RESEARCH

SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS THROUGH ARCHITECTURE

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Information

This research is part of the graduation studio Designing for Health and Care in an Inclusive Environment at the Faculty of Architecture, TU Delft. It includes an introduction to the research, the theoretical research including design guidelines and the documentation of fieldwork. The research topic focuses on creating opportunities for social encounters through the means of architecture and has a specific focus on the designated design location: the Tarwewijk in Rotterdam.

Keywords: Architectural design, social encounters, transition zones, urban loneliness, social infrastructure, meeting places, social interaction, spatial design, public familiarity, Tarwewijk Rotterdam

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Abstract

Loneliness is an increasing concern in Dutch society, with 11% of the Dutch population experiencing strong feelings of loneliness, a number that is expected to grow as cities become more densely populated. This research explores the role of architectural design in fostering social encounters at multiple spatial scales — neighbourhood, transition zone, and interior — focusing on Tarwewijk, Rotterdam. The study examines the physical and programmatic qualities needed in architectural and urban design to contribute to social interaction and, consequently, reduce social isolation.

Using a combination of insights from architectural and sociological thinkers such as Richard Sennett, Eric Klinenberg, and Herman Hertzberger guide the exploration of social infrastructure, public familiarity, and spatial organization. The findings suggest that design interventions — such as enhancing transition zones, promoting identity and accessibility, designing social spaces that accommodate to a diversity of different groups — can strengthen social networks of people.

Ultimately, the study argues that while architectural design alone cannot solve the issue of loneliness, it plays a crucial role in shaping environments that encourage social interaction and a sense of belonging, contributing to the broader effort of loneliness prevention in inner-city neighbourhoods.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 01

01

Why architecture could play a role in reducing loneliness

In 2023, 1 out of 10 people in Dutch society experience strong feelings of loneliness. According to the CBS (2024), strong feelings of loneliness are subject to almost 11 percent of the Dutch society. Feelings of strong emotional loneliness (absence of close relationships) in the year 2023 appears to be greatest (14%) among young people between the ages of 15 and 25. On the other hand, feelings of strong social loneliness (shortage of social contact) in the same year is the greatest (18%) among people between 35 and 45. (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2024) People that suffer from severe loneliness incur up to 50 percent higher healthcare costs than people who do not feel lonely, according to research by Maastricht University among 350,000 adult Dutch people. Loneliness therefore plays a major role in healthcare costs, especially among young adults (19-40 years in the study of Maastricht University). According to the researchers, loneliness costs society approximately 2 billion euros in additional care every year. (Van Der Poel, 2021)

As mentioned before by CBS (2019), almost 11 percent of Dutch people experience strong feelings of loneliness. If that feeling lasts for a very long time, it leads to worrying, stress, poor sleep and depression. Loneliness appears to be most frequent among people with a low level of education and residents of non-Western origin, but in the end: loneliness affects all ages, both men and women. (Vriesema, 2019) Besides, the number of people in need of support and/or care has increased. Due to the aging population, this issue will grow significantly in the coming years. As a result, we will see fewer 'self-reliant' individuals living independently over time. Strengthening people's social networks starts with creating casual encounters. An inclusive neighbourhood that provides space for social networks can contribute to this. (Platform 31, 2021)
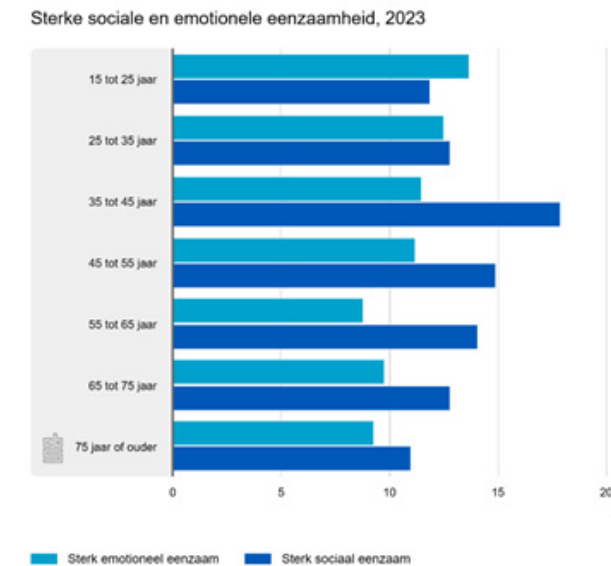

Figure 1: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (2023). Sterke sociale en emotionele eenzaamheid [Strong social and emotional loneliness]. Retrieved November 1, 2024, from https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2024/39/1-op-de-10-mensen-sterk-eenzaam-in-2023

According to Hollak (2020) loneliness occurs anywhere, but especially in big cities. The fact that feelings of loneliness are more common in big cities highlights the influence of the living environment on people's well-being. This is urgent, since shown by research almost 70 percent of the world's population in 2050 will live in cities. Hollak (2020) therefore argues that the impact of the city on our emotional health is therefore of great importance.

This highlights why it is crucial to consider the effects of architectural design on people's living environment. In many cities, there are not enough accessible social facilities to support people's social networks. For example, in Tarwewijk, social facilities such as community centres, meeting centres for youth, and dance studios have even been cut back over time, due to economic issues. (Doff et al., 2022) In addition, when you currently look around in the built environment, you mainly see apartment complexes and terraced houses. These housing types are often not optimally designed to encourage social interaction and help reduce social isolation. Because of the pressure that stems from the housing crisis, the type of housing that is currently being built is in danger of becoming even more uniform. (Klumpenaar and Van Noort, 2024) When the aim is to develop sustainable and future-proof housing, the issue of social isolation in cities should not be neglected, as thoughtful design may have the potential to help prevent it. This research contributes by exploring how architectural design can foster social interactions, with the goal of alleviating social isolation. Social encounters naturally occur at various scales within the built environment – in-

side buildings, just outside homes on the street, and on a larger scale in parks or public buildings. These interactions can be influenced by conditions in the immediate environment, which are shaped by the surrounding architecture. Therefore, this study focuses on how architectural design can encourage social interactions across different scales, from the neighbourhood, to the transition zone and finally the interior, exploring the relationship between architectural design and the way people socially connect with each other in these domains.

Figure 2: Facade benches as design feature in the newly built houses in the Tarwewijk which may create oppurtunities to enhance social encounters among neighbours. (own work)

Theoretical Framework

In response to the growing issue of social isolation in cities, this research examines how architectural design can influence opportunities for social encounters at various scales, in the order from public to private: the neighbourhood, transition zone and the interior.

Starting off at the scale of the neighbourhood, this part focusses on social interaction within public life. This part of the research will mention the work of two sociological thinkers Richard Sennett and Eric Klinenberg. Insights from Richard Sennett's essay 'The public Realm' (2008) will

be discussed, as he offers valuable perspectives on how to meaningfully connect diverse groups of people in public spaces. His ideas provide enriching insights for architectural designers and urban planners. To gain more practical guidance on creating programmatic spaces that bring people together, Eric Klinenberg's book 'Palaces for the People' (2019) will be explored. Klinenberg (2019) introduces the concept of social infrastructure and highlights specific spaces that are essential for fostering inclusivity and social interaction for all individuals, fostering inclusiveness with his propositions.

The next literature framework supporting this research focuses on the transition zone, meaning the transition between public and private. The book supporting this is 'De Stoep: Ontmoetingen tussen huis en straat' [The Sidewalk: Encounters between house and street] written by Eric van Ulden, Daniel Heussen, Sander van der Ham, Gwen van Eijk and Wijnand Galema. This literature framework is particularly relevant for this research for two reasons. First, it addresses essentially the same topic this research is all about; how the transition zones are the spaces in cities offering ideal
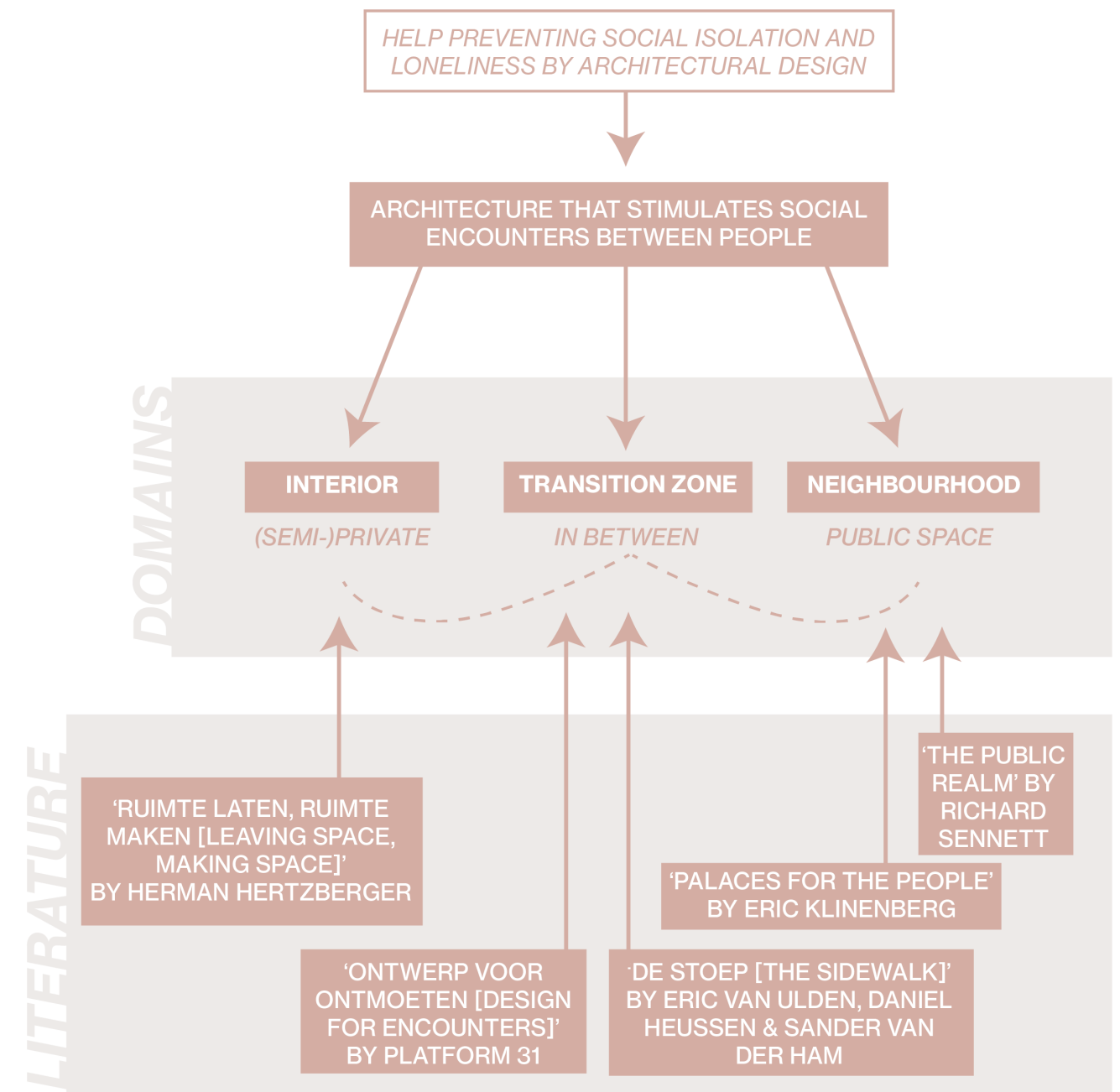
Figure 3: Schedule of the theoretical framework. (own work)

circumstances for social encounters between people to occur. Second, the book is based on a detailed analysation of over 6000 streets in Rotterdam, the same city as the neighbourhood Tarwewijk is situated in, for which this study will ultimately provide guidelines.

Closing off with the more private scale of the interior, the framework used for this scale is the work of the architect Herman Hertzberger, whose ideas are highly relevant to this study. Hertzberger emphasized the importance of designing architectural spaces that foster social interaction. Consequently, a book written by Hertzberger himself 'Ruimte Maken, Ruimte Laten' [Making Space, Leaving Space] (2015) will serve as a primary source, as it discusses many of Herzberger's architectural projects and outlines his key viewpoints on architecture's role in facilitating social interactions.

Research Questions

Leading question

Can public and residential buildings in inner-city neighbourhoods create opportunities for social encounters across different spatial scales (interior, street, and neighbourhood) to contribute to the prevention of loneliness?

Sub-questions

1.   Who suffers from loneliness and what role plays architectural and urban design in this issue of loneliness?

This question is meant to gain a deeper understanding of the issue of loneliness and what groups are prone to social isolation. When being aware of which groups of people deals with loneliness more often or/ and substantially this will be fundamental for an outcome that is inclusive and actually effective. Also understanding how the built environment may influence social isolation and loneliness, is the foundation for creating design guidelines through this research.

2.   What are the key-factors that contribute to the success of a well-functioning meeting place at the scale of the neighbourhood, and how can these factors effectively stimulate social contact between residents?

This question attempts to relate architecture to a wider context, specifically on the scale of the neighbourhood. It is therefore interesting how to attract and invite residents in the neighbourhood to a building, and what programmatic qualities a building would need to function as a successful meeting place, that fosters social cohesion in the neighbourhood and increases the amount of social contact between people.

3.   How does the transition zone create opportunities for encounters between people?

This question addresses the space between the exterior of the building (private space) and the public space. It will explain why this 'transition zone' is such an essential space for people to meet each other, while also going more into detail what physical qualities are needed to design successful transition zones.

4.   How could the interior of a building create opportunities for encounters between people?

This question explores what physical qualities in the interior of the building may influence the chances of encounters between people. It will attempt to answer what architectural means a designer could use to design spaces that are able to provoke more social contact between people in architectural spaces.

Research Methods

This research uses three main approaches to gain the knowledge needed to answer the research questions and develop design guidelines. This knowledge is gathered through a combination of theoretical research, two case studies and the input from local residents of Tarwewijk. The theoretical study provides a base of valuable knowledge, case studies serve as examples to examine the knowledge of theoretical study and the input from local residents in Tarwewijk gives the research a specific and fitted outcome to the given design brief.

Theory

The sub-questions will be answered mainly through literature research, as explained in the section 'literature framework'. In addition to this literature framework, the research is supplemented by recent news articles and published studies about the Tarwewijk, in order to give the literature research a specific and more detailed focus.

Case studies (fieldwork)

This research involves two case studies. These case studies are part of the fieldwork as they involve a site visit, one guided by the designer and resident of the building (Co-housing by Flip), the other by a former building manager (Studentflat by Herman Hertzberger) who is often in contact with the users. Both the designer as the former building manager explain or answer questions concerning the 'social' use of the building. This part of the research will gain a deeper understanding in how architectural design which is intended to foster interactions between users, in reality influences social relationships, specifically from the perspective of the user. The case studies also address how the 'social' use of the building has changed over time.

