioned reflected issues regarding the Rembrandt park and its surroundings, I am discussing the design possibilities for the presence of diverse cultural groups in public space and their social interaction. This is why "Bridging Diversities" was selected as the subject for this project.

he research area and consequently
he diverse and inclusive public spaces
the diverse perception of use and

This thesis is based on the assumption that when there is social diversity, public space should reflect such diversity. And people with different cultural backgrounds have a different interpretation of urban public space as well as social interaction. Therefore, design interventions might facilitate public space for the presence and interaction of diverse groups of users. Accordingly, public space needs to be as diverse as its users. For this purpose, the end product of this thesis proposes a diversity in design to answer the current social diversity in the area as well as flexibility and adaptability of its use for supporting a more diverse future of the project site.

The design part of the project consists of:

1. The design proposal for the scale of the south side of the park, facilitating diverse scales of social spaces, activities, programs and thus users.

2. The design of the A10 underpass as the corridor that moves people between the neighborhood and the city park. By extending the existing activities and adding more functions, I want to possibly extend the social boundaries from the neighborhood over the A10 ring road to the park.

3. The focused design intervention for the section of the project area, including the Rembrandt park. This part frames the detailed design ideas including suggestions regarding material, furnitures and plantation for the purpose of framing a diversified public space.

The above mentioned design ideas will be presented as the "Vision" for the project area. Therein, the vision for developing the Rembrandt park and its surrounding areas will be illustrated through maps and visualizations. In overall, the final design deals with the necessity of having diverse, flexible and adaptable spaces due to the diversity of the patterns of its use. This way, the design allows for the presence of different groups and their social interaction in public space.

"Because of different inter-ethnical characteristics, interactions in this area cannot be taken for granted, but require reflection as well as exploration to overcome inter-cultural differences and misunderstandings. In this regard, studies focusing on the relationship between the use of the public space by different migrant groups are crucial"
(Nell &Rath, 2009, p.35-37)

This thesis focuses on the affordances of public space in relation to diverse cultural groups and the issue of cross-cultural interaction within a multicultural society located in the city of Amsterdam. Investigating the issue of diverse social presentations and interactions and how public space can influence this notion is a relevant issue, both from a social and scientific perspective.

First of all, it is necessary to reflect on the social implications of the planning and design of public space in a city like Amsterdam. As a multicultural city, Amsterdam is dealing with social issues related to diversity in culture and consequently social conflicts, which in particular are significant in the studied area of 'Amsterdam New West'. In such conditions, all these issues reflect on the physical environment in which "public space" is the crucial one; in public space, people of different cultures and thus perceptions have the opportunity to meet and interact with each other. Within this context, it is relevant to explore new possibilities by design for examining the physical diversities and its compatibility with the diverse use of public space in a multicultural neighborhood.

Secondly, the perception of people and their symbolic meaning of public space have been less considered in urban design and planning. Having considered the participatory research and design theories, this study examines methods that are communicative to inhabitants and are able to reflect their thoughts and perception on public space. This way, the contribution of this study aims to provide helpful insights to the academic debate on how diverse design of urban elements can contribute to the knowledge of users with different backgrounds.

In this context, there is currently no existing study in Amsterdam New West in which the phenomenon of "diversity of use, place and users" has been directly considered. Previous studies were either concentrated on the improvement of the social condition (such as safety) or the quality of physical setting but rarely the interrelation of both layers simultaneously. Furthermore, the research area is facing a lack of "public space" which limits the possibilities for social interaction. The purpose of this thesis is thus to improve the current condition of the public space via innovative design as well as to bridge diversities by creating inclusive public spaces.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
& METHODOLOGIES

THE SOCIO-SPATIAL PERSPECTIVE

The socio-spatial perspective emphasizes the interaction between infrastructure and society. It further highlights the importance of space to social life, as well as the influence of culture on urban development (Gottdiener et al., 2014). In this respect, many urban planners as well as sociologists have emphasized the interrelation of the social and spatial layers of public space as a crucial phenomenon in creating livable places.

In 1961, in her book "The Death and Life of Great American Cities", Jane Jacobs examined in different ways how cities are used and how they and their people behave in real life. She described social problems as a phenomenon in organized complexity (1992, p.433, 14), referring to the modernist urban planning of the twentieth century. Jacobs questioned the modern urban planning and the way it rejects the city as it rejects its people. She believed that a city is the result of a complex relationship between all elements, including its residents and urban planning should initially respect the right of citizens, rather than simply focusing on architecture.

With a focus on respecting the interplay between humans and space, her investigations were mainly based on observations and the empirical experience of the 'real life' of the city created by its residents. By claiming a "Bottom-Up Community Planning", Jacobs contested the traditional top-down planning approach and its contradiction with the real life of residents. In this context, she also stated that "cities have the capability of providing something for everyone, only because, and only when, they are created by everyone."(1992, p. 238).

It is noteworthy that the concept of users' experience, initially coined by Kevin Lynch (1960), reflects a similar ideology. However, to the contrary, Lynch in his method acted as the third person and let people explain their experience of the city by forming mental maps. As expressed in his book "Image of the city", Lynch (1960) further examined the interrelation of built environments and societal layers in the city. By way of his method, the so-called mental mapping, he studied how the spatial layers can be translated differently to the people's social image of a place. This method has subsequently been used as a tool for reviewing top-down exclusive planning of cities and for creating planning which is inclusive to the needs of different groups of people.

During the same era, other urbanist -such as William Whyte (1980)- expanded the same ideology, although in different manners. William H. Whyte, also known as a "people's watcher", explained the direct mutual relation between the small urban spaces -such as plazas, streets and parks- and the use thereof by different people. By conducting observations, Whyte aimed at empirically document the interrelation of the form and function for different types of open spaces (Neal, 2010). By using his method of direct observation, Whyte presented how different elements in small public spaces are used in different ways by different people. He concluded his explorative research on New York public spaces by stating that "people use the space and urban elements in completely different ways".

Within the abovementioned influences, scholars framing the socio-spatial perspective on public space underlined the social function as being closely connected to the physical form. In overall, cities have been considered as places for people to meet and people are presented as the main contributors in design and design itself as a "problem solving processes" for a better social function of the city.

In the year 2000, by claiming the concept of space and place, Thomas Gieryn introduced a shift from 'space', representing a geometric location, to 'place', representing a location defined by the meaning given by its users. In the same way, many researchers who adopted the socio-spatial perspective considered public space as social place.

The theory of "public space as a third place" was first introduced by Oldenburg (1989), according to whom public spaces are able to serve as so-called 'third places'; the places between the home and the work place (Figure1). He defined 'work place' as a place where people spend more of time during their daily lives and the 'third place' as a place accessible to the general public where people can relax, feel at home and meet others; such as cafes, bars, community centers or even parks (p.22-26).

In this manner, the characterization of the 'third place' is different from other settings in daily life. It is rather a gathering place where people can come and go, where the community is alive and people can be themselves (p.20). In his view, public spaces provide the opportunity for people to interact with known or unknown groups and form bonds with one another as well as the location itself.

In 1989, in his book "The Grate Good Place" Oldenburg introduced some of the characteristics of such "third place": according to him, a "third place" is an "inclusive" place where the needs of different groups are considered, typically characterized as "plain", "playful" and remarkably performing as a "good home" where diverse groups of people have no concerns and can enjoy their surroundings" (1999, p. 20-42).

Accordingly, public space is an informal setting where people from a range of different social groups based on gender, age, ethnicity and social class can meet and interact (Holland et al., 2007).

In this relation, Lefebve (1991), explained public space as a social place containing information driven by different practices but also networks that facilitate information exchange.

The network can be "tangible" as a street or "intangible" as a social network. By the meaning of "network", Lefebvre referred to different ways of social exchange; such as the exchange of values and culture. Being a social place, public space guides people to meet, mix and exchange information with others while having their own values and cultures. Within this scope, public space is particularly appealing for promoting inter-cultural interaction between diverse cultural groups.

As a current study, Dines and Cattell concluded from their research in East London that public space plays a fundamental role in people's attachment to their locality, while at the same time providing opportunities for socializing with others and creating a memory of the place (2006). It is however, important to note that the presence of different characteristics and their way of socializing may center on the different meanings attached to different spaces, or the type of social representations on space (Holland et al., 2007).

The importance of public space as a social place and how it should be designed has been further emphasized by different scholars, in particular in: People Places (Cooper Marcus et al., 1990), Public Space (Carr et al., 1993), The Power of Place (Hayden, 1997), Every Day Urbanism (Crawford et al., 1999).

According to these scholars, public spaces – such as city parks – should fit into the perceptions of different cultural groups, in a way that give their expectations and their meaning of a social place. This way, any public space can be the significance of all the social practices it covers; from individual's interaction with urban elements to the social exchange amongst diverse groups. Respectively, a social place cannot be defined as one single space - it is rather composed of different layers and multiple social spaces.

It is further notable that when social groups diversify, public spaces need to be diverse as well to facilitate the expectation of such groups. Similarly, when social layers are reformed, physical layers should also be reformed and vice versa. In this way, public space has to be adaptable, flexible and varied. (F. 2)

1

2
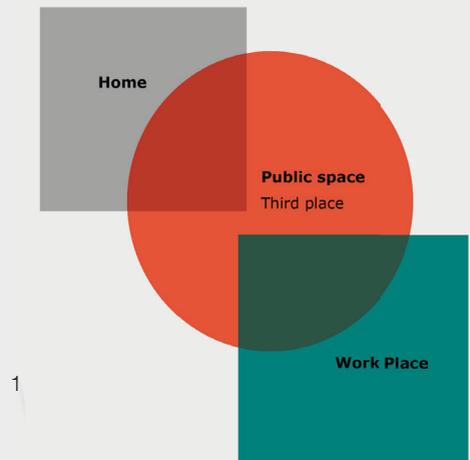
1: Public space as a third space (Own image)
2: Adaptability of social and physical space (Own image)

THE SYMBOLIC SIDE OF URBAN PUBLIC SPACE

People act toward things, including other people, based on the meaning those things have for them. (Blumer, 1969)
Claiming a 'multicultural' city, various groups of people can hold very divergent views about the urban environment they live in, since they each look at it from a different perspective (Nas, 2011).

A group's sense of collective memory is grounded and expressed in a specific set of symbols. The symbolic side of urbanism is constantly formed and reformed, imagined and created in space and time – just one single urban element could already hold very diverse symbolic meanings to different people (Amin, 2008).

The symbolic side of urbanism has been the subject of studies by different researchers, in particular: "Symbolic Interactionism" (Blumer, 1969), "Urban Symbolism" (Nas, 1993), "Urban Symbolism and Rituals" (Jezernik, 1999), and "Hypercity - The Symbolic Side of Urbanism" (Nas and Samuels, 2006). The study of the city, its people and elements is also indebted to the work of Kevin Lynch, who stated "who knows the city better than its residents."

Urban planner Kevin Lynch was the first to practice the method of mental mapping in order to design cities from the perspectives of the citizens who live in them. Instead of concentrating on what is inside people's mind, he focused on the components of the environment that orientates individuals to explore and make memory of the place (Gieseking, 2014). In his book "The Image of the City" (1960), Lynch showed that as people interact with their surroundings, they interpret and encode them into mental maps. His research technique, the use of so-called mental maps, combined with interviews, creates the possibility to discuss all kinds of ideas with respect to the city with informants (Nas, 2011, p.8).

Although the method has proven to be very productive, some elements, such as cultural difference and the diverse symbolic meaning of urban elements, were not well-recognized therein. In line with Lynch's approach, but more inclusive to diversity in terms of meaning and culture, other researchers expanded a similar ideology based on further investigation, suggesting that the urban environment also depends on social and cultural conditions.
In this respect, Herbert Blumer, an American sociologist, used the term "symbolic interactionism" to further explain the symbolic relationship derived from all objects in the urban public space and the way it influences the society. He offers three basic premises from a 'symbolic interactionists' perspective. One of them is that "people act towards things on the basis of the meaning that the things have for them." (Blumer, 1969, p. 2).

Subsequently, he explained the culture as a conception, customs, tradition or such like which is connected to what people do. And in reverse, society refers to the way people act towards other objects (p. 6). He defined such things as all objects that human beings may note in their surroundings, including other people.

In this way, people in different positions and locations do something which reflects how they define the situation. Consequently, people's perceptions and interpretation of the situation are significant. In this way people as social actors create or reform public space based on the meaning it has for them. Accordingly, the urban public space is a dynamic space, full of symbols and symbolic interactions (1969).

Influenced by the concept of symbolic interactionism, Peter Nas (2011) has, through investigation in different cities, provided evidence that the meanings attached to the urban environment also depend on its cultural patterns. In contrast to Lynch's idea, he has proven that the "meaning" is essential in studying urban perception and symbolism.
By using the method of mental mapping in different locations, such as Jakarta and Colombo, he found that the symbolic meaning of each city varies between diverse population groups (2011, p. 52). These meanings do not only vary among different ethnical groups, but also amongst different social classes.

In the study of urban symbolism, many other concepts have been explored: for example, the concept of presence and distribution of urban elements, which entails that through its symbolic characteristic every urban element offers different things to different groups. Therefore, urban elements have the potential to be interactive to different people and functions at various levels simultaneously (Nas & Samuels, 2006).

Each of the above mentioned theories have made an important contribution to advance our understanding of the human perception and, in a comprehensive sense, the human-environment interplay. Urban public spaces have been considered as socially crucial, given that they comprise people with diverse perceptions.
Accordingly, the relationship between people and the environment is more than a simple interplay. Through this interplay, the environment forms peoples' perception, which in its turn defines the way environment is experienced. In this context, considering various aspects of public space is important for a better social and physical interchange with diverse group of people.

For this purpose, the suggested explorative methods of tracing people's interaction with their surroundings can be used and further improved for designing public spaces which are inclusive to different group of people. Further, the communicative methods such as mental mapping, allows individuals to reflect their thoughts and have a role in forming public space, which at the same time is the reflection of their needs and perceptions.

Summarized, public spaces should be inviting to diverse groups of people to visit, stay and interact with their surroundings including other people. Such public space, as a characteristic, has to be inclusive – adaptable and variable to better facilitate the presence and experience of different groups.

One of the current methods which is considered as a guiding tool for designing public spaces is the "affordance theory" which could help designers and planners to create attractive and interactive urban environments. It actually combines environmental psychology and art, more specifically this theory provides a conceptual framework for the designers for considering the relation and interaction between the environment (public space) and the users considering that people and space are connected and co-produce one another rather than exist as distinct, autonomous entities (Mangold,W and Giesking,J.2014).

Public space and its different components has qualities which allow/ afford individuals and the groups to perform an action. The affordance theory contributes to the better understanding of the effect of these different components rather than describing the properties of the built environment such as form, color and texture (Paramita Atmodiwirjo, 2014).

This research involves using explorative methods to examine the socio-spatial affordance of urban public space from the perspective of users with diverse backgrounds. The selected method has been previously used in connection with the graduation project of Andrea Aragone (2015) which was carried out in the culturally diverse area in Brussels. His project has inspired me to reexamine the aforementioned method by carrying out a study with respect to the multicultural city of Amsterdam, thereby also applying some personal views and approaches for certain elements. I have found the method very effective as it aims to analyze the social and spatial layers in correlation, rather than on a distinct basis. This way, the method helps to investigate the affordance of physical space as a social space with various social representations.

Having considered both the limitations and possibilities of this method, the current research is aimed at an area of 1.5 km2 covering the Rembrandt park and its surrounding neighborhoods.

The guiding socio-spatial research method is composed of 4 phases: "Analysis", "Reading", "Bridge" and "Vision". From the first phase on, this method allows the user of the method to be engaged with the research by design process, which leads to the final design proposal (F.3).

The phases Analysis and Reading are a part of the design process; this way, every phase in the design process is examined by further researching, analyzing and reading the potential of different conceptual designs. During the Analysis phase, apart from the literature review,

I have used observations, semi-structured interviews, mental maps and sketches as my research techniques. The data were mainly collected by taking part in the daily life of the neighborhood of Amsterdam New West, talking with inhabitants and watching them and conducting interviews. At the same time, I have used methods as mapping and sketching to record the current setting but also to examine the possibilities for and with design.

Eventually, the results of the Analysis phase are overlaid as concluded to present the potential of public space. In the "Bridge" phase, the outcomes of the "Analysis & Reading" phase are translated to tools for design.
By using pattern language, data and maps are converted into possible concepts for the study location which can finally lead to a design proposal. The last phase, "Vision", presents a design proposal for the study area and respectively answers the main research question.
In this way, the final design and the outcome of this study can be further examined by applying research questions and within the same methodological structure.

How urban planning and design can enhance the socio-spatial affordance of public space in relation to users with diverse backgrounds and expectations in the multicultural neighborhood of Amsterdam New West?

As described above, the selected method consists of 4 phases, i.e. analysis-reading-bridge-vision. In each phase and through different tools and methods, one relevant sub-question will be answered:

Analysis: How public spaces are used and experienced by different groups of people?

Reading: What are the potentials of urban public space and what can be added to its potential layer for better attracting diverse group of people?

Bridge: Can spatial design promote the presence of diverse groups in the park and their social interaction?

Vision: Here, the design proposal will present the answer to the main research question.

Research

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

DESIGN PROPOSAL

P1 P5
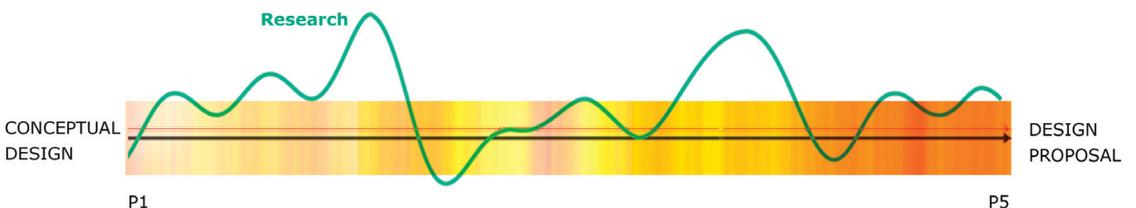
.3: Thesis process from Conceptual design to Design proposal (own image)

Main research question

How urban design and planning can enhance

the socio-spatial affordance of public space for the presence and interaction of

people with diverse background and perception, in the multicultural

neighbourhood of Amsterdam new west?

Analysis

How public space are used

and experienced

by diverse group of people?

Observation

Interview

Mapping

Lynch /Image of the city

Literature review

Vision

Bridge

Design Principles

Can spatial design promote social interaction and the

presence of different group in the public spaces of multicultural neighbourhoods?

.4: Visualization of the Socio-Spatial Method (Own Image)

Reading

Which are the potentials of urban public space and
what can be added to its spatial layer for better attracting
diverse group of people and promoting social interaction?

Mental Model

Time+Space

Space+density

Space+ownership

Porosity

Diversity in Architecture

LITERATURE REVIEW

An initial literature review comprises various literature by sociologists, environmental psychologists, cultural geographers, city planners, architects and urban designers, who all describe ideologies about public space and its cross- cultural variations.

There is an extensive collection of literature available in relation to public space as a physical space, its interrelation with users and the influence of culture thereon. Since there are many different perspectives to this phenomenon, I have selected the following literature as the main basis for this study:
"Public Space" (Carr, Francis, Rivlin, Stone, & Altman, 1993), "The death and life of great American cities" (Jacobs,1992), "Public places, urban spaces" (Carmona, Oc, Heath, & Tiesdell, 2003), "The image of the city" (Lynch, 1960), "Symbolic interactionism" (Blumer, 1969), "The production of space" (Lefebvre, 1991), "Cities full of symbols'' (Nas, 2011) and, "The social life of small urban spaces" (Whyte 1980).
It is noteworthy that relevant governmental reports, online publications as well as previous graduation researches on public space and the related subjects have also been considered for the purposes of this thesis.

MAPPING AND SKETCHING

As a part of the design methodology, this thesis as a starting point uses sketching design concepts to examine different design ideas. This method is used as a tool for translating and visualizing the data collected from other methodologies, such as observation and interview.
I have found the methodology to be very effective as it combines layers and is also able to reveal ideas in a continuous manner within different stages of the project. In addition, mapping as being visual is a communicative methodology for a non-verbal presentation of the project process. In this manner, it can potentially be used by both researchers and respondents.

As part of this research, respondents present their ideas about their area by drawing so-called "mental maps". Meanwhile, those who prefer verbal communication can follow their responds as being mapped by the interviewer

during interview. (See also the 'mental mapping' section)

Interviews are conducted initially with inhabitants of the research site so as to investigate the real voice of the society, followed by separate interviews with professionals and community organizations that arrange events and activities for different ethnic groups in Amsterdam. I also interviewed the park managers and developers of previous successful projects (for example, Evert Verhagen, the project manager of the Westergasfabriek).

For the purposes of the interviews, I employed the interview guide provided by Zeisel (1984). A focused interview was used to examine the users' experience of public space. In this respect, Zeisel stressed that interviews should be focused towards the research goal, which in this thesis is 'examining the diverse perception of different groups in public space and the way they use the space'. Posing questions in interviews means systematically asking questions to find out what people think, feel, do, know, and expect (Zeisel, 1984, p. 137). In the case of a focused interview, a good interviewer is one who is flexible about his prescribed plan and tries to use his own initiative during the interview (p. 138). This way, a focused interview is useful to find out how individuals or groups define a specific situation and how they feel about it and why.

In the context of the above, the following categories have been considered when holding the interviews:
Inhabitants 'daily habits in public space'/ Their 'general feeling' about/ Their 'expectation' thereof in regards to specific activities and qualities / Their 'daily orientation' therein/ Their liked or disliked zone therein/ Their 'emotional bonds' to that/ Their social exchanged and shared activities with other groups.
For this project, a part of the interviews has been combined with so-called "Mental Maps". This method helps in translating the people's image of public space as well as their perception and orientation into readable maps.

IMAGE OF THE CITY (MENTAL MAPPING)

Mental mapping is a valuable methodology in the function of an emic approach of the perception of space and orientation by the so-called ordinary people (Nas, 2011, p. 102). The method, known as Lynch's method, creates the possibility to discuss all kinds of ideas with respect to the city with informants (p. 8).For this project, a part of the interviews has been combined with so-called "Mental Maps". This method helps in translating the people's image of public space as well as their perception and orientation into readable maps.
The method is especially valuable for multicultural neighborhoods as it helps understanding the image different people encode of the same neighborhood. This method allows people of different ethnicities but also social classes to describe their ideas in a communicative way and through drawings.
Accordingly, I have used this method to get respondents to express their ideas about their neighborhood. For this purpose, they are initially asked to make a drawing of how they move around the neighborhood on daily basis, where they would like or dislike to go and their most visited places.
Maps are collected without notifying the Lynch orientation elements. In this way,

the method is applied in a slightly different way and people themselves are given the freedom to define and draw the specific orientation nodes and urban elements they use to find their way.

After the interview, the collected maps are scaled and analyzed to understand the reason behind their orientation in public space, as well as the potential of urban public space in relation to different groups of people.
Their 'expectation' thereof with regards to specific activities and qualities / Their 'daily orientation' therein/ Their liked or disliked zone therein/ Their 'emotional bonds' to that/ Their social exchanged and shared activities with other cultural groups.

DIRECT OBSERVATIONS

By using the method of observation, I have aimed at examining the outcomes of interviews and adding more clarification and explanation thereto. Where the interview is a great way of learning about people and their habits, the observation is a valuable way to investigate what people really do in public space (Bernard, 2005).
For this study, the observation takes place in different spots and during different time zones. By means of direct observation, I

watch people and map their behavioral patterns in public spaces. The main focus thereby is on the presentation of different groups, their main activities, the most used areas and paths as well as the rejected and neglected areas.

