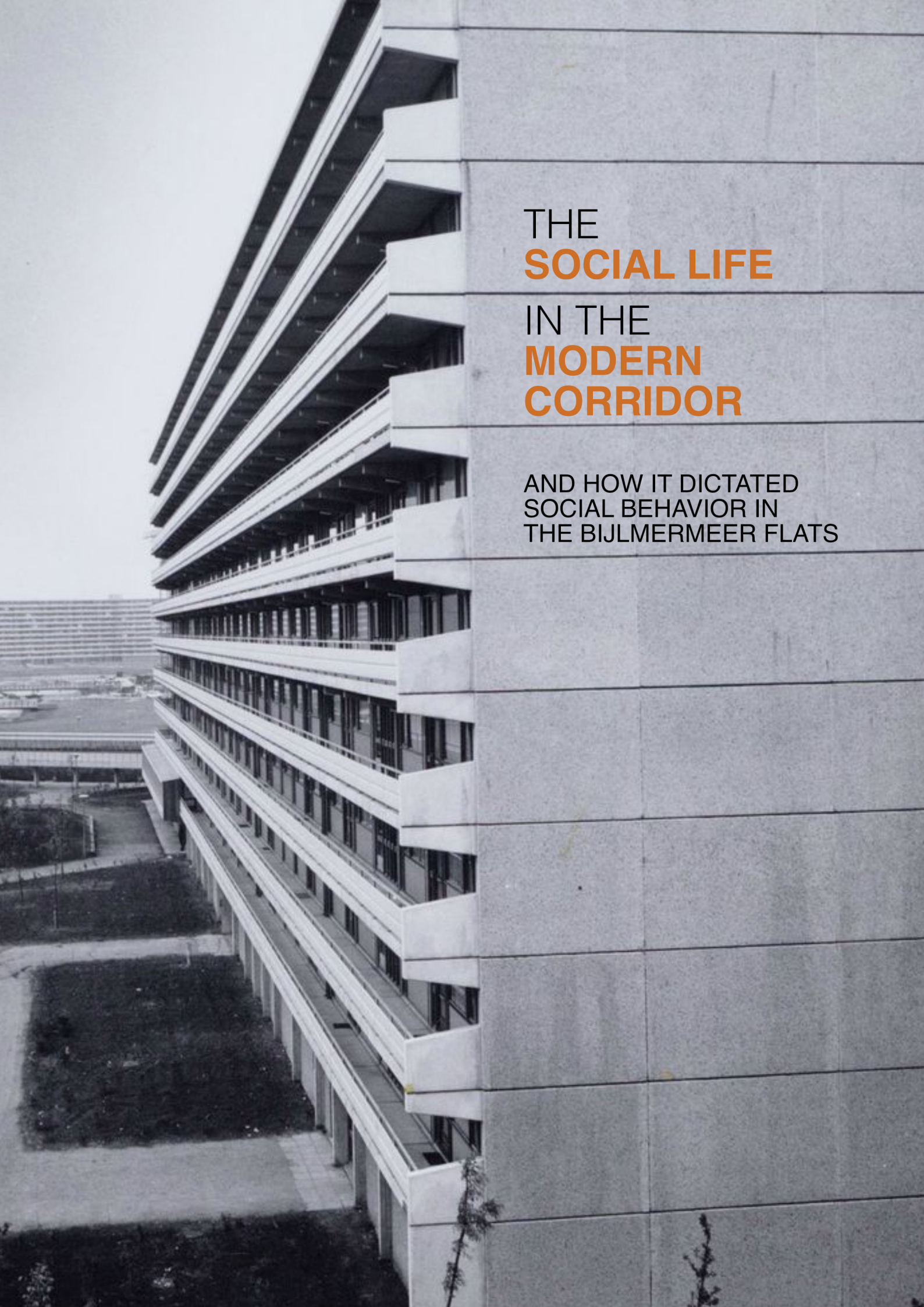


THE SOCIAL LIFE IN THE MODERN CORRIDOR

AND HOW IT DICTATED SOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN THE BIJLMERMEER FLATS

Cover page: Figure I
High rise flat of the galleries
Note. From [Photograph of Bijlmermeer], by B. Hulsman, 2015, Vrij Nederland (https://www.vn.nl/iedereen-even-ongelukkig-in-de-vinex-wijk).
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Abstract