The case studies are selected based on whether they were designed to intend the stimulation social connection through architecture at the scale of interior, street or neighbourhood and ideally are comparable

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION
Can public and residential buildings in inner-city neighbourhoods create opportunities for social encounters across different spatial scales (interior, street, and neighbourhood) to contribute to the prevention of loneliness?

literature frameworks

MAIN CHAPTERS OF THE RESEARCH

case studies reflecting towards theory (site visits as part of fieldwork)

LINK LONELINESS - ARCH	NEIGHBOURHOOD	TRANSITION ZONE	INTERIOR
• loneliness and belonging • belonging and familiarity in the built environment • target groups • reflecting to social / cultural background of Tarwewijk	• public familiarity • social infrastructure • Proximity of meeting places • Porosity of buildings • Transitions, borders & boundaries	• physical features; greenery, view, dimensions, access, climate, traffic, expression of identity, programmatic considerations • value for the Tarwewijk	• the option to withdraw from social interaction • balance of openness and closeness • the right distance / proportions • design for different personal interpretation

A foundation of theoretical and practical knowledge in enhancing social interaction through architecture

A foundation of theoretical and practical knowledge on designing architecture to foster social interaction in Tarwewijk, Rotterdam

mapping social infrastructure in the Tarwewijk

DESIGN GUIDELINES

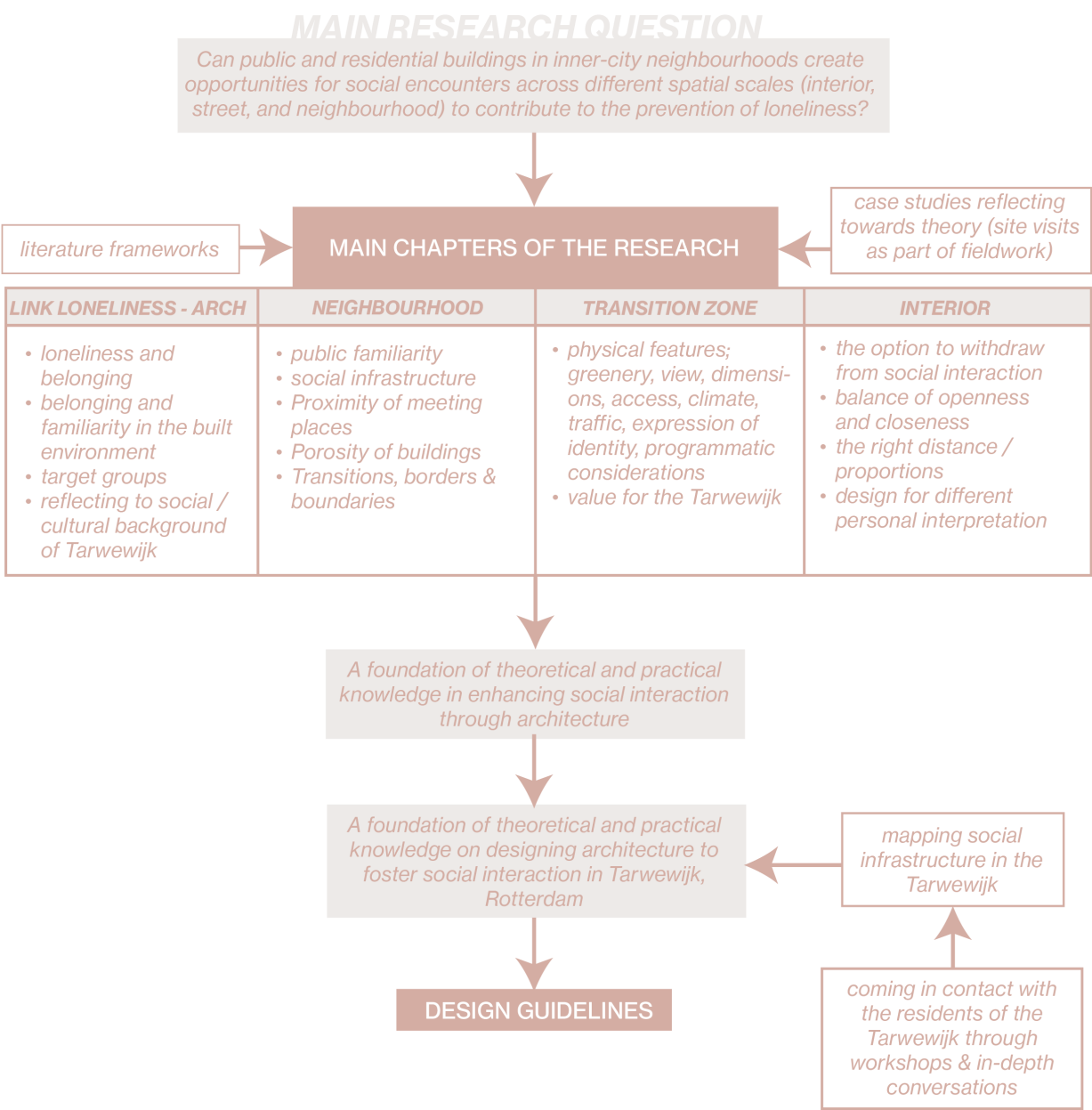*coming in contact with the residents of the Tarwewijk through workshops & in-depth conversations*

Figure 4: Schedule of the researh methods and output. (own work)

to the scale and context of Tarwewijk. The case studies will as well reflect towards the theory, also serving more insights and inspiration for guidelines.

Input from local residents of Tarwewijk (fieldwork)

It is also essential to understand the needs and preferences of the local residents from Tarwewijk, who are the future users of the given design brief. Therefore there will be spoken with local residents during multiple sessions at the neighbourhood initiative 'Take-A-Way', documenting the valuable in-depth conversations.

To gain an even broader perspective of the needs and preferences of local residents in the Tarwewijk, a workshop will be organized next to a local supermarket, to come in contact with different age and social groups in the Tarwewijk, providing a more complete overview. This workshop is guided by showing passersby a map of the Tarwewijk while asking three main questions to start the conversation: Where do you meet people? Where do you feel most at ease? How do you help others/neighbours? The data of the conversations and their personal information (gender, age, years lived in the Tarwewijk) is documen-

ted in a transcript and this information is linked to the mentioned places in the map of the Tarwewijk.

After getting to know the neighbourhood during conversations with local residents of Tarwewijk, the existing social infrastructure of the Tarwewijk will be mapped. This is carried out by listing all different kinds of social infrastructures that exist in the Tarwewijk, consequently linking these social infrastructures to specific age groups who (may) use these social infrastructures. Understanding how existing social infrastructures behave, may gain deeper insights for the upcoming design process to strengthen these existing networks and also fill in the possible gaps. Ultimately, these gaps could offer inspiration for developing design guidelines to better enhance social cohesion within Tarwewijk.

Figure 5: The Image shows a conducted fieldwork activity regarding the workshop to spontaneously meet local residents in Tarwewijk (own work)

RESEARCH

CHAPTER 02

02

Research

Loneliness and Architecture

1. Who suffers from loneliness and what role plays architectural and urban design in this issue of loneliness?

1A. What is the meaning of loneliness?

To better understand loneliness, Van Tilburg and de Jong Gierveld (2007) explore the connection between loneliness and belonging. A network of meaningful relationships with others is an essential ingredient for quality of life. However, when people feel disconnected from others, their quality of life is diminished. Loneliness, in this context, stands as the opposite of belonging. Deficiencies in one's social network can give rise to feelings of loneliness. (Van Tilburg & de Jong Gierveld, 2007)

According to research by Franklin and Tranter (2021), this sense of belonging is related to many factors such as; cultural, spatial, temporal and generational factors. Specifically for this research, the argument regarding the link between the spatial factors and belonging are particularly relevant. Franklin points out the value of familiarity of places and how that relates to the feeling belonging, with examples such as 'homesickness' and to the built up of memory's in people's environments. He criticizes densely built-up, monofunctional or poorly designed neighborhoods and "non-places" such as airports, shopping malls, hotels – according to him all socially neutral spaces which do not offer social relationships, group identity or belonging – which makes them unattractive meeting places, consequently having an impact in our sense of belonging to a place. (Franklin & Tranter, 2021) Therefore, it can be concluded that urban planning and architectural means should invest for instance in recognizable landmarks, neighbourhood culture, varied architecture and a clear social infrastructure to help people feel at home.

1B. What types of loneliness can we recognize?

Van Tilburg and de Jong Gierveld (2007), discusses different types of loneliness, referencing Weiss's literature. In 1973, Weiss first outlined an important distinction between emotional loneliness and social loneliness.

Emotional loneliness arises from the subjective experience of a profound sense of loss due to the absence of an intimate relationship – an emotionally close bond with a partner or a best friend. According to Weiss, this form of loneliness can only be alleviated by forming a new emotionally intimate connection. (van Tilburg & de Jong Gierveld, 2007)

In contrast, social loneliness is linked to the subjective feeling of missing meaningful relationships with a broader social network, such as acquaintances, colleagues, neighbours, or individuals with shared interests – people with whom one can engage in hobbies or activities. This form of loneliness may occur after a recent relocation to a different region. While an intimate partner relationship is undoubtedly significant in life, it cannot mitigate this type of loneliness. (van Tilburg & de Jong Gierveld, 2007)

1C. Who suffers from loneliness and why?

"Emotional loneliness" (a longing for a close bond) is most prevalent among individuals aged 15 to 25, with 14 percent reporting a strong sense of emotional loneliness. The other form of loneliness, "social loneliness" (a need for more social contact), is most common among those aged 35 to 45, with 18 percent indicating they feel strongly socially lonely (CBS, 2024).

Although people born outside the Netherlands have the same or even more frequent weekly social contact with family, friends, or neighbours compared to those born in the Netherlands, they nevertheless report feeling strongly lonely more often. This is especially true for social loneliness, which affects them more frequently than individuals born in the Netherlands (CBS, 2024).

1D. What do we know about loneliness and social ties in the Tarwewijk in Rotterdam?

Doff et al. (2022) has mapped by conduc-

ting 50 interviews with residents in the South of Rotterdam which social groups (based on economic and social capital) live there (specifically in the neighbourhoods: Tarwewijk, Afrikaanderwijk, Carnisse and Hillesluis) and how they experience and use their neighbourhood. What appears is that except from the so-called 'emerging middle group' and 'established upper class' that usually use the centre of Rotterdam for social activities, all groups use their neighbourhood practically or even intensively, when it comes to their social network, but also shopping and other local facilities (like schools, playgrounds and parks). For some groups living on South, they are even almost fully dependent on the facilities offered by their neighbourhood since they have a very small range of action. (Doff et al., 2022)

From the interviews with the stable, cultural and low-contact middle group it also appears that there is a language barrier between different groups. This makes communication between people harder. (Doff et al., 2022)

Some interviewees say that there should be more facilities for meeting in the Sou-

th, such as a community centre, especially in view of the nuisance caused by young people who hang around. Some young people indicate that existing facilities are not always accessible to them and that they are sometimes even excluded. (Doff et al., 2022) According to an interviewee:

"What I miss is more appeal for young people. You no longer have a community center where you can just walk in and have a nice chat or play games. You just don't have that anymore. (...) They lock everything down and everything goes bankrupt. The municipality should also look into this. Then they complain about loitering youth, but yes, this is exactly what causes it. There is no place to go." (Doff et al., 2022, P. 34)

1E. How does architectural design relate to stimulating encounters between people?

According to Hertzberger (1996), whatever an architect does – or consciously refrains from doing, such as engaging with closure and openness – they inevitably, whether intentionally or not, influence the most fundamental forms of social relationships. Even though social relationships are only partially dependent on spatial conditions,

Figure 6: One of the more lively streets in the neighbourhood Tarwewijk, due to the multiple shops (own work)

this dependency is sufficient to justify a deliberate organization of space. Such an organization should enable individuals to present themselves to one another in the best way possible (Hertzberger, 1996).

While "social architecture" does not exist, this does not change the fact that we cannot escape the implications of how people position themselves in relation to one another, how they perceive each other, and how they respond to one another (Hertzberger, 1996).

Neighbourhood

2. What are the key-factors that contribute to the success of a well-functioning meeting place at the scale of the neighbourhood, and how can these factors effectively stimulate social contact between residents?

This chapter explores, on a broader scale, how architecture could contribute to fostering encounters between people. It examines the relationship between architecture and public life, as the public life serves as a setting for (spontaneous) interactions among diverse individuals. The chapter begins by discussing the connection between public life and architecture in general terms and then delves into how this understanding can be applied to facilitate encounters among residents of neighbourhoods like Tarwewijk in Rotterdam.

According to Ulden et al. (2015), social interactions in cities are often viewed as anonymous and distant. Although in cities, social interactions happen continuously. Even when these social interactions seem superficial or fleeting, they may be of worth. As also recognized by Ulden et al. (2015), people may not always know each other personally, but social identification and categorization processes are still constantly taking place in public life. City dwellers are particularly skilled at categorizing others into subcultures and social groups based on their appearance and behaviour, precisely because they frequently find themselves among 'cultural strangers.' In a certain way, strangers in the city are, in fact, familiar with one another. This phenomenon is called 'public familiarity'. Public familiarity therefore enables people to place others socially and determine how they relate to each other. Do they recognize themselves or not? Public familiarity is important, as it allows individuals to evaluate the behaviour of others, which may contribute to a feeling of social safety. It may also contribute to the feeling of 'belonging' and therefore reducing feelings of loneliness, as it is previously mentioned by Franklin and Tranter (2021) (in chapter 1, section 1A) that fee-

lings of belonging are partially related to familiarity in people's living environment. The built environment must therefore provide sufficient opportunities for contact with others that are recognizable by, for example, providing space for expressions of identity. Therefore this connection of familiarity and belonging underscores, that for a pleasant and social public life, public familiarity is at least as important as personal or intimate contact between people on the street. Ulden et al. (2015) mentions, if we want to prevent residents in cities from actually living anonymously and past each other, it is necessary to design places in the public life that enhance social contact. When the public environment of people is experienced as safe and familiar, it is more likely that social connections can grow, while also serving a starting point for fostering new social connections.

An American sociologist who has written extensively about social relations in public life is Richard Sennett (2008). In his essay The Public Realm, Sennett (2008) describes public space as a physical, social, and cultural domain where people come together and interact outside their private environments. By public space, he refers to

locations such as squares, streets, parks, markets, as well as theatres and cafes. According to Sennett (2008), these spaces are more than just physical locations, aligning with phenomenon of public familiarity; it is a place where individuals from different backgrounds and perspectives can meet. Such encounters can foster mutual understanding and tolerance, narrowing divides, (in planning terms, here are two different goals for what should happen at the membrane/border between communities in the city: on the one hand, the effort would be to diminish differences at these edges through social exchange, on the other, the goal would be exposure to difference, awareness of it) but they can also lead to tensions that might fragment social groups.

The physical design of cities significantly influences how public spaces function. In his essay, Sennett (2008) critiques modernist urban planning, which often favours monofunctional neighbourhoods or closed-off buildings that can potentially worsen social isolation. Instead, Sennett (2008) advocates for the design of spaces that are open, porous, and partially unprogrammed – environments that encourage interaction and activity. This concept will

be explored in greater depth later in the chapter.

Another American sociologist who studies urban life is Eric Klinenberg (2019). In his book *Palaces for the People*, Klinenberg (2019) introduces the concept of "social infrastructure." Social infrastructure, as he defines it, refers to the physical spaces that determine whether people's social capital (a term often used to describe relationships and personal networks) can grow. Robust social infrastructure should facilitate contact, mutual support, and collaboration among friends and neighbours. Klinenberg (2019) argues that healthy social infrastructure is crucial for cities because it is where local, face-to-face interactions occur and where relationships between people can thrive.

Klinenberg (2019) provides concrete examples of social infrastructure, including public institutions like schools, playgrounds, libraries, parks, and sports fields, as well as semi-public spaces such as sidewalks, courtyards, or community gardens. Cultural institutions like churches, as well as commercial venues such as bars and cafes, also play a role in fostering connecti-

ons.

When it comes to serving as a meeting place for all, Klinenberg (2019) strongly advocates for the public institution of the library. According to Klinenberg (2019), libraries are essential to the vitality of a neighbourhood because they can buffer various personal issues, including social isolation and loneliness. Libraries are open to everyone and free to use, making them spaces where culture can be shared. This inclusivity likely explains why libraries serve so effectively as social infrastructure. Moreover, libraries are often staffed by professionals who ensure that these spaces remain accessible and welcoming, helping to sustain social cohesion among users.

"In New York, as in cities across the United States and around the world, neighbourhood libraries and librarians do all kinds of unexpected things for surprisingly large numbers of people. Their core mission is to help people elevate themselves and improve their situation. Libraries do this, principally, by providing free access to the widest possible variety of cultural materials to people of all ages, from all ethnicities and groups." (Klinenberg, 2019, P.37)

Figure 7: Bravenboer, D. (2025, January 3). *Publieksmedewerker Mirjam ter Welle in stadsdeelbibliotheek Tongelre in Eindhoven in gesprek met een buurtbewoner tijdens de wekelijkse 'Open soep'.* NRC. https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2025/01/03/elke-dag-naar-de-bieb-maar-niet-voor-de-boeken-a4878160

In the Netherlands, the trend of libraries serving as meeting places has been ongoing for some time. By 2025/2026, libraries in the Netherlands will also be required to fulfil a care duty. This means that every library must have at least 16 hours of professional staff presence each week to assist visitors. (Zantingh, 2025) This trend could mean that libraries possibly will become the inclusive meeting spaces of the future.

As (Zantingh, 2025) highlights: "*The library exists to make contact with the go-*

vernment easier, to assist elderly individuals struggling with digitalization, to answer questions about finances or parenting, to combat loneliness and illiteracy, as a meeting place, for debates, and as a tool against polarization. The number of youth and adult members is growing, as are the number of visitors and book loans—especially the number of activities. Libraries are organizing more than ever."

A factor of social infrastructure which should absolutely not be overlooked, is the proximity of such social facilities, es-

Middengroep

Minder ruime actieradius, gericht op Zuid en 'praktisch' buurtgebruik.

Vinden praktische voorzieningen belangrijk, en dat ze dichtbij zijn.

Organiseren verschillende activiteiten (boodschappen, school, speeltuin, zwemles, sportschool etc.), nemen de snelste routes.

Benoemen hangjongeren, alcoholisten, zwervers.

Veiligheid is een belangrijk thema, vooral met oog op opgroeiende kinderen, vertellen relatief vaak over incidenten.

Gedeelde ruimte op Zuid
15

Verbonden lagere groep

Sterk verankerd in de buurt (lange woonduur, opgegroeid).

Hoog gebruik wijk, vaak sociaal, verblijven er vaak ook lang.

Tevreden over voorzieningen (veel, dichtbij, goedkoop).

Geen ruime actieradius.

Zorgen over jeugd en verbinding, verhalen over verloren gemeenschap.

Actief in de buurt, vrijwilligerswerk (speeltuin), veel contact ("de hele buurt, ze kennen mij").

Gedeelde ruimte op Zuid
17

Opkomende middengroep

Lijkt op de culturele middengroep, maar dan jonger en minder economisch kapitaal.

Actieradius: voor sociale activiteiten naar Noord en het centrum.

Gebruik Zuid lager, vrij lege kaarten, maken wel volop gebruik van het Zuiderpark.

Missen voorzieningen zoals restaurants, sportschool, ontmoetingsplekken.

Weinig buurthechting, betaalbaarheid vestigings-motief – m.u.v. de sociale stijgers uit de wijk zelf.

Gedeelde ruimte op Zuid
16

Precariaat

Sterk gebonden aan de buurt, meestal ook mentaal (vertrouwd).