Although very useful, this method does have some limitations: in terms of the accuracy of a direct observation, observers may be influenced by their own expectations of what they are looking for or by expectations about the behavior of any ethnic group (2005, p. 435). In addition, it is impossible to have the overview of the whole research area at the same time. So, while recording from one spot, the observant may fail to record issues out of his framed view.
Accordingly, the observation can be more accurate by engaging several observants. Despite the mentioned limitations, many researchers have considered this method very useful as it allows them to address issues which are not easily studied by any other method (p. 436).
Having considered both the limitations as well as the strengths of the observation method, this thesis reflects on the overlap of multiple methods and findings in order to optimize the accuracy of the overall analysis.

Pattern language

Patterns are very useful as they provide information that is readable to everyone. The nature of patterns is similar to those of a "language'': they both involve certain rules and elements. Every pattern describes a problem that accrues over and over in our environment and then defines the core of the solution to the problem (Alexander, 1977, p. x).

In this project, Pattern language, as a tool (bridge) from research to design, can describe dominant issues for the purpose of diversities. I used pattern mainly to translate data and conclusions which are not easily readable. For example, behavioral patterns in public space in connection with the presented spatial forms.
Patterns have the capacity to be expanded and improved. This way, it can be used later in the future design of the area or even during the workshop with inhabitants. As patters are readable for everyone, people of different understanding are able to communicate with pattern and use it in designing their own environment.
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ANALYSIS & READINGS

MENTAL MAPPING+ INTERVIEW
A meeting point: Steve Jobs school

In the very beginning of the field research when I was searching for a place where local inhabitants gathered, I found the Steve Jobs school a good social place for conducting interviews.

Before holding interviews at school, I talked to some of the inhabitants who were present at a nearby art event, but also at religious and cultural centers and surrounding streets. However, that was not sufficiently informative as some people were clearly not comfortable to respond due to their lack of time, but also for other reasons. Under those circumstances, every interview couldn't last more than 5 minutes, hence making an in-depth interview impossible. Although not very informative, these brief interviews did give me a broad impression and also some indication of the main issues in the area.

To exceed the mentioned limitations, the school as a semi-public space was selected for having more information about the area. In the school itself, I have found people more comfortable and sociable in response to my questions. Further, I have been introduced to some of the children's parents by the school's staff prior to conducting interview. Most of the interviewees were able to respond to a simple interview in English. For Dutch speaking respondents, I was offered the help of the school's staff.

The interviews in front of the Steve Jobs school were carried out in three days during month April . The interviews, in combination with a mental map, lasted 10 to 15 minutes, with a few interviews lasting up to 30 minutes. In all interviews, the focus lied on issues related to the use of, meaning of and orientation in public spaces. It is notable that most of the respondents had a non-western origin.

16:00 in Sloterpark.
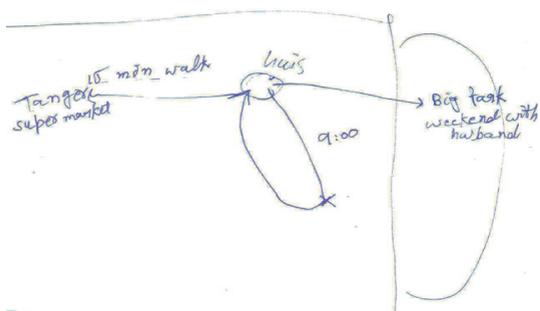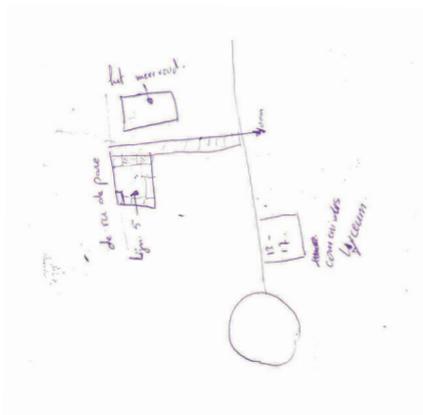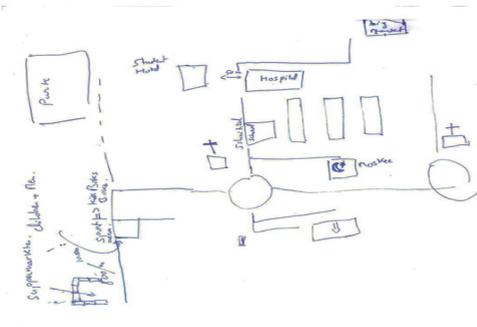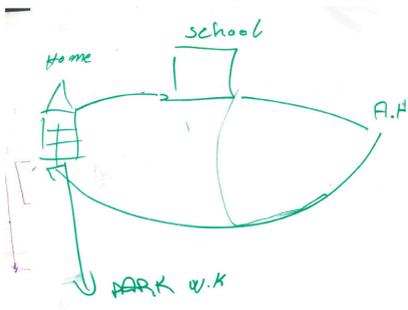
1. Mental maps made by inhabitants at a meeting point, Steve Jobs school

During the interviews in the Steve Jobs school, the following main issues were observed:

1. The school is a meeting place (a controlled public space), particularly for inhabitants with a non-western origin and also for women with children. The school as meeting place was defined as a semi-public space, not only for exchanging information about children and the school itself, but also for creating a social network and making new friends.

2. Nearby city parks, such as the Rembrandt park, have a different meaning for different cultural groups. For western inhabitants, parks are associated with sports, nature, dogs, either alone or with others. For non-western inhabitants, parks are associated with good weather, a weekend with family, a visit during the week just to take children to the playground.

3. Most of the respondents (16 out of 20) did not have a clear image of the neighborhood at night. Those who had a semi-image drew a line to describe a path.

4. All of the respondents expressed certain ideas about their community – with people in mosque, with family, with neighbors, in each case mainly with people of the same origin. The respondents expressed to have limited contact with other cultural groups - mostly in the form of brief conversations in an emergency situation or when needing to ask for a specific question.

5. With respect to which cultural elements where perceived as having a dominant influence on people's orientation in the area, religion centers were mentioned and drawn by different interviewees.

6. In practice, most respondents were able to describe their image of the neighborhood with a simple drawing. When doing so, respondents in particular were able to express a clearer image of the south side of the research area. In addition, respondents with a non-western origin have mentioned only little and unclear information about the surrounding neighborhoods, whereas respondents of western origin did express their views, in a comparative manner, about other areas of the city.

7. The dominant daily activities and orientations described by non-western respondents can be summarized in a few words: home / shopping / school / playground (sometimes) / mosque / park (mainly with family in weekend).
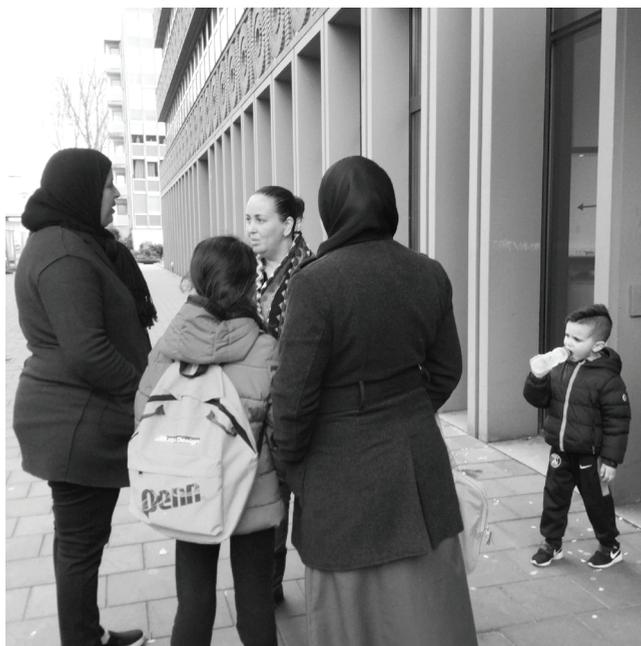
2. Social interaction and exchange in front of a meeting pin,Steve Jobs school (own image)

The school was described as a meeting place (a controlled public spac
inhabitants with a non-western origin and also for women with children.
place was defined as semi-public space, not only for exchanging infor
the school itself, but also for creating a social network and making new

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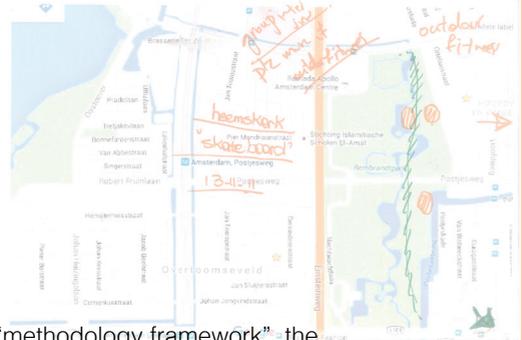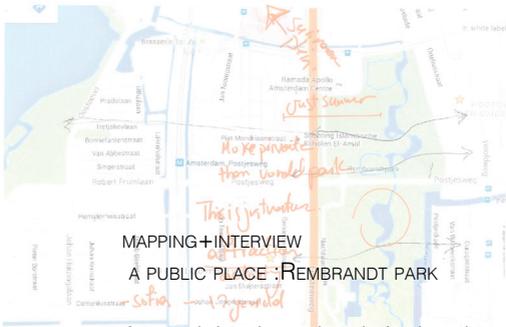
MAPPING+INTERVIEW

A PUBLIC PLACE :REMBRANDT PARK

As explained previously in the chapter "methodology framework", the method of mapping is a participatory method for both the respondent and interviewer. During the observation days in the park, I had the opportunity to listen to some of the park's users and their expressions about the park as well as the representation of other groups.

For this purpose, during the interview, I used a map of the Rembrandtpark and the area to better communicate with the respondents. This allowed them to either directly make a drawing on the map, to specify the described zone in the park, or to observe their answers while being sketched by interviewer.

Respondents were initially asked to describe the park and, in particular, their favorite zones in park, the area they live in, the frequency of their visit to the park, the purpose of their visit, and the characteristic of their favorite park. In total, I interviewed more than 30 people, individuals and groups with different age and nationality.
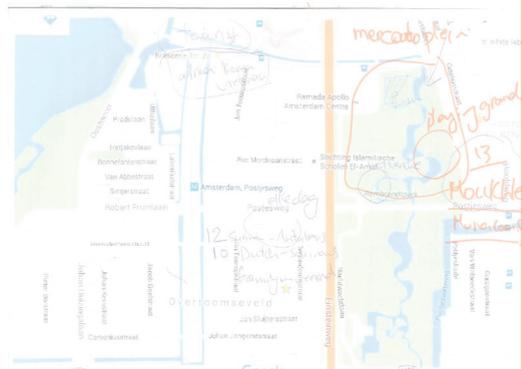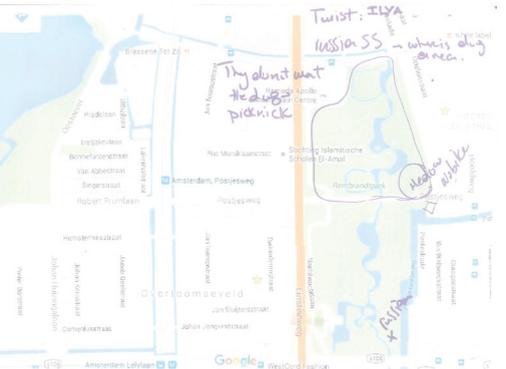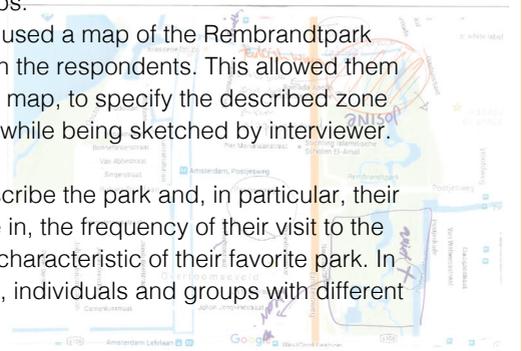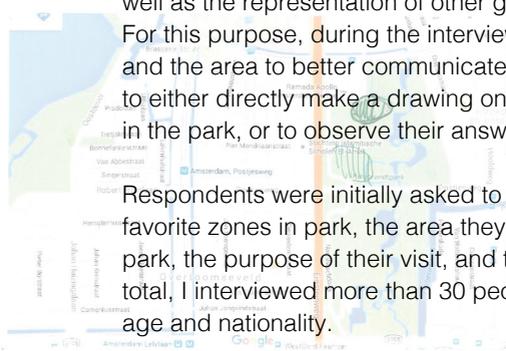
The conclusion of interviews, combined with maps (narrative maps), indicate the following main issue about the pattern of use in the Rembrandt park:

The park's north side was mentioned more frequently by various interviewees.

The south side (the area located near the S106 road) was generally described as a low quality space without function and also being unsafe. However, it was also perceived as positive by some dog owners.

The west side (edge) of the park is used more frequently by non-western inhabitants, whereas the east side is used more by western inhabitants.

The lack of playgrounds and sportive facilities (and in general, social activities) were mentioned by both western and non-western respondents.

Both groups mentioned considering an area for dogs. Non-western people preferred not to have any dogs around in the park.

Both groups characterized the park as generally being quiet, which however was perceived to have both potential and weakness.

For non-western inhabitants, the main reason for visiting the park was mainly associated with family and children. Western inhabitants expressed different reasons for visiting the park.

Most of the respondents lived nearby the park, within 5-10 minutes walking distance (except for two groups of respondents who were tourists and the park was on their way to their final destination).

The park was also described as just being green without offering any activity. In this respect, a comparison was made to the Vondel park, which hosts many activities. A group of respondents indicated to live nearby the Vondel park, but also being used to go to the Rembrandt park because of its open-air fitness equipment facilities.

"It is notable that some of respondents couldn't clearly orient themselves, using the map, around the park. Some activities were mentioned and signed on the map with some distance from the actual location."

Turkish Mother for children.

New Zealand

Theodor Radny

Turkish born

Turkish family

Dutch Girl "quiet"

Nothing here
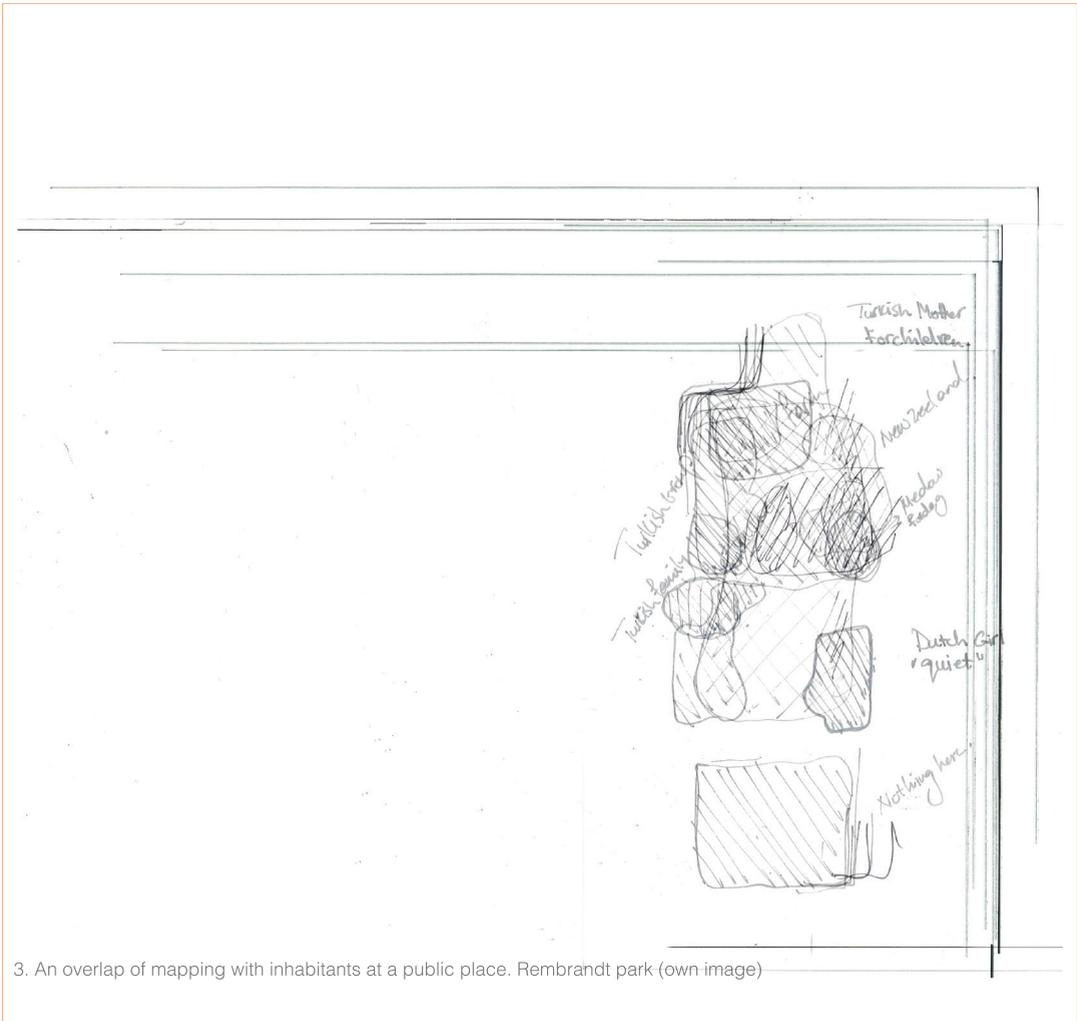
3. An overlap of mapping with inhabitants at a public place. Rembrandt park (own image)

The front map illustrates the conclusion of overlapping different information from different respondents, either by the way of mental mapping or interviewing. The colored closed and open meeting points, were either directly mentioned by respondents or are amongst the same characteristics. For instance, the Steve Jobs school was directly described as a meeting place by and for parents. In this map, other places with the same characteristic are also shown. Regarding the meeting points inside the park, there are known more potential meeting points in the north side of the park comparing to its south side.

The meeting points mentioned in the neighborhood and park have some characteristics in common. The shared characteristics are further considered in the design phase of this study:
1. The scale of the social places as being semi-public
2. Urban elements as an influential aspect in people's orientation and memory of their neighborhood
3. Social edges as being different for different people

2. SOCIAL ORIENTATION

1. SCALE OF PUBLIC SPACE

3. SOCIAL EDGES

4. Potential meeting points (Own image)

The following maps are the conclusion of observations of the park during seven consecutive days, covering different locations and time zones. The first phase of observation occurred in May during sunny days.

As claimed by the 'project for public space', by observing people, we can learn a great deal about what people want in public spaces ("William H. Whyte," n.d.). By using the basic tools of observation we can learn an immense amount about how to make our cities more livable (Kent, 2001).

For observation, the experimental method described by William Whyte -using a grid layout (10m2) to record the observation and to translate data to maps- was selected. Although I took a bit different approach by using a grid of 40m2 which was proper to the size of the park and the pattern of use therein. The purpose of the time-space maps is to find out the potential of public space in different time zones with regard to different activities by different people. Respectively, the following main issues were recorded:

1. Active locations in different time zones.
2. Density of use in active locations
3. Presentation of different groups: non-western and western
4. Dominant activities in different locations

This part of the project has appeared very experimental to me. By each step, I have learnt more of the method and the possible ways for recording the patterns of use in the park. Meanwhile, the possible way of translating data to readable maps and sketching the possibilities for better developing the current situation have been my main challenges.

Rembrandt park:

time+space
Density+space+time
space +activity/ownership
Conclusion for design
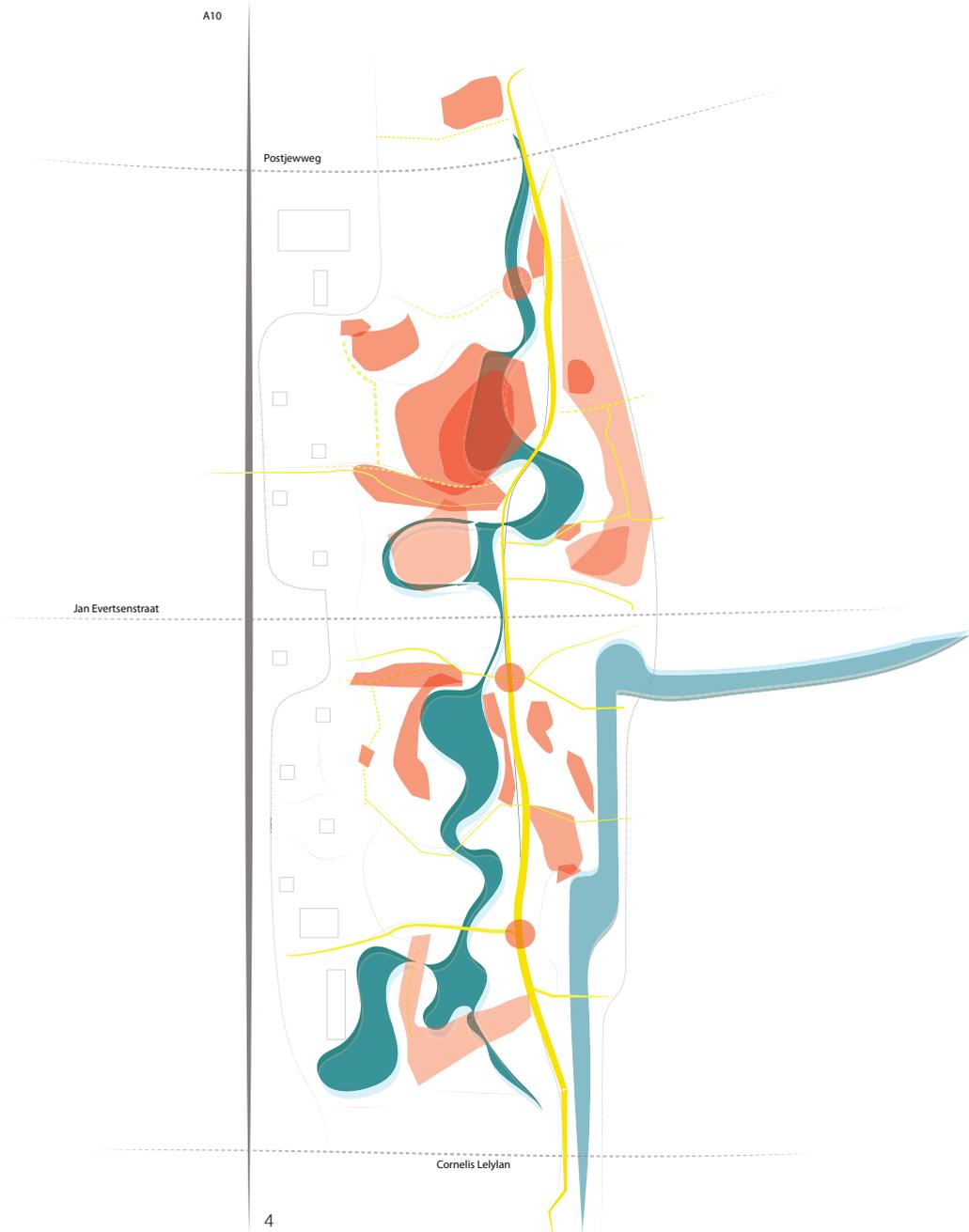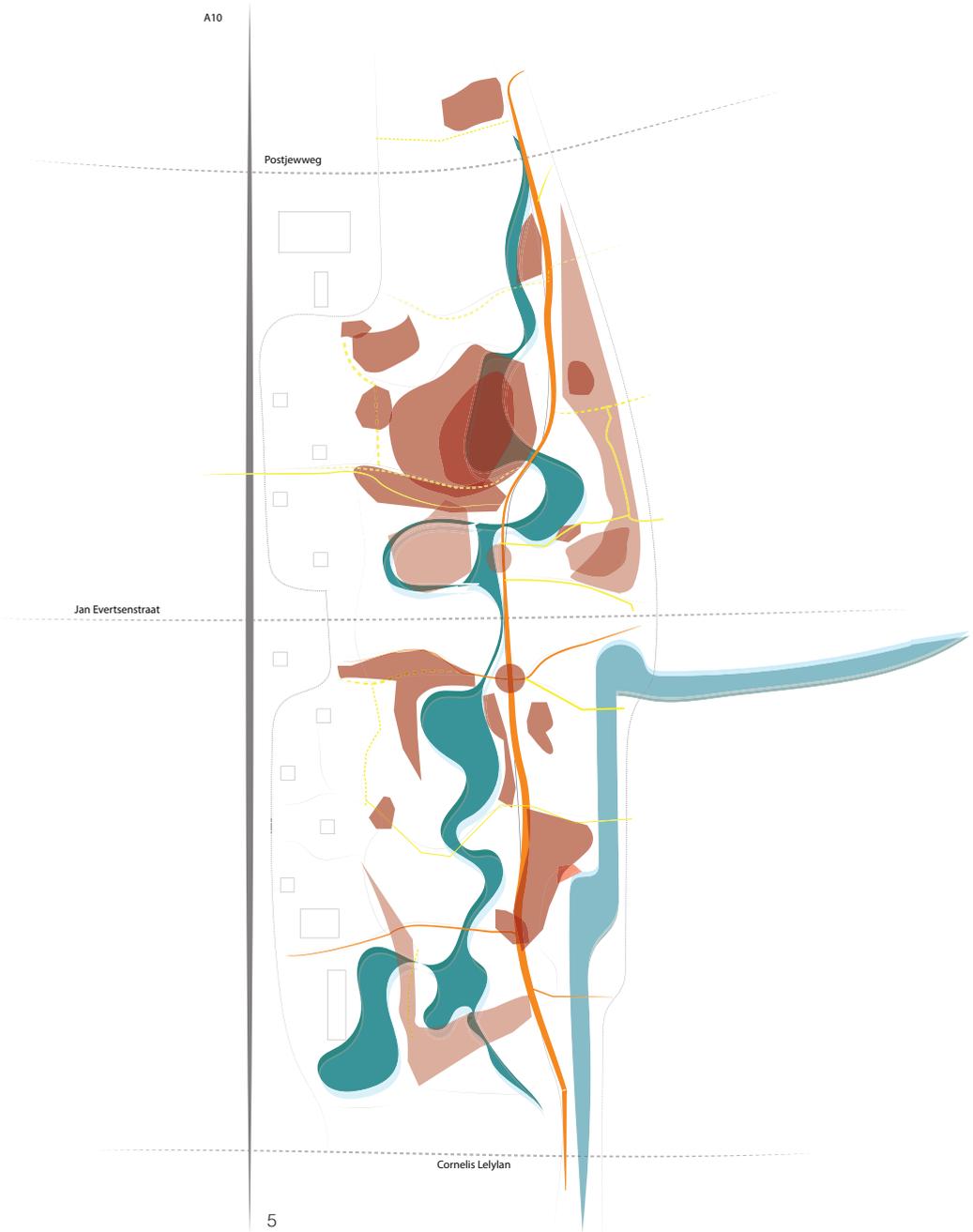
1. Mapping at Rembrandt park (own image)

