SPACE-MAKING, PLAYING IT FORWARD

Using language in co-creative participatory urban processes to access and value the ‘unconventional‘ while also building citizen literacy

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ABSTRACT

The project aims to develop a co-creative approach to participatory urban planning and design for improved socio-spatial justice through co-creation. The project is situated within a broader context of 'Them vs Us' conflicts including rigid social hierarchies of coloniality, caste, class and expertise that limit the extent to which and what types of communities are involved in urban development. More specifically, the project endeavoured to:

1. Reimagine the urbanist as a 'language mediator' whereby the urbanist experiments with ways to communicate with and between different stakeholders (inhabitants, migrants, institutions, etc). As such the urbanist becomes multilingual not just in a spoken or written sense, but also in visual and body languages, as well as silence. Together, engaged stakeholders, built trust, and an identifying of needs, wants and worries inform co-creation;

2. Recognize, access and value 'unconventional' knowledge and experiences to expand traditional realms of expertise. This aim focuses on the dismissal of 'othered' knowledge paradigms that could help in addressing pressing urban challenges;

3. Build inhabitant literacy to facilitate inhabitants not only 'having a seat at the table' but also an informed voice when they are there.

These aims intertwine to form the central research question, 'how can an approach to participatory planning and design use language as a means to engage with different actors, access and value 'unconventional' knowledge while also building citizen literacy?'. The project takes place in Rotterdam's western Bospolder-Tussendijken neighbourhood. In response to the research questions and its Rotterdam context, the research outputs are 4-fold, underpinned by the central theme of what it means to be seen. They consist of (1) a storybook; (2) reflections on co-creative participatory approaches; (3) the report; and (4) the bonus spatial implications of the research for urban design and planning. The outputs allow for the intersectional sharing of multiple stories, exposure to other types of knowledge and experiences, and the unpacking of existing systems and hierarchies that hinder the realisation of socio-spatial justice.

Key words: Rigid hierarchies, Coloniality, Caste & class, Urban expertise, Language, 'Unconventional' knowledge, Inhabitant literacy building, Co-creation, Rotterdam

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The foundation presents some of the preliminary elements that have allowed this project to come to life. Firstly, a glossary defines how some key terms have been interpreted in the research project to provide a baseline of clarity between readers and the writer. The second part details my personal motivations and inspirations for this project, namely to pay space-making forward.

THE FOUNDATION

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?!:

A GLOSSARY

ACCESS

the freedom and ability to acquire or make use of knowledge and experience (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). However, access in the context of the project does not adhere to 'extractive logics of planning' and instead advocates for reciprocity (Ortiz, 2022, p.3).

CO-CREATION

a particular form of participation that enables the joint and equitable collaboration of diverse and (often) absent voices in the ideation, proposal, decision-making, making, and aftercare phases of a project.

COLONIALITY

refers to mindsets and power dynamics resulting from European colonial history that created a caste system, deeming one group and its paradigms as superior to all the rest. This led to the dismissing, 'othering' and/or making invisible of other systems of knowing and being, and rigidly asymmetric relational dynamics that still persist today (Quijano, 2000).

DECOLONIALITY

simply put, decoloniality, involves the practice of recognizing and imagining other ways of knowing, being and interacting to inform how we live (Ortiz, 2022), breaking free from rigid, non-inclusive yet dominant paradigms.

INTERSECTIONALITY

responds to dominant approaches to understanding discrimination typically focused on singular categories of exclusion. The term was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s when she introduced the concept to examine Black women's employment experiences. Intersectionality proposes that we explore multiple social identities, probing us to investigate complexity and the relationships between these identities to uncover how they overlap and may mutually work to reinforce oppression, privilege, power dynamics, and social inequality.

LANGUAGE

not limited to spoken or written communication but is all-encompassing including silence, and visual, body and emotive languages that act as mediums to shape meaning and nuance.

LITERACY

concerns our evolving skills and abilities to observe, understand, interpret and question systems around us as well as create and communicate knowledge and experiences through different languages to achieve our goals (UNESCO, n.d.; TeachKloud, 2017).

'OTHER'

to 'view or treat a person (or group of people) as intrinsically different from and alien to oneself' (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d., webpage) oftentimes based on negative stereotypes, misconceptions and or prejudice

PARTICIPATION

refers to the wide spectrum of ways diverse and (often) absent voices can be engaged in projects, ranging from tokenism to citizen power.

VALUE

described as the foundational catalysts that drive subsequent action. In other words, they are the standards to which individuals and collectives adhere to achieve their desired aims (Igobin, 2011). Often they are expressed as a noun but can also be communicated through action.

SPACE-MAKING

understood in the same way as place-making: the processes of creating and improving public space based on community participation to strengthen the connections people have with the places around them (Project for Public Spaces, 2007). However, space-making represents an additional meaning. Curly and coily hair can be wonderfully voluminous. For centuries though, in the Western mainstream it has been perceived as 'ugly', 'unprofessional' and 'undesirable'. However, from the Black Panthers to more recent natural hair movements within the Black community, people proudly wear their natural hair. In doing so, individuals and collectives take up space and make space for others to feel safe and inspired to do the same, both physically and emotionally. It is in this intersectional context of space-making being grounded in existing social movements of empowerment and self-celebration, especially of marginalised groups, that distinguishes itself from place-making.

SYSTEMS THINKING

examines the parts, people, complexities, and interactions of a system and its functioning as a co-constituent of larger systems for a more holistic approach to understanding and analysis.

UNPACK

the use of 'unpacking' heavily draws upon a denotation of 'disruption', which involves confronting, interrupting and challenging current systems that enable the (re)production of inequality and injustice. In addition to this, unpacking seeks to examine and understand the different elements that keep a system alive, as the overarching aim is to be able to create more just, equitable and inclusive systems of living in the future after disruption has occurred. As a quote from the film, *Women Talking*, summarises, "perhaps we need to understand what we're trying to achieve, instead of what we want to destroy" (Polley, 2022).

A THANK YOU TO THE SPACE-MAKERS:

A MOTIVATION

Last summer, I went on holiday to France. As I walked down city streets lined with bustling restaurants and shops, I realised that I was calmly strolling. My presence was greeted by either unbothered passersby or with warmth and a smile. This is and has not always been the experience of a Black woman in Western Europe. I was prompted to reflect on the many migrants of colour, women, and marginalised communities who had traversed these streets before, the injustice and prejudice they faced. I am incredibly grateful to them for creating space for myself and my generation to simply be. It is easy to put a face, or better yet faces, to these space-makers. They are my grandparents, who migrated to the UK during the Windrush in the 1950s. They are my parents, second-generation Londoners. They are their peers in the form of countless aunties and uncles. So like those who walked before me and in the paraphrased words of Rupi Kaur, in my graduation project, "I stand on the sacrifices of millions before me, thinking, 'what can I do to make this mountain taller, [wider, more dynamic] so the people after me can see further, [more broadly and more deeply]'". And my contribution, through this thesis, is by embracing our diversity in urban development.



Figure A
Eli Harold, Colin Kaepernick and Eric Reid protesting racial injustice in America
Photographer unknown as cited in Schwab, 2019

The first layer examines the overarching problem field concerning the central theme of ‘Them versus Us’ phenomenons in urban planning and design. This is then followed by condensing this information into a succinct problem statement before stating the 3 research aims and complimentary questions that the problem field exploration inspired. As this project concerns co-creative practices in urban development, 6 principal ethical considerations for conducting the research have been made explicit and clear to guide the project’s trajectory. Lastly, the focus areas for the project are introduced and outlined. The areas directly include Rotterdam’s westerly suburb, Bospolder-Tussendijken (BoTu) and more indirectly, Rotterdam South’s Afrikanderwijk.

LAYER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 THEM VERSUS US, TWO-FOLD:

A PROBLEM FIELD

1.1.1 THE BASICS

'Them versus Us', is commonly stated, or rather implied. The term refers to a somewhat natural and widespread phenomenon when an individual's, and oftentimes a collective's, perception of the world consists of an 'ingroup' (us) and an 'outgroup' (them). As a result, people become inclined to associate and hold more positive beliefs about others in the same or similar group than those labelled as different (American Psychological Association, n.d.). There are multiple examples of how 'Them vs Us' mindsets translate to physical space, which can create barriers to spatial justice. In Edward Soja's seminal works about justice, specifically 'The City and Spatial Justice' (2010), he details how redlining of urban space, exclusionary zoning, institutionalised residential segregation, and the legacies of colonial geographies act as wombs that birth spatial injustice. An underlying theme running through these examples is the desire to 'keep separate', 'them' away from 'us' [Figure 1.1]. In these scenarios 'Them vs Us' presents in the form of unequal access to opportunities and investment based on race or ethnicity in the case of redlining in the United States (Wex Definitions Team at Cornell Law School, 2022). Or alternatively, Dutch migration policies of the 1970s that saw permanent integration policies as a hindrance that could prevent migrants' movement back to their home country (Scholten, 2013). Consequently, integration between people of migrant and ethnic Dutch backgrounds was discouraged (Scholten, 2013).

Perhaps beneath the surface of 'Them vs Us' conflicts though, is fear and the perceived threat of the 'other'. Mouffe (2005 as cited in Calderon, 2020), explains how 'them' is believed to put into question the identity of 'us', ultimately endangering the former's existence. Equally, focus on the separation that is 'Them vs Us' shifts attention away from 'we' and what can be achieved by it. Concerning policy-



Figure 1.1
Pegida Demonstration in Amsterdam exclaiming "Close the borders!"
NOS Nieuws, 2016

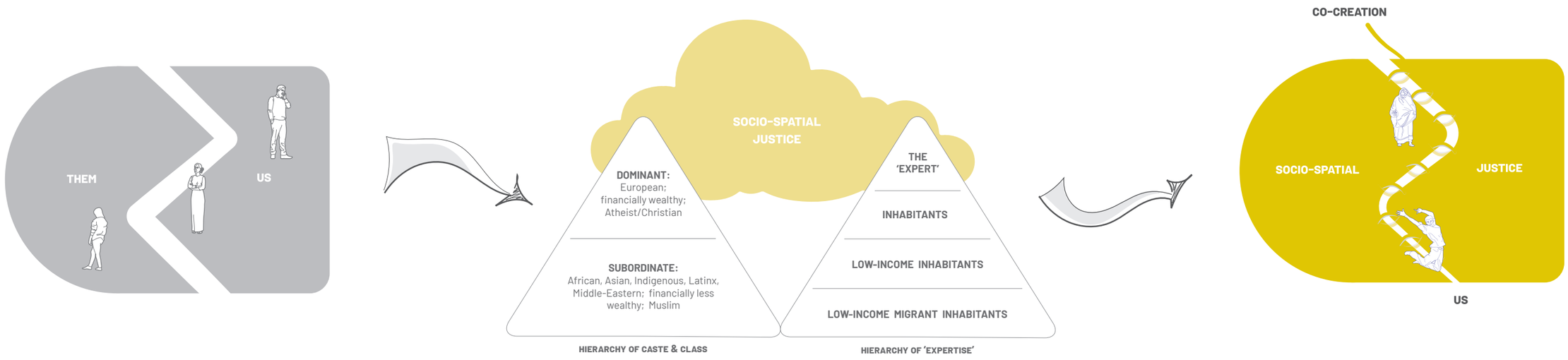


Figure 1.2
Two hierarchies presenting significant obstacles to socio-spatial justice

making in contexts fraught by cultural and racial conflicts, political theorist, academic and life peer Bhikhu Parekh (2000 as cited in Cripps, 2004) posits that multicultural societies are essential for fulfilling human potential. Parekh goes on to describe how no single culture is home to all that is precious to human life nor can a single culture nurture the broadest range of human capacities. Instead it is through contrasting and conflicting values, skills and 'otherness' that challenge us, both morally and intellectually, to push the bounds of our imaginations and reflect on the limitations of our minds.

In their idealistic form, participatory practices in architecture and urban development also endeavour to expand realms of power and include previously absent voices to enrich what is known, understood and implemented (Till, 2005). However, it is long acknowledged that participation exists along a spectrum, whether that be Shelly Arnstein's oppositional ladder (1969), David Wilcox's collaborative framework, or Rosalind Eyben's rights-based model (2003) (as cited in Aylett, 2010). The reality of participation in practice is disputed in Jeremy Till's 'the Negotiation of Hope' (2005). Till notes how participation in practice, directed by 'expert' architects, designers, and planners, often resembles that of placation. For example, 'participation, as far as the majority is concerned, is participation in the choice of the decision makers. Thus the function of participation is solely a protective one' (Pateman, 1970, p. 7 as cited in Till, 2005). Pateman contends that transformative participation that challenges conventions of the norm, would destabilise political, economic and democratic status quos.

But is change not needed when there are plentiful examples of (socio-spatial) injustice like mentioned previously? Are there ways to question what is traditionally accepted and forge new avenues for a just future?

These types of questions have probably been raised by many before me. This thesis seeks to join their ranks and contribute to socio-spatial justice through transformative participation, in the form of co-creation in urban development. It focuses on the disruption of two 'Them vs Us' conflicts that significantly impact the success of participation [Figure 1.2]. The first of the 'Them vs Us' conflicts, coloniality versus embracing diversity, was born from observations of how income and ethnicity data are often and prominently used in socio-spatial inequality research (Boterman et al, 2020; Lynam et al, 2023). Lenses of caste and class situate these categories within larger systems and (colonial) histories along with how they intersect with other social identities. The second 'Them vs Us' conflict, 'the expert' versus local communities relates back to previous arguments regarding participation in urban development and how urban planners and designers can be complicit in maintaining structures of injustice and inequality. Based on research, the following sections will more thoroughly detail each conflict. The sections also zoom into Western European contexts, specifically that of the Netherlands.

1.1.2 **COLONIALITY VS EMBRACING DIVERSITY EXPLAINED**

'History, as nearly no one seems to know, is not merely something to be read. And it does not refer, merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do.'

James Baldwin (1965, p.47)

The first 'Them vs Us' conflict, Coloniality versus Embracing Diversity, implores us to take a deep look into the past to investigate historical power dynamics and how this contributed to hierarchies of caste and class of the present [Figure 1.5]. To begin, European colonialism (from the 15th to 20th centuries) was primarily concerned with maximising financial profit by exercising one country's political and economic control onto another country (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). In this context, cultures of individualism and unrelenting exploitation were important to execute aims of capital generation (Igobin, 2011; Wilkerson, 2020). In tandem, for these colonial systems to work, hierarchies of both caste and class were key. Isabel Wilkerson, author of *Caste: the Lies that Divide Us* (2020) explains how the creation of hierarchy is a natural and long-time phenomenon within the animal world, and across different societies and cultures. However, Wilkerson describes how the construction of caste hierarchies based on skin colour, or other physical features deemed non-European, was relatively new. That is, until skin colour and other 'non-European' traits became cornerstones to someone's position in colonial society [Figure 1.3]. The hierarchy of caste works in parallel with that of class, although the former historically trumps the latter.

In such caste hierarchies, Europeans perceived themselves as the dominant force



Figure 1.3
'Johan de la Faille' depicting the business owner and his Black servant during the Dutch 'Golden Age'
Jan Verkolje, 1674

to 'civilise' inferior, indigenous peoples of Africa, Asia and the Americas (Wilkerson, 2020). The latter group was perceived as unenlightened and primitive, and as such their knowledge and value systems were easily dismissed, disrespected and disparaged. In the present day, caste hierarchies are ladened with continual reminders of the superiority of one caste over another are not only upheld by explicit prejudice. Instead, these notions can present in more subtle ways in signs, symbols, media and even the built environment (Wilkerson, 2020). Such ways include statues on pedestals that valorise individuals [Figure 1.4], and as a result, their deeds, despite how exploitative and unjust they were and are (Olusoga, 2020). Or how mainstream media uses language to perpetuate historical stereotypes. Take for example British media coverage of Notting Hill Carnival, a celebration of Caribbean culture, in comparison to Glastonbury music festival. The former event is often presented as a supposedly riotous occasion filled with crime and violence, while the latter event is praised for its low crime levels even though it has proportionally more arrests (Harris, 2017; Mcleod, 2016).

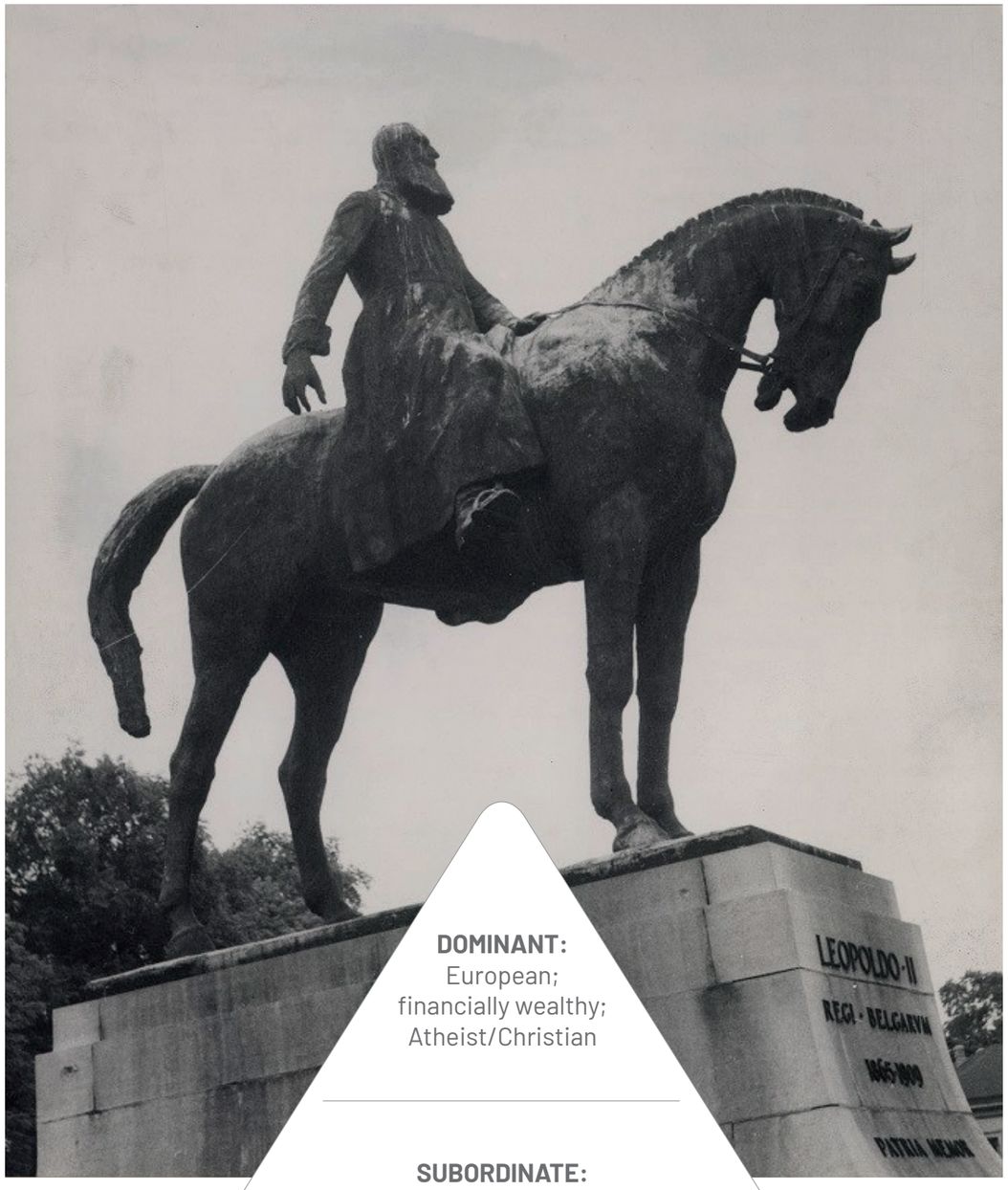


Figure 1.4
A statue valorising Belgium's King Leopold II in Brussels despite the violence and ruthless atrocities committed in Congo under his order
Photographer unknown in article by Pierre Kompany, 2022

Figure 1.5
Hierarchy of caste & class

HIERARCHY OF CASTE & CLASS

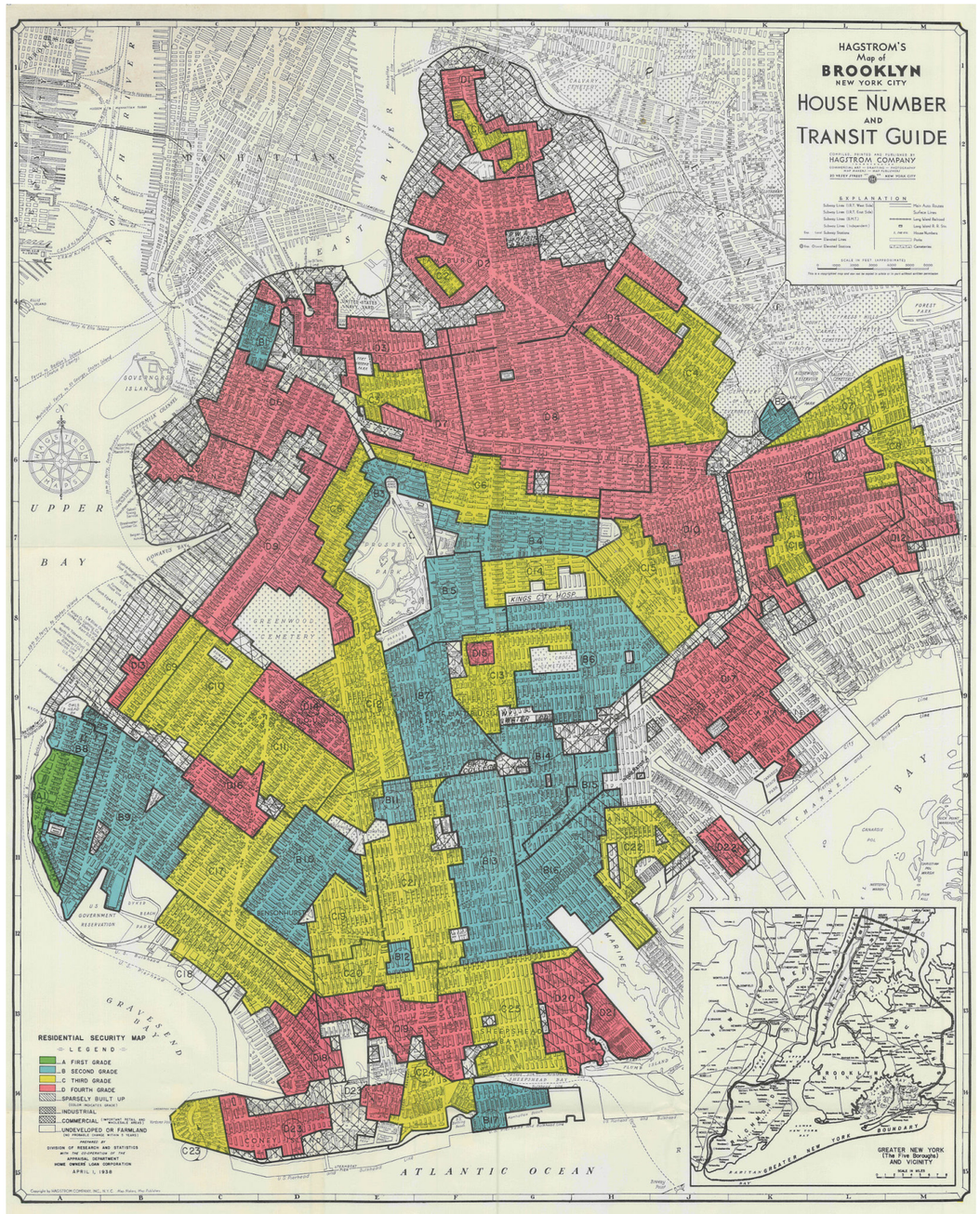


Figure 1.6
Redlining & 'The 1938 Home Owners' Loan Corporation map of Brooklyn'
National Archives and Records Administration, Mapping Inequality

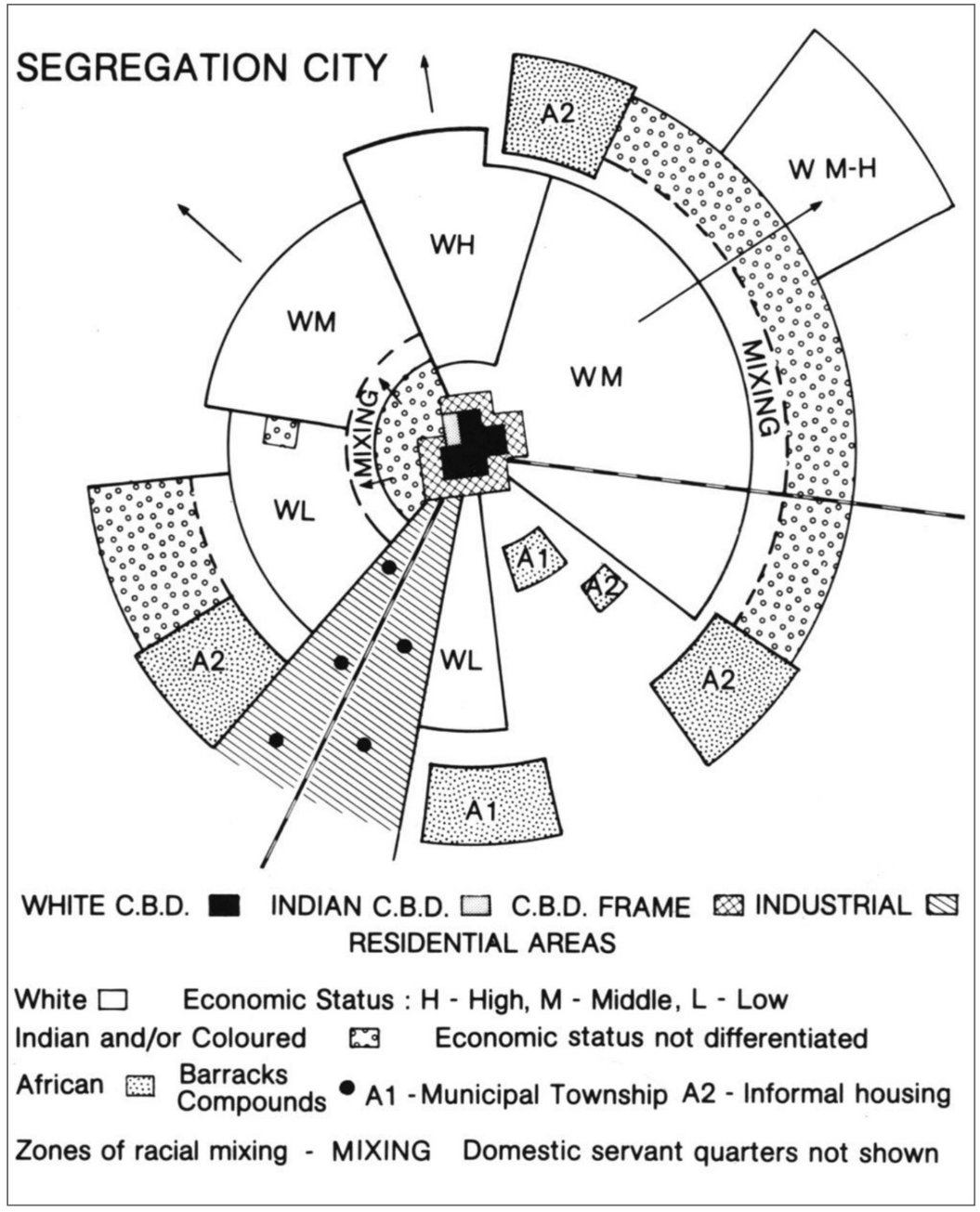


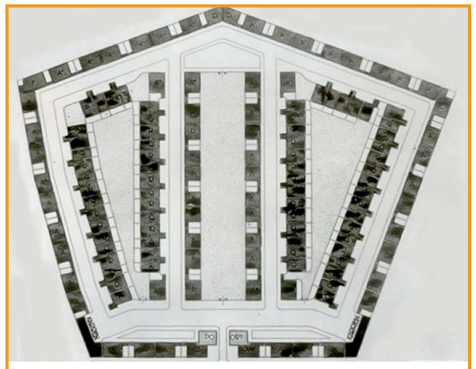
Figure 1.7
Model of a Segregation City in Apartheid South Africa
R. J. Davies, 1981

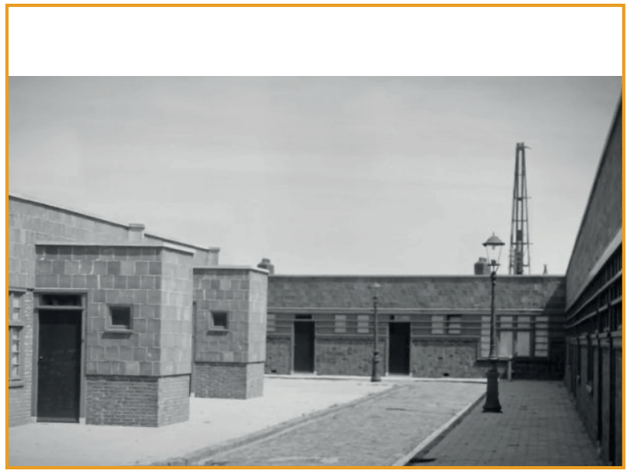
HIERACHIES OF CASTE & CLASS IN THE DUTCH CONTEXT

Despite its long history as a colonising power, the Netherlands is not typically associated with hierarchies of caste or class. Nor is the country typically associated with the need for a decolonial approach to planning, as decoloniality is often coupled with the so-called 'Global South' and North America to address the effects of, for instance, redlining in the United States [Figure 1.6] or Apartheid's model of a segregation city in South Africa [Figure 1.7] (Jackson, 2021; Davies, 1981). Nevertheless, academic Cody Hochstenbach (2022) details several examples of active caste and class hierarchies in Dutch planning and design [Figure 1.8]. These hierarchies often manifest in the form of residential segregation. Take the civilising offensives of the early 20th-century. This policy saw the growing number of urban poor sent to live in 'Woonscholen' (Living Schools). Here, they would be taught in the 'proper' ways and behaviours of the middle class, ridding them of their 'problematic' working class behaviours. Such Woonscholen existed across the country in Amsterdam's Asterdorp, Rotterdam's Brabantsdorp, and several others. The spatial organisation was somewhat prison-like. There was a single entrance, while residents who behaved 'badly' lived in the centre in contrast to 'well-behaved' residents who lived around the perimeter with windows looking out onto public streets. Modern equivalents include 'Tuigdorpen' and 'Asowoning' that isolate certain social groups like asylum seekers from the general public.

Similarly, guest workers and migrants from Turkey, Morocco and beyond arrived in the Netherlands after World War II. Not everyone was pleased. Racial tensions culminated in a 1972 race riot in Rotterdam's Afrikaanderwijk where white residents turned violent towards the newcomers. In response, the city government proposed the implementation of a dispersal policy. The policy suggested that no more than 5% of a neighbourhood's population could be of migrant descent. The national government refused the proposal on the grounds that it explicitly discriminated on the basis of migrant background.

Nonetheless, several decades later a loophole was found in the form of the Rotterdam Act of 2006. The necessity to implement the act was based on a 'big increase in the number of people from 'other poor countries' (...) concentration of residents with few socio-economic opportunities will emerge and that in certain neighbourhoods inappropriate behaviour, nuisance and criminality will accumulate and spiral out of control' (Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning, and the Environment, 2006, p.2 as cited in Hochstenbach, 2022). Although a national law, the act was implemented in Rotterdam first. These original neighbourhoods included Oud-Charlois and Carnisse, areas already characterised by high migrant (descended) populations. The act itself aims to regulate who can and cannot live in certain areas to improve livability scores by prohibiting the residence of people with insufficient length of stays in the region and no income from work, pensions or student benefits. Nevertheless, the policy has worked to implicitly exclude low-income and non-native Dutch groups from living in the city. Yet liveability has not improved and instead there are expansions into other areas and across spatial scales. Harking back to liveability, the indicators influencing scores are questionable, as higher migrant populations and shares of low-income residents equate to lower liveability levels. The prison-like arrangement of the Woonscholen and discriminatory practices born from the Rotterdam Act demonstrate how urban designers, planners and policy-makers, in varying capacities, can be complicit in the continuation and sometimes worsening of socio-spatial injustice, also in the Netherlands.









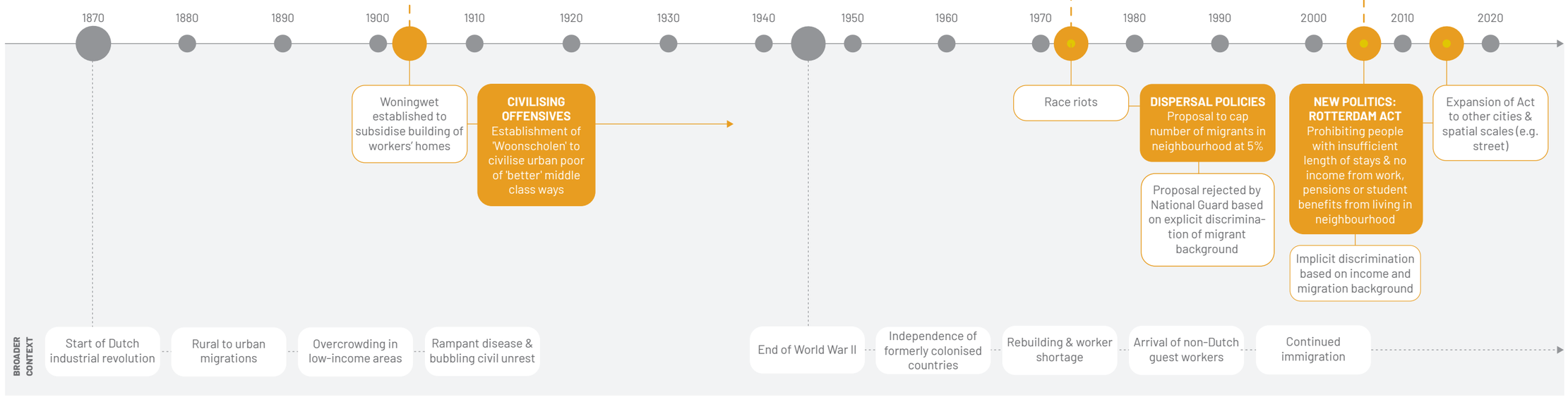


Figure 1.8
A timeline of a history of Dutch residential segregation
Based on Hochstenbach, 2022

Image 1
Asterdorp 'Woonschool', Amsterdam in 1942, Dokwerker, n.d.

Image 2
Floor plan of Asterdorp 'Woonschool', Amsterdam, Dokwerker, n.d.

Image 3
Race riots in 1972, Rotterdam, as cited in Doorbraak, 2023

Image 4
Demonstrators of the Rotterdam Act 2022, van Benten, n.d.

1.1.3 **THE 'EXPERT' VS INHABITANTS EXPLAINED**

The second 'Them vs Us' conflict relates to the 'expert' versus the people. The conflict is upheld by a hierarchy of 'expertise'. The 'expert' planner or designer sits at the top of this hierarchy, while local communities occupy the middle and lower levels of the hierarchy, especially those with lower incomes [Figures 1.9 & 1.10]. Reasons for the latter placement result from an acknowledgement of the different intersectional identities of local communities, like migration background and income that influence their levels of power and visibility.

Challenges related to the conflict include the perceived invalidity and inferiority of 'non-expert' fields of knowledge, which ultimately limit participatory practice. As explained by Jeremy Till (2005), normative traditions of professional and academic legitimacy are often based on principles of completeness and logic. A dependence on using these principles makes it easy to disparage the ideas that result from the openness and fluidity of normal conversation. However, new knowledge is seldom created by the monologues of individuals and is instead the consequence of collectives in active dialogue with each other (Till, 2005; Parekh, 2000 as cited in Cripps, 2004). When the urbanist recognizes the value and power of their own profession as well as local community expertise, co-creation becomes more feasible. Such an approach could allow for a multi-way process of exchange, urbanists and local communities work in tandem to birth new knowledge and ways to design, plan and experience urban space. It also enables earlier opportunities to confront issues or obstacles that may normally be hidden from view or the dealing of which is delayed due to fear of the unknown (Till, 2005).

Moreover, oftentimes engaging with politics presents a perceived threat for architectural and urban professions who instead opt for apolitical approaches. Acknowledging the political nature and implications of their/ our work would shatter mainstream culture. Nevertheless, 'participation is inherently political, not in the party political sense of the word, but in the sense that it affects people's lives' (Till, 2005, p.5). For example, dispersal policies, the Rotterdam Act and the spatial arrangement of 'Woonscholen' require the cooperation of urbanists.



Figure 1.9
A banner for an exclusive residential development in Mumbai, India
Rachel Lee, 2021

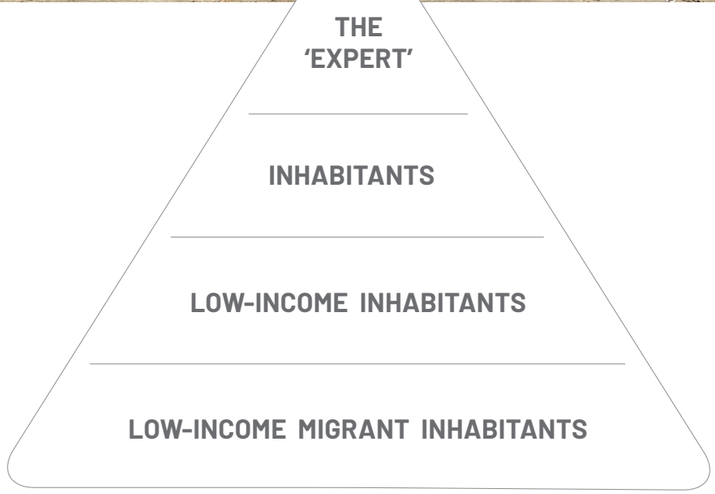


Figure 1.10
Hierarchy of expertise

HIERARCHY OF 'EXPERTISE'

1.1.4 **Them vs Us conflicts: Areas of convergence**

The 2 'Them vs Us' conflicts have been detailed separately; however, are there instances where the two overlap? A central point of convergence between the hierarchies is the dismissal of 'othered' knowledge and value paradigms, for epistemic violence lies at the heart of coloniality (Escobar, 2007 as cited in Ortiz, 2022). In this relationship, curiosity to learn from non-dominant, diverse sources [Figure 1.11] is greatly dimmed (Nenquimo, 2020). Anthropologist Arturo Escobar (2011) expresses how current mainstream understandings of modernity surmise the 'existence of One World - a universe' (p.139). The foundations of this 'universe' though are underpinned by Western-centric thought (Ortiz, 2022). This is not unexpected or unusual as the handwriting of caste dictates that the dominant caste must always be the most able and most knowledgeable (Wilkerson, 2020). Author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) as well as academic Merlijn van Hulst (2012 as cited in Ortiz, 2022) warn of the use of a single story. In doing so Western thought is deemed the authoritative body of knowledge, undermining knowledge and work from other non-Western canons (Mignolo, 2005; Khandwala, 2019 as cited in Ortiz, 2022). An equatable example of this in the 'expert' vs inhabitants conflict is that of education and what constitutes being educated. In the Netherlands, highly educated people are those with university degrees (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, n.d.). Although, are there not other ways of being educated?

It is also important to acknowledge the powerful influence of dominant economic and political systems, which relate to an amalgamation of caste, class and 'expertise' hierarchies. Urban researcher Camilo Calderon (2020) echoes Edward Soja's (2010) thoughts on the principle sources of spatial injustice. The former elaborates that, 'within this social order, power caters to the needs of groups and interests and values linked to market rationality, while excluding and marginalising others that may focus on environmental performance or local identity' (p.54). This is similarly the case in Rotterdam (Doucet et al., 2011). Prevalent themes in modernisation and development are anchored in new universal and monocultural architectural languages, namely that of postmodernism (Cripps, 2004). For example, recently completed urban projects in Rotterdam are bound by similar forms that relate to often quoted ideals of 'character', 'development' and 'innovation' [Figure 1.12] (Rotterdam Make It Happen, n.d.). Not only is this dominant vocabulary developed by few institutions and key figures, mainly in Europe and North America, it also discounts the vast pluarilites for urban planning and



Figure 1.11
'We open scientific research to volunteer observers' illustrating other ways of seeing
Benoît Bonnemaison (Bonnefritte), 2021

design (Cripps, 2004). Further effects of this in the built environment lead to the isolation and displacement of lower caste and income groups by way of institutionalised gentrification. For example, due to house price increases and the previously detailed Rotterdam Act (van Gent, Hochstenbach & Uitermark, 2018; Hochstenbach, 2022).
The areas of convergence discussed above are prime examples of spatial injustice. In its foundational essence, spatial justice entails 'the fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use' (Soja, 2010, p...). Soja continues by explaining that spatial justice is not only a destination but also a journey that seeks to disrupt processes that reproduce inequality and injustice. Nonetheless, this understanding can be further built upon to encompass socio-spatial justice. Hence, these opportunities could also extend to how cities are envisioned and grow, where the role of people who inhabit the city in these processes has been recognised as crucial. Urban areas evolve as a result of the conscious engagement of residents with different intersectional identities having the 'Right to the City' (Lefebvre, 1968). In this sense 'right' encompasses individual as well as collective rights, legal as well as moral rights to the city (Marcuse, 2009). Embracing other social orders, ways of designing cities, the conflicts, and the differences that these processes may inspire, are 'not only legitimate but necessary for the contestation of unjust and unsustainable hegemonies' (Mouffe, 2005 as cited in Calderon, 2020). There is a desire not to just assimilate but integrate ideas and experiences born in varying contexts that can lead us to more just societies and as a reflection, the built environment.

Retelling the story of a Brahman, a dominant caste man speaking about his revelations of lower caste people, Isabel Wilkerson describes:

"They knew things about the world that his privilege had not required him to know...he was the beneficiary of their gifts rather than the other way around, and he came to see what had been lost by one not getting to know the other for his lifetime and all the lifetimes before his. He wished every dominant-caste person would awaken to this fact. 'My message would be to take off the fake crown. It will cost you more to keep it than to let it go. It is not real. It is just a marker of your programming. You will be happier and freer without it. You will see all of humanity. You will find your true self" (as cited in Wilkerson, 2020, p.363-364).

This too can be the case for urban planning and design.



Figure 1.12
Rotterdam Make It Happen poster championing development, character & innovation as the city evolves
Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.

1.2 THEM VERSUS US, CONDENSED:

A PROBLEM STATEMENT

Socio-spatial justice. A goal and process intertwined with the right to the city, especially for a diversity of people, in how the city evolves. It also entails the equitable spatial distribution of opportunities and resources. Nevertheless, 'Them vs Us' conflicts present significant barriers to achieve this, as within them reside rigidly in-built hierarchies. Although hierarchy is a natural phenomenon, those of caste, class and expertise are human constructs bound to the 'Them vs Us' conflicts - (1) coloniality versus embracing diversity, and (2) the 'expert' versus inhabitants. These conflicts and their accompanying hierarchies respond to common urban socio-spatial inequality and injustice research concerning income and ethnicity data, situating these categories in broader (historical) systems. Meanwhile, the conflicts and hierarchies help to identify the role of the 'expert' planner and designer within them. Seldom do the hierarchies attempt to leverage the plurality of knowledge and experiences available for large-scale shared mutual benefit, instead the hierarchies dismiss diverse knowledge systems in favour of dominant paradigms. Simultaneously, processes resulting from the 'Them vs Us' conflicts, work to perpetuate further injustice by way of social exclusion. Without celebrating and respecting multiplicity, how are we to imagine and build a future that is truly just and collective? As partial gatekeepers of power and visibility in the built environment, especially of marginalised people including migrants and those with lower-incomes, urbanists can contribute to disrupting these hierarchies and cycles. Hence, this thesis project endeavours to investigate how co-creative participatory approaches to urban planning and design can work as disruptors [Figure 1.13].

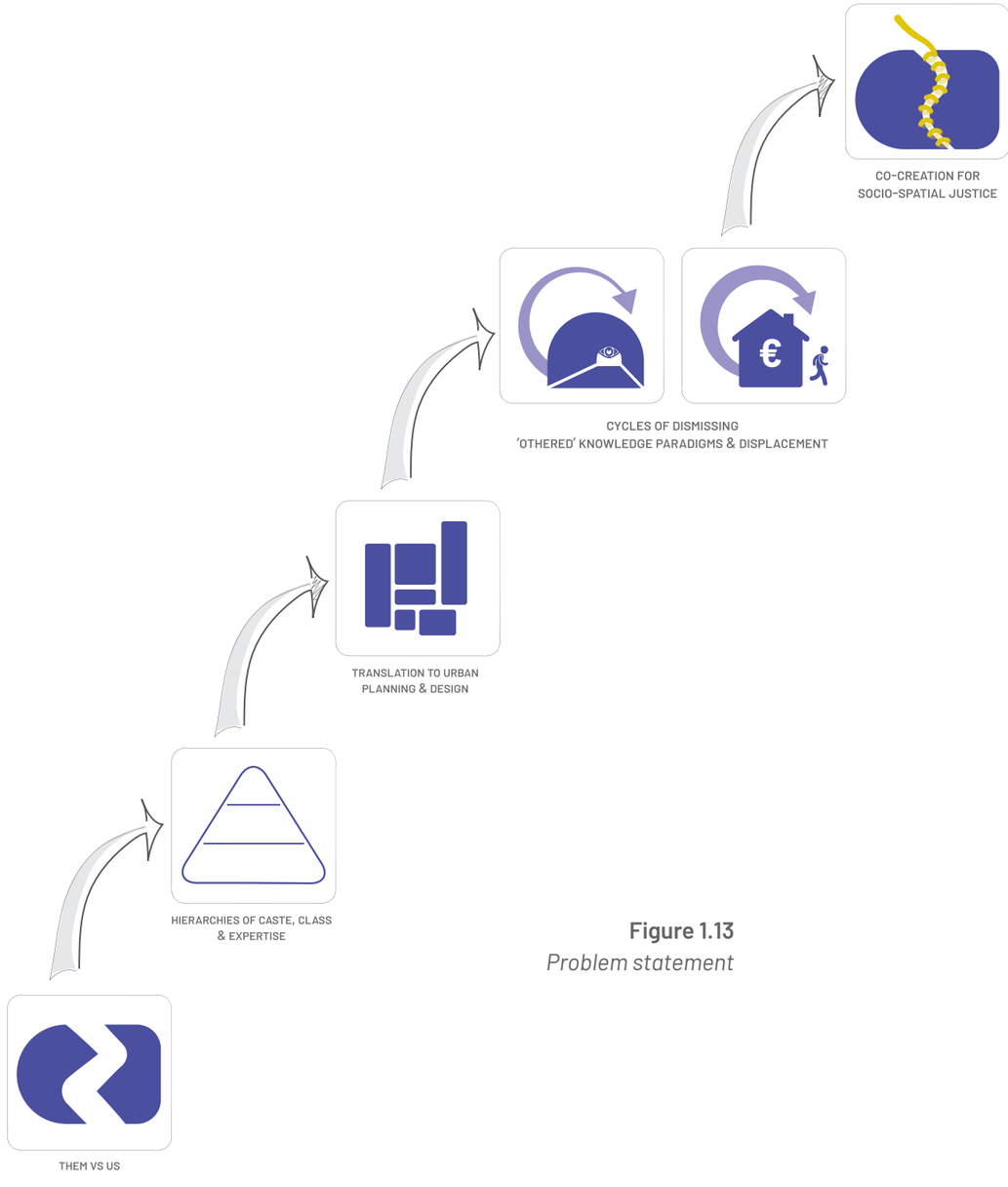


Figure 1.13
Problem statement

1.3 INTENTION, INTENTION, INTENTION:

RESEARCH AIMS & QUESTIONS

1.3.1 **RESEARCH AIMS**

The overarching objectives of this project are, like the problematisation, two-fold. The first aim regards being of service to currently marginalised/invisible communities and developing processes that can nurture a reality of socio-spatial justice. The other concerns tangibly contributing to the pool of co-creative participatory approaches by recognizing and celebrating diversity. More specific sub-aims include:

"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart"

Nelson Mandela

1. **REIMAGINING THE URBANIST AS A 'LANGUAGE MEDIATOR'**

In this role, the urbanist experiments with various ways to communicate with and between different stakeholders (migrants, institutions, etc). As such the urbanist becomes multilingual not just in a spoken or written sense, but also in visual, emotive and body languages, as well as silence. [Figure 1.14] In this sense, co-creation is informed by the built trust between engaged stakeholders who feel safe, seen and understood to identify and share their wants, needs and worries that can be infused within participatory processes.