Beperkte actieradius.

Laag gebruik vanwege financiële en fysieke beperkingen, relatief lege kaarten.

Vervoersarmoede, eenzaamheid.

Benoemen groepen (Bulgaren, alcoholisten).
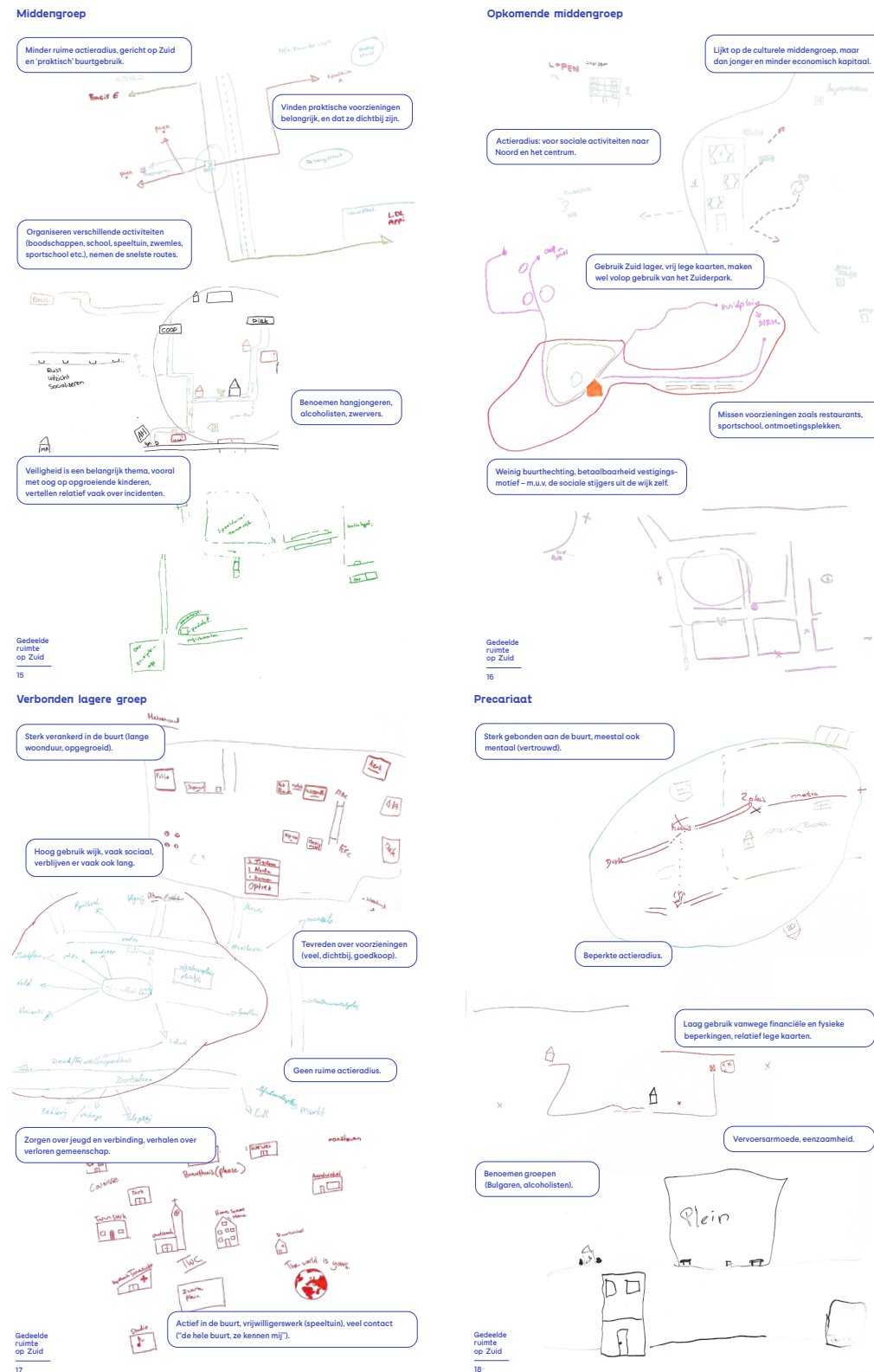
Plein

Gedeelde ruimte op Zuid
18

Figure 8, 9, 10, 11: Doff, W., Kennisplaats Leefbare Wijken, University of Erasmus, & Municipality of Rotterdam. (2022, April). *Narratieve kaarten [Narrative maps]*. Ruimte Op Zuid.

Figure 8 (top, left) shows the narrative map of the middle group
Figure 9 (top, right) shows the narrative map of the upcoming middle group
Figure 10 (bottom, left) shows the narrative map of the connected lower group
Figure 11 (bottom, right) shows the narrative map of the precariat

pecially for neighbourhoods like Tarwewijk. Research by Doff et al. (2022), which involved interviews with 50 residents from Tarwewijk, Carnisse, Afrikaanderwijk, and other areas in Rotterdam, revealed that the most represented social groups in these neighbourhoods have a limited activity radius. This means they rely heavily on the amenities available within their immediate neighbourhood. The predominant social groups (their maps explaining how the social groups use their public space are shown in figures 8, 9, 10 and 11) in these neighbourhoods rarely venture far, likely due to limited financial resources. This underscores the need for accessible, nearby meeting places to address residents' social needs — specifically, a low-threshold, cost-free meeting functions.

However, proximity alone does not deter-

mine the success of a meeting place. Other factors, such as the transition from private to public space, also play a role. Ulden et al. (2015) describes how the boundaries where private and public spaces meet — so-called "transition zones" — generate a certain tension. Transition zones can take various forms, such as a row of houses facing the street, a café terrace on the sidewalk, or even balconies on upper floors. These transition areas are precisely the places where interactions between people are most likely to occur. When a transition zone is actively used, it can foster a sense of ownership and responsibility, creating a space where interactions with passersby naturally arise. (Ulden et al.,2015)

Richard Sennett (2008) also writes about these transition zones in his essay The Public Realm, but from a different perspective. In his essay, he introduces two types of "systems" that can apply to public life: closed systems and open systems. A closed system, according to Sennett (2008), refers to an "over-determined form," meaning structures that cannot adapt to changing conditions. He contrasts this with the natural world, which he uses as a metaphor where spontaneous occurrences hap-

pen, boundaries are porous, and exchange is possible. While an open system also has some degree of fixation — it must take shape in some way within the natural world — it is not absolute, making it more adaptable and dynamic. (Sennett, 2008)

To better understand open systems and their implications for architectural design, Sennett (2008) explains the difference between borders and boundaries. These concepts occur in the natural world, for example, at the cellular level or within the territorial spaces of organisms. In nature, borders are zones within habitats where organisms become more interactive because they encounter different species or physical conditions. Boundaries, on the other hand, represent a limit — a point beyond which the territory does not extend. (Sennet, 2008)

In essence, there are two types of limits: the border, which could be more considered as a transition zone, and the boundary, which marks the shift from public to private. This distinction can also be translated into architecture. For example, consider the porosity of a border versus a boundary. Sennett uses the example of a modern office building with a glass façade: while people who pass by can see what is happening inside, they cannot feel, smell, or hear what is happening. Such buildings often have a single regulated entrance, making them more related to boundaries than borders, as the exchange is limited. (Sennet, 2008)

Sennett (2008) argues that the challenge of the 21st century should be to enhance the porosity of buildings. Imagine creating spaces where more exchange is possible between interior and exterior areas, thereby strengthening social interactions. Visibility also plays a critical role in transforming a space into a border rather than a boundary. Sightlines and transparency in architectural volumes can serve as an initial point of contact, drawing people into spaces where activity is happening. When accessibility is facilitated, the chances of encountering and participating in such activities increase. (Sennet, 2008)

This principle of borders and boundaries offers lessons not only for enhancing interactions between people but also for fostering connections among different social groups. For example, when considering a design for a neighbourhood, where is the best place to create spaces for social interaction? Often, meeting places are positioned at the heart of a neighbourhood to strengthen community bonds. However, Sennett (2008) suggests that locating meeting spaces at the edges (borders) provides greater opportunities for diverse groups to come together, helping to prevent isolation. Placing a meeting space at the centre of a neighbourhood might limit opportunities for exchange between different groups, potentially weakening social ties across various demographics. (Sennet, 2008)

Perhaps the most critical lesson from Sennett (2008) is the importance of leaving room for flexibility. He cautions against creating a closed system by fully fixing the physical or programmatic elements of a design. Instead, he advocates for leaving unprogrammed spaces — areas that allow the built environment to function as a process capable of adapting to future changes. Designing with this mindset can also accommodate the evolution of social structures and interactions, ensuring that opportunities for encounters between people are continually fostered as conditions change. (Sennet, 2008)

This principle is also relevant for libraries, given their multifaceted roles, which change depending on the needs of the local community at any given time. Over time, these needs may evolve, underscoring the importance of flexibility in design.

After discussing the types of functions that bring people together, where in a neighbourhood to place these functions, and the importance of enhancing transition zones through porosity and visibility, we can now turn more in detail to the form and programs of these spaces. This will be addressed in the following chapters, focusing on two scales: the transition zone (the relationship between the building and its exterior) and the interior level (how spaces within the building can facilitate interaction).

The Transition Zone

2.   *How could the transition zone create opportunities for encounters between people?*

This chapter focuses on the space in between private(the inside of a building) and the public(the space outside of the building), in other words; this chapter delves deeper into the 'transition zones', as they shown to play a significant role in fostering interactions between people. Additionally, this chapter discusses the physical qualities of transition zones, to be aware which factors may improve the functioning of transition zones, subsequently improving social contact in this domain.

Study of transition zones in 6231 streets of Rotterdam

In the previous chapter, we explored the concept of transition zones on a neighbourhood scale and why these zones can contribute to enhancing social interaction. Ulden et al. (2015) discusses the idea of the transition zone in greater detail in his book 'De Stoep: Ontmoetingen tussen huis en straat' [The Sidewalk: Encounters between home and street], particularly from the perspective of neighbourhood residents.

This book includes a study of 6231 streets across 92 neighbourhoods in Rotterdam, demonstrating that transition zones are indeed where informal interactions between neighbours occur most frequently, and identifying the physical factors that play a role. Their decision to analyse Rotterdam's streets stems from the city's diverse urban development history, which has resulted in a wide variety of housing typologies — and therefore different types of transition zones — making the findings more accurate and generalizable.

The streets were categorized and linked to data from the neighbourhood monitor. Ad-

Figure 12: *De stoep is een logische plek om elkaar te ontmoeten [The sidewalk is a logical place to meet].* (n.d.). The City at Eye Level. https://thecityateyelevel.com/stories/de-stoep-is-een-logische-plek-om-elkaar-te-ontmoeten/

ditionally, data from all streets were linked to the neighbourhood to enable comparisons.

Ulden et al. (2015) examined correlations between the number of transition zones and neighbourhood characteristics by plotting the percentage of transition zones against various factors, such as:
- The percentage of rental housing
- Average property value
- The percentage of staircase entrances to housing
- Residential density

- Length of residency
- Household size
- Percentage of youth
- Commercial activity

Ulden et al. (2015) also demonstrated a correlation between neighbourhoods with many transition zones and higher neighbourhood satisfaction levels.

Ulden et al. (2015) further analysed successful transition zones — based on indicators such as the degree of personal appropriation (evidenced by identity markers)

and the general level of maintenance — and identified the physical factors that may influence their success. These factors include:
- Orientation
- Sidewalk and transition zone dimensions
- Street profile
- Presence of greenery in the street

The findings reveal that physical characteristics play a role in fostering social contact. For example, wide streets or abundant concealing greenery can create a sense of distance. The analysis also showed that transition zones measuring between 1 and 2 meters in width are more likely to feature the expression of identity compared to narrower or wider zones. These findings align with the advices from Mantingh and Duivenvoorden (2021), which argues that overly narrow transition zones do not provide enough space for appropriation, while excessively wide zones enhance privacy, thereby hardening the boundary between public and private spaces.

Finally, the analysis identified a trend regarding transition zones, observable in both design solutions in new construction projects and adaptations in older urban areas. According to the researchers, this trend reflects an increasing awareness of the importance of transition zones in promoting social interactions.

Survey

In addition to this study, the researchers also conducted surveys to ask residents about their interactions with neighbours, fellow residents and people passing by. They sought to determine whether these interactions occurred in the transition zone and if such contact was better maintained. The results show that three-quarters of respondents stated that their contact with neighbours took place in the transition zone. Additionally, people who actively used their transition zones — for gardening, sitting, or engaging in conversations — reported significantly more frequent interactions with neighbours compared to those who did not consciously use their transition zones.

Physical features

The survey confirmed a correlation between specific physical features and the maintenance of planned contact. For spontaneous interactions, differences in physical characteristics did not matter, but they did for planned contact.

- Greenery
Streets with abundant greenery can hinder contact. Residents in streets with significant greenery reported maintaining planned contact with neighbours less frequently than those in less green streets. (Ulden et al., 2015)

- View
Similarly, streets with an open view were associated with fewer instances of planned contact among residents. (Ulden et al., 2015)

- Dimensions
Planned contact was more common in narrower streets compared to those wider than 20 meters. This may relate to the concept of the "human scale." Mantingh and Duivenvoorden (2021) explain that at a distance of 100 meters, human vision can distinguish between a person and an animal. If the goal is to encourage interaction, this distance should be the maximum for a public space. At 25 meters, human vision can recognize emotions in others, which serves as another important threshold to consider. These spatial characteristics are crucial when designing spaces intended to foster social interaction.

- Access
The accessibility of the transition zone also plays a role in its use. Residents whose front doors open directly onto the street reported more frequent planned contact with neighbours than those whose homes are accessed via porticos or galleries. A potential explanation is the shared responsibility and sense of ownership that direct access to the street promotes among residents. (Ulden et al., 2015)

- Climate
Unsurprisingly, nearly all respondents indicated during interviews that sunlight plays an important role in their use of the transition zone. Some residents also use their transition zones in the absence of sunlight, but only if the weather is pleasant. (Ulden et al., 2015) Sunlight and favourable weather conditions are key motivators for utilizing transition zones. Therefore, it is important to consider how buildings influence the microclimate when aiming to stimulate interaction.

- Traffic

Figure 13, 14: Nijs, H. (n.d.). *Justus van Effenstraat*. Siem Goede. https://siemgoede.nl/energiezuinig-maken/justus-van-effenstraat/
Figure 13, 14 (top and bottom): Both images of this architectural project of Justus van Effenstraat, shows that transition zones can create a spaces for people to express identity, whether this is on ground level or not

The presence of vehicular traffic also affects the use of transition zones. Fast-moving cars, in particular, prevents people from claiming and using these spaces (see figure 17). (Ulden et al., 2015)

- Expression of identity
For planned contact, the presence of identity markers in the transition zone is strongly associated with more frequent interactions. Personalizing the space fosters social connections. For example, residents occupying the transition zone while gardening or engaging with personal objects naturally interact more with others. These objects can also prompt reactions from neighbours or passersby, serving as conversation starters.
Survey results further revealed that respondents with numerous expressions of identity in their transition zones reported significantly more contact with people passing by. (Ulden et al., 2015)

- Programmatic Considerations
Other factors also play a role. Mantingh and Duivenvoorden (2021) suggest that transition zones are most effective when located adjacent to living spaces, such as a kitchen or living room. This proximi-

ty increases the likelihood of spontaneous interactions, such as stepping out or opening a door, facilitating contact with the outside environment.

Value for Tarwewijk
Ulden et al. (2015) has also provided valuable insights into neighbourhoods associated with disadvantage and urban challenges, particularly regarding the role that transition zones can play in such areas. This is especially relevant for neighbourhoods like Tarwewijk, characterized by a high proportion of (affordable) rental housing, a significant number of immigrant and low-educated residents, high density, below-average neighbourhood satisfaction scores, and poor results on both the social and safety indices. Factors such as high residential mobility, greater (ethnic) diversity, and safety concerns are known to hinder interactions among neighbours in these areas. Transition zones, however, can play an important role by facilitating contact. These zones are spaces where people encounter one another and, in a sense, are compelled to engage.

Despite this potential, spatial analysis from Ulden et al. (2015) reveals that neighbour-

hoods with disadvantaged characteristics tend to have relatively few transition zones, a commonness of staircase entrances to houses, and greater density. Nevertheless, the existing transition zones in these areas often prove to be just as "successful" in terms of identity expression as those in other neighbourhoods. Surveys even show that transition zones in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are used by a relatively higher proportion of residents. Furthermore, residents in these areas report being just as satisfied with their transition zones as those in neighbourhoods with fewer challenges. Interestingly, a closer examination of the data reveals that in neighbourhoods with low average property values and low neighbourhood satisfaction scores, people are often more satisfied with their transition zones. Dissatisfaction with the broader neighbourhood or immediate living environment does not necessarily extend to these spaces. (Ulden et al., 2015)

In neighbourhoods with disadvantaged characteristics, more respondents report engaging in planned interactions with their neighbours and fellow residents. In these areas, people often come together in transition zones to discuss shared or personal issues – or simply to socialize. (Ulden et al., 2015) This suggests that transition zones may hold even greater value in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, serving as vital spaces for fostering social contact and strengthening community ties.