Time+space: 7:30-9:30

A10

Postjewweg

Jan Evertsenstraat

2

Cornelis Lelylan

A10

Postjewweg

Jan Evertsenstraat

Cornelis Lelylan

3

A10

Postjewweg

Jan Evertsenstraat

Cornelis Lelylan

4

A10

Postjewweg

Jan Evertsenstraat

Cornelis Lelylan

5

Time+space: 17:30-21:00

A10

Postjewweg

Jan Evertsenstraat

Cornelis Lelylan

6

Time+space: after 21:00

A10

Postjewweg

Jan Evertsenstraat

Cornelis Lelylan

7
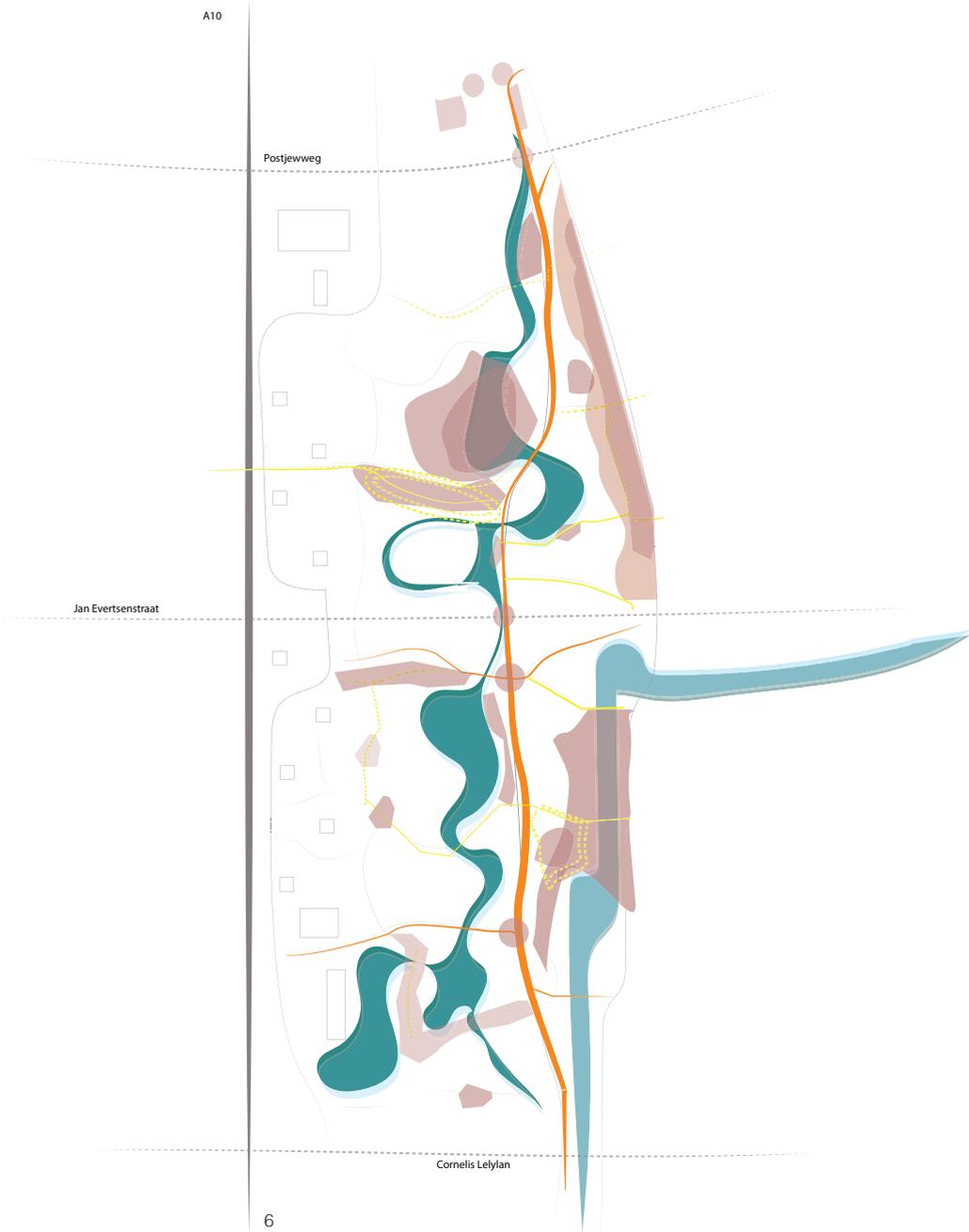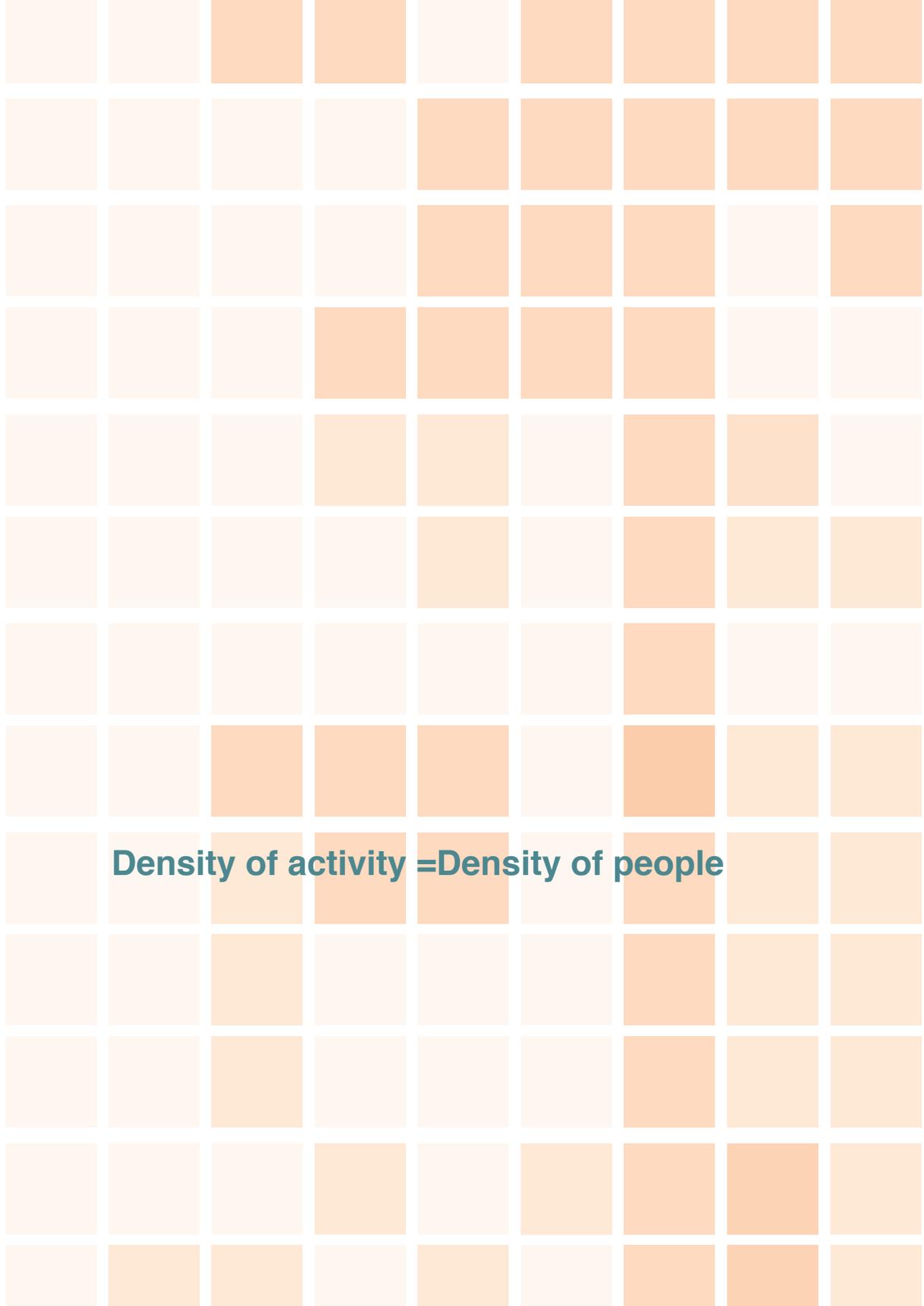
Density of activity =Density of people

Density of activity =Density of people

The 'location+ density' maps are the conclusion of recording activities but also the people engaged with those activities, in different locations and time zones. In these maps, areas which are shown more densified support or host a wider range of activities. The reason for this is sometime the characteristic of facilities but in the Rembrandt park , this is mainly due to the presence of different people doing different activities; the more people there are, the more activities arise. Accordingly, these maps show the active zones in the park.
It is notable that, the density is partly related to the flows of people passing through the park. This is mainly the case for the main route connecting the northern side of the park to its south and few paths connecting the west and east side.
As it is shown in the following maps, despite the large green area of Rembrandt park, only few location and zones are intensively used

Space+density: 7:30-9:30

A10

Postjewweg

Jan Evertsenstraat

Cornelis Lelylan

8

Space+density: 9:00-11:00

A10

Postjewweg

Jan Evertsenstraat

Cornelis Lelylan

9

A10

Postjewweg

Jan Evertsenstraat

Cornelis Lelylan

10

A10

Postjewweg

Jan Evertsenstraat

Cornelis Lelylan

11

Space+density:17:30-21:00

A10

Postjewweg

Jan Evertsenstraat

Cornelis Lelylan

12

A10

Postjewweg

Jan Evertsenstraat

Cornelis Lelylan

13
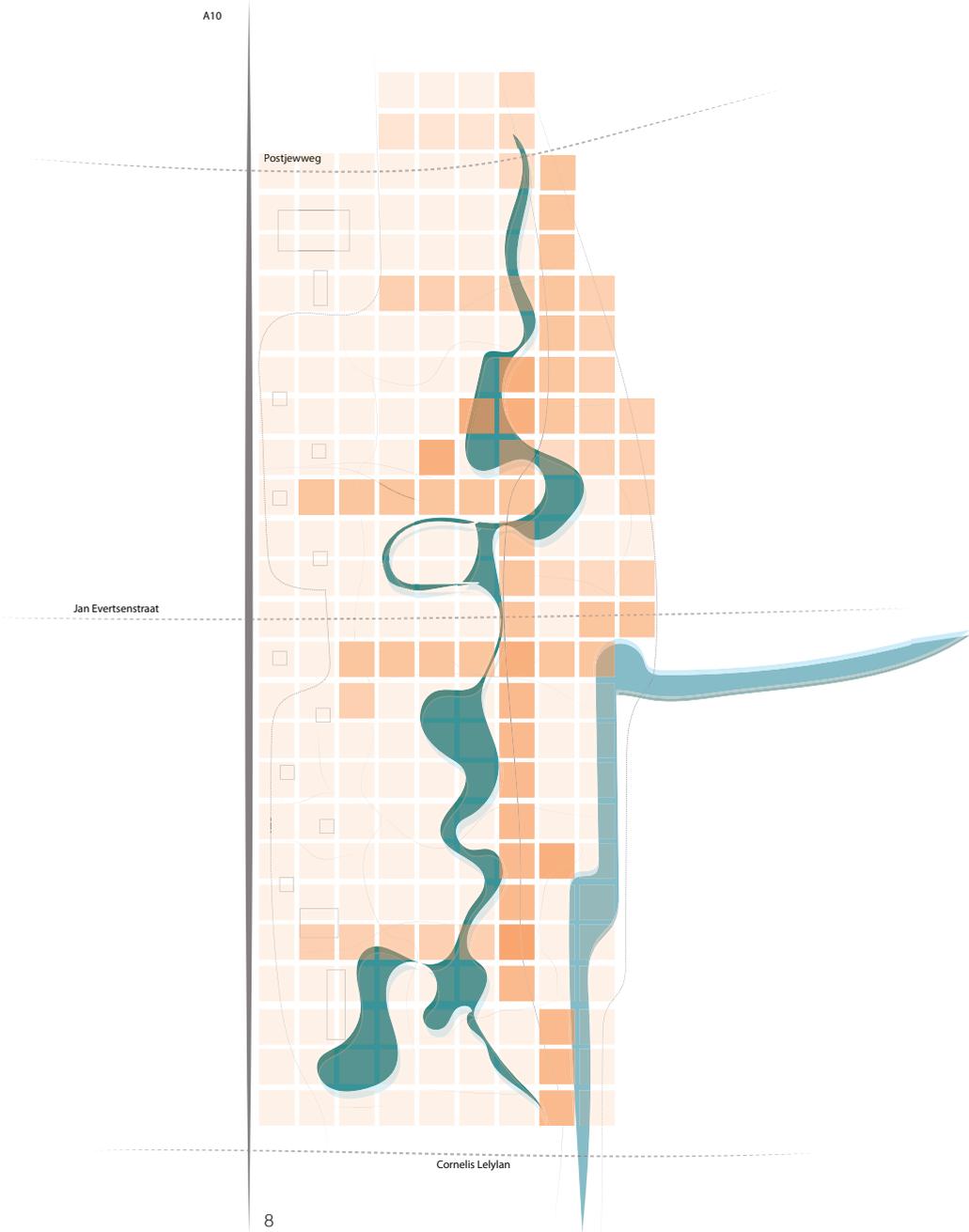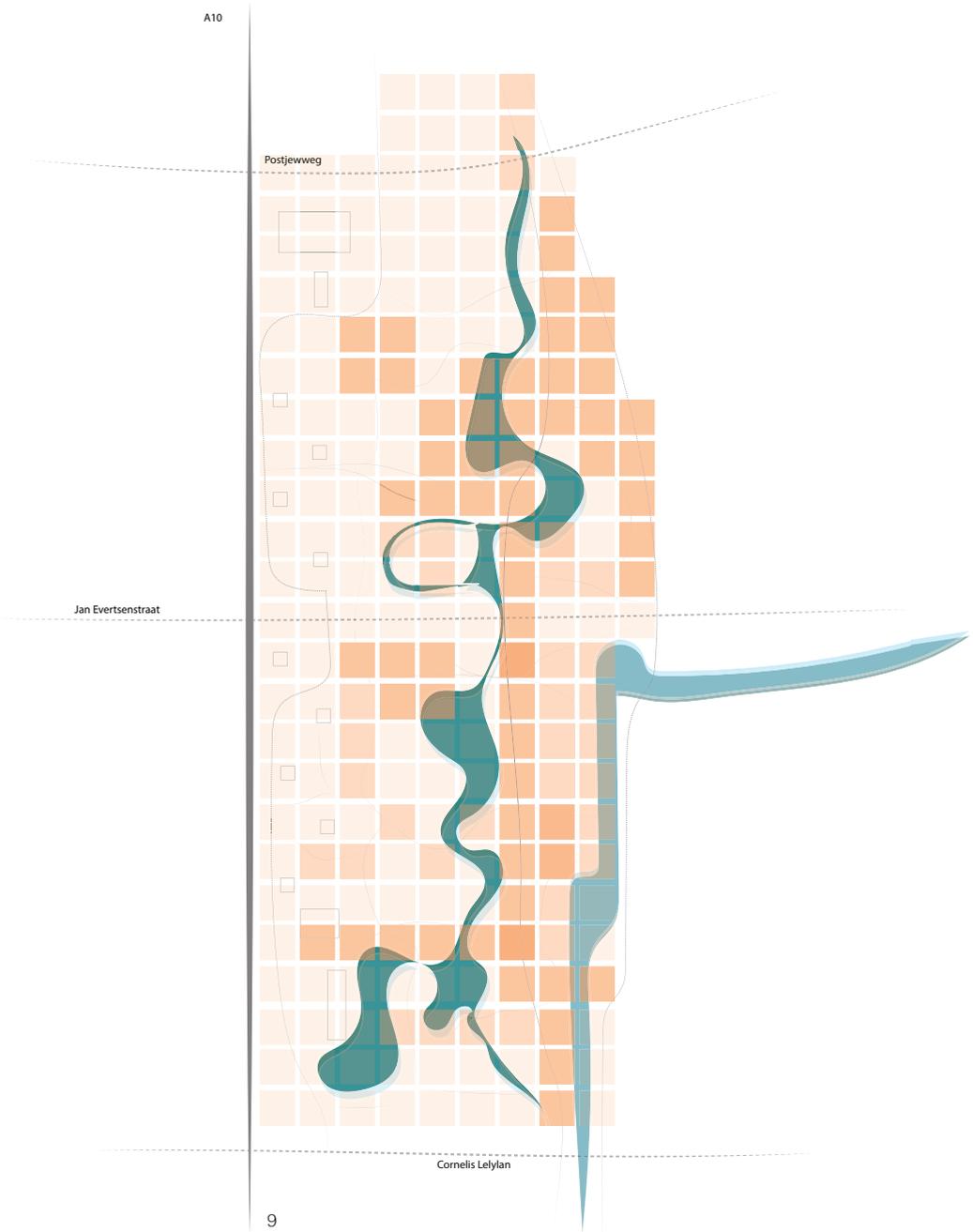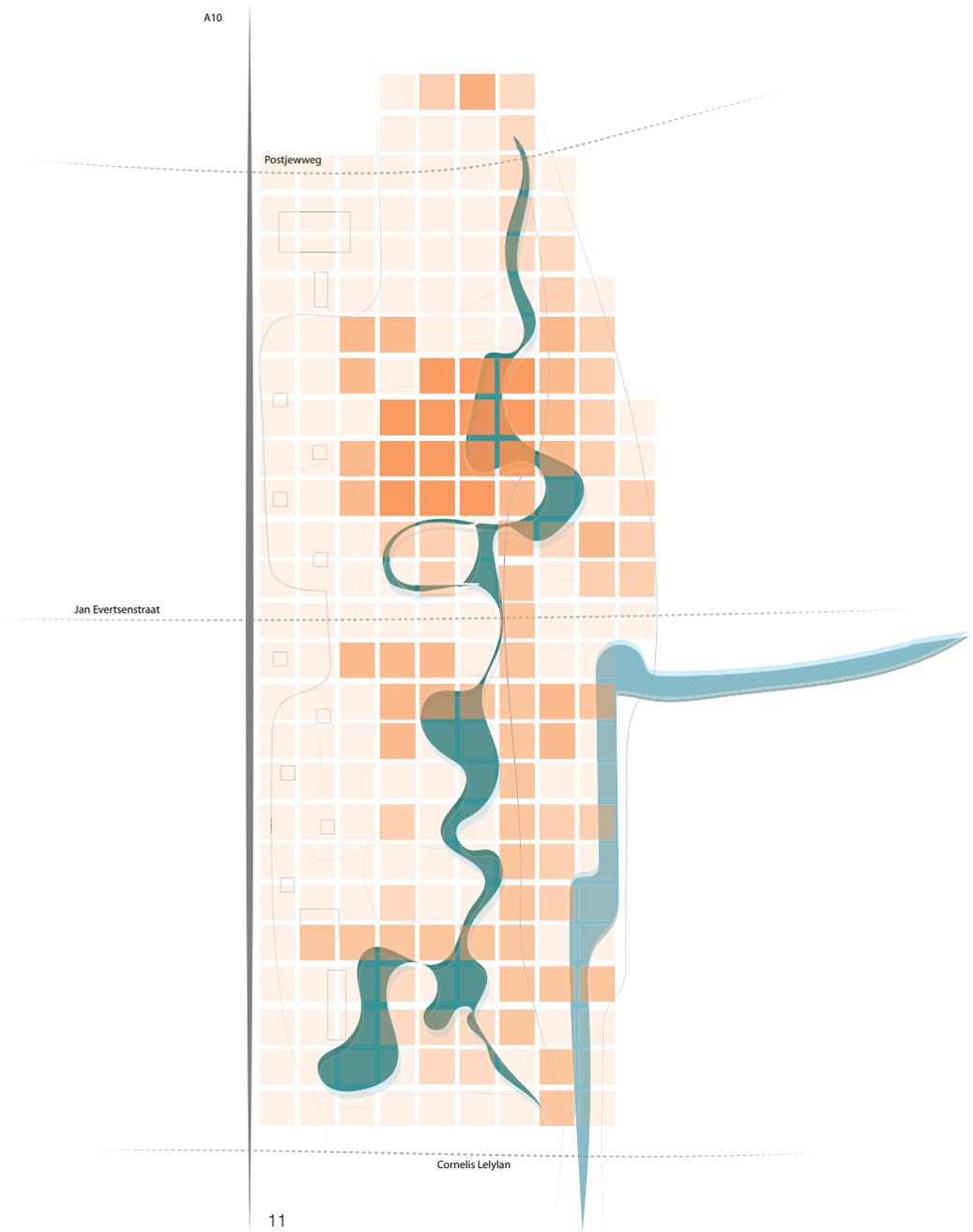
The 'activity +space' maps show the examples of activities and affordance of space to those activities. The ownership of space by specific activities represents the potential of the space.
The activities that happen in the park are simple as reading a book or very specific such as those related to events and public performances. In all, what is very clear is that the repetition of an activity at the same place ,over different time zones, indicates the potential of the space to that activity. Similarly ,the areas that host diverse activities have in fact the higher level of affordance, due to facilities, location and their design charectristics.