The Social Life in the Modern Corridor: *a historical research on how spatial design of corridors influence the social behavior in the Bijlmermeer flat in Amsterdam.*

The Netherlands is dealing with a housing shortage with high rise construction being the primary solution. Nevertheless, high rise construction faces a negative stigma of crime and social isolation. How did the modern ideas shift from the “rue interieure” and “streets in the air" to the insecure, anonymous reality? Focussing on the spatial design of the corridors in the Bijlmermeer flats, this paper investigates its influence on social behavior in times of origin, decay and renewal. The methodology is multidisciplinary, part 1 elaborates on the reasons of construction of the case study, zooming in on the origins of the CIAM and international discussions. Part 2 focuses on the renewal strategies tied to behavior in the contemporary corridors examined with mapping, observations, interviews and a questionnaire. The historical analysis connected to contemporary behavior will explore how spatial design can restore social behavior without demolition. The findings indicate that the original modern ideas of standardization, repetition and separation of functions creates a “nomansland” and lacks “eyes on the street”. Physical renewal strategies focused on combating this with creating a sense of identity and social interaction by improving transparency, visibility and quality. The primary research showed that wider gallery dimensions and clusters of dwellings reduce anonymity and allow ownership. In the circulation core and entrance hall, where a higher number of users is inevitable, tighter spaces promote brief encounters and shared paths open conversations. Renewal strategies in severe circumstances as the Bijlmermeer flats require an integrated multiparty approach. However, the shift in social behavior in the Bijlmermeer flats after physical renewal shows that spatial design can contribute in restoring social interaction and identity without demolition.



Figure II
Kleiburg
Note. Photograph taken by the author, 2026

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Introduction

The Netherlands is facing the challenge of a substantial housing shortage. By 2030 we aim to build almost a million new dwellings to address the current crisis (De Jonge, 2023). The primary proposed solution is to build high rise buildings, yet these housing structures have a negative stigma of crime and social isolation. While this stigma is rooted in the past, a hundred years ago it used to be the opposite (Lévy- Vroelant et al., 2008). During the industrial period and post-war situation, high rise buildings were also presented as the main solution to the shortages. They were introduced by the Modernist Movement of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) as the “new modern living”, promising community and equality through architectural principles of separation of functions, standardization, ”light, air, space” and communal facilities (Declerck, 2004 in; Turkington et al., 2004). In reality this led to the opposite, many structures resulted in severe circumstances of crime, social isolation and physical decay (Krantz, 1999). The Bijlmermeer flats is the most radical example in the Netherlands that shifted from the modernist ideas into severe conditions. Spaces that would foster social interaction were translated into concepts as “rue interieur" and “street in the air” (Smithson, 1967). In particular, these turned into unsafe spaces hosting unwanted behavior and activities. The renewal improved the circumstance, showing that renovation can be the answer without demolition. What are the spatial factors that influenced this certain behavior? What can we learn from this case study for future projects? The aim for this paper is to examine how the spatial design of the corridors is related to social behavior.

This paper will investigate the modern corridors, originally introduced by the Modernist Movement as the “rue interieure", the gallery and the minimal entrance halls. It explains how the modernist ideals of the CIAM turned into sinkholes of crime and social isolation, followed by large-scale demolition and renewal strategies. The case study of the Kleiburg flat is a primary example of how the ideals were implemented, failed and renovated into success. While other factors play a role in the development of these spaces, this case study eliminates these to get insights on the influence of the spatial layout. This will be retrieved by an analysis of the original ideas of the construction, the period of decay and the renovation, tied to an examination of the social behavior within the contemporary corridors.
The paper answers the question: **How can historical research of the construction and renovation of the corridors of the Kleiburg flat demonstrate the influence of spatial design on social behavior?**

This research adopts a multidisciplinary approach of architectural historical research and socio-scientific observations. The theoretical foundation is developed through primary modernist archives, books and secondary literature. The historical research is tied to primary research of the Bijlmermeer flats, including observations mapping, photographs, interviews and questionnaires. The original design history compared to the current behavior in the renovated corridors, will show how the social interaction and identity can be restored without demolition.