These findings are particularly relevant for Tarwewijk. Sociological research conducted by Doff et al. (2022) in Rotterdam South further supports this perspective, showing that the most prevalent social groups in Tarwewijk are highly focused on building social connections and networks within and around their neighbourhood.

Thus, while disadvantaged neighbourhoods face spatial and social challenges, transition zones offer a significant opportunity to promote interaction and cohesion among residents. For Tarwewijk, investing in these spaces could play a significant role in addressing these challenges and enhancing the social fabric of the community.

Figure 15 (top, left): Large planters mark a slight blur between private and public and provide an opportunity for residents to express identity. Tarwewijk, Rotterdam (own work)
Figure 16 (top, right): The green facade and the niche at the front door create a slightly stronger sense of privacy, but also soften the transition from public to private and is used by the residents to express their identity. Tarwewijk, Rotterdam (own work)
Figure 17 (bottom, left): Due to the car traffic on the street, there is almost no room left for a transition zone to be created, if it is even attractive to use. Tarwewijk, Rotterdam (own work)
Figure 18 (bottom, right): A strip of greenery in front of houses has been taken over by local residents to create a meeting place to connect with fellow residents in the neighborhood. Tarwewijk, Rotterdam (own work)

Interior

4.   How could the interior of a residential building create opportu¬nities for encounters between people?

This chapter explores how the interior design of a building can play a role in fostering social interaction. The discussion primarily draws on the work of Herman Hertzberger (1996), who proposed several concrete ideas on how spatial design can facilitate encounters between people. The concepts presented in this chapter are directly linked to spatial conditions that influence social interactions.

The chapter begins with 'choice to withdraw', which examines how social interactions emerge within a space. It then delves into the impact of open and closed spatial conditions on social relationships, followed by an exploration of the importance of appropriate spatial dimensions. Finally, it concludes with a discussion on leaving space open to interpretation, emphasizing the flexibility and adaptability of the built environment to support diverse social needs.

1. The choice to withdraw

When it comes to facilitating spontaneous encounters between people, Hertzberger (1996) emphasizes that "non-commitment" in social interactions is essential. The idea is that individuals should always have the option to withdraw from an interaction at any moment if they wish to do so. This possibility, according to Hertzberger (1996), creates an opening or encouragement to engage in social interaction in the first place. He describes the process of establishing contact as a kind of seduction process, where mutual appropriation becomes possible precisely because individuals feel they can step back at any time. (Hertzberger, 1996)

In translating this concept into architectural elements, Hertzberger (1996) uses the example of benches. He argues that providing seating is one of the most fundamental provisions that allow people to temporarily claim their immediate surroundings. This temporary appropriation of space can create favourable conditions for social contact. For a chance of an encounter to occur, individuals should have the opportunity to initiate a cautious, low-commitment approach to interaction. This allows them to respond to each other's presence if they so desire – always under the condition that the interaction remains voluntary. (Hertzberger, 1996)

While Hertzberger (1996) advocates against forcing social interaction, he also stresses that design should never impose a lack of social interaction. He underscores the idea that architects are not only designers of walls but also of views and perspectives. (Hertzberger, 1996) The following section on "open and closed" spaces further explores this concept.

2. Balance between open and closed

Now that we understand what is necessary for spontaneous encounters to naturally occur, in this paragraph it will be further explored how spatial organisation can influence this process. Spatial organisation can incorporate various degrees of openness and enclosure, each playing a crucial role in shaping social interactions. Hertzberger (1996) emphasizes the need for careful design with the right balance between shielding and openness, as this directly affects how individuals experience inclusion or exclusion within a space.

One example he provides is the swing direction of a door, which can have a significant impact on spatial perception. A door that opens to immediately reveal the entire space creates a different social dynamic compared to one that allows individuals time to adjust before fully entering. This subtle design choice can (consciously or unconsciously) influence social interactions and relationships within a space. (Hertzberger, 1996)

Case study: The relation between Flip's co-housing community project and Hertzberger's concepts of 'choice to withdraw' and 'open and closed'

A clear example of Hertzberger's ideas in practice can be seen in one of the case studies described in the fieldwork booklet – the co-housing community project designed by Flip. These simple residential buildings, composed of multiple

housing units with shared spaces, have been deliberately designed to facilitate encounters among residents. For instance, some living rooms on the ground floor feature windows facing the communal areas, allowing for visual interaction with activities happening there. From the private space, this design element fosters a sense of openness; when the curtains are drawn open, it signals to others that the resident is approachable.

Additionally, Flip's project carefully places communal functions along key circulation routes. A shared seating area is strategically located along the hallway leading from the private residences to the laundry room. This placement allows residents to naturally encounter one another in a casual, non-obligatory way, offering opportunities for spontaneous interaction while maintaining the freedom to continue or withdraw from the engagement as desired. One can imagine a building as a collection of such (small) design elements that interconnect and form a cohesive whole. As Hertzberger (1996) describes, these cumulative design decisions should be made with great care to result in inviting architecture. (Hertzberger, 1996)

Case study: Lessons learned from student housing complex at Weesperstraat, Amsterdam

However, designers must also be aware of how certain architectural choices may unfold over time, particularly in the balance between openness and enclosure. The case study of the student housing complex on Weesperstraat in Amsterdam, designed by Hertzberger himself, illustrates how well-intended social spaces can, over time, reveal their limitations.

Originally designed to be highly accessible to the public, the building lacked sufficient visual connections to maintain social control, ultimately attracting homeless individuals and drug users, who could even access the bicycle storage area. According to the former building manager, this led to unsafe situations within the complex, which he personally experienced as well.

Today, the building has been entirely privatized, secured with an access card system and surveillance cameras. The once open and accessible communal spaces on the ground floor — except for the student café — have now been taken over by private businesses, erasing much of Hertzber-
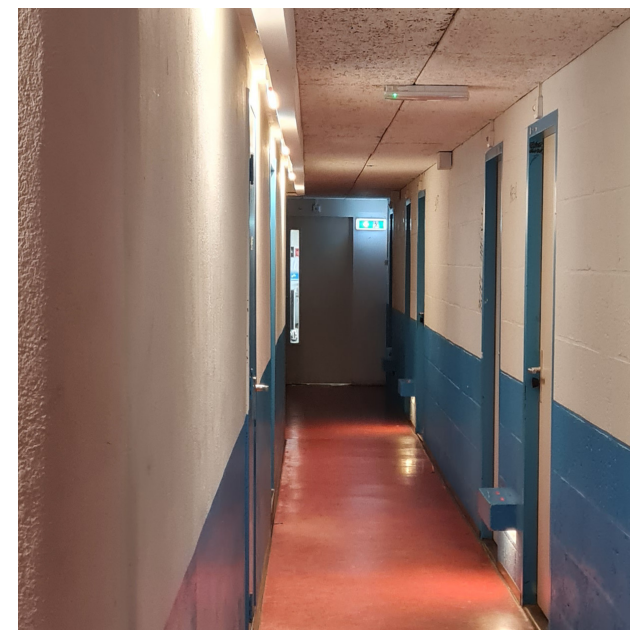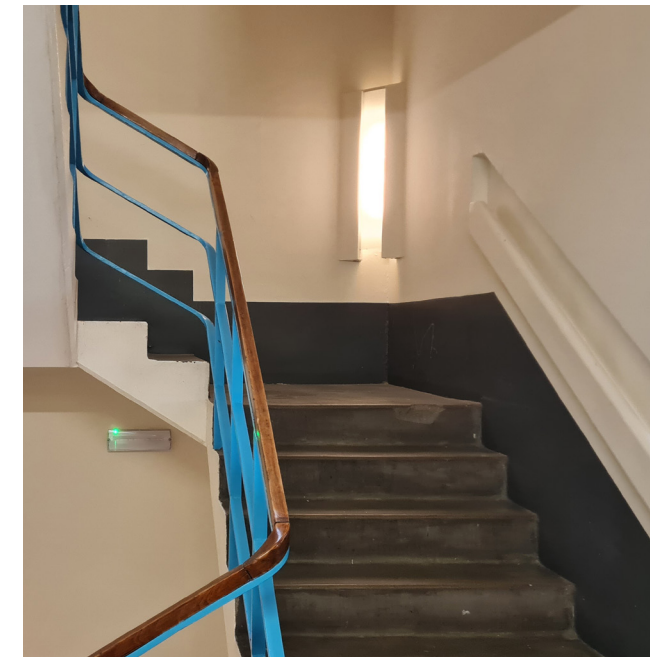
Figure 19 (top, left): The privatized facade of the student housing complex at Weesperstraat (own work)
Figure 20 (top, right): The detailing of the shape and lighting of the staircase of the student housing complex at Weesperstaat (own work)
Figure 21 (bottom, left): The hallways, with lighting details, functioning as a little foundation to rest your bag on or something else, creating a small oppurtinity for social contact to occur. Student housing complex at Weesperstraat (own work)
Figure 22 (bottom, right): The outside facade of Flip's co-housing, showing their can be variations of flexibility in the facade which can be expanded if the user wishes to do so (own work)

ger's original social intentions.

3. The right distance

On the other hand, it is also imaginable that the size of spaces have a significant impact on human behaviour. The dimensions of a space influence the sense of distance and proximity between individuals, which varies depending on the context. According to Hertzberger (1996), different functions and activities inherently require different spatial dimensions to accommodate them effectively.

The distance between individuals is particularly important when it comes to providing seating arrangements. Hertzberger (1996) emphasizes that careful consideration must be given to finding the right balance in seating distances. If people are seated too far apart, it requires more effort to stay engaged in the conversation, potentially leading to disengagement. Conversely, sitting too close can create discomfort and inhibit interaction.

Hertzberger (1996) provides an example of the elevator experience, where people are suddenly placed in close proximity to one another. In such a confined space, the na-

tural response is often silence, as the lack of appropriate personal distance makes it difficult to initiate or maintain conversation. (Hertzberger, 1996)

4. Interpretation

The final point in this chapter focuses on leaving space for user interpretation. This concept closely aligns with Richard Sennett's idea of allowing unprogrammed space (as discussed in chapter 2.2), but Hertzberger approaches it from a slightly different perspective.

Sennett (2008) advocates for viewing the built environment as an ongoing process — one that can adapt to future changes. When applied to a smaller scale, such as interior spaces, this adaptability translates into giving users the freedom to determine how they utilize different elements of the built environment in various contexts.

Hertzberger (1996) emphasizes that individual differences play a crucial role in shaping people's needs and preferences regarding how they interpret and utilize a space, depending on the location and occasion. According to him, it is impossible to design a one-size-fits-all solution, which is

why allowing room for personal interpretation is essential.

However, Hertzberger (1996) warns that simply leaving spaces 'open' — or in other words, stopping the design process too early — is not a sufficient approach. While such openness might increase flexibility, it can also lead to spaces that function less effectively. Instead, he argues for an approach that expands choices in a meaningful way — designing elements that can serve multiple purposes and adapt to various needs, all while maintaining their core identity.

Conclusion

Answers to the sub questions

1. Who experiences loneliness, and what role does architectural and urban design play in addressing this issue?

According to recent data from CBS (2024), emotional loneliness is most prevalent among youth and young adults (aged 15-25), whereas social loneliness (the need for more social contact) is more common among individuals aged 35-45. Additionally, people born outside the Netherlands report experiencing strong feelings of loneliness more frequently. Results of the re-search in Rotterdam South from sociologist Wenda Doff et al. (2022), indicate a lack of social infrastructure for youth and young adults in the area. Addressing these needs through well-planned social programs that acknowledge cultural backgrounds, alongside strategic spatial design, could alleviate loneliness. Effective spatial organization can influence how people position themselves, how they are perceived by others, and their ability to engage in social interactions.

2. What are the key factors that contribute to the success of a well-functioning meeting place at the neighbourhood scale, and how can they stimulate social contact between residents?

A pleasant public life relies not only on intimate personal relationships but also on the phenomenon of public familiarity. Creating safe and familiar environments fosters social connections and serves as a foundation for new interactions. As Klinenberg argues, social infrastructures provide essential spaces for social cohesion and support, offering a buffer against social isolation. The accessibility and proximity of such infrastructures are crucial for their success.

Richard Sennett (2008) emphasizes the importance of transition zones in public spaces. He advocates for greater porosity in building design, facilitating soft transitions between public and private areas. This encourages social interactions by providing spaces where diverse groups can meet and develop mutual understanding and tolerance. Positioning meeting areas at the edges of neighbourhoods can further bridge divides and promote inclusivity.

3. How do transition zones create opportunities for encounters between people?

The effectiveness of transition zones depends on several physical factors, including:
- The presence of (abundant) greenery
- Visibility and sightlines
- Appropriate spatial dimensions
- Accessibility and circulation
- Conditions of the (micro)climate
- The amount of traffic
- Expression of identity
- Thoughtful programmatic decisions
A well-balanced combination of these elements can create inviting transition zones that encourage spontaneous social interactions.

4. How can the interior of a building create opportunities for encounters between people?

Hertzberger outlines four key principles for designing interiors that foster social interaction:

1. The option to withdraw: Individuals should always have the possibility to disengage from social interactions if they choose. This sense of autonomy encourages initial engagement.

2. Balance between openness and shielding: Spaces should provide a mix of openness and privacy to allow individuals to feel included without being overwhelmed.

3. The right distance: The proportion of space should encourage interaction without causing discomfort. Being too far apart makes engagement challenging, while being too close can feel intrusive.

4. Design for different personal interpretations: Spaces should allow for diverse uses and personal interpretations, catering to different needs and backgrounds. This adaptability towards different groups op people enhances inclusivity and increases the chances of (spontaneous) social interactions.

By incorporating these principles, interior spaces can become more helpful in fostering meaningful social connections and contribute in the prevention loneliness.

Conclusion on main question

Can public and residential buildings in inner-city neighbourhoods create opportunities for social encounters across different spatial scales (interior, street, and neighbourhood) to contribute to the prevention of loneliness?

This research has highlighted loneliness as a significant health issue and explored its connection to the feeling of belonging, emphasizing the role of factors in the built environment related to belonging, such as familiarity, meaning a built environment should provide sufficient opportunities for contact with others by recognition through e.g. providing space for expressions of identity. This enables people to place others socially and determine how they relate to each other, enhancing 'public familiarity'. These elements of recognition and identity manifest across all scales discussed in the research — ranging from the larger scale of the city or neighbourhood, to the spaces surrounding buildings and even their interiors. These elements specifically occur in the transition zones – inside and outside building, existing at every level of scale – and these are the key areas where social interactions are also most likely to occur. Thoughtfully designing these spaces can strengthen social networks, ultimately helping to reduce feelings of loneliness among people and contribute to its prevention.

When considering an architectural design brief focused on supporting social infrastructure, incorporating spaces with an inclusive social function — such as libraries — serves as an essential starting point for combating social isolation in neighbourhoods. Additionally, well-designed housing that encourages social interaction within residents' immediate living environment can facilitate the development of direct social networks, fostering to an individual's feeling of social safety and social connectivity among residents.

Design Guidelines

The design guidelines are shown on the next spread. The design guidelines are based on both theoretical research and fieldwork. The design guidelines based on the fieldwork is divided into 2 categories; on the one hand, the design guidelines that result from the site visits of the two performed case studies, and on the other hand, design guidelines that result from the contact made with local residents of the Tarwewijk.

Increase social contact at the neighbourhood scale

According to Sennett
- Open, porous borders and boundaries
- Sightlines and transparency as an initial point of social contact
- In public space -> diminish or expose differences
- Meeting places at the edges between different areas
- Leaving unprogrammed space / allowing space to function as a process

According to Klinenberg
- Social infrastructure that is open to everyone and free to use, functions that can sustain social cohesion

According to other sources
- Proximity of social infrastructure

Increase social contact in the transition zone

According to 'De Stoep' [The Sidewalk]
- Avoid greenery blocking views / sightlines
- Open views can hinder contact
- Small streets
- The right acces system; front door opening directly towards the street
- Pleasant micro-climate; provide sun and protection for bad weather conditions
- Avoid (car-)traffic
- Expression of identity
- Social safety

According to Platform 31
- Be aware of human scale
- Program should logically shift from more public to private

## Increase social contact in the interior of a building

According to Herzberger
- Enhance mutual appropriation, a feeling of non-commitment to stimulate social contact, e.g. by benches
- Thoughtful consideration of spatial organisation in openness and enclosure
- Size / proportion of space should match the context; the expected social relations to occur in a space
- Interpretation; a one-size-fits all is impossible, therefore allowing room for personal interpretation is crucial

According to Flip, on communal housing project Tanthof, Delft
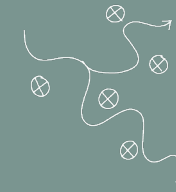
- Create routes along meeting points
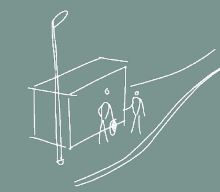
- Size and function should match

- Formal and informal spaces create different types of social contact

- Establish visual connections towards desired places

- Thoughtful organisation of space

- Flexibility in construction -> people can adjust their living space -> no reason to move

According to visit of Weesperflat, Amsterdam

- Enhance social safety in the design

- Wide galleries to mimick the idea of the street at heigher floor levels

- Detailing of light, edges and ramps to sit / or put stuff on may create a small moment, a subtle intention that could lead to an encounter between people or to create a chance of appropriation of space

Design guidelines for the **Tarwewijk** from fieldwork

According to mapping social infrastructure of Tarwewijk

- Invest in green areas for all age / social groups

- Invest in meeting places for youth & young adults, with extra consideration for women & people with disabilities

According to workshop at Dirk

- Provide visibility of social networks

- Enhance meeting places for youth & young adults in terms of cultural development

- Make sure a neighbourhood consists of a sufficient amount of social infrastructure, appealing to different age / social groups

According to in-depth conversations at Take-A-Way sessions

- Give attention to language barriers, the quality of education, and provide help/care for people who are in need

- Create spaces where people can cook and share meals together (mentioned by the target group of adults and elderly)

- Strengthen already existing social infrastructures in the neighbourhood

FIELDWORK

CHAPTER 03

Take-A-Way sessions

Introduction about Take-Away

Take-A-Way is an organization run by a small group of individuals: Mariëlle, Reinard, Stefanie, and Tineke. It is located on the ground floor of the building De Harmonie. Every Monday (12:00–16:00) and Friday (10:00–14:00), they open their doors as a community walk-in space. While primarily intended for residents of the neighbourhood, people from outside the area are also welcome — regardless of age, gender, or background. The intention is to create a space where people can connect with one another through creativity.