By the front map, example of active zones and routs are shown.
As some areas are used due to the presence of facilities therein, other areas are used because of the adaptability of space. For example, the areas without fitness equipments but with the adaptable design intensively used for sport trainings (F.16-19).
In addition to activities are performances. People own the space to perform, to present their unique culture, tradition, habits ,story and art to others. The central axis of park creates potential for groups performance and public events, as well as the edge for small groups.
The areas that support performance have some shared characteristics. They are usually in the center of a zone or at the overlap of different paths and flows. The fact that performers want to be seen and they perform where the place offers this possibility.

14. An example of a performance at the crossing of two public paths (Own image)

A10

Postjewweg

Jan Evertsenstraat

Cornelis Lelylan
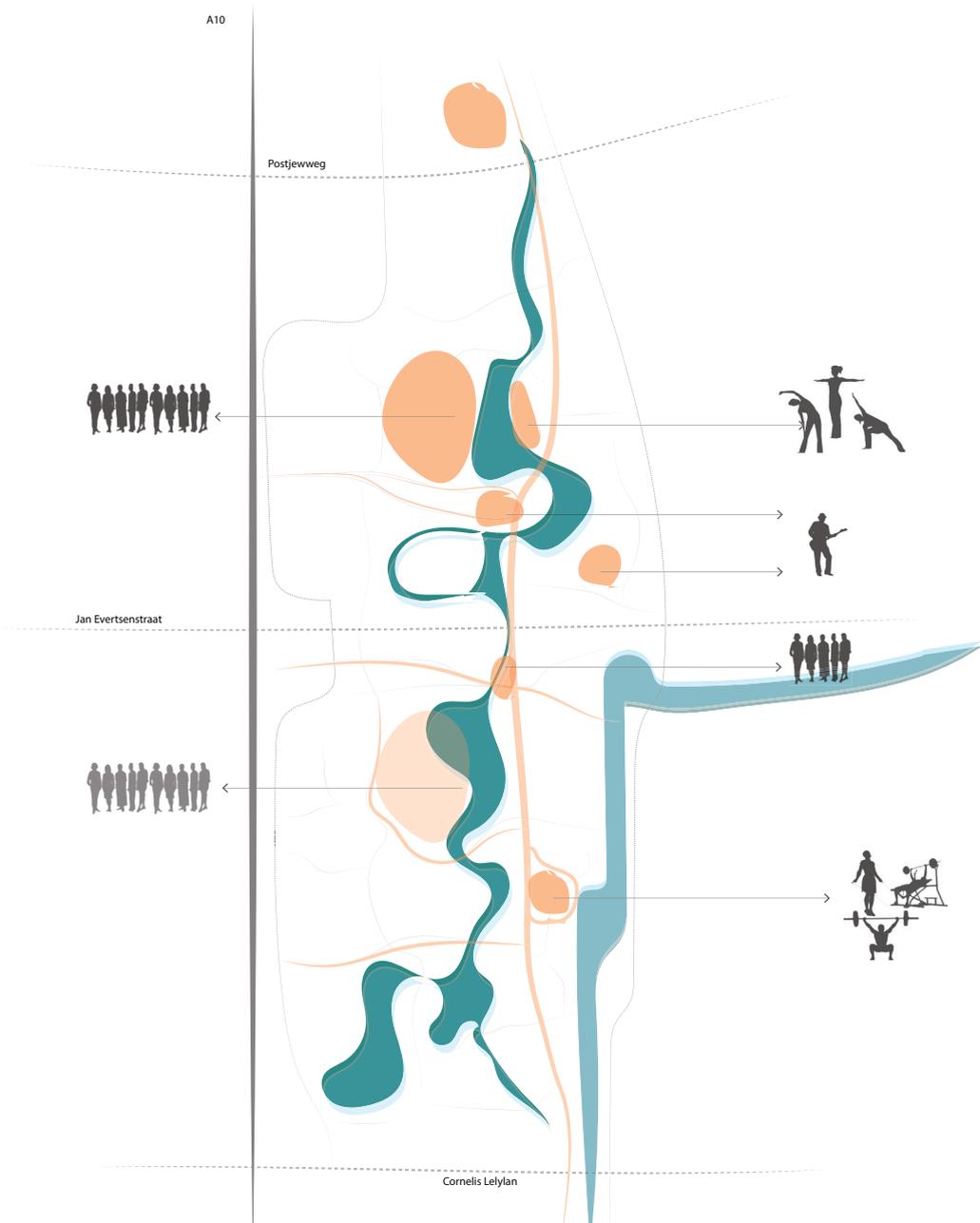
15. Dominant activities and active locations (Own image)

16.Fitness out of open air fitness area (Own image)

17.Public benches are used for sport activities (Own image)

18.Running around close loop (Own image)

19.Sport activities in children playground (Own image)

Space+ Activity/ownership
Lunching at the park

Although there is no cafe or restaurant in the park, there are some areas where people sit to have lunch; usually, children after school, with or without parents, and people who work in the neighborhood.
These "lunch areas" are located mainly at the edges, along the main north-south route and around playgrounds. The same activity happens also during weekends but more in the center of the park when people have more time to stay and meet with family and friends .
It is notable that the location of benches also define the lunch areas in the park.

21.Lunching at the edge of the park (Own image)

A10

Postjewweg

Jan Evertsenstraat

Cornelis Lelylan

20. Lunching at the park

22.Lunching at the edge of the park (Own image)

23.Lunching at the center of the park (Own image)

Space+ Activity/ownership
Ownership of space by diffrent groups

A part of the ownership of space is about the groups who use the specific
zone on regular bases. The park is visited by different groups from different
nationalities. However, the presence of some groups is limited to some specific
zones. Visitors with a non-western background are seen more at the left edge
of the park and the playgrounds. They are also represented in the center but
mainly during weekend. As the presentation of non-western visitors is limited
mainly to the left edge of the park, the right edge is visited more intensively
by groups and individuals with a western background. These groups are also
represented more in the center. This way, the edge of the park shows less
diversity comparing to the more diverse center of the park.

24. Ownership of space: non-western group at the left edge of the park (Own image)

A10

Postjewweg

Jan Evertsenstraat

Cornelis Lelylan

Western visitors

Non-western visitors
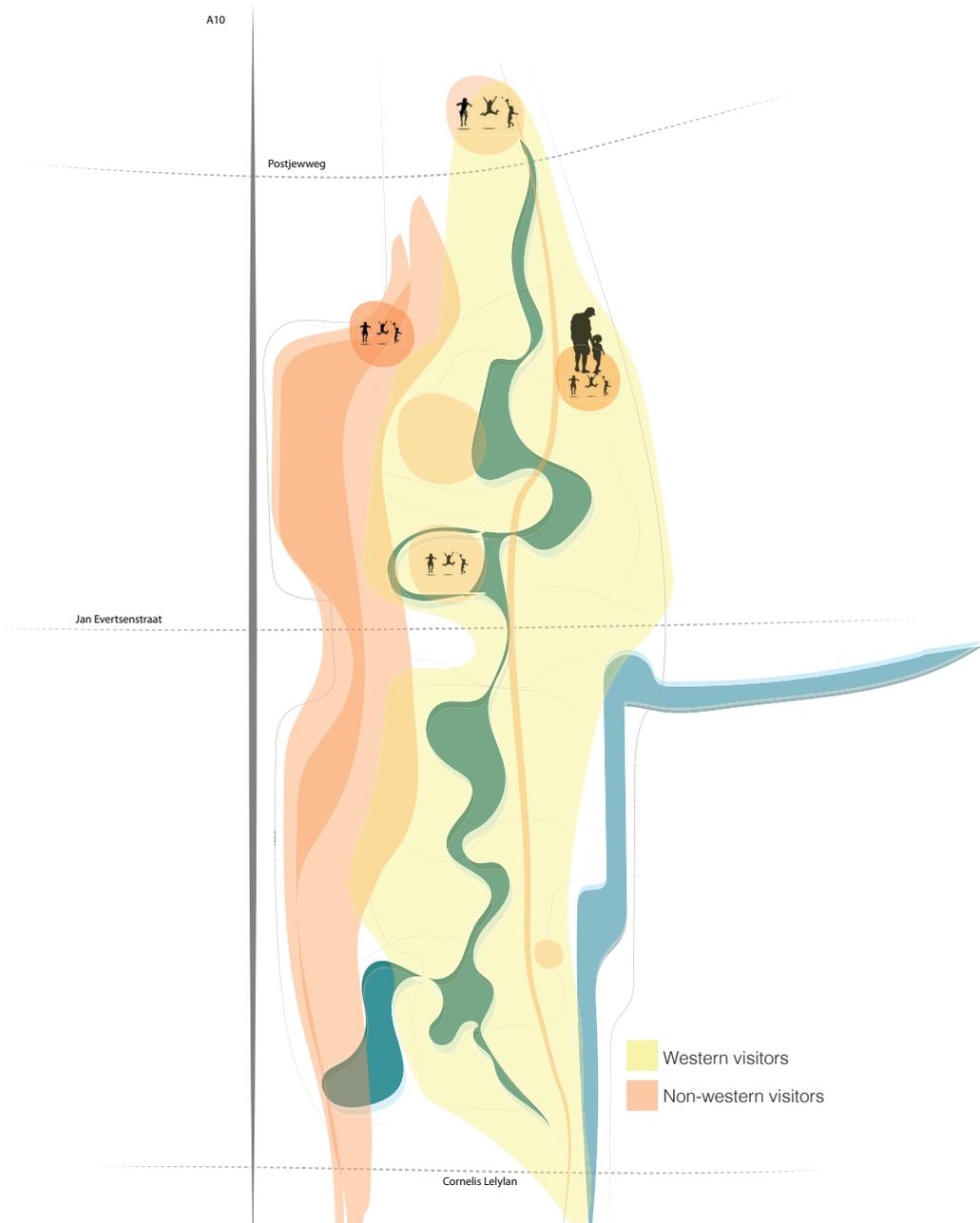
25. The ownership of space by western and
non-western visitors (own image)

Conclusion for design

Desirable diverse future
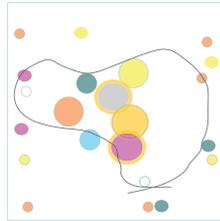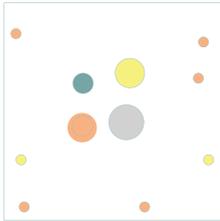
Creating diversity to different scales of the park
+ Connecting diversities
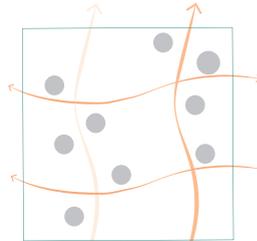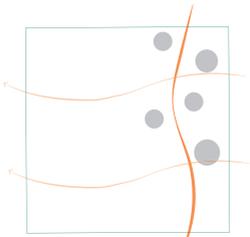
Activating the left edge of the park by
creating diverse social spaces
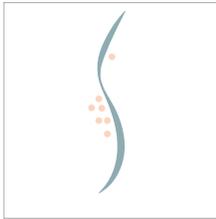
EXTENDING SOCIAL EDGES TOWARDS THE
EDGE OF THE PARK
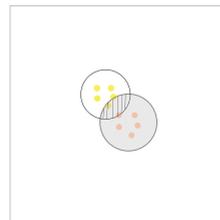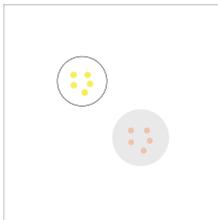
FOCUSING ON SHARED ACTIVITIES AND
SOCIAL SPACES
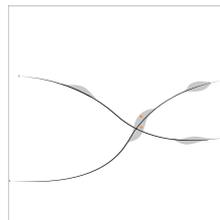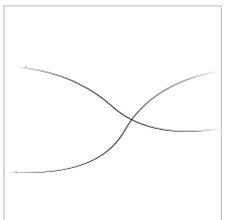
Creating collective spaces in interaction
with active linear spaces

As explained previously in the chapter
"methodology framework", the method of
mapping is a participatory method for both the
respondent and interviewer. For the purpose
of this project, I had the chance to interview
different professionals working, living or
researching in this area. The focus interviews
were conducted with sociologists, urban
designers, architects, project managers and
creative thinkers.
During the interviews, we together discussed
the issue of diversity and in particular for
such a public space like the Rembrandt park.
In some interviews, we more discussed the
problems, whereas in others design ideas
were the main subject of the interview. Some
of the interviews, such as interview with
Evert Verhagen and Stephanie Akkao, have
been modified and published by the Atlantis
magazine.
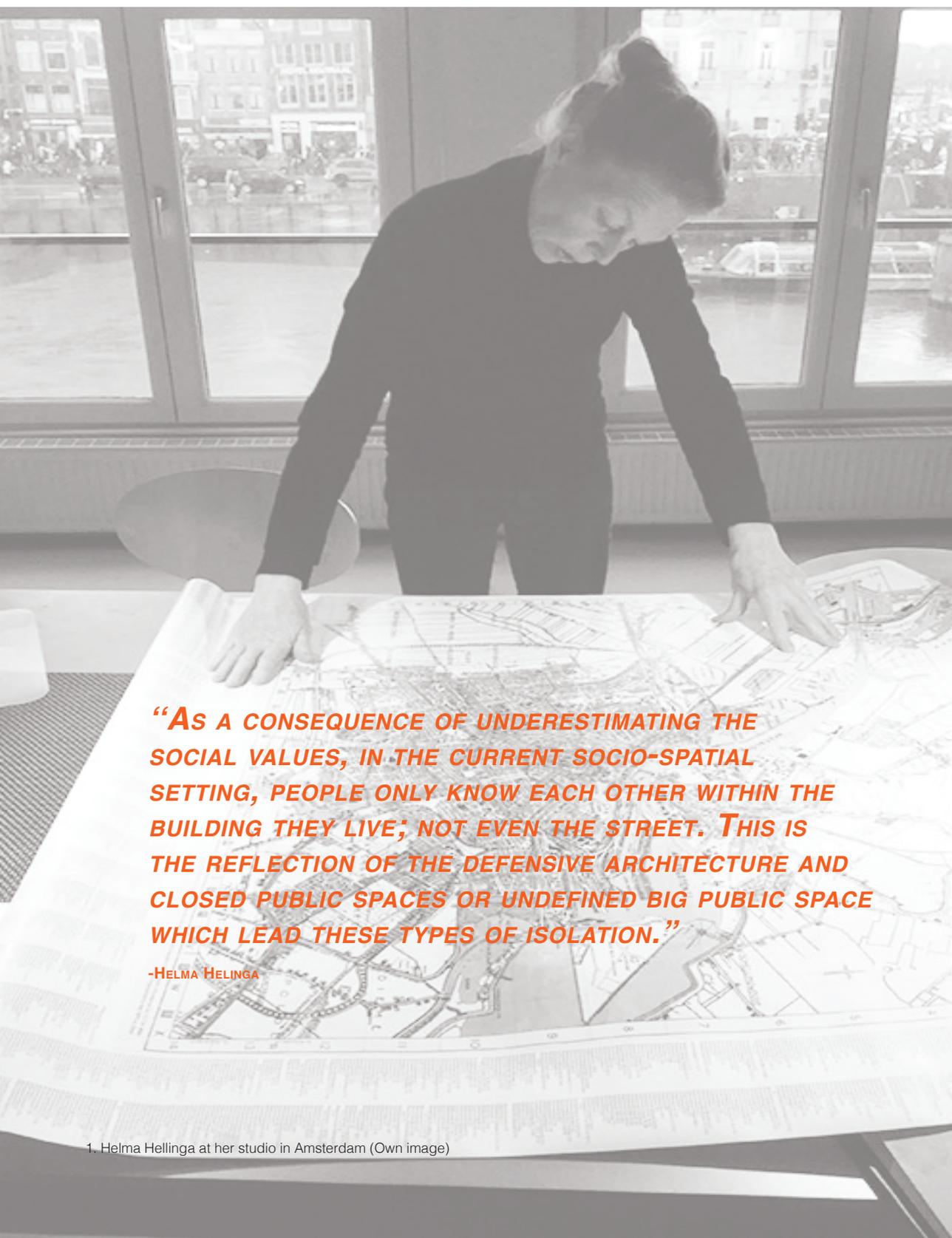
"*As a consequence of underestimating the social values, in the current socio-spatial setting, people only know each other within the building they live; not even the street. This is the reflection of the defensive architecture and closed public spaces or undefined big public space which lead these types of isolation.*"

-Helma Helinga

1. Helma Hellinga at her studio in Amsterdam (Own image)

Helma Hellinga is a Dutch sociologist. She is the writer of the book 'onrust in park en stad' which criticized the social dimension of urban renewal in Amsterdam New West. The interview with Helma took three hours and was conducted in her studio in Amsterdam.

With Helma Hellinga, we discussed the relation between the current social issues and the physical space such as the Rembrandt park in the project area- Amsterdam New West.

Big gap between small and big scale of Public space

We talked about the defensive architecture and urban planning and its impact on today's defensive behavior of some groups in the area. We checked the vintage maps of Amsterdam, went through the past situation when there was not any barrier as the A10 ring and

. Sloter park > Rembrandt park < Vondelpark

the Rembrandt park were rather a transitional space between the old and new city.
During the interview, Helma shared her experience of the area which at the same time were mapped and drawn by me.
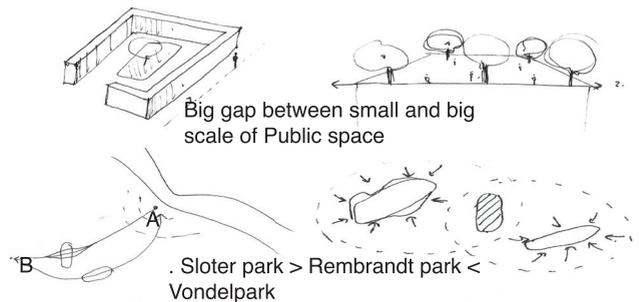
1. The big gap between the small defective space between buildings in Amsterdam New West and the undefined big scale public space in the Rembrandt park.
2. The lack of physical permeability in the Rembrandt park which makes her to take a longer path from Amsterdam New West (her second house-B) to the center of Amsterdam (her first house-A).
3. The lack of identity in the Rembrandt park.
As the Vondel park is known as an active crowded park, and the Sloter park as nature park, what would be the best identity for the Rembrandt park?!
4. The lack of meeting places in the research area as a consequence of the urban planning which has a limited substantial influence on the social contact of its inhabitants.

3. Sc: Own image

" WESTERPARK ACTS LIKE MAGNET BECAUSE IT IS PROGRAMMED TO BE MAGNET. USERS CAN FIND THEMSELVES EASILY IN THE PARK AS IT OFFERS THEM SEMI-PUBLIC SPACES RATHER THAN HUGE PUBLIC SPACE. WESTERPARK IS VISITED BY DIVERSE GROUPS BECAUSE IT SUPPORTS DIVERSITIES THROUGH CREATIVITY, ADAPTABILITY AND FREEDOM ,,
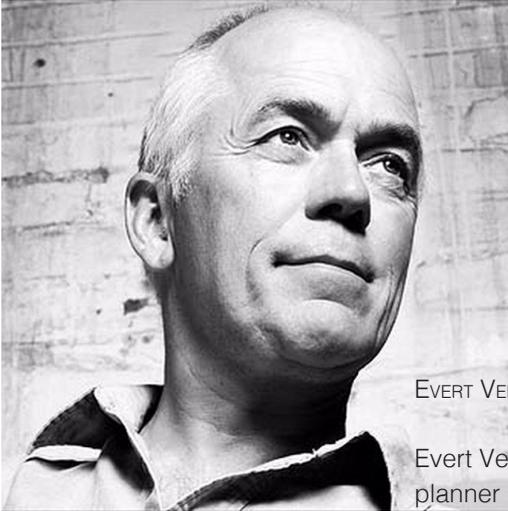
EVERT VERHAGEN

Evert Verhagen is a Dutch Urban planner and project manager. He has been the project manager and developer of dominant public projects such as Weterpark in Amsterdam. The interview with Evert took 2 hours and was conducted in the Westerpark .

During the interview with Evert, we discussed the following keywords: multicultural city, diversity, magnet public space, city energizer. We reviewed together, some examples of public spaces which act like magnet and attract diverse groups of people; for example the Westerpark. Westerpark is unique as it facilitates diverse groups for different types of interactions while being open for experience.

City energiser
Westerpark: Redefining Amsterdam's Public Space

"This park is dynamic, meant to grow in phases. It is self-evident and looks as if it has always been there. That is what this park is all about; a combination of leisure and performance that transforms a neglected area of the city into the focus of activities."

These days, the design of public space is a key issue all over the world. The matter isn't always a lack of public space, but the presence of public spaces that attract people and create what can be called 'energy' for the city, such as Westerpark in Amsterdam. The intense interest the city park has attracted both at home and abroad has marked it out as an example of an active city energiser. Project manager Evert Verhagen, the public face of the Westergasfabriek development project, is regularly invited to speak about this concept at international conferences on the public space realm. Although the park is primarily an amenity for the neighborhoods Spaarndammerbuurt, Staatsliedenbuurt, and Jordaan, the events that occur there attract people from all over Amsterdam and sometimes far beyond.

To get to know the idea behind this project, Atlantis visited Evert Verhagen at his studio in a typical three-storey Amsterdam house. We made ourselves comfortable in a cozy meeting room in which piles of books on architecture, urban design and philosophy were scattered around tables, chairs and the floor. Evert described his particular experience of the city and we continued our talk about Westerpark and how it's been transformed from an old neglected gas factory to a public zone that energizes and lights up Amsterdam.

Interview with
Evert Verhagen
Project Manager, Creative Cities

by
Maryam Behpour
MSc student, Urbanism
TU Delft

"The factory was originally built to bring light to the city. And now it brings the energy to the city by attracting, integrating and exchanging ideas."

What are the primary ideas behind today's Westerpark?

In general, there are always two ways to start a project:

1) You follow in the footsteps of others and do things by the book.

2) You do something from your own experience; you see it as your one and only big chance and you go for it.

When I started there in 1990, I was 35 with the experience of living in times of old structures and old neighborhoods in an unsafe situation. Before I came to work on the old gas factory I worked in Amsterdam southeast, an area based on concrete modernist city planning which means building, economy and everything separated but not integrated. I found that these ideas would not work anymore.

I was sure that this time, we had to do something different as we need integration within a creative environment. That's how I knew I had to do something completely different with the Westergasfabriek. I started to think about it in terms of energy; the energy that was produced in the gas factory for a century. The factory was originally built to bring light to the city. And now it brings energy to the city by attracting, integrating and exchanging ideas.

As I know, just a few months after the first tenants settled into the Westergasfabriek, the public were allowed in. At that time the site was almost empty.

What was the reason for the temporary opening of the project site? How did you later integrate the temporary experience in design and program?

At the beginning of the project, we encountered some harsh realities as well as different problems while imagining the concept:

1) The site was previously industrial and therefore was contaminated.