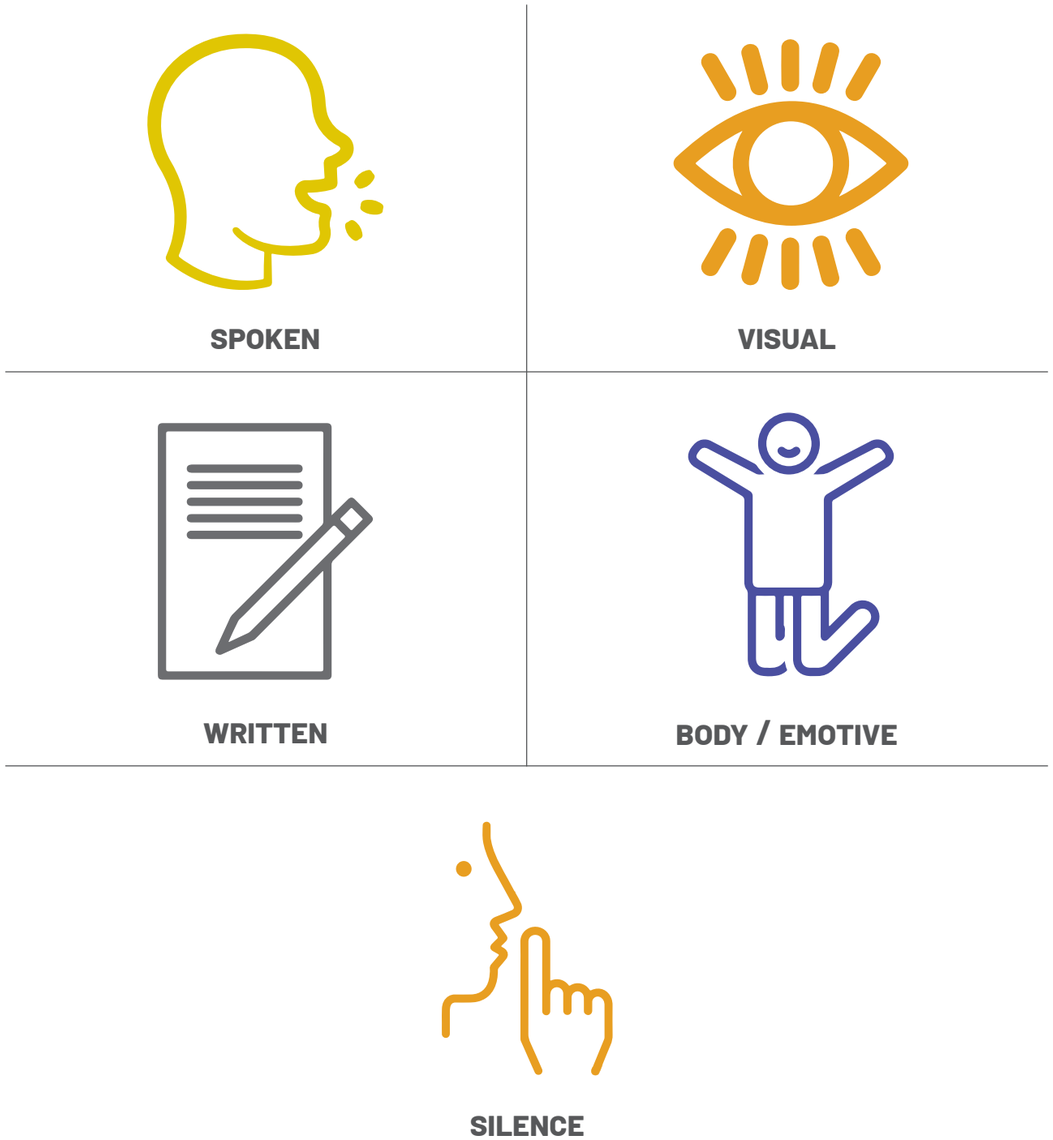


Figure 1.14
What is meant by language in the context of this project

ARGUMENTATION: as Jeremy Till (2005) explains, one of the acknowledged problems of participation is the oftentimes non-transparent communication between the urbanist and local communities. Communication often occurs on the urbanist's terms in the form of coded, technical drawings and language that do not always clearly translate information to other stakeholders. Equally, alternative vocabularies shift away from dominant thinking to instead include diverse vernaculars (Mbembe, 2001 as cited in Ortiz, 2022). New languages of communication between the urbanist and different stakeholders are therefore needed to provide conditions for knowledge transfers, exchanges and evolutions. These languages not only include spoken words but also silence, visual, written, emotive and body languages. In doing so, understanding different languages can also help address and uncover complexities regarding contrasting cultures and building feelings of safety and trust.

For example, the Maslow's Palace project in New Delhi uses a digital gaming language to engage with marginalised communities in urban development conversations [Figure 1.15] (Beattie, 2018). In this example, language enables the communication of ideas and concepts between participants and urbanists to envision what might be in the future and also understand why things are as they are in the present. The project's participants commented that they not only feel more confident expressing themselves using this non-traditional language, but also developed more empathy and understanding of others' perspectives (Beattie, 2018).



Figure 1.15
Maslow's Palace gameplay analytics
Hamish Beattie, 2018

2. **RECOGNISING, ACCESSING AND VALUING 'UNCONVENTIONAL' KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES, TO EXPAND TRADITIONAL REALMS OF EXPERTISE**

This aim focuses on appreciating previously dismissed or 'othered' knowledge paradigms that could help in addressing pressing urban challenges. Moreover, additional benefits include the transition from fixed 'Them vs Us' thinking to cultivate attitudes of 'we'.

ARGUMENTATION: as an important element of participation is the multi-way exchange of knowledge between the urbanist, citizens and other stakeholders. Urbanist and scholar Catalina Ortiz (2022) advocates for epistemic justice free of devaluing other knowledge systems born beyond dominant Western frames. This requires a re-evaluation of what constitutes knowledge and valuing currently disregarded systems. Simultaneously Till (2005) explains, the creation of new knowledge is a consequence of collectives in active dialogue with each other. The heterogeneous nature of urban planning provides fertile soil for this to take place by drawing from other sources (Roy, 2011 as cited in Marotta & Cummings, 2019). For example, by 'not carefully considering people's tacit and latent feelings and perceptions in participatory practice we unnecessarily limit designs' engagement processes to 'explicit and observable knowledge about contexts' and negate their ability to explore future alternatives with reference to non-physical attributes of setting' (Visser et al., 2005, p.122 as cited in Beattie, 2018, webpage). Such an approach may help encompass sense-making in participation's aim of solution-finding (Till, 2005). Sense-making involves the 'altering, respecting, acknowledging, and shaping [of] people's lived worlds' (p.10).

Expanding realms of traditional expertise also requires broadening the scope of accepted homes of knowledge. In addition to universities or design and planning firms, knowledgeable spaces could also include places of worship, barbershops and so forth. This would result in accessing and valuing 'unconventional' knowledge. For example, in some communities, religious centres have evolved to house other functions like nurseries, day-cares, language classes and so forth (Mack, 2017; 2019 as cited in Kärrholm et al, 2022). They have become emblems of community for a diversity of people. Similarly, barber shops in Black and Brown communities are often safe havens where groups gather [Figure 1.16 & 1.17]. As a result of the tight-knit nature of the barber shops, some in the United States have curated and displayed African American art where people can learn about their histories and culture (Chung, 2015). Equally, doctors come to barber shops to screen and provide patrons with health checkups (Kast & Harvie, 2021). Lessons from these examples suggest the need to go and explore where knowledge can be accessed and also to engage with people where they already are. In this regard, an exploration into physical forums of exchange can assist in building trust, transparency and accountability.



Figure 1.16 & 1.17
'Barbershops as a bastion for the black British community', Theo McInnes, 2017

3. **BUILDING INHABITANT LITERACY**

To facilitate inhabitants not only 'having a seat at the table' but also an informed voice when they are there. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly apparent that institutional change is not a one-person job, it requires a team and a collective to disrupt and recreate more inclusive and just systems.

ARGUMENTATION: there is increasing acknowledgement that spatial literacy is as salient as mathematical and written literacy, as it is intertwined in the fabrics of our everyday lives (Witham Bednarz & Kemp, 2011). This thesis' definition of spatial literacy building can be likened to an aim of the Niteshop (2023), a urban research collective based in Rotterdam who are exploring ways to further expand our mental infrastructure to be able to read space and reflect on how it can be organised. Spatial literacy in this sense involves developing curiosity and an understanding how different systems impact how we live in the built environment, and also what can be re-evaluated, remoulded and created [Figure 1.18].

The concept of developing literacy has been endorsed by UNESCO's Futures Literacy that aims to empower imaginations, as well as strengthen our ability to prepare and react to change and uncertainty (UNESCO, n.d.). Furthermore, few urban design studies openly engage with power, and those that do examine binary interactions between 'experts' and inhabitants by facilitating balanced power (Calderon, 2020). Contrarily, by building inhabitant literacy participants can better understand the validity of their thinking and those of others, and examine the roots of conflicts and differences to develop ways of managing them (Calderon, 2020). The focus to build inhabitant literacy also includes developing, amongst others, the communicative literacy of 'experts'.

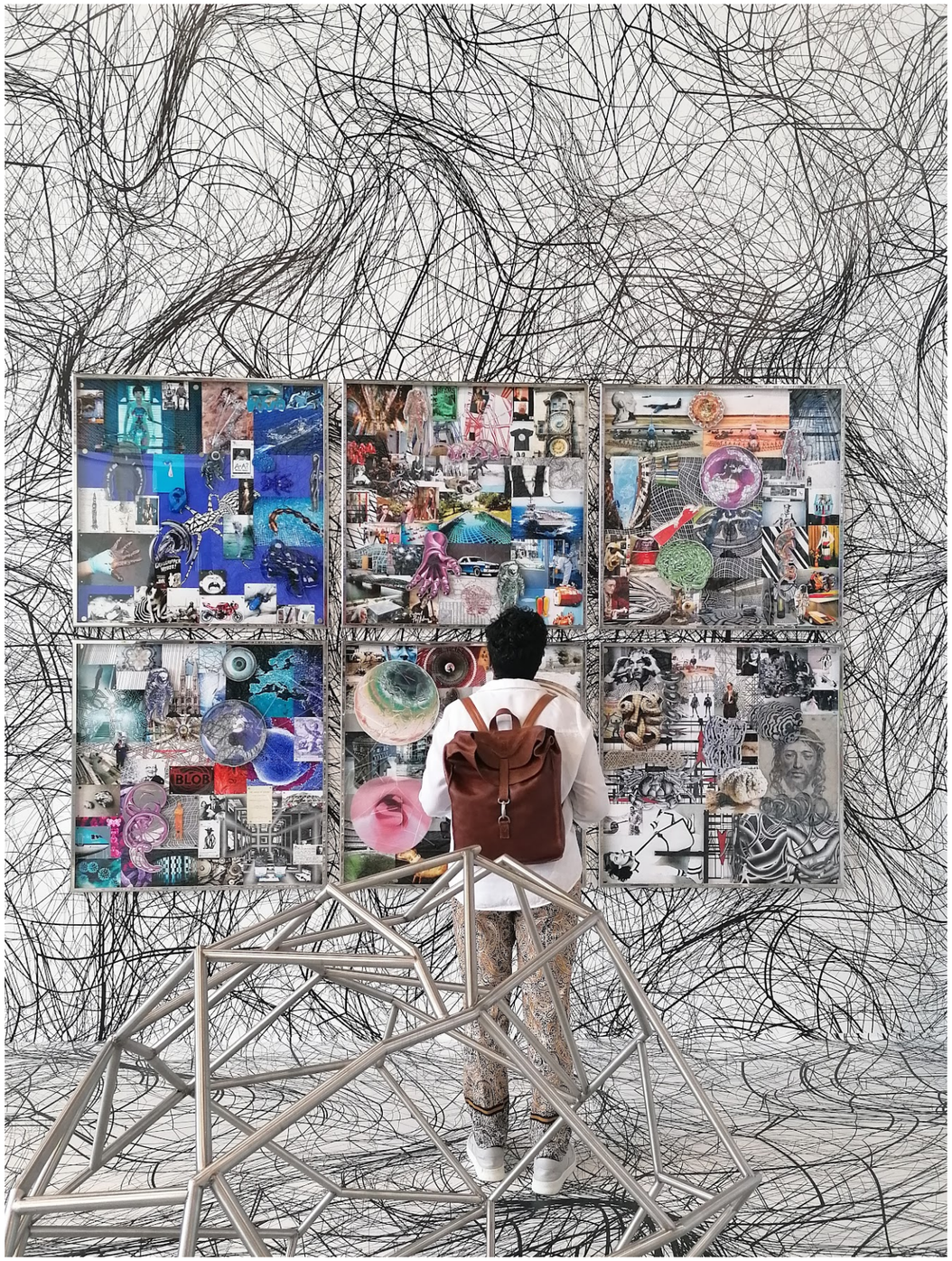


Figure 1.18
Untitled by Peter Kogler, 2021
Attempting to understand
complex systems
Photo by Author, 2021

1.3.2 Research questions

OVERARCHING QUESTION: **How can a co-creative approach to participatory planning and design use language as a means to engage with different stakeholders, access and value 'unconventional' knowledge while also building inhabitant literacy?**

SUB-QUESTION 1: What languages (verbal, written, visual, emotive/body and silence) can be used to best engage with stakeholders with different intersections of identity?

SUB-QUESTION 2: How and where can 'unconventional' bodies of knowledge and experiences be accessed and valued?

SUB-QUESTION 3: How can inhabitant literacy development be embedded into the fabric of a co-creative participatory planning and design approach?

1.4 TO GUIDE, TO HAVE & TO HOLD:

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A review of ethical considerations is important for steering the direction of the thesis, particularly concerning analysis of what final outcomes may be and the steps needed to make this come to fruition. Hence, this chapter precedes that of the resesearch outputs and other sections.



MUTUAL BENEFIT

Need to ensure intentional mutual benefit of the collaborative project for the researcher and collaborators, especially the communities who are engaged by the researcher during the course of the project. As such, there may be a need for continuation of the project. In this context, systems to build trust, transparency and a sense of temporal commitment can be nurtured, while also counteracting the 'extractives logics of urban development' by researchers (Ortiz, 2022, p.3).



~~NEUTRALITY~~

Acknowledgement that neutrality is not optional in the context of this thesis, as it can work to maintain the status quo. In contrast, the thesis aims to reimagine the urbanist not only as a 'language mediator' but also as an activist (Till, 2005). Given the political backdrop, rooting the thesis in socio-political relevance is key for standing in solidarity with those already advocating for social change (Ortiz, 2022).



EMPOWERMENT

Acknowledgement that although the thesis advocates for the empowerment of individuals and collectives in participatory practice, entirely horizontal power dynamics are a utopian ideal (Till, 2005). However, the epistemic privilege of myself, as the researcher, to intentionally include other knowledge types can be leveraged to lift others up (Ortiz, 2022), and by collaboratively building literacy.



RESEARCH FATIGUE

Acknowledgement of research fatigue in communities already engaged in urban research and the need to mitigate the effects of this. For example, Vildana Gačić (n.d.) from the Municipality of Rotterdam, notes how there is an immense amount of research conducted in a single neighbourhood. She continues that active organisations become overwhelmed by questions from well-intentioned students, and henceforth the need for improved research coordination.



DATA PROTECTION

Need to take necessary procedures to ensure privacy, safety, respect and anonymity (if desired) of shared source data. Therefore, a Data Management Plan (DMP), Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) as well as other agreements to collaborate with other partners was completed. This included a written agreement with the Veldacadmie as well as verbal or written consent to participate in the study from engaged inhabitants.



POSITIONALITY

Acknowledgement of my positionality (which is dynamic and as a result changes in different (power) contexts) as an individual, a part of multiple collectives, a student researcher, and a proponent of decoloniality. My family and upbringing has afforded me many privileges in terms of a loving, stable home, accessible educational opportunities, and the freedom to travel easily. I am of migrant descent and come from a country with visible class hierarchies. At times, I was the only woman/ person of colour or Black woman/person in many of the spaces I grew up in. As such, I am aware of the lack of diversity and inclusion based on gender, ethnicity, race and class. My positionality influences how I interpret information, how I frame narratives, and what I present. For example, confirmation bias may limit the ability to seek multiple narratives, which the thesis endeavours to do. As such there is an intention to seek a plurality of ideas and perspectives, through triangulation, to better understand the parts of complex wholes.

1.5 BOSPOLDER-TUSSENDIJKEN:

INTRODUCING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The focus area for the thesis project concerns Bospolder-Tussendijken (BoTu), a neighbourhood of Rotterdam [Figure 1.19]. A very brief history of the area, excluding its demographics, now follows. Nestled in Rotterdam's western borough, Delfshaven, BoTu originates from before the Second World War, where untouched remnants of old architecture and cityscapes can be found in bordering Delfshavense Schie to the south (van Wijk & van der Veen, 2019). Main streets like the Schiedamseweg, which splits Bospolder and Tussendijken in two, boast a plethora of shops, eateries, other (semi)public establishments, and one of the city's largest weekly markets on Visserijplein on Thursdays and Saturdays. BoTu is well served by metros A, B and C as well as currently (although not for much longer) trams 4 and 8, making the rest of Rotterdam, Schiedam and other cities further west accessible.

Meanwhile, Bospolder-Tussendijken is undergoing significant urban development as strategic 'focus areas' in Rotterdam municipality's environmental vision (Omgevingsvisie) for the city [Figure 1.20] (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2021). Many though see the repetition of familiar urban renewal trends that lead to gentrification and subsequent displacement of current communities, which drives further inequality (Doucet et al, 2011; Nieuwland & Lavanga, 2020; van Gent & Hochstenbach, 2019).

The locations of the area as well as that of the researcher are illustrated in the adjacent map. The location of the Veldacademie is also noted. The reasoning for this will come to light shortly.





Figure 1.19
Map of project areas and locations of the researcher & collaborator

Figure 1.20
'Vital neighbourhoods' highlighted in Rotterdam's 'Omgevingsvisie' (Environmental vision)
Gemeente Rotterdam, 2021

There were 2 main criteria for why these areas were chosen:

1. Existing research partners/collaborators

Ethical considerations 1 and 5 were particularly influential. Therefore, to ensure reciprocity and prevent further research fatigue, it was important for there to be existing research partners/ collaborators in a neighbourhood. Incoming the Veldacademie based in Rotterdam Zuid! The Veldacademie are currently involved in the area's development by monitoring the 2028 Resilient BoTu programme (Veerkracht BoTu). The Veldacademie's role largely focuses on community building by researching how neighbourhoods' social resilience changes over 10 years, specifically regarding social networks and communities. Moreover, the organisation not only has active projects in Rotterdam's Bospolder-Tussendijken that align with the thesis' aims, they also act as an intermediary between local communities and the municipality. The Veldacademie's intermediary role could help support the continuation of the project if desired as well as multi-level stakeholder involvement. For instance, the municipality is keen on developing community research hubs in various areas of the city, which this thesis project could inform [Figure 1.21].

2. Low-income area with large immigrant populations

After examining the 'Them vs Us' conflicts and hierarchies, it became apparent that low-income migrants and 'subordinate' castes sat at the bottom of each. As such, this thesis focuses on a co-creation approach that engages immigrants and low-income groups. Bospolder-Tussendijken is home to a vast range of migrants from Turkey, Suriname, Morocco, Cape Verde, the Dutch Antilles, Poland and multiple other geographies. In comparison with Rotterdam's average income, the neighbourhood earns noticeably less [Figure 1.22].

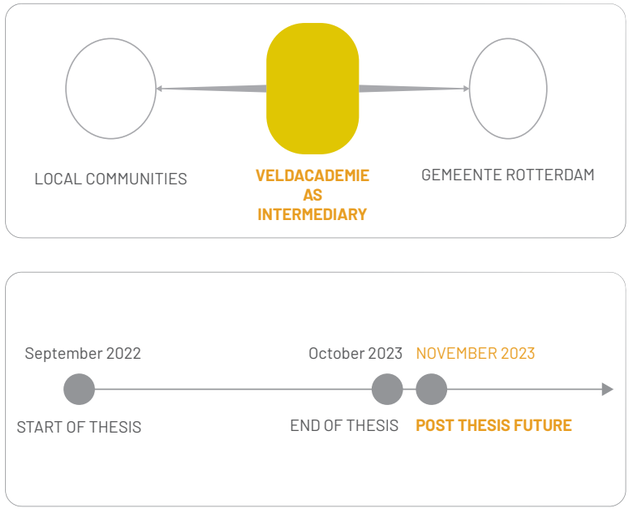


Figure 1.21
Diagrams illustrating the intermediary role of the Veldacademie & long-term duration of project if desired

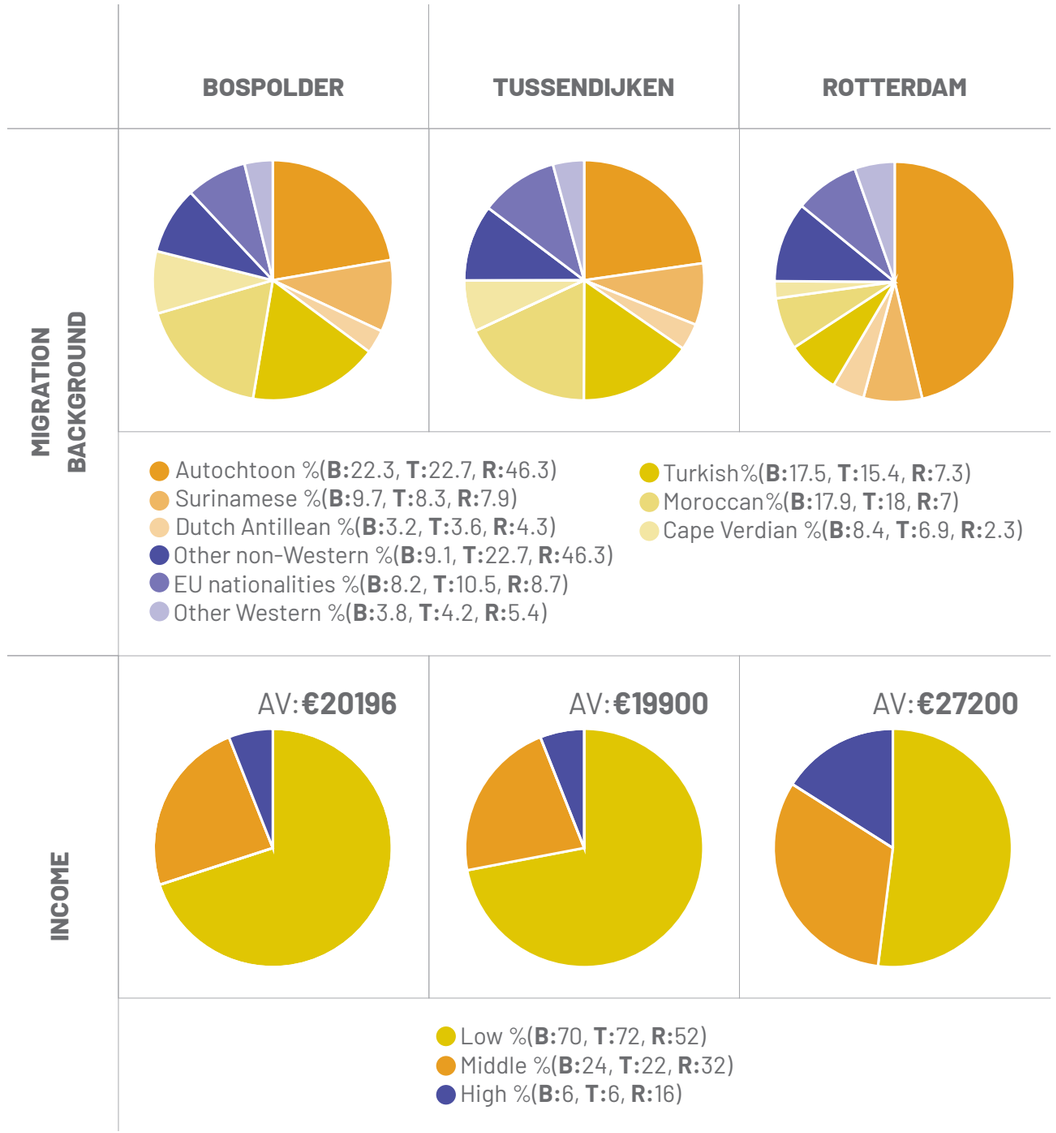


Figure 1.22
Demographic information regarding ethnicity & income of BoTu in relation to the Rotterdam average
based on information by Gemeente Rotterdam 2022; 2018 & AlleCijfers, n.d.

This layer explores the operational conceptual framework which outlines what the project aims to do, how, and in what forms. This is then followed by building onto some of the content detailed in the first layer by creating a firmer theoretical framework. The theories and themes included in the framework underpin the research project. Such theories and themes include those regarding the broad spectrum of languages that can be broken down into further categories like power, silence, and spoken and visual language as well as decoloniality.

LAYER 2: CONCEPTUAL & THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

2.1 THE BASICS

Key concepts in the thesis include that of systems thinking and intersectionality. Hence, Matryoshka dolls (or Russian dolls) [Figure 2.1] present a metaphor for how both the conceptual and theoretical framework can be interpreted. Terms in both the conceptual and theoretical framework are largely the same [Figure 2.2]. Like Matroyshka dolls, the relationships between different theories and systems can be presented alongside or within each other, subsystems within systems. This flexibility of arrangement aligns with the thesis' aim of embracing diversity and non-binary perspectives, while offering an example of how language can be adapted to communicate contrasting messages.



Figure 2.1
Drawing of Matryoshka doll

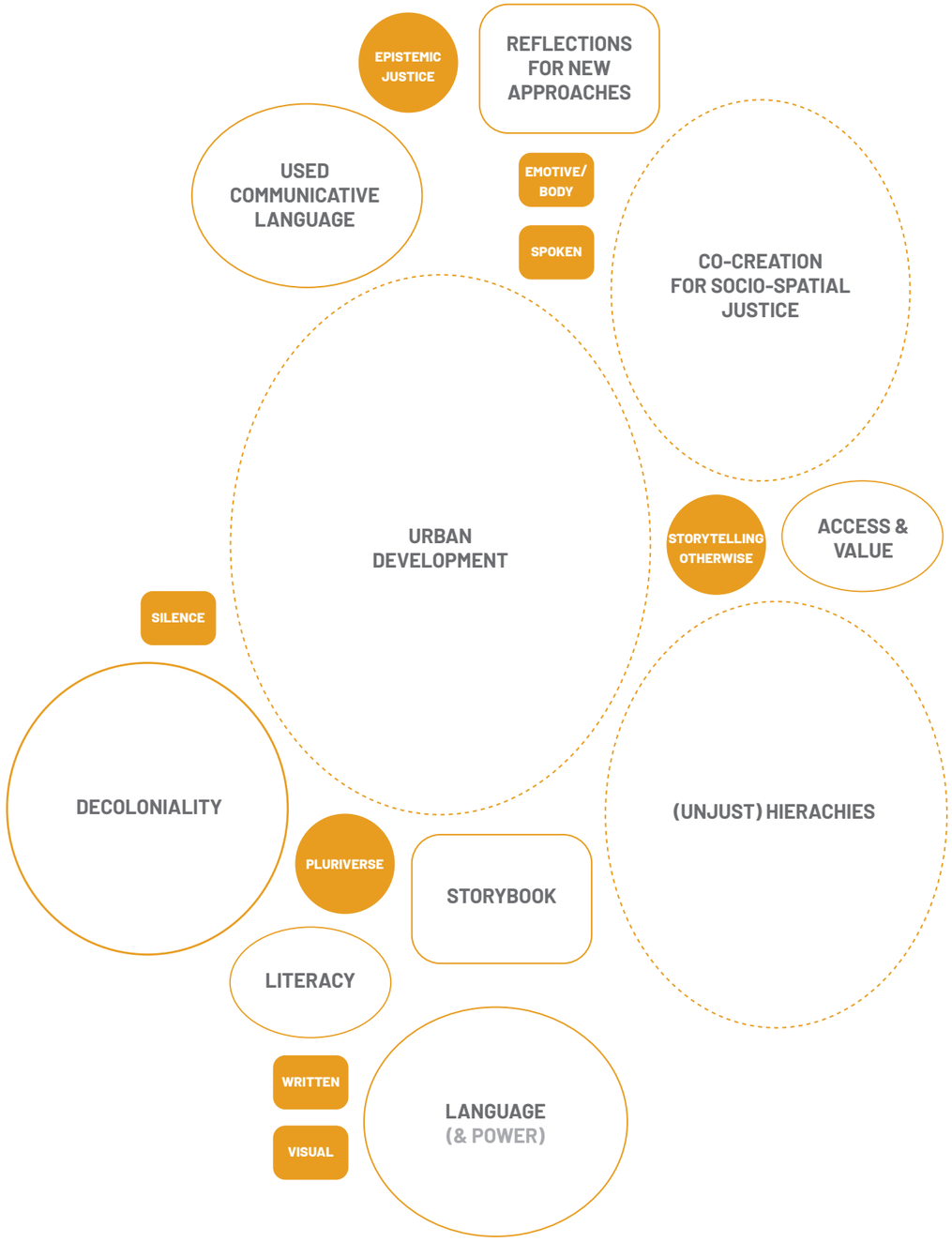


Figure 2.2
Matryoshka doll elements of conceptual & theoretical frameworks

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework [Figure 2.3] details the operalisational aspects of the thesis from its situated context to what it aims to do, and in what form. The framework is comprised of 4 main parts:

THE BROADER CONTEXT
As previously described, urban development resides in a broader context of the embedded unjust hierarchies of caste, class and expertise, which pose significant obstacles to realising socio-spatial justice.

THE UNPACKER
Participatory planning, specifically co-creation, can work to disrupt harmful 'Them vs Us' conflicts and accompanying hierarchies.

THE LENSES
Participatory planning, can work as a way to unpack harmful hierarchies by confronting, examining and understanding elements of existing systems to be able to create more just, equitable and inclusive systems of living.

THE OUTCOMES
The aims are then operalisationed in the form of a storybook, and reflections about the process of the thesis to inform the creation of a community research hub.

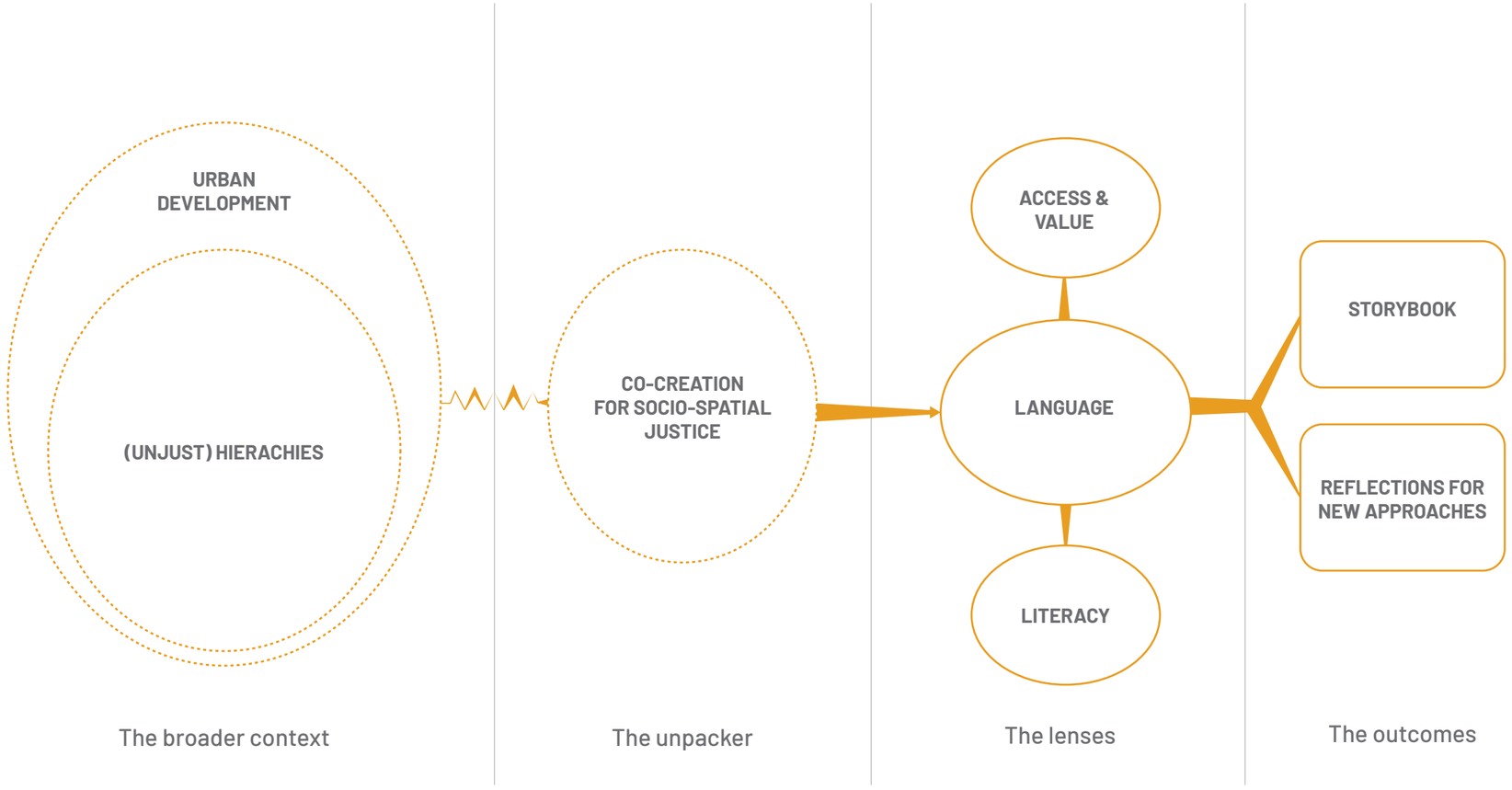


Figure 2.3
Conceptual framework

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The following theoretical framework [Figure 2.4] builds onto the symbolism of the Matryoshka dolls. Unlike the conceptual framework, the theoretical one illustrates how smaller subsystems fit within larger ones as opposed to adjacent to.

CO-CREATION FOR SOCIO-SPATIAL JUSTICE

The central aims of the thesis project concern developing a co-creation participatory approach to urban planning and design for socio-spatial justice, the details of which are elaborated upon in Layer 1. Nevertheless, this co-creation exists within a broader context of urban development in general and then more specifically corresponding unjust hierarchies. Hence, the theoretical frameworks gradual zooming in and naming of systems within systems.

DECOLONIALITY

Zooming into the framework a little more, we are presented with decolonial theories. In the context of this thesis, which concerns various (historical) hierarchies relating to caste and expertise, it was fitting for co-creation for socio—spatial justice to be underpinned by decoloniality that addresses and challenges power and epistemological asymmetries. Further below, their are specific decolonial concepts that are expanded upon:

Epistemic justice

At the core of the thesis' research problem is the dismissal and sometimes erasure of 'othered' knowledge paradigms. Therefore, the thesis aims to provide a platform to showcase and appreciate these other forms. Or in other words, realise epistemic justice. Epistemic justice is a term coined by Miranda Fricker who distinguishes between 2 types. The first concerns testimonial injustice, which involves someone's word being ignored or simply not believed on grounds of their race, gender, sexuality, disability and other social identities. Contrastingly, hermeneutical injustice relates to a person's perception of their life and the tools they and other people have in expressing and receiving life experiences (Fricker, 2007). Language helps shape our perception of the world, and equally we are limited to the tools that a single language presents (Sapir & Whorf, as cited in Evans, 2015). For example, Enlightenment planning culture championed rational thought while condemning attempts to understand emotional experiences (Baum, 2017 as cited in Ortiz, 2022). It is this absence of emotion amongst other ways of knowing that restricts what can be understood. It is also the recognition of these sources of knowledge that underpin decolonial ambitions. This has inspired calls for epistemic disobedience, which entails a refusal to perpetuate hierarchies of caste

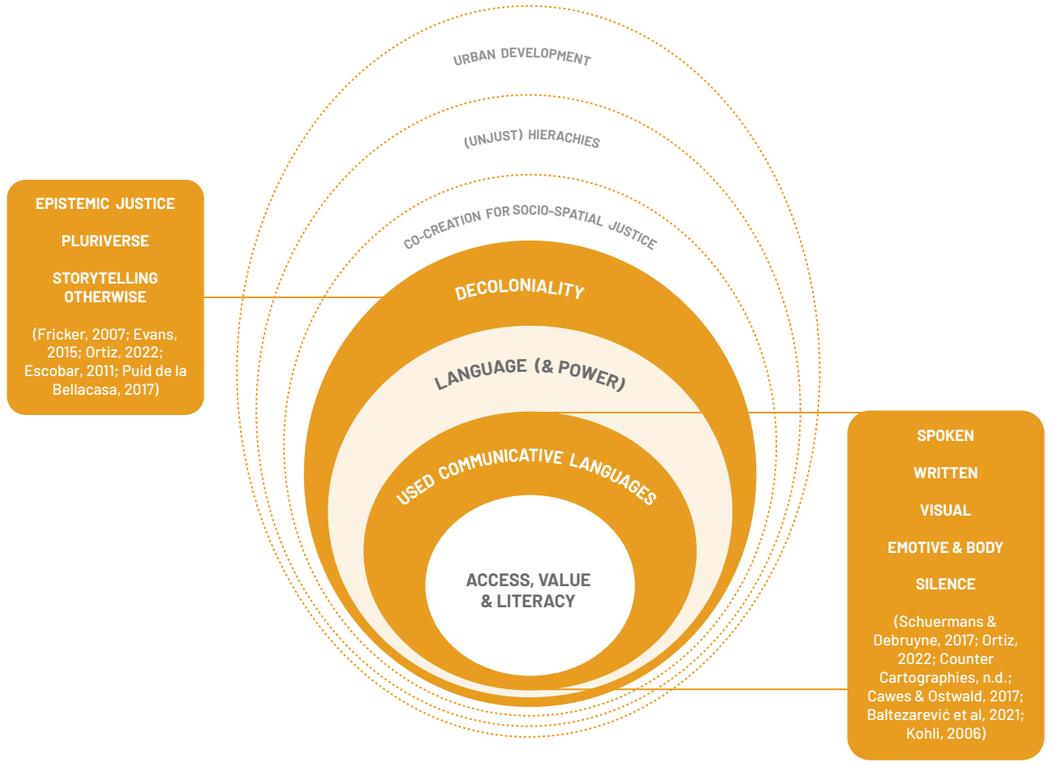


Figure 2.4
Theoretical framework

and the belief in the authoritative body of Western thought to embrace multiplicity (Sousa Santos, 2014 & Mignolo, 2000 as cited in Ortiz, 2022).

Pluriverse

Building onto ideas of multiplicity and epistemic justice, the pluriverse presents 'a world where many worlds fit' (Zapatista as cited in Escobar, 2011). Unlike common depictions of one world or a singular universe, pluriversality allows us to connect with subaltern discourses and practices (Escobar, 2004 as cited in Ortiz, 2022). These may include other life philosophies like buen vivir, ubuntu, and degrowth that could underscore imaginings of more just societies, politics, economic structure and urban development.

Storytelling otherwise

Storytelling otherwise involves pluriversality, epistemic disobedience, border thinking as well as 'sentipensante'. Directly translated to English, the latter term refers to 'feeling-thinking' or the 'one who feels while thinking' (Ortiz, 2022, p.16). Sentipensante's origins lie in Afro-Colombian fishing communities, where it means to act with the heart while using it. In the words of Ortiz, storytelling otherwise embodies 'the rhythms of place, territorial struggles, celebration, truth-telling, popular resistance and collective affections' (p. 16). This is similar to feminist thought where notions of care propose the use of interconnected intellect, practice and heart to challenge singular ways of knowledge production (Hilary Rose, 1983 as cited in Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017).

LANGUAGE (& POWER)

Continuing the themes explored in decoloniality regarding hierarchy, epistemology, and challenging present norms, this next layer of the framework seeks to explore language's role in this, particularly its relation to power.

Language is vast. It consists of words, phrases, sounds, gaps, silences, bodily and facial gestures, accents, images, which work together to create meaning (Evans, 2015). Language acts as a vessel to communicate knowledge, thoughts, beliefs and customs and to build relationships (Shakib, 2011; Halliday, 2003 as cited in Evans, 2015).

David Evans explains how language is impactful and has the potential to construct and cement boundaries between 'Them' and 'Us', as language is punctuated by power relations between different people. This ultimately leads to the sidelining, and sometimes violence, of 'othered' systems of knowing, being and living, and marginalisation of certain groups. Connected to the hierarchy of caste and class, language hegemony often relates to languages that have (historically) been perceived as having more sociopolitical and economic currency. For example, when speaking of Portuguese in Guinea-Bissau Bourdieu (1989) expresses, 'It is clear that throughout the period of colonial domination the colonialists pointed out to their colonial subjects that the only elegant and cultured language, capable of expressing beauty and scientific exactitude, was theirs, the colonialists' (p.117 as cited in Evans, 2018). Moreover, as explained in previous sub-layers, communication in design fields often favours that of 'experts' - namely that of completeness and logic (Till, 2005).

Equally though, language, and the valorisation or re-valorisation of dismissed languages, have the capabilities to liberate by presenting new opportunities to cross boundaries, learn from and build new knowledge (Evans, 2015). The specific language lenses explored in the research have been broken down in terms of used communicative languages. Specific used languages of the different communities will be detailed in the course of the project. Meanwhile, background as to what is meant by communicative languages is described below.

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGES

Language. A word usually associated with the spoken or written kind. Nevertheless, understanding meaning and nuance encompasses a wider range. This scope includes the aforementioned types, in addition to visual and emotive, body languages as well as silence. The Mater Dei primary school, set in an increasingly hyper-diverse Leuven, Belgium environment, is exploring diverse ways to communicate with students and parents with other mother tongues and growing proficiency in Dutch (Schuermans & Debruyne, 2017). Although applied to a school context, the example is used to provide insight.

Written language

Written languages often act as a way of documenting information, and are especially present in technological spaces. Written language can range from abbreviated and ever innovative forms to long-time established formal styles. Nevertheless, in professional planning and design spheres, specific jargon is used, excluding those who are not fluent (Till, 2005). Similarly, in Mater Dei, staff members noted how traditional, formal language used to communicate with parents was no longer effective. Hence, in official letters, they began to use more digestable Dutch and complementary pictograms.

Spoken language

Similarly, spoken language has often been the primary medium to communicate histories from one generation to another. Typically, when we speak of multilingualism we refer to the skill of being able to converse in multiple oral languages from English and Swahili to Mandarin. Although there are distinct languages, there are also dialects and accents. Nevertheless, 'accentism' in countries like the United Kingdom and the Netherlands is tightly bound to hierarchies of caste and class, excluding those not dominant. For example, people who speak with a Dutch-Moroccan accent are often perceived as less professional, intelligent and/or formal (Jansen, 2016). The Mater Dei school demonstrates how embracing other forms of spoken language can enrich customarily used ones. While they also mention the importance of spaces to support informal conversation, that contribute to nurturing environments of safety, belonging and openness.

Visual language

In design disciplines visual languages are essential in communicating ideas. Nevertheless, as Jeremy Till (2005) expresses, this imagery often presents in the form of technical, coded drawings, intelligible to the eyes of urbanists and unintelligible to inhabitants. As such, there have been movements like counter cartography that challenge dominant power structures, advocating for the representation of other knowledge paradigms and ways of expression (Counter-Cartographies Collective, n.d.). Equally, pattern language, coined by architect Christopher Alexander in 1977, enables inhabitants to coherently organise a set of patterns to help explore and describe root problems and their solutions (Dawes & Ostwald, 2017).

Emotive, body languages

When speaking of effective storytelling, Catalina Ortiz (2022) posits how the age-old act is tightly interwoven with emotions that help us better understand the past as well as the future. Matre Dei primary school used emotive mediums such as music and other art forms as instruments for language acquisition. Ortiz also describes how emotion is a key catalyst of social change. Storytelling through langues occurs in socio-political contexts. As such, emotions can reveal elements of privilege and marginality, the effects of power and reflect the socio-spatial environment in which they are bound (Osborne & Grant-Smith, 2015 as cited in Ortiz, 2022).

Silence

In a culture that often awards those who speak the loudest, silence is an underestimated language tool. Attitudes towards silence vary from context to context, and hence careful readings of situations are salient in using the language effectively. Silence though, allows time to think, to reflect, to listen before responding. Silence has also been linked to nurturing creativity (Baltezarević et al, 2021). Silence also speaks to the relational dynamics between different people, speaking to levels of trust and whether being forthcoming with information is safe (Kohli, 2006).

ACCESS, VALUE AND LITERACY

In the innermost layer of the framework, we have 'access, value and literacy' which are not necessarily theories that will be explored in the framework but present a rearticulation of what all the aforementioned theories aim to inform and illuminate.

The following layer focuses on the research project's methodology, which consists of 5 sections. The first begins with a recap of the overarching research question. From the reiteration of the research question, the emphasis on participatory planning and design is reinforced once more. Hence, the second section outlines who the different collaborators are in the project. On the basis of this, used research approaches are described, they include Peter Marcuse's 3 steps to critical urban theory and participatory action research. After describing the overall research approach, the subsequent section zooms into the distinct methods employed to respond to each sub-research question. Finally, the last section consolidates all the information from previous sections by introducing the specific research outputs: (1) a storybook; (2) a booklet of reflections for co-creative participatory approaches; (3) the report; and lastly (4), a bonus booklet regarding spatial implications of the research's findings regarding urban design and planning.

LAYER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 COLLABORATORS

The overarching research question guides the entire project. ‘How can a co-creative approach to participatory planning and design use language as a means to engage with different stakeholders, access and value ‘unconventional’ knowledge while also building inhabitant literacy?’

An outline of the thesis’ collaborators, for this is a collective endeavour [Figure 3.1]. Direct collaborators include engaged communities in Bospolder-Tussendijken (and wider Delfshaven), the Veldacademie, my mentoring team, and myself - the student researcher. Indirect collaborators include the many individuals and collectives who have nourished this project from my family, friends, and peers to spontaneous encounters and exposure to art in various forms and the wider world.

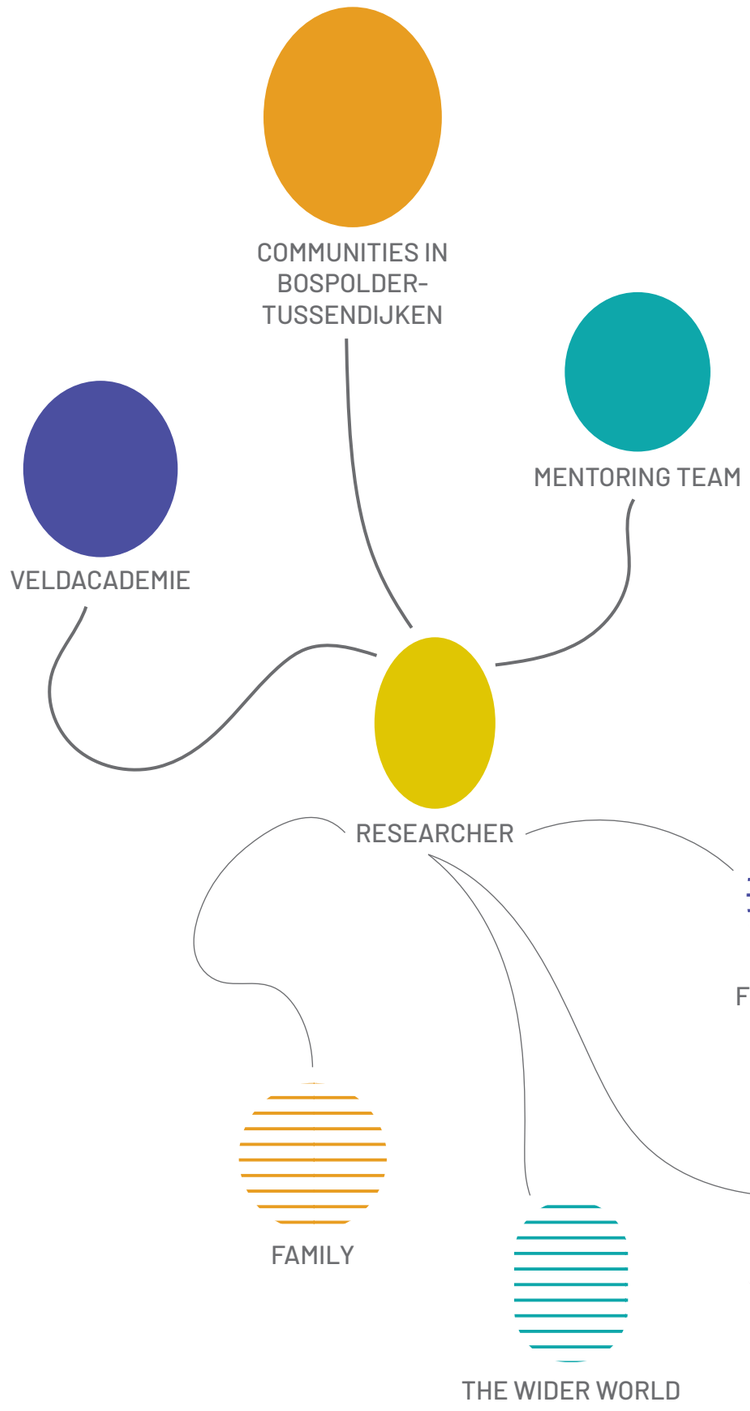


Figure 3.1
Diagram of collaborators

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACHES

The research approach orients the project: both participatory action research (PAR) and Peter Marcuse's 3 steps to critical urban theory (CUT) aim to collectively identify sources of injustice and inequality to seek lasting transformative change [Figure 3.2] (Institute of Development Studies, n.d.; Marcuse, 2009). Given the project's aim of disrupting harmfully rigid hierarchies, the different methodological approaches work to compliment each other. PAR sits within a larger body of action research and is often used in various fields, including education, the social sciences and urban planning. The methodology advocates for an iterative process, which for this thesis, is based on Gerald Susman's 1983 action research model consisting of diagnosing; action planning, action taking; evaluation and specifying learning. Similarly to descriptions in the problem field and ethics sub-chapters, PAR is underpinned by mutual benefit, trust, long-term engagement, intersectionality, change, and a challenging of power dynamics (Lenette, 2022). To supplement and deepen the action research cycle, CUT consists of 3 steps: (1) expose, (2) propose, and (3) politicise (Marcuse, 2009). Expose entails the examination of a problem's root cause and clear communication of findings to those that need and can use them. Propose involves collaborating with affected groups to create targets, strategies, proposals and so forth turning desires into reality. Lastly, politicise embodies clarifying the implications of political action based on what is exposed and proposed, and supporting subsequent interventions and strategies. The adjacent figure illustrates where and how PAR and CUT intertwine.