Each day generally features a planned activity, which may be initiated by the organizers or suggested by the visitors themselves. The purpose of these activities is to provide something to do, so people can engage with one another. There is no obligation to create something tangible; participants are free to decide how they wish to spend their time or contribute during the session.

Visitors are always offered coffee, tea, and often cookies, and they are encouraged to bring leftover vegetables from home to contribute to the communal "group soup." During each session, a small, informal group prepares the soup, which is later shared with everyone along with fresh bread.

In addition to the walk-in sessions at Take-A-Way, the organizers are involved in various small projects. They design patterns and print them on different objects, are currently working on a coffee table book, and are also socially involved, recently they participated in the Bed-Bad-Brood [Bed-Bath-Bread] demonstrations in Rotterdam. These initiatives reflect the wide range of activities they are engaged in alongside their community work.

Take-Away Meeting, 29-11-2024

On this day, we (Emmy, Guus, Jarema, and I / Quinta) presented our workshop plan to Dirk and the group at Take-Away. This sparked several interesting conversations:

Figure 23 (top): Interior of Take-A-Way, viewing their side projects (own work)
Figure 24 (bottom): Interior of Take-A-Way, viewing the bar people often gather around (own work)

- It was mentioned that there used to be a place called Het Gemaal, a BuurtBuik initiative where leftover food from the market could be collected and used to prepare meals for residents with limited financial resources. According to participants, this system worked very well but was relocated to the Afrikaanderwijk, leaving a gap in the Tarwewijk.
- Some noted that there is a community center nearby where good meals were also served, but attendance was very low.
- Dorcas was another initiative that functioned well, but it was discontinued by the municipality.
- Many meeting spaces in the neighborhood are scattered, which hinders interaction among residents because it becomes harder to know where to go.

Martha (age 67 y/o):

- Martha highlighted that social hospitality spaces, such as Take-Away, are a feature of the neighborhood but are too few in number. Official hospitality businesses are not permitted in the area.
- When we asked Martha why there are so many men in public spaces and so few women, she explained that the neighborhood is home to many labor migrants,

who are often men and tend to congregate on the streets. Additionally, on Fridays, many men attend the mosque, while women are expected to stay at home. However, these women are more likely to frequent places like the Cultuurwerkplaats or Bloemenhof, where many Turkish women gather, during the day.

- When asked if she ever feels unsafe due to the presence of so many men, Martha shared that she is mindful of her route home at night. She lives on Dortselaan and, if returning from the theater or a concert after 10:00 PM, she deliberately walks past several shops (such as men's barbershops) that remain open late and where she knows the people. She feels reassured knowing she can always seek safety there if needed.
- She also mentioned the Millinxpark, where cooking events occasionally take place. However, the group using this space tends to operate in isolation and is not neighborhood-focused due to certain policy restrictions.

Zara (age +/- 55 y/o):

- Zara observed that many residents are unaware of the meeting spaces available in the neighborhood, which limits the

Figure 25: Picture of the table where people do several activities, such as crafting, eating/drinking, talking to each other (own work)

success of these initiatives.

- She also pointed out that the municipality can be challenging to work with. While there is available space in buildings for organizing activities, the allocation of budgets often comes with the requirement of oversight. Due to a lack of resources for monitoring, resident-led initiatives frequently fail to take off.
- According to Zara, cooking is one of the most effective ways to bring people together. It allows individuals to learn about each other's cultures and culinary traditions. Given the diverse population of the neighborhood, where cooking plays a cen-

tral role in many cultures, the enthusiasm for food-related activities is very high.

Take-Away Meeting, 6-12-2024
During this day, while making Christmas decorations at Take-Away, I asked Martha and Reinard (one of the organizers of Take-Away) a few questions about their thoughts on how people in the neighbourhood prefer to come together. I also introduced the idea of creating a library that offers multiple functions for the community and asked whether such a concept would be desirable for the area.

Martha (age 67 y/o):

First, I spoke with Martha, a frequent user of libraries in the area (she mentioned growing up regularly visiting libraries often with her family, making them an indispensable part of her life) to ask whether establishing a new library would even make sense. There is already one at Zuidplein in the theatre building, although the library section is quite small. I was curious to hear her thoughts on that library.

Martha explained that the Zuidplein library primarily caters to parents with young children and the elderly. There are also a few study spaces for teenagers and young adults. (I visited the library later that same day. The number of study spaces was minimal, accommodating no more than about 30 students) However, she spoke very positively about the building as a whole and how it is organized. From time to time, free concerts are offered in the theatre, which she considers highly valuable. Many older adults attend, and going to the theatre serves as a form of "going out" for them. However, not all everyone can afford expensive concert tickets.

"You really feel welcomed there," she said. "When you arrive, you're directed to a place where you can store your coat and belon-

Figure 26: The entrance at Take-A-Way, in this corner people can bring stuff that they don't use anymore so people can take away things they like for free (own work)

gings. If you need to wait for the concert, you can sit at a large table where coffee, tea, and cookies are always offered. You're truly treated like royalty."

However, she did note that the theatre's concerts mainly attract white audiences because they predominantly feature classical music, which doesn't appeal to everyone. She suggested that greater attention to cultural diversity would be an improvement.

Martha also mentioned that libraries are sometimes underutilized because people are unaware that they are free. She suggested that parents should be informed — ideally when their children start school — that library access is free of charge.

I also asked her if there are many libraries near Tarwewijk and whether building a new one might be redundant. She noted that there are several within walking distance, such as in Afrikaanderwijk and Carnisse. However, she emphasized the value of having a library nearby. It provides people with an opportunity to leave their homes, which is especially beneficial for parents with young children. A library offers them a free activity elsewhere and a chance to avoid being cooped up at home.

When I asked if it was true that there are

limited offerings for teenagers and young adults, she confirmed this. However, she mentioned House of Urban Arts, an organization that attracts young people from the area. Unfortunately, the organization is at risk of losing its funding, which would have serious consequences for the well-being of youth and young adults in the neighbourhood.

Reinard(age +/- 55 y/o)

Later, I also spoke with Reinard about his perception of Tarwewijk and what, in his view, could bring people together.

Reinard expressed criticism of the way spatial planning is often approached in neighbourhoods like Tarwewijk. He observed that such plans tend to focus on solution-oriented strategies, which, according to him, are not always the most meaningful or effective approach.

What would truly benefit Tarwewijk, he argued, is improving and enhancing what is already present in the neighbourhood. Adding new functions to the area is, in his opinion, not the right way to address existing challenges. Instead, he introduced the concept of "ambiguity" in design — the idea of creating spaces that are intentionally "somewhat vague." This lack of strict defi-

nition would allow for multiple interpretations of how a space could be used.

According to Reinard, this approach enables people to appropriate the space in their own way, as it is not confined to a single purpose. Such flexibility also allows the space to evolve over time, adapting to the needs of the community as they change.

He added that this principle is also reflected in the concept behind Take-A-Way as a gathering space. The area used by Take-A-Way was intentionally designed with an ambiguous function; there is no definitive answer to what Take-A-Way "is." The idea is to create an environment where people feel free to engage in whatever activities they need or value in that space. This means that Take-A-Way can hold different meanings for different individuals.

Reinard also advised me to consider the impact of the future pedestrian bridge connecting Katendrecht and Tarwewijk. He pointed out that adjustments would be necessary for the public transport lines and the existing dike to ensure the bridge serves as a meaningful connection. These factors, he suggested, should also be reflected in the design of my project for the area.

Conclusions from the Take-A-Way in relation to my topic

-    Feedback from the older target group reveals a lack of suitable spaces in the neighbourhood where people can cook and share meals together. They emphasized that cooking and eating together is the way to foster connections across different cultures. Through sharing their culinary traditions, individuals can learn from and about one another. However, it is important to note that establishing a commercial hospitality function is not permitted in the neighbourhood.

-    There is a clear need to strengthen and provide better support for the existing social network within Tarwewijk. Any new building or development in the area should function as an extension of what already exists, enhancing and complementing the current social fabric.

Figure 27: Picture of the table where people do several activities, such as crafting, eating/drinking, talking to each other (own work)

Workshop at Dirk

Introduction about the workshop

To gain a better understanding of the residents of Tarwewijk and the social infrastructures they engage with, we organized a workshop at Dirk (a local supermarket). During this event, we (Emmy, Guus, Jarema, and I/Quinta) approached passersby to ask them three questions to start the conversation, offering a slice of freshly baked cake in return. The three questions we posed were:

1.   How do you help others / neighbours?

2.   Where do you feel most at ease?

3.   How do you meet others?

By engaging with random passersby, our goal was to reach as many different demographic groups as possible, ensuring a representative picture of the entire neighbourhood. In total, we spoke with 24 respondents, encompassing a mix of genders and various age groups.

While asking the questions, we made an effort to delve deeper, uncovering potentially relevant topics and gaining a better understanding of how the neighbourhood's social structures operate. For example, we occasionally asked whether people felt anything was missing in their neighbourhood, enabling us, as designers, to address these gaps later in the design process.
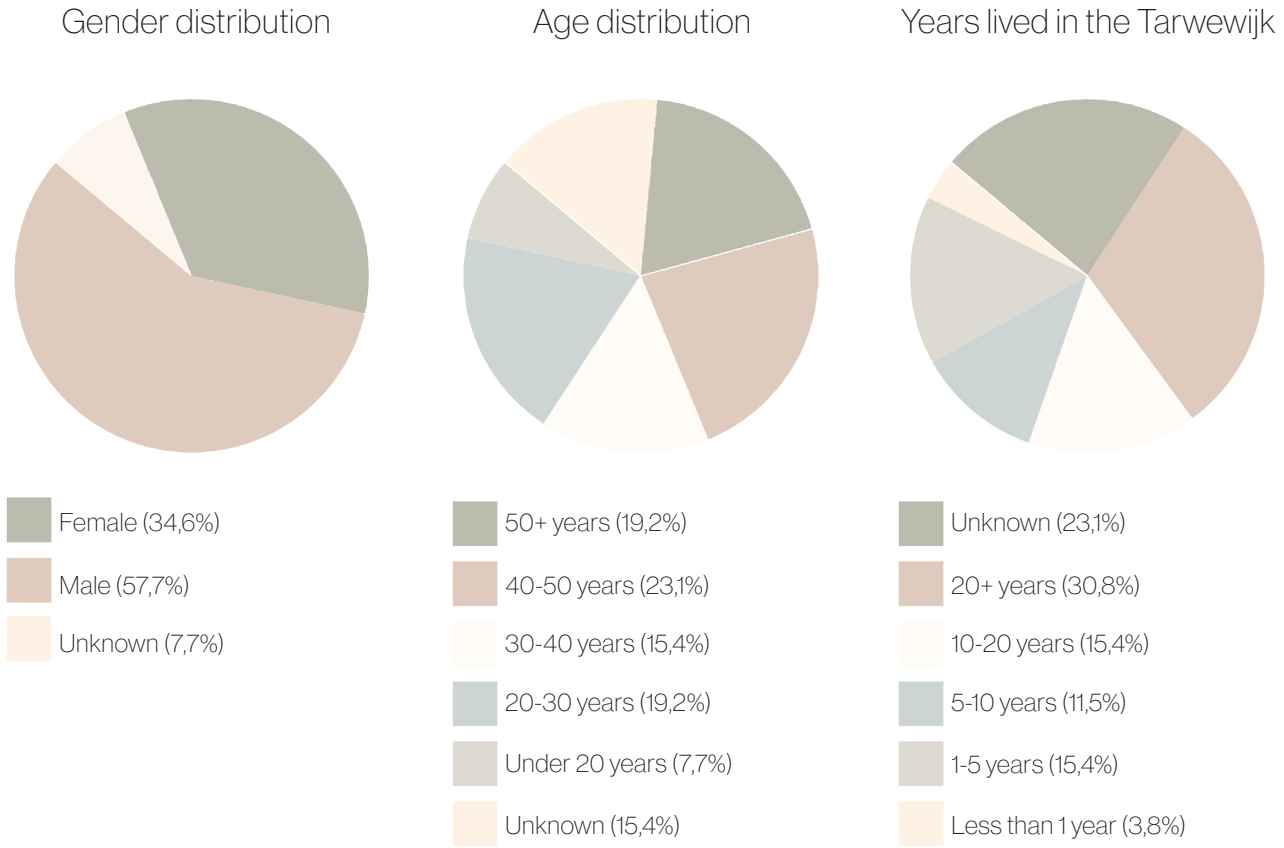

Figure 28: Pie charts that show general information about the respondents (own work)

Gender distribution
- Female (34,6%)
- Male (57,7%)
- Unknown (7,7%)

Age distribution
- 50+ years (19,2%)
- 40-50 years (23,1%)
- 30-40 years (15,4%)
- 20-30 years (19,2%)
- Under 20 years (7,7%)
- Unknown (15,4%)

Years lived in the Tarwewijk
- Unknown (23,1%)
- 20+ years (30,8%)
- 10-20 years (15,4%)
- 5-10 years (11,5%)
- 1-5 years (15,4%)
- Less than 1 year (3,8%)

Observations During the Workshop at Dirk according to the pie charts (figure 28)

It was noticeably easier to approach men (57,7%) than women (34,6%) during the workshop. As a result, there was an uneven distribution of respondents, as seen in the pie chart on the right. Women appeared to be too busy to stop at our stand and answer questions. Compared to the men passing by, women were often carrying heavy shopping bags or accompanying children. This suggests that women may have a relatively higher workload, possibly due to household responsibilities. Men, on the other hand, were primarily running small errands — perhaps during work breaks, though not necessarily — since most of the men we approached did not seem to be in a hurry.
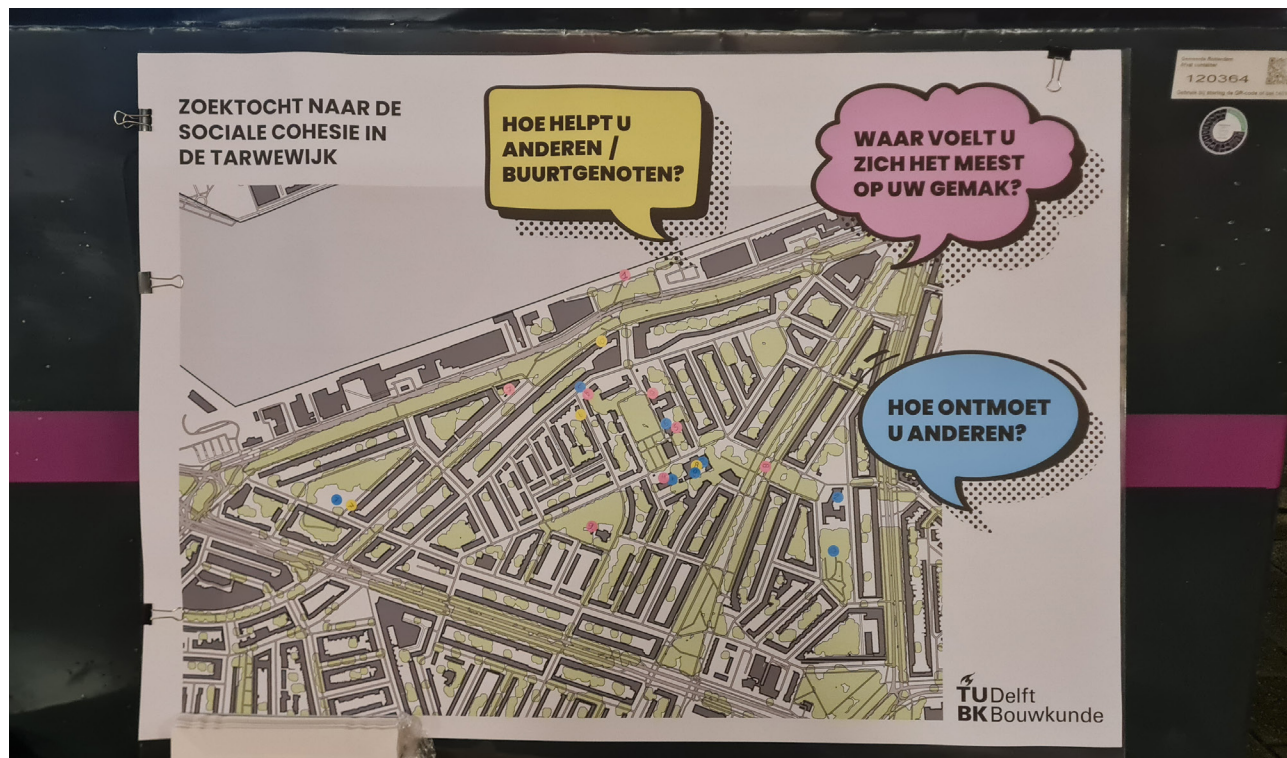
Figure 29 (top, left): The set-up of the workshop at the Dirk, Tarwewijk (own work)
Figure 30 (top, right): Asking questions to the people from the neighbourhood at the Dirk, Tarwewijk (own work)
Figure 31 (bottom): The poster with questions that we used to guide conversations, along with dots that are placed according to which places in the neighbourhood people mention during the conversation (own work)

The method

For the workshop we used a poster displaying the map of the Tarwewijk and the three questions. Having the map of Tarwewijk at hand made it easier for us to talk to people about their neighbourhood, and we also documented some information on the map. Although, most parts of the conversations we documented mainly in a folder: while one person kept the conversation flowing, the other wrote the information down in this folder (see figure 32). In this folder, we reserved half an A4 page for each respondent. On this page, we noted general information such as gender, age, and how long the person has lived in Tarwewijk.