2) At that time Amsterdam was considered dangerous and safety was an important issue for everyone. We didn't want to take the risk that the place would be occupied by squatters.

3) The gas factory (as an idea) had a strong negative association with people. It made them think of the war.

4) We were sure that we could not change this situation in one year or so.

Therefore to examine the situation and people's reaction, we made a plan for temporary use of the site. The main question to be addressed was how to bring people together. We wanted to be successful, but how can one make a big change while taking the least risk?

1. WGF TheWeb Festival © Arjen Veldt
2. Western gas factory under construction and redevelopment © Caro Bonink
3. Cinekid event -The Street's official name is Pazzanistraat. It's Westergasfabriek's hub for media and for the general public. Dutchview Studios, Ketelhuis Cinema and several restaurants and galleries stand adjacent or opposite one another © Arjen Veldt

atlantis**kinetic**

> *"Successful projects have the capacity to become like a magnet, to give new direction to the main flows of people in the city."*

The factory was already there with all its negative associations. We didn't want to change what people knew for many years. Rather we decided to redefine the contaminated gas factory. We decided to warm up the frozen ideas about the gas factory.

The result was satisfactory; the first performance in the Gasholder, the opera Antigone by "Ton de Leeuw", immediately became the high point of the 1993 Holland Festival. Antigone highlighted the spectacular possibilities of the huge structure.

At the end, we understood that these industrial buildings were focused towards the inside and that we had to do special things to create a new connection between buildings and public space.

What is your global theory to make a project successful? What are the objectives of these "forever energetic" projects?

Successful projects have the capacity to become like a magnet, to give a new direction to the main flows of people in the city. You may ask how to make that happen.

The main objective is to find the right program. Energy is in the software, not the hardware. Flow is not a stable situation; it changes every day. If we look at the world over the last 200 years, movement is increasing. The successful cities are those that have the capacity to be a magnet and attract the flow, energy, to themselves. In this project, we had a neglected area and now we have a magnet.

4. Westergasfabriek Zuiveringshal West - expo ©Arjen Veldt
5. Cinema Sandwich event ©Arjen Veldt
6. Semi Public space © Evert Verhagen
7. Drum Rhythm, Picnic, Pitch and Rollende Keukens (Rolling Kitchens) with its ideal blend of ambience, people, park, and rugged indoor spaces Pitch ©Arjen Veldt ·

This is my global theory. 25% of the world population are going to become migrants in the next thirty years; in that case, we need to make a place that supports people with diverse backgrounds and ideologies; a creative place where creativities survive and grow. A good design should also be capable of having an adaptable program.

For the case of the Westergasfabriek, there are even today some very beautiful completely empty buildings that support different activities. Actually, the successful project was already there. It's a kind of museum with a unique architectural style. What I want to say is that the original architect in 1894, Isaac Gosschalk, was creative to make a beautiful building for the gas industry that is flexible to new programs today; better to say, it had the right program from the beginning. So, my theory for the Westergasfabriek was to keep that fire burning through a new programme that won't freeze in design. I believe that in many cases, emptiness is better than architecture; just leave a part for the experience.

All these ingredients and more, made the Westerpark perform as a magnetic character. It attracts, it moves around and lets ideas integrate; therefore energizing Amsterdam.

Do you believe that Westerpark can be a model for redefining public space and energizing Amsterdam? Why?

Yes, I believe it is already known as a model of the energetic urban zone in many countries. Westerpark is a place where people can enjoy multiple activities in a clean, attractive, safe, exciting environment where things can happen in an informal setting.

Except for design, an integrated program, creative supportive team and the fantastic history of the location creates a place where people can feel welcome and not neglected; the feeling that you are welcome with your personal beliefs and ideas.

In Westerpark, we designed semi-public areas rather than public ones; this strategy aimed to help users to find themselves within a big urban area faster and easier. •

"I believe that in many cases, emptiness is better than architecture; just leave a part for the experience."

"In the westerpark,
we designed semi-public areas rather than public
areas. The strategy aimed to help users to find
themselves within a big urban area faster and
easier."

-Evert Verhagen
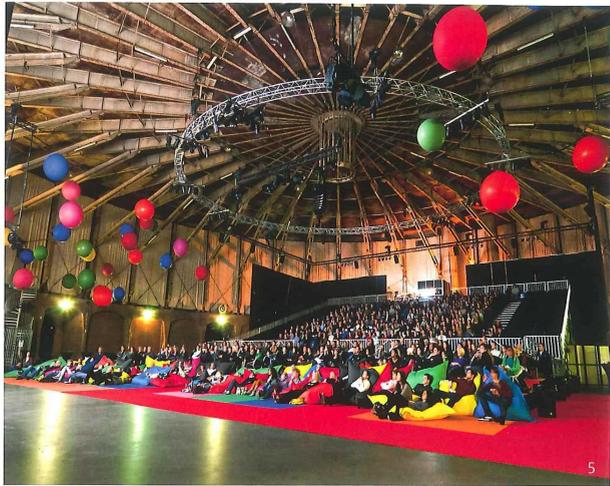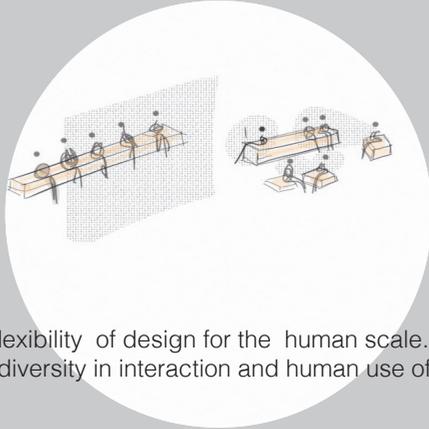
Adaptability and flexibility of design for the human scale. Flexibility in design supports diversity in interaction and human use of the space.
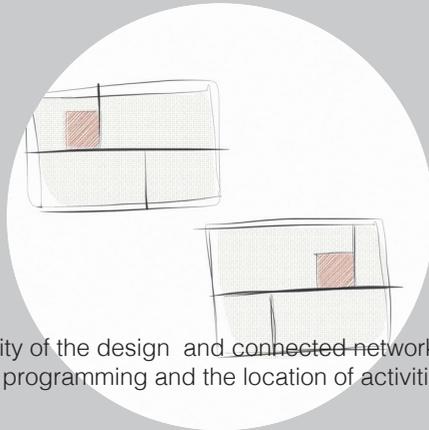
Adaptability of the design and connected networks in terms of programming and the location of activities.
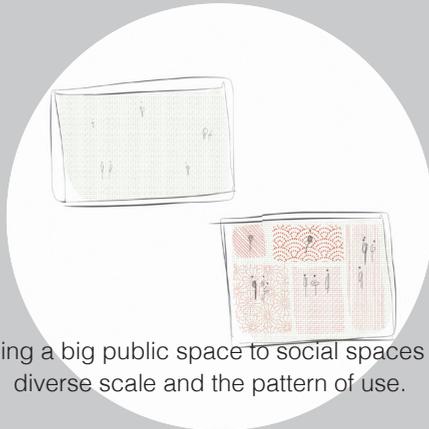
Dividing a big public space to social spaces with diverse scale and the pattern of use.

"THEY MAY NOT USE THE BIG URBAN AREA BUT THEY PROBABLY HAVE THEIR OWN SOCIAL SPACES... IN DIFFERENT SCALES ....
WE SHOULD LEARN OF WHERE THEY USE ...."

Stephanie Akkaui is a Lebanese Architect, Urban designer living and working in Amsterdam. Her main approach is to design context for social interaction.
With Stephanie, We discussed design ideas for interactive social places. The focus of the interview led to experimental methods inclusive to users. Here are some of the conclusions of the interview:

1.Regarding the presence of cultural diversities in public space, we need to have a flexible design instead of fixed structures. This is partly due to the presence of diversities and partly the unpredictable future of diversities.

2.Regarding the ownership of space: people want to make the space their own. Space has to be adaptable

3. Regarding the Rembrandt park, we need more diversity in term of scale.
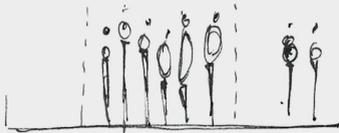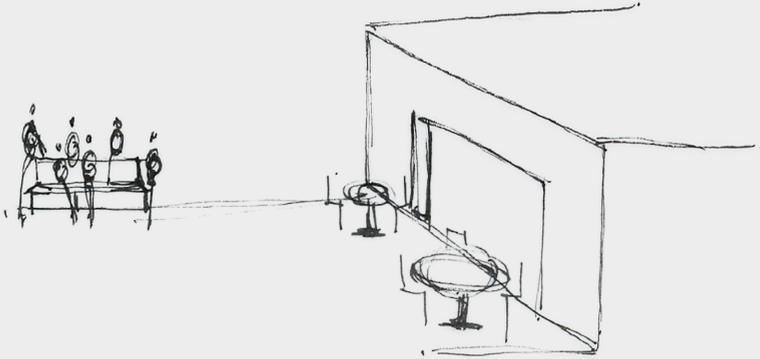
Donica Buisman is an Amsterdam based project man-
ager and Urban planner.
She plans, design and manageS community focused
projects. People play the main role in her projects and
are participated in the design process.

I interviewed her briefly about the Rembrandt park.
During the interview, we discussed the problems /
difficulties of design in socially diverse public spaces.
During the interview, she shared with me her experi-
ence of a failed design for a small public space:
in that scenario, the design was aimed at inviting
people to socialize in front of a snack bar in Amster-
dam New West by creating round tables with 'social'
benches. However, the round tables were left empty
as users preferred to use the regular urban benches
located within 50m-100m distance from the design
location. This indicates the different meaning diverse
people attribute to social space, borders and edges.

CONCLUSION FOR DESIGN IN 6 PHRASES

IDENTITY FOR THE PARK

MEETING PLACES

SEMI PUBLIC SPACE RATHER THAN PUBLIC SPACE

ADAPTABILITY OF USE

DIVERSITY IN DESIGN: FORM, FUNCTION, COLOR, MATERIAL, ….

DIVERSITY IN SCALE

DIVERSITIES

COLOR
FURNITURE
PLANTATION

Every architecture has a language and speaks with users by that language.......
Architecture communicates through form, ratio, material and color. It speaks out how it can be used and by whom. This way, diversity in architecture means diversity in communicative languages and thus diverse users of the place. In the Rembrandt park, architecture is limited to few characteristics of furnitures, plantation and colors.
As a part of the architecture, are sitting furnitures which are not designed to support diversities in form and adaptability. In addition, they are not mean to triggers interaction amongst different people. Even social sitting areas are more inviting to groups who know each other, rather than creating interaction amongst different groups. Architecture in the park, is fixed and has very little of adaptability. The lack of diversity in design limits the patterns of use and the presence of diverse users.

1. A furniture, framing a view (Own image)

FRAMING A VIEW

ANTI-SOCIAL LONG SEAT

2. Diversity in furnitures (Own image)

A GROUP'S TERRITORY

Current status

FRAMING A LARGE SCALE SCENERY

SHARING AN ANTISOCIAL
LONG SEAT WITH OTHERS...

Framing A SHARED ACTIVITY

A GROUP'S TERRITORY

3. Diversity in furnitures (Own image)

Desirable interactive future
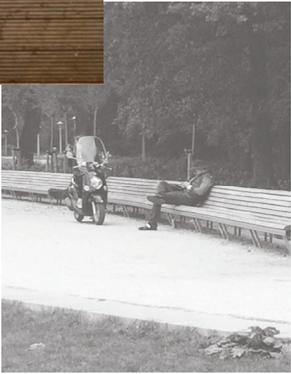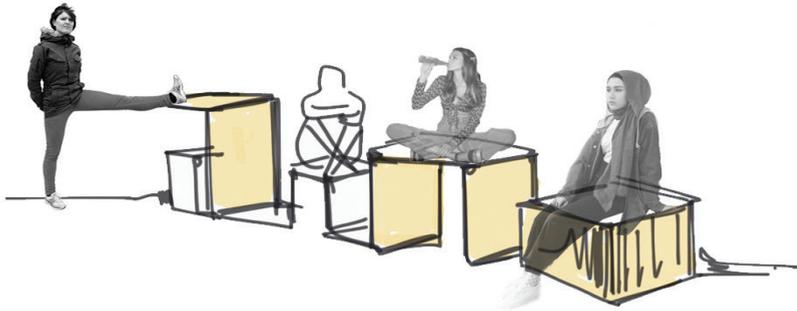
Design is adaptable to different pattern of use
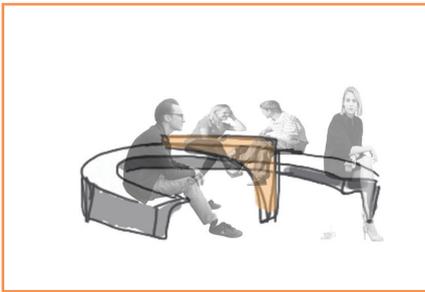
Encouraging social interaction by facilitating
the collective furniture

Encouraging social interaction by providing
diverse pattern of seating
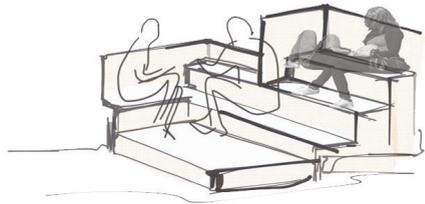
ANTI-SOCIAL FURNITURE
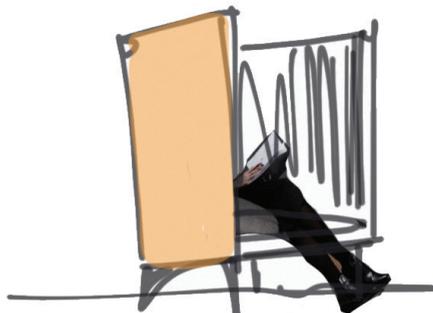
Colors in the park are either brownish or greenish and not more ...

There exist so many more colors and tolerances between brown and green which can be added to the colors of the park....
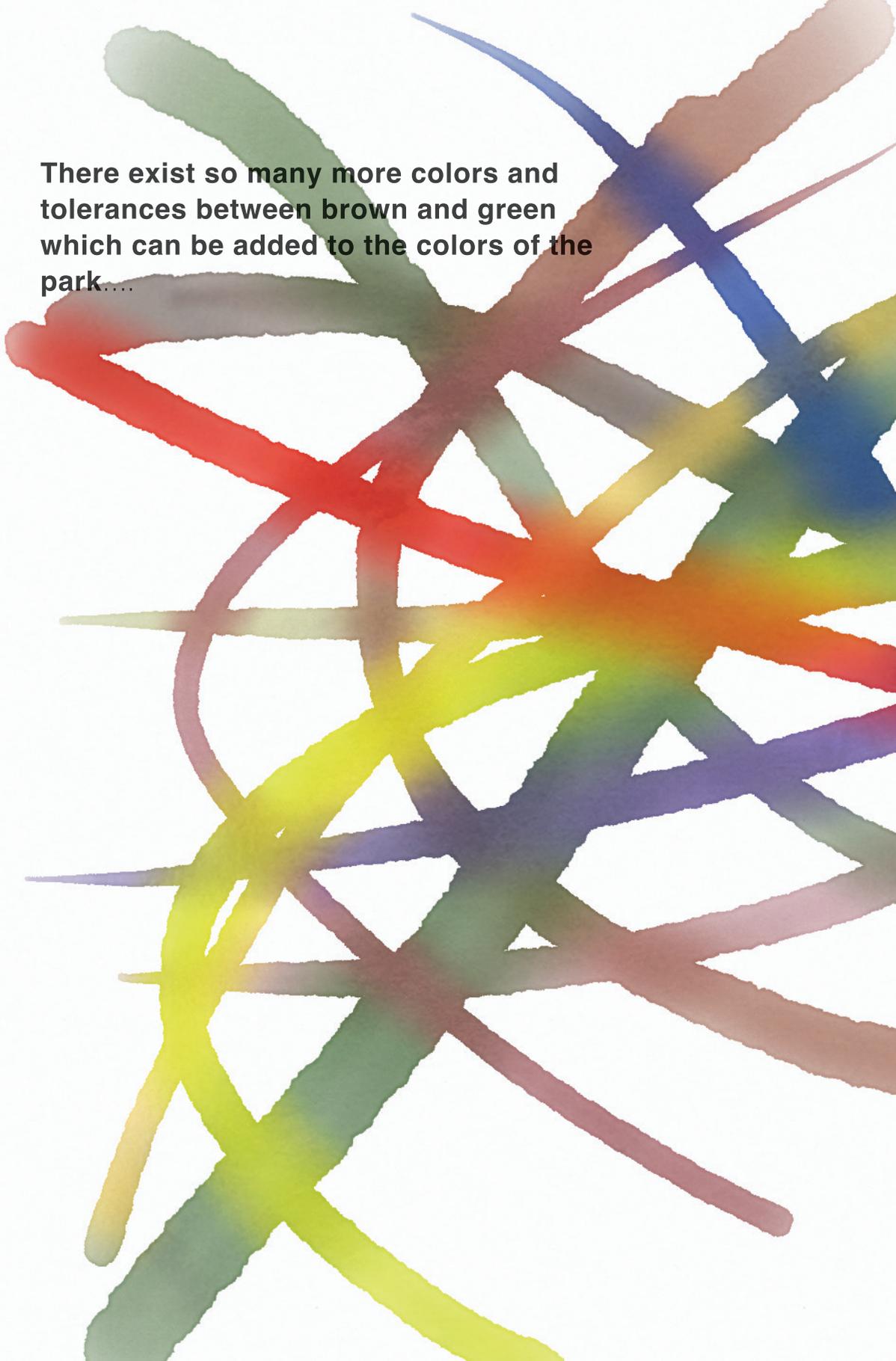
People are a part of the architecture, mixed in the image we observe around us. When the colors change, the expression of that image, including its objects also changes. Colors give character to space.

Despite giving character to space, color is also useful in influencing human behavior. With or without our realization, every individual sees color differently, depending how one's perceived the phenomenon. (Jalil, Yunus, & Said, 2012, pp. 54-55). Since colors hold different meanings for different cultures, they have to be used with careful consideration of possible behavioral reaction to colors. In this manner, the selected colors for the design of public space need to have the balance of an aesthetic and the perceived approach.

In the Rembrandt park, color plays an small role just presented with the nature changing in the park. The aim of this study is to apply more colors to the park for the purpose of having diverse design that attracts diverse people. In this study, this happens by the way of using different materials but mainly diverse plantation.
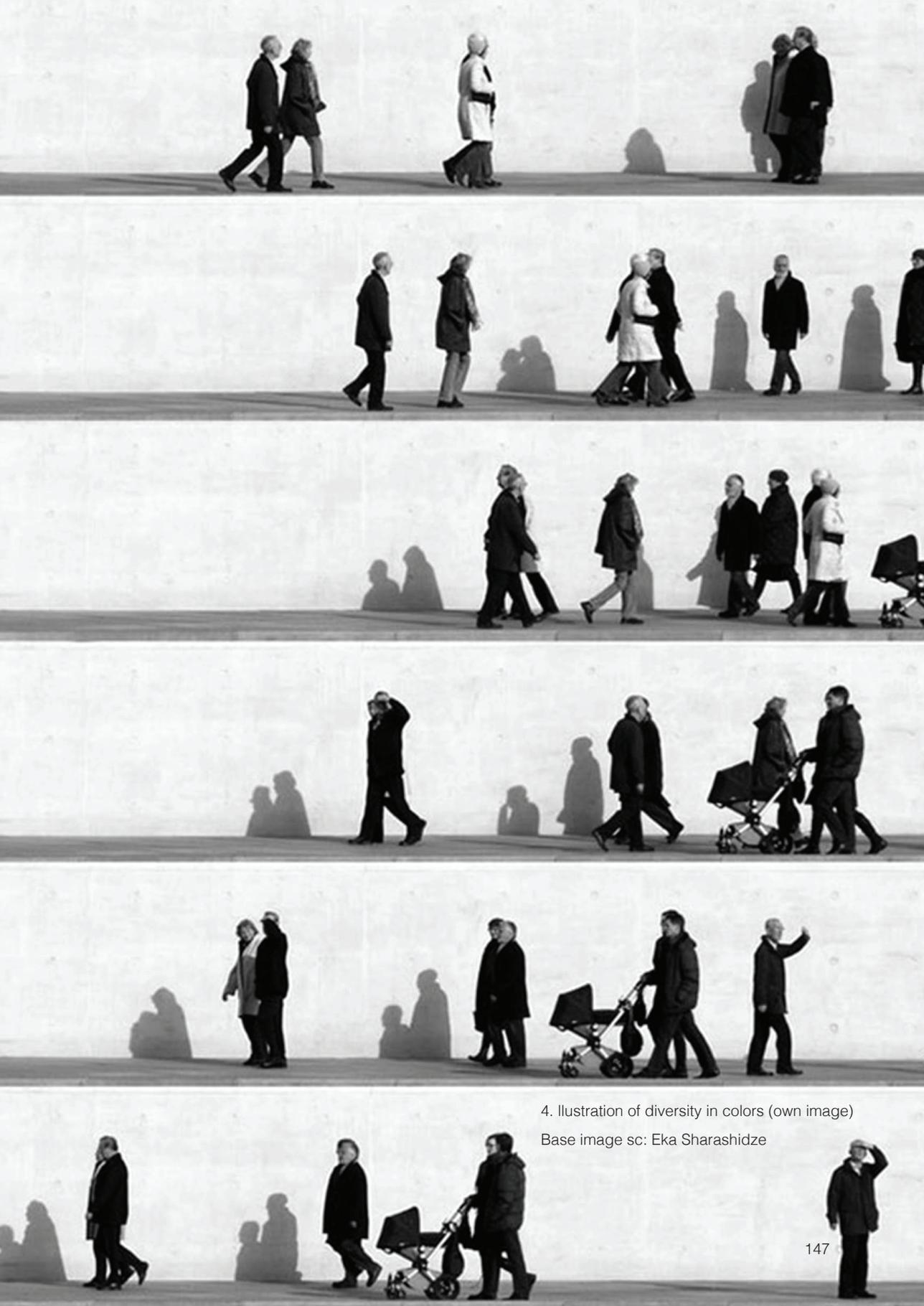
4. Ilustration of diversity in colors (own image)

Base image sc: Eka Sharashidze

5. Diversity in plantation (own image)
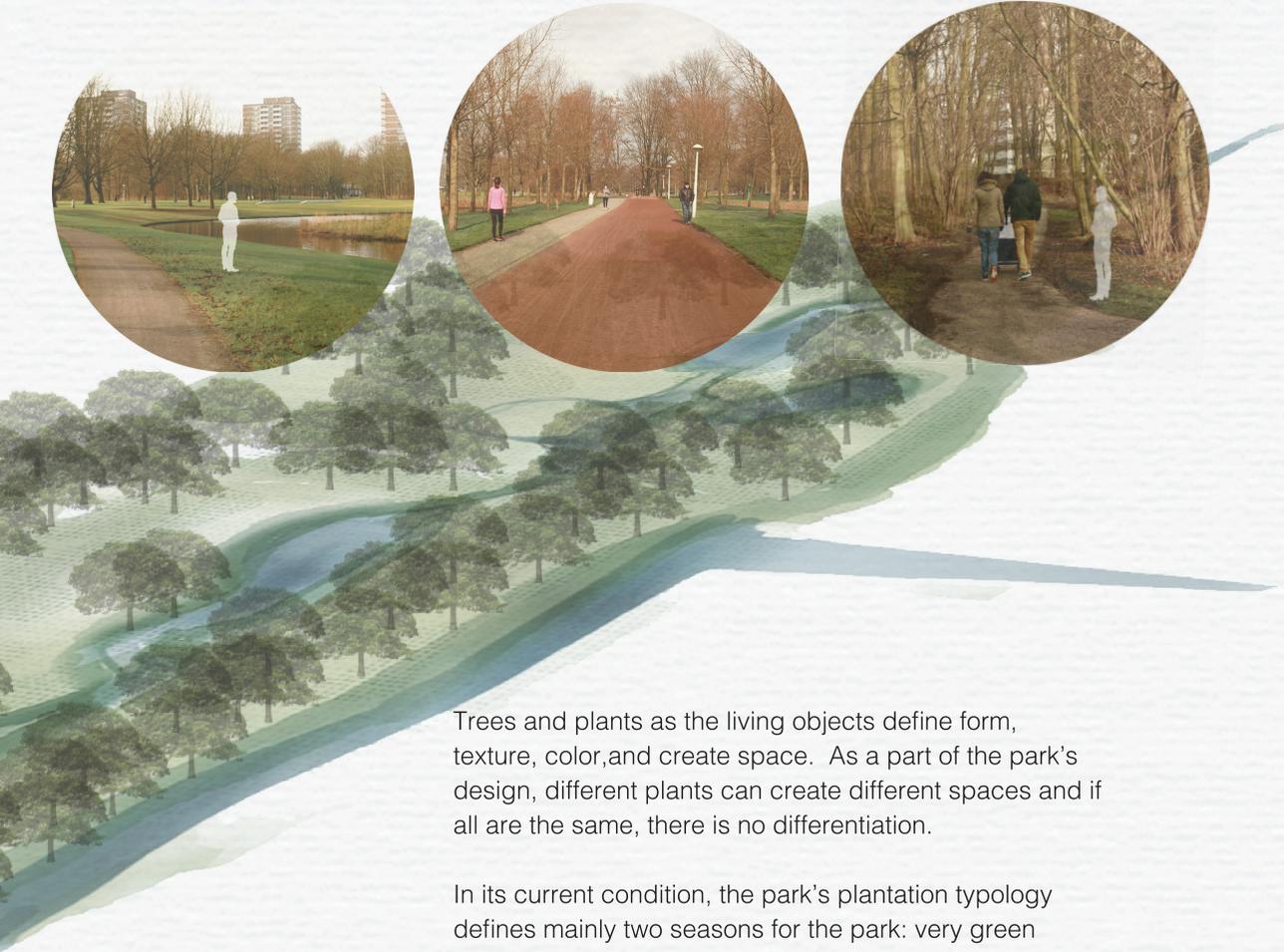
Trees and plants as the living objects define form, texture, color,and create space. As a part of the park's design, different plants can create different spaces and if all are the same, there is no differentiation.