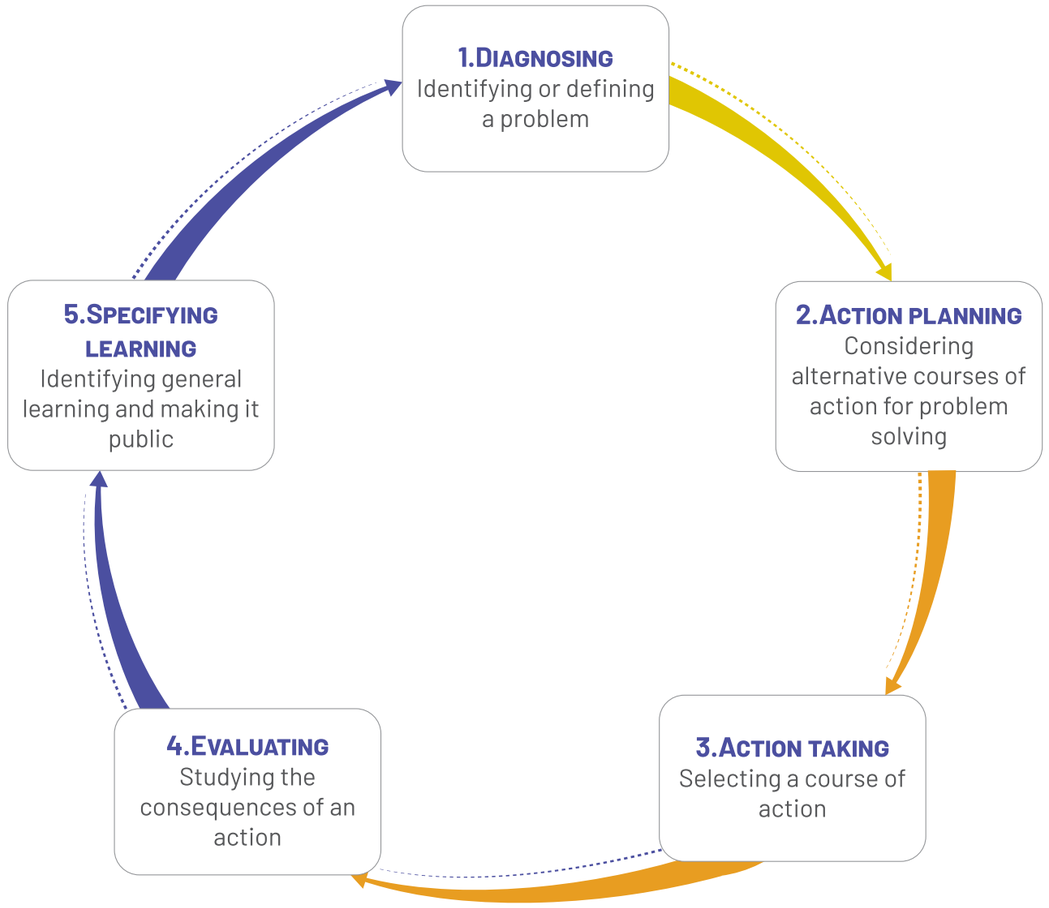


Figure 3.2
Action research cycle & interwoven steps to critical urban theory
based on Gerald Susman's 1983 model & Marcuse, 2009

3.3 METHODS

The specific methods, which are used to respond to each research question. The methods matrix [Figure 3.4] also details how the methods relate to participatory action research and critical urban theory. Harking back to ethical consideration 3 regarding my positionality as the researcher and subsequent bias, 3 types of research methods have been used to respond to each question (triangulation). The 3 different methods work to complement each other by exposing different information to garner more comprehensive understandings and therefore proposals. As is evidenced in the matrix, semi-structured interviews as well as observation underpin all methods used to respond to each research question. Regarding the former method, semi-structured interviews worked to both guide more casual chats on the street as well as more in depth, multiple-hour long or short but frequent conversations over time. These latter discussions occurred more regularly once I had built relationships with various participants.

The selection of methods heavily draws from both the introduction regarding socio-spatial justice, and especially the theoretical framework [Figure 3.3]. For example, when elaborating on the 'Right to the City', Lefebvre speaks of understanding the concept from a space-time perspective. Namely, users' right to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in urban areas' (1991, p.34 as cited in Marcuse, 2009). Extending this notion of time to multiple scales, from time throughout the day to historical developments over time, richness can be added to the analyses. Especially as people's experiences of space are dynamic, particularly in urban developments, where time acts as a link between the past, present and future (Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 2021 as cited in Ortiz, 2022). As such, during interviews, observations and sensory mapping I was attentive to as to how feelings and valuing of space have evolved over time. Explorations through time can also help identify more concrete examples of how the 'Them vs Us' conflicts and hierarchies manifest(ed), exposing the roots of the problem.

Moreover, South American decolonial scholars refer to the concept of 'relational ontologies' that bind the spiritual, human and non-human to make meaning (Escobar, 2014 as cited in Ortiz, 2022) This notion is also mirrored in black feminist thought (Ortiz, 2022). This concept echoes that of 'sentipensante' referring to the previously described relationship between thought and feeling. Similarly, Lefebvre's trialectic understanding of space - perceived, conceived and especially the later 'lived' space, acts as a vehicle to translate these notions to the built environment. In the project, interviews, observation, and multi-media reviews contribute to understanding feeling and emotion in language. While sensory mapping, represents what people see, touch, taste, smell, hear, and feel towards certain space, and symbols and landmarks they resonate and orient themselves with. Together, these elements contribute to people's orientation, experience and knowledge of space.

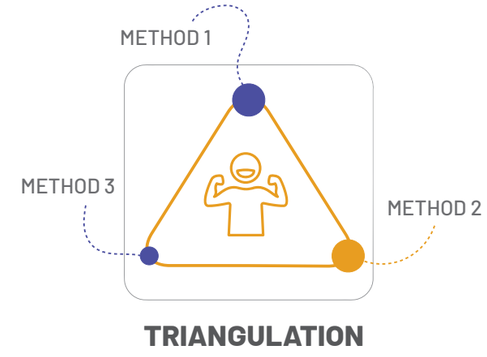


Figure 3.3
Key elements of selected methods



Figure 3.4
Methods matrix

3.4 RESEARCH OUTPUTS

STORYBOOK, REFLECTION COLLECTION & BONUS IMPLICATIONS

The research outputs resulting from the sum of the aforementioned sections are 4-fold, consisting of (1) a storybook; (2) reflections for co-creative participatory approaches; (3) the report; and (4) the bonus spatial implications of the research for urban design and planning [Figure 3.5]. There is much overlap between the three. As mentioned before, the location of the project was dependent on researchers already active in certain neighbourhoods. Therefore, the expected outputs align and build onto existing and budding Veldacademie projects as well as the thesis' aims [Figure 3.6].

The storybook acts as a small-scale living lab in terms of co-creating a book, (in physical, as well as digital form), detailing the pluriversal perspectives of how space is understood and experienced in Bospolder-Tussendijken. It also aims to collectively develop our creative thinking skills and confidence in sharing stories. The collaborative processes of making the storybook with engaged communities in BoTu may then feed into aspirations of Rotterdam Municipality to explore and develop community research hubs in a variety of the city's neighbourhoods. This brings us to the next output, a collection of accessible, easy-to-use reflections for co-creative participatory approaches, comprised of prominent realisations, questions and elaborated descriptions. This collection can be used to prompt co-creative participation projects in BoTu itself as well as other contexts where they are of relevance, including Rotterdam at large. Moreover, the report offers further insights into the different details of the storybook and reflections about the thesis' research process - the project's foundation, fieldwork and the development of the storybook. Lastly, as a type of unexpected bonus, the research also revealed some of the spatial implications concerning urban design and planning based on what people shared during the course of the project.

Key binding characteristics of the outputs is the collective healing power that can result from them. This desire stems from observation as well as decolonial thought, namely that of Gloria Anzaldúa's 'border thinking' (1999 as cited in Ortiz, 2022). The output platforms allow for the intersectional sharing of multiple stories, exposure to other types of knowledge and experiences, and the building of understanding. Scholar-practitioner Aftab Erfan (2017 as cited in Ortiz, 2022) expresses that such arenas of convergence and communication, involves 'a group [that] has, within itself, the knowledge, creativity, sensitivity, and power it needs to solve its own problems' (p.5). And in the context of this thesis, may foster collective healing of destructive 'Them vs Us' conflicts.

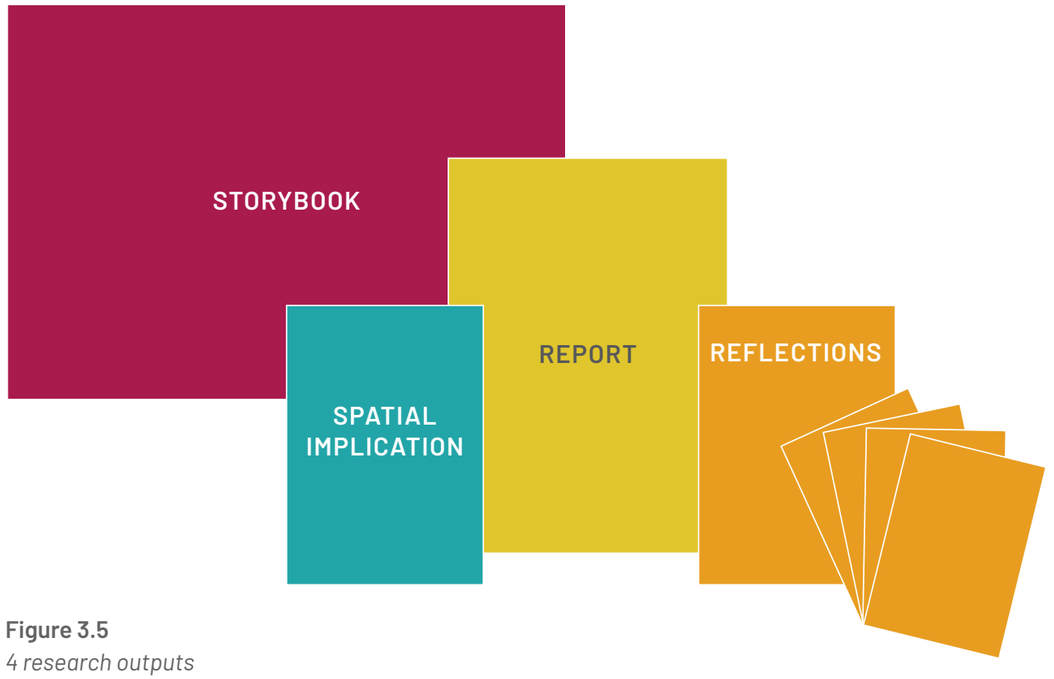


Figure 3.5
4 research outputs

OUTCOME / DETAILS	RELEVANCE RESPONSE TO AIMS & SUB-QUESTIONS?	COLLABORATION WITH WHO?	COLLABORATION ON WHAT?	OBJECTIVE THE WHY?	AUDIENCE FOR WHO?
STORYBOOK (FOCUS ON ENGAGED COMMUNITIES, INHABITANTS)	1. 'Reimagining the urbanist as a 'language mediator' What languages (visual, verbal, cultural and otherwise) can be used to best engage with people with different intersections of identity? 2. 'Recognize, access and value 'unconventional' knowledge' How and where can 'unconventional' bodies of knowledge and experiences be accessed and valued? 3. 'Embed inhabitant literacy in a co-creation approach' How can inhabitant literacy development be embedded into the fabric of a participatory planning and design approach?	Engaged communities in Bospolder-Tussendijken.	The Veldacademie have an existing online dashboard, documenting and monitoring visibility and community engagement by presenting stories, networks, knowledge and so forth. The thesis extends this by focusing on language and sharing in how networks are built.	Present variety of languages - namely visual, written and emotive languages that inform how space is experienced and understood. Present pluriversal perspectives of space from a variety of stakeholders, especially from previously and currently invisible communities (political dimension). How can differences be understood? Can mutual understanding be found? Build our literacy, our mental infrastructures by thinking creatively and making, as well as responding to other perspectives.	Engaged communities who are able to share insights into their neighbourhoods on their terms, in languages understood by them, contributing to feelings of empowerment and validity. Sharing stories in this form can also help develop our creative thinking skills. Urban planners and designers who are able to use the storybook's contents to self-reflect on assumptions and preconceptions. Also are presented with the opportunity to practise their multilingual abilities - visual, written and emotive.
REFLECTIONS FOR CO-CREATIVE PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES TO PLANNING & DESIGN (FOCUS ON URBAN PROFESSIONALS)	1. 'Reimagining the urbanist as a 'language mediator' What languages (visual, verbal, cultural and otherwise) can be used to best engage with people with different intersections of identity? 2. 'Recognize, access and value 'unconventional' knowledge' How and where can 'unconventional' bodies of knowledge and experiences be accessed and valued? 3. 'Embed inhabitant literacy in a co-creation approach' How can inhabitant literacy development be embedded into the fabric of a participatory planning and design approach?	Professionals in the field of urban development and (indirectly) engaged communities in Bospolder-Tussendijken and 'experts'	The Veldacademie and Rotterdam municipality are exploring bottom-up approaches to urban planning and design that foster quality, depth, trust, useability and continuity. They want to ensure that there is mutual benefit for the communities involved. This all will be in the form of the Veerkracht BoTu project and developing community research hubs in Rotterdam.	To build 'expert' literacy in interacting, communicating and making with communities in co-creative participatory projects.	Professionals in the field of urban development
SPATIAL IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH (FOCUS ON BOTH INHABITANTS AND URBAN PROFESSIONALS)	Focuses on elements of research aims 2 and 3, as opposed to accompanying sub-research questions: 2. Recognizing 'unconventional' bodies of knowledge and experiences'. 3. Celebrating and showcasing how current spatial literacy levels of inhabitants can inform urban planning and design.	Indirectly with various engaged communities in Delfshaven who provided insight and urban development practitioners who support in substantiating ideas shared by engaged communities.	A bonus feature of the research projects.	In addition to the relevance of the booklet in terms of the aims, this booklet presents a collection of some of the spatial implications of what various communities in Delfshaven have communicated.	Professionals in the field of urban development regarding what to keep in mind. Engaged communities to hopefully boost their confidence in their existing abilities to read urban space and how this impacts human lives.

Figure 3.6
Matrix illustrating details of research outputs

LAYER 4: FIELDWORK PREPARATION

Following the participatory action research (PAR) process, this next layer of the project details the action planning and action taking phases of fieldwork - how, when, where and with whom fieldwork took place. The layer is dotted with reflections throughout, again adhering to PAR by evaluating and specifying learning from these phases to inform co-creative participatory approaches.

4.1 QUESTION STYLE

This section provides an overview of the used question style, where there was careful consideration as to what questions were asked *and how* they were asked.

QUESTIONS: THE 'WHAT'

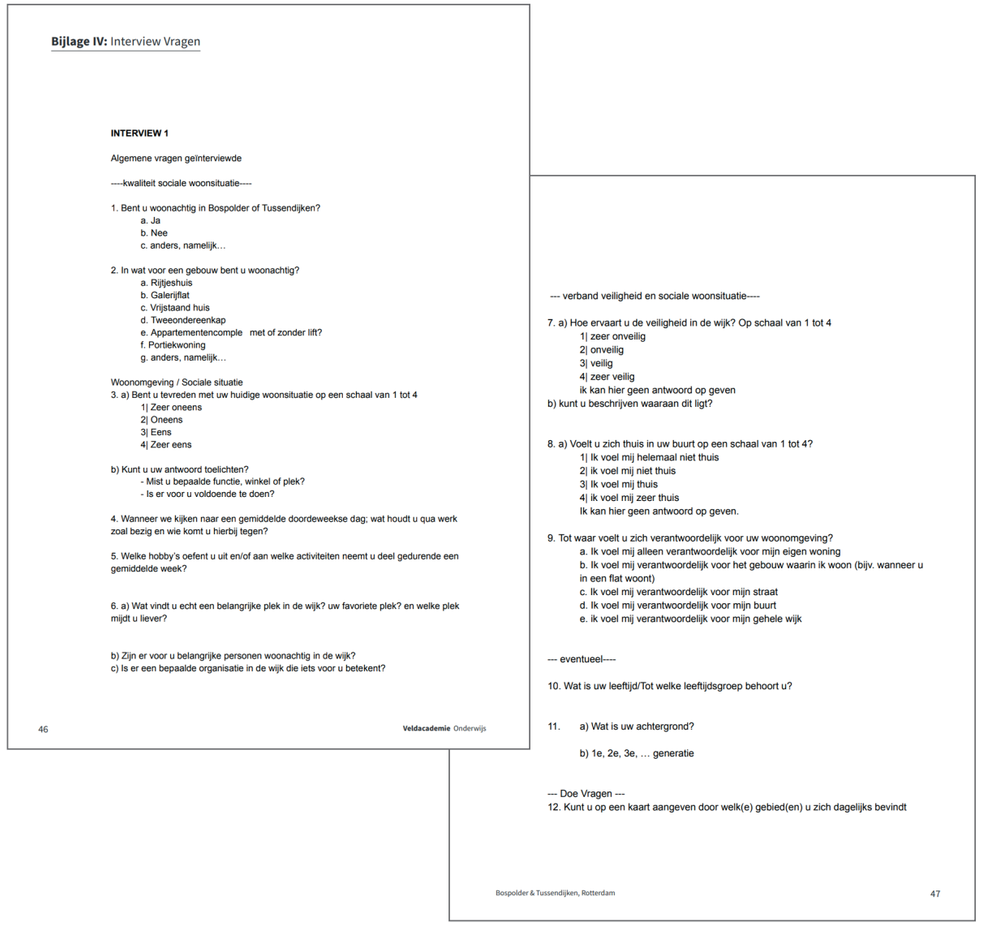
When conducting initial research and during conversations about spaces of value for different people, prior to fieldwork, feelings of community, home and safety commonly appeared. For example, spaces where knowledge and experiences could be accessed and valued concerned the communal, safe and homely environments of barber shops, churches and daycare centres (Kärrholm et al, 2022; Kast & Harvie, 2021). The Veldacademie also shared other student projects based in Bospolder-Tussendijken, which were conducted in collaboration with the Veldacademie to avoid research fatigue. [Figure 4.1]. As such, fieldwork questions focused on what community, home and safety mean to a diverse range of people and what places reflected this, for participatory projects to engage with them there [Figure 4.2].

In addition to more general spaces, specifically asking where these places exist in Bospolder-Tussendijken, or more broadly, Delfshaven. Nonetheless, it was insightful to understand how participants' responses reflected their connections to other parts of the Netherlands and the world at large, often the result of their migration histories. Moreover, to garner a multisensorial understanding, questions were also asked about 'what smells do you associate with home? Why? and 'what sounds do you associate with home? Why?' were asked. With a desire to adopt sentipensante and build on Nelson Mandela's notion of speaking to the mind versus heart to understand how people express value, a final question was asked: 'what is the language of your heart?'.

Many of the questions asked (listed above) were quite short, simply phrased but so often, and quite surprisingly to me, were greeted by profound responses that sometimes resulted in conversation lasting for hours. These types of questions actively sought for a multiplicity of interpretations and not to steer participant responses with specific information. Doing so allowed for the building of pluriversal perspectives in 'a world where many worlds fit' (Zapatista as cited in Escobar, 2011), using simple, inclusive language. As a result, the questions and responses contested singular narratives by establishing pluriversal understandings of what is meant as opposed to assuming 'universal' meaning. This is important as for different people, there are different places and spaces where people feel comfortable to share, as well as the diverse elements that are conducive to this.



Figure 4.1
Sample of previous fieldwork questions asked in BoTU
van Wijk & van der Veen, 2019





COMMUNITY

What does community mean to you?

What places do you feel a sense of community?



HOME

What does home mean to you?

What places do you feel at home?

What smells do you associate with home? Why?

What sounds do you associate with home? Why?



SAFETY

What does safety mean to you?

What places do you feel safe?



LANGUAGE

What is the language of your heart?

Figure 4.2
Fieldwork questions

QUESTIONS: THE 'HOW'

As well as the substance of a question, the tone and sequence of them are important (Brooks & John, 2018). For example, many members of the community in BoTu/Delfshaven expressed how they are often spoken to in patronising, superior tones by researchers, planners and civil servants alike. These interactions mirror what Nemonte Nenquimo (2020) describes of their being little to no interest in recognizing and learning about experiences that have (historically) been 'othered', dismissed, and/or made invisible. Tones of open curiosity, of interest, of care worked to challenge dehumanising status quos [Figures 4.3 & 4.4].

Figure 4.3
Curiosity as described by a participant

Figure 4.4
Illustration of caring
Karima, 2023





REFLECTION: **CURIOSITY**

As a researcher, I was visibly curious, through my speech but also enthusiastic body language, to learn from and with other people. These actions demonstrate what researchers describe as 'intellectual humility' (Leary, 2021). Intellectual humility expresses that although we may have lots of existing experience, knowledge and skills, we acknowledge that there is always so much more to learn (Leary, 2021). Doing so pushes the bounds of our imaginations, it prompts reflection on our own limitations, inspires us to search for new knowledge and experiences to disrupt harmful cycles, and equips us with the tools to remould and create more just realities (Parekh, 2000 as cited in Cripps, 2004; Kashdan et al., 2013). I tried to embody this type of curious openness and humility and valuing of the participants' perspectives, which translated to having more positive social interactions, a common effect of curiosity in interactions (Kashdan et al., 2013).

REFLECTION: **CARE**

A seasoned researcher encouraged me to care and to feel, 'je mag jezelf laten raken' (English translation: 'you can let yourself be moved/touched'). One day, as I was doing fieldwork, I was struck by a passionate feeling, an ardent sense of care for Bospolder-Tussendijken and Delfshaven. I realised that although this physical feeling came from my core, its origins were born from the area's communities and their mutual care for me. Communities in the area entrusted me with their stories, asked about mine, showed concern for my safety, and celebrated my birthday. In addition to weekly fieldwork that involved lots of social conversation, I was also connected to the area through sewing lessons. I became invested in the long-term health and prosperity of BoTu and its people, I care. I feel that it is through this recognition of our interconnectedness, and reciprocity of respect and care that together we can work to a brighter future. For instance, this mutuality of our collective connection is also a common theme presented in both decolonial and feminist thought (Ortiz, 2022; Puig De la Bellacasa, 2017). Therefore, care presents us with an antithesis to current modes of living based on heteropatriarchy, coloniality, and capitalism (Escobar, 2019 as cited in Ortiz, 2022). Likewise, care opens up new ways of producing knowledge that challenges current and dominant status quos. Through, for example, the act of simultaneously thinking and feeling, sentipensante (Ortiz, 2022), of an intertwined way using the brain, hand, intellect and heart (Rose, 1983 as cited in Puig De La Bellacasa, 2017).

REFLECTION: **INTERVIEWS VERSUS FLUID CONVERSATIONS & FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS & IRREGULAR SEQUENCE**

The sequence of when the questions were asked was irregular, there was no uniform structure. Initially, the conversations could be a little stilted as I wanted responses to the specific questions asked but eventually they began to flow. For new knowledge is often the result of people in dialogue with one another sharing experiences and perspectives, often through telling stories (Till, 2005; Parekh, 2000 as cited in Cripps, 2004). From research, I found that fluid conversations seem to be more conducive to storytelling than rigid interviews that follow a strict sequence of question 1, question 2, then question 3 and so forth. This fluidity can sometimes lead to people going off on tangents that may initially appear irrelevant (which they may sometimes be and steering back on subject is necessary). Other times these tangents and the organic nature of discussions allowed for the possibility to be surprised by what is said. These surprises help to build a fuller understanding of the wider context. For example, when I asked someone about whether they played sports regularly, they then told me quite an elaborate story about a hospital visit and how they are now committed to improving their health by exercising regularly. So yes, they play sports regularly!

Likewise, fluidity enabled a focus on feeling and emotional experiences, emphases that were traditionally shunned by Enlightenment planning culture (Baum, 2017 as cited in Ortiz, 2022). I found that as I shared information about myself, such as my family's parallel history of migration, or asked follow-up questions that responded directly to what was said, people opened up more. When I reflected on this, follow-up questions signify that we are actively listening, care about what is being said, and are curious to hear more about what someone is saying (Brooks & John, 2018). Studies have shown that people in conversation with someone who asks follow-up questions and shares information about themselves, typically feel heard, respected, safe and are therefore more forthcoming in conversations (Brooks & John, 2018).

REFLECTION: **BALANCE BETWEEN OBSERVATION & ASKING QUESTIONS**

Observation is an art, a skill. It is invaluable in trying to understand people and how we use space. As I sat on tram 8, journeying from Rotterdam West to the northeast, I grew to have a fuller understanding of who used the tram; when there was a market and what stop to get off at; how the city was changing as newly-built modern towers contrasted with 1980s residential blocks with banners bellowing 'SLOOP ONS NIET' (English translation: 'Don't demolish us'). Observation enabled me to gain insight.

Together with its merits though, a major limitation is the inevitable observer bias (Dudovskiy, n.d.). On the tram journey, everything that I observed was then interpreted through my lenses of seeing the world, my own frame of reference consisting of prior knowledge and experiences. Asking people questions about what, why and how something is the way it is allows these frames of reference to be challenged and/or expanded. Alison Wood Brooks and Leslie K John (2018) explain how asking questions stimulates learning, exchanging ideas, innovation, and trust building. Asking questions can help build rapport between different people. For instance, many times on tram 8, at local cafes, and at the end or beginning of conversations, I noticed a recurring gesture, a handshake or fist bump followed by moving a hand to the heart. I assumed it meant something along the lines of camaraderie. From asking different people, this understanding was enriched with nuance as the gesture not only signifies 'being in my heart' or respect but also changes depending on varying ethnic and age groups. From my own experiences I have come to realise that although we can observe and then interpret, there is great humility and fuel for learning through asking questions and being enlightened, and even surprised, by someone's response.

4.2 PLANNING A ROUTE? & PARTICIPANTS

THE ROUTE

Although the original hypothesis was that places of worship, barber shops & hair salons would be places where communities gather, I did not (accidentally and then later intentionally) start there. Prior to starting fieldwork, the intention was to immediately go to the aforementioned spaces. During my first conversation in Bospolder-Tussendijken, a business owner spoke of the Niteshop with whom she was acquainted and suggested that I pay them a visit as they are a movement concerned with urban research and development. So began a process of referral, whether the route was largely determined by following what people said both verbally and through visually identifying where people congregate [Figure 4.7].

The majority of research took place around the central artery of Schiedamseweg, home to many shops, eateries, other semi-public establishments and referral networks [Figure 4.5]. For example, after going to the Niteshop and becoming acquainted with their mission, I was introduced to one of their partners, All Dae, and one of their projects, School of the Future, which was presented at Het Nieuwe Instituut. Other referral networks concern Visserijplein Market, where I met two individuals who put me in contact with a train of volunteers and employees from WMO and Pier 80 Huis van de Wijk. The Veldacademie invited me to a BoTu beoordelingscommissie meeting (assessment committee) to observe how decisions to (financially) support different initiatives in the area take place. People from the WMO and Niteshop were present again. Other networks include that of Kumpir Corner and weekly football training in Park Rotterdam. Lastly, weekly sewing lessons provided a varied network of fieldwork participants from business owners, current residents, former residents, employees and hobbyists of the area. The posters and flyers that appeared in windows and on stands concerning a collective protest to keep trams 4 and 8 in the area, prompted me to travel along tram 8 from end to end, to better understand what communities it serves and where. Fieldwork in other places not connected to networks that I encountered also took place along the street as well as at TU Delft. Initially, the aim was to speak to as many people as possible, but as the project progressed the focus became about deepening relationships on a fairly weekly basis from March to through to September.



Figure 4.5
Map of fieldwork route

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 34 participants were involved in the study - 26 of whom were interviewed, 16 of whom were involved in co-creating elements of the storybook, and 9 who were both interviewed and contributed to the making of the storybook. For instance, regarding the expression of denotations of safety, home and community, participants who were previously interviewed were approached again to see if they wanted to convey these meanings in their language of choice. Contrastingly, once spaces and places of safety, home and community had been illuminated, participants who regularly spent time in these locations were asked if they wanted to contribute to the storybook, regardless of whether they had been approached before. Nevertheless, I was in regular contact with them, and thus a relationship developed.

Regarding the profile of the total 34 participants, there was a mix of residents (former and current), business owners, employees and hobbyists in the area [Figure 4.6]. Equally, there was a mix of different age, groups of people between 20 and 65 years of age, although I rarely asked and instead estimated their approximate age. Those under 16 were not included in the research for ethical and privacy reasons. Adhering to the project's focus, from the beginning of fieldwork, I intentionally approached people from different ethnic backgrounds [Figure 4.8]. These ethnic backgrounds ranged from Suriname to Eritrea, the Netherlands to Turkey. I later came to realise that the same intentionality was absent for gender as I felt more comfortable approaching women than men. Nevertheless, to get a more comprehensive understandings, I stepped out of my comfort zone and started to also engage in conversation with men. I now believe that discomfort is a catalyst for learning and growth, 'for change to happen [and to create more equitable and inclusive societies] we need to sit in the discomfort' (Ajayi as cited in Stack, 2017).

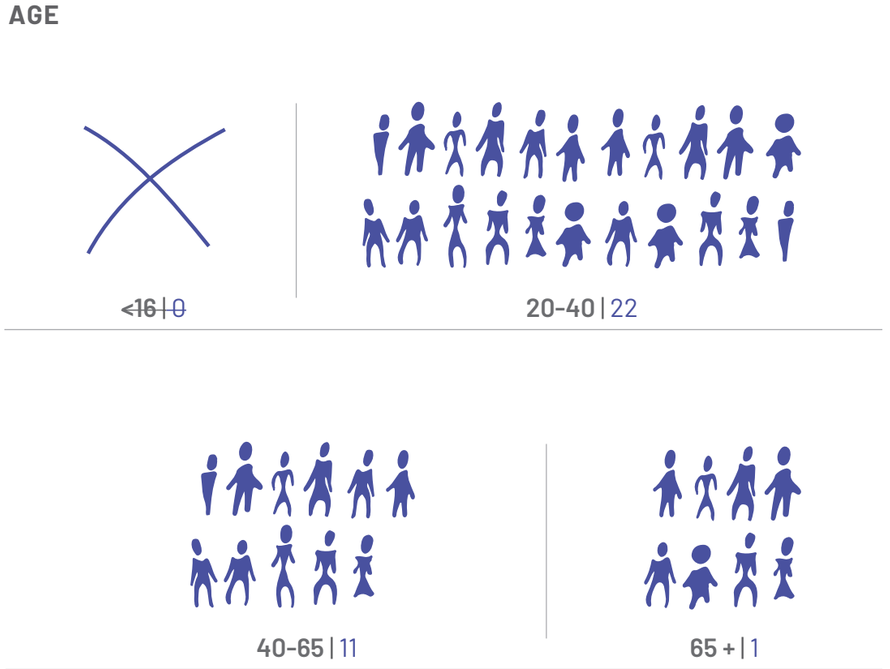


Figure 4.6
Diagrams of participant age and relationship to neighbourhood

*note that participants can have numerous relationships with the area hence more than 26 people appearing

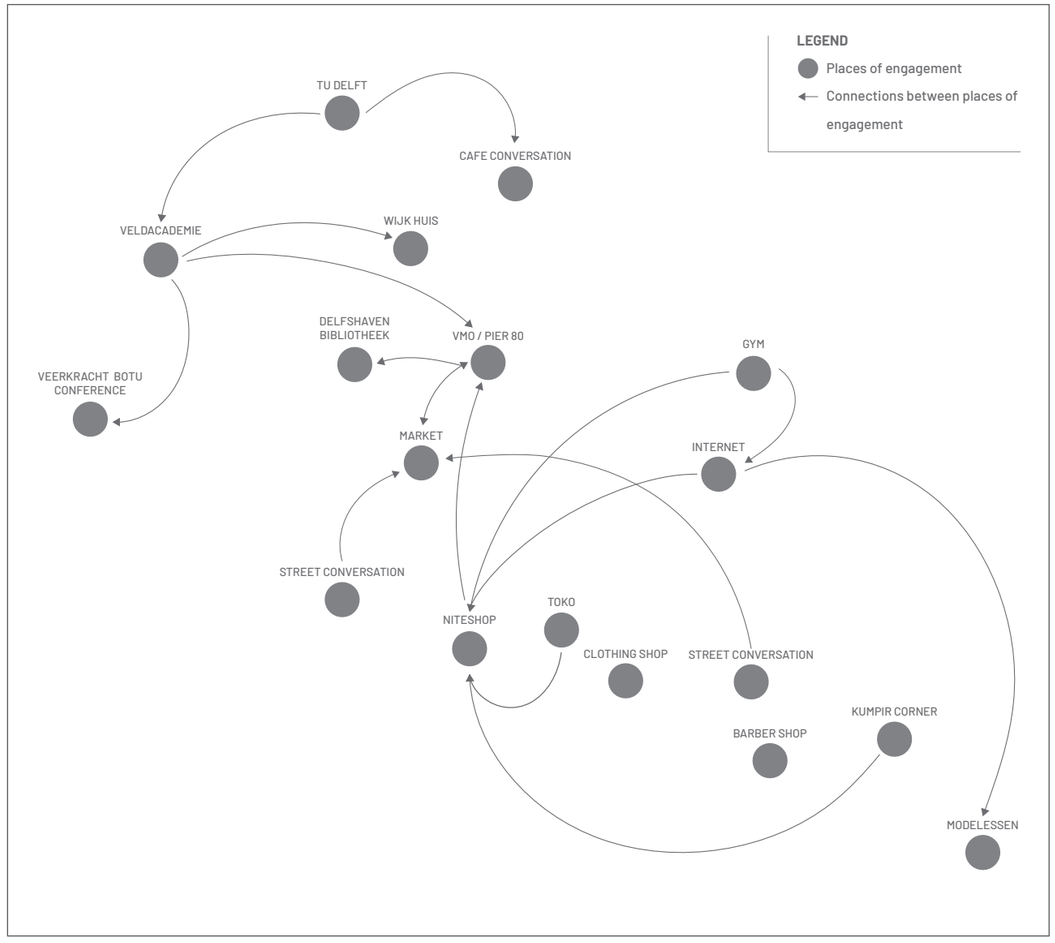


Figure 4.7
Diagram of participants networks

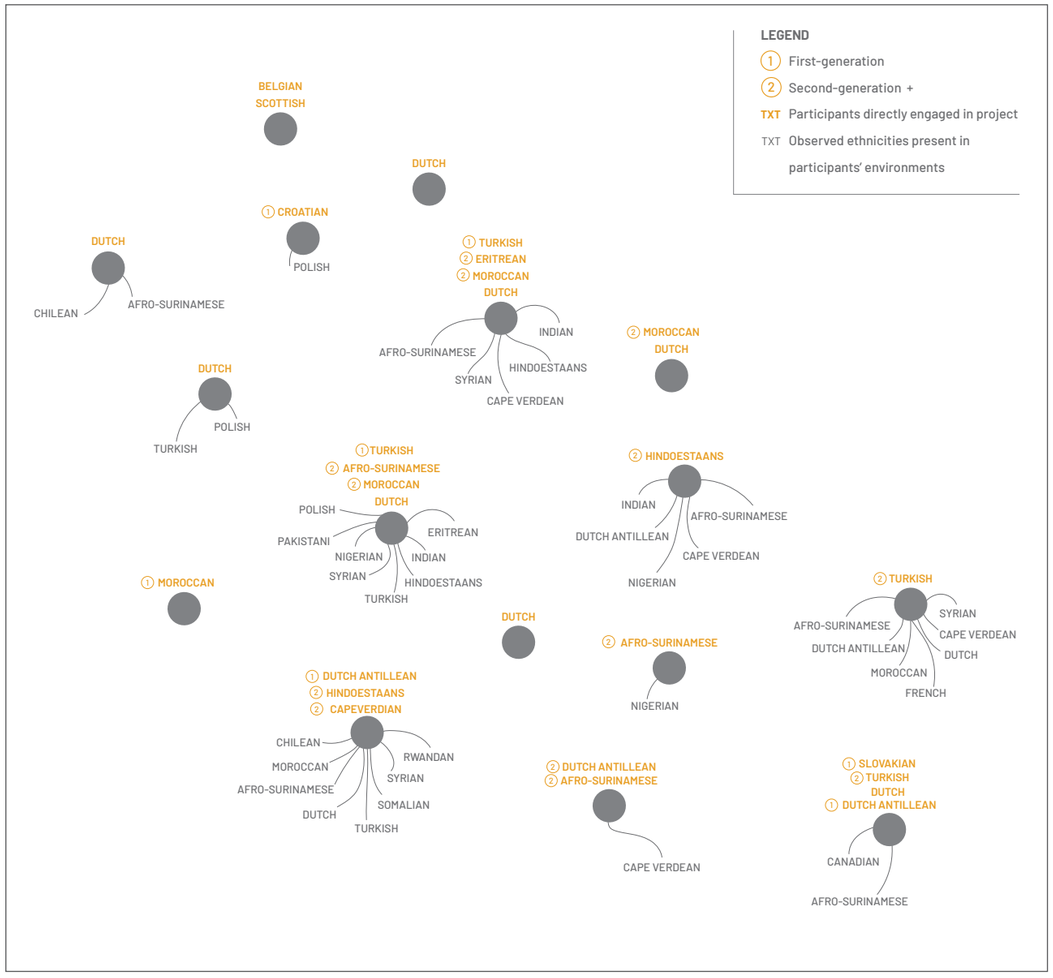


Figure 4.8
Diagram of ethnic diversity of participants

LAYER 5: LANGUAGES OF BOSPOLDER-TUSSENDIJKEN

Applying the participatory action research (PAR) process, the following 3 layers from 5 to 7 present the results from the action-taking and evaluation phases of fieldwork. This particular layer explores the languages used regarding spoken, written, visual and body languages in relation to silence and languages of the heart. As opposed to traditional architectural or urbanism drawing codes that are often technically loaded, the layer investigates other linguistic codes that can be used to communicate and resonate with different people groups in order to better include them in co-creative urban development. Hence the layer responds to the first sub-research question, 'What languages (verbal, written, visual, emotive/body and silence) can be used to best engage with stakeholders with different intersections of identity?'. A conclusive summary at the end of the layer makes explicitly clear some of the main findings. It should be noted that emotive language was also distinct in prior layers and frameworks; however, upon conducting analysis, emotion was communicated in a variety language types not just body language.

NOTES ON LAYERS 5 TO 7

Before continuing, it is important to note how in all 4 outputs (storybook, reflections, spatial implications, and report) there was an effort to invite participants to be co-authors and/or contributors. This was intentional, as language supports our framing and understanding of the world, while we are also limited to the tools that a language offers (Sapir & Whorf, as cited in Evans, 2015). Therefore, to expand upon architectural or urban design languages, as well as those that I use, various participants developed their own creative contributions. For participants who had time to create by themselves (often after clarifying aims and brainstorming together with me), they used languages that resonate with them ranging from drawing, photo voice (photography) to music and graphic design and several more to communicate their thoughts. For others, who had less time, I would try to translate ideas using metaphors or analogies that they had described and then building onto them. All figures in layers 5 through 7 have been created using one of these methods. The first is indicated by either citing the creators themselves, if permission is given to use their names, or by stating that the figure was anonymously created. If the images have been translated by me, no author, anonymous or otherwise, is cited.

5.1 SPOKEN LANGUAGE

Spoken language analysis was conducted by way of informal interviews and observation, which revealed 4 uses of spoken language that will be further elaborated on. They include (1) bi/multilingualism; (2) remixing; (3) Dutch as an additional language; and (4) music.

BI/MULTI-LINGUALISM

A wide range of languages are spoken in BoTu including Dutch, English, Moroccan (Amazigh), Arabic (different dialects from Morocco, Syria, Lebanon and Eritrea), French, Cape Verdean Creole, Somali, Hindi, Urdu, Sranan Tongo, Croatian, Turkish, Polish and many more [Figure 5.1]. These languages are reflective of the multiple nationalities, ethnicities and cultures present in Delfshaven. Everyone I spoke to was bilingual, quite common in the Netherlands, and in Delfshaven at least 9 of the 34 participants spoke 3 languages or more fluently. This group largely consisted of first and some second-generation migrants, the latter of whom would act as translators for their parents. A first-generation participant from Morocco explained, 'Actually, I'm speaking Moroccan, Arabic, French, English and 'beetje' Dutch'. She continues that the Netherland's multilingualism is what attracted her to live here in the first place, *"actually, I really like Netherlands. Before choosing to live here, we travel in all Europe and we choose Netherlands because it's good for us."*

Due to this multilingualism and range of languages one participant describes how 'mond tot mond' (English translation: 'word of mouth') communication is the best kind. Another woman who grew up in Rotterdam explains how multilingual communication can better notify people of different events, services and support, where dissemination *"has to be in Turkish, in Arabic, in English, in Spanish, in Papiamentu, in Dutch. Well, I think I've covered everything a bit."*

As well as acting as translators to their first-generation parents, there are further reasons for this multilingualism among first, second and subsequent generations. Two participants explained how being able to speak several languages is due to necessity. In the words of one participant who moved from Curacao to the Netherlands,

> *"if you grew up here [in the Netherlands] these different languages appeared through slang. With us [in Curacao] and also here, that necessity makes sure you speak full languages. For me, I learnt Spanish because there was just nothing else on TV. So I had to learn Spanish. That's why you just grow up with all those languages. It's simply necessary. Or else, those children's movies, the cinema, or those animations, you just wouldn't understand anything. So you are unconsciously learning those languages little by little, and you're just raised with them."*

This perhaps results in an adaptability to dealing with difference, as was so seamlessly demonstrated by observing a Moroccan Dutch participant. During his many conversations with a range of people, he could easily switch to Dutch, Turkish, Arabic, and Urdu depending on who he was talking to. Furthermore, a participant who speaks Turkish and Dutch on a daily basis demonstrates this language agility. For instance, when he is talking in Turkish with someone and a non-Turkish speaking person is in close proximity, he will use a few Dutch words to indicate to the non-Turkish speaker that he is not talking about them.



Figure 5.1
Some of the languages spoken in Delfshaven

REMIXING - CONNECTION AND FAMILIARITY WITH OTHER GEOGRAPHIES, CULTURES, AND LANGUAGES

Hiphop and remixing! In the spoken language of Delfshaven, remixing is of particular importance. Firstly, let us briefly introduce what remixing is. Two participants describe how remixing is an effect of postcoloniality, where immigrants play with and 'flip' what already exists to create something new and in order to survive horrific and challenging experiences. In the 1970s the Bronx, New York, remixing was interwoven into the fabric of the burgeoning music genre, hip hop (Partridge, 2020).

As a result of the plentiful exposure and connection to other cultures, geographies and languages, which is so common in immigrant neighbourhoods, new identities emerge. Especially amongst the youth and with each generation. As one participant continues, 'that identity arises, so to speak, because you have so many different cultures living together who share with each other. Kids who are born sometimes have bi-cultural and/or multi-cultural backgrounds and were brought up bilingually. And they're just constantly sampling different things from different cultures.' Another participant expands,

> *"when I was young I wasn't aware that I was saying Turkish and Moroccan words. Think of 'keefers' (?), think of 'abi' (big brother in Turkish), or whatever. But you are, it's part of the lingo. And yeah, if you sit down and reflect, you're like 'oh but that's because ...'. We have a large Moroccan community, a large Polish community, a large Surinamese community present [in Rotterdam]."*

The same participant also reflects on how diverse demographic mixtures create different soils for remixing seeds to grow [Figure 5.2]. As the Rotterdamer continues,

> *"in terms of language differences between Rotterdam and Amsterdam, here we use the word 'mos' a lot, which comes from the Cape Verdean community meaning boy. Amsterdammers, for example, find that very strange to hear, but that's because the Cape Verdean community isn't present there. For example, what they do there is 'omdraaien' (English translation: 'flip') words. That's also a kind of language. They work differently there and that's why Surinamese words are big because the Surinamese community is very present there. And so the [newer] languages are formed by the presence of the types of people that are there, the cultures that are there."*

Lastly, he explains how fast-paced language innovation and creation is, *"people don't stop. People don't stop to think about how such a language is formed and how it's made its own in one breath or 'a blink of an eye'."*





Figure 5.2
National flowers of the 7 most prominent migrant backgrounds in Rotterdam (Suriname, Turkey, Morocco, Dutch Antilles, Cape Verde, Indonesia & Poland) and Amsterdam (Morocco, Suriname, Turkey, Indonesia, Germany, UK & Ghana) that contribute to different soils for remixing

Incorporated data from Gemeente Rotterdam, 2023; Gemeente Amsterdam, 2022; & de Boom & van Wensveen, 2017

DUTCH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Many people in Delfshaven speak Dutch as an additional language. As a Moroccan lady explains,

> *"I was working in horeca as a food safety specialist only speaking English. I started to learn English first because it's an easy language and international language. Then now, I'm trying to learn Dutch."*

Nevertheless, in various fields - whether that be the working arena or in dealings with the municipality, there can be limited patience with people whose Dutch is not completely faultless. For example, as one participant elaborates,

> *"for me, language was not necessarily a [difficult] thing, but the Dutch language was. You know? Especially when you look at professional work environments. It's the fact that you don't have a good command of the language or that there is always a certain mistake. Always been a bit of a barrier after my studies. Not massively, but I did notice it here and there, you know? When you look at job applications and when you look at an email. Writing, being able to properly write self-assessments, write yourself good evaluations. Yes, if you can't express yourself well in writing then you won't get any further. That literally happened. And then it was also with applications. Also, it's just always been 'een blok aan m'n benen" (English translation: 'something that holds me back').*

He then goes on to describe how now that he is working in a more embracing environment where speaking 'perfect' Dutch is no longer an obstacle, he can "focus on my work. And you can already see how many more steps I've made in my work" as he no longer has to worry about seamlessly speaking or writing in Dutch. He continues that now 'I'll be able to grow'. This can extend to the accentism described in Layer 2. Regarding accentism in the Netherlands, people with Moroccan Dutch accents or who use different grammatical syntax are stigmatised and deemed as lesser than those who use 'standard' ABN Dutch.

Connecting this with linguistic theory, prescriptivism entails the belief that there are correct and incorrect ways in which language can be used. Therefore, producing books prescribing ways language should be used in speech and/or writing (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). Nonetheless, in the case of participation with groups of people from diverse backgrounds, a descriptive approach is more appropriate, inclusive and conducive for co-creation. Descriptivism instead focuses on the idea that language (books) should describe how language is actually used as opposed to being preoccupied by the 'rules' that govern it (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Therefore, speaking 'perfect' Dutch need not be a prerequisite for co-creation.



Figure 5.3
Diagram illustrating common Dutch grammar confusion for additional language speakers

MUSIC AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Although not directly regarded as spoken language, music with its different rhythms is an important verbal language used in BoTu. Music in Delfshaven reflects the diversity of its population, with genres ranging from country, Hindoestaans beats, hip-hop, reggaeton, to Turkish pop, afrobeats and an array of other sounds. To listen to a fuller spectrum, although it is still just a glimpse, please scan the QR which will direct you to a Delfshaven playlist with songs that were identified during fieldwork. Walking down the street, I could hear music blaring from a popular barbershop. When I went inside and asked what the significance of music is, several employees and customers explained how music is essential for setting the 'vibe'. Take a Turkish cafe. They played an audible (re)mix of Dutch, English and Arabic music that could be heard blasting from the speakers all around the space, where many young groups of various ethnic backgrounds came to sit and eat. Moving closer to the kitchen, where staff and older patrons are often Turkish, a muted TV appears with 'Istanbul FM' plastered on the front with occasional music videos. In both instances, music aids in feeling relaxed and even at home while eating or working.