The paper is divided into two parts. **Part 1: The historical analysis: Social ideas shaping construction** is the historical and theoretical framework. This will explain the reasoning of the construction of the Bijlmermeer flats with a focus on the role of the corridors, tied to the international discussions. Each paragraph contains a period, defined by the evolution of the modern corridor. The sections are divided into: the historical context of that period, the consequences for architecture, the focus on the Netherlands and the zoom in on the corridors.

P1.1 The Modern Ideal 1900-1960 Explores how the Industrial Period and the Second World War led to the international Modernist Movement, introducing concepts as “The Neighborhood Unit” and the “rue interieure”

P1.2 The outcomes of the Modern Movements 1960-1972 elaborates on how the ideas of the CIAM and Team 10 shaped the architectural landscape and inspired the construction of the Bijlmermeer flats.

P1.3 Decay and critical discussions 1972 - 1983 discusses the international critiques and rise of postmodernism. It shows the situation of the Bijlmermeer flats turning into poverty and crime and how this is situated in the corridors.

Part 2: The Renewal: Restoring social behavior focuses on the result of the physical renewal interventions to the primary research of contemporary social behavior in the corridors.

P2.1 The Renewal background 1983 - 2017 elaborates on the renewal strategies of the Bijlmermeerdlats following the same structure of the historical analysis: the context, the architecture and the corridors.

P2.2 Examinig the Renewal 2026 contains the primary research examining how the renovated corridors influence the social behavior in the corridors, by observations, mapping and interviews.

Ultimately, the paper will tie the conclusions of **Part 1** and **Part 2** together, explaining how the spatial design of the corridors are related to social behavior.

PART 1

The historical analysis:

Social ideas shaping construction

P1.1 The Modern Ideal 1900 - 1960s

Before examining the contemporary Bijlmermeer corridors and their associated behavior, this chapter provides clarification regarding the historical trajectory from the industrial period until the post-war situation. By analyzing the foundations of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) architects and their ideas for a new society. It provides the causality for shifting from the traditional city into the structured modern urban planning. This shift is realized by concepts such as “Ville Radieuse” and “The Functional City”, which provided a framework for high rise constructions (Declerck, 2004, Turkington et al., 2004) and addressed the acute European housing shortages. In the Netherlands, this formed the basis for the fundamental General Development Plan (AUP) of Van Eesteren and many other high rise constructions (City of Amsterdam, 1934).

This paragraph gives an understanding into the ideological origins creating the base of the Bijlmermeer construction, which was rooted in the modern ideals of community, equality and “light air and space”. It explains how the architects established these ideals with the separation of functions, standardization and the provision of communal facilities, manifesting in the “rue intérieure", galleries, minimal entrances and “street in the air” (Le Corbusier, 1967). Consequently, this paragraph answers the question: What are the origins of the Modern Movement and how were their ideals translated into the spatial design of the corridors?

P1.1.1 Industrial period led to an international Modernist Movement

During the 19th century, the industrialization period triggered a significant demographic shift, necessitating urgent housing interventions. Many job seekers moved to the cities for work, causing the population of European cities to triple or quadruple with five decades (Levy-Vroelant et al, 2008).The housing market was unable to accommodate this growth in, resulting in up to 80% of the population in seventeen major cities living in a one- or two- bedroom apartments (Van der Woud, 2010). These miserable circumstances led to overcrowding cities, filled with poverty, diseases and a lack of hygiene. The private housing market became an issue on the political agenda. Only during the high rise peak of the First World War, the government implemented social housing strategies uplifting the working class morally and physically. The Great Depression in the 1930s and the Second World War interrupted these efforts.

P1.1.2 The Second World War and the CIAM

Following the Second World War, urgent demand for efficient housing aligned with the philosophies of the Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Modern (CIAM). Led by Le Corbusier, the congresses of the CIAM (1928-1959) promoted high-rise housing though concept as "Ville Radieuse" and "The Functional City" focusing on "light, air, space" (Declerck, 2004, Turkington et al., 2004). They aimed to construct a new egalitarian society with better living environments, replacing overcrowded unhygienic chaotic traditional cities without daylight, where citizens were perceived as prone to disorder and revolution (Hall, 1988).