In its current condition, the park's plantation typology defines mainly two seasons for the park: very green during the mild season and almost dry during the winter.

There are three types of plantation in the park: solitary or groups of treas, shrubs- mainly the water's edges- and vegetations that grow naturally.
There is a low diversity in the plantation pattern, plants and vegetation typology. The lack of diversity in plantation has formed spaces with similar charectristics.

When i make a design for plantation, I pay attention to
architecture- shape, structure and color...

-Piet Oudolf, landscape architect
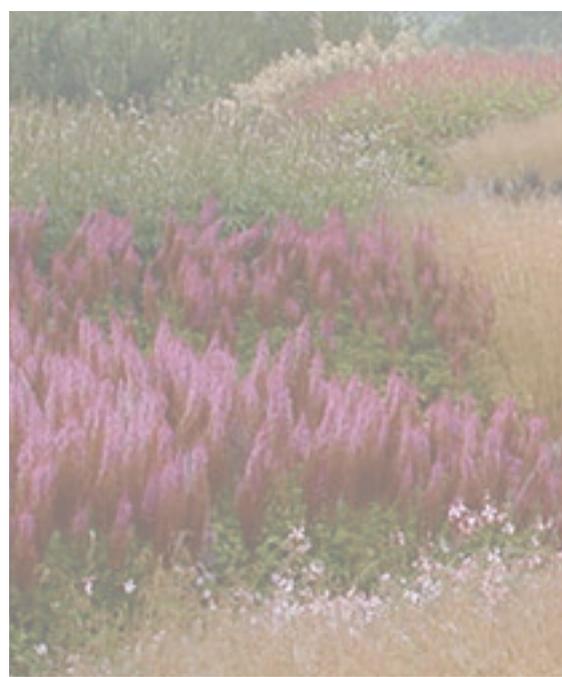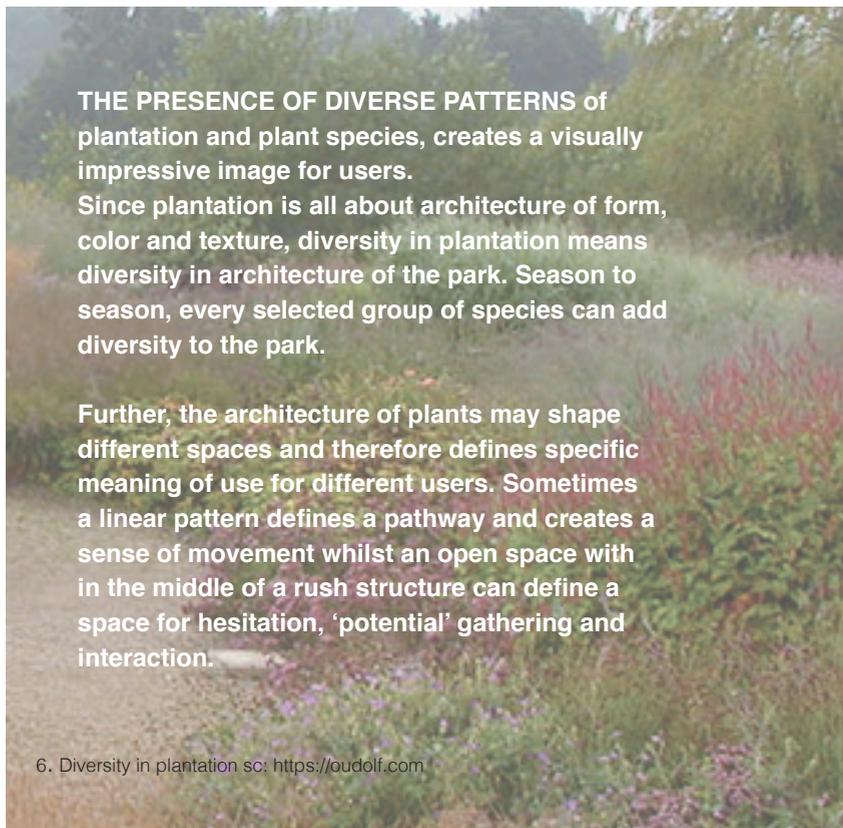
THE PRESENCE OF DIVERSE PATTERNS of plantation and plant species, creates a visually impressive image for users.
Since plantation is all about architecture of form, color and texture, diversity in plantation means diversity in architecture of the park. Season to season, every selected group of species can add diversity to the park.

Further, the architecture of plants may shape different spaces and therefore defines specific meaning of use for different users. Sometimes a linear pattern defines a pathway and creates a sense of movement whilst an open space with in the middle of a rush structure can define a space for hesitation, 'potential' gathering and interaction.

6. Diversity in plantation sc: https://oudolf.com

As illustrated on this page, the park offers possibilities for a fluid physical connection between the park and the fronted streets. Despite certain limitations, both the western and eastern areas have physical access to the park. Although there is room for improving the physical connectivity of the park, the current set up does offer possibilities to communicate between the two sides of the A10 ring road through the park.
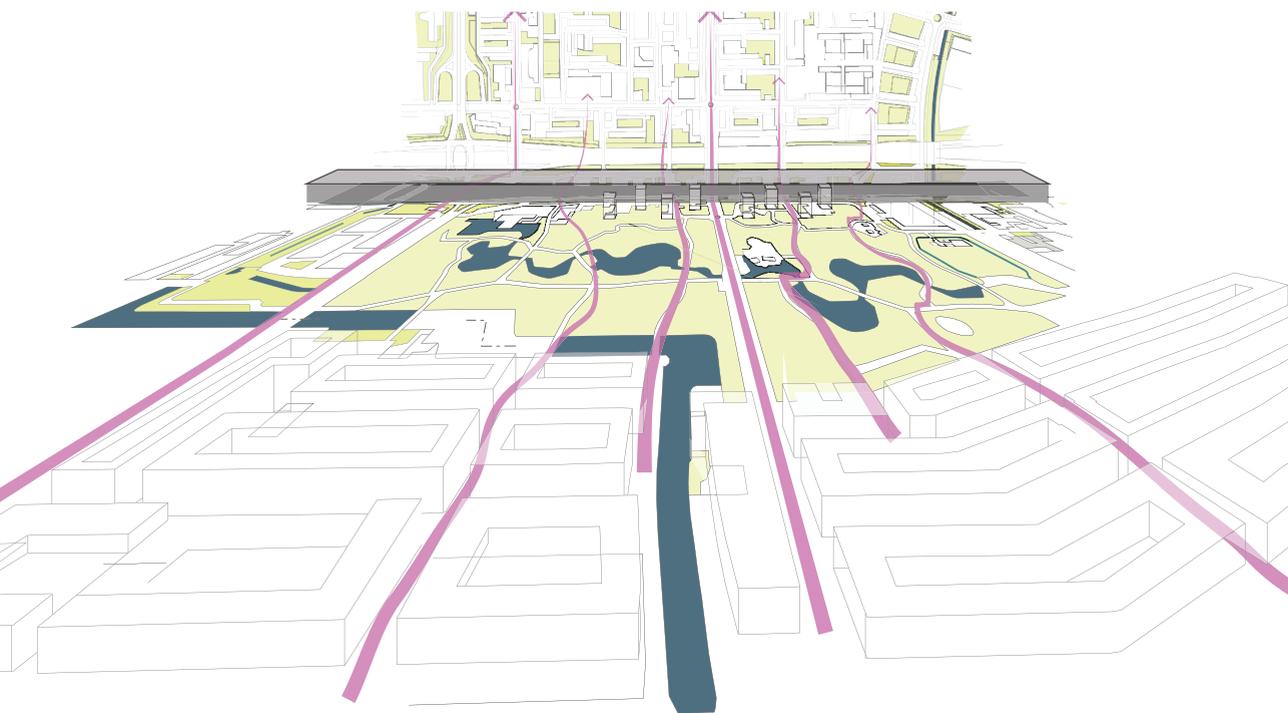
1. Physical porosity from east towards west (own image)

2. Physical porosity from west towards east through A10 underpass (own image)

3. Physical porosity from the park towards the wast neighborhood through A10 underpass (own image)

4. Visual porosity - from the Rembrandt park to the east side of park-winter (own image)

5. Visual porosity - from the Rembrandt park to the east side of park-Autumn (own image)

6.Visual porosity -From the west side of the park towards park sc:googlemap.com

7.Visual porosity -From the Rembrandt park to the west side of park through the
A10 underpass (own image)

The A10 motorway is currently functioning as a visual barrier, blocking visual porosity to and from the Rembrandt park.
As illustrated in the front map, the visual porosity of the left neighborhood towards the park is very limited all year round. This has limited the visual connection of people who live or communicate through the park from the west side of the A10.

In contract, people who live and access the park from the right side always have some degree of visual connection to the park, less during summer and more during winter. The only item that limits their visual connection is the typology of plantation and trees which are actually a part of the park itself.
Since people of the neighborhood at the right side of the park have a better visual access to the park, that side is also used more and is more active comparing with the left side of the park. Similarly, the lack of visual porosity might be one of the reasons for the inactivity of the park's left side but also the reason for inhabitants of the same neighborhood to be seen less in the park. It is notable that by way of mental mapping, some inhabitants of the left side have no mental image of the park and did not even mention it during the interviews performed (please refer also to the section on mental mapping).

summer time   winter time
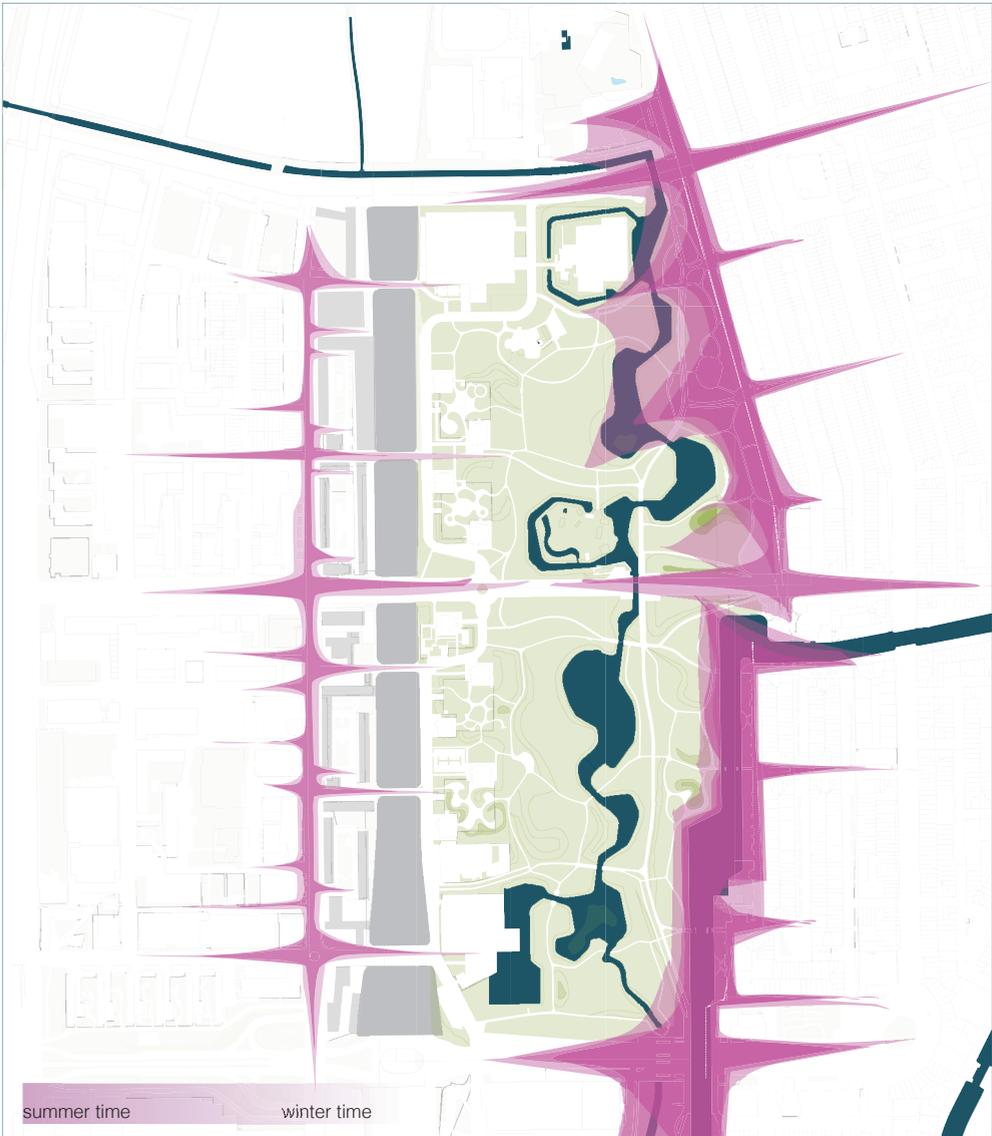
8.Visual porosity. from the east and west side through the park
 (own image)
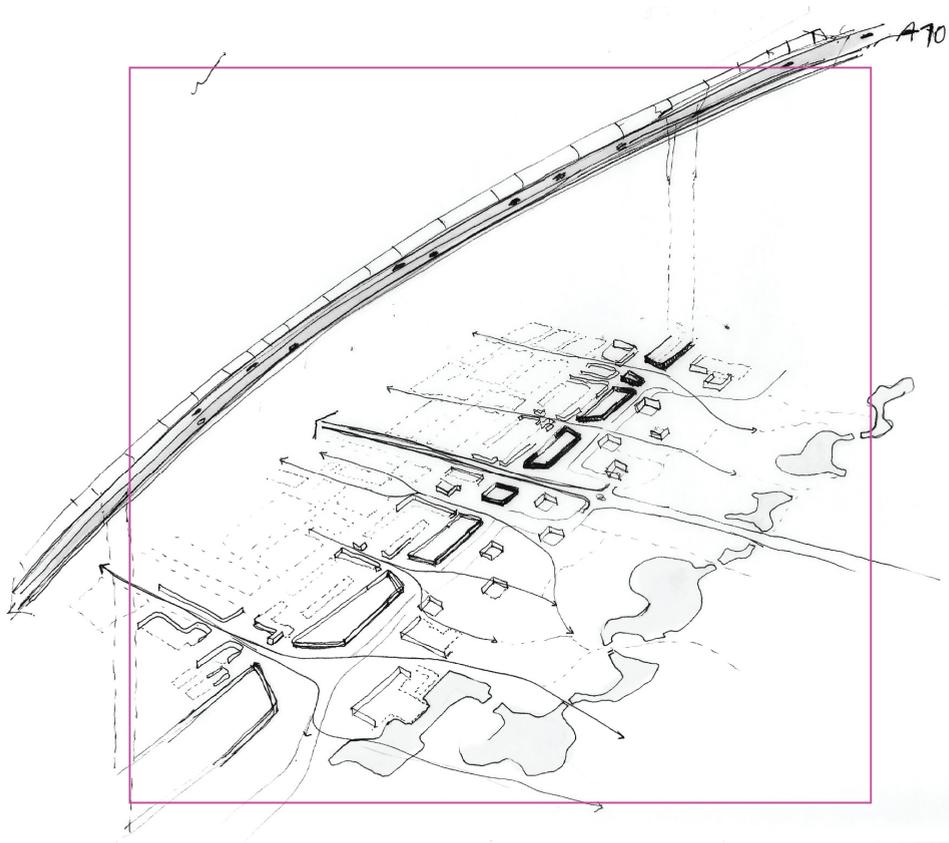
9. Ilustration of the possible future with the wide A10 underpass

When we talk about porosity, we are talking about limits. About moving those limits, changing them or at least making them slightly more blurred (European Europe, 2012). When we design and place an infrastructure in the city, we should know that it is not going to be just a functional element, but also a public characteristic.

In this study, the Vision is aimed to create better visual porosity by:

1. Opening the A10 underpass
2. Extending public functions through A10 underpass.
3. Extending more of the park characteristics and programs
4. Adding adoptable spaces for facilitating diverse programs and activities.

By creating more room under the A10 for new programs, we can shift its function from being a barrier to a transitional space between small closed communities to the big public park. The A10 underpass can be better designed to extend both social and physical edges between the Rembrandt park and the New West neighborhood.

THE **B**RIDGE, in this study is a transmissionary stage from the analysis to the design. By this stage, the outcomes of every level of analysis are translated to patterns applicable for design. This way, created patterns are contextual but are not designed for a specific context and thus are applicable to different studies within the similar social context .

Pattern is a statement of the art of careful observation, of seeing patterns that are alive, as a neglected foundation of high-quality design (Ulrich,2006). As Christopher Alexander (1977) described in his book, a patter is a language, being communicative to different people with different knowledge and understanding. Alexander defines language as a combinatorial and creative method of communication in different contexts. The aim for this language is to allow users to use the patterns to develop an appropriate design for a given context (Montenegro et al,. 2011).

In this study, pattern is considered as a simplified form of a socio-spatial issue in a form of design principals for the purpose of diversities. In addition to the nature of pattens, pattern is also used for creating a network of design, continuity and some degree of similarity. This way, some patterns are used repeatedly in different design scenarios.

BRIDGE

In support of diversities

A1-2

Adaptability of design elements, programs and activities

B1-2

Scale of design elements, programs and activities

C1-2

Form/ shape of design elements

In support of diversities

Low diversity → High diversity

D1-2

Continuity of design elements, programs and activities

E1-2

Texture of design elements

F1-2

Color of design elements

In support of diversities

Sociality

Low diversity   High diversity

G1-2
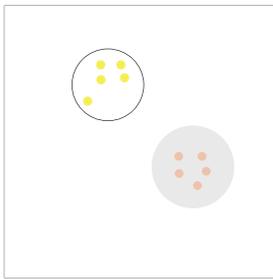
Having separated social settings/spaces   Having shared social settings/spaces
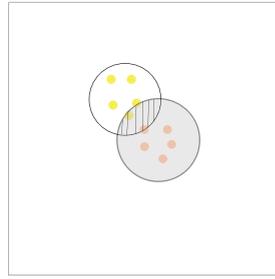
H1-2
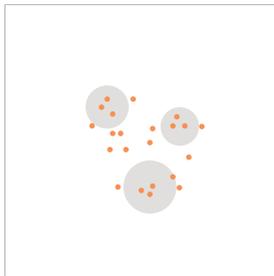
Diversity in social settings/spaces= diversity in users and activities

In support of diversities

Sociality

Low diversity → High diversity

G1-2
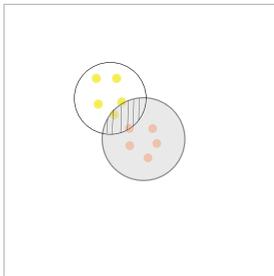
Focusing on the current shared
social setting/space
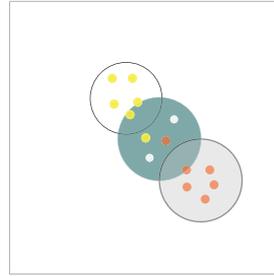
Adding a new social context to the
current social setting/space

K1-2
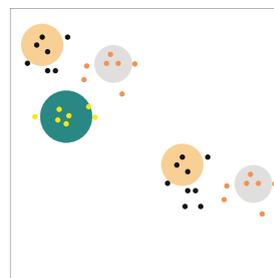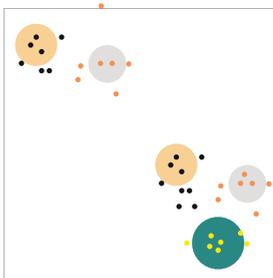
Moving a social setting/space= moving the users

Social collectivity

L1-2

No collectivity

collectivity

M1-2
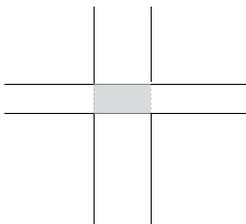
Fixed collectivity
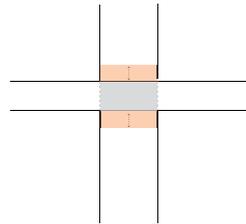
Adaptable collectivity

Social collectivity

N1-2
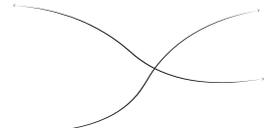
No collectivity

collectivity

P1-2

Collective edge

Extention of collectivity
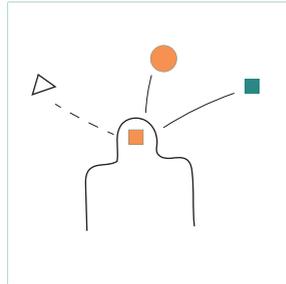
Perceived urban orientation elements
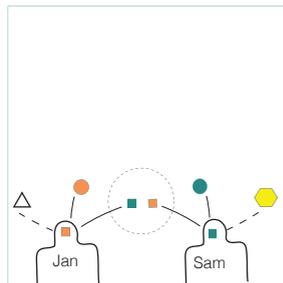
Shared perceived urban orientation elements

Social orientating

Low diversity → High diversity

Q1-2
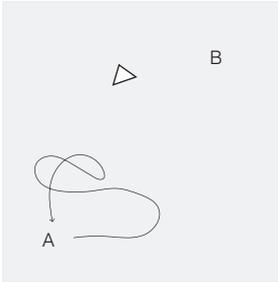
Disorientation
orientation around one destination
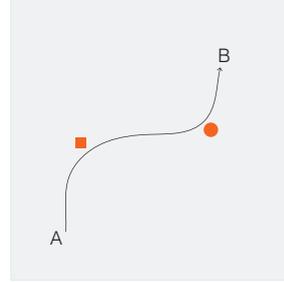
Orientation
Orientation between multiple destinations