In another case, in a gym with an online presence, music is used to maintain a tempo and concentrate in a zone. Additionally, music creates the foundation for coming together, to relax and also enjoy. All Dae, a multifunctional community hub, organises Jam Nite's to showcase the array of musical talent in Rotterdam, often afrobeat, hip hop and R&B. At an event organised by the Niteshop, Reclaiming the Block, which was partly filled with talks followed by a party, music was similarly important for setting the mood [Figure 5.4]. After the talks concluded, the various DJs took to the floor suggesting that the festivities had started. Hence, music can provide a foundation for sparking different moods, depending on the activity and target audience.



Figure 5.4
DJ playing music at a Niteshop event, 2023

SCAN ME!
(spotify code or click the link)
https://spotify.link/2vgc99kz8Cb

5.2 WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Multimedia reviews consisting of social media posts, namely on Instagram, flyers, manifestos, posters, and neighbourhood committee proposals in addition to observation and (informal) interviews formed the basis for written language analysis. Findings from this examination were then organised under 5 principle themes, (1) multilingualism; (2) remixing similarly to spoken language; (3) monolingualism; (4) zoomed-in analysis of pronouns. Punctuation, adjectives and poetry; and lastly (5) font and structure.

MULTILINGUALISM

As was mentioned in the previous section, a multitude of languages are spoken in Bospolder-Tussendijken, of which they are also written. For example, Jehovah's Witness volunteers had a stand packed with promotional flyers in a plethora of languages including Cape Verdean Creole and Dutch [Figure 5.5]. This is particularly reflective of the large Cape Verdean community in Rotterdam at large, with the majority concentrated in Delfshaven specifically. Similarly, in another religious flyer, text including a prayer, is written in both English and Dutch [Figure 5.6]. The Niteshop also shared their Hair Manifesto in various languages including English, French, Portuguese, Papiamentu, and Arabic [Figure 5.19]. While still a work in progress, the Delfshaven library is increasingly working on stocking children's books in Turkish, Arabic and Polish so that parents can also have easy access to books in their mother tongues [Figure 5.8]. Although moving away from multiple written languages in the form of alphabets, whether they be in the Latin or Arabic scripts, other multilingual examples include flyers and posters that combine text with other, namely visual languages [Figure 5.9]. For example, a flyer advertising an 'Infoplein' (English translation: 'information hour') at 'Huis van de Wijk' in Oude Mathenesse (Bospolder Tussendijken's western neighbour), simple text regarding areas of support are accompanied by icons communicating what services are offered. This includes



Figure 5.5
Jehovah's Witness flyers available in both Cape Verdean Creole and Dutch

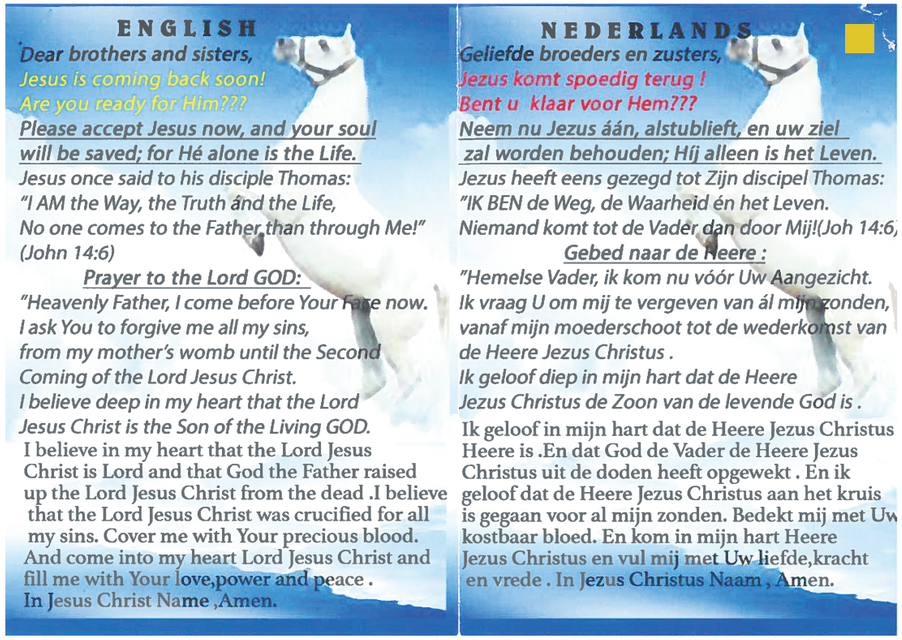


Figure 5.6
Christian flyer available in both English and Dutch



Figure 5.7
Spreekuur Bulgaarsestraat flyer
available in 6 languages

assistance with documents, health, money, living, residents' ideas and so forth. Equally, library flyers despite exclusively being written in Dutch use photography to communicate what is being offered, such as reading with young children, baby classes and technology assistance with the elderly. The same applies to a widely hung protest poster appealing the proposed shortening of the number 8 and 4 trams, which also uses tram icons to signify the poster's meaning [Figure 5.16]. Meanwhile, flags and different languages are used to aid in easily identifying what languages are being written on a flyer advertising another Infoplein in Bulgaarsestraat [Figure 5.7].



Figure 5.8
Children's library books available in Turkish, Polish and Arabic



Figure 5.9
Infoplein flyer that mixes written and visual language through icons to communicate services

REMIXING

This notion of remixing that was previously explored also extends to written language. The name of the urban research movement, the Niteshop, itself is an ample example of how this takes place. As Nacor, a member of the Niteshop's core team explains,

> *"why did we flip the name? I think that not long before we opened we thought, 'okay, what are we going to call it?' We knew that we wanted to remix, mix avondwinkel. A night shop, 'n-i-g-h-t'. But then Alex thought, we can also call it 'n-i-t-e'. In principle they sound the same but then you've made a name out of it. The second aspect is that we're playing with language. Immigrants are constantly developing new identities, new language creation is also a part of it* [Figure 5.10]. *Yes, so it's more than logical that we played with that."*

Richard, also a core team member continues, that within hip hop, both written and spoken language, especially the former, words are shortened, therefore it was natural for the team to make this decision. They also both give credit to their colleague Alex ***"who is someone who always keeps an eye on the trends"*** and keeps abreast as to how, in this case language, evolves and develops.

In the Niteshop's CO-OP zine and social media posts, they also interweave several words from other cultures and geographies in mainly Dutch text [Figures 5.11 & 5.12]. Their audience on these platforms are multicultural and often younger. In doing so they capture and communicate more nuanced meanings and connect with other narratives and movements. In the CO-OPzine, they include words such as 'embedded', 'Culture', 'Sauce', 'heritage', 'community', 'realness', and 'Block'. Block, for example, refers to the American 'block' meaning street and 'block party'. A block party intimately relates back to the origins of hip hop where members of a community come together for an event, bask in solidarity, or so 'we can breath, take it easy' (Lin-Manuel Miranda, 2008 as cited in Partridge, 2020). Other words on social media concern popping over to our Abi next door (English translation: 'big brother' Turkish). Or when describing how Kruiskade is a well-known chilling spot for youth, they use a Somali word, 'Ciyaal suuq'. The term literally translates to 'children of the market, of the shopping street', to allude to the area being a 'Campus of Everyday Knowledge' as opposed to its negative connotations.



Figure 5.10
The evolution of the Niteshop's remixed name

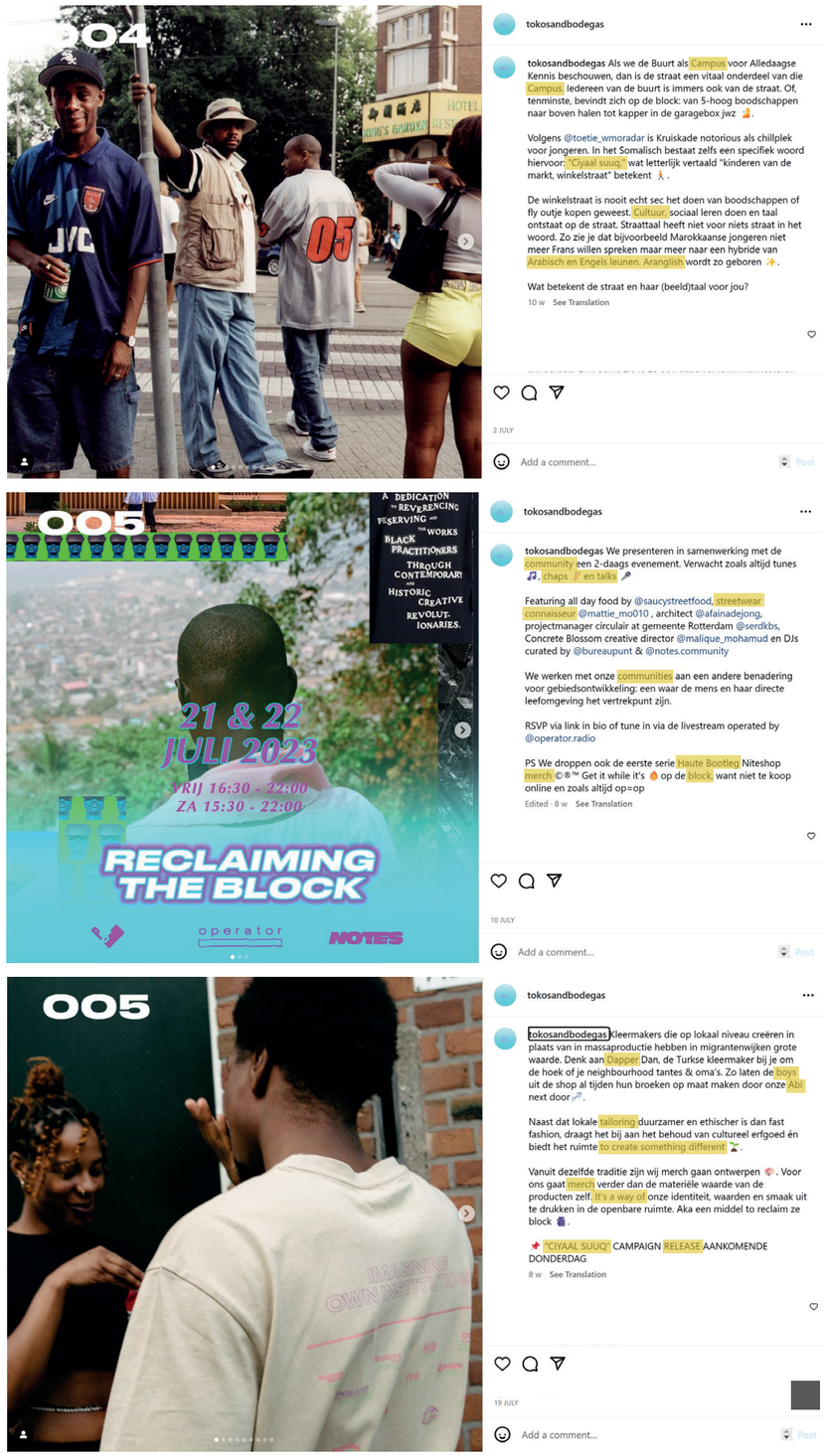




Figure 5.11
The Niteshop's CO-OPzine (2023) with highlighted words of solidarity, adjectives, and infused words from other cultures



Figure 5.12
A selection of the Niteshop's Instagram posts with highlighted words of solidarity, adjectives, and infused words from other cultures

MONOLINGUALISM

In contrast to the multilingualism and remixing that were discussed prior, a portion of the analysed texts were monolingual both in written languages as well as visual supports. This includes Infoplein's in Schiemond and Middelland that were exclusively written in Dutch with no other means of deciphering what services are offered [Figures 5.13 & 5.14]. This perhaps makes it difficult to engage with those most in need of certain services like language support. Sahan Supermarkt's Ramadan Calendar is largely targeted towards BoTu's Turkish-speaking community, save for a few words such as the slogan 'vertrouwd', 'voordelig' (English translation: 'trusted and beneficial') and distribution centre [Figure 5.15]. The flyer includes an Iftar prayer to the left of the timetable, which seems to be written in old Turkish as well as a translation to more contemporary Turkish.





Figure 5.13
A monolingual Middlelland spreekuur flyer



Figure 5.14
A monolingual Schiemond Infoplein flyer

Figure 5.15
A monolingual Ramadan calendar

ZOOMED IN LANGUAGE ANALYSIS

Personal pronouns

Now a brief analysis into writing techniques that work to evoke emotion, togetherness or not at all. A study of written 'Infoplein', religious and library flyers as well as manifestos and posters revealed how personal pronouns are used to demonstrate varying tones. Before continuing, it is important to note that the use of gender pronouns in Delfshaven has not been explored. This is due to the scope of the project, while the subject area itself appears sensitive and requires more comprehensive research in the neighbourhood. Harking back to used personal pronouns, the informal 'je' (English translation: 'you') is used in flyers disseminated by the library and religious groups. Conversations with the creators and audience of the flyers have not been had to better understand the intent and effect. However, the use of 'je' sparks questions as to whether there was an attempt to remove distance and formality between the library, religious groups and their respective audiences and instead increase approachability. Or is this received as being impolite and perhaps rude? This is in comparison to many of the municipal Infoplein flyers like that of Middeland which use the formal 'u'. Is this indicative of distance in a relationship or does it denote respect, or something else?

Answers to these questions require asking people for clarity. Nevertheless, it is significant to note how the use of personal pronouns contributes to notions of solidarity. For example, the Wijkraad's (English translation: 'neighbourhood council') tram 8 and 4 protest posters use inclusive 'onze' (English translation: 'our') and 'we' when they are trying to galvanise support, create a collective and communicate how 'we're in this together' [Figure 5.16]. In the Niteshop's CO-OPzine and Hair Manifesto, 'wij', 'onze', 'we' are used much to the same effect of the tram 8 and 4 poster [Figure 5.19].



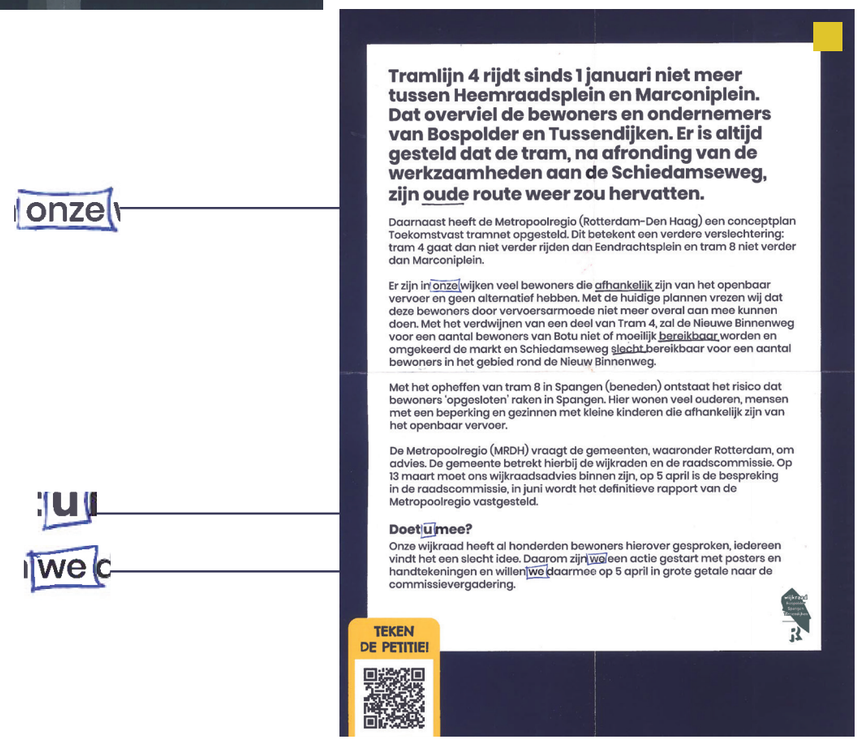


Figure 5.16
Tram 8 and 4 protest/petition poster with highlighted words of solidarity

Punctuation, adjectives & poetry

Similarly to personal pronouns, punctuation can aid in conveying emotion. In several library and Infoplein flyers in Bulgaarsestraat, the flyers' tone is direct and to the point, punctuated by full stops [Figure 5.7]. This is in contrast to the tram 8 and 4 protest poster that uses exclamation marks in the slogan and to encourage people to sign the petition [Figure 5.16]. The Infoplein flyers also have minimal descriptions beyond 'beperkt' and 'klein' (in Dutch and English at least!). Contrarily, in library flyers about baby and children's activities, adjectives such as 'leuk', 'mooi', 'spannend', and 'heel gezellig' are used (English translation: 'nice, exciting and very cosy/pleasant') [Figures 5.17 & 5.18]. Meanwhile, the Hair Manifesto experiments with poetic techniques [Figure 5.19]. One such technique is enjambement (the continuation of a sentence without a pause at the end of the line) as is demonstrated by the simply stated 'to be'. This emphasises and prompts thinking regarding the theme of being and what that entails. Moreover, the manifesto uses simile with references to being 'awkward like Issa Rae, joyful like Lupita confident like Sha'Carri, funny like Elsa Majimbo, flawless like Beyonce'. This highlights the diversity of existing space-makers and prompts other people to similarly take up space, especially as it relates to 'reclaiming [Black] beauty'. It also exemplifies a knowledge of prominent individuals in the culture and history of black beauty, which is further illustrated by adjectives including 'free', 'confident', 'puffy', 'frizzy', 'protective', and 'inclusive'. This potentially has the effect, at least for one young black woman and her aunty, of being seen and understood.



Figure 5.17
Voorlees activiteiten flyer with highlighted adjectives for engagement with parents and young children

Figure 5.18
Peutervoorlezen flyer with highlighted adjectives for engagement with parents and young children

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

our

we

you

your

SIMILE

awkward like Issa Rea,

joyful like Lupita,

confident like Sha'Carri,

funny like Elsa Majimbo,

flawless like Beyonce.

ADJECTIVES

care-free,

Free

difficult

messy, puffy, frizzy,

Layed, slayed, beaded, faded,

braided

Basic, regular, unbothered

new

on fleek

toxic

Not exclusive but inclusive.

joy.

EN Manifesto

Reclaiming our beauty and the industry

Somehow we've come to believe that textured hair is difficult.
Well, difficult just means you are not easy to lay low.

Our hair exists to help us shape, curve, zig zag and make waves.
Grow towards the sun: shine, curl, coil. Let us be messy, puffy, frizzy, free.

Free to transform into anything it desires, Layed, slayed, beaded, faded, braided - not measured by its length but whatever it aspires

to be

awkward like Issa Rea, joyful like Lupita, confident like Sha'Carri, funny like Elsa Majimbo, flawless like Beyonce.

Yes we can slay, but we don't have to do it all day. Yes it's a crown but we don't have to be royal to be celebrated.

Basic, regular, unbothered today, ourselves and magical another day.
Black and brown is who we are. And black is culture.

A culture made of movers, shakers, leaders, game-changers.
Setting new rules, forging new worlds and shaping an industry led by us.

And while some see black beauty as a space made for us, we see chemists, manufacturers, creators, investors that still do not look like us.

So we think it's time for a new standard, where we change the patterns without damaging our hair, introduce new values, create effortless tools, shape an industry Back to the basics, natural care, braided and protective styles.

Under your wig or not. Sew-in for length or not. Edges on fleek or not.
Turned into bantu knots. Worn for a week or a month.

Don't let anyone tell you how you should wear your hair. Let it breathe, let it free.
Free from toxic ingredients, beauty standards, brands and products that will tell you what a woman should be.

And while we know our hair is not just hair, but culture.
We believe culture can be shared and appreciated by everyone.
When it comes from us and is made by us – to protect, express and connect.

Asia, Africa to America: Uyghur to Fulani and (un)popular culture.
From cornrows, micro braids and making lemonade... braids.

These styles have been part of many generations and landscapes.
That's why we say, our beauty is global beauty.

Not exclusive but inclusive. Not made of burden but made of joy.

We came to believe that it's time for us to be who we are meant to be, reclaim the industry and truly live care-free.

FR Manifeste

Reconquérir notre beauté et l'industrie

D'une manière ou d'une autre, nous en sommes venus à croire que les cheveux texturés sont difficiles.
Eh bien, difficile signifie simplement que vous n'êtes pas du genre à faire profil bas.

Nos cheveux existent pour nous aider à modeler, courber, zigzaguer et faire des vagues.
Pousser vers le soleil : briller, boucler, s'enrouler. Laissez nous être désordonnés, gonflés, crépus, libres.

Libre de se transformer en tout ce qu'ils désirent,
Couché, Plagué, perlé, Dégradé, tressé - pas mesuré par leur longueur mais leur aspiration

être

maladroit comme Issa Rea, joyeux comme Lupita, confiant comme Sha'Carri, drôle comme Elsa Majimbo, impeccable comme Beyonce.

Oui, nous pouvons slay, mais nous n'avons pas à le faire toute la journée.

Oui c'est une couronne mais nous n'avons pas besoin d'être royaux pour être célébrés.

Basique, régulier, indifférent aujourd'hui, nous-mêmes et magique un autre jour.
Noir et marron, c'est ceux que nous sommes. Et noir c'est la culture.

Une culture faite de movers, de shakers, de leaders, de game-changers.
Établir de nouvelles règles, forger de nouveaux mondes et façonner une industrie qui nous appartient.

Et tandis que certains voient la beauté noire comme un espace fait pour nous, nous voyons des chimistes, des fabricants, des créateurs, des investisseurs qui ne nous ressemblent toujours pas.

Nous pensons donc qu'il est temps pour une nouvelle norme, où nous modifions Le schéma sans endommager nos cheveux. Introduire de nouvelles valeurs, créer des outils sans effort, retourner aux fondamentaux, soins naturels, styles tressés et protecteurs.

Sous votre perruque ou non. Cousu pour plus de longueur ou non. Bordures sur molleton ou non.
Transformés en nœuds bantu. Portés une semaine ou un mois.
Ne laissez personne vous dire comment coiffer vos cheveux. Laissez-les respirer, laissez-les libres.
Exempt d'ingrédients toxiques, de normes de beauté, de marques et de produits qui vous diront ce qu'une femme devrait être.

Et même si nous savons que nos cheveux ne sont pas seulement des cheveux, mais une culture.

Nous pensons que la culture peut être partagée et appréciée par tous.
C'est pour nous et par nous - pour protéger, exprimer et connecter.

De l'Asie, de l'Afrique à l'Amérique : des Ouïghours aux Peuls et de la culture (non)populaire.
De cornrows (tresses africaines), micro tressages et fabrication de limonade... tresses.
Ces styles ont fait partie de nombreuses générations et paysages.
C'est pourquoi nous disons que notre beauté est la beauté globale.
Pas exclusif mais inclusif.

Pas fait de fardeau mais de joie.

Nous en sommes venus à croire qu'il est temps pour nous d'être ce que nous sommes censés être,
Se réapproprier l'industrie et vivre vraiment sans soucis.

PT Manifesto

Recuperando a nossa beleza e a indústria

De qualquer maneira, passamos a acreditar que o cabelo texturizado é difícil (de tratar).
Bem, difícil apenas significa que não é fácil de ficar quieto.

O nosso cabelo existe para nos ajudar a formar, curvar, zig zag e fazer ondas.
Cresce em direção ao sol: brilha, rola e enrola. Deixa-nos ser bagunceiros, inchados, crespos, livres.

Livre para se transformar em qualquer coisa que deseja,
Deitado, perfeitado, frisado, desbotado, trançado - não medido pelo seu comprimento, mas pelo que deseja

ser

desajeitada como a Issa Rea, alegre como a Lupita, confiante como a Sha'Carri,
engraçada como a Elsa Majimbo, impecável como a Beyoncé.

Sim, podemos entreter, mas não precisamos de fazer isso o dia todo.
Sim, usamos uma coroa, mas não precisamos ser nobres para ser celebrados.

Hoje atuamos de forma básica, comum, e despreocupados. Amanhã seremos nós mesmos, encantadores.
Negros e pardos e o que somos, com uma cultura negra.

Uma cultura feita de audaciosos, agitadores, líderes, os que mudam o jogo.
Definindo novas regras, forjando novos mundos e moldando uma indústria liderada por nós.

E enquanto alguns veem a beleza negra como um espaço feito para nós, ainda não vemos químicos, fabricantes, criadores, investidores que se parecem conosco.

Portanto pensamos que é hora de uma nova norma, onde mudamos os padrões sem danificar o nosso cabelo. Introduzimos novos valores, fornecemos ferramentas contra o esforço, moldamos uma indústria de volta ao básico, com um cuidado natural e estilos trançados e protetores.

Colocamos uma peruca, deitamos o cabelo, trançamos para aumentar o comprimento. Mas só quando nós quisermos.
Transformado em nós bantos. Usado por uma semana ou um mês.

Não deixe ninguém te dizer como deves usar o teu cabelo. Deixe-o respirar, deixe-o livre.
Livre de ingredientes tóxicos, livre de padrões de beleza, livre de marcas e produtos que te dirão o que uma mulher deve ser.

E embora saibamos que o nosso cabelo não é apenas cabelo, mas cultura.
Acreditamos que a cultura pode ser compartilhada e apreciada por todos.
Quando vem de nós e é feito por nós - para proteger, expressar e unir.

De Ásia, África à América: Uigur para Fulani e a cultura (des)popular.
De trancinhas, micro tranças e fazer tranças... de limonada.

Esses estilos têm sido parte de muitas gerações e paisagens.
E por isso que dizemos que nossa beleza é uma beleza global.

Não exclusivo, mas inclusivo.
Não feito de carga, mas de alegria.

Chegamos a acreditar que é hora de sermos quem devemos ser,
recuperar a indústria e viver verdadeiramente feliz.

PAP Manifesto

Repoderá di nos beyesa i e indústria

Di un manera of otro nos a yega ta kere ku kabei tekstură ta difísil pa manehá.
Bon, difísil solamente ta nifiká ku no ta fásil pa domina.

Nos kabei ta pèrmiti nos pa duna forma, kurva, zig zag i pone ola.
Krese ku kara pa solo: bria, krúl, lora. Laga nos ta desordená, di span, seku steif, liber.

Liber pa transformá den ki forma ku nan ke.
Den la, yéchi defini, ku kuenta, ku diseño, di fièktu - no ta midi su largura, ma pa loke e ta aspira

na ta

kopioso manera Issa Rea, alegre manera Lupita, sigur manera Sha'Carri, prèt manera Elsa Majimbo, impekabel manera Beyonce.

Sí, nos por pone den modèl ku la, sinembargo no tin mester hasi esei pa henter dia.
Sí, e ta un korona, sinembargo nos no mester pertenesé na kas real pa por selebrá.

Loke ta básiko, regular, sin molèster pa awe, ta nos mes i magiko mañan.
Pretu i maron ta loke nos ta. I pretu ta kultura.

Un kultura ku ta konsistí di esnan ku ta move, ku ta revolushoná, líderá, esnan ku lo kambia e wega.
Esnan ku ta establesé reglanan nobo, pusha drenta mundunan nobo i forma industria guiá pa nos.

I miéntras ku algun ta mira e bunitesa pretu manera un espasio trahá pa nos, tòg nos ta mira kimikonan, fabrikantenan, inventornan, investornan ku ainda no ta parse nos.

Pesei nos a pensa ku ta tempu pa un stèndert nobo, unda tin kambio di patronchi sin hasi daño na nos kabei. Introdusi balornan nobo, krea hèrmèntnan rekubeku, pa duna forma na un industria. Ban bék na e fundeshi, kuido natural i estilonan trenzado i protektivo.

Bou di bo peluka òf no. Kosé pa hasi mas largura òf no. Yèchi na lugá of no.
Loré na dundu di bantu. Ku ta keda pa un siman òf un luna.

No laga niun hende bisa bo kon bo mester drecha bo kabei. Dun'e rosea, dun'e libertat. Liber di ingedientenan tóksiko, stèndert di bunitesa, merka i produktonan ku ta dikta kiko un muhé mester ta.

Meintras nos sa ku nos kabei no ta solamente kabei, ma kultura.
Nos ta kere ku por komparti kultura i aprecsiá pa tur.
Ora e ta bin di nos i ta produsi dor di nos i ta na nos - pa defendé, ekspresá i konektá.

Asia, Afrika pa Amerika: Di Uyghur pa Finlandia. Di richi nchi. fléktu chiki chiki i benta di aw'i lamunchi ... mas fièktu.

E estilonan aki tabata parti di hopi generashon i paisahenan.
Pa e motibu aki nos por bisa, nos bunitesa ta bunitesa mundial.

No ekslusivo sino inkluso.
No di karga, sino di alegria.

AR بيان

انتعاشة جرامالنل واللصانعة

الأن نصدق ان الشعر المرجع صعب التهذيب
والكثير مما نحن الآخرين ان نقول ان شعرنا لا يستسلم بسهولة
شعرنا يستطيع أن يتحرك ويدور ويتعرج كما يواجه الجو
شعرنا ينمو نحو الشمس ويلمع

بدع شعرنا ان يكون حرا وجامح كالشجر
دعوانا نكون غريبا ومرحون مثل ايسا راي
سعداء مثل لوبيتا
او ثقون مثل شا كاري
مضحكون مثل السا مالجيمبي
مهمازون وكاملون مثل بيونسي
الأحتفال كما لذاذا ليس للملوك فقط
شعرنا هوا تاجنا

ثقافة تتكون من اناس مبدعون و محركون

يصنعون قواعد جديدة
ويغيرون قواعد قديمة

ورغم ذلك نرى كيف يواصلون مصانع
و مستثمرين لا يشبهوننا
ولكن تتحرك في ثقافتنا و جرامالنل

نحن نرى ان الوقت قد حان لمعيار جديد
تحيت نغير الأنظمة بدون ان نغير شعرنا
ونقدم قيما جديدة
مدعوين لاستخدام اساليب وتقنيات
ونرجع الى الأساس: منتجات طبيعية للشعر

عاش كان تحت شعر مستعار
قد كان محلول
او في عقد البانتو
مدة اسبوع او شهر

كيف تدرك أن رأي الآخرين لا يحدد شعرك
حق شعرك ان يكون
ان ينفش

خالي من الهواء السامة
او اعياء جامد
كل شخص يقول لك كيف تدرك شعرك وجرامالك

ثقافة هو طق لب شعر طق
من أين ان شعرنا ليس
الثقافة تجب ان تكون مشتركة مع الجميع
و لكن طق عندما نصنع بانفسنا

من اسيا الى افريقيا الى أوروبا
الشاكل والعوائق
متعددة حالت بين الجميع
ولهذا نقول: الجمال هو جمالنا

ان نرى الأستيعاب لن ثقافتنا هي فخر
نريد استعادة واستعادة كل نعيش حياتنا

Figure 5.19
A hair manifesto available in 5 languages with highlighted pronouns, simile and adjectives for increased engagement through emotion, the Niteshop, 2023

FONT & STRUCTURE

There was also an exploration into font sizes and styles in how they relate to inclusivity. The front of the tram 8 and 4 poster is written in large font while the descriptive text on the back is also in clear, legible font for a variety of readers [Figure 5.16]. In the Niteshop's CO-OPzine, the font is not uniform, while several different styles are used to reflect the multitude of quotes from a variety of people in a fairly large font [Figure 5.20]. In Sahan Supermarkt Ramadan timetable, different text fonts were used for different functions [Figure 5.15]. For example, more romantic text styles were used for prayers as well to write 'Ramazan itself'. Meanwhile, less embellished styles were used to write down times and addresses. The text about the CO-OP's aims is written in a much smaller font, similar to the Mirror Mirror Museum in Gent [Figurea 5.21 & 5.22]. The use of small fonts prompts questions as to how accessible small-font texts are to a broader, more inclusive range of people. For example, larger, clear fonts can meet the needs of many potential audience members who may be neurodiverse and/or have difficulty reading, making it easier to decipher and understand as well as increasing the willingness to do so (Scope, 2022).

Furthermore, in plans discussed during Bospoluder-Tussendijken's beoordelingscommissie (English translation: 'assessment committee') several committee members identified the need for clear, concise and digestible information in this particular context. Two of the plans that were submitted were structured with the same headings and sub-headings, however, one plan was slightly more elaborate than another, which was less favoured. For committee members that were unfamiliar with the proposed projects, they favoured more concise, easy-to-read text that can be absorbed in a limited time frame than something that is more extensive. Hence, votes for this particular project relied on committee members who were familiar with the project to spread the word.



Figure 5.20
Differentiated font used to communicate different speakers and perspectives in the Niteshop's CO-OPzine, 2023

IN CO-CREATIVE ENVIRONMENTS, **CONCISE MESSAGING** > **ELABORATE MESSAGING**



Figures 5.21 & 5.22
Small font in the Niteshop's CO-OPzine (2023) and a ModeMuseum Antwerpen flyer

5.3 VISUAL LANGUAGE

Like written language, visual language analysis has also employed observation, interviews and multimedia reviews of Instagram, flyers, signage and the streetscape to garner a better understanding of what visual languages are used in Delfshaven. Findings have been categorised into (1) eclecticism and familiarity to reflect target audiences; (2) remixing to reflect target audiences; and (3) eclecticism and minimalism.

ECLECTICISM & FAMILIARITY TO REFLECT TARGET AUDIENCES

In several shops including a toko and the Niteshop, several familiar products are displayed, often in an eclectic way to connect with their diverse audiences. In the words of one participant of Hindoestaans background explained, 'a product already has so many stories, shares so many perspectives on life'. For example, in the toko, the varied assortment of products and vibrant colours mirror their customer base who are largely Cape Verdean, Surinamese, West African, Antillean and to a lesser extent south Asian [Figures 5.23 to 5.26]. Products include Cape Verdean beans, Surinamese and Hindustan bamie, and scotch bonnet, okra, bhindi, lady's fingers or many other names the vegetable goes by, appeal to the far-reaching geographies from South Asia, West Africa and Central and South America. Equally, the shelves of the Niteshop are adorned by products that reflect (migrant) histories and stories [Figure 5.27]. For example, Morjon, a type of canned sardines is displayed that for one participant, from a Hindoestan's background, evokes several memories,

"The story behind it is that it is an ingredient for a recipe. In Surinamese cuisine, this is called the 'Eerste Hulp'. Eerste Hulp is a recipe that was made when you didn't have much or when you didn't have much to spend. On days when there was no food in the fridge and all you have





Figures 5.23 & 5.24 *Beans and eclecticism of food and hair products as objects of familiarity*

Figure 5.25 *Bamie as an object of familiarity,* photo voice by an anonymous participant





left is rice, tomatoes and maybe potatoes, you make a dish with that. And it was given a name because it was in every Surinamese household. With Morjon, even though we lived in such a quite tragic situation, it was always tasty, very 'lekker'. Comes from a kind of necessity, but there was a contrast in that [the dish] did bring joy. For me again, as tragic as it is, I have very positive memories of that dish. A very joyful mixture."

The participant goes on to describe how in concert with other products and items, people are able to make connections that they otherwise would not have made had the products not been displayed together. For instance, in our conversation, we explored how despite someone not being familiar with all products, familiarity with a few or even one can prompt curiosity to learn about each other. In other examples, the eclectic imagery ranging from animation, drawings and comics to photos in the Jehovah's Witness flyers [Figure 5.5] work to engage with a broad audience - young, old; artistic, families and singles, of varying ethnic backgrounds.



Figure 5.26
Okra and scotch bonnet, objects of familiarity for a variety of cultures

Figure 5.27
Objects of familiarity where Morjon is placed next to an intricate tea set in the Niteshop



REMIXING TO REFLECT TARGET AUDIENCES

As was mentioned in the previous section, Continuing the concept of remixing described in the spoken and written language sub-layers, remixing of visual languages in Delfshaven also contributes to new identities. This ranges from clothing, items and products to appropriation of the streetscape. For example, displayed in the Niteshop is a range of hot sauces [Figure 5.30]. They tell the story of a Guyanese and Dutch artist exploring her identity in the world. The Super Hot Pepper Sauce alludes to one of her parent's roots in Guyana, while the Hot-ish Pepper Sauce relates to her other parent's roots in the Netherlands. Combined these hot sauces create a new identity, Hot Pepper Sauce which is a culmination informed by both histories and cultures. Meanwhile, in workshops facilitated by the Niteshop commonly consumed beverages and symbols of childhood, such as Capri Sun juice boxes, were transformed into crossbody bags and caps [Figures 5.28 & 5.29]. Another product includes a packet of kidney beans that have been remixed to link the beans with family and familial rituals of eating [Figure 5.31]. For example, for one participant, the beans conjure up memories of his grandmother and excited anticipation to eat the beans regularly every Monday growing up, which is evident in the bean packet's reimagining and poetry.

This notion of remixing also extends to the streetscape. Along the busy Schiedamseweg, there are numerous shops spanning food, clothing, fabrics and furniture stores that occupy the pavement, creating an eclectic environment [Figure 5.32]. The blurring of where shops end and the public pavement begin is present in many street cultures in other areas such as the MENA region, various parts of Africa and many others. Meanwhile, the notion of eclecticism also extends to signage, a crossover between written and visual languages where wide-ranging styles mix. In general, Bospolder-Tussendijken's signage on shop fronts and eateries is varied, and non-uniform yet they co-exist [Figures 5.33 to 5.36]. It ranges from bright, colourful and/or funky signs like that of the Coolhaven Collectief, which houses an array of musicians and visual artists, or Polish supermarkets and Surinamese eateries, which also use flags and symbolic colours to communicate their presence to their audience. The bright neon lights of 'kroegjes' (English translation: 'pub') attract many tourists and ethnic Dutch locals having a drink or more traditional Dutch meals. The Niteshop also use neon colouring, but unlike the kroegjes they refer back to the block letters and lights of 'avondwinkels' (English translation: 'night shops' or 'off-licence shops' in the UK), which are customarily frequented by a variety of people, especially youth [Figure 5.10].



Figure 5.28
Remixed Capri-Sun juice boxes into sneakers
The Niteshop, n.d.

Figure 5.29
Remixed Capri-Sun juice boxes into caps and crossbody bags
The Niteshop, n.d.









Figure 5.30
Remixed hot pepper sauces exploring multi-faceted identity
Ezri Jade, Sandra Zegarra Patow & Nacor Martina, 2021

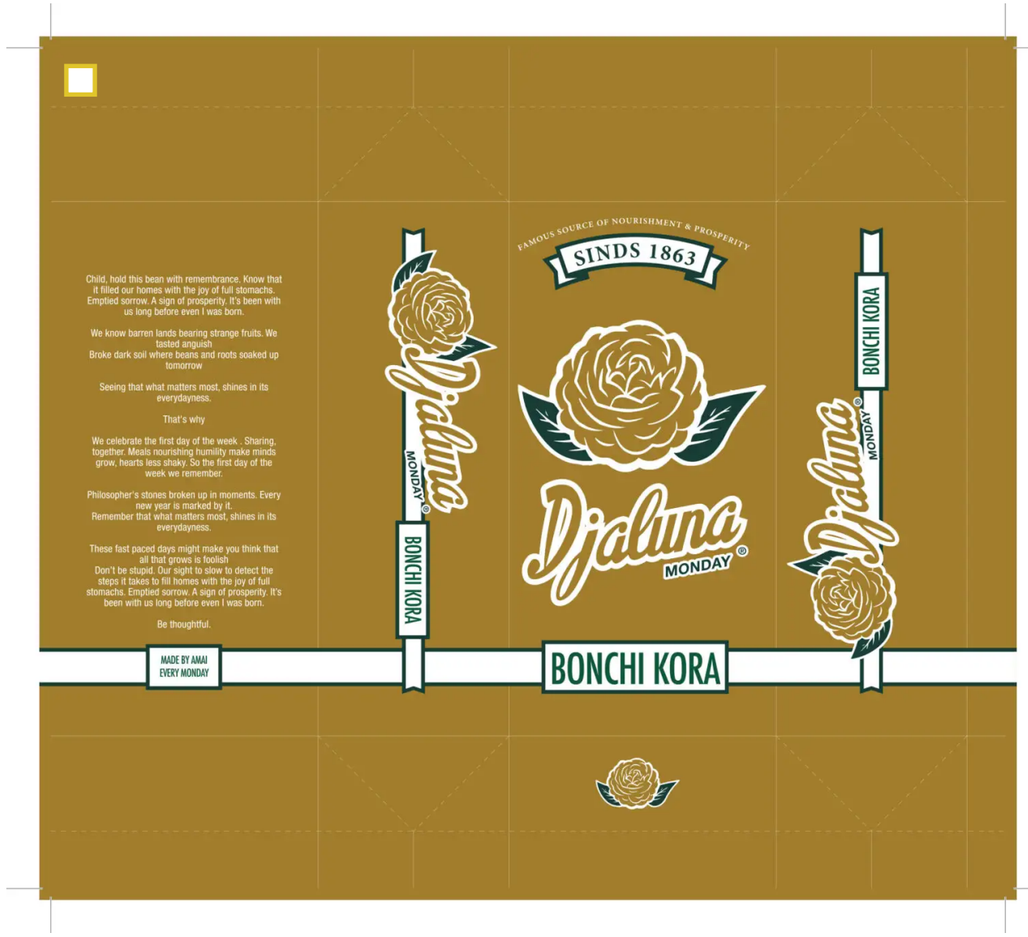


Figure 5.31
Remixed beans linking personal stories with eaten product
Nacor Martina, 2022





Figure 5.32
Remixed streetscape by way of shop extensions onto the public street

ECLECTICISM AND MINIMALISM

In contrast to eclecticism explored in prior sections, the signage and aesthetics of certain fashion stores such as 1912, and cafe's like Alstadt, are more minimalistic and monochromatic in their design [Figures 5.37 & 5.38]. The former establishment's customers come from all over Rotterdam and beyond who come in search of very particular clothing. Cafes such as Alstadt, though, are frequented by students and those working remotely on their laptops.

Figure 5.33
Signage that uses colour to communicate the presence of a Polish supermarket

Figure 5.34
Combination of eclectic styles of old and new signage that coexist

Figure 5.35 & 5.36
Neon signage of 'kroegjes'









Figure 5.37
1912's minimalistic logo design



Figure 5.38
Alstadt cafe's minimalistic logo design, Historisch Delfshaven, n.d.



5.4 BODY LANGUAGE

Body language is an especially impactful yet often subtle language of communication therefore observation as well as question asking to gain clarity were used to understand how people express themselves through their body. Again, like in other language sections this was grouped into 5 categories, (1) languages of respect, 'I see you'; (2) sitting and eating; (3) acts of service; (4) languages of hospitality; (5) alertness/being observant.

LANGUAGES OF RESPECT, 'I SEE YOU' (HAND GESTURES & GREETINGS)

At the end of our conversation, a first-generation Moroccan woman took both of my hands in hers and squeezed gently before putting her hand to her heart. I was struck by the warmth of the gesture. As I observed people's body language on the street as well as in shops like barbers and eateries, I noticed a similar gesture, a fist bump or handshakes followed by a hand to the heart [Figure 5.39]. I assumed it meant something along the lines of camaraderie. After seeing it again in a cafe, I asked the owner what it meant. He described how it is a signal of respect, a symbol of 'I see you' and of 'being in my heart'. He continued that it changes and adapts based on varying ethnic and age groups. For example, a fist bump was more typical for greeting Surinamese and Cape Verdean boys and men. Meanwhile, in Turkish culture, your hand would be placed lower than your chest to greet older people. A group of men in a barbershop elaborated that the fist bump was generally a way to greet other men and boys. A hug and very occasionally a fist bump would be used as a greeting gesture in mixed women/men and girl/boy friendships.

Further elaborating on this idea of greeting, it was customary and natural to simply greet people in shops, and a simple way of building rapport with people. For instance, in a toko, whether it was busy or quiet, people would greet both customers and staff. A young woman who had seen me in the toko, approached me later on in the day as she had recognized me from the toko. A similar situation occurred again when I was in a cafe and talking to the owner when a friend of his came in and we greeted each other. When I was walking down the street I saw him again, and although he was talking to someone else, we still acknowledged each other. Similarly, two middle-aged women who grew up in 1970s the Netherlands explained how greeting their neighbours was common practice and increased their feelings of community and togetherness.

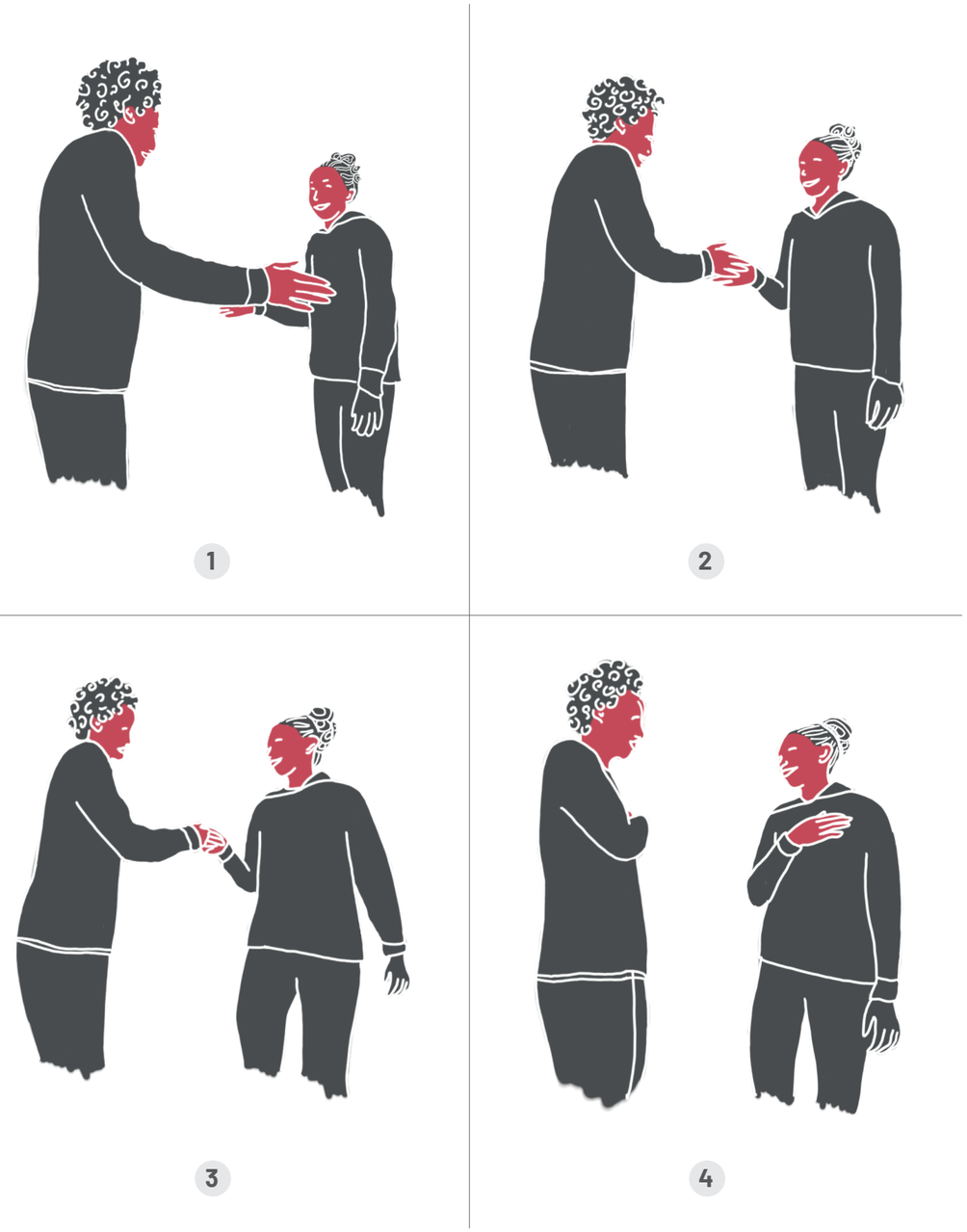


Figure 5.39
Scenes of an 'I see you' greeting

SITTING AND EATING

Still partly exploring the theme of respect and ways to express 'I see you', body language also changed in relation to using non-dominant Dutch eating and sitting styles. For example, in a Turkish restaurant/cafe, I ordered a 'pannetje menemen'. When it came, accompanied with slices of bread there was no cutlery [Figure 5.40]. The bread was the cutlery, it acted as the way for me to scoop up delicious mouthfuls of menemen. The food and the cultural environment I was in, invited the eater to consume differently. In another anecdote, a participant described how an older Dutch woman had wanted to organise a communal lunch with her neighbours who were largely Muslim. The woman, though, made ham sandwiches, so unfortunately, many of her neighbours could not eat and therefore fully participate. Equally, in one of the Niteshop's spaces, a tranquil working space at the back, the soft teal carpet, low-lying tables and plump bean bags ask for other body configurations and the removal of shoes [Figures 5.41 & 5.42]. For instance, upon entering the room, as is customary in many cultures such as those in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region and large parts of Asia, shoes that have been worn outside are to be taken off. Essentially there is a different ritual to greet the space. Likewise, there are no high chairs, instead people directly sit or lie down on the carpet, on beanbags or on cushions. People are prompted to change the way they move in space, and thus also the way they think in the space - to be calmer.