In the blank space on the page, we placed post-its where we wrote down most of the information. We used different colours of post-its — yellow, pink, and blue — each corresponding to one of the three questions as showed on the poster (see figure 31).

The answers people provided often included specific locations. For instance, when answering the question; Where do you meet others? someone might say; At the schoolyard! Since blue corresponds to that question, we also placed a round blue sticker with the respondent's number on the map of Tarwewijk, marking the location of the specific schoolyard. Additionally, the respondent's story about why they often visit the schoolyard was documented on a blue post-it in the folder.

If any other relevant information emerged, we wrote it in the remaining blank space on the page. This method allowed us to organize our documentation clearly and systematically.

Figure 32: The A4 pages from the folder where the conversations where documented (own work)

Conclusions of the pie charts (figure 33)

Nature of Social Contact

The pie charts reveal that for most respondents, social interactions in the neighbourhood are primarily with (direct) neighbours (9/17). Some respondents mentioned (as noted in the transcript in the appendix) having a WhatsApp group with their neighbours, while another enjoys sitting outside in sunny weather to chat with neighbours. However, the majority of respondents indicated that their contact with neighbours is mostly superficial, such as exchanging a simple "hello." Nevertheless, several respondents mentioned helping their neighbours with tasks such as grocery shopping, pet sitting, assisting with furniture, or taking out the trash. This suggests that while social initiatives or interactions do exist among neighbours, they are relatively limited.

Places of Social Contact

Additionally, 9 out of 19 respondents indicated that they meet people within Tarwewijk itself. This suggests that for roughly half of the participants, the neighbourhood plays an important role in maintaining social connections.

Place Attachment

The findings also show that the majority (10/19) feel a sense of connection to specific places within the neighbourhood, such as (semi-)public facilities, the church or other religious spaces, or the neighbourhood as a whole.

Additional Gaps/Wishes

A few respondents were also asked what they feel is missing in their neighbourhood. Most mentioned a lack of greenery and expressed a desire for an improved aesthetic appeal in the area.

Conclusions of the transcript (appendix 4.2.1)

What stands out from the conversations we've had with residents is that there are primarily two opposing perspectives: on one hand, there are that people show concern about their fellow residents and are or want to be engaged with the neighbourhood or its social networks. On the other hand, other people feel like there is nothing to do in the area, have no interest, or simply don't feel invited to participate.

This suggests that the social networks in the neighbourhood may not be inclusive (enough). Possible reasons could be:
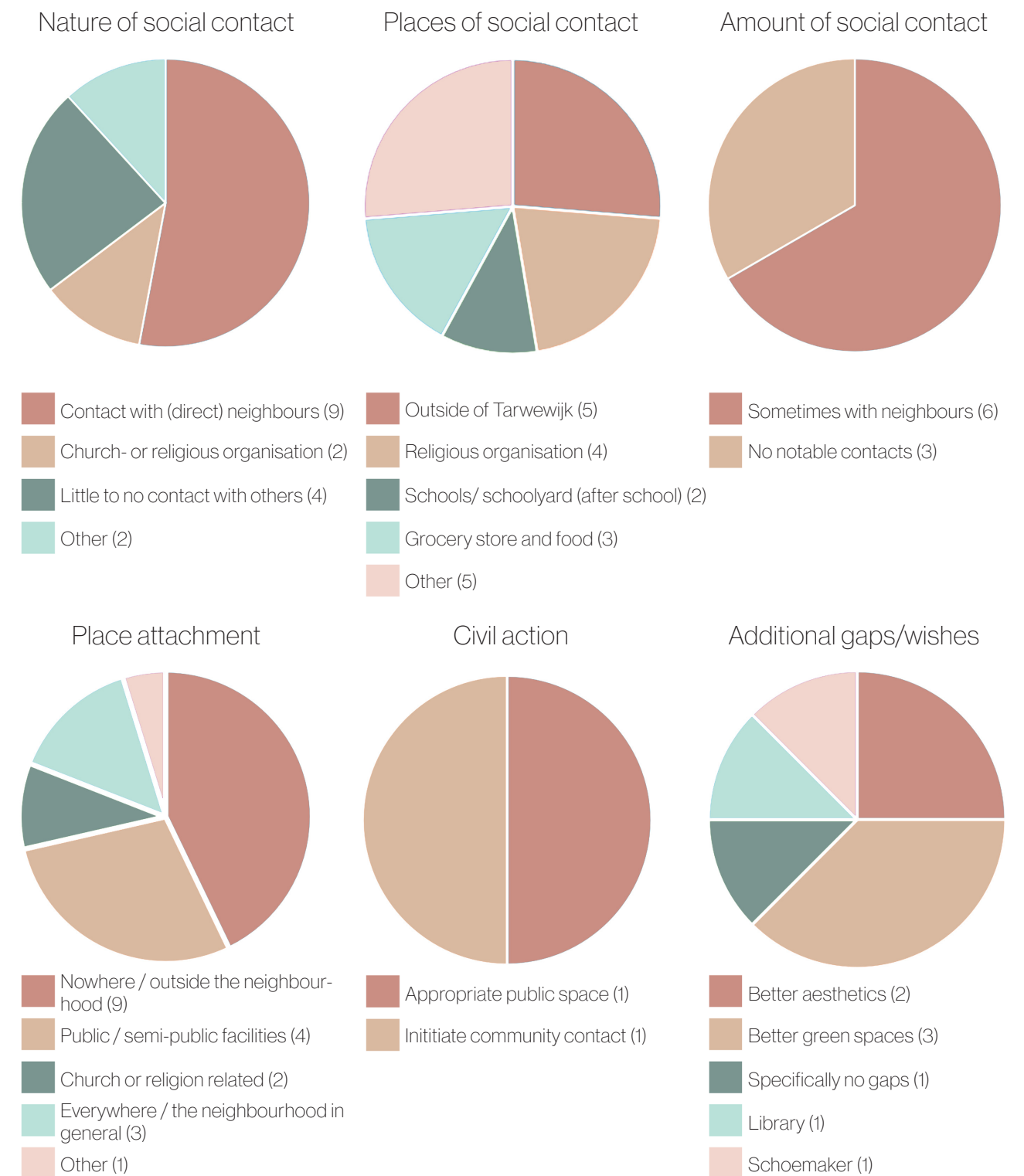

Figure 33: Pie charts that show and summarize the answers to questions we asked and highlight key topics, with the legend showing what people answered and the number of respondents (combination of own work and the work of Guus Teunen (student, in the same Health & Care studio)

1.   Social networks are not sufficiently visible. For example, the Minhaj mosque is surrounded by residential buildings and can only be accessed via a narrow alleyway. (There are redevelopment plans aiming to address this issue.)

2.   Social networks primarily cater to specific groups, such as religious communities or older adults.

3.   Social networks that consider themselves inclusive may not be attractive enough. In practice, they still attract a particular group of people, leaving some people feeling disconnected or unable to form meaningful connections with like-minded individuals.

4.   Some residents are simply too busy with their private lives to engage with neighbourhood social networks.

5.   Public spaces in the neighbourhood are not inviting enough. Issues such as litter and a lack of greenery worsen the problem (Kamerman, 2022). This lack of appealing public spaces contributes to an absence of community involvement and a sense of ownership among residents.

Conclusions from the Workshop that show gaps in the social infrastructure

-       From the conversations it appeared that there is a lack of suitable meeting spaces for youth and young adults: While there are some options available for sports in the neighbourhood, there are no spaces catering to other interests, such as music. This gap leaves the needs of this group unmet.

-       It was also mentioned in the conversations that there were sometimes language barriers between neighbours that made contact between eachother more difficult, also it appeared that one of the respondents helped his neighbours with legal matters (since the respondent had a profession as lawyer) and another respondent mentioned the learning difficulties of children and teenagers in the neighbourhood. These stories suggest a need for resources to address language and educational barriers: A space where individuals of any age can study, receive assistance, and improve their skills could significantly enhance their opportunities in society. Such a space would also contribute to the overall health and cohesion of the neighbourhood.

-       For groups with disabilities (who were also mentioned in the interviews to be relatively common in the neighbourhood), a library offering various cultural functions such as art, film, music, and reading could serve as a way to help them engage more fully in society. This may also be relevant for youth and young adults in general, as there are relatively more options available for physical excercise but a lack of cultural development in the neighbourhood.

Figure 34: The set-up of the workshop at the Dirk, Tarwewijk (own work)

Mapping the Social Infrastructure

Introduction

Based on the sessions held at Take-A-Way and the workshop at Dirk, a clearer picture has emerged of the social structures within the neighbourhood. This section explores in greater detail the specific places where different groups of people meet. By analysing these locations, we can identify where groups intersect (creating opportunities for connection) and where certain groups are underrepresented in the social infrastructure (highlighting gaps in connectivity).

It is important to realise that this paragraph of *mapping the social infrastructure* is not complete. The social structures in this research were mentioned in conversations during the fieldwork. Since it was not possible to contact everyone in the neighbour-

hood, certain iniatives or other means of social infrastructure could lack in this research, but the most noticable social structures in the neighbourhood are mentioned in this paragraph.

A distinction is made between meeting places that are publicly accessible – such as parks, playgrounds, and schools – and private spaces, like community or religious initiatives. The private spaces are further categorized by their accessibility: do they cater to all demographics in the neighbourhood, or are they limited to specific groups?

For example, a place like Take-A-Way is classified as an accessible space because it intentionally opens its doors to people of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds. In contrast, religious initiatives are considered less accessible, as they require a certain affinity with religion for individuals to feel welcomed or connected. As a result, these spaces tend to cater to more specific target groups.

Figure 35 (right): An overview of the different age groups and which social functions tin the neighbourhood attracts which age groups.

More accesible (public/private)
Less accesible (private)

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(young) children till 16 y/o
- Playgrounds
- Schools
- Parks
- House of Urban Arts (from 8 y/o)
- Minhaj (mosque)
- Victory Outreach (church)

(young) adults 16 till 27 y/o
- Parks
- Fitness equipment (predominantly used by men)
- House of Urban Arts (till 23 y/o)
- Minhaj (mosque)
- Victory Outreach (church)

adults 27 till 55 y/o
- Playgrounds
- Schools
- Parks
- Buurtbuik
- Take-A-Way
- Buurtcentrum Millinxparkhuis
- Wijk- en Speeltuin vereniging (closed off community)

- House of Hope (for vulnerable people)
- Victory Outreach (church)
- Minhaj (mosque)

empty nesters 55 till 70 y/o
- Parks
- Buurtbuik
- Take-A-Way
- Buurtcentrum Millinxparkhuis
- Wijk- en Speeltuin vereniging (closed off community)
- House of Hope (for vulnerable people)
- Victory Outreach (church)
- Minhaj (mosque)

elderly 70+
- Parks
- Buurtbuik
- Take-A-Way
- Buurtcentrum Millinxparkhuis
- House of Hope (for vulnerable people)
- Victory Outreach (church)
- Minhaj (mosque)

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The overlap:
- Parks
The lack:
- functions for (young) adults

1. Public

1.1 Parks

Throughout the neighbourhood, there are several accessible parks. However, they are fragmented and lack cohesive green connections or walking routes between them. The parks serve various purposes, often providing for (young) children with playgrounds and/or sports facilities. Seating areas are commonly integrated into the park designs.

Research on Rotterdam South, including Tarwewijk, conducted by sociologist Wenda Doff shows that public spaces such as parks, playgrounds, and squares are considered important by different age groups as well as social groups in the neighbourhood. (Kamerman, 2022)

1.2 Playgrounds

Most open spaces in the neighbourhood are designed primarily for (young) children, as they function as playgrounds. At the heart of the neighbourhood, there is a dedicated space exclusively serving as a playground. These spaces are meeting points in the neighbourhood for children as well as their parents.
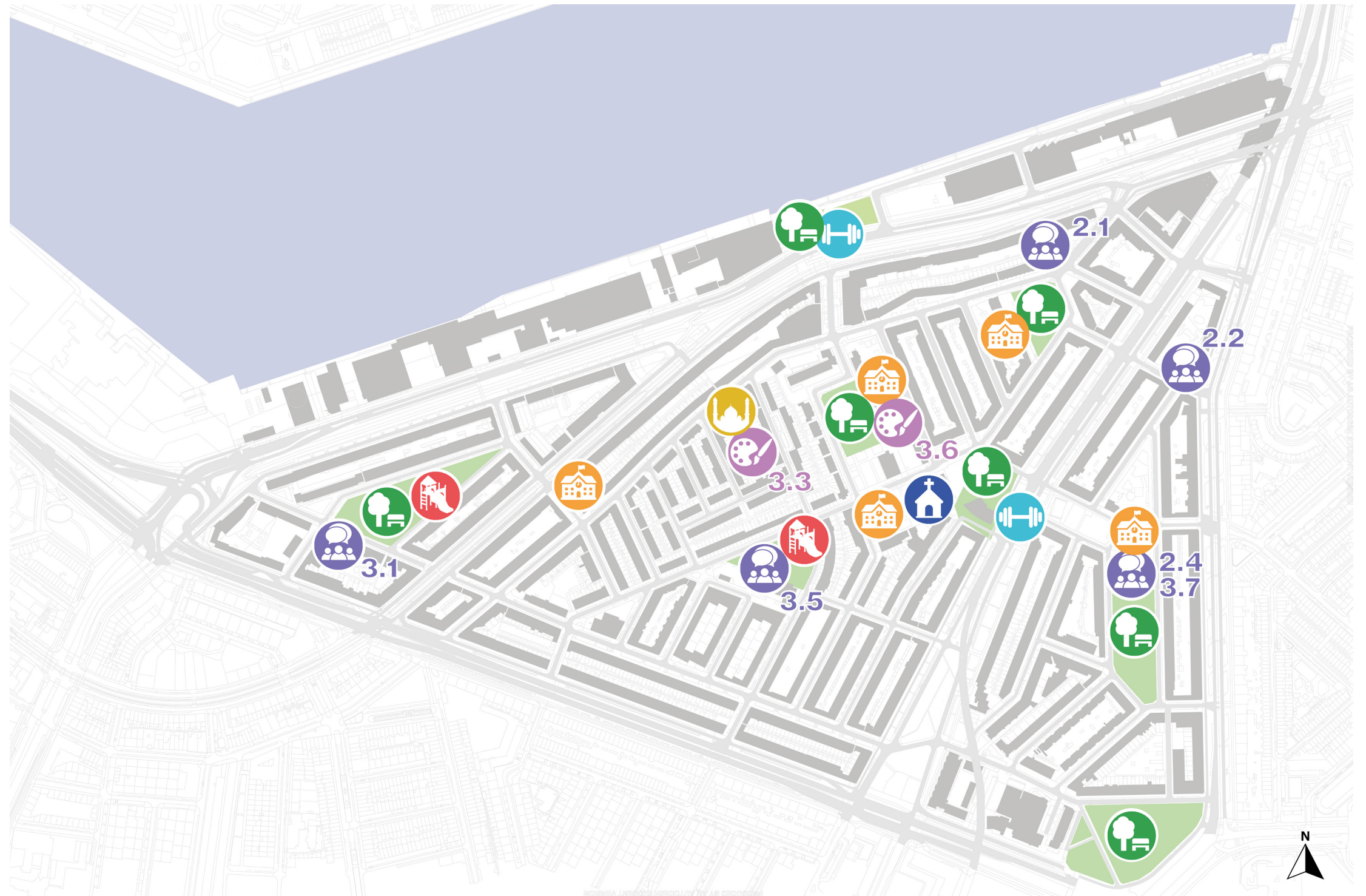
Figure 36: Map of the social infrastructure in the Tarwewijk (own work)

1.3 Schools

In addition to playgrounds, the neighbourhood is home to multiple schools. These function as meeting points, here also for children as well as their parents.