Europe faced severe physical, social and economic post-war damage, an intensified housing shortage and population growth. The standardization and repetition of construction methods facilitated rapid and cheap production, reducing the building time by two-thirds (Power, 1993). The preferred peripheral locations were cheap and made large scale projects possible. Consequently, this period was called the "golden age" for high rise construction. The developments targeted no longer just the social class, but also the middle class. This led to a significant proportion of the population living in high rise buildings (Esping Andersen, 1990), resulting in a European landscape dominated by uniform, monotenure, concrete high rise (Hoekstra, 2003)

Beyond rationalization and technological advantages, the high rise buildings carried significant ideological weight. Modernist planners introduced the new typologies as "new architecture for new people", aiming for an egalitarian ideal of community and an equal society that could be achieved by the physical form. Figure 1.1 illustrates this ideological significance. Large high rises became the symbol of modern living characterized by repetition, separation of functions, open blocks, uniformity, modern materials and methods and communal facilities (Mentzel, 1989).

P1.1.3 The Neighborhood Unit and the Netherlands

The Netherlands adopted modern urban planning as a strategic response to the severe housing crisis following the Second World war. One in five dwellings was destroyed or damaged and the construction of new housing had stagnated (de Vreeze, 1993). In the Dutch context, there was a strong preference for the structured neighborhood planning of the CIAM architects, including Van Eesteren and Bakema. As a result, the post-war reconstruction of the 1950s and 1960s was heavily influenced by "The Neighborhood Unit" concept of American Clarence Arthur Perry (Perry, 1929). The concept was originally rooted in Ebenezer Howard's "Garden City" concept (Howard, 1898), which integrates the benefits of "town" and "country" in low density development distanced from the chaotic industrial city. Perry argued that active urban planning is essential to foster community. The approach was a peripheral development with dedicated amenities, fostering a sense of identity, community and safety (Klerk,1980). "The Neighborhood Unit" was the response to the threat of the massive anonymous urban society which was growing in with the increase of population.

"The Neighborhood Unit" informed the basis for the General Expansion Plan of Cornelis van Eesteren (City of Amsterdam, 1934), which served as a blueprint for the post-war reconstruction. As a chairman of the CIAM, Van Eesteren followed a rational and scientific approach to urban planning rooted in "The Functional City", which mandated the separation of the four functions of the city, living, working, recreation and transport. On top of that the "light, air, space" motto supported the shift from cramped closed city blocks to an open block system with optimized sunlight (Declerck, 2004, Turkington et al., 2004). Government subsidies preceded a peak in high rise construction, including the Bijlmermeer flats (Hoekstra, 2018)