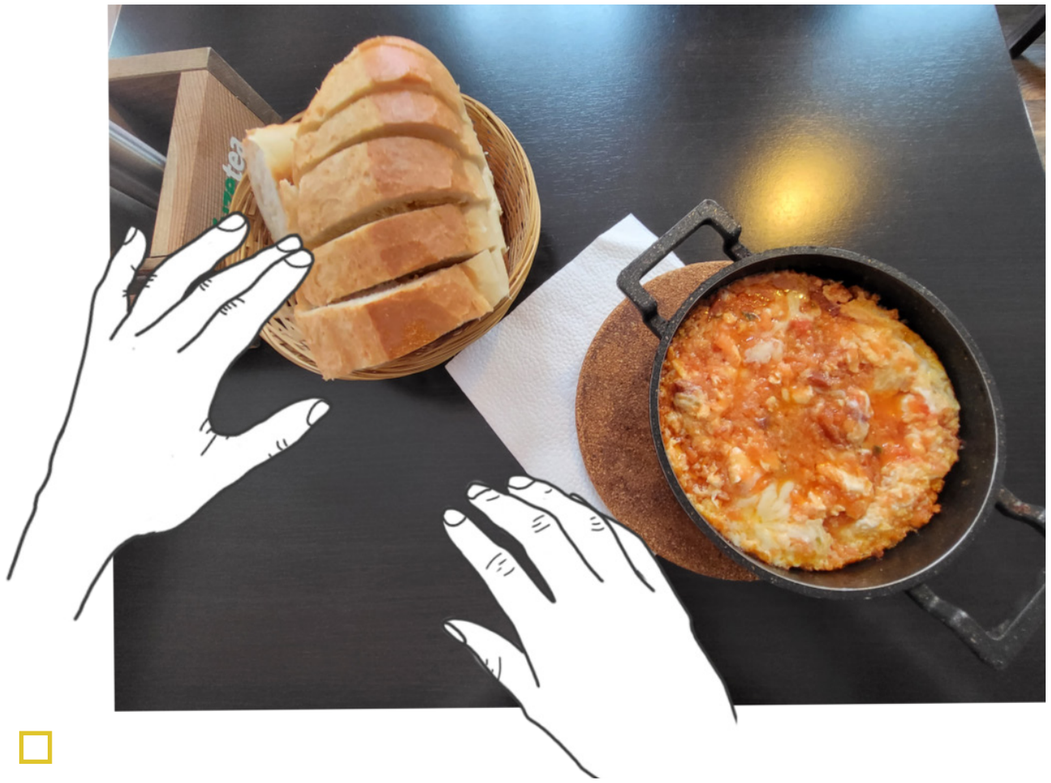


Figure 5.40
Pannentje Menemen to be scooped up and eaten with bread as opposed to cutlery



Figure 5.41
A rack to place shoes prior to entering the Niteshop's backroom
Lù Měi & Romy Zhang, 2023



Figure 5.42
Shoeless people sitting on the floor of the Niteshop's backroom in varying ways
Lù Měi & Romy Zhang, 2023

ACTS OF SERVICE

On many occasions, body language conveyed a want to be of service to those around them. In a bustling market, a woman struggling with her trolley was assisted by an employee who ran over to help. In another instance, a new Dutch business owner who was finding it challenging to integrate into the neighbourhood extended her services to also facilitate classes for children in the area. Similarly, there is an entire task force of volunteers who staff and energise the WMO radar, who take the time to chat with patrons as well as serve drinks and food.

Interestingly, some members of the Turkish community in Delfshaven had common funds where each member of the fund would contribute monthly sums, rotating who would receive the total contributions at the end of each month [Figure 5.43]. This is similar to pardner that were first used by first-generation Caribbean migrants (Windrush generation) in the UK who faced much institutionalised racism in the British banking systems. Like that of the communal common funds used by some members of the Turkish community, pardners are built on foundations of trusting and knowing each other to create (informal) rotating savings and credit associations to support one another without depending on larger instiituions (Bloom, 2023; Prosperity Pardner, n.d.). These systems provide a fruitful opportunity regarding literacy building, regarding how to establish collective cooperatives to build (financial) capacity and self-sufficiency without relying on larger bodies, who sometimes enforce their own hierarchies of caste and class. Additionally, highlighting the similarities and yet slight differences between initiatives in various communities, whether they be Turkish, Caribbean or otherwise, can make visible other ways of living and being.

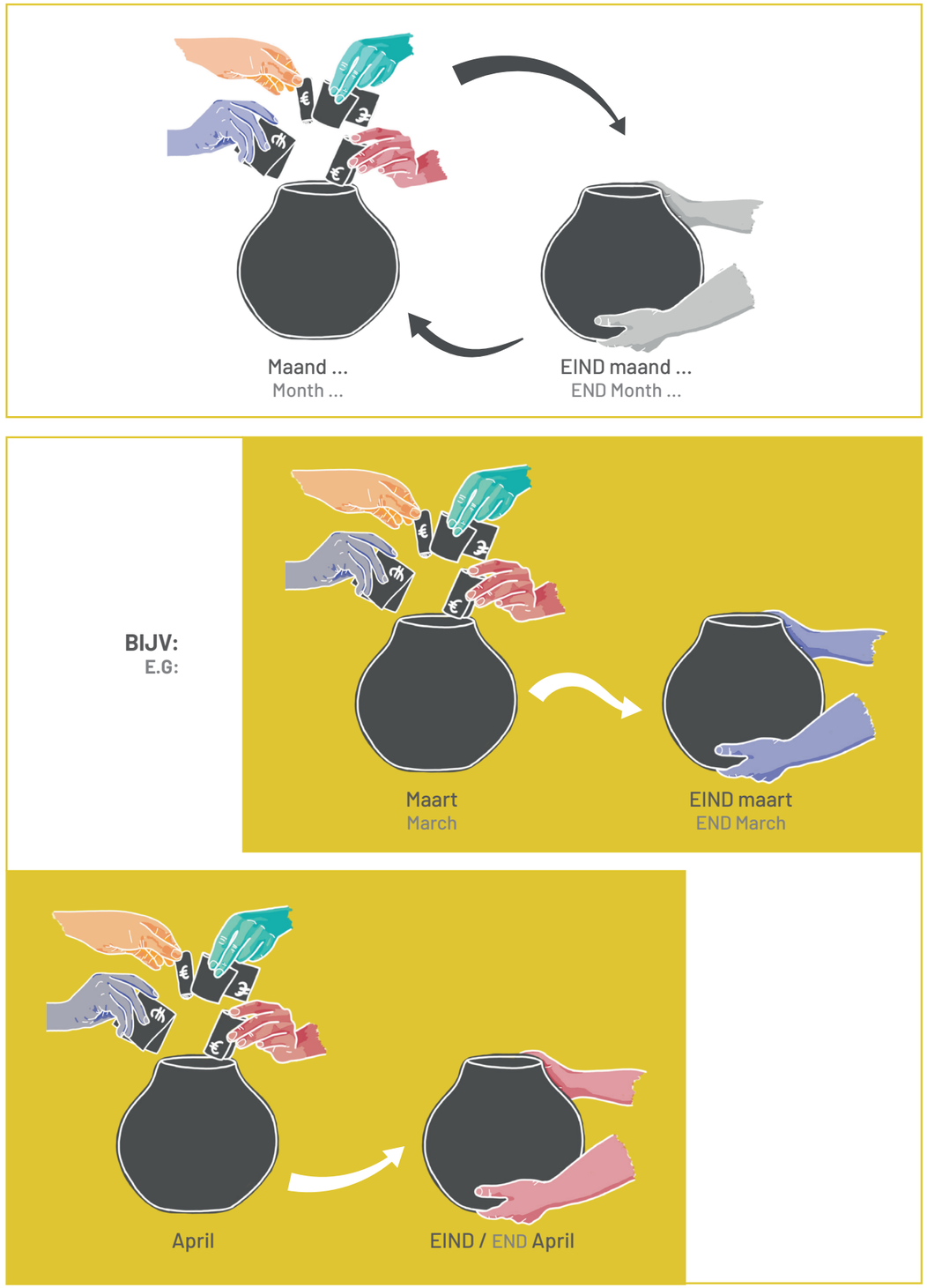


Figure 5.43
How the rotating savings and credit associations of common funds and pardners work

LANGUAGES OF HOSPITALITY

In addition to supporting one another, I often experienced welcoming hospitality. After agreeing to be interviewed, a shop owner asked if I would like coffee or tea in a toko [Figure 5.44]. In other instances, I was offered coffee or water by a young Dutch business owner and was given mandarins, peaches, pomegranate and complimentary tea and baklava in a Turkish cafe [Figure 5.44]. The young Dutch business owner also explained how before opening their shop, neighbours came to offer biscuits and flowers. Before starting a 2-hour long conversation in another cafe, participants brought over some water and coffee while the same beverages were offered in another community hub. Equally, in homes, one participant who grew up in 1970s the Netherlands, explained how after a playdate she would eat dinner with her friends and vice versa. It is also significant to note how specific furniture and objects facilitate this hospitality. Seating space, in the various forms that this might appear - lounge chairs, low stools, high stools, benches, thickly rimmed plant pots, whether they be cemented fixtures of space or flexible and moved around, whether they be in semi-public domains like shops or on the public street, invited people to spend time in a place, interact and appropriate space while seated [Figure 5.45]. One participant shared how his father would take his chair to the garage at 16:00 but would come back after midnight as 'in every garage [there are] a few chairs' where hospitality was facilitated and therefore people felt comfortable to be there.



Figure 5.44
Complimentary mandarins, peaches, ginger beer, Turkish tea and baklava given to the researcher by various people in Delfshaven during or after conversations













Figure 5.45
Hospitable, traditional and/or multi-functional seating in Delfshaven

ALERTNESS/BEING OBSERVANT

Looking around from side to side, being attentive to sounds further away, looking through the crowd to see who maybe needs some assistance, glances over shoulders - body language also conveyed an alertness of one's surroundings. For example, this alertness could provide insight into relational dynamics. In busy spaces, a young Dutch Moroccan participant would adjust his posture to have an overview of the space around him, observing other people to see that they were ok. He was also cognizant of the speed and force of footsteps in case they posed a threat [Figure 5.46].Meanwhile, in other environments that felt less like home, where he felt antagonised for his MENA appearance in largely white areas, his body language would change as he felt hyper-visible [Figure 6.4]. Another participant explained how although she would like to greet people more often. As a woman though, she hesitates as she does not want her body language to be misconstrued as flirtatious when that is not the desired effect.

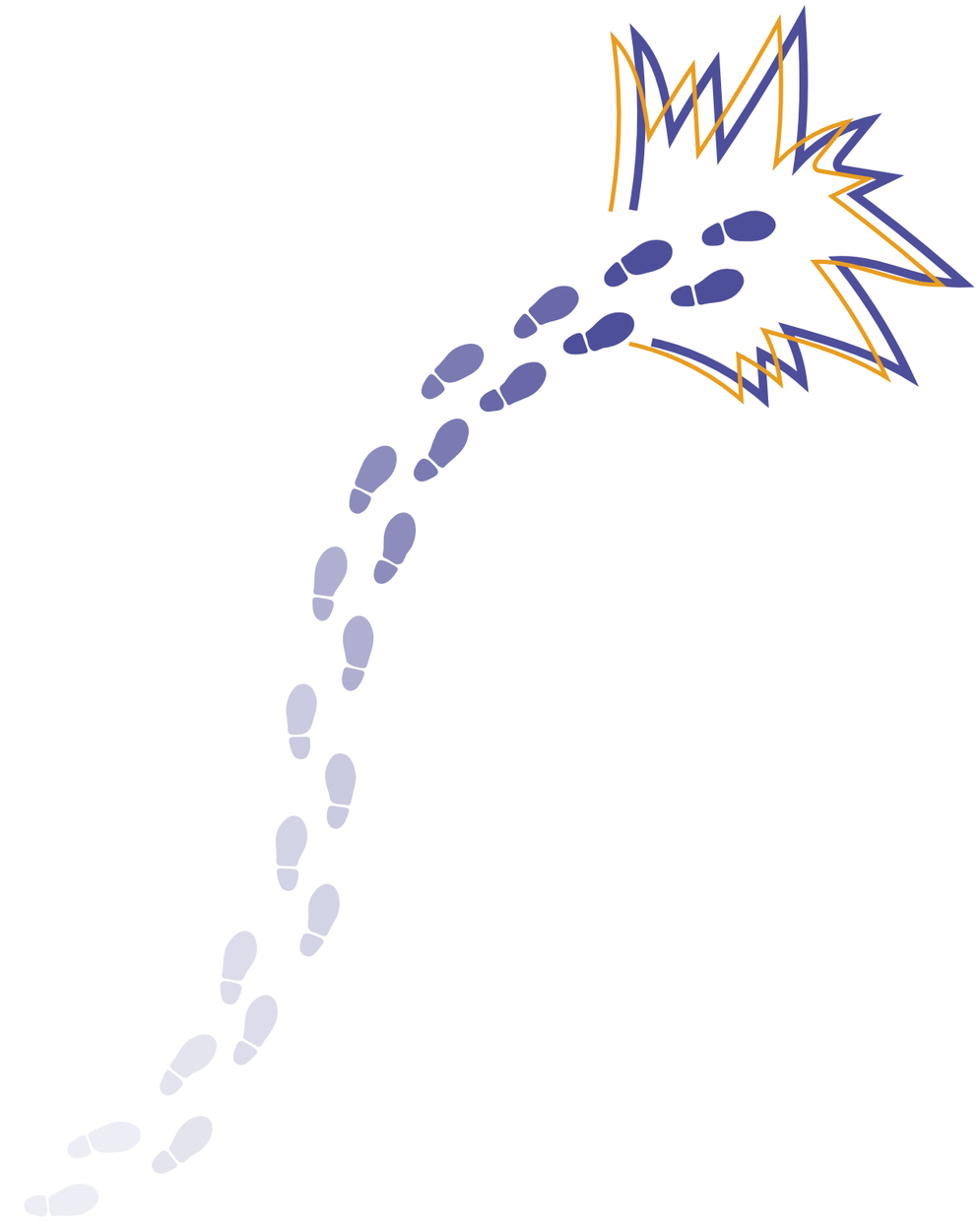


Figure 5.46
Approaching footsteps

5.5 SILENCE LANGUAGE

Observation and interviews were used to explore the subtleties of how silence is used in Delfshaven and by whom. The findings are then clustered into 3 main groups, (1) power dynamics, single-way monologues, inaction and distrust; as well as (2) silence for concentration.

POWER DYNAMICS, SINGLE-WAY MONOLOGUE, INACTION & DISTRUST

Silence was something to observe to help illuminate the relational dynamics between different people, as was discussed previously by Kohlie (2006) [Figure 5.47]. For example, in a conversation with two other people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds, the person from historically non-dominant castes continually responded after the person from historically dominant caste responded. Although this could in part be attributed to a result of personality differences, the former person was more forthcoming during one-on-one conversations than in a group setting. Therefore, tuning into who is silent and who is not, can help us better understand power and levels of comfort. Moreover, many people expressed how there is often a silence between the municipality or 'experts' who work in the area and inhabitants of Delfshaven. This takes the form of the former group not taking the time to listen to and instead make silent the needs of the latter group, often in a patronising tone leading to distrust and ineffective action. For instance, one participant explained how an organisation operating in the area, staffed by several individuals not from the area and from privileged backgrounds with the best of intentions, were out of touch with the needs of the community. Instead of asking their target audience, children and parents of Delfshaven, what their needs, wants and interests are, they arranged origami classes for kids who threw away the products they made as soon as the session was over. This speaks to how language acts as a vessel to communicate thoughts and beliefs, namely those of a reaffirmed hierarchy between 'experts' and inhabitants on behalf of (unknowing) practitioners and municipality employees (Shakib, 2011; Halliday, 2003 as cited in Evans, 2015).

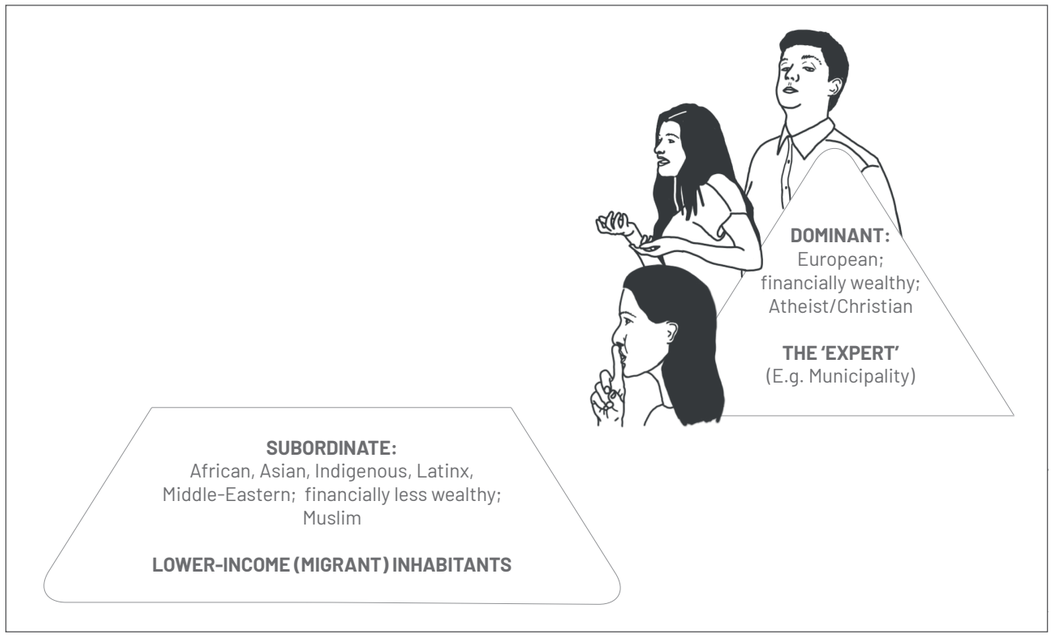


Figure 5.47
Power dynamics resulting from various hierarchies, including that of caste, class and expertise, that inform who speaks and who is silenced and patronised

SILENCE FOR CONCENTRATION

Again, referring back to the theoretical framework regarding silence boosting creativity, one participant spoke of how silence allows her to concentrate on tasks at hand [Figure 5.48]. She continued that silence and the non-present pressure of having to speak allows her to be absorbed in an activity like sewing, contributing to a feeling of lightness and peace. Similarly, this same concentration and attentiveness can be applied in other less peaceful contexts. For example, several former residents of Delfshaven described how they try to filter through the noise, distilling different sounds to identify possible ones of danger, for example like the fast pace of approaching footsteps.



Figure 5.48
Photo voice

NL: "Mijn stoel en mijn e-reader. Ik lees veel en kan me daar goed concentreren"
EN: "My chair and my e-reader. I read a lot and can concentrate well there"

Marleen, 2023

5.6 LANGUAGES OF THE HEART

"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart."
- Nelson Mandela

This final language type was conducted to understand what languages best resonate with various people in Delfshaven and engage them in a way that makes them feel valued, heard and seen. As this is highly personal, (informal) interviews shed light on 3 themes, (1) 'language' languages; (2) feelings; and (3) values informing attitudes and behaviours.

'LANGUAGE' LANGUAGE

'Language' languages of people's hearts included Papiamentu and Turkish as they connected participants to their family and their roots [Figure 5.49]. For example, one participant who had migrated from the Antilles to the Netherlands explained how Papiamentu is the language he spoke with his grandmother, an important figure in his life. Therefore the act of speaking the language attaches him to the histories of his island, Curacao. Likewise, a participant who was born and raised in the Netherlands, described how his 'vadertaal' (English translation: 'father language' as opposed to mother tongue), Turkish, connects him to the home and culture of his parents who had migrated in the 1980s.
Meanwhile, other participants mentioned how the language of their heart includes 'language' languages that they speak most often and have the best command of. For example, an employee and resident of Delfshaven of Moroccan descent described how Dutch is probably the language of her heart as she speaks it the most. Although what she feels is the language of her heart is shifting as she increasingly gets more comfortable with English. This brings about an interesting notion that the languages of people's hearts are not static but instead dynamic, in motion and changing whether that be per context or over time. Another participant who grew up in Rotterdam, in a Dutch-speaking household and school environment said how Dutch, specifically with a 'plat' (English translation: flat) Rotterdams accent is the language of his heart. He continued that when speaking Dutch there is no need for him to think or reflect about how to speak the language regarding grammar or vocabulary. He also mentioned how he feels confident when using Dutch idioms to express himself, which may not always translate in other languages. His favourite expression is 'daar komt de aap uit de mouw' (literal English translation: 'here comes the monkey out of the sleeve' meaning 'now it has been revealed').

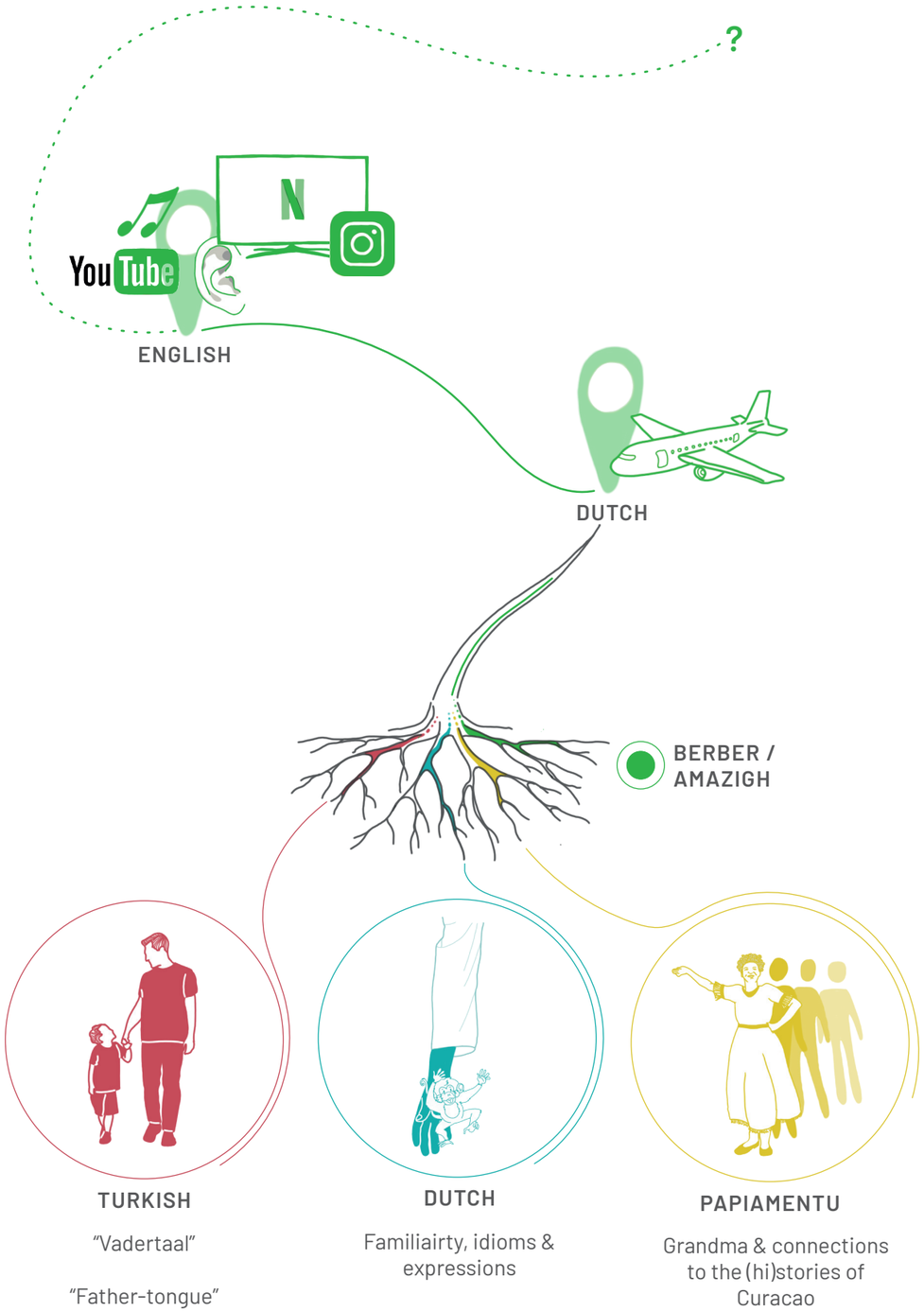


Figure 5.49
'Language' languages of the heart using Aminata Cairo's (2023) metaphor of 'Roots & Routes'

FEELING

Surprisingly and pleasantly for me, many participants described how feelings are the languages of their hearts [Figure 5.50]. For example, a young woman, a middle-aged man and two middle-aged women of Dutch, Surinamese and Antillean descent, communicated how love is the language of their heart. The two women elaborated that love permeates every fibre of their being, that love is something innate within them and is at the core of what it means to be human and therefore what they use to interact with those around them. Unfortunately though, they note how love does not feel like the dominant language of current urban development, as Rotterdam itself grows snobbier and less accepting or open to other people. Contrarily, a young man of mixed Moroccan Dutch descent and former resident jokingly said pain was the language of his heart. Then he more seriously explained that it was not because he wants to inflict pain but because he has experienced much heartache during his life and that it occupies considerable space in his heart.

VALUES INFORMING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

Another cluster of languages of the heart include that of values, which then subsequently inform attitudes and behaviours [Figure 5.50]. Many values revolve around those of being in community with each other. For example, one participant, a resident of Moroccan descent, described how humanity and caring are the languages of her heart which are symbolised by a warm embrace . In both her work and personal life she tries to embody caring in everything she does by being generous with her time and effort. For example, her mother needed new running shoes but could not get them herself so the participant went to get them for her. Equally, a barber expressed how the language of his heart is 'making people happy' which he is able to do on a daily basis through his work and art. Another participant explained how languages of curiosity, whether they be demonstrating care or asking questions, resonate with her on the deepest level as she feels seen, heard and appreciated.



Figure 5.50
Collage of feelings and values of the heart with contributions from participants including Karima & Gaaf, 2023

5.7 REFLECTIVE CONCLUSIONS

The following section details principle findings and implications of the research, in the form of reflective conclusions, as they relate to research question one, 'What languages (verbal, written, visual, emotive/body and silence) can be used to best engage with stakeholders with different intersections of identity?'. Unconventional to most conclusions, some of the findings are further substantiated with experiences, studies and literature to situate the findings within a broader field. The reflective conclusions have been organised into 5 central themes: (1) familiarity; (2) remixing; (3) differentiation; (4) give and take; and (5) challenging status quos and historical hierarchies. The last section details implications for spatial design in particular.

THEME: **FAMILIARITY**

Building onto the themes of care and curiosity that were introduced in Layer 4, languages of familiarity add another dimension. For example, languages of familiarity were expressed in spoken and written languages by way of adjectives, similes, metaphors and music that speak to the certain vernaculars used by different groups while also creating 'the vibe', such as in the Hair Manifesto or music in barber shops. The same applies to visual languages where different spaces showcase decorations and products, such as food, that are often used on a daily basis. Effects of this familiarity in spoken, written and visual languages include communicating an understanding and interest in inviting certain communities to feel seen and recognised.

When exploring the theme of familiarity within a broader context, 'trading zones' and boundary objects come to mind. The concept of 'trading zones' with boundary objects was developed by Peter Galison (Balducci & Mäntysalo, 2013). Galison observed how innovation and change occur when exchanges between actors with different perspectives and ideas take place, which is enabled by intermediary languages that create understanding and opportunities for exchange. In the context of this research, a plethora of boundary objects such as familiar products, music, or languages that resonate with different people and that are present in space, work as nodes of convergence. For instance, they can be used to connect with diverse groups to both make them feel seen while also creating opportunities to communicate and create collaboratively. In regards to implications for co-creation explicitly, languages of familiarity are important throughout the entire process. However, they could be particularly pertinent in the initial stages of first connecting and engaging with different people, and in engaging them in certain spaces to ensure that they feel recognised. Furthermore, on behalf of the urbanist, designer, student, planner and other roles, this requires a curiosity to learn about the interests of those we want to engage so that we are able to deeply communicate.

THEME: **REMIXING**

Again expanding on the theme of curiosity, remixing and fusing different languages can be especially relevant for engaging with second and subsequent generations of migrants who grow/grew up in multicultural environments. Remixed and evolving spoken, written and visual languages also help to identify and capture nuance. For

instance, terms like 'ciyaal suuq' used to describe popular hangout spots for young people presents a positive connotation to describe spaces that are often considered infamous with certain people and behaviours. Throughout the co-creation process, this requires the practitioner to keep abreast of how language evolves and changes, especially to engage with (multi-generation migrant) youth.

THEME: **DIFFERENTIATION**

Differentiation is often spoken about in education and business circles, where it is acknowledged that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach does not equate to creating effective learning environments nor developing the most profitable or successful business strategies (Wilson, Krechevsky & Gonzalez, 2020; MacMillan & McGrath, 1997). For example, in classroom settings, varying products to help express a student's learning may be differentiated while the facilitators themselves may have to differentiate their approach to best meet their students' needs (Reis & Renzulli, 2018). Equally, the language layer highlighted the need and importance of differentiation in regards to co-creation in the following sections:

Multilingualism versus using one language
Similarly, to the previously aforementioned themes, differentiation is underpinned by curiosity and care while also greatly influencing how languages of familiarity and remixing can be used, as one size does not fit all. This includes differentiating the language used to engage with different people. For example, multilingual communication in both the spoken and written form can be effective in involving diverse groups, especially in regards to communicating with a variety of first-generation migrants. In such cases, accessible and clear advertisements (flyers and so forth) and information provided prior to co-creative gatherings as well as during these gatherings can be shared in multiple languages such as Dutch, Turkish, Arabic, Cape Verdean Creole, Polish and many others, depending on the engaged groups. Visual cues in combination with written and/or spoken language can also aid in this. Both actions help mitigate feelings of exclusion and ensure that people feel included and not stigmatised. Differentiation can also extend in regards to writing in multiple languages or just one. For instance, when trying to be inclusive and far-reaching in who is engaged, multilingual spoken and written communication is recommended. If solely one community is to be engaged, monolingual communication may be more appropriate.

Languages of solidarity and pronouns:
When engaging with older audiences, formal pronouns such as 'u' work to communicate trust. Meanwhile, using 'we', 'our' and so forth work to communicate unity and a subsequent breaking down of 'them versus us' sentiment. Nevertheless, although this unity and this solidarity of 'we' is communicated in speech and text, this also needs to be translated into action.

Sitting and eating
Another point of differentiation concerns how people occupy space as well as other ways of eating. For example, depending on the engaged group as well as the co-creative sessions, people may want to sit on the floor or beanbag if the mood is more relaxed or they may want to sit on chairs if they have difficulty sitting on the floor. Similarly, hospitality regarding sharing food and drinks in Delfshaven is common. Therefore, when co-creating with participants in physical space, it would be beneficial to ensure that there are foods that people can and want to eat, including those to be eaten with hands (and ensure thst service amenities like sinks are present).

Asking about the language of people's hearts
Asking about the language of people's hearts at the beginning of co-creation can guide in supporting people engaged in co-creation to feel seen, while simultaneously building trust and aiding in people expressing themselves in languages that most resonate with them. In BoTu this included embodying love, humanity, and curiosity, which were originally and later further cemented as languages to communicate with people. Languages of the heart also encompassed

Turkish, Dutch or Papiamentu connecting participants with their histories. For example, one participant spoke about how Turkish was the language of their heart. Therefore, when communicating certain ideas, he expressed them in Turkish first to then reflect on how this translated to our mutual language, Dutch. During co-creative workshops or other forms of meetings, it can be helpful to work in differentiated hybrid language settings so that participants are able to think fully in their preferred language before rushing to translate their thoughts.

THEME: **GIVE & TAKE + HOSPITALITY**

Hospitality in terms of food and drink
Hospitality in terms of offering food and drink was common in Delfshaven, and evoked a sense of being welcomed into the space. Thus, when engaging with participants in co-creative meetings (in whatever form this may be) having food and drinks that meet the dietary needs of the participants could contribute to them feeling more comfortable and thus willing to engage. For instance, this may require there is 'beefless' or halal food to be shared, depending on the participant group.

Greetings of respect
Greeting participants or those we encounter, verbally and/or through hand gestures can help denote respect, build trust and show acknowledgement of 'I see you'. Continuing to greet participants and those we encounter after a co-creative process can also counteract 'the extractive logistics' of planning and design. For instance, as we communicate a desire to recognise people even after a project is concluded, we also share a want to realise our collective humanity by simply greeting each other.

Embedding and giving back to the community (during & after)
Embedding oneself into the area can also be a way of giving back to the community. For instance, throughout the thesis, I tried to embed myself in the community, to make myself visible and give back even in small ways. Sometimes this involved having lunch at independent cafes and recommending said eateries to eager tourists. Sometimes this involved getting my groceries from the local toko and having conversations with employees and customers. Sometimes this involved actively listening to people as they shared their stories and other times it involved weekly sewing lessons in the area. I felt and still feel humbled and honoured to be entrusted with the many stories, conversations, vulnerability, strength, and generosity. Moreover, embedding into the area can remove distance from the various groups involved, where it may be beneficial for urban planners and designers to carry out part of their work in the neighbourhoods they're working in and with.

Asking people what they would like
Through this research and other experiences, it has become a necessity to ask people about what they would like. Many times throughout the research I asked myself how ideas and aims would be beneficial for the community, as I sometimes doubted their value for Bospolder-Tussendijken. I asked members of the community and listened intently to see if some ideas would indeed be useful and ensure a give and take process. Although this thesis' aims were not collectively developed with the various communities in BoTu, in future, it would be beneficial to do so prior to establishing a project's objectives. Likewise, asking people what they would like during the project can support in countering and changing the patronising and superior attitudes of the municipality, planners and designers, as several participants described.

Elaborating on this last point, asking people what they want as opposed to assuming, can prevent the White Saviour Industrial Complex (WSIC) from rearing its harmful head. Teju Cole (2012) describes WSIC as a term to refer to people from the West, who with their good intentions, go to 'help' (this word can be very problematic!) people in Africa, Asia and South America who are deemed less fortunate. Their intentions, however, often cause more damage than

good. This is in part due to a lack of examination into the complex workings and systems of power and history, and a lack of evaluation as to our positions within said systems. As a result, people who are meant to be the recipients of supposed 'help' are not consulted enough about their wants or needs, nor is their autonomy to act fully recognized. The WSIC is not necessarily exclusive to white people, as it is a mindset and behaviour that can be adopted by many. Although the term is commonly used in describing interplays between people in the so-called Global South and North, manifestations of the WSIC, especially in contexts with long histories of coloniality, can manifest in Western Europe - for example, a common experience of various participants feeling patronised by the municipality. Thus, regarding asking questions before the co-creative project fully commences, additional reflection is needed on behalf of the urbanist in terms of power and positionality.

THEME: **CHALLENGING (RIGID) STATUS QUOS & LIVING HISTORIES OF HIERARCHIES**

As James Baldwin expresses, history lives within us. It informs how we are conditioned today as our behaviours are rooted in ideological, cultural and historical contexts (Rousseau & Fried, 2001 as cited in Jung et al., 2021). The living legacies of history can manifest in how knowledge is produced, our interactions with others and the power dynamics that underpin these interactions, where embedded hierarchies of caste, gender, class and so forth come to life consciously or subconsciously. From this layer, (rigid) status quos and historical hierarchies can be challenged through the following points:

Faultless speaking and writing
Faultless language skills in terms of writing and/or speaking need not be a prerequisite to participation at the beginning or during co-creative processes. This would prevent individuals and groups whose Dutch is conversational and fluent, though perhaps not consistently faultless in terms of grammar or vocabulary, from feeling stigmatised and unable to progress.

Power & silence
In particular group interviews (or better yet fluid conversations!) between people of different ethnicities and genders, those that responded to questions first were oftentimes a part of historically dominant groups. This example as well as other expressions of living histories of hierarchy are important to note as they contribute to whose voice is heard and whose voice is left unheard; what knowledge, experiences and stories are shared and which ones remain unshared. These age-old ways of being conditioned are intricately interwoven into the very fabric of our society, adopting different expressions over time and space, often thwarting efforts to realise a more equitable and inclusive world (Hulko, 2009; Wilkerson, 2020). Although much can be discerned from what is explicitly said or referenced, we can also infer meaning from absence, reading the silence of the air. For example, from what was not said and through body language, we can gauge how cognizant people are of their environment, and the power/relational dynamics present in interactions - who dominates the conversation and who is quiet, and why this may be. Hence, to nurture a healthier reality, urbanists can be attentive to who is silent during co-creative processes and subsequently develop strategies to ensure engagement in co-creation.

SPATIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR URBAN PLANNING & DESIGN

THEME: **HARNESSING KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCES & SKILLS**

Political theorist, academic and life peer Bhikhu Parekh (2000 as cited in Cripps, 2004) argues that no one culture possesses all that is valuable to human life nor can one culture nurture the broadest range of human capacities. A key to fulfilling human potential though, may lie in multicultural societies. A way of realising this potential is being curious, being curious enough about knowledge and experiences that are often and have historically been 'othered', dismissed and/or made invisible (Nenquimo, 2020). Being curious pushes the bounds of our imaginations, prompting us reflection of our own limitations, inspires us to search for new knowledge and experiences to disrupt harmful cycles, and equips us with the tools to remould and create more just realities (Parekh, 2000 as cited in Cripps, 2004; Kashdan et al., 2013). Insights from participants in Delfshaven do just that, where we can collectively harness and leverage the knowledge, experiences and skills of a diversity of communities to evolve our cities and create new identities within. As one participant described in terms of creation and innovation, "people don't stop".

THEME (zoomed-in): **HOSPITALITY & REMIXING THE STREETSCAPE**

There were several examples where shops, food or retail establishments extend into the street altering its character, and adding a certain dynamic layer. For example, the pavement was appropriated by tables, racks displaying products for sale, and seating options. This poses the question, 'How can urban designers invite customisation?'. Richard Sennet (2012) reiterates the principles of porosity where urban space becomes more fluid as opposed to self-contained by, for instance, creating more entrances in buildings or expanding open-air markets into streets. Another opportunity for porosity may present itself in wide pavements that allow for diverse ways of using the street. Of course, there are other considerations, such as ensuring that the pavement width has the capacity to accommodate additional functions without hindering people's ability to actually manoeuvre or walk (Gehl, 2011).

Furthermore, there are traditional seating options that people use in urban space such as benches. In Delfshaven there are also multi-functional items, like thickly rimmed, low planters and boundaries around metros, that people use to sit on, which indicates how these elements foster more hospitality in space. This inspires the question, 'How can street furniture be made multifunctional to invite user appropriation?'. Jan Gehl (2011) introduces the concept of 'sitting landscapes' where multipurpose elements such as large stairways, monuments, and fountains with broad terraced bases, allow for increased diversity in how a city's spaces are used and henceforth become more compelling and intriguing environments. This multifunctionality of space can perhaps extend to supporting the hobbies and interests of inhabitants. For instance, music is valued for a variety of reasons in Delfshaven - setting the mood, and presenting a creative outlet. Therefore, could the materiality of space encourage people to make music and create unexpected stages to perform?

LAYER 6: MEANINGS OF SAFETY, HOME & COMMUNITY

Findings in this layer, namely derived from interviews and conversation, respond to research question 2, 'where and how can 'unconventional' bodies of knowledge and experiences be accessed and valued?'. It specifically explores and identifies what is valued as well as the 'how' and 'why' in terms of safety, community and home for a plethora of people in Delfshaven. Building on previous layers [1 through 3], the aim of this is to recognise and appreciate what elements are needed to create spaces in which inhabitants feel comfortable to participate in co-creative urban development.

From the findings there appears to be an intersectional relationship between safety, community and home. Nonetheless, safety acts as the bedrock for subsequent feelings of home and/or community. The following sections elaborate on the denotations of safety, home and community separately while still mentioning when there is overlap between the three. The sections present the different interpretations in regards to how they mirror or challenge each other yet work together to create an interconnected web of existing perspectives. Equally, conclusions from this section build onto those from Layer 5: Languages of Delfshaven.

6.1 MEANINGS OF SAFETY

Perspectives concerning safety result from replies to 'what does home mean to you?' as well as organic conversations where the subject was brought up. Central themes concern (1) freedom and feeling safe on the street; (2) anonymity and Night versus Day; (3) women, girls and safety; (4) hyper alertness; (5) what it means to be seen, and finally an exploration into the unexpected concept of trust.

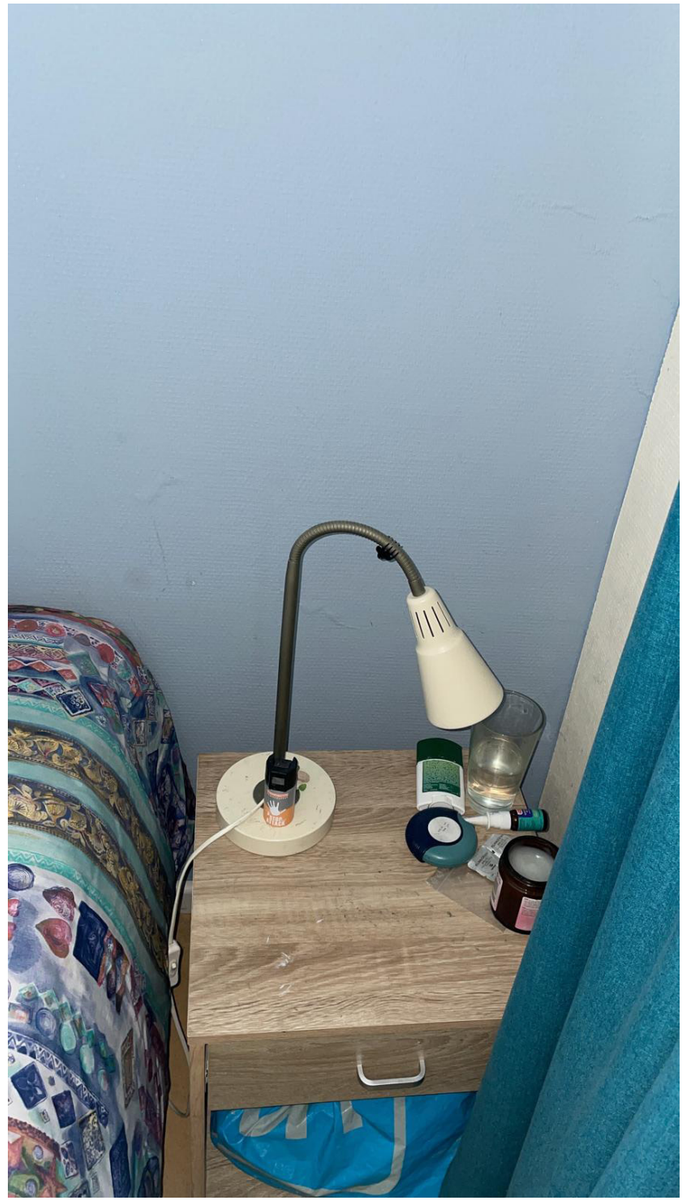
FREEDOM & FEELING SAFE ON THE STREET

For many participants safety involved feeling secure in different public spaces whether that be the street, the metro or shops. For example, a young Delfshaven business owner expressed how feeling safe is when she does not come across someone on the street who could threaten her well-being. Where there is no need for her to think 'deze persoon hoef ik niet eens aan te spreken' (English translation: 'I don't need to address this person'). Similarly, another middle-aged resident described how she feels safe when there is no need to worry about what may happen on the street. This is exemplified by a Moroccan woman who had recently immigrated to the Netherlands described how her freedom and safety are intertwined as she 'can go at 3am!' without much fear. Moreover, a middle-aged resident explained how her perception of safety places a heavy emphasis on the street as this translates to her levels of safety at home. The same middle-aged participant then continued that safety involves everyone feeling safe on the street, during the day as well as at night [Figure 6.1] (Dutch quote: 'dat iedereen gewoon veilig is op straat, overdag zowel s'avonds'). The young business owner stated how she generally feels safe in Delfshaven, which a former resident explained, was nicknamed the dangerous 'Duivelshaven' (English translation: 'Devil's Port)' when he was growing up around a decade ago.

Figure 6.1
Photo voice

NL: "Bij het lampje staat een busje pepperspray. Je weet maar nooit!"
EN: "A bottle of pepper spray next to the lamp. You never know!"

Marleen, 2023



ANONYMITY & NIGHT VERSUS DAY

Building onto what was expressed about varying levels of safety during the day versus night, many respondents explained how they feel safer during the day. For instance, a student who lives in Delfshaven explained that he was mugged after dark. This resulted in him being more aware at night, not using head or earphones or wearing a hood so that he can hear and see what is happening around him. Furthermore, and in particular many women across various ages, ethnic backgrounds and with different relationships with the area highlighted how they often feel unsafe at night [Figure 6.2]. As one participant explains,

"During the day you feel a bit more free. At night or in the evening, in the dark, it becomes a different story because then you don't feel as free and safe as during the day. Because during the day you have control of the people around you but at night that's not really the case. You're pretty much anonymous and that is creepy, can be creepy."





Figure 6.2
Overview of surroundings at night & during the day that contribute to increased or lower levels of safety

During our conversation, the participant explained how control is likened to having a visible overview of what is happening around them. However, she mentions how the built environment even during the day can impede these levels of overview and instead increase anonymity. For example, when asked about what elements of the built environment she associates with safety, the participant, who is a former Delfshaven resident, recounts the environment of her childhood. She explains how her environment was filled with low-rise buildings, with some homes being just 1 to 2 storeys high with lots more freedom around her [Figure 6.3]. Partly influenced by her youth, she now associates light as well as low-rise buildings with safety as she is able to have an overview of what is happening around her. Meanwhile, high-rise buildings,

"[like those by Marconiplein, are] unsafe because all kinds of things can happen from above and you can be ogled from all sides and wouldn't even know it. And yes it gives me a feeling of insecurity...The height and not knowing what's happening within, well you don't know that in low-rise buildings either, but in high-rise buildings it becomes even more anonymous. And the higher, the more vulnerable you are, I think."

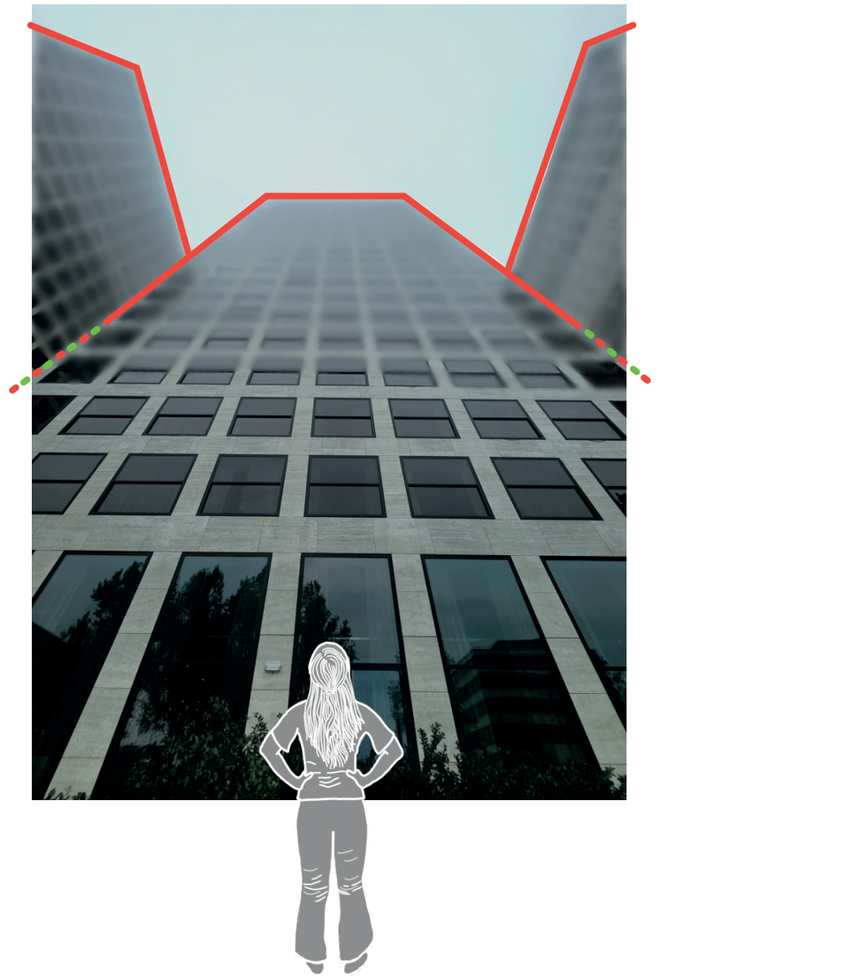


Figure 6.3
Comparison of high and low-rise buildings in contributing to feelings of overview and anonymity

WOMEN, GIRLS & SAFETY

Harking back and looking deeper into the lack of safety for women and girls, a women in her 50s explains how women and girls are often objectified while many men and boys are socialised to treat women *"like hunted game, unfortunately"*. One participant even expressed how her having learnt karate as a child helped increase her sense of self-confidence to defend herself and walk differently on the street. Despite this though, she recalls being harassed while shopping, harassment, she adds, being an experience shared by many women and girls. She elaborates using a frightening story of how she,

"was even followed a few times that [she] had to call the police at some point, 'I'm shopping here and this man has been following me for I don't know how long and I don't know what to do anymore. Help me'."