1.4 Fitness Equipment

In two locations within the neighbourhood – the park near Maashaven and the park along Mijnsherenlaan – outdoor fitness equipment has been installed for public use. Observations indicate that the fitness machines are frequently utilized, with up to ten people using them simultaneously. However, these observations also reveal that the equipment is predominantly used by men.

2. Private (but accesible to anyone)

2.1 Take-A-Way

Take-A-Way is a neighbourhood initative managed by a small team led by Mariëlle, Reinard, Stefanie, and Tineke. Take-A-Way opens its doors as a walk-in space, welcoming residents from the neighbourhood and beyond. Everyone is invited – men, women, young, or old, regardless of their background. The primary goal is to foster connections between people through creative activities.

Overall Take-A-Way mainly attracts adults, empty nesters and elderly, even though they are open for everyone. In that sense it is not the most attractive space for younger people to go to.

2.2 Cultuurwerkplaats [Cultural Work Place]

Similar to Take-A-Way, the CultuurWerkplaats serves as an accessible meeting place for residents of Tarwewijk. Located in a former school building with an inner courtyard, the space is designed to foster connection and engagement (CultuurWerkplaats Tarwewijk | Ontmoeting & Ontwikkeling [meeting & development], n.d.). To bring people together, the CultuurWerkplaats organizes a variety of creative activities and workshops.

2.3 Minhaj (partially)

On Friday afternoon (6-12), around 2:00 PM, Guus and I visited the building on Polslandstraat, primarily to learn more about the mosque located there, Minhaj-ul-Quran, as well as the art studios housed in the same building. At the entrance, we approached a man who turned out to be the ideal person to speak with, as he is actively involved in the organization of the mosque.

We expressed our interest in understanding how the building is utilized, both by the mosque and the art studios. The man, approximately in his 30s, explained that Minhaj-ul-Quran has been established in the building for 25 to 30 years. He emphasized that it is not just a mosque, but an open community initiative that welcomes everyone in the neighbourhood – regardless of faith – as a type of community hub. He shared several examples of activities organized by Minhaj for the Tarwewijk neighbourhood, including indoor soccer tournaments and first aid courses. Minhaj also provides practical assistance, such as facilitating homework support, offering access to a confidential counsellor, supporting individuals with mental health challenges, and helping those experiencing financial difficulties to find solutions.

The prayer space itself serves more than just religious purposes – it is also used for community events such as birthday celebrations. He described Minhaj as a true welfare organization for the neighbourhood, transcending cultural or religious boundaries. For this reason Minhaj is categorized as accesible (open to everyone)

as well as less accesible (since Minhaj is associated also with religion)

2.4 Buurtbuik [Neighbourhood Belly]

BuurtBuik is an initiative run by volunteers who prepare meals for those with limited financial means. It is an accessible initiative, as anyone can contribute as a volunteer, and everyone is welcome to join for a meal. Volunteers collect surplus food from the local market, which is then used to prepare the meals.

3. Private (but less accessible for everyone)

3.1 House of Hope

House of Hope is a neighbourhood initiative specifically aimed at supporting residents who face challenges in their lives. For this reason, it is categorized as less accessible. The organization provides assistance with health, financial matters, and other needs. However, it is accessible in the sense that anyone can contribute, for example, by volunteering.

3.2 Minhaj (partially)

Referring to 2.3

3.3 Atelier Henk van Vessem [Art studio Henk van Vessem]

Atelier Henk van Vessem is an art studio located in the Polstandstraat in the same building as the mosque Minhaj. When Guus and I visited the building we spoke to a person who was actively involved in the organisation of Minhaj (referring to 2.4). We specifically asked about any insights of the art studio, since there is barely any online information about the art studio avalaible. We didn't receive much information except from it's function as an art studio. Because of the lack of information about this place, the atelier is categorized as 'less accesible'.

3.4 Victory Outreach

Victory Outreach is an international Christian church actively involved in supporting the neighborhood. They organize various initiatives, such as a Christmas dinner for the homeless, and host numerous events centered around religious activities.

3.5 Wijk -en Speeltuinvereniging {Neighbourhood and Playground association]

At the heart of the neighbourhood is a spacious playground for children located, which is also home to the 'Wijk- en Speel- tuinvereniging' [Neighbourhood and Playground association]. Little is known about this association, but during conversations conducted as part of the fieldwork, it was mentioned that the association is managed by a "closed" group. For this reason, it has been categorized as 'less accessible'.

3.6 House of Urban Arts

House of Urban Arts is a cultural organisation for teenagers and young adults (from 8 to 23 y/o) located in a school building. The Urban Art displinces that they teach include dance, singing, rap & creating beats through workshops, presentations, lectures and performances.

However, according to the conversation with local resident Martha at Take-A-Way (referring to 3.1 Take-A-Way sessions) the organization is at risk of losing its funding, which would have serious consequences for the well-being of youth and young adults in the neighbourhood.

3.7 Buurtcentrum Millinxparkhuis [Neighbourhood centre Millinxparkhuis]

Millinxpark is a community center that also serves as an accessible meeting place for residents of Tarwewijk. The concept behind Millinxpark is to create a space where residents and volunteers can participate in and organize activities together. However, as mentioned by a local resident Martha during the Take-A-Way sessions (referring to 3.1. Take-A-Way Sessions) the group using this space tends to operate in isolation and is not neighborhood-focused due to certain policy restrictions. Therefore this neighbourhood centre is categorized as less accesible.

Conclusions

- For children, many activities are organised by the schools and there are also after-school care options in the neighbourhood. In addition, the public spaces are thoughtfully designed for this target group. Many parks are equipped with playgrounds for young children. These places also provide opportunities for their parents to connect with other parents.
- There are quite a few initiatives that appeal to adults (especially those in the empty-nester stage) and the elderly. These often involve spaces that use creativity in art or cooking as a means to foster social interaction. It could be mentioned that there could be done more in the neighbourhood for this target group, which is also argumented in the conclusions of paragraph 3.1. Take-A-Way Sessions.
- When considering features that appeal to all target groups, it quickly becomes clear that parks and green spaces are valuable areas benefiting everyone. They can serve as meeting places for everyone. When ensuring inclusivity in neighbourhoods, designing places like parks is vitally important.
- From the analysis, it is evident that there is a gap in the neighbourhood when it comes to meeting spaces for teenagers and young adults. House of Urban Arts is the only organization that organizes cultural activities for this group, but their services are limited to young adults up to the age of 23. Aside from House of Urban Arts, there are only outside public facilities where teenagers and young adults can spend their time. However, these public spaces are often focused solely on sports, such as basketball courts and fitness equipment. Observations show that these facilities are mainly used by men. For women or teenagers/young adults who are not drawn to these activities, there are no alternatives available in the neighbourhood.

Case Studies

Case study 1: Community living Tanthof by Flip

Flip is both the designer and a resident of a cohousing community located in the Tanthof neighbourhood of Delft. The complex consists of three clusters, each accommodating approximately 18 residents. One of the clusters also includes a meeting space designed for residents of the entire neighbourhood to connect with one another. While all three clusters share a similar hierarchical structure of spaces, the configuration varies slightly between them.

These spatial levels can be understood as a spectrum ranging from a small network(private spaces such as bedrooms and individual living rooms) to larger network (shared spaces accessible to the wider neighbourhood). In this spectrum there are semi-private spaces which are exclusive to residents of the cluster, such as their shared garden, spacious kitchen and living room, workshop, bike storage, and laundry facilities. Each floor within a cluster also includes smaller shared kitchens and sanitary facilities for its residents, this subsequently accommodates a smaller network for example. Additionally, there are community gardens shared across all clusters, fostering social interactions between clusters and therefore a connected to a larger network. Spaces designed for the entire neighbourhood widens this network even further.

Designing spaces with this range of scales within networks is a well-considered choice, as it aims to provide a certain flexibility to accommodate the residents' varying needs.

Since social interaction and spending time together are central to cohousing communities, several intentional design choices were made to encourage these behaviours:

Pathways and Community Functions

Routes through the building are designed to pass by various shared facilities, encouraging spontaneous encounters and ma-

Figure 37: Facade of one of the three community buildings designed by Flip, adjacent to the shared garden (own work)

king it easy for people to connect regularly. Visibility and Openness: Private living rooms on the ground floor include windows overlooking the adjacent shared living room, hallway, and garden. This design is particularly designed for families, enabling them to keep an eye on children playing in these communal spaces. Additionally, it creates openness and softens the boundaries between private and shared areas.

Flexibility

The design accommodates future adaptability, allowing residents to expand spaces, create rooftop terraces, or adjust the transparency of façades based on their needs. This flexibility ensures that residents can adapt their living arrangements to changing circumstances without needing to move. For instance, rooms are intentionally sized at 4x4 meters but can be extended to 4x6 meters. Residents can also exchange rooms or adjust living spaces as household compositions change, enabling the community to grow or shrink as needed.

Proportion

The optimal cluster size is neither too small

nor too large, with 18 residents per cluster striking the right balance for a co-housing community.

Size and function
Meeting spaces are designed to be intimate rather than overly large, with specific purposes to encourage use. Flip mentioned the relationship between size and function, which should match. He shared the example of a bus stop or a small play area. To foster encounters between people, it helps to provide a subject to talk about, something which could relate to the bus stop or the play area itself. However also the size of this area should align with the function in order to create an inviting atmosphere to then also foster these encounters.

Layout of spaces
The placement of spaces also matters greatly. Proximity between spaces helps subconsciously encourage social interaction. For example, positioning benches to face one another or arranging homes around a courtyard instead of in distant, orthogonal layouts which raises a sense of closeness.

Formal and informal
Finally, there is a balance between formal and informal spaces. For instance; hallways function as informal spaces where casual conversations and spontaneous meetings occur, while formal spaces like meeting rooms serve a more structured purpose. Both types of spaces are essential for a well-functioning system.

Case study 2: Studentflat Weesperstraat by Herman Hertzberger
The student housing complex on Weesperstraat (1960s), designed by Herman Hertzberger, is located at a central spot in Amsterdam. Thanks to its central location, the building has never faced vacancies, even though students typically move out after an average of one and a half years. The reason: each student shares their living room, kitchen, and sanitary facilities with 17 others — a group size that, in practice, is too large to foster social cohesion (this may contradict with the case study of Flip's co-housing that includes 18 residents per cluster, but in Flip's co-housing projects there are smaller scale levels within these clusters). The private rooms for students themselves are relatively small but feature large windows that often offer beautiful views of Amsterdam. The communal spa-

Figure 38: The facade at ground floor level of the Studentflat at the Weesperstraat, Amsterdam (own work)

ces also emphasize these views, with the living room opening towards a balcony that provides pleasant views of the city.
The original design of the building aimed for an open layout. The ground floor was intended as an accessible community space for residents and neighbours alike. Even the area leading up to the front door of the student's room entrances was designed to allow for direct postal delivery. However, this openness proved problematic in practice. It attracted drug dealers, addicts, and others who caused safety issues, leading to some parts of the building becoming actually unsafe. Additionally, disturbances caused by the students themselves, such as large parties, worsened the challenges the building already faced.
To address these issues, modifications were made to the building. Public spaces were privatized by adding multiple access-controlled doors, which only residents can use, and it was also necessary to install surveillance cameras.
Today, only a few communal spaces remain. On the ground floor, there is a shared area exclusively for the students, which includes both indoor and outdoor spaces.

Figure 39 (top): The interior of the hallway in one of the student housing modules (own work)
Figure 40 (bottom): The gallery street on the fourth floor of the Weesperflat (own work)

There is also a café for residents, part of the original design, that remains a lively hub. This café is intensely used, so much so that nearby businesses have complained about losing customers to the vibrant student café. The café primarily serves as a recreational space for drinks, parties, movie nights, and similar activities. Originally, the ground floor was meant to offer more amenities for students, but most of these spaces have been repurposed and are now occupied by private businesses.

The building connects to the street through benches placed between its columns, creating an inviting interface with the surrounding urban environment.

On the fourth floor, Hertzberger included a prototype of his "street in the sky" concept. This wide gallery, complete with thoughtfully designed benches, provides residents with a space to meet and make their own. It is actively used for this purpose. The apartments on this level are slightly larger and self-contained, catering to older students or those with children.

Hertzberger also integrated several playful architectural details into the building. For instance, the lighting is incorporated into the design itself. In the student hallways, the lights are placed low on the walls, ser-ving as both a surface for placing bags and a source of soft, indirect light that subtly draws attention toward the communal areas. He also designed built-in mailboxes and preserved features like the original spot for a phone booth.

The building also includes a smaller component known as the 'meisjeshuis' [girls house], where only five students share a living room, kitchen, and sanitary facilities. This setup seems to be more successful. According to the former building manager, residents in this section tend to stay significantly longer than in other parts of the complex.

RESOURCES

CHAPTER 04

04

Resources
4.1 Annotated Bibliography
4.2 Appendix

Annotated Bibliography

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Appendix

4.2.1 Workshop at Dirk - Transcript

Fieldwork transcript edited – day one 25.11.2024, 15:00 to 18:00
The interviews were conducted outside the Dirk van den Broek supermarket in the norther part of Tarwewijk, Rotterdam South.

General remarks
People were stopping for cake mostly and we asked ask you some quick questions

Interviewees
1. STUDENTS COUPLE, 20 TO 25 YEARS OLD APPROXIMATELY
How do you meet people in the neighbourhood?
- Well rarely in the neighbourhood mostly if we see friends, it's in the city and so we don't know maybe some of our neighbours. The one person in the street was a friend moved away so now it's no one.
Where do you feel at ease in the neighbourhood?
- Nowhere, Tarwewijk is not pretty, if it's nice weather we go to the centre or maybe another park. Sometimes we walk along the Maashaven because of the view
What was the last time you helped someone?
- Couple weeks ago we called the police becau-

se our elderly neighbour didn't open his windows and his curtains for three days. She heard his dog crying so she called.

2. MALE
- It was very hard to speak with him
How do you meet people in the neighbourhood?
- In the mosque in the neighbourhood (Wolphaertsbocht 500)
- I drink tea with friends and I have grandchildren and they go to school and I meet people there also

3. FEMALE, AROUND 40 YEARS OLD
- She lives 16 years in the Tarwewijk
How and where do you meet others?
- She doesn't meet people in the neighbourhoods, but she knows direct neighbours
Where do you feel at ease in the neighbourhood?
Where do you help people?
- She doesn't help people and she doesn't feel at home anywhere
- Her children's play playgrounds in the neighbourhood, and sometimes she sees people there

4. MALE, AROUND 40 TO 50 YEARS OLD
- Lives 29 years in Tarwewijk
How and where do you meet others?
- At home mostly but sometimes also church, not precise about what church was it
- He uses the Maashaven park to sports sometimes for jogging
Where do you feel at ease in the neighbourhood?
- He said on the streets when he was young but now he is on a pension and he doesn't really go on the street anymore, so nowhere in the neighbourhood.