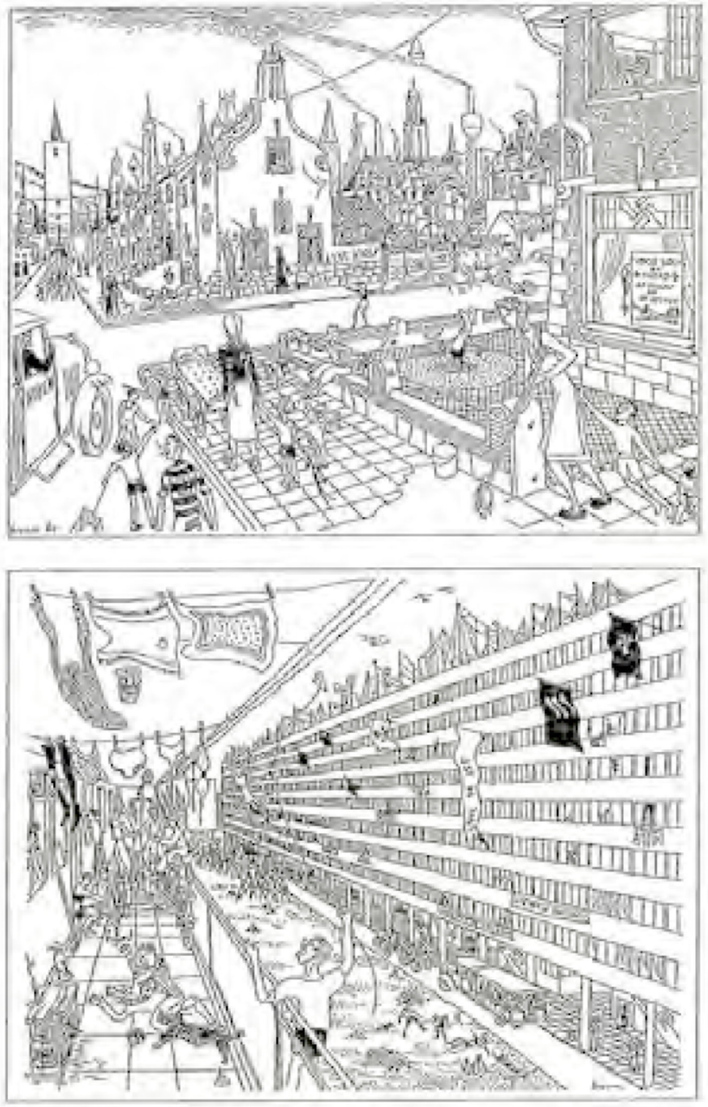


Figure 1.1
The view on traditional cities and modern cities
[Illustration]
Note. From [Illustration of traditional and modern cities], by A. Hessels, R. J. van Lanen, and H. Oudhoff, 2021, Large Housing Estates: Ideas, Rise, Fall and Recovery: The Bijlmermeer and Beyond (p. 48), Springer. Copyright 2021 by Springer.

P1.1.4 The “rue intérieure”, galleries and minimal entrances.

The Modernist Movement sought to eliminate the stuffy streets of traditional cities, viewing it as a “gut” where traffic puts the quality and safety of pedestrians at risk (Le Corbusier, 1973). In his “Ville Radieuse” concept Corbusier explains how to achieve this goal. The streets are separated from traffic by elevating them from the ground and added to the building as the “rue intérieure" (Le Corbusier, 1967). This street was meant to avoid anonymity and host social interaction. The space was more broad and included amenities available for everyone. Figure 1.2 shows the well-known example of these principles in the Unite d'habitation in Marseille. The introduction of the galleries in the open block structures facilitated maximal sunlight and opened toward the green landscape. According to the “light, air, space” principles, the gallery is a space where neighbors could meet, accompanied with the outdoor air and view on the green (Mumford, 2002). Figure 1.3 shows the ideal of the use of the galleries. The standardization made the dwellings and view equal for all residents. Ultimately, the entrances were minimized because the focus was on efficient vertical circulation. On the ground floor, as much space as possible should be given to the park landscapes and recreation.



Figure 1.2
Interior of the Cité Radieuse in Marseille
Note. From [Photograph of the interior of Cité Radieuse], by M. Bernard, 2014, Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cit%C3%A9_radieuse._Int%C3%A9rieur_1.JPG). CC BY-SA 3.0.



Figure 1. 3
The Modern Ideal of the Galleries
Note. From [Screenshot of children cycling in the Bijlmermeer], by T. van Voornveld, 2022, YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ygl4UP5S3gY). Copyright 2022 by Thomas van Voornveld.

P1.2 The outcome of the Modern Movement 1960s - 1972

After understanding the longer background and causality of the Modern Movement, this section elaborates on the architectural outcome of the ideas. The post-war period embodies the peak in high rise production in European countries, the architectural landscape was shaped by uniformity and monotonous high rise buildings. The outcome led to first critiques on the Modern Movement by Team 10, including influential Dutch members like Aldo van Eyck. They advocated a more human-oriented approach to urban planning (Risselada, 2005). In the Netherlands, the “Laag of hoog bouwen?” ("Building Low or high rise?” report of 1961, resulted in governmental support for high rises (Commissie Hoogbouw-Laagbouw, 1961) The political and ideological ideas covered in this section, shows the motivations for constructions in Amsterdam, including the Bijlmermeer flats. It explains how “rue intérieure”, galleries, minimal entrances and “street in the air” are implemented, answering the question: How did the outcome of the Modern ideals shape the spatial design of the corridors of the Bijlmermeer flats?