These feelings of a lack of safety for women and girls have been corroborated in a variety of studies, especially at night. In one study conducted in the Netherlands, (NPO, 2021), with participants aged between 16 to 34, 11% of men felt unsafe in the evening while 23% felt safe at night in their neighbourhoods. Contrastingly, 49% of women felt unsafe during the evening and 66% felt unsafe at night. Many (young) women who participated in the study explained how have procedures to ensure their safety when alone, outside at night: 99% explained how they explained texts notifying family and/or friends of their whereabouts; 91% cycle home faster; 74% alter their routes; and 52% hold their keys between their fingers

HYPER ALERTNESS

The previous section spotlighted the lack of safety for women and girls. Nonetheless, being very observant and hyper alert about the surroundings is also shared by many of the young men who participated in the project. For example, a man in his 20s and former resident explained how he would be cognizant of the speed, force and pressure of footsteps behind to ensure that no one was running up on him. Similarly, he says how as a teenager he could walk past someone drinking a soda on the street in the morning and remember the soda later on in the afternoon [Figure 5.46]. Essentially, he was aware of the different elements of his environment - whether they be large or small objects or people in order to safeguard his security.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SEEN

While talking to a couple of employees in Delfshaven of Surinamese, and of Moroccan Dutch descent, they highlighted how there is a present 'them versus us' sentiment in Rotterdam as a whole. For example, a participant of Moroccan Dutch descent in his 20s explained how when travelling to less ethnically and racially diverse areas of the city, he was perceived as a threat [Figure 6.4]. He elaborated that it was his North African and Arab physical features that residents of said areas associated with danger. The origins of these beliefs and stereotypes, as Amnesty International (2022) explains, can be traced back to historic 'orientalist' beliefs that frame Muslims as belligerent towards the 'West'. This sentiment was reignited by the attacks on 11 September 2001 and the following 'war on terror'. Despite the Islamic world spanning vast geographies and equally diverse ethics groups, there has been a racialisation and homogenisation of 'Muslim appearances'. This group then includes people from (or descended from) the MENA (Middle-East and North Africa) region, Turkey and Pakistan as well as other groups adorning Islamic dress or similar features. As a result of harmful stereotyping upheld by mainstream media, politics and academia, people labelled as Muslim are often subject to prejudice and typecasting as menacing 'terrorists'. In turn, the experience resulted in him feeling stigmatised and unsafe due to his appearance. Although the hostile stares that followed him believed they saw him, the believed threat that his outer supposedly presented, their vision was blinded by a discriminatory prison of racial and cultural stereotypes and prejudice. Ultimately this prison, or bias, caused them to fail in actually seeing him as a person beyond what he looks like and their associations with his appearance.

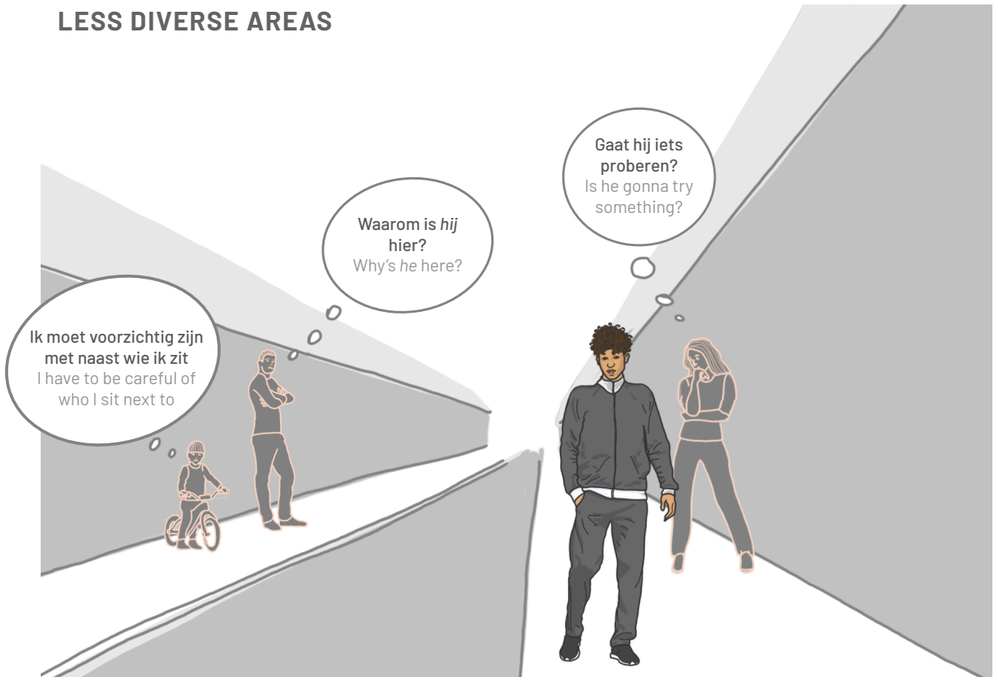


Figure 6.4
A translation of a Moroccan Dutch participant's feelings walking in largely white neighbourhoods versus more multi-cultural and muli-ethnic ones

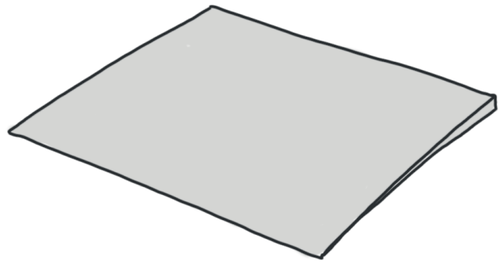
6.2 MEANINGS OF TRUST

Through the various conversations that took place in Delfshaven, it became apparent that for many, safety was built on a foundation of trust. Hence, there is an additional section exploring what trust means in Bospolder-Tussendijken [Figure 6.5].

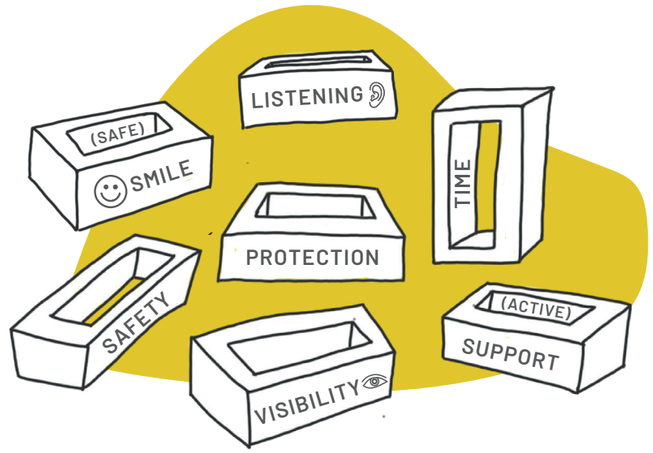
A middle-aged woman explained that to feel safe she needs to feel trust and familiarity. This for her is represented in a smile, whether that be on someone else's face or in her mind, a smile signifies peace of mind, safety and protection. How is this foundation of trust built, however? For many, trust is initially freely given unless actions prove otherwise. For example, one resident explained how his father said that you have to trust people, and that putting up a wall is not necessary. Other women, a mixture of former residents, business owners and hobbyists said that they hold a belief that most people who walk by are to be trusted on a basic level. Subsequent actions then determine whether the relationship can be deepened or whether trust becomes fractured.

Speaking of broken trust, there is a heavy distrust of institutions such as the municipality of Rotterdam. This is largely the result of many (former) residents, business owners and employees explaining how the municipality can be patronising towards the community and neglectful, leading to many community members feeling unheard and misunderstood. Instead, social workers with substantial experience of working in the neighbourhood express how visibility, active support and listening are key ingredients to build trust.

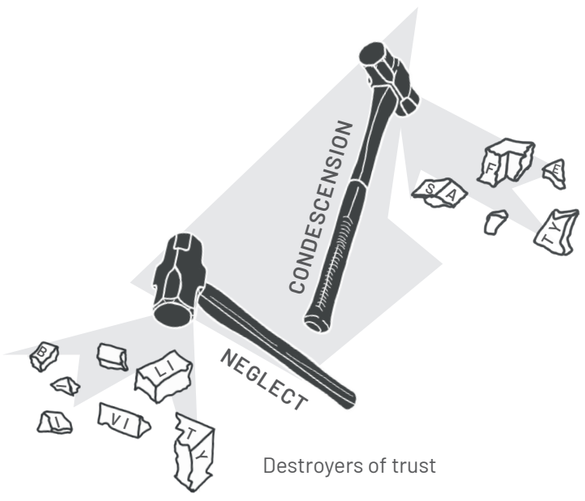
Regarding the relationship between trust and visibility, research conducted by the Municipality of Rotterdam and the Universiteit voor Humanistiek (Susan Brand, 2023) provides further insight. When investigating ways to increase engagement from residents with low trust in the government and politics in general, they proposed 'loten' (English translation: 'raffles/lots'). In this process, members of various communities, who have demonstrated high involvement, were selected to act as representatives for their respective neighbourhoods. From the study, they noted higher levels of trust towards local governmental bodies like wijkmanagers (English translation: 'neighbourhood managers') and their teams of social workers as they were present, visible and accessible. The same cannot be said at the municipal or national level where trust in government was unchanged and remained low. Hence, visibility is salient for developing trust.



Foundational basis of trust



Building blocks for trust



Destroyers of trust

Figure 6.5
The freely given foundation of trust, trust's building blocks and its destroyers

6.3 MEANINGS OF HOME

Findings for this section were based on responses to the question, 'what does home mean for you?' (in addition to unstructured conversation) as they relate to umbrella themes of (1) home, a feeling not necessarily a single place; (2) familiarity and/or nostalgia through the sense; (3) seeing your reflection around you; and (4) having a connection with your environment and the people around you.

HOME, A FEELING NOT NECESSARILY A SINGLE PLACE

Home is complex, multilayered, and associated with a physical place, which for some in Delfshaven it was. From conversations though, 'home' became a transcendent feeling that was sometimes difficult to describe [Figure 6.6]. For example, one participant asked what home meant for me so that he could base his response on that. Another participant who had moved from Curacao to the Netherlands expressed how home *"is a feeling. I can't explain it. I feel at ease, I feel proud"*. Many others echoed how home is a feeling. A middle-aged woman who migrated to the Netherlands for love said that home is a feeling representative of security, safety, and is not necessarily a physical place. Similarly, a middle-aged employee of Surinamese descent described how home is safety, balance and peace. A former resident explained how the dirt, pollution and often overflowing rubbish bins so common in cities are not conducive elements for building a calm home. Other elements are conducive to building these balanced homely oases. For example, one participant seeks an environment where she has space to grow her plants as well as tranquillity from the hustle and bustle of city life. Meanwhile, a young resident from another part of Rotterdam who moved to the neighbourhood once he started studying stated that home *"is where I feel comfortable"*.

For many women of varying ages and ethnic backgrounds, comfort at home is deeply entwined with a sense of freedom. A Dutch woman in her 20s described how home is a place of 'loslaten' (English translation: letting loose/go) where there is no need for her to put on a show or a facade and be constantly preoccupied with how she is perceived, a place where being anonymous is ok [Figure 6.7]. Likewise, a Dutch business owner described how home is a place that inspires relaxation, comfort and a break from performing. These can be likened to 'code switching', which involves "adjusting one's style of speech, appearance, behaviour, and expression in ways that will optimise the comfort of others in exchange for fair treatment, quality service, and employment opportunities" (McCluney et al., 2019, webpage). Often people from traditionally subordinate castes or those in lower rungs of social hierarchies, such as people of colour and women, code switch subconsciously. Hence, this freedom from performance can be a breath of fresh air.

Furthermore, two middle-aged women reflected on the meaning of home by journeying through memories of their childhoods, which were tightly linked to a sense of freedom. For example, during the day their home extended to the street and it was only when street lights turned on that they would go to their house for dinner. A woman who had recently moved to Rotterdam from Morocco also explained how she has been able to feel at home in a foreign country as she feels free.



Home is not necessarily a physical space

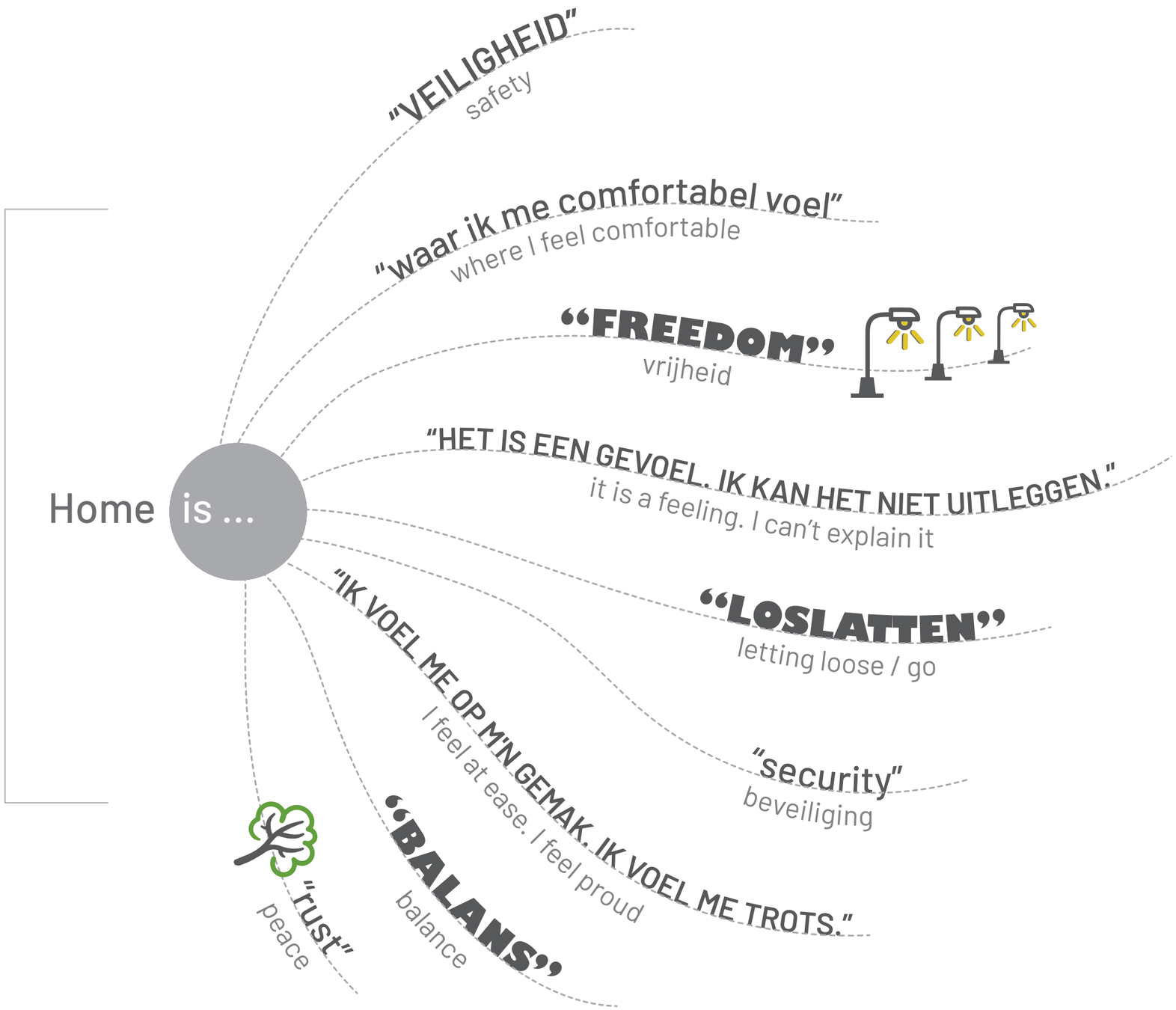


Figure 6.6
Feelings that represent home



Figure 6.7
'Loslaten'
Hester van der Stoep,
2023

NL: "Eigenlijk, zie je hier, het soort van proces, zoals we al eerder had gezegd over dat thuis zijn is soort van loslatten. Dat je eigenlijk, niet negatief bedoeld, maar een beetje dat strikte, dat beklemender, dat je dat loslaat wanneer je in je eigen situatie bent. "

EN: "'Actually, what you see here is the kind of process, as we said before, about being at home and thatbeing a kind of letting go. That you actually, [and I] don't mean it negatively, but you let that strictness, that opression go when you are in your own situation."

FAMILIARITY AND/OR NOSTALGIA THROUGH THE SENSES

For others, home entailed familiarity and/or nostalgia of past environments in the form of sights, smells and sounds [Figure 6.8]. For example, one participant who was born and raised in the Netherlands described how the nature of Suriname, where his family are from, symbolised home. Similarly, for a participant who worked in Delfshaven, the music and chatter of the Visserijplein market as well as the ringing of bells of nearby churches in the neighbourhood in which she resides, signifies home. For another participant, the smells of her father's tobacco, gel, the household's soap as well as the 'huisfluitje' (English translation: home whistle) her father used kindle memories of home, of her youth. Her father used the huisfluitje so much that even people from her neighbourhood would recognize the melodies and know that he was close by.

Other aromas such as that of spices were also indicative of home. Of ingredients that connect people from geographies spanning from South Asia, Africa, and South America to the Netherlands, of connections and ceremonies between family members and wider religious communities. For instance, a toko owner recounts how the smells of spices induce a homely feeling, where people even curiously comment and ask what is cooking inside his home. In another story, a Hindoestaans participant explains how massala evokes a multisensory plethora of memories,

> *"Just the smell alone is reminiscent of home. That smell alone reminds me of so many other memories I have with family but also with Suriname. So it's funny that a product releases something like that. Yes, something can loosen you up so that you completely go down a kind of memory lane. It actually makes me realise what meanings it has. Yes, I mean when I think of a massala, I go all the way back to the 'Offerfeest' (Feast of Sacrifice or Eid al-Adha), for example. Get what I mean? And that I saw my father with his brothers and father for the first time, slaughtering a sheep for example. Do you get me? A ritual is suddenly connected to it"*



Figure 6.8
Spice walls, massala, soap, whistle, market chatter & the ringing of bells that evoke nostalgia and familiarity of home

SEEING YOUR REFLECTION AROUND YOU

Another participant who is Moroccan and Dutch, highlighted how home for him is characterised by seeing your reflection around you. He goes on to describe how, as a former resident, he feels at home in the diverse, multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual neighbourhood that is Delfshaven, a place where difference is the norm yet where he can also see people who look like him [Figure 6.4]. He is accepted and seen for who he is - a curious thinker, considerate communicator, a human with thoughts, feelings, and so much more. This is in stark contrast to his experiences in more culturally, ethnically, and racially homogeneous areas of Rotterdam. In such settings he feels the antagonism and fear of people's stares that are so firmly rooted in bigoted and blanket stereotypes of Arab people as 'terrorists' and people to be approached with caution. This perception is corroborated by a white Dutch participant who grew up in such a Rotterdam neighbourhood, in school environments that were racially less diverse. He recounts how in primary school teachers would say ***"moet niet naast Marokkaanse jongens zitten...ze zijn gevaarlijk"*** (English translation: "don't sit next to Moroccan boys...they're dangerous").

Hence, home as one participant of Surinamese descent who works in Delfshaven but lives in Rotterdam Noord articulates ***"je voelt je thuis als je omgeving je ontvangt"*** (English translation: "you feel at home when your environment welcomes you") [Figure 6.9]. An initially humorous yet striking example he gave is that you feel at home when you can use and someone allows you to use their toilet without feeling awkward, especially when you really need to go. This can be in their house or in semi-public spaces like a shop or eatery. Your body too, feels comfortable enough to have a shit.

"Je voelt je thuis als je omgeving je ontvangt"
"You feel at home when your environment welcomes you"



Figure 6.9
Using a participant's analogy, a toilet attuned to the different needs of its users to welcome and feel at ease while using the space

HAVING A CONNECTION WITH YOUR ENVIRONMENT AND THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU

Home also involves having an attachment to an area. For some this involved going back to their country, their parents' or their grandparents' country of origin regularly [Figure 6.10]. For example, one woman who immigrated to the Netherlands in the 1990s following the onset of the Yugoslav Wars, goes back to Croatia annually to feel grounded and connected to her roots. Moreover, during the summer months several businesses, namely restaurants and cafes, temporarily close. Several people explained how they would be going back to Turkey, Morocco or other countries for July and August. This is partly to be closer to and connect with families who live in other geographies, which introduces another meaning of home in Delfshaven. Home denotes 'samen zijn' (English translation: being together) with family for a Turkish Dutch resident and business owner, whether they be in the Netherlands or abroad. Along the same lines, for a young Dutch resident the people around him make him feel at home. Equally and contrastingly, home is also a place where he can be alone [Figure 6.11].

A former resident spoke about how home denotes having an attachment to an area, which he does with Delfshaven. Nevertheless, another former resident of Antillean descent who has lived in and around Rotterdam her entire life, explained how although a significant part of her life is attached to the neighbourhood, as the city changes, the less she recognizes it [Figures 6.12 & 6.13]. She continues that people have become more snobby, unaccepting and open to other people. Both spoke about how for many students and young professionals moving to the area, a feeling of attachment is often absent. One resident student offered that he does not necessarily feel connected to the area and it is something that he could invest more time in. His major hesitation is that he thinks he will leave the area at some point in the future, presenting the notion of how the length of stay or residency in an area influences levels of investment to create feelings of home.

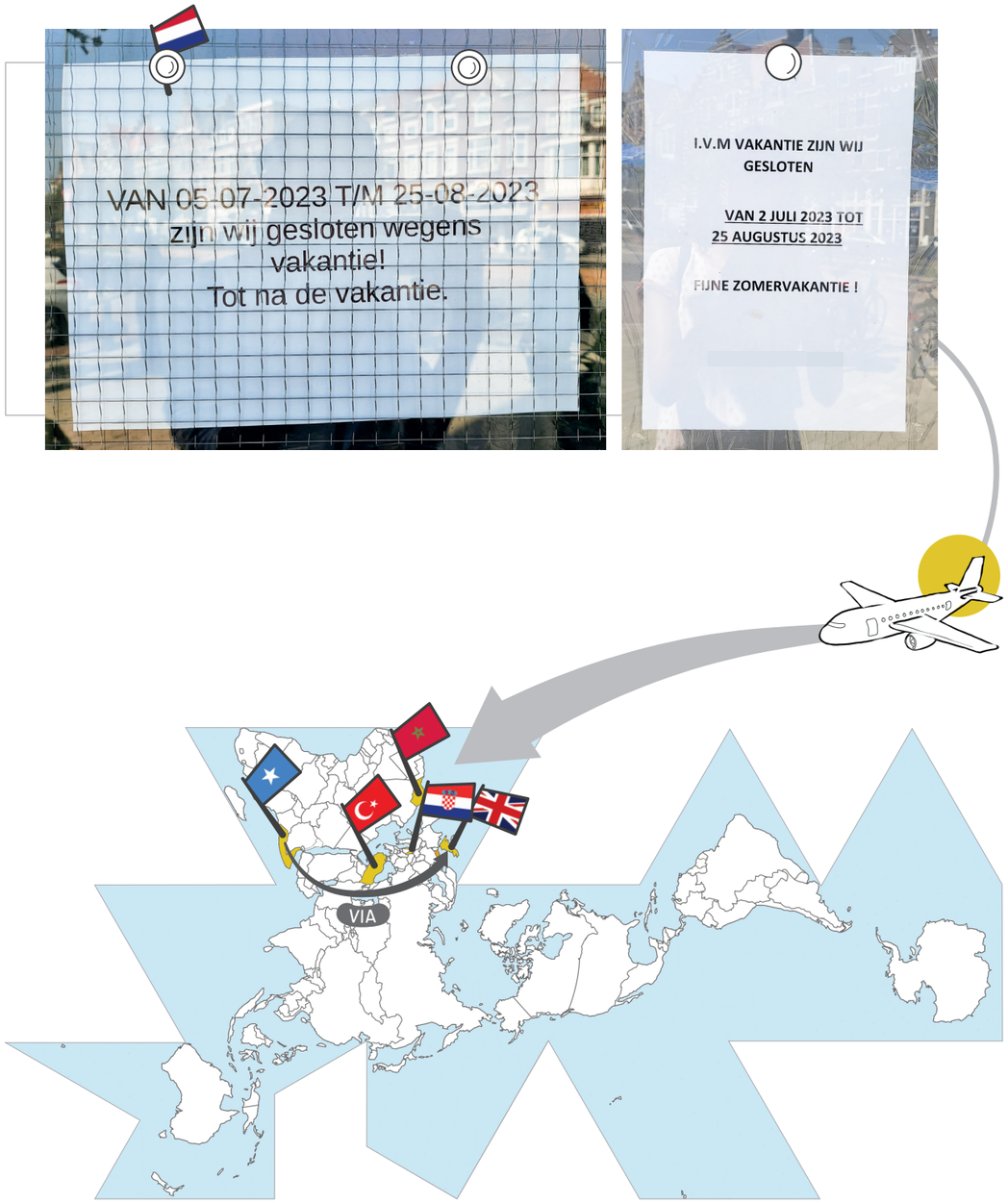


Figure 6.10
Photos of signs in BoTu cafe and restaurant windows notifying customers that they are closed for the summer as they travel to some of the locations highlighted in the Dymaxion map

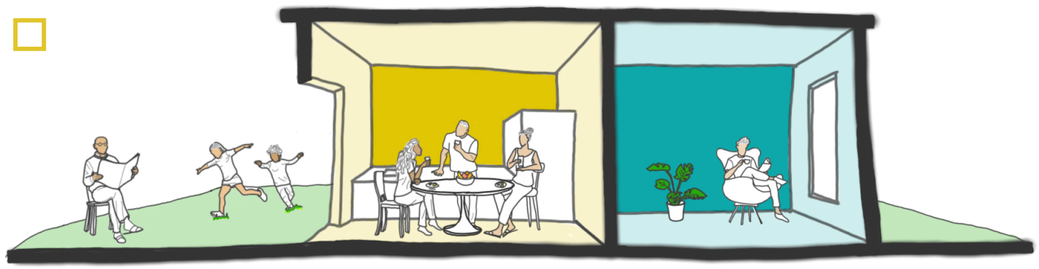


Figure 6.11
Being at home can include both spending time together with family and friends or alone in another space



Figure 6.12
Protest banners on the facade of a Rotterdam residential block exclaiming "Don't demolish us"

Figure 6.13
Cranes in the sky as Rotterdam's skyline builds upwards
Rijnmond & NOS, 2022



6.4 MEANINGS OF COMMUNITY

Findings in this section are based on responses to the question, 'what does community mean for you?'. Like safety and home that have preceded it, community is complex and multilayered and has been organised into further concepts: (1) service, generosity, hospitality and care; (2) rings of and levels to community; (3) greater sense of community in Delfshaven; (4) diminishing sense of community in Delfshaven; (5) living legacies of separation; and (6) community to disrupt cycles of trauma and poverty.

SERVICE, GENEROSITY, HOSPITALITY AND CARE

To begin, what are the characteristics of community? From several responses in Delfshaven, it became evident that community is grounded in service, generosity, hospitality and care. For example, on a busy Thursday market afternoon, an elderly woman was wheeling her trolley before it got stuck [Figure 6.14]. A market employee ran over to help her, first greeting her, then asking to help and finally rebalancing her trolley so that she could resume her journey. The significance of the simple act of greeting those around you, like the market employee did, cannot be underscored enough. For example, two middle-aged residents, one a former resident and both currently hobbyists in the area, described how when they were growing up in 1970s Rotterdam, acknowledging your neighbours or passersby was customary. The low bushes, fences and walls that separated front and/or back gardens allowed people to easily talk to their neighbours without physical obstacles [Figure 6.15]. Now, they explained how this occurs less frequently. One participant elaborates that this may partly be due to how being friendly as a woman can often be misconstrued to mean something else and potentially result in harassment. Nevertheless, both agreed that they would appreciate a 'hello', the support and just a general chat with their neighbours. One woman was delighted that every year in her building, she exchanges Christmas cards with her neighbours while during New Year's celebrations, all residents congregate in a central hall to personally wish each other a happy new year. Similarly, a resident recalled how when a friend was going through a financially challenging period, he sought out opportunities for him to work while also vouching for him to potential employers.



Figure 6.14
An elderly woman struggling with her shopping trolley before someone goes to help her

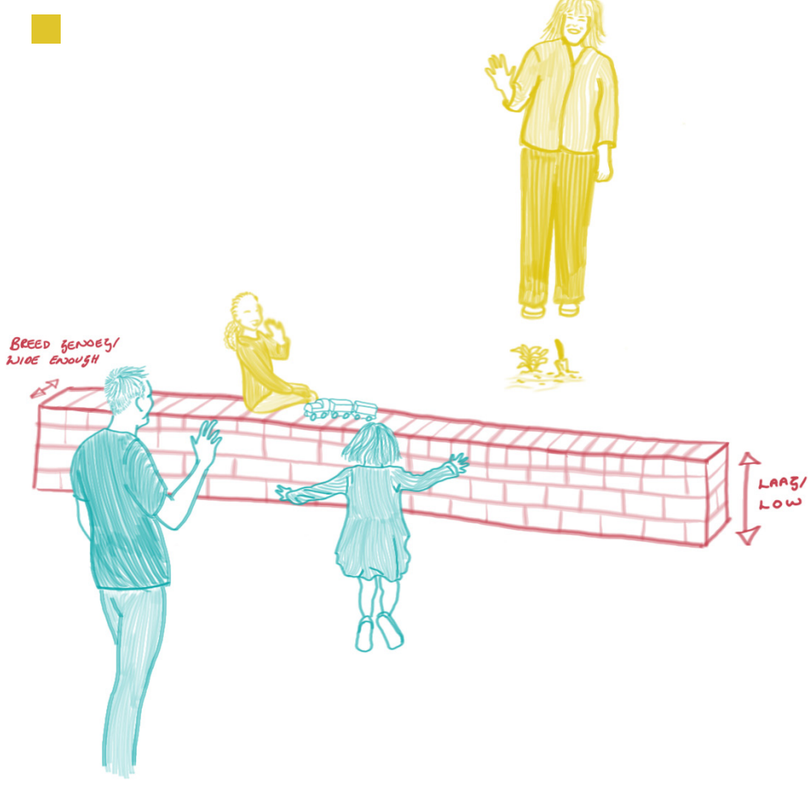


Figure 6.15
The low yet wide walls separating neighbours that allows for friendly interaction & privacy

RINGS OF AND LEVELS TO COMMUNITY

As one participant expressed, having people close is valuable, so in what form does community present itself? One participant spoke about how there are rings that indicate what varying levels of community and closeness can feel and look like [Figure 6.16]. For example, she described her immediate family (parents, spouse/partner, children and siblings) and close friends occupying the inner ring. This is then followed by friends in the middle and finally work colleagues in the outer ring. It is essential to note that this participant was middle-aged, her family has been in the Netherlands for generations, while she has lived her entire life in the country and worked in Delfshaven for several years now.

For someone with a different relationship to the Netherlands, who occupies certain levels may be drastically different. For instance, a woman who had recently immigrated to Rotterdam from Morocco had a different placement of people groups. She and her husband had moved together without any other family members, therefore he was her best friend, confidant and partner, presumably occupying the most intimate inner ring, similar to the first woman. However, where the two perceptions may vary is the breadth of the community network and the placing of colleagues. As the young woman was new to Rotterdam most of her social interaction occurred at her place of work where she spent several hours a day, multiple days a week. Hence, her colleagues become her friends and community in this foreign land, ***"when you have good people, so it's totally normal to have good vibes"***. Although not a work environment, a young resident explained that fellow students or in a more general sense, like-minded people formed the basis of his communities. Likewise, communities of like-minded people can range from similar interest groups, hobbies in sports or the arts, life stages and so much more. However, a high-level footballer with friends in the area explained that although he has invested a lot of time and effort into football, there is a hyper competitive culture that prevents deepening relations.

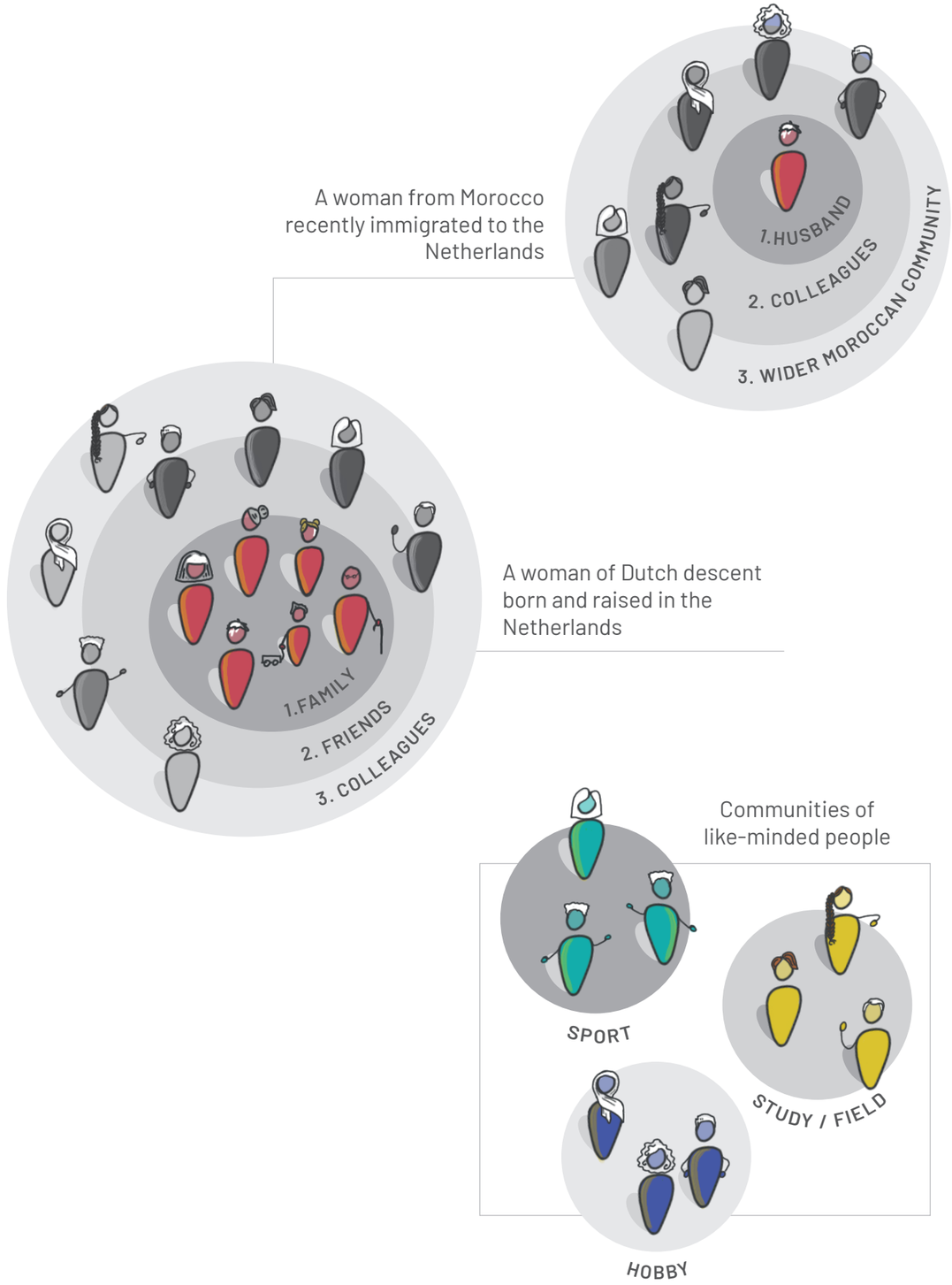


Figure 6.16
The varying rings of community for a diversity of participants

Additionally, the ring metaphor places the immediate family in the centre. However, as one participant, the young footballer explained that for him 'family' includes people who support you during the good and the bad, who 'have your back', where there is no harmful competition, 'just good vibes'. He continued that family is not an entity that is easy to describe but for him, it is not a term exclusive to those biologically related to him [Figure 6.17]. Further exploring the notion of 'family' one participant who immigrated to the Netherlands from Curacao as a child in the 1970s expresses that for many people with migrant backgrounds, families and communities may simultaneously exist in geographies close by and far away. For instance,

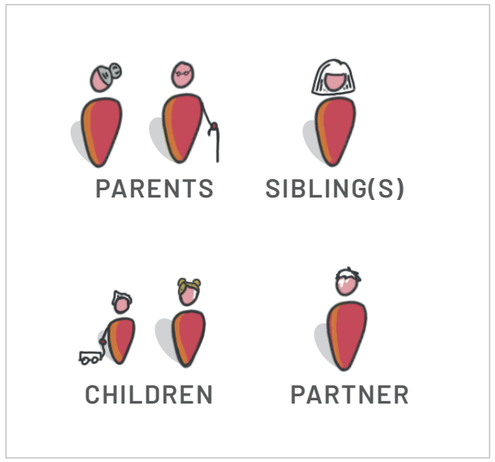
> *'When I grew up I had an aunt living with her husband and children. My mother comes from a family of 9 children, so the rest all lived in Curacao. So I didn't see them that much. But we spent a lot of time calling there or my parents called. It was a conversation of no more than 10 minutes because it was outrageously expensive to telephone overseas. So once in a while we telephoned with the family and then if we happened to be in the area we could also say a word and then we would run away quickly because then mama continued talking. My aunt who lived here, that is my mother's sister, and I saw her regularly because during all holidays they either came to us or we went to them.'*

She also explained the pivotal role of her adoptive grandmother growing up who she would visit weekly and overnight well into her young adulthood. Multigenerational communities consisting of grandparents, children, grandchildren and even aunts, uncles and/or cousins is something that can be observed in many communities throughout Delfshaven.

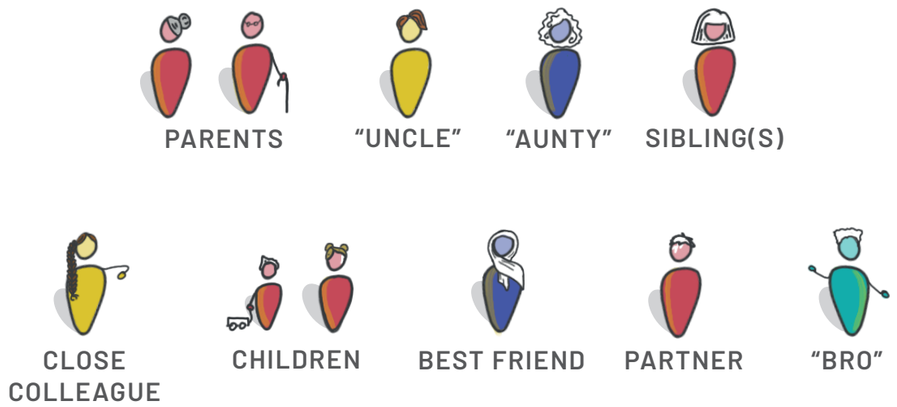


Figure 6.17
Differing definitions of family

Conventional definition of 'family'



How the definition of 'family' can be expanded

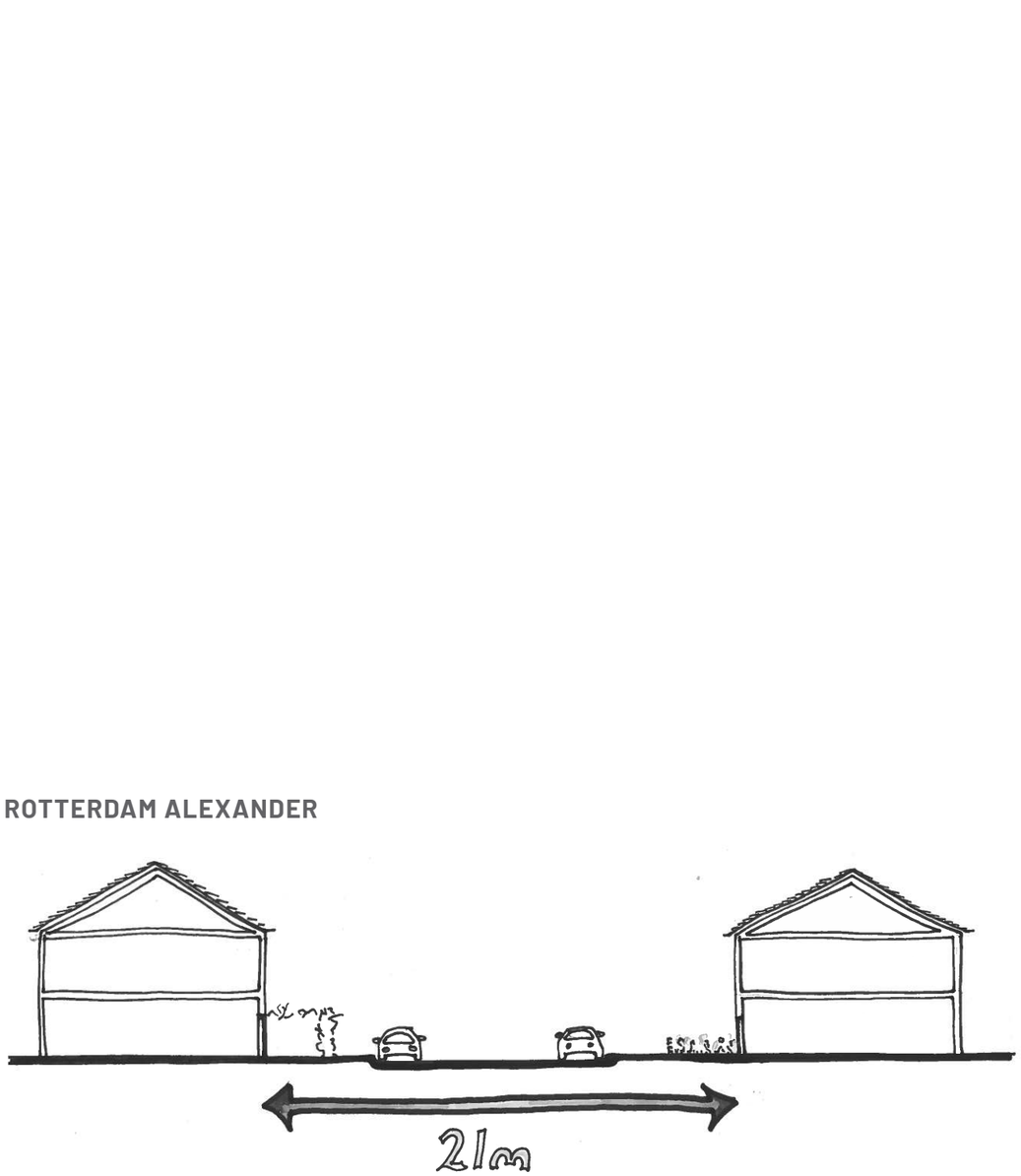


GREATER SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN DELFSHAVEN

Notably many white, Dutch participants described how they felt a greater sense of community in Delfshaven than in other parts of Rotterdam that they had lived or worked in. For example, a resident who has lived in the neighbourhood for several years explained how the close proximity of buildings to one another, narrower streets, and more densified character of Delfshaven juxtaposed the environment of her youth in Alexander, another Rotterdam neighbourhood [Figure 6.18]. She considered how the urban composition of Alexander meant that there is more physical space between neighbours. At first she thought this may be a result of her perception as a child where everything appears bigger but as she reflects on her recent visits back to Alexander, she feels the same - the physical distance also created social and communal distance. Hence, although she had friends and her parents, she never felt like she was a part of a community, like one that she thought existed in (Dutch) villages where you grow up with a community. She still does not feel like she has a community now, nevertheless, she sees more examples of community in the densely built Delfshaven than where she grew up.

A business owner who has just opened a new shop, also expresses how in comparison to Rotterdam Noord, there is a great sense of collectivism in Delfshaven. This became apparent to him when as they were renovating and decorating their new shop, neighbours from other businesses and nearby homes would come bearing tea and biscuits to welcome them. He attributes this to a more present sense of individualism in Noord. This idea of individualism is echoed by the former Alexander resident who reflects on it being a common feature of Dutch culture as a whole. She continued that this aspect does not necessarily foster community or the spontaneity needed to build it.

To provide a little more context, Igor Grossman and Henri Carlos Santos (2016) explain how individualism is often presented as the opposite of collectivism. The former culture is marked by a greater focus on the individual in terms of "self-direction, autonomy, self-expression, self-fulfilment, personal achievement, and personal rights and liberties" (p.3) while it also perceives a person as separate from others. Individualism is more prevalent in Western (European) countries such as the Netherlands, Germany and the UK as well as in Canada, the USA and Australia, although it is becoming more widespread globally. Contrarily, collectivist cultures place more value on harmony, group goals, social responsibilities, connection, relationships, and conformity. This emphasis also translates to how a person is viewed - interrelated and meaningfully connected to and with others. Collectivism is common in South and Central America, Sub-Saharan Africa, the MENA region, Eastern Europe and large parts of Asia. Therefore, it is understandable that a heightened sense of community is found in a neighbourhood with many migrants from cultures that are more collectivist.



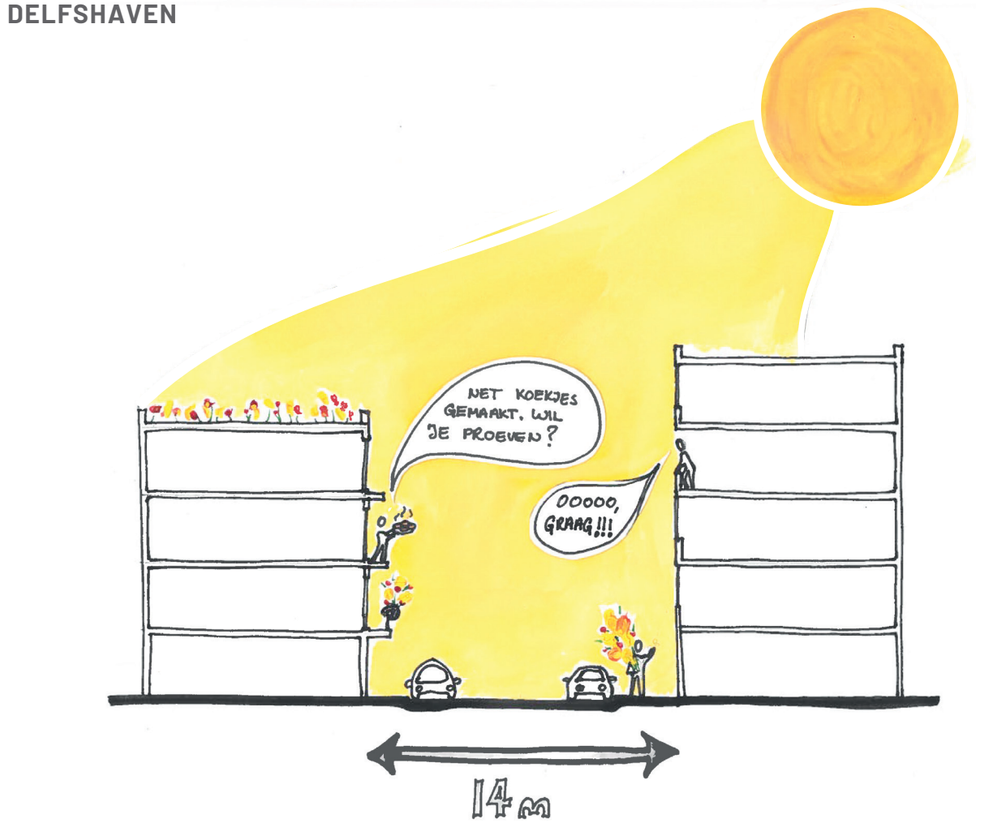


Figure 6.18
Differing street widths in Rotterdam Alexander and Delfshaven which informs levels of community spirit

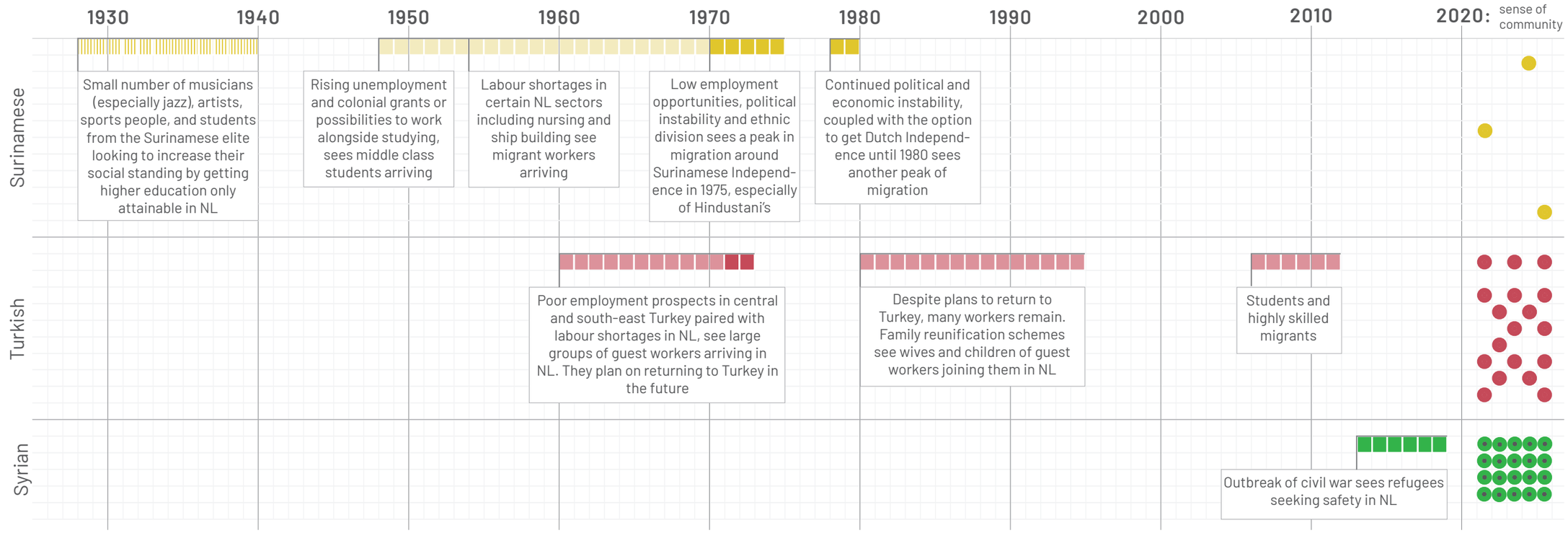


Figure 6.19
Waves of immigration of Surinamese, Turkish and Syrian communities over time
based on Alle Cijfers, n.d.; NPO Kennis & Andere Tijden, n.d.; University College London, n.d.; Vijf Eeuwen Migratie, n.d

DIMINISHING SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN DELFSHAVEN

The greater sense of community that was detailed in the section prior greatly contrasts with former and long-term residents of Delfshaven who express a diminishing collectivism in the area, namely people of colour or from older generations. For example, a middle-aged woman of Surinamese descent sadly expresses how there is a growing lack of community spirit. Two employees in the area of Surinamese, Moroccan and Dutch descent also said there is a very present 'them versus us' feeling, attributing the shrinking sense of community to increased isolation and individualism. From their experiences and observations, they note the rising loneliness amongst men with little to no friends, no partners, and limited to no communication with their children, which in turn leads to feelings of not being respected. Similarly, middle-aged women explain how, while growing up in the Netherlands there was greater collectivism with family, friends, neighbours, and their communities, also in urban settings. For them, this is now considerably absent from their general reality.