5. FEMALE AROUND 30 YEARS OLD, DIDN'T LIVE IN TARWEWIJK
- She worked at the school building because she lives in it also neighbourhood to them and when we ask her
How do you meet other people?
- They have a neighbourhood WhatsApp group, but it's mostly direct neighbours
How do you help people in the neighbourhood?
- Sometimes she brings out the garbage cans and then other neighbours bring it back, but only with closest neighbours.
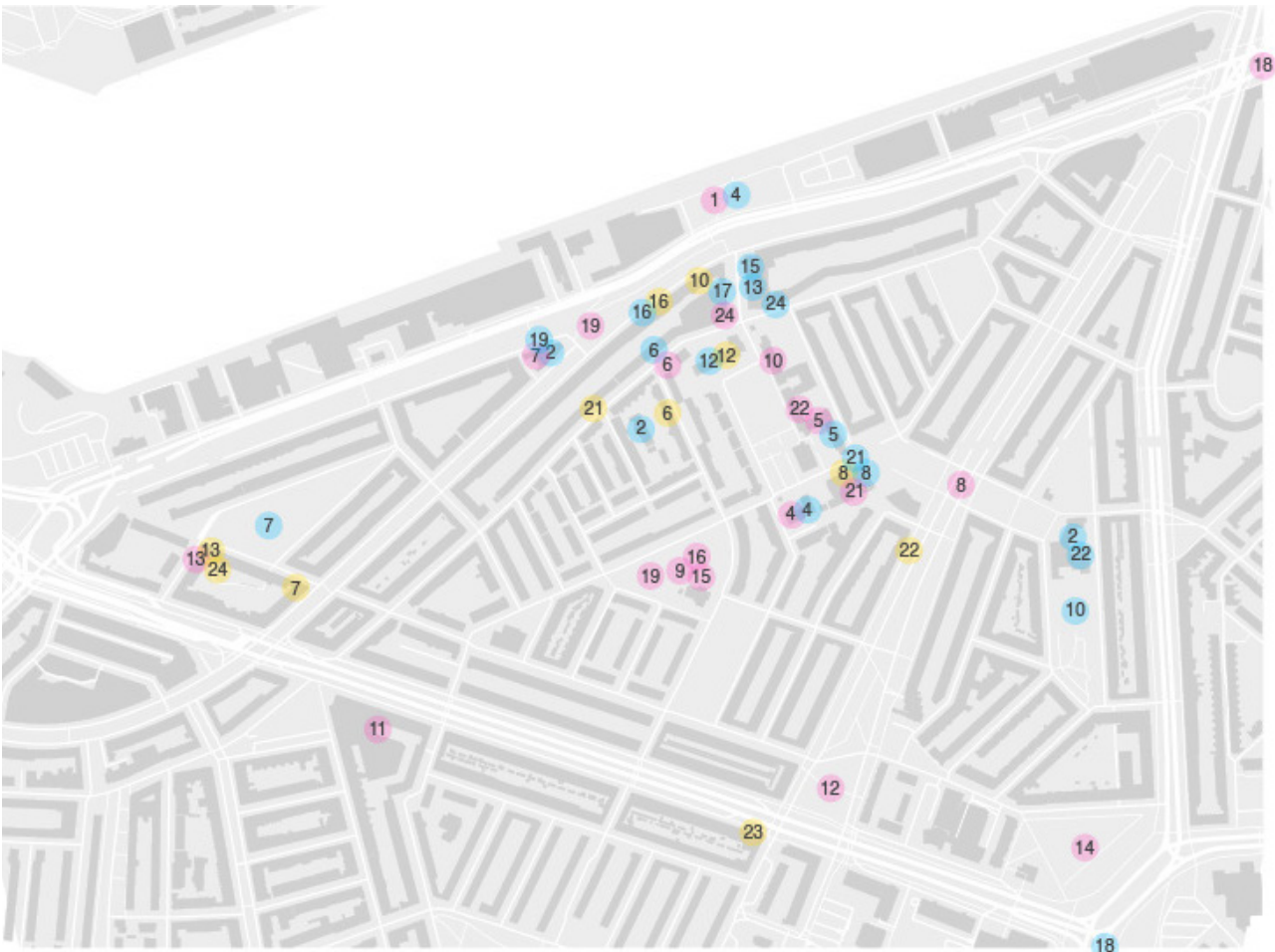

Figure 41: The numbers reference to the number of the respondent and the places/ areas they mentioned (work of Emmy Vermeulen, student health & care studio)

Where do you feel at ease?
- My workplace so my school

6. MALE, AROUND 50 Y.O.
- He was thinking that we were from the architects that they're planning to demolish the buildings in the neighbourhood
- He lived in this building across from the new plans and he was very concerned about the building that is planned to be built across from him. It's going to be six or seven levels and he was afraid of what it will be for his building, because of sun issues and

related heating costs.
How do you meet other people?
- He sits outside of his home when it's nice weather and the sun shines, and he talks to his neighbours because, and neighbours do the same. He became friends with his neighbours but he says it really depends on the street, and sometimes peoples aren't nice – i.e. on Brielselaan. He mentions the people are very closed to.
Where, or when you help your neighbours (for the last time)?
- In Polslandstraat lives an elderly man that has

cancer, and he asked him to help him with the move furniture because he had to move away from a rented apartment.

7. MALE IN ELECTRIC STROLLER – TURKISH/ MIDDLE EASTERN ETHNICITY
- Very nice to us
- Lives in the triangle on the west of Tarwewijk
- Very happy about the neighbourhood
Where do you meet other people?
- There are meetings in the park over there to discuss neighbourly affairs, but he never goes because he doesn't really like talking to people.
- Maybe he would go if he was younger, but not now. He has grandchildren so maybe he would go with his grandchildren.
- He's been living there for 30-40 years, and he said that the neighbourhood has changed, there is not as much respect as there was back then.
- Says that maybe the mosque and also this markets in Afrikaanderbuurt
How do you help people in the neighbourhood?
- Lends work equipment mostly to direct neighbours

8. MALE AROUND 30 YEARS OLD
- Lives here and in Tarwewijk for five months
- He lives in the church, he said he was safe by Christians
Where do you meet other people?
- It was mostly in the Church (victory outreach) and it's also where he helps other people there spreading words. They give him food.
Where do you feel most at home?
- This gym under the metro because he really like to do sports

9. FEMALE I THINK AROUND 30 TO 35 YEARS OLD
- Lives four years in the neighbourhood.
- She was with her two small children
Where do you feel at home in the neighbourhood?
- Nowhere, she doesn't really like the neighbourhoods. She was saying that when she was looking for houses to live, she didn't really want to live in Rotterdam Zuid because of reputation, and at some point she found this house and now she's OK with it.
- She thinks that her street is OK but if you go more to the West, it gets more ghetto-like. She thinks it's

because in her street people pay for their houses and do not get them as social housing like more on the west.
Do you meet other people?
- Maybe some neighbours, but she's rather not going anywhere
- She goes to playgrounds with her children, mentioned not paying for the fenced one in the middle of Tarwewijk. She then sometimes bring a friend, otherwise she doesn't speak to neighbours.
How do you help people in the neighbourhood?
- She doesn't really help people, but one time was helped by someone when she locked herself out of her house
- There's a handyman in her in her street
- She's friendly, she says hi and people say hi back

10. 12 YEAR-OLD GIRLS
- She was with another friend, it was dark outside but it was still 5PM
Where do you meet others?
- At school and also they mostly hang on the street
- Mostly around dirk, when it gets darker closer to home, sometimes on the playgrounds
Where do you feel most at home?
- She goes to this dancing school house for urban arts so it's next to her school, she has a dancing group there but sometimes she also goes to Milinxpark.
Do you help other people?
- There was one situation when she or her parents helped someone hang on a TV

11. MALE AROUND 30 YEARS OLD, with Irish accent
- He came biking to the dirk and he spoke English and he lived in the Tarwewijk for one year.
Where do you feel at home?
- He was saying he goes to this café / bar near the place, with beer and music, other places feels at home is mostly out of the centre.
Do you meet in the neighbourhood?
- He said, speaks to neighbours sometimes, very little, he doesn't know people personally and he became friends with a couple in his streets, but they moved away last year so he doesn't speak to them anymore
Do you help others?
- Rather rarely, but one time he helped a kid fixing

his bike

Fieldwork transcript edited – day two 29.11.2024, 14:00 to 17:00
The interviews were conducted outside the Dirk van den Broek supermarket in the norther part of Tarwewijk, Rotterdam South

General remarks
People were stopping for cake mostly and we asked ask you some quick questions

Interviewees
12. MALE 40 YEARS OLD
- Lives in the Tarwewijk since 1997 (27 years)
- Lives in the flat next to Dirk
Where do you feel at home in the neighbourhood?
- Close to the police station, it feels more safe there so he feels more at ease
Where do you meet other people?
- Nobody, but he does know his direct neighbours
How do you help people in the neighbourhood?
- Used to but not anymore, did try help people from the flat before with using computers, but he quit since it appeared to be hard for him to help people understanding and this made him feel less motivated to continue the help.

13. MALE
- Lives in the Tarwewijk for 10 years
Where do you feel at home in the neighbourhood?
- He feels most at home at House of Hope, where you can have free (evening) meals with people who, among other things, struggle with issues like loneliness. According to him, this place truly provides a family feeling.
Where do you meet other people?
- At Dirk, he meets many neighbours, but of course, he also gets to know a lot of people through House of Hope.
How do you help people in the neighbourhood?
- Through House of Hope, he meets other people by helping out with cooking and occasionally having a chat with them.
- He is convinced that kindness and having con-

versations with people are what they need, and he hopes this will improve the atmosphere in the neighbourhood.

14.   MALE AROUND 30 YEARS OLD
- Lives in the Tarwewijk for 4 years
- He also studied architecture and has been working for himself for some time now.
- He mentions that the streets are too narrow, which sometimes leads to inconvenient situations. However, he thinks the housing in the neighbourhood is good.
Where do you feel at home in the neighbourhood?
- At the soccer field on the edge of Tarwewijk.
Where do you meet other people?
- He mainly meets his friends at Zuidplein, which he thinks is fine, and therefore, in his opinion, Tarwewijk doesn't really need anything.
He doesn't have much contact with the neighbours; sometimes he says hello, but sometimes he doesn't.
How do you help people in the neighbourhood?
- He doesn't.

15. FEMALE AROUND 55 YEARS OLD
- She has lived in Tarwewijk for 7 years; before that, she lived in Charlois for 20 years.
Where do you feel at home in the neighbourhood?
- She feels most at home at the playground in Tarwewijk, where she sometimes goes with the children who come to visit. She can also have a cup of coffee there.
Where do you meet other people?
- She knows three Turkish women in the block, but there is a language barrier.
How do you help people in the neighbourhood?
- Not really in Tarwewijk, but in Charlois, yes. But not anymore now.

16. FEMALE AROUND 16 YEARS OLD
Where do you feel at home in the neighbourhood?
- Overall it's "HER" neighbourhood
- When the weather is nice, she goes to the playground/parks.
Where do you meet other people?
She knows the direct neighbours and people on the street.
How do you help people in the neighbourhood?
- She helps direct neighbours when they ask for as-

sistance, as well as people on the street. In fact, she tries to help wherever possible.

17. MALE AROUND 45 YEARS OLD
- Lives 27 years in the Tarwewijk
- He particularly shared a lot about the experience of the neighbourhood from the perspective of his children. He has, among other things, a son with a disability (not sure what kind of disability).
Where do you meet other people?
- He was hanging out with some friends around a store across from Dirk.
How do you help people in the neighbourhood?
- He has been volunteering at a soccer club for 11 years, specifically for young children/youth with disabilities.
- He has helped many young people off the streets by getting them interested in the soccer club.
- He mentions that there are problems with young people hanging around on the streets, but that it's also understandable because there is no place for them once they reach a certain age (there are plenty of playgrounds/activities for younger children in the neighbourhood). This issue doesn't apply to older children/youth, but also young adults. Many young people, for example, are into music (playing instruments, rapping, etc.), but there is nowhere to support those activities and creativity. There are still opportunities for sports, but there is a gap when it comes to 'culture.'
- Children/youth with disabilities also struggle in the neighbourhood. Often, parents keep their children at home out of shame, which makes it even harder for them to integrate into society. By "disabilities," he also refers to learning delays, which are common in the neighbourhood. He believes something should be actively done about this.

18. FEMALE 26 YEARS OLD
- Lives 2 years in the Tarwewijk
Where do you feel at home in the neighbourhood?
- At the market in the Afrikaanderbuurt.
- When asked if she enjoys taking a walk around the neighbourhood, she immediately replies, "Oh no, I never walk here, there's nothing interesting to see."
Where do you meet other people?
- She mentions that she doesn't find Tarwewijk a pleasant neighbourhood, and therefore, she doesn't really meet people there. She has the impression

that there are many groups in the neighbourhood. You either belong, or you're left out. That's why she prefers to go somewhere else to meet people.
- She mentions that she would like to see something for her age group to do in Tarwewijk. If only something "interesting" could be organized that is suitable for young adults, such as a place for social activities. She also reacts positively when she hears about the idea of possibly organizing musical/dance activities in the neighbourhood. When it comes to the idea of community gardens/gardening, she mentions that she knows of a place where this is possible, namely the Cultuurwerkplaats. However, she says that it's not very appealing to her age group, as it mainly attracts older people.
- She mentions that she doesn't know her neighbours.
How do you help people in the neighbourhood?
- Not really, although she has been to 'BuurtBuik' twice. It's an initiative in the neighbourhood where leftover food from the market can be taken for free, and a meal is cooked for people in the neighbourhood. She mentions that it mainly attracts older people.

19. TWO BOYS AND GIRL AROUND 12 YEARS OLD
- They have been living in Tarwewijk for 12 years, around the corner from Dirk, near a small playground.
- They attend to the school OBS the Globe
Where do you feel at home in the neighbourhood?
- They feel most at home at the playground association and the playground near their house. They say, "The neighborhood is fun and dangerous."
- When we ask further, they mention that a lot of illegal fireworks are being set off by other kids in the neighbourhood, and they find that scary. They themselves say they are not involved with fireworks, except for one of the boys, but only on New Year's Eve.
Where do you meet other people?
- They meet people outside of school at the mosque at Wolphaertsbocht and at Maashaven.

20. MALE 15 YEARS OLD
- They have lived in Tarwewijk for 3 years, along the metro line, near Maashaven.
- He goes to school at Olympia College, behind the

Feyenoord training camp.
Where do you feel at home in the neighbourhood?
- He feels most at home in Rijnhaven, on the street with his friends.
Where do you meet other people?
- He mainly meets his friends from Tarwewijk at the schoolyard.
- He occasionally has contact with the neighbours, mainly just saying hello.
How do you help people in the neighbourhood?
- Mainly through small gestures, such as holding the door open for older people (neighbours).

21. FEMALE AROUND 50 YEARS OLD
- The woman only spoke English. She lived in Tarwewijk for 20 years, but in 2005, she moved to Dublin for 20 years. Now, she has recently returned to Tarwewijk and plans to stay. She mentions that she enjoys living in the Netherlands and in Tarwewijk. She also notes that the neighbourhood is in better condition since her return.
Where do you feel at home in the neighbourhood?
- She feels most at home at the church.
Where do you meet other people?
- She knows many people in the neighbourhood and has mainly met people at the church in the past; this was her main social network in the area. The church is no longer in the neighbourhood.
How do you help people in the neighbourhood?
- She mainly helps her neighbours, for example, by doing groceries for them sometimes.

22. MALE AROUND 50 YEARS OLD
- Lives 12 years in the Tarwewijk
Where do you feel at home in the neighbourhood?
- He feels at home everywhere, especially at the school where his children go.
Where do you meet other people?
- He participated for the first time in a dinner for people from the neighbourhood (Wevershoek).
- He also goes to the community centre at Millinxpark.
How do you help people in the neighbourhood?
- He has taken an active role in the neighbourhood himself. He has been working on a social plan at Mijnherenslaan for 3 years. There, he set up a "neighbourhood garden" near his house with picnic benches, a water point, and more.
- He tries to help his neighbours wherever he can.

For example, a neighbour of his had knee surgery and ended up in a nursing home for two weeks. Her son was supposed to take care of her cats, but due to circumstances, he couldn't, so he temporarily took over the care of his neighbour's five cats.
- He also once helped a downstairs neighbour with administrative matters.
What do you think that the neighbourhood lacks?
- When we ask what he thinks is missing in the neighbourhood, he answers that there is a lack of greenery. For example, recently, housing was built in a certain area where he would have preferred to see a park instead. He says that greenery makes a big difference to the liveability of the neighbourhood, especially for older groups of people (not just for young children).
- He himself is unsure about moving. According to him, there is a lot of turnover in the neighbourhood because many migrant workers live there.
- His daughter also likes to share her opinion about this place: according to her, there is a lack of a proper dog park in the neighbourhood, one that is specifically designed for walking and playing with dogs.

23. MALE AROUND 50 YEARS OLD
- In the Tarwewijk 8 years (since 2016)
Where do you feel at home in the neighbourhood?
- Nowhere.
- He mentions that this is partly due to the lack of greenery; it's so grey and dull that it makes people feel hopeless, he says. In the past, he lived in a much greener environment in The Hague. He would love to see Kralingse Bos in Rotterdam again, but he also understands that it's unrealistic.
- He complains about the poor maintenance of the green public spaces (both parks and playgrounds) that do exist.
Where do you meet other people?
- He doesn't have much contact with others in the neighbourhood. That's why he often says he would like to move, but it's difficult at the moment due to housing prices. However, he also mentions that he has no desire to get to know others in the neighbourhood; he only uses his home to "sleep."
How do you help people in the neighbourhood?
- He himself initiated a neighbourhood chat.
- He has also helped people in the neighbourhood with legal matters for a while. He is a lawyer himself and mentions that people sometimes seek him out

through others when they need help. In that sense, he is somewhat "known" in the neighbourhood.
What do you think that the neighbourhood lacks?
- He suggests that places like the theatre at Zuid-plein, or similar meeting spots, could be good for the neighbourhood, as long as gentrification is prevented. It must still be accessible to people with limited means. He gave an example of a community space where they had a punch card system, where people could order an extra "broodje bal" (meatball sandwich) to be given for free to those who couldn't afford it.
- He also mentioned that he noticed there is a night shop in the neighbourhood that stays open until 2 a.m., where various groups of people come together. He finds this remarkable, especially since there are many groups in the neighbourhood of people who either "don't trust each other" or are very focused on their own networks. He does say, however, that there are often disturbances around the night shop. He encouraged us to check out what happens around that time (we decided not to do so).

24. MALE AROUND 50 YEARS OLD
- Lives 25 years in the Tarwewijk
Where do you feel at home in the neighbourhood?
- He feels most at home at the Ice Cream shop on the corner across from Dirk. It's closed in the winter, but in the summer, when the weather is nice, he enjoys going there.
Where do you meet other people?
- He doesn't know many people in the neighbourhood. He doesn't have active contact with the neighbors.
- He meets his friends mainly at food spots in the neighbourhood, including the Ice Cream shop, but also at the shawarma place nearby, as he is friends with the owner.
How do you help people in the neighbourhood?
- Years ago, before the pandemic, he helped at House of Hope.
- He likes to help others, but mentioned that some people misunderstand him.
What do you think that the neighbourhood lacks?
- When we ask what he thinks is missing in the neighbourhood, he answers "the shoemaker." Apart from that, he believes the neighbourhood has everything: "a butcher, a supermarket, a tailor, hairdres-

sers, etc." He finds the neighbourhood a pleasant place to live.