R1-2
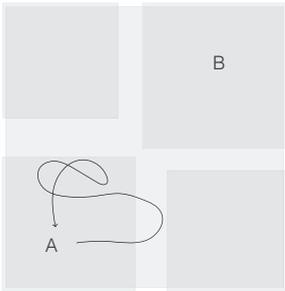
Disorientation
orientation around one destination
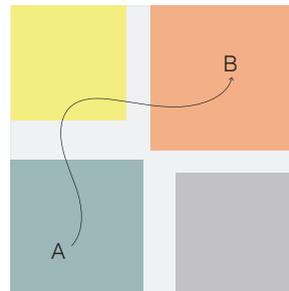
Orientation
Orientation between multiple destinations

S1-2
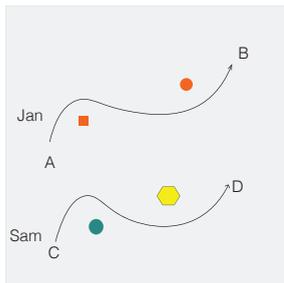
No shared social orientation
Different social spaces
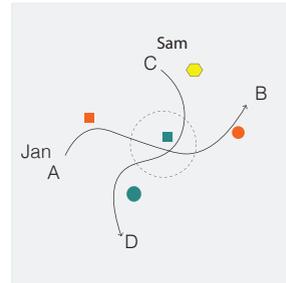
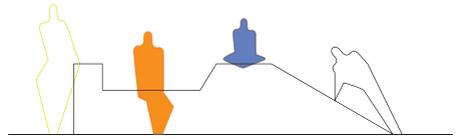shared social orientation
Shared social space

In support of diversities
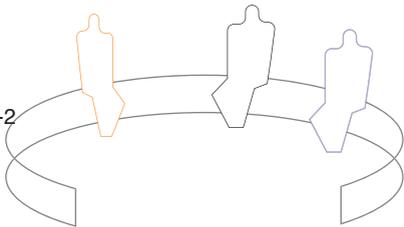
Social Seating

T1-2
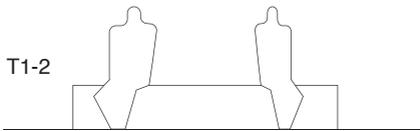
Providing limited ways of sitting
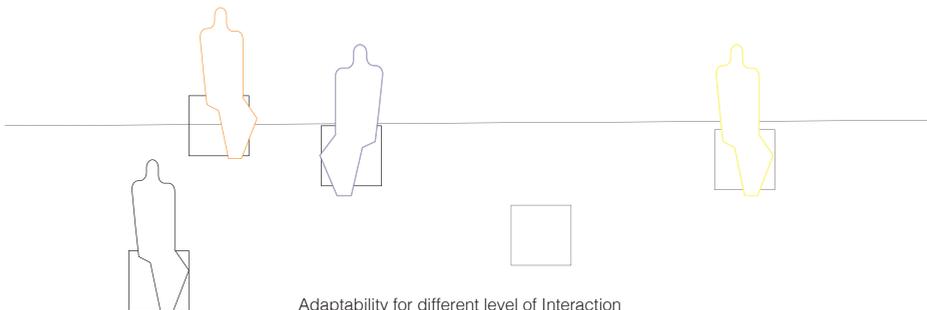
Providing diverse ways of sitting

U1-2

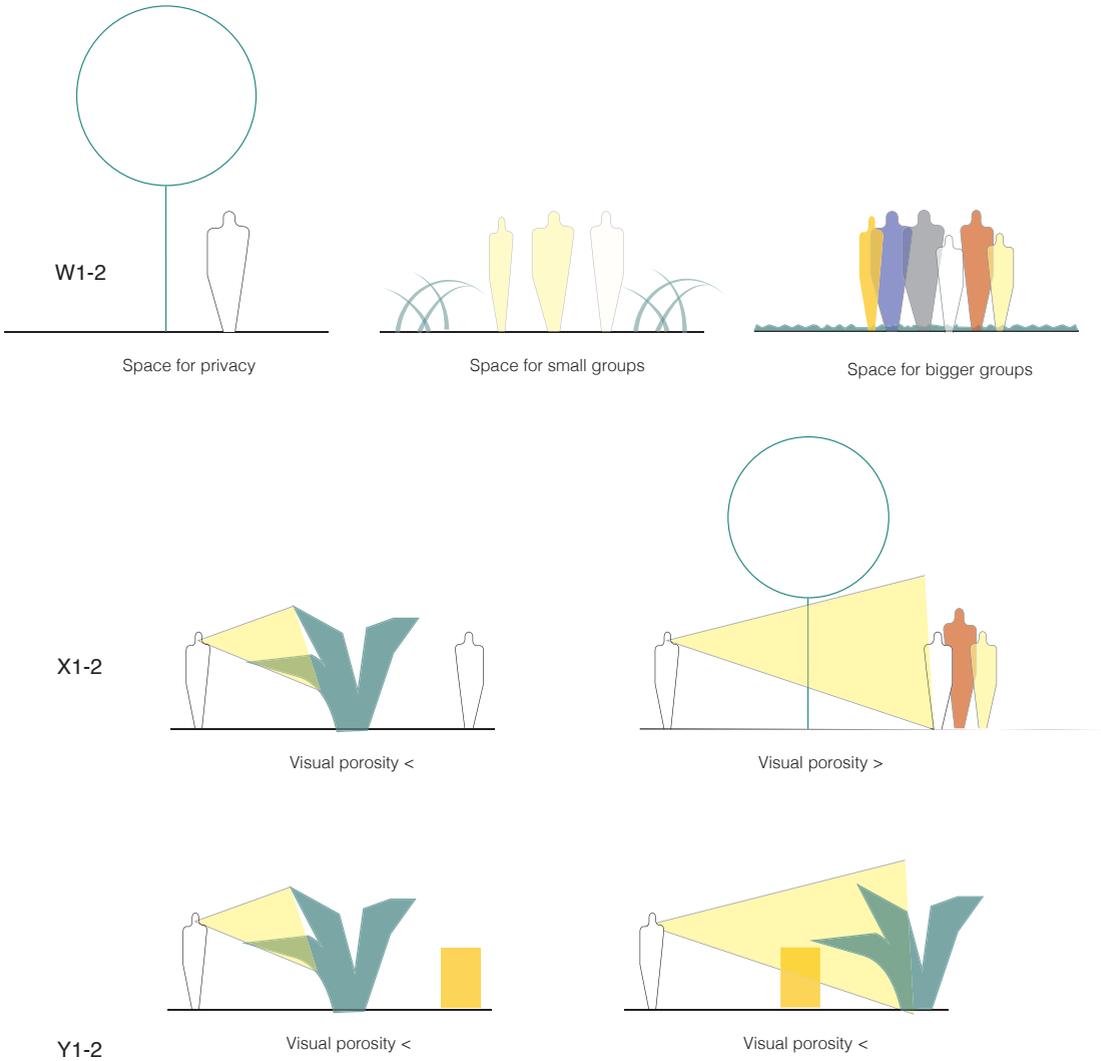Encouraging social interaction

Encouraging no social interaction

V1-2

Adaptability for different level of Interaction

In support of diversities

Planting

W1-2

Space for privacy

Space for small groups

Space for bigger groups

X1-2

Visual porosity <

Visual porosity >

Y1-2

Visual porosity <

Visual porosity <

In the vision, the outcomes of analysis as patterns were employed for creating a design intervention for the south side of Rembrandt park. Vision explains the development of design towards an improved master plan for the south side of the Rembrandt park, a focused intervention for a section of the park and illustrations from users' perspective.

At the end, the vision is examined and tested in the park to further explore the compatibility of diverse design interventions with the perception of the people who visit the park.

Vision

Design development

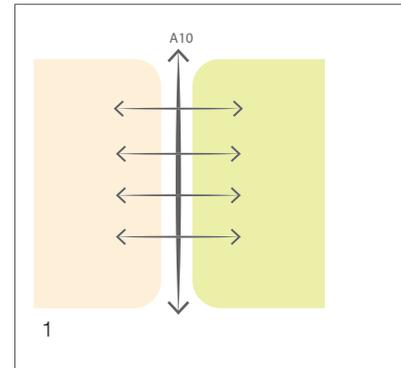Master plan

Focused intervention

User's perspective

Testing the design

The Vision is aimed to answer the following issues in the general scale (master plan) and the scale of focused design intervention:

For the scale of the master plan:
        1. Diversity in scale- social spaces
        2. Extension of social edges- waterfront
        3. Connection of the diverse scale - the loop
        4. Extension of visual porosity

For the scale of the focused design intervention:
        1. Diversity of use/users
        2. Diversity of social interaction
        3. Adaptability of space
        4. Continuity of space/urban elements


1

SCALE OF MASTER PLAN

The master plan for the south of the Rembrandt park (F.10) has been developed to answer the above mentioned issues by way of using the assigned patterns.

FIRST OF ALL, the A10 underway is expanded for increasing the visual porosity between park and the adjacent neighborhood (F.1). Also, it aims to create room for the extension of social edges as programs between both sides of the A10 ring road (F.3-4).
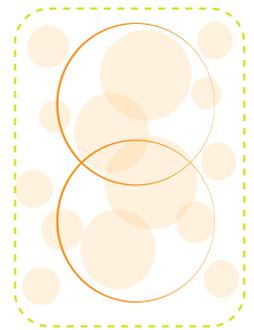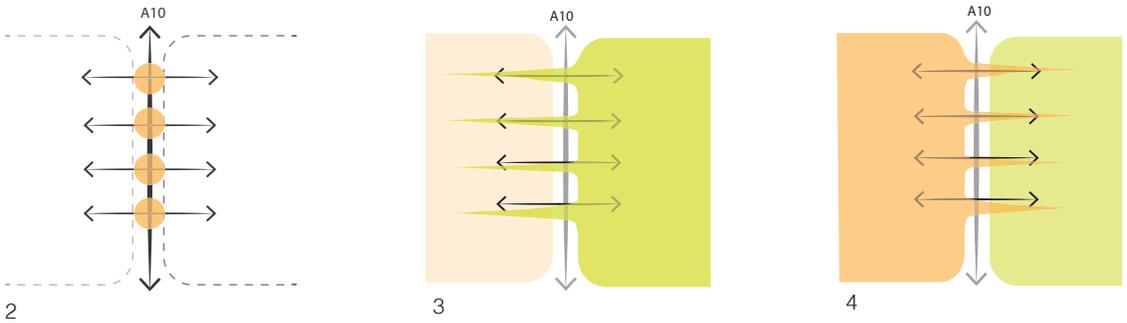

5

6

7

2

3

4
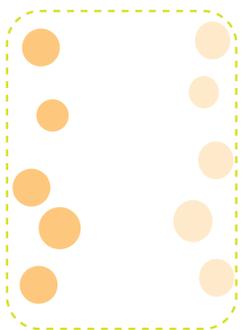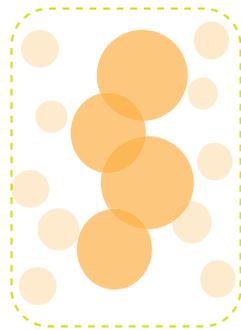
SECONDLY, the west edge of the park, which is currently inactive, is activated by creating social space for the gathering of small groups-medium diversity (F.5).

THIRDLY, the central axis of the park is facilitated but also left partly open for large diversities, the presence of bigger groups and diverse activities (F.6).

FINALLY, for expanding the waterfront social spaces, from the central axis towards the edges, the water boundaries are extended outwards (F.8-9).

This way, the diversity of space from its edges towards the center of the park increases, as well as its openness and adaptability. The designed social spaces are connected by the loop for a better network and circulation of diversities between the two edges and center (F.7).
Every stage of the design development is supported by a number of patterns .

8   9

FOCUSED DESIGN INTERVENTION
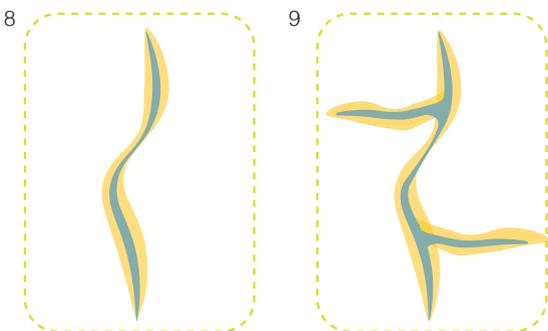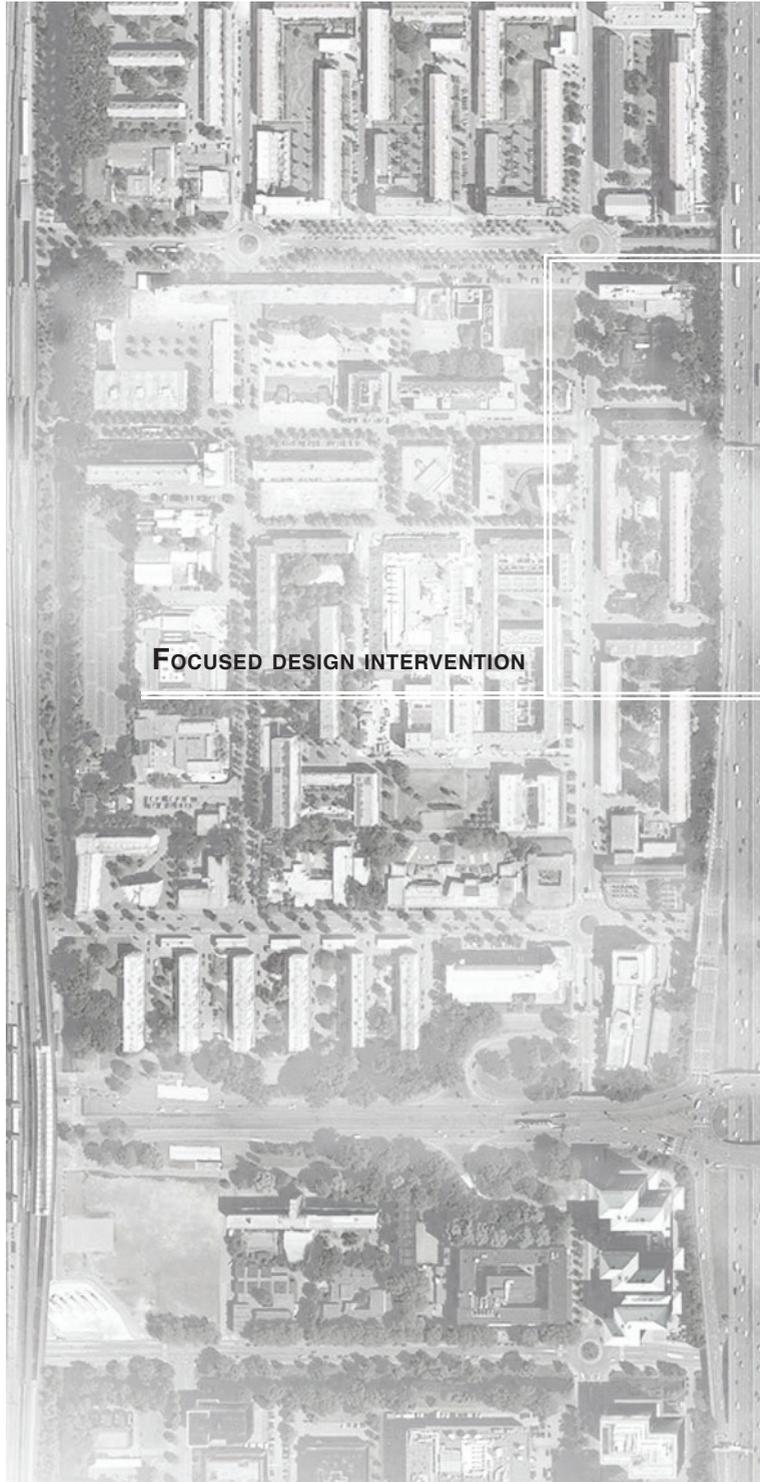
10: Master plan for the south of Rembrandt park (own image)
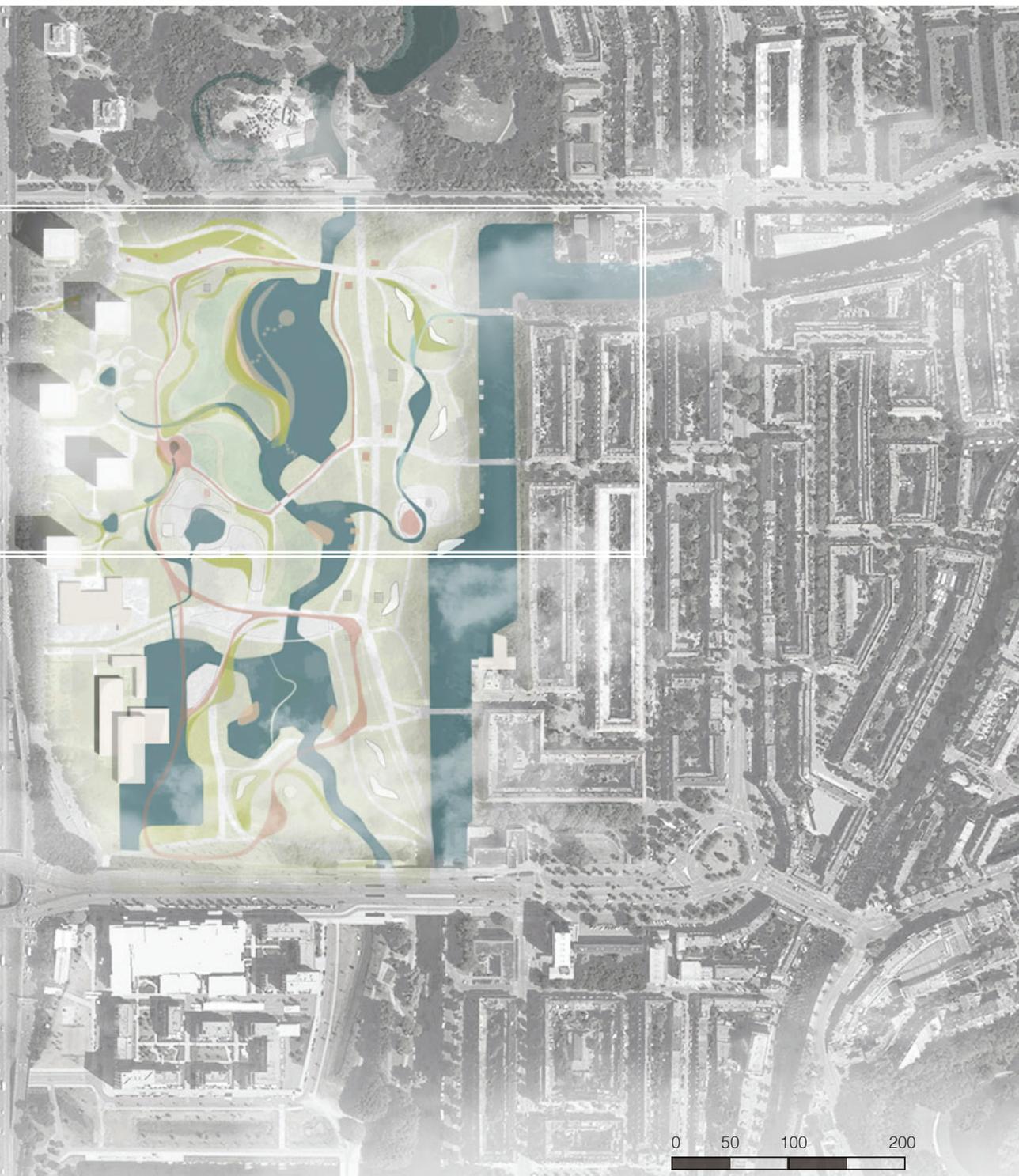
11: Focused design intervention (own image)
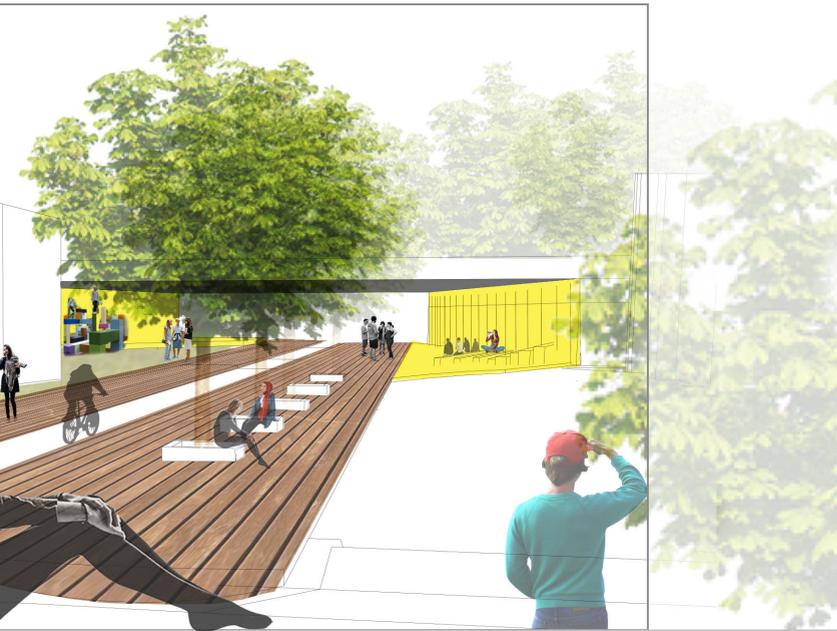
0   50   100
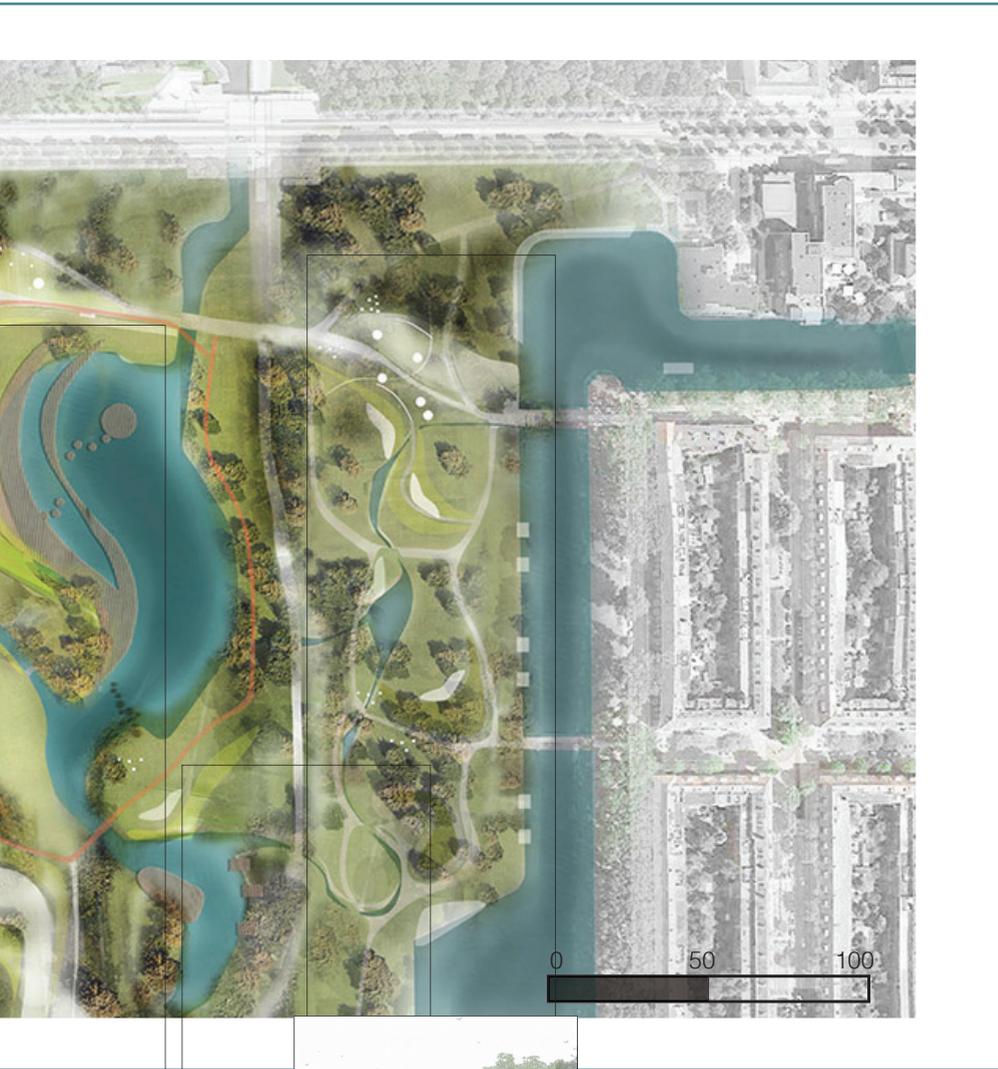
11. View over the A10 underpass from a living room.
There are some people - a few of them are seating and others are moving towards the park, while some are just coming back from the park.
One can see similar colors and materials being repeated, as if an extension of the park.
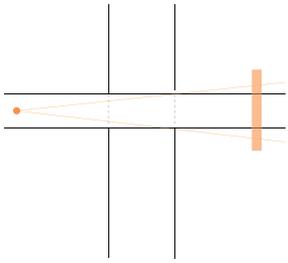
Visual porosity/interaction
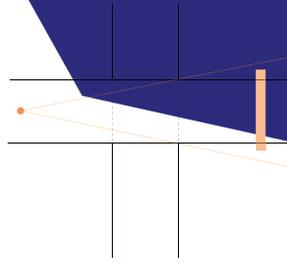
Visual prorosity/interaction
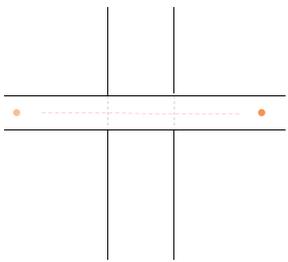
Linear space
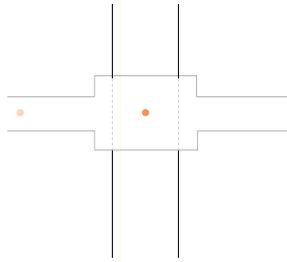
Collective space
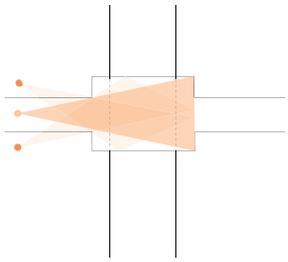
Form & orientation
Visual porosity/interaction