Furthermore, the period of arrival of various migrant communities to the Netherlands, as well as other historical factors that are elaborated on in the following section, contributes to declining senses of community [Figure 6.19]. For example, a middle-aged man of Surinamese descent expresses how the Surinamese community is not very tight-knit and fairly scattered in where they live, especially in comparison with the Turkish community. Meanwhile, a man of Turkish descent explains how he feels a quieting sense of togetherness within the community, especially in comparison to the Syrian community. He ascribes this to how large-scale Syrian immigration is more recent than that of Turkey, where in order to survive and create homely environments there is a necessity to support each other and be united. He continues that the Turkish community are now multi-generational and speaks Dutch and thus have access to more groups than the Syrian community. Moreover, as the area constantly changes, some residents are unsure of how long they will reside in the area which limits their need and desire to weave themselves into the fabric of Delfhaven's communities.

LIVING LEGACIES OF SEPARATION

Histories of interaction (or lack thereof) from one place can be imported and manifest in another. For example, a man of Surinamese descent explained that there is a type of inherited separation amongst the different ethnicities, namely the Afro-Surinamese and Hindoestaans communities (descended from South Asian indentured labourers) due to historical stigmas. Discussions such as the Pakhuis de Zwijgers conversation where Afro-Surinamnese and Hindustaans guests explore 'from division to solidarity: how can we come together?' (2023) can help supplement and prompt this unpacking.

COMMUNITY TO DISRUPT CYCLES OF TRAUMA AND POVERTY

Ultimately there is great power in community, where some participants attributed community to being an essential ingredient in the disruption of cycles of trauma [Figure 6.20]. Two Moroccan Dutch and Surinamese men, one in his mid-20s and one in his early 40s, were witnesses of crime and poverty growing up which caused very real trauma in their respective environments. Thus, they spoke of the need for collectives to heal wounds, shift mindsets and develop new narratives. So much so, that the motto of neighbourhood coaches is ***"we gaan samen vooruit"*** (English translation: "we move forward together") where as a community we bolster and empower one another.

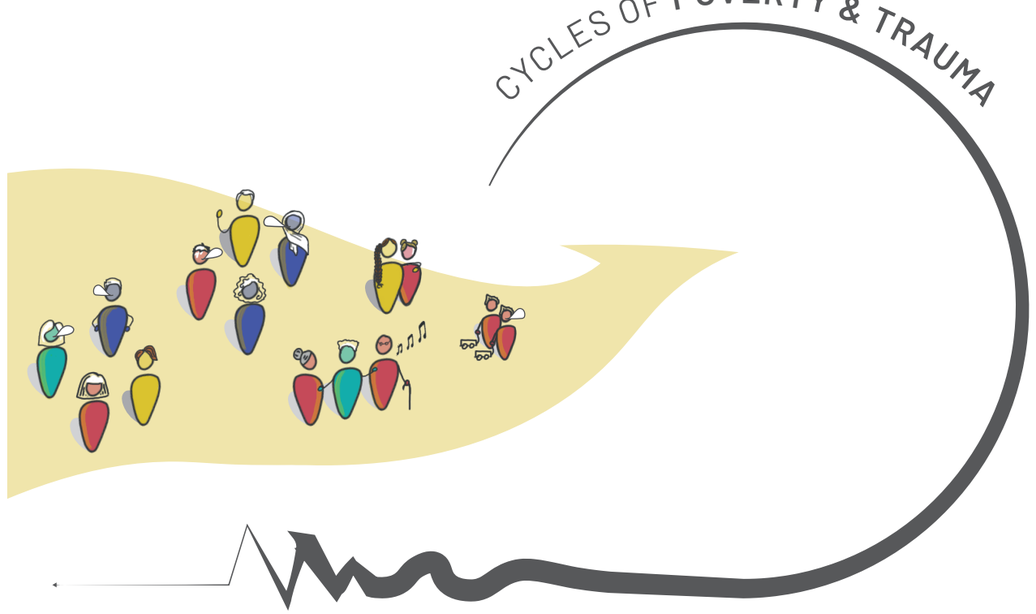


Figure 6.20
Community as a primary ingredient to disrupt cycles of trauma and poverty

6.5 REFLECTIVE CONCLUSIONS

The following section communicates the principal findings and implications of the research as reflective conclusions, as they respond to research question two, "Where and how can 'unconventional' bodies of knowledge and experiences be accessed and valued?'. Like in the previous layer, some reflective conclusions have been substantiated with additional experiences, studies and literature. Conclusions and reflections concern 3 central themes: (1) familiarity and differentiation in the context of visibility; (2) visibility and trust building; and (3) a shift to healing. The last section details implications for spatial design in particular.

THEME (continued): **FAMILIARITY & DIFFERENTIATION IN THE WIDER FRAME OF VISIBILITY**

Familiarity & visibility
Feelings of home are often related to multi-sensory familiarity and/or nostalgia as well as being able to recognize the environment. Hence, people tend to feel safe, at home and value spaces and places where they can see their reflection around them. This requires urbanists to again be curious about what elements are conducive to people feeling seen, safe and at home and how this may shift across people groups. This can begin in the early phases of co-creation and gradually deepen as time progresses.

What it means to be seen - challenging status quos
For many, home entailed not needing to perform to societal standards, or needing to drastically adjust their behaviour to feel accepted, to instead feel free. A Moroccan-Dutch participant in Delfshaven explained how he often felt stigmatised and labelled based off of his appearance in culturally, racially and ethnically less diverse neighbourhoods. Instead he felt more comfortable in the more culturally, racially and ethnically diverse neighbourhood of Delfshaven, where he is able to see his reflection around him and where people see him as a human as opposed to stereotype. Afterall, "je voelt je thuis als je omgeving je ontvangt" (English translation: you feel at home when your environment receives you). James Baldwin (as cited in Nelson, 1983) offers a perspective of how recognising yourself in your surroundings connects to the notion of shared experiences. In Baldwin's short story 'Sonny's Blues' (1957) there is a moment of mutual realisation between two brothers. The brothers grasp that they are not solely bound by family or skin colour, but also a shared (racial) experience.

Although we may never understand the experiences that come with living certain (social) identities, there can be an attempt on behalf of the urbanist, to dig deep and reflect on how personal (sub)conscious conditioning informs our mindsets and attitudes. This is especially the case when we interact with different people, especially those who are a part of socially (and historically) perceived subordinate castes, who often subconsciously codeswitch. This unpacking can last a lifetime.

Differentiation & visibility
Co-creative engagement can occur in larger as well as smaller groups or one-to-one interactions as people indicated that they feel at home when together with others, as well as alone. This conclusion/reflection echoes the differentiation that takes place in school classrooms regarding instructional strategies (Reis & Renzulli, 2018). For example,

some students learn best through group work, meanwhile, others do so through discussion or working alone. Nonetheless, at various points, teachers differentiate and accommodate for this.

Participants highlighted how feeling safe on the street is often related to having a (visible) overview of what is happening around you, which is higher during the day than at night. This is particularly pertinent for women and girls, and in another way for boys and men who describe feeling hyper-alert. Therefore, during co-creation, it would be valuable to engage people when it is light or in places that are well-lit and not derelict after dark.

THEME: **VISIBILITY & TRUST BUILDING**

The building blocks of trust, as illuminated by many participants, discuss trust being built on visibility, time, support, smiling, protection, safety and listening. During the thesis project, being visible and spending time in the area was salient for building trust as well as deepening relationships through regular, casual and sometimes spontaneous interactions. This visibility and investment of time, also affected how interested people were in becoming more involved in the project - those who I spoke to regularly were more keen. This visibility and trust could be strengthened by a simple greeting - saying hello and/or acknowledging people, as they are not invisible. Similarly, expanding on giving and taking, support is another building brick for trust. Inhabitants of Delfshaven described assisting each other with a trolley, sharing food and developing common funds. Hence, in order for co-creative projects to be truly fruitful urbanists need to be visible, and frequently so, to the people that they are engaging with during co-creation while also giving back.

Further examples of how to build visibility and trust are presented in a participatory 'trading zone' project in a changing Milan area characterised by deteriorating qualities of housing and public space as well as increasing social inclusion (Calvaresi & Cossa, 2013). To encourage inhabitant involvement, leaders and facilitators made themselves visible in the following ways:

(1) Established a Neighbourhood Lab in a local flat where sharing could take place between residents and Lab employees. The space fostered feelings of safety and home as the space could be appropriated for exchanging information, doing homework and/or having a coffee.

(2) Organised neighbourhood events, like the screening of the 2006 World Cup in a community centre to develop a culture of cooperation and re-appropriation of abandoned public spaces. Different groups and individuals from the community were in charge of various organisational processes. E.g. the local parish supplied the equipment that was installed by young people.

Additionally, trust was prioritised, which was made actionable through:

(1) Established the Neighbourhood Lab's legitimacy from the outset by producing periodic newsletters explaining the urban renewal processes to create transparency and accountability.

(2) Established an accountability protocol. Once the lab collected requests from residents, they also provided them with information on how, in what timeframe, and who (municipality, housing corporations, architects, contractors, etc) would process and realise their requests.

THEME: **SHIFTING TO A FOCUS ON HEALING (building on care & curiosity)**

Some participants explained how communities are necessary in order to disrupt cycles of trauma and poverty. Urbanists can assume roles and adopt mindsets that champion shifts in planning to focus on healing, which consequently challenge status quos and living histories of hierarchy. For example, Gloria Anzaldúa's 'border thinking' (1999

as cited in Ortiz, 2022), a concept of decolonial thought, advocates for platforms where intersectional sharing, exposure to other types of knowledge and experiences, and the building of understanding occur. Scholar-practitioner Aftab Erfan (2017 as cited in Ortiz, 2022) expresses that such arenas of convergence and communication, involve "a group [that] has, within itself, the knowledge, creativity, sensitivity, and power it needs to solve its own problems" (p.5). Therefore, implications for urbanists concern a focus on healing, especially in how they interact with varying communities.

SPATIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR URBAN PLANNING & DESIGN

THEME: **VISIBILITY, SAFETY, OVERVIEW & ANONYMITY**

Participants noted how having more overview of what is happening around them contributes to higher levels of safety while decreasing feelings of anonymity. They also spoke about how low-rise walls and other separating elements help to safeguard privacy while also encouraging neighbourly interaction. Another participant also mentioned how more densely arranged buildings foster community spirit. These observations prompt the question, 'How can planning and design contribute to inhabitants having more overview of their environments while also facilitating varying possibilities for community interaction?' Jan Gehl (2011) perhaps offers a response through his explorations of sight, field of vision and overview by describing how every urban inhabitant should be afforded optimal conditions for seeing by way of the built environment not obstructing sight lines. For example, he describes 'zones for staying' and the 'edge effect' (p. 165) whereby areas around perimeters or transition/border zones between spaces are popular. These offer ample opportunities for observation while feeling protected and less exposed than being in the middle of an area. Moreover, in relation to safety, especially for women and girls, it is important to have well-lit paths that allow for easy direction as well as for seeing people during the day and at night.

THEME: **VISIBILITY & RECOGNISING YOUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Several participants explained how home involves having a connection to their environment while also recognising it as it grows and changes. Hence, the question, 'how can the design of urban space ensure that inhabitants can identify and connect with cities as they evolve and develop?'. There are numerous responses to this in regards to policy, namely affordability. Nonetheless, harking back to design, this could include ensuring that there are boundary objects and spaces of familiarity that people can resonate with as new socio-spatial identities are created.

LAYER 7: PLACES & SPACES OF SAFETY, HOME & COMMUNITY

The last part of the research presents a network, an interconnected web rather, of different establishments where people can be engaged for co-creative urban planning and design. Hence, responding to the second research question, 'how and where can 'unconventional' bodies of knowledge and experiences be accessed and valued?'. Leaning on the previous layers, these spaces and places evoke feelings of safety, home, community and so much more. As these spaces and places are so vast, they have been broken down into 6 main categories: (1) beauty; (2) community hubs; (3) food establishments; (4) outdoor activity and recreation; (5) places of worship; and (6) the arts. To further showcase the different languages of Delfshaven, 'zoom in's' of specific spaces of safety, home and community by various communities, illustrates how and why these spaces are of value. These 'zoom ins', in addition to explorations of counter cartography and co-creative mapping with various participants also respond to the third sub-research question, 'how can inhabitant literacy development be embedded into the fabric of a co-creative participatory planning and design approach?' Coincidentally, exploration into different spaces for a range of people also highlighted what spaces are missing, notably those for the youth and women of various ages.

REFLECTION: **SPATIAL DESIGN VERSUS DEVELOPING APPROACHES FOR DESIGN**

Throughout this thesis, I was asked about my 'final design' that would work to conclude the findings of the research. Given the temporal scope of the project, and the time needed for co-creation this was not possible. Nevertheless, this line of questioning prompted me to reflect on the relationship between spatial design and developing approaches for design. There seems to be an emphasis on the result of how space is designed without thoroughly unpacking and evaluating how existing systems and processes contribute to (re)producing socio-spatial inequality and injustice. How are we to create truly inclusive and just environments if we do not allow ourselves the opportunity to reflect on our approaches to planning and design?

Paulo Freire (1970 & 1972 as cited in Evans, 2015 & 2018), author of The Pedagogy of the Oppressed examines the phenomenon described above by way of the banking model of education. He explains how in such models, which are representative of many educational systems (of the time that persist in the present), dominant cultures and ways of thinking are ingrained in students. The effect of this is that focus is placed on performance, which works to maintain status quos. This is as opposed to encouraging critical thinking that is needed to reveal the interelationality of systems to unpack, deconstruct and create new, just realities.

This paradigm shift to focus on processes that lead to results requires continually fostering a growth mindset, where embracing discomfort is conducive. Carol Dweck, a renowned psychologist, has extensively researched both fixed and growth mindsets. A fixed mindset is a belief that someone's intelligence, talents and other abilities are predetermined without the possibility of developing beyond those limits. With a fixed mindset there is also an emphasis on succeeding or failing, whereas learning from past mistakes is largely neglected (Mind Tools, n.d.). Contrastingly, a growth mindset allows for the evolution of previously held beliefs by learning from past mistakes, observations, feedback and environments of the unknown (Armstrong, 2019; Mind Tools, n.d.). In doing so, there is creativity, new knowledge and experiences to build something new.

Relating this to fields of urbanism and architecture, Jeremy Till (2005) explains that normative traditions of professional and academic legitimacy are often based on principles of completeness and logic [refer to Layer 1.1 for more information]. A reliance on adopting these principles makes it easy to disparage the ideas that result from the openness and fluidity of normal conversation or that critique dominant ways of doing and thinking. However, new knowledge is seldom created by the monologues of individuals and is instead the consequence of collectives in active dialogue with each other (Till, 2005; Parekh, 2000 as cited in Cripps, 2004). As such, the incomplete maps displayed in this layer function as counter cartographies that challenge power structures by highlighting different boundary spaces presented in boundary objects (maps and drawings) [refer to Layer 5.7 for more information], while also inviting commentary on behalf of the viewer to together create fuller understandings. A desired effect is to also build confidence in participants expressing and communicating ideas.



Figure 7.1
A 'standard', 'conventional' world map
GIS Geography, 2023

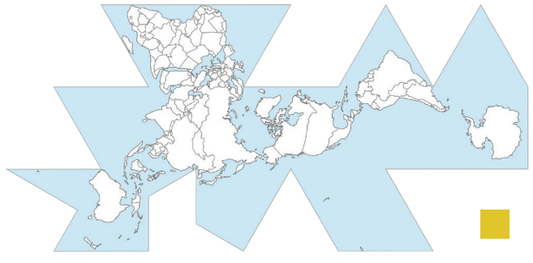


Figure 7.2
A Dymaxion/Fuller world map that prompts us to shift our mindset, hopefully to one of growth
Adapted from Visioncarto, 2018

7.1 DEVELOPING A CO-CREATIVE MAP

To further explore co-creation, I set out different ways to engage people, as it was apparent that a one-size-fits-all approach to engage with different stakeholders was not going to work, differentiation was necessary. One approach included going to specific establishments, generally ones that I had visited before and therefore built up a relationship with, to ask if they had time to discuss being more involved in the project. I then asked if they would like to be co-authors of the storybook by telling their story in languages of their choice (the manifestations of which will be detailed further along in the report), working with people in casual workshop-like environments.

For instance, an opportunity presented itself to collaboratively re-design a calendar of 'spreek uren' (consulting hours) that in its current state was not readable or clear for its target audience [Figures 7.3 & 7.4]. The idea to do this came about after speaking to a neighbourhood coach who explained how the schedule was clear to her as it provided an accessible overview, a perception that was corroborated by many colleagues and/or social workers, that calendar and map were not suitable for their other audience. As such, the idea was proposed and with the assistance of a neighbourhood coach, I was put in contact with a network of social workers who suggested that I come to a spreekuur (which actually lasts multiple hours) to ask members of the target audience, social workers and volunteers to redesign the calendar.

There were suggestions about how to modify the entire document; however, the report mainly details how the map [Figure 7.3] was redesigned to transform it from something that was perceived as quite abstract to something more useful. In the initial planning stage of the session, Karima recommended that I bring along certain symbols to ease communication on the day and inspire further thought. In addition to the selected icons relating to different services concerning health, home, financial and legal support, reading letters, and general questions and conversation, I brought along different variants of maps as well as a colour wheel. The reason for bringing along various colours, symbols and images was purposeful and in accordance with a Harvard Thinking routine aimed at connection-making and deep thinking [Figure 7.5].

From the session, many people commented on how the map was illegible as a result of there being no street names, no indication of public transportation options or no visible 'herkennings punten' or landmarks, which people often used to orient themselves within space [Figures 7.6 to 7.8]. These elements have all been added to the revised map [Figure 7.9], with the addition of images of the front facade of different places as people sometimes do not recognize street names even though they could visually recognise the establishment by remembering what the outside looks like.

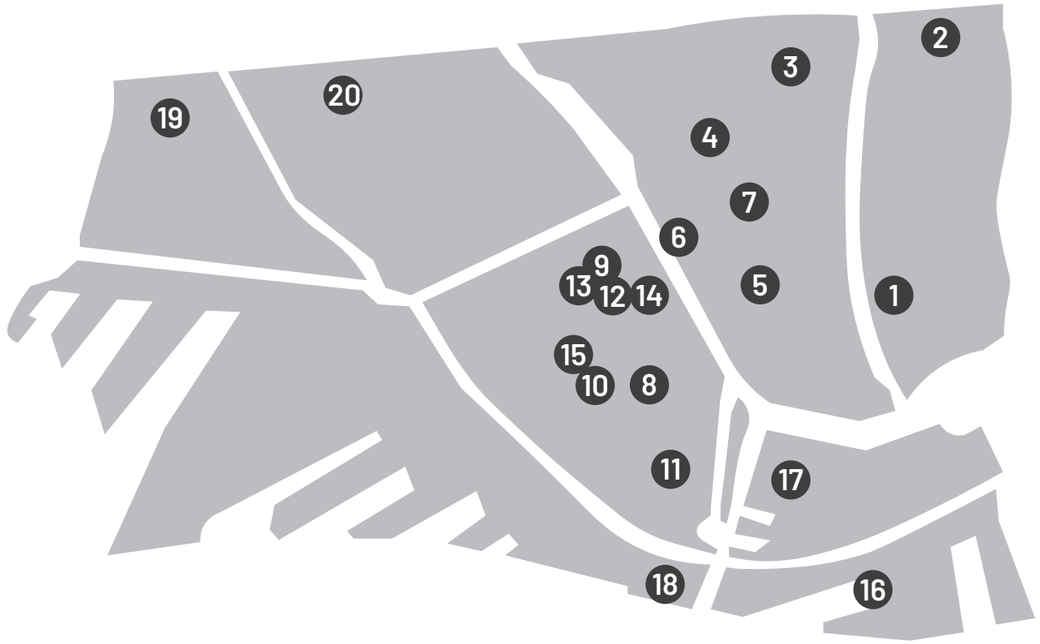


Figure 7.3
Zoomed in image of Bospolder-Tussendijken map prior to co-creative redesign, Zorgvrijstaat, n.d.



Figure 7.4
Original 'Info uur' calendar and Bospolder Tussendijken map prior to co-creative redesign, Zorgvrijstaat, n.d.

COLOUR

What colour(s) do you feel best represents ... for you?

Can be applied to meanings of community, home, safety [CHS], places of CHS, the language of your heart, and so forth.





SYMBOL

What symbol(s) do you feel best represents ... for you?

Can be applied to meanings of community, home, safety [CHS], places of CHS, the language of your heart, and so forth.



IMAGE

What image(s) do you feel best represents ... for you?

Can be applied to meanings of community, home, safety [CHS], places of CHS, the language of your heart, and so forth.



Figure 7.5
Toolkit of icons, colours & different map types to bring to co-creation session



Figure 7.6
Notes from a co-creation session
Michael Abraha, Dagmar de Jager, Alissa Udo, Sevda, S. Olgun, 2023

Figure 7.7
Notes from a co-creation session
Michael Abraha, Dagmar de Jager, Alissa Udo, Sevda, S. Olgun, 2023

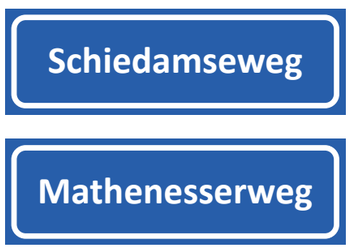
Figure 7.8
Conclusions from co-creation session
Michael Abraha, Dagmar de Jager, Alissa Udo, Sevda, S. Olgun, 2023



PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPTIONS



LANDMARKS



STREET NAMES



GROUND PLAN



IMAGE OF FRONT FACADE

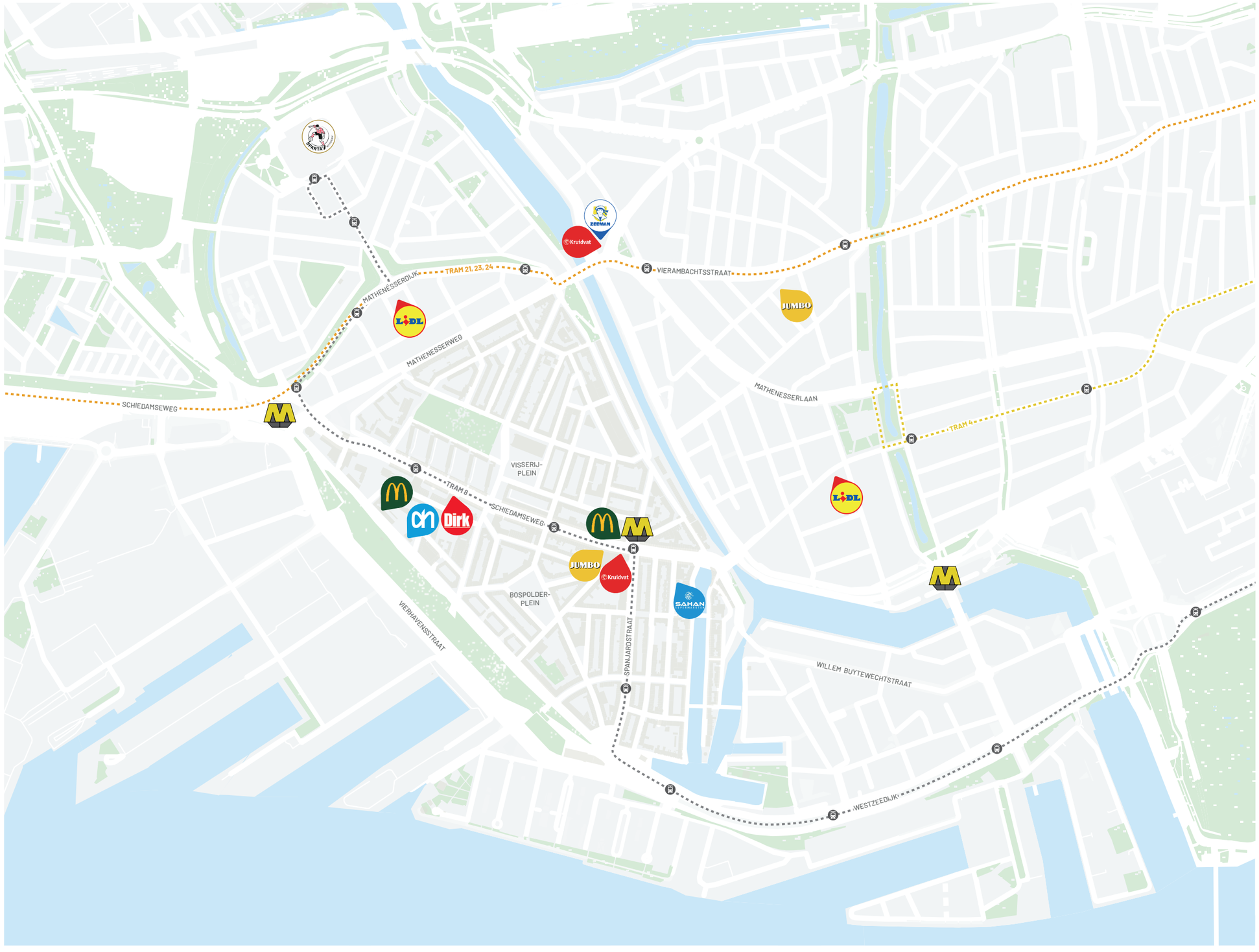


Figure 7.9
Co-created map of Delfshaven with landmarks, street names and public transport options as discussed in co-creation session
Michael Abraha, Dagmar de Jager, Alissa Udo, Sevda, S. Olgun, Author, 2023

From this experience in particular, as well as reflecting on others during the project, it became evident that there is a need to differentiate between different people groups for co-creation [Figure 7.10]. This notion of differentiation was also infused in previous layers. Nevertheless, in terms of co-creation, the amount of time that we have to engage with various people is adapted to their time availability. For example, with some participants, it may be possible to engage with them in longer 1 to 2-hour style workshops or conversations if this is scheduled beforehand. Other times, in an eatery for example, questions were asked intermittently over 2 hour periods over several days to accommodate for the customer flow and the fact that participants were working. In other cases, such as the development of the co-creative map, it was possible to speak to people as they waited to be seen by the social workers or when the social workers were free. This resulted in speaking to a number of participants over a 3-hour period for 10 to 20 minutes each. Nonetheless, if this contact is regular, whether that be daily, weekly or monthly, it works to increase visibility and therefore trust.

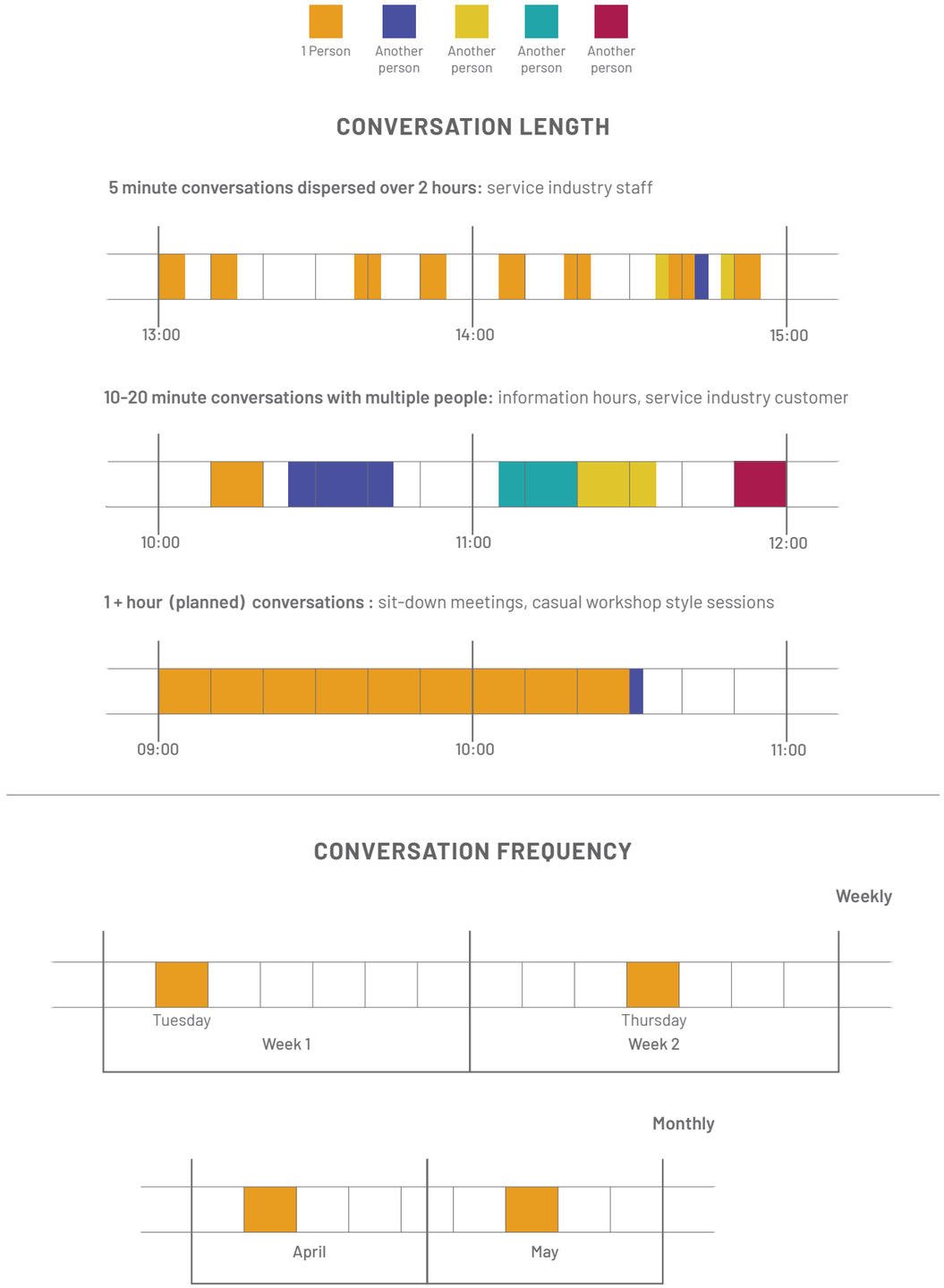


Figure 7.10
Time differentiation for engaging with people regarding conversation length and frequency

7.2 EVOLVING IDENTITIES & SPACES OF SAFETY, HOME AND COMMUNITY

The following sections identify what spaces and places of safety, home and community there are in Bospolder-Tussendijken for a variety of people with (evolving identities). Hence, before we go further, I would like to first present how spaces and places of safety, home and community change for people over time as they enter new life stages [Figure 7.11], as is evidenced by a participant, Jilles, who explains,

"Okay, that's fine, then I'll try to explain it per part, I think. The maps are sort of divided per school period. So the first is primary school and at that time I mainly knew Kralingen and a little bit of the centre. The second map is from my high school days. During this time I started to know more of the west of Rotterdam, but I had no places that I could really say were important places for me besides school and around it. The third map is from my university time. During this time I moved to Rotterdam West. During this time I got to know a lot more of Rotterdam. The orange spots are a kind of highlights or important places for me. Then those colours in the background are important places as shapes. And then the colours are the primary colours, which is also a kind of link back to youth. And because I went to such an art high school, these colours are also a link to that for me. The photos are then important moments. So I kind of have these orange spots, orange spots are important places and the photos are important moments or beautiful moments. And then that's exponentially older that the older I got, the more I got to know about the world around me and all that. And then also a kind of exponential line, so suspicious. I don't know if you can do anything with this."

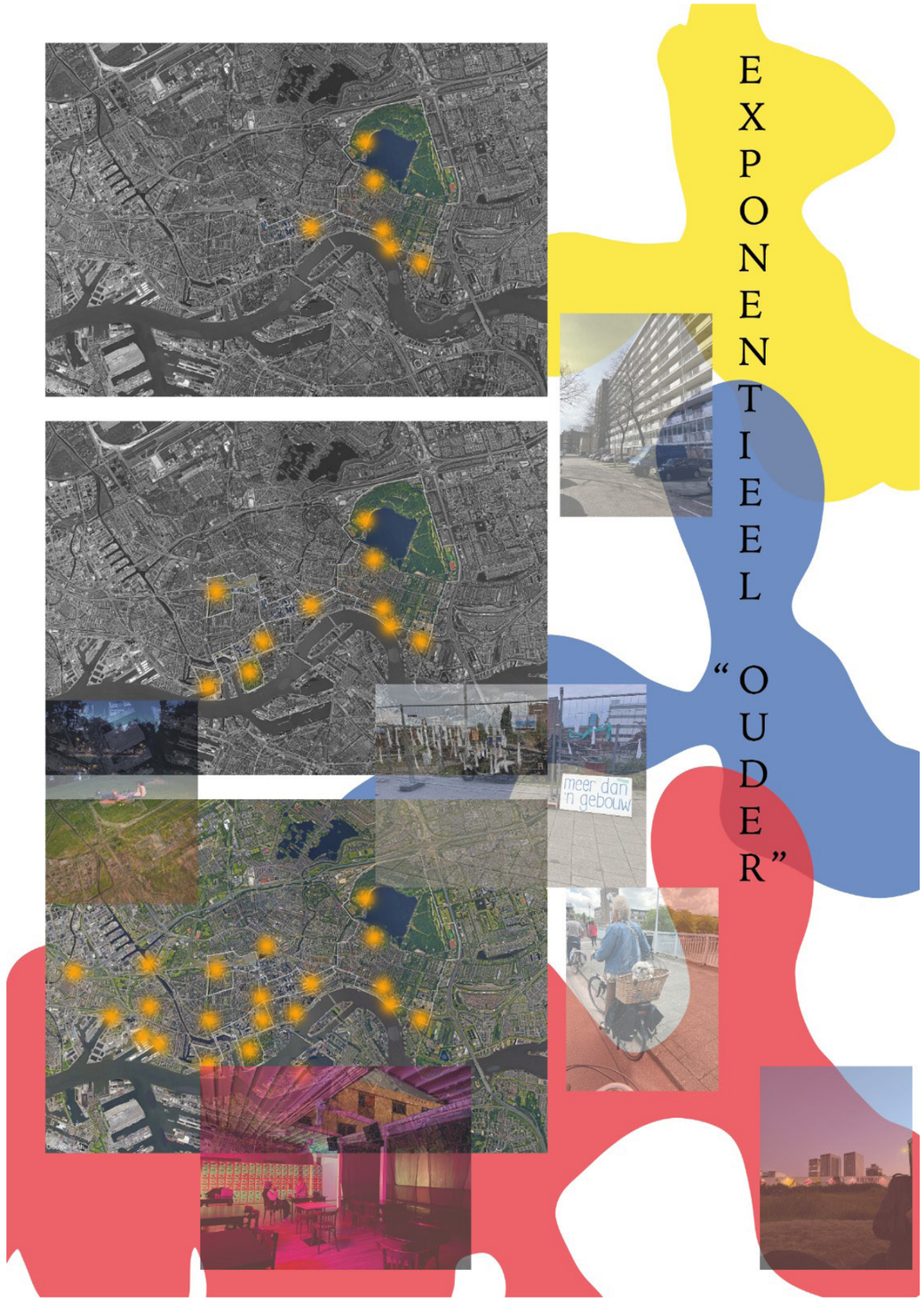


Figure 7.11
'Exponentiele 'Ouder" chronicling spaces of significance in Rotterdam over time
Jilles Rodenburg, 2023

7.3 BEAUTY

Beauty establishments are significant places where various groups and communities gather, as evidenced by the high concentration of such spaces along Schiedamseweg [Figure 7.12]. The umbrella of beauty establishments is broad, consisting primarily of barber shops, hair salons and nail bars. Within each category, there are specific clientele who visit the establishments. For example, some barber shops cater to black men and boys, some looking to get the on-trend Wedge look. Many are footballers and regularly practise and play on football pitches and squares like that of Kruiskade and the Sparta fields. Meanwhile, others cater more to Turkish or Moroccan men and boys, occasionally elderly women too. The same applies to hair salons that cater to different hair textures and communities. Nail bars typically attract a more female clientele; however, this is changing as an increasing number of boys are getting pedicures.

During conversations with customers of these barbershops, they explained how they frequent these places regularly - weekly or biweekly to look fresh and because they take pride in looking after themselves. One middle-aged woman explained how she goes to her hairdresser every 4 to 5 weeks. The barbers, hairdressers and nail technicians, interact and meet with multiple clients a day, often more than 10. Participants of the research continue that the shops are spaces that feel like a family where so many different people share and laugh with each other, where difference is appreciated, and where you can be chatty or quiet. Essentially, it feels safe. One participant expressed how present and concentrated he feels when he is doing his work that he loses track of time. While either doing someone's hair or waiting to get their hair done, people are in conversation with each other, while music plays to set the mood.

Other functions also take place in the shops. For example, a barber shop is integrated into the larger space of the Niteshop where talks and podcasts are recorded. Hence, there is a flow and exchange of knowledge from the different people in the space. So much so, that in another barber shop, a customer described how the shops are informative where you learn about each other and where you can learn how to cut hair. All Dae is similar although they have a hair salon section but aim to bring ***"together the community and create a foundational base for people to practise their ambitions"*** (All Dae, 2023). This is demonstrated by their organising game and music nights, attracting other clientele who may not just come to get their hair done.

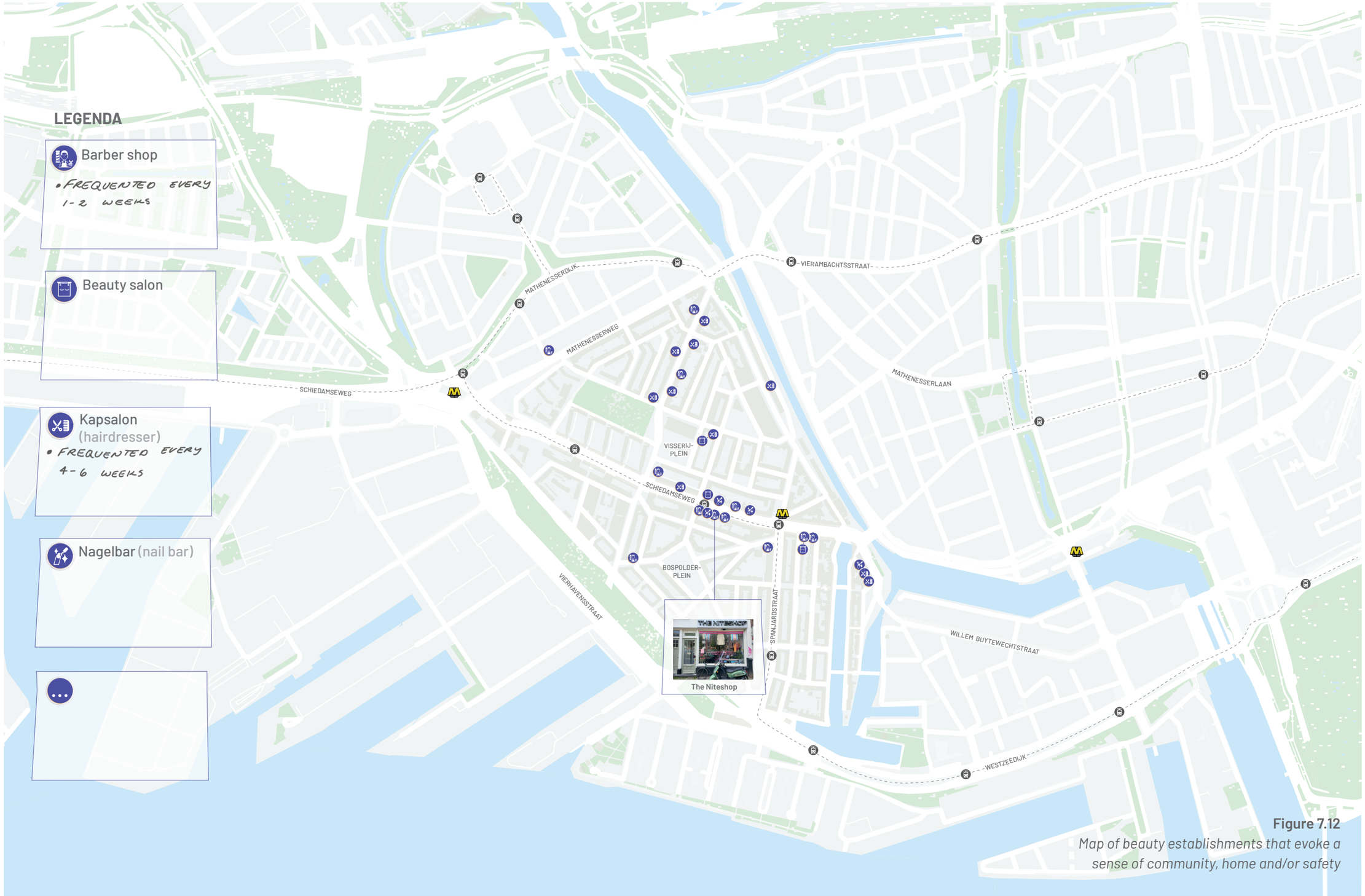


Figure 7.12
Map of beauty establishments that evoke a sense of community, home and/or safety

7.4 COMMUNITY HUBS

Like beauty establishments, there are also several community hubs dotted throughout the neighbourhood that attract different people groups [Figure 7.13]. For instance, the library and the WMO's Huis van de Wijk Pier 80 (English translation: 'House of the Neighbourhood') are adjacent to each other on the perimeter of Visserijplein. The library attracts a variety of people, ranging from people using computers to parents and children looking to read books together. The library can also be a place of support as young students can get reading help. Meanwhile, every week adults can get support relating to health, money, housing and so forth during information hours. These information hours also offer support in other languages such as Turkish. In the Huis van de Wijk, there is a cafe that is generously staffed by volunteers and appeals to diverse groups. This includes the elderly and the middle-aged from a plethora of ethnic backgrounds including Afro-Surinamese, Hindoestaans, Turkish, and Moroccan as well as social workers and market staff. The former groups (who are not necessarily employees) often sit together in their groups, often divided between women and men chatting over a coffee.

All Dae and the Niteshop are community hubs that often attract a younger demographic who are a mixture of first, second and later generations of migrants, and consciously so. As a participant from the Niteshop explains,

> *"An important aspect of the Niteshop is that even if you look from hip-hop culture and street culture, you often see in video clips that the corner shop is the place where youth culture gathers. Later in the evening you just saw that a group of people were standing in front of [the avondwinkel around the corner] and that actually kind of led to a kind of meeting place."*

In these communities, we see recurring examples of remixing and ensuring a sense of familiarity for their target audience to be able to see themselves in these spaces. The Niteshop also has a network connecting them with the Nieuwe Instituut and various municipal actors.

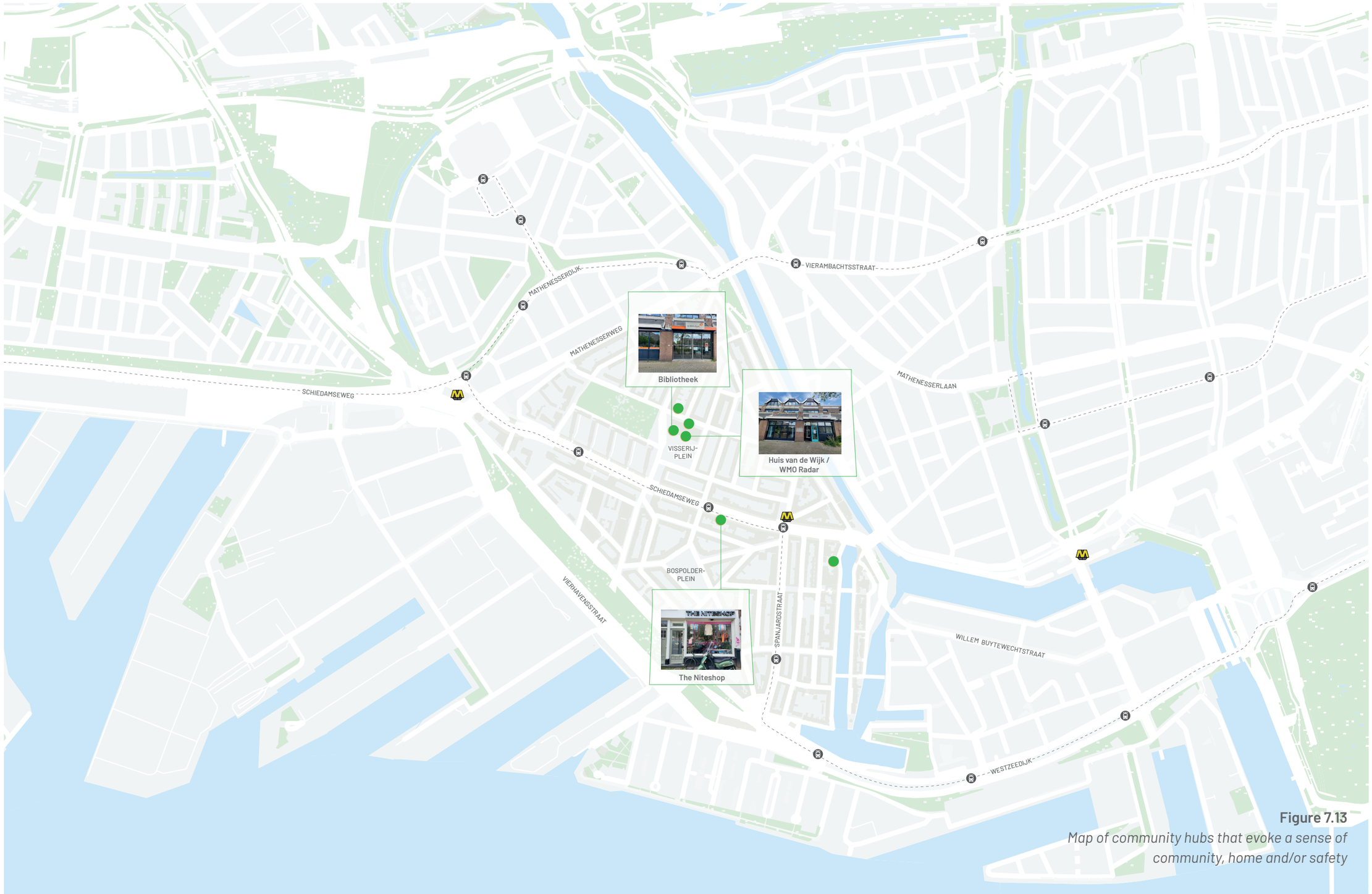


Figure 7.13
Map of community hubs that evoke a sense of community, home and/or safety

COMMUNITY HUBS: A ZOOM INTO THE NITESHOP

Alcolado Glacial has held a prominent place in Caribbean households for over 50 years. It is known for its cooling properties, its ability to alleviate nasal congestion, relieve headaches, and soothe itching from mosquito bites.