Form & orientation
Visual prorosity/interac-
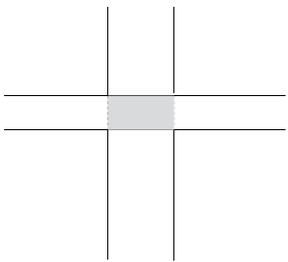
Fixed space
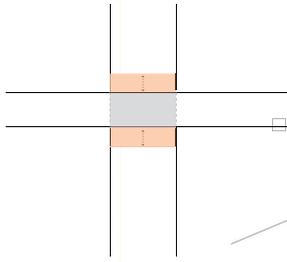
Flexible / Expandable
space

13.Pattern development for A10 underpass(own image)

12. The A10 underway has public functions. It is designed to facilitate diverse programs for the purpose of the temporary stay of people. The main function of the A10 is to increase the porosity and lead people towards the park. The continuity of the design elements from the park through the A10 underway helps orientating people towards the park.

14. Since the design is adaptable, it can host different programs. The created flexible rooms provide possibilities for different design scenarios. Such as pop-up stores or simply a meeting room for those who pass the A10 underway.
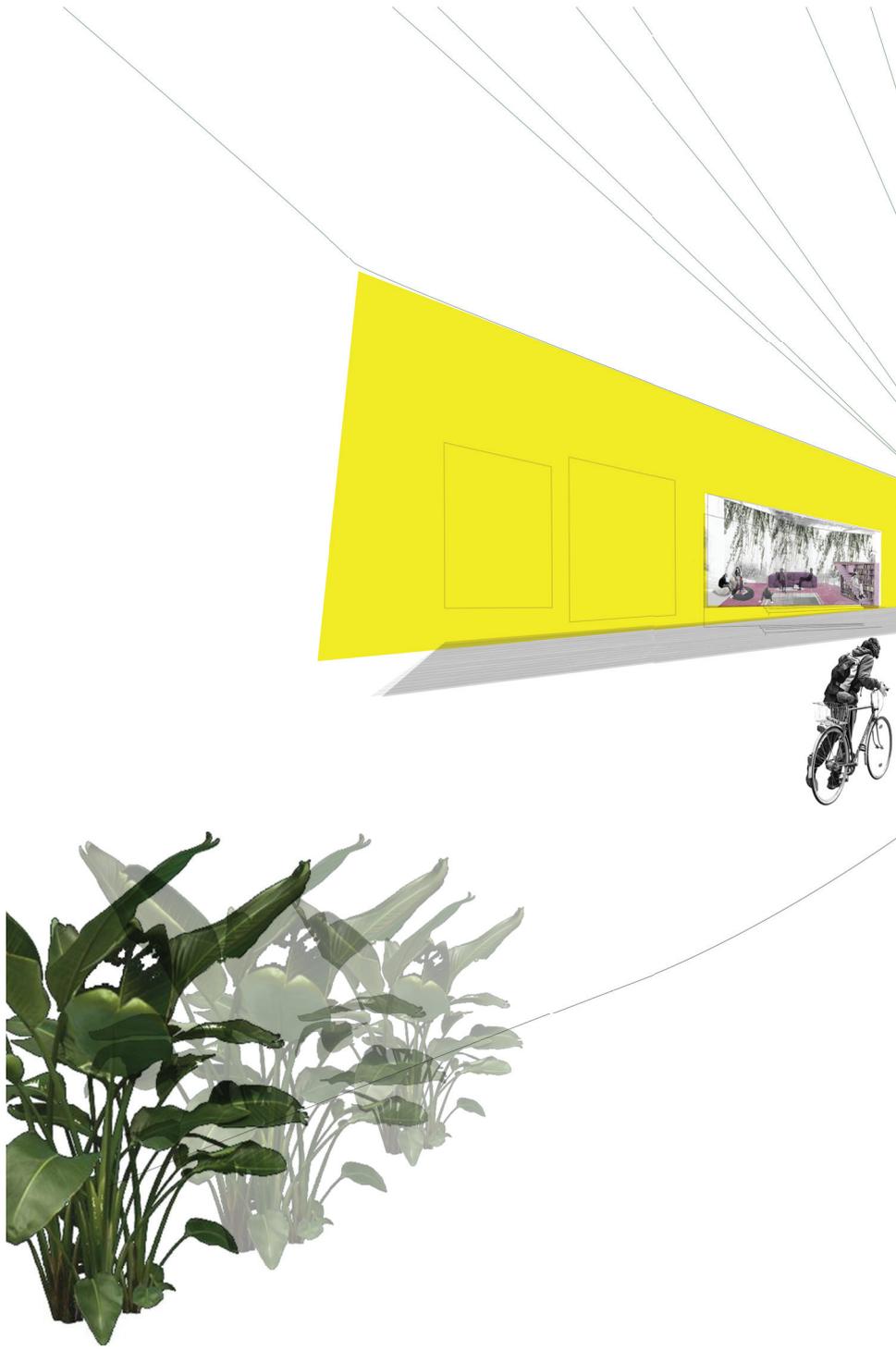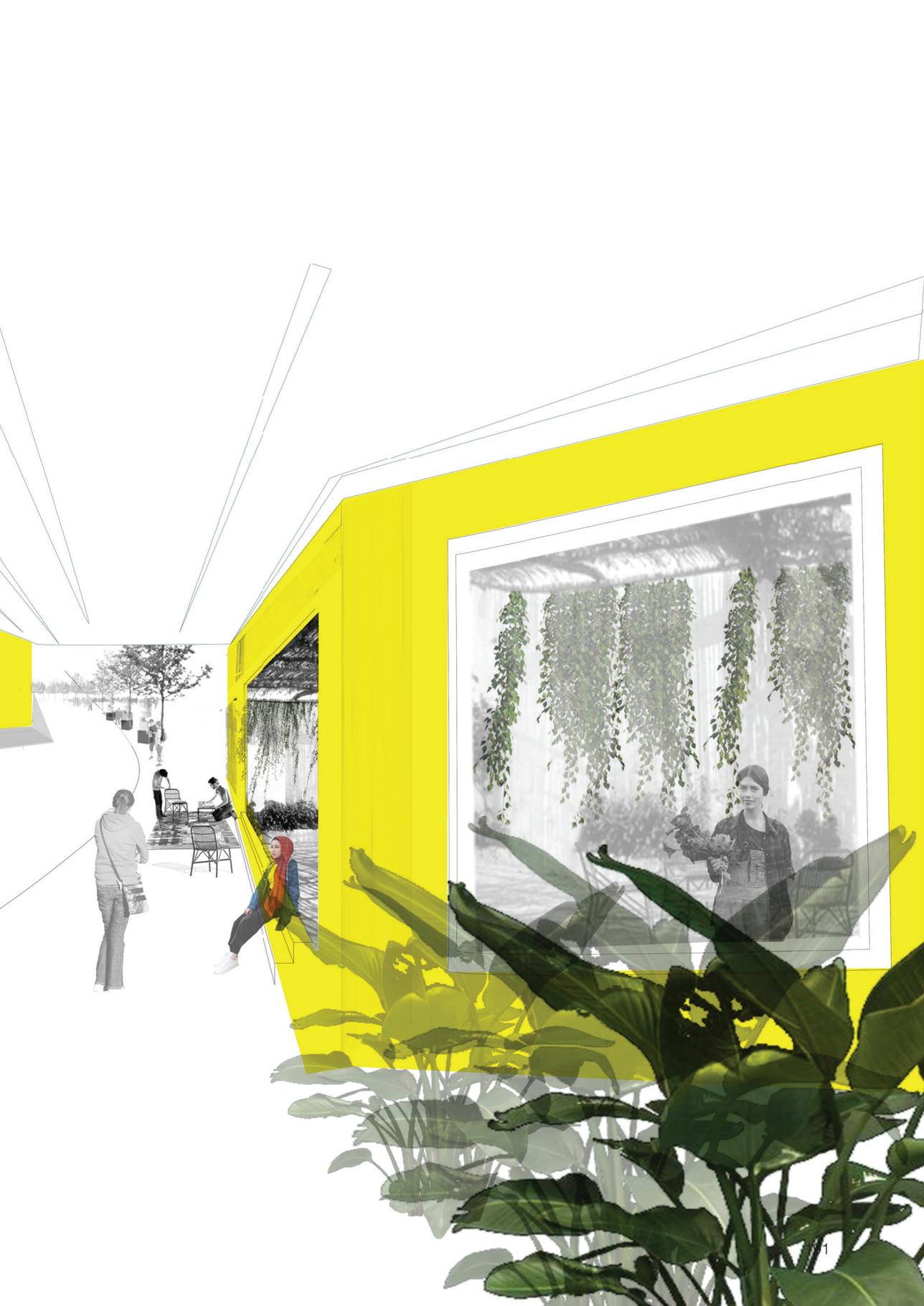
15.The social spaces at the edge are the spatial representation of medium diversity - these places are designed for small to medium-sized groups. The furnitures allow for diverse patterns of seating and interaction with others.
The selected materials (such as gravel) allow some degree of adaptability to future programs in a bigger scale. The presented continuity of the design elements lead users to other edges and zones of the park.

16. The garden provides inhabitants of the surrounding towers with a place to gather and socialize.
It offers little diversity and adaptability as it is not aimed at inviting super diversities.
Spaces are designed to facilitate small groups. The garden provides a sample of what is
experienced in the centre of the park but with less diversity: using water, stone and grass as the key
design elements.

17. Behold the center of the park, designed for super diversity
Super diversity is supported here by different design elements creating a diverse experience, but also by keeping the space open for experience. This place in particular has potential for gatherings of big groups, but also of those who want to be in the center but more on their own.
The presented design elements, materials and plantation invites visitors for diverse types of interaction with the park and other visitors.

18.Walking from the centre towards the edge of the park, there are quiet places designed for medium to low diversities. The semi-public spot is usually visited by small groups and individuals who want to be in public space, but in a more quiet section. The privacy and quietness here is supported by having trees and tall plants for edging and multiple small stages placed over the water.

As mentioned in the methodology framework of this study, the selected method emphasizes on the circular characteristic of design and research process, rather than the linear characteristic. This means that every design can be tested, questioned and analysed again within the same methodological structure.
In this study, the vision as the conclusion of different phases of the analysis has been tested by revisiting

19.Location of interviews

the park and interviewing people with different backgrounds.

INTERVIEW WITH PARK USERS

The interview was conducted with 15 people during one Sunday in month February. The interview was conducted on the locations where the design has been illustrated.
During the interview, people mentioned different elements of the design and had different suggestions for improving the design, which clarifies the presence of different perceptions people have of public space.
The conclusion indicates that although respondents asked focused questions about different design elements, their input cannot solely be attributed to their differences in cultural background.

The main purposes of testing the design was to test how communicative it is towards the inhabitants, how different people reflect on it, if it supports any specific claim about cultural differences and, lastly, to examine the method itself. Testing the design as a part of the socio-spatial method could have resulted in more data by the participation of more interviewees and also during different time zones.

20.Vision

21.The current status in the park

Conclusion

This study frames the lack of diversity in the spatial layer of an urban public space and the possible solutions by design. The spatial modification of the design has been derived from the findings provided by the analysis which was simultaneously performed at the level of both layers - social and spatial. The applied method provided valuable insights for the design and possible social spatial patterns for a diverse public space supporting socio-cultural diversity.

The outcome of this study is not aimed (and was not intended) to create a fixed design as every design element itself may require a further focused investigation. The proposed design is purely a part of the method, visualizing the possibilities in a spatial form. This was supported by the employed method that allows the investigation of the context in a circular (rather than linear) manner. This way, the design can be questioned again and reinvestigated within a similar context for the purposes of similar or different design goals. Accordingly, the proposed design shows the possibilities but not the definite design for increasing diversifies in a spatial layer of a socio-culturally diverse neighborhood.

It should be noted that from the outset of this study, it has not been the intention to create a completely new park as the park within its current setting already forms part of the perception by its users and the identity of the area. The purpose of the study was therefore to use the possibilities offered by the park and add new layers for facilitating the presence and interaction of diverse groups of people.

The outcome of this study, including the design and the created patterns, can be a useful source for other designers looking to create a design for supporting diversities. I hope that the outcomes of this study not only can serve to improve the diversity in the design of public spaces, but also provide the experimental base for investigating public life within public space by using methods communicating to inhabitants and reflecting their thoughts and actions in the design of public spaces.

In overall, the selected theories and methodologies, which are embodied in the structure of this thesis -analyzing, reading, bridging and vision- appeared very promising to me. They were aimed at analyzing the social and spatial layers in correlation, rather than on an individual basis. This way, the method helped this study to investigate the "affordances" of physical space as a social space with the diverse social representations within.

Firstly, by using the selected methodologies I had the chance to lively experience the theoretical part, being the symbolic side of urbanism, inclusive social space and the real meaning of diversities in the everyday lives of the inhabitants in the project area. Amongst the theories selected for the base of this study, the theories by Kevin Lynch (1991) completed by the cultural perspective of Peter Nas (2002) and Herbert Blumer (1969) have proven very useful. In particular, for the purposes of exploring people's different perceptions of public space, focusing on those groups who are seen less and the possible underlying reasons by means of mental mapping combined with interviews. At this stage, communication with respondents, and using some samples of "mental maps" prior to the interview, were helpful.

Regarding the selection of questions, such as "where do you go every day in the neighborhood?" caused a defensive reaction from some cultural groups as it associated with their privacy. Therefore, it appeared to be more useful when some questions were replaced by generic and approximate ones. Furthermore, being introduced by a member of the community led to a faster process but also better trust from the interviewees themselves.

It is notable that this method, although having been very useful in the beginning of the study, could not be used purely for the purpose of design and therefore needed to be examined by other methods as well.

As part of the second stage of this study, the experiences and suggestions of William Whyte (1980) were employed in terms of the necessity of direct observation for exploring the use of public space and design of inclusive

social spaces. The method of observation helped to better understand the outcome of the interviews, as well as the relevant literature.

Parallel to observation, the method of sketching was added in the course of the process. Sketching new scenarios for the presented situation in the park, led to exploring design ideas in the very beginning of the study. This approach helped to steer this study into the direction of the research process towards the final vision.

Overall, the method of observation, although very useful, has some limitations: for instance, it is impossible to have the overview of the whole research area at the same time (Bernard, 2005). So, while recording from one spot, the observant may fail to record issues out of his framed view. Accordingly, the observation can be more accurate by engaging several observants.

Combined with all stages of this study is the method of interviewing. With respect to the interviews conducted with inhabitants and park users, the location of the interview was very important. People in some specific locations appeared more relaxed and communicative. Regarding the selection of questions for the interviews, having specific keywords rather than fixed questions led to innovative questions suitable to every single interviewee and thus wider responses within a fixed structure. Also, considering the selection of interviewees, sometimes one person with a communicative language and knowledge of the area appeared to be a good representative for a big group of people.

Amongst the interviews, those combined with mapping were the most useful in terms of being communicative and participatory to respondents. The interviews helped to find out, how a similar issue can be presented using different words, knowledge and also captured by different people. Further to the method itself, the sub-tactics of socializing with people, finding the right people for the purposes of the study, asking the right questions and, most importantly, translating answers to patterns for design, have all brought me priceless experiences.

The third stage, being the outcome of the research, has been tested

and questioned via interviewing professionals. That helped this study in the final selection of the data that was more crucial for the design. In this respect, the interview with Evert Verhagen was the most informative and brought this study to a new level of challenge for design. However, certain sociological points of view were initially missed, which were later completed by conducting an interview with sociologist Helma Hellinga.

Accordingly, this study suggests having interviews not only with urban designers and planners, but also with sociologists who have worked on or experienced the same area. The interview with Helma Hellinga, who is the writer of the book titled "Onrust in de stad en park", provided a valuable perspective to the stories behind the current issues in the targeted area.

It is notable that amongst the interviews, either with inhabitants or professionals, there were also some interviews which are not reflected directly in this study but gave me knowledge and inspiration for better processing the study as well as the final design.

Regarding having a combination of methodologies for a more precise outcome, this study suggests the value of overlapping of data gathered from what people say, draw and do in public space. In essence, the overlap of their thoughts, words and actions. That is because sometimes people don't know what they want. Sometimes they know what they want, but they cannot express it precisely in words. Sometimes, they basically don't mean the same as what they say. Then they draw, but they cannot always draw all what they have in mind. And then they act and react in public space, but even the last part is influenced in part by their perception and in part by the environment with all objects including other people.

In the end, although appearing very challenging, the selected methodologies brought new knowledge to this study, something that could not have been achieved by purely following written theories and methods. Here, the suggestion for designers would be to take more explorative actions rather than only focusing on the series of published literatures and that way to keep some space for experience.
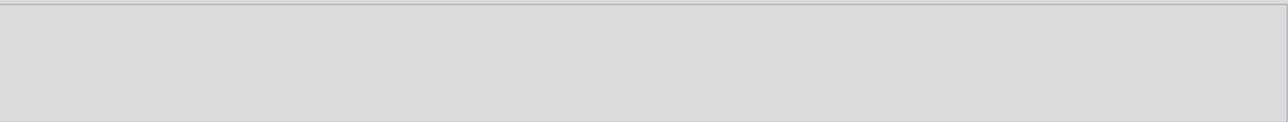
The design part of this study was developed in parallel to the research process. During every stage, design concepts and ideas drew new outlines for research as research reflected new insights on design.
Driven by the relevant literature reviewed, the research area has been established from the
beginning with socio-cultural diversities, mainly due to the presence of immigrants. In parallel, driven by the selected theoretical views, having inclusive adaptable social spaces is a necessity.

Having diversities in mind, the designs presents the necessities as possibilities of diverse adaptable design interventions within an urban public space. The "diverse design intervention" is described as a bridge to connect diversities in the platform of the Rembrandt park in Amsterdam. In this stage, the design patterns appeared very useful in terms of translating the analysis into a generic discipline for design. This way, patterns as a method created possibilities for improving contextual design disciplines which can also be applied to other projects within a similar context, design for socio-cultural diversities and interaction.

It should be noted that in the beginning of this project, creating a social space for interacting with others was the main goal and actually also a sort of 'must'. However, after having experienced the neighborhood, its inhabitants and their stories, watching how they act and considering previous researches conducted, the study helped to experience the hidden aspects of interaction:
Firstly, interaction cannot be taken as a must. Instead, it has to be taken as an option.
Secondly, inclusive design means a design for everyone, including those who want to interact with others, but also those users who prefer less interaction with other groups. Accordingly, the final design supports diversities also in terms of the level of social interaction.

Regarding cultural diversities, the use of public space divided by cultures and their perception of public space was initially one of the main aims of this study. However, from this study, it follows that it is not possible to divide people by their cultural characteristics. That is partly due to the presence of many cultures, even within one cultural group.

In addition, there are presented overlaps between cultural characteristics. There are cultural differences and there are people from different cultures who act differently. However, not all differences are due to cultures and also the culture is not always the reason for all differences.

The aforementioned was experienced during all stages of this study but mainly by conducting interviews with people of different cultures in the study area using the design illustration for the park (testing the design).

The conclusion indicates that, although respondents asked focused questions about different design elements, that by itself does not provide conclusive evidence for the existence of cultural differences. Rather, it clarifies the presence of different perceptions people have of public space. And that is "diversity" and can create diversities. In addition, society's statistics are not fixed and are constantly changing. In such a complex system, we as designers can only act as wise and conscious as possible to select the data which allows the most proper design scenarios and keep the design open for future experience as well as adaptation. This is supported by the vision of this study by proposing diverse adaptable social spaces as the key for attracting a diverse group of people.

To close this reflection, I want to say that an urban designer is the designer of peoples' perceptions today and all what may shape their perceptions in the future. We are not only the designer of form but also the designer of social flows, peoples' use or misuse of a place and their social life stories outside of their homes. We are the most influential actors in the presence and interaction of diversities. In addition to being a designer, we are the translator of people's perceptions, from sociology to physiology, from their minds and behavior to the outline for design.

In essence, people are the main drivers of public space and we are the translators of their demands for spatial design. We can learn a lot from people, even those with the lowest communicative language or level of professional understanding can be the best contributors for creating a successful design for people. Design is for people and has to be inclusive to all people.

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BRIDGING DIVERSITIES is a research and design project about the correlation of social and spatial diversities in an urban public space, the Rembrandt park in Amsterdam. This project brings together the physical diversity of the park with the diversity of its users and questions the compatibility of both.

How diverse is the design of the park? How diverse are the park's users? Which groups are seen more or less in the park? If they are not present in the park, where and how are their social spaces? How can their social spaces be extended to the park?