Yet, it may also symbolize the connection with your mother or the life lessons imparted by your grandmother.

Things can encompass multiple meanings, and there is inherent value in the everyday. However, we require a fresh perspective to truly appreciate and comprehend this.



Figure 7.14 & words
Nacor Martina, 2023

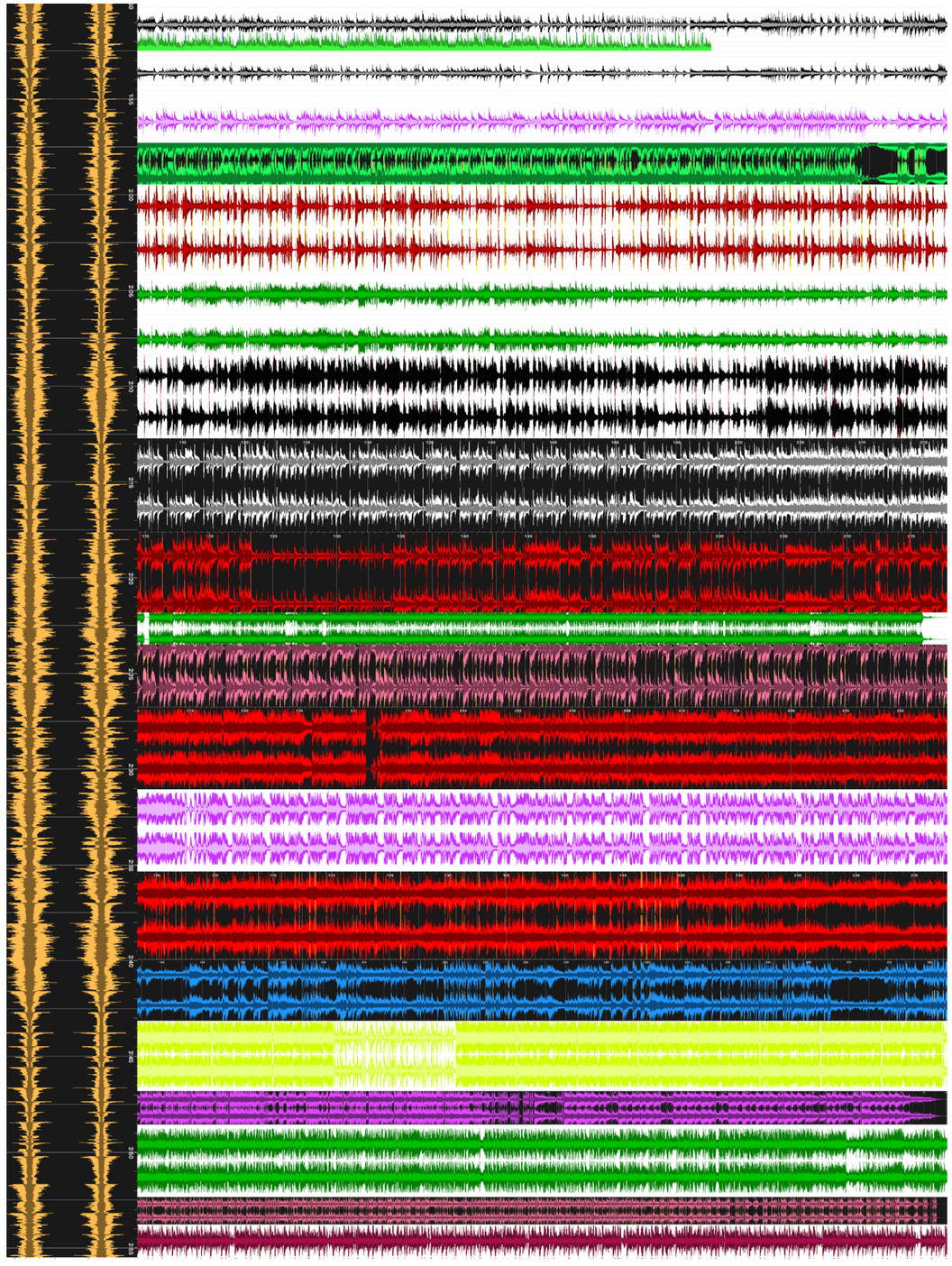
COMMUNITY HUBS: A ZOOM INTO THE NITESHOP

NL: “TNS [The Niteshop] staat voor mij gelijk aan een huis. Ik heb het zelf altijd moeilijk gevonden om een thuisgevoel te hebben. Dat komt doordat ik mij in vele subculturen thuis heb willen voelen maar er geen enkele de sensitiviteit van de post-koloniale stedelijkheid woorden heeft weten te geven. Dat zorgt voor het gevoel je onbegrepen te voelen. TNS heeft mij in mijn werk- en privéleven een houvast kunnen geven, woorden kunnen geven aan wat ik zie, hoor en voel. ”

EN: “TNS [The Niteshop] is equivalent to a house for me. I have always found it difficult to feel at home. This is because I’ve wanted to feel at home in many subcultures, but none have managed to put into words the sensitivity of post-colonial urbanity. That creates a feeling of being misunderstood. TNS has been able to give me something to hold on to in my work and private life, to give words to what I see, hear and feel. “

Figure 7.15 & words
Richard Nazier, 2023

SCAN ME!
(spotify code)
Link: https://open.spotify.com/playlist/104awP20iNcokZDUW9S8Pq?si=747fa96184ca4de0



7.5 FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS

Food and activities related to consuming food often bring different people groups together [Figure 7.16]. In Delfshaven this includes Visserijplein market, cafes, restaurants, tea houses, supermarkets and shops, tokos and monthly neighbourhood dinners. For example, Visserijplein market attracts communities within Bospolder-Tussendijken and beyond where the number 8 tram acts as an important transportation channel to and from these locations. Various stalls selling Surinamese, Antillean, Turkish and a variety of other foods, along with other products such as clothes appeal to their equally diverse clientele who manoeuvre through the crowds. Equally, around the perimeters groups gather around and chat on benches and low walls.

There is also a network of tea houses, where Middle-Eastern men often come together, as well as cafes and restaurants serving Surinamese, Turkish, Syrian, and eclectic mixtures of food. For example, a Turkish cafe sees customers coming to enjoy food who are from a full spectrum of ethnic backgrounds in Delfshaven. Customers are often young and some are older as they have relationships with the family who own and operate the cafe. Construction workers eager to enjoy a filling meal also go to the shop. Additionally, some cafes are frequented by students or young professionals who live and or work in the area such as the Keilicafe, as one participant highlights. Kroejges (English translation: 'pubs') are also popular with students and ethnic Dutch groups. Numerous neighbourhood dinners are also organised by social initiatives and groups that actively seek to engage with the elderly or the mix of neighbours who live on Mathenesserweg such as the street party 'Over de Brug'.

In relation to shops, one middle-aged woman explained how she does not often go out with friends, however, going shopping to buy her groceries is a time when she can be social and interact with her friends. This is corroborated by another participant who explained that her daily routine generally consists of going to work and then going back home. Nevertheless, it is when she is shopping between the aisles of Jumbo or Dirk supermarket on Schiedamseweg where she chats with friends and acquaintances. Tokos are often places where communities go weekly. Upon entering one particular toko, it is customary to greet the staff as well as other customers who are often in animated conversation with each other. These shops sell produce from Cape Verde, Suriname, the Caribbean, West Africa and South Asia, therefore their customer base often has connections with these geographies.

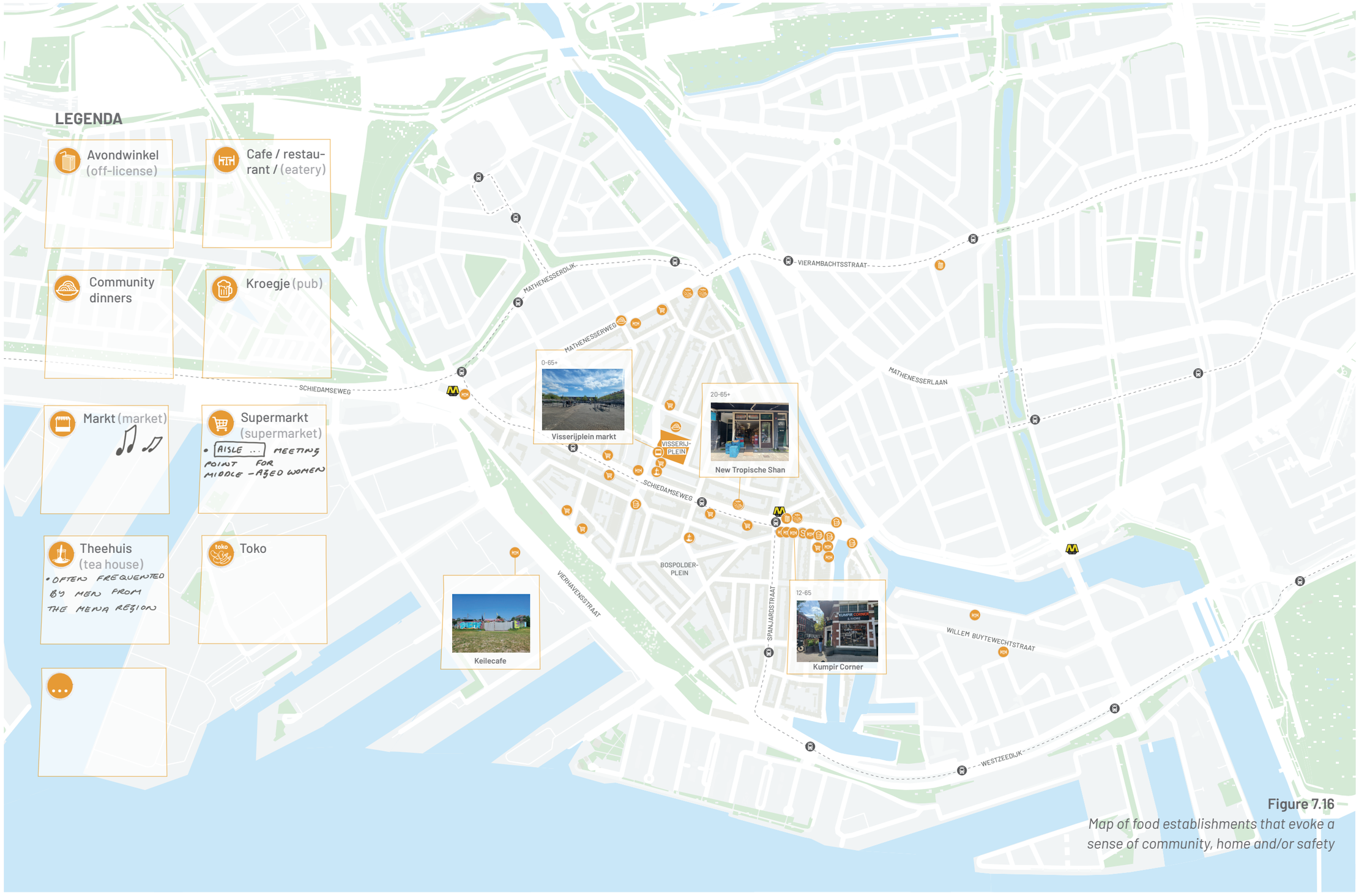


Figure 7.16
Map of food establishments that evoke a sense of community, home and/or safety

FOOD: A ZOOM INTO NEW TROPISCHE SHAN









Figure 7.17
Toko through my eyes, photo voice
Anonymous participant, 2023


Daun Salam blad
Gewicht: 10gram
Maussi Kruiden


Citroenzuur
Gewicht:
50 gram
Maussi Kruiden


Hardi-Turmeric fijn
Gewicht:
50 gram
Maussi Kruiden


Piment-lontai heel
Gewicht:
50 gram
Maussi Kruiden


Ultra Braid
X-Pression
100% Kanekalon




NESTUM
Nestlé
Arroz
Bolacha Maria
Mel
Roti
Mango
Chutney
Garnalen


BADIA
Complete
Seasoning
LEKKER BEKKIE
Pommisitair
Chutney
HOT
JANTJE PEPER
99%
Gemalen Peper
Tamarinde


新記麵廠
SHINCO
BAMIE FABRIEK
EXTRA FIJNE
EI TJAUW MIN
1500 Gr.
INGREDIENTEN:
EI MEEL, WATER, KLEURSEL
DROOG BEWAREN
MADE IN PARAMARIBO-SURINAME
ABOENAWROKOSTRAAT # 45
TEL: 458568 - 08592745 - 08645428
15 JAN. 2023
15 APR. 2024
新記麵廠
SHINCO
BAMIE FABRIEK


400gr
Surinaamse Bami
100% NATURAL


KING PRODUCTS B.V.
"DE KONING"
POLLOCK MIGAS
PRODUCT OF CHINA


SWEET TAMA
NET WEIGHT 450 G.
PRODUCT OF THAILAND
COMPAL
Flora
FEIJÃO ENCARNADO
RED KIDNEY BEANS
FEIJÃO PRETO
GRÃO
Nohut
Haslama
800g


het buitenland
Geen Starttarief
Afghanistan
Cape Verde



7.6 OUTDOOR ACTIVITY & RECREATION

Multiple outdoor activities and recreation present spaces to engage with various communities [Figure 7.18]. For example, the Dakpark sees groups of mothers chatting while their children play in calming green environments. Furthermore, other friendship groups, families and students enjoy barbecues in the warmer months. The same applies to Heemraadsingel. Alternately, football pitches and squares, such as Bospolderplein, host a broad spectrum of ages including children, and their parents - namely mothers, teenagers, and younger men who collectively play football on Saturdays. Gyms in the area also attract different friendship groups from Delfshaven and Rotterdam as a whole (generally from Centrum) to exercise together. Interestingly, canals of the river bank in Maassluis, and other coastal areas host fishing communities from Delfshaven, which generally consist of middle-aged men.

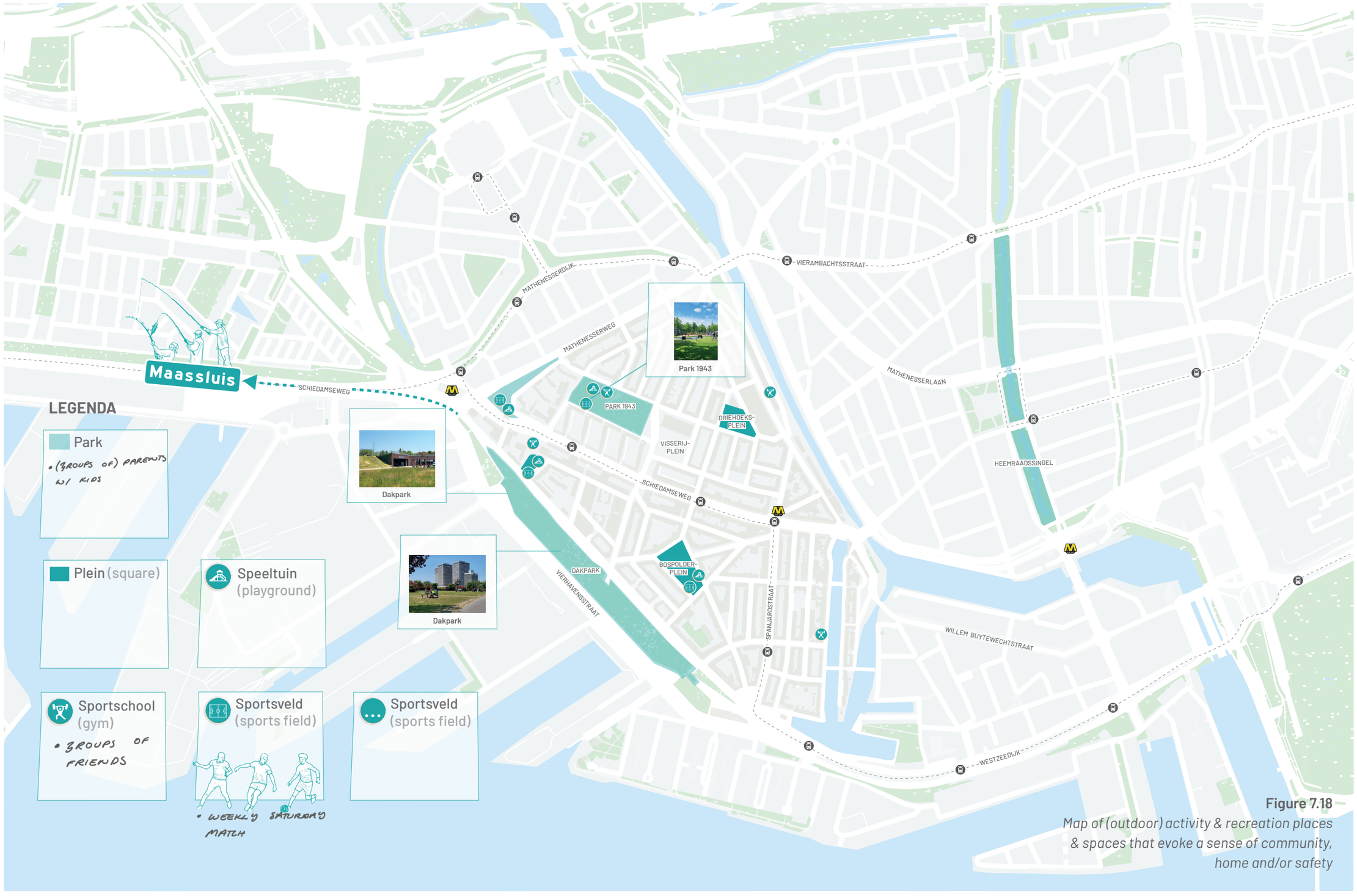


Figure 7.18
Map of (outdoor) activity & recreation places & spaces that evoke a sense of community, home and/or safety

7.7 PLACES OF WORSHIP

Places of worship are significant places where various groups gather [Figure 7.19]. For example, there are a number of churches in Delfshaven that appeal to a range of Christian communities, Jehovah's Witness and Anglican groups among others, which is evidenced by the flyers advertised. While there is a significant Muslim community where people attend Friday mosque in old school buildings that have been repurposed. In other cases, a participant of Hindoestaans descent goes to an ashram in Amsterdam on a weekly basis, which he highly anticipates.

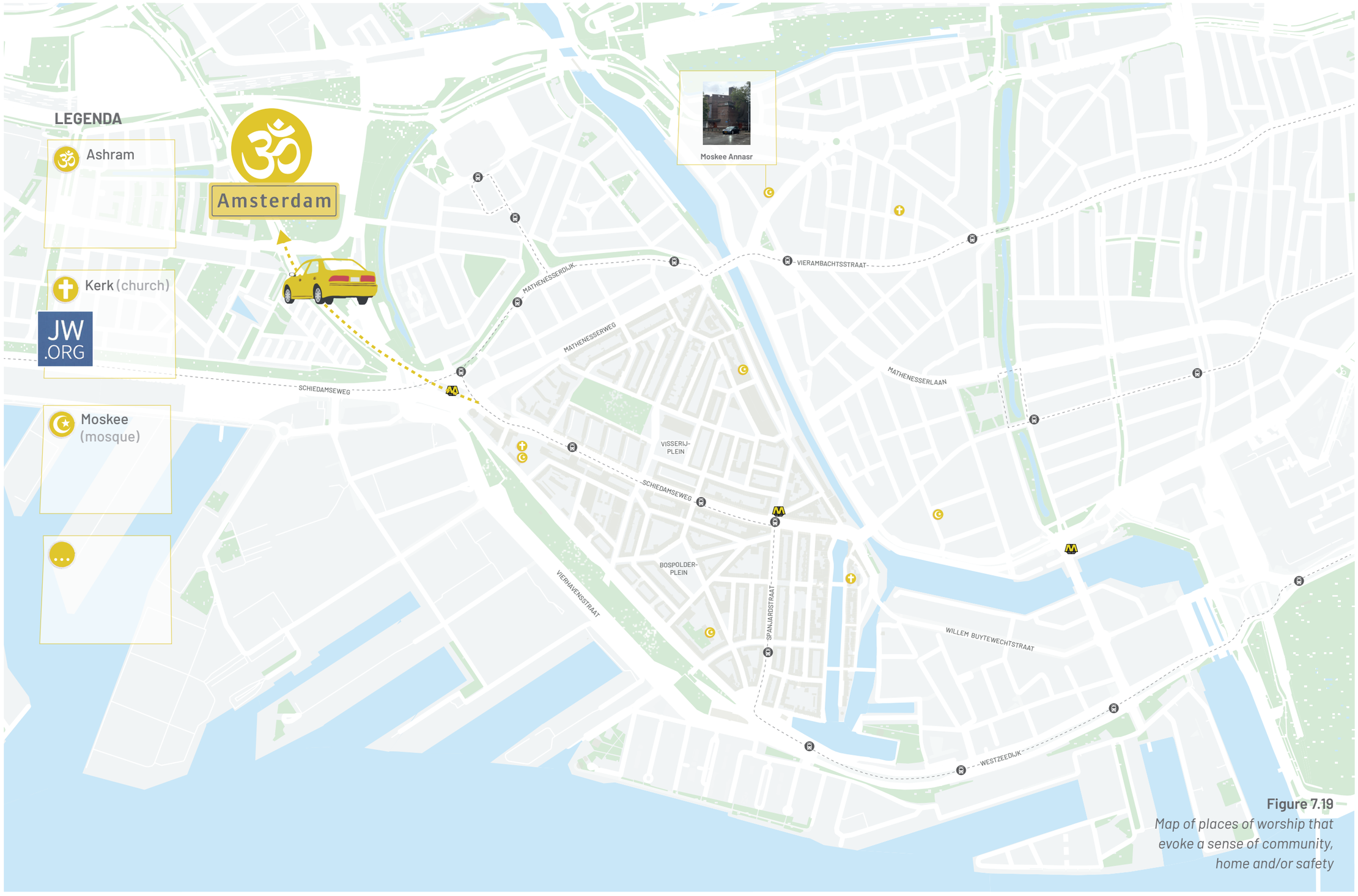


Figure 7.19
Map of places of worship that evoke a sense of community, home and/or safety

7.8 THE ARTS

Lastly, the arts present places and spaces where people gather ranging from visual arts and crafts to music studios [Figure 7.20]. For example, one participant explained how she is involved in the 'Muzikant Centrum Dinano' group, which for her is a place of community and a place where she feels at home and safe, especially in the practice rooms. Coolhaven Collectief houses such music studios and practice rooms as well as painters, photographers and sewing ateliers like that of Modelessen. Modelessen attracts a broad range of sewers, ranging from beginners to advanced, and primarily women, girls and to a lesser extent men and boys of all ranges from the young to older. For many, it is a place to fine-tune a skill in a supportive, creative, communal environment where a relaxed yet concentrated mood is set by music, tea and coffee.

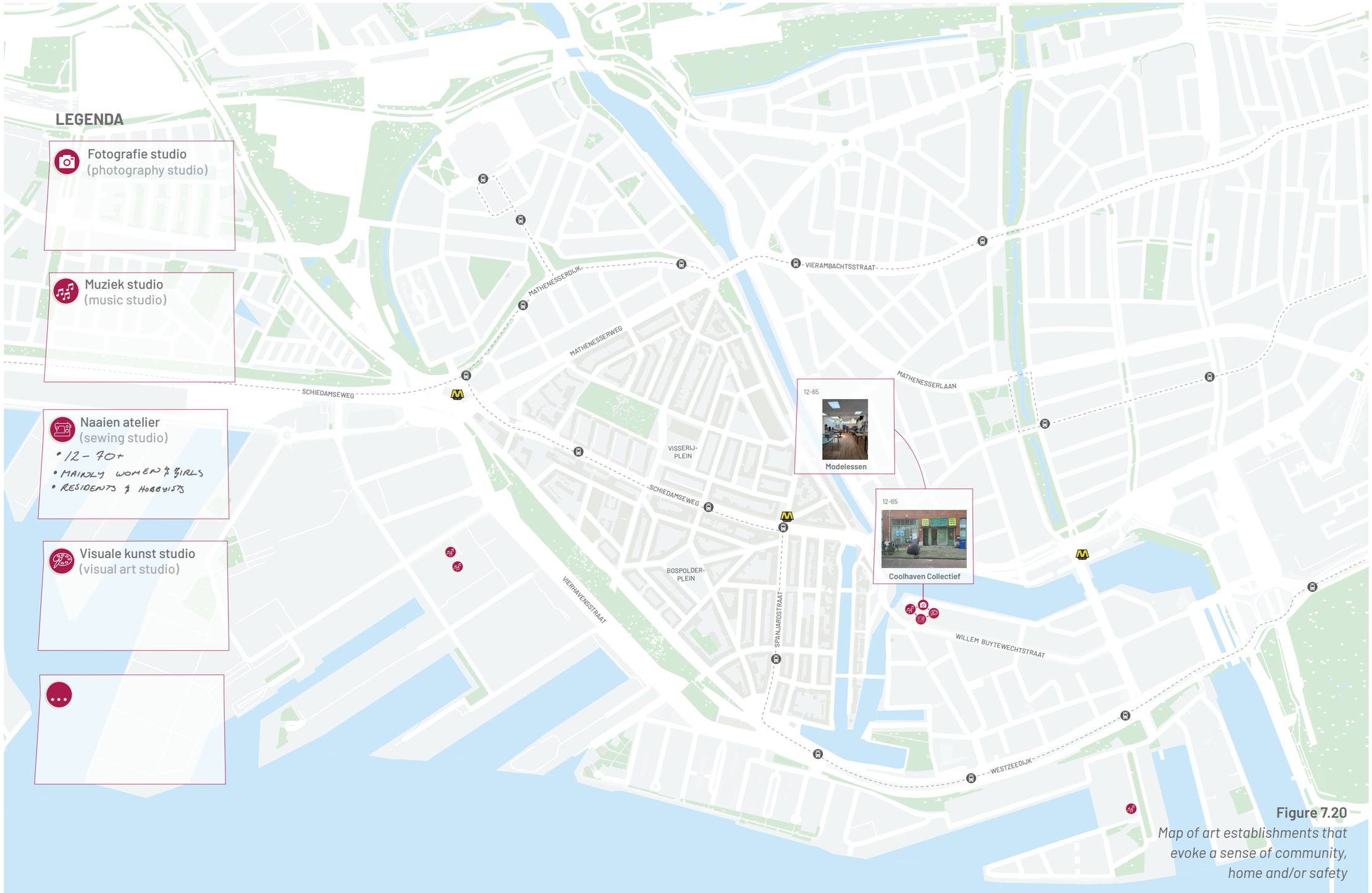


Figure 7.20
Map of art establishments that evoke a sense of community, home and/or safety



NL: “Die wc vind ik geweldig, elke keer weer :)! En het staat een beetje voor alles wat ik aan die ruimtes incl. ons naaiatelier zo geweldig vind - de community feel, het geknutselde en knullige, het gedeelde, het samen zijn en samen doen. If it makes sense :)”

EN: “I find the toilet fantastic, every time :)! And it kind of stands for everything I love about these spaces, including our sewing studio - the community feel, the tinkering, the usable, the being together and doing things together. If it makes sense :)”

NL: ”Nog meer kennis op te doen zodat je **zelfverzekerder** wordt. **Zelfvertrouwen**. Ik denk dat ‘t ook iets te maken heeft met **veiligheid** of zo, dat je dan veiliger voelt zodra je wat **diverser** wordt.”

EN: “Gain even more knowledge so that you become more **self-assure**. **Self confidence**. I think it also has something to do with **safety** or something, that you feel safer as soon as you become a bit more **diverse**.”



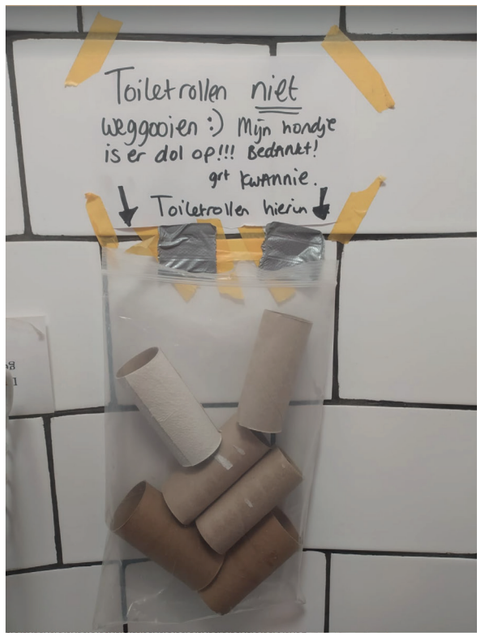
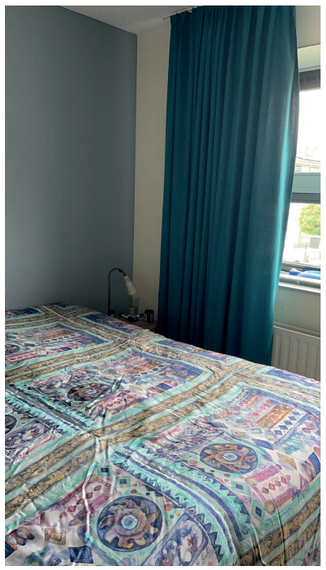


Figure 7.21
Modelessen through our eyes
Photo voice and words
Daša Mišovišova, Marleen and an anonymous participant, 2023

NL: “Ik denk dat de kern is, je wordt **veelzijdiger** en **kleurrijker** en dan ga je misschien zo meer **zelfvertrouwen** krijgen. Misschien is het ook goed voor je psyche, mentale gesteldheid misschien is dat goed woord voor”

EN: “I think the gist is, you become more **versatile/multi-faceted** and **colorful** and then you might get more **self-confidence**. Maybe it's also good for your psyche, mental condition, maybe that's a good word for it.”









NL: “De sprei en de gordijnen heb ik zelf gemaakt. Samen met de kleur van de achterwand geeft het vooral **rust**.”

EN: “I made the bedspread and curtains myself. Together with the color of the back wall, they provide **peace**.”



NL: "Dus het heeft aaneenschakeling van effecten die door voortvloeien naar andere mensen. Z-oals een oneindig ketting woordt van één mode les heeft eigenlijk impact op heel veel andere dingen."

EN: "So there's a chain of effects that flow through to other people. Like an infinite chain from one fashion lesson that actually has an impact on a lot of other things."

NL: "[Maken] geeft me een gevoel van **vrijheid** en het bereiken van een bepaald doel."

EN: "[Making] gives me a feeling of **freedom** and of achieving a certain goal."





NL: "Deze kleding betekent voor mij **"respect"**. Ik droeg dit onlangs tijdens een hindoeïstische afscheidsdienst, die ik heel indrukwekkend vond. De hindoe rouwkleur is wit, die van mij is zwart."

EN: "These clothes mean **"respect"** to me. I recently wore this to a Hindu farewell service, which I found very powerfull/impressive. The Hindu mourning color is white, mine is black."

NL: "Ja, ik word creatiever. Kijk, dat is eigenlijk 't belangrijkste ding. **Creativiteit**, daar gaat het om. Dat je zelf met een origineel idee komt en dat kunt vertalen naar een product iets wat tastbaar concreet wordt. Ik denk dat m'n creativiteit wat meer ontwikkeld en dat ik daar achter kom dat ik meer kan dan ik eigenlijk dacht. Ik ondek zeg maar mezelf van mijn kunnen, mijn grenzen, andere mentaliteit. Dus ik kom erachter wat ik nog meer kan, waar ik nog niks van afwist. Dus het is een ontdekking van mezelf. En dat leidt ertoe dat ik nog meer ga nadenken van hoe kan ik nog creatiever worden en hoe kan ik dat vertalen naar andere dingen in m'n leven? En misschien kan ik naast dit ook op een andere manier creatiever worden. Iets anders bouwen misschien? Weet je wel? Dus dan ga ik brainstormen met mezelf. Dus als ik dit kan maken, dan kan ik dat ook maken. Ja dus het is een kettingreactie."

EN: "Yes, I'm becoming more creative. See, that's actually the most important thing. **Creativity**, that's what it's all about. That you come up with an original idea and can translate it into a product that becomes tangible and concrete. I think my creativity has developed a bit more and I've discovered that I can do more than I actually thought. I discover my abilities, my limits, a different mentality. So I can find out what else I can do that I didn't know about before. So it's a discovery of myself. And that leads me to think even more about, 'how can I become even more creative and how can I translate that to other things in my life?' And maybe besides this I can become more creative in another way. Maybe build something else? You know. So then I start brainstorming with myself. So if I can make this, I can make that. Yes, so it's a chain reaction."





7.9 SPACES THAT COULD BE: WHAT ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE AND WOMEN?

From the research findings of the project and conversations with various participants, it became clear that there is a lack of diverse (public) spaces for specific groups to use where they can feel safe, at home, and be in community. These two groups mainly concern the youth, between the ages of 12 to 25 as well as women. For example, one participant reflects on the significance of avondwinkels, *"[it's] tragic actually that the facade, the front of a night shop, has to be the meeting place for young people"*. Equally, young girls often meet in Primark, a retail shop, as there are few other options. The same applies to older women who meet in supermarket and market aisles but little other places. When one participant describes her childhood, she explains how she could always play on the street where the street itself acted as the infrastructure to play games like 'trefbal' (English translation: 'dodgeball'). She continues that in her teenage years, when her interest to play as she did as a child lessened, she could go to youth societies or clubs. Images of her youth can be seen in Figure 7.23 However, she reflects on the limited clubs there are for young people now, especially in lower-income areas like Bospolder-Tussendijken despite there being initiatives offered by social workers regarding money management, debt and so forth, which I was informed about during a conversation with a social worker. Another participant in her mid-twenties explained how it was difficult for her to pinpoint places of community. She used the analogy of the television comedy 'Friends' as unlike the characters in the show, she does not have a sofa in a semi-public or public space where she can simply go and meet her friends [Figure 7.22]. In addition, with increased time on their hands after they retire or when their children leave home, older women expressed how they are in search of something to do with their time. One such place is Modelessen where sewing lessons are offered in the atelier. Nevertheless, could there be more spaces? If so, what is needed to realise more space for youth and women?

There are several reasons as to why these spaces may not exist in abundance, ranging from cultural factors and political-economic agendas to varying and active socio-historical hierarchies. Again, this presents a further opportunity for literacy building to identifying and unpack the different elements of systems to realise more spaces for youth and women if this is wanted and build upon the existing ecosystem of spaces and places of safety, home and community [Figure 7.24].



Figure 7.22
Sofa from the Sitcom 'Friends' upon which a group of friends regularly meet
Netflix as cited in Morgan, 2018

Foto’s p
passend bij mijn jeugd

Het immens grote gebouw waar mijn vader vroeger werkte, herkenbaar aan de 5 pijpen



Mijn basisschool ….



Figure 7.23
NL: Foto’s passend bij mijn jeugd
EN: Photos that reflect my youth
Anonymous participant

Winkel annex postkantoor in de dorpskern…hier was alles verkrijgbaar



Heerlijk zwemmen in ons zwembad , die nu helaas niet meer bestaat!



Lekker zwemmen in het nieuwe zwembad van Heijplaat

Deel van het dorp tijdens opzoomeren



Langs deze winkels dagelijks naar school lopen



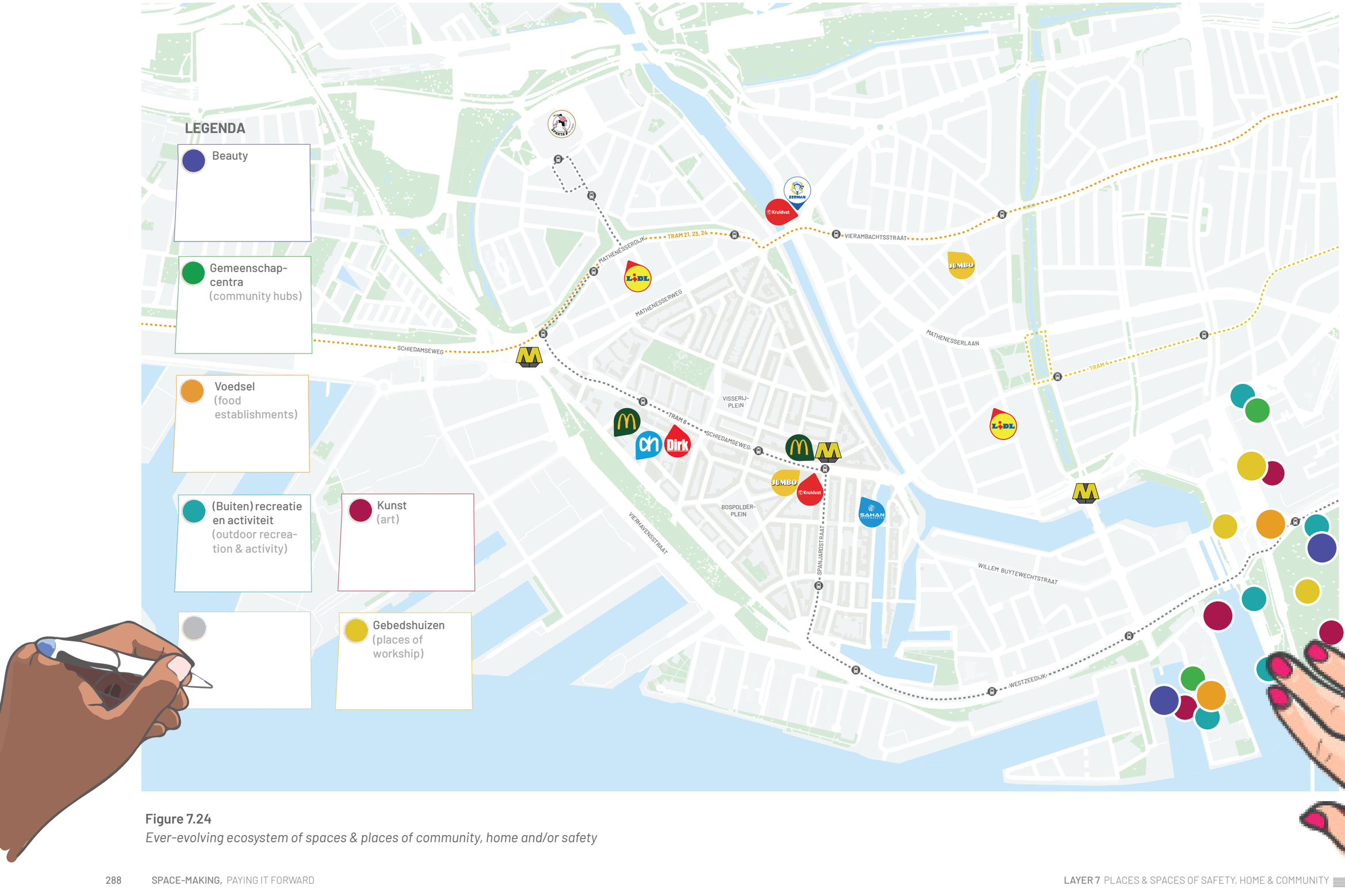


Figure 7.24
Ever-evolving ecosystem of spaces & places of community, home and/or safety

7.10 REFLECTIVE CONCLUSIONS

This final section communicates the main findings and implications of the research as reflective conclusions that respond to, 'where and how can 'unconventional' bodies of knowledge and experiences be accessed and valued?'. The highlighted themes concern differentiation in terms of spaces and time as well as spatial design implications.

THEME (continued): **DIFFERENTIATION IN SPACES & TIME**

Ecosystem of spaces and places
This layer has highlighted how there are a plethora of spaces and places where people feel safe, at home and/or in community with each other. Together these spaces and places form a network, or an ecosystem rather, of where people can be engaged ranging from food and beauty establishments to places of worship, the arts, community hubs and outdoor activity and recreational areas. From the analysis, it appears that spaces with more diverse functions, such as community hubs, naturally attract more varied people groups. The same applies to food establishments, where although some may cater to more specific groups, they also create more opportunities for more spontaneous encounters with a broader range of people.

Regularly frequented places and space
Many spaces within this ecosystem are easily accessible and regularly frequented. For example, people go to barber shops and hair salons every 1 to 6 weeks. Meanwhile, places of worship such as ashrams, churches and mosques were attended weekly, the same applies to artistic and creative studios and sports areas like football fields and gyms. Moreover, noticeably, many of the spaces and places that are frequently visited are easily accessible along principal axes, like the Schiedamseweg, with ample public transport.

Differentiation in time
Regarding how people can be engaged in these different spaces, it is important for urbanists to acknowledge and accommodate people's schedules, especially during co-creation. For it may be possible to engage with people for hours at a time every month or so, whereas, for others, weekly 20-minute interactions may be more feasible, perhaps as people wait to be served.

Implications for urbanists regarding all 3 sub-themes include identifying and developing an understanding of ecosystems of spaces and places of where different groups gather to co-creation to engage them there. Special attention can be paid to spaces that invite more specific groups as well as a broader range of people, and spaces that are regularly frequented to ensure more long-term and sustained engagement, of course, adapting to the time capacities that people have. Naturally, engaging people in specific places requires give and take in the form of support in some way, financial compensation, and/or other means.

SPATIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR URBAN PLANNING & DESIGN

THEME (continued): **HARNESSING KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCES & SKILLS**

Building onto harnessing the knowledge, experiences and skills of communities engaged, this layer illuminated more insights. They concern the fishing community in Delfshaven who have rich knowledge and skills about marine biodiversity, and could perhaps be engaged in the design, development and maintenance of water bodies. The section also highlighted how there could be more public spaces for the youth as well as women and girls to ensure that they have spaces outside of their homes where they feel safe, at home and in community. For example, a woman mentioned how she is eager to make her own cosmetics products. Thus, plants, trees, flowers and so forth that are indigenous to the Netherlands could be planted in various spaces to invite people to use and become connected to public nature, which people use and access for cosmetic, medicinal, food, spiritual and/or grounding purposes.

LAYER 8: CONCLUSIONS & DISCUSSION . . . FOR NOW

The reflective conclusions at the end of layers 5, 6 and 7 as well as the reflections peppered throughout layers 4 and 7 encapsulate the main findings of the research and their implications for co-creation. This is especially true within an urbanism context whether by designers, planners, researchers, policy-makers, educators and students. The reflective conclusions respond to the main research questions. Hence, to avoid repetition, this conclusion and discussion layer briefly condense the themes revealed in the reflections and reflective conclusions of layers 4, 5, 6 and 7 as they relate to the research questions, which guide the research outputs - storybook, reflection collects and bonus of implications for spatial design (and therefore planning) [Figure 8.1]. Finally, the uncovered themes are arranged in such a way as to understand how they inform the content of the various research outputs [Figure 8.2]. These themes, however, are underpinned by an overarching one regarding being seen - what it means to be seen and how we can ensure that people are seen, which each output explores in varying ways. A profound implication of the project and its themes is the need for a mindset shift oriented on healing, care and curiosity. At times this may evoke discomfort, but this ultimately supports in realising inclusive, healthy and socio-spatially just cities where people are seen and valued.

There was an initial idea to identify the implications of the research as they pertain to various stages, like the beginning, middle and end of co-creation processes. However, after much thought and deliberation this has consciously not been done in the final conclusion (although there are echoes in reflective conclusions). The reason is that there is no linear way of approaching co-creation or order in which the revealed themes and implications are to be addressed, adopted and adapted. The project's findings show how it is important to make our own connections as participation requires high degrees of local contextualisation. Hence, the findings can be applied when an individual and/or group thinks and/or feels it appropriate.

Building onto the research

Given the temporal scope of the study, analysis was conducted to a relatively thorough extent, particularly in relation to responding to the research questions. However, the results are to be interpreted as a mere taster into the richness of languages, meanings and places of safety, home and community in Delfshaven as opposed to a fully comprehensive overview. As such, there are several ways (layers) in which the project can be built upon. Here are a few suggestions:

(1) the thesis project has provided a foundation in which literacy building can be embedded into co-creative approaches for both inhabitants and urbanists. Thus, there are now opportunities to explore how literacy building can occur regularly and to experiment with what forms are most effective.

(2) there was a greater emphasis on where to engage people and how to express value. Nevertheless, future work could focus on how people can be engaged in co-creation in certain spaces and places using real-life projects.

(3) the thesis was very much focused on the perspectives and experiences of inhabitants. Therefore, in future, it could be interesting to examine how inhabitant perspectives intersect and diverge from those of design, planning, education, research, policy-making and so forth. Doing so would support in better unpacking and understanding what is already working and what could be improved. For instance, this could include analysing languages used by the municipality or policy-makers in diverse mediums such as official documents and social media.

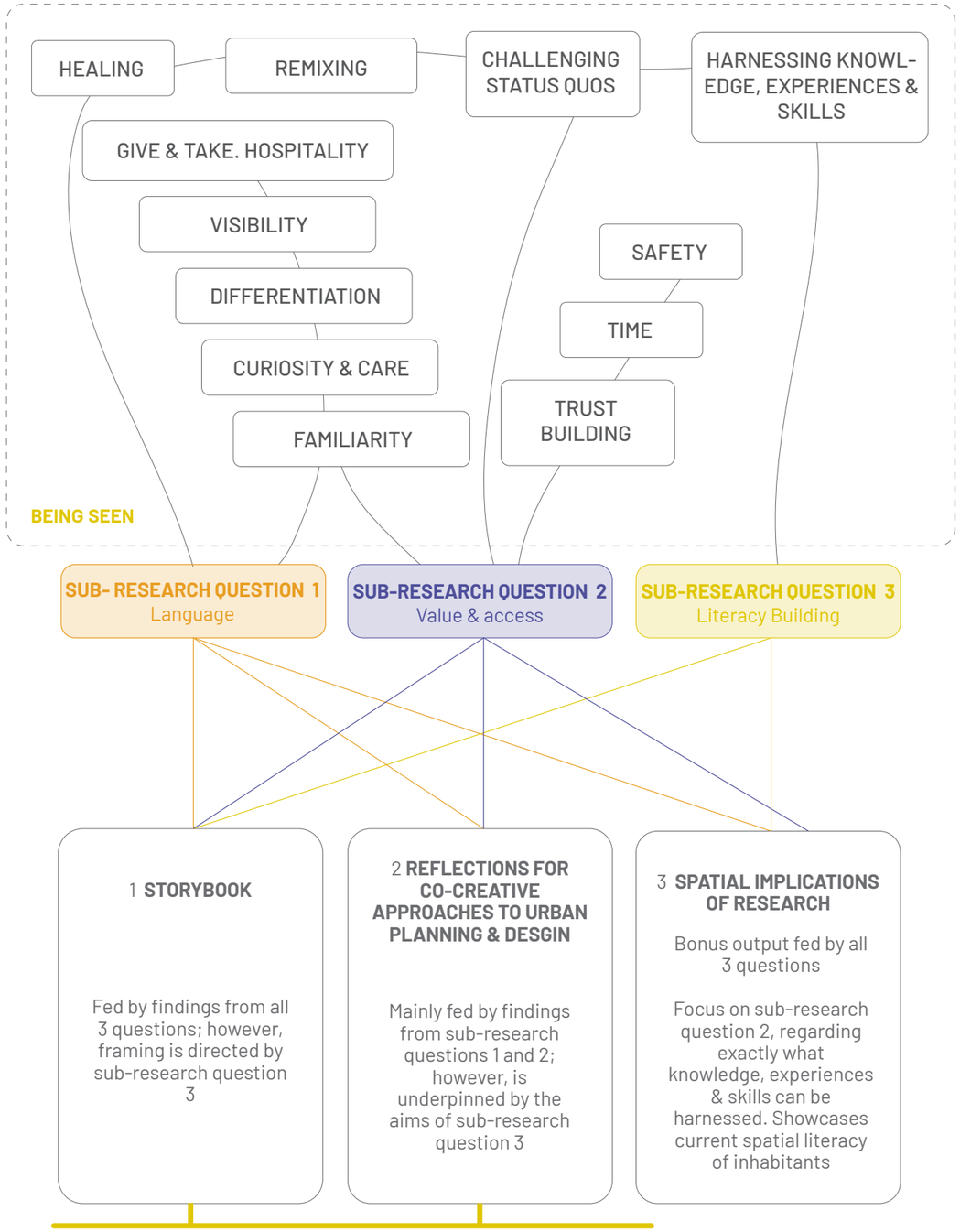


Figure 8.1
Themes as they relate to the research questions, and how the research questions relate to the 3 outputs



Figure 8.2
Themes as they relate to the 3 different outputs

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