P1.2.1 The outcome of the Modern Movement

Across Europe, the high rise wave was peaking and the new uniform world was a visible result. Even after the war, shortages intensified, the focus was to build even quicker, cheaper and more efficiently. High rise construction became a ‘production’, instead of ‘building’ traditional houses. The Modern Movement believed that social problems can be solved with technical solutions of prefabrication and innovation (Van Elk & Priemus,1970; Zijlstra, 2001). During the high rise peak, early critical voices arose on “The Neighborhood Unit” and the “Ville Radieuse”. The aim for a social pattern of homogeneity was often not realized because the focus was on the quantity of dwellings instead of creating communal facilities. The outcome was a widely spread repetition of uniformity and monotony (Ibelings, 1996).

The criticisms were reflected in the data. The peak of production in many countries stopped after 10 years, for several reasons. In the Netherlands the market demonstrated different demand and it became clear that the top-down planning of the modern architects did not fulfill the wishes of the residents (Mentzel,1989, Hall, 1988). Figure 1.4 shows that the high rise wave in the Netherlands had its peak production around 1965, and was gone ten years later. Even before the end of the construction of the Bijlmermeer flats in 1975, hardly any new high rises were built in the rest of the country (Turkington et al., 2004).

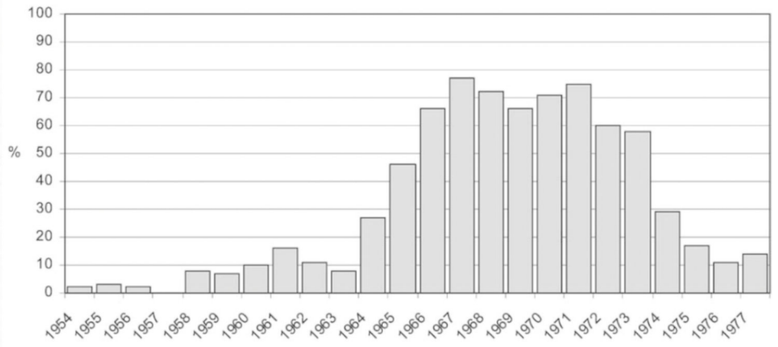


Figure 1.4
The high-rise wave in the Netherlands: dwellings in high-rise (over five storeys) as a percentage of all social sector flats.
Note. From [Graph of high-rise dwellings as a percentage of social sector flats], by G. Helleman and F. Wassenberg, 2004, Cities, 21(1), p. 5 (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2003.10.011). Copyright 2004 by Elsevier.

P1.2.2 Architecture inspirations of Team 10

The consequences of the functionalism of the early CIAM architects was recognized and shifted into a more human-approach by Team 10, the younger generation of the CIAM members. In 1953 Team 10 emerged, including Alison and Peter Smithson, Aldo van Eyck and Jaap Bakema, who argued that “Ville Radieuse” was technically efficient but neglected social interaction (Risselada, 2005). Team 10 prioritized human needs and advocated for a stronger relationship with the streets, mirroring the critique of Jane Jacobs. She advocated for more lively streets, since in the modern neighborhoods “eyes on the streets” were missing (Jacobs,1961).

Team 10 reconstructed the architectural concepts of the CIAM. The four functions of “The Functional City” became a hierarchy of house, street, district and city, which would give a human scale and encourage human encounters. Within this concept they introduced the “street in the air” (Smithson, 1967). CIAM placed cars on a higher level for efficiency and giving the ground floor to residents, instead Team 10 created elevated, wide streets where activity and social engagement between residents would occur. These bridges were aimed to be communal meeting spaces (Provoost, 2007). In the Netherlands Aldo van Eyck and Jaap Bakema were influential members of the team 10 movement, showing an aversion to the separation of functions, uniformity and monotone mass housing of the CIAM. They focussed on structural integrity by embracing the complexities of human interaction, an alternative to the (Jencks,1973). For Van Eyck the threshold was crucial in-between space to break anonymity, where people come home and meet (Eyck, 1962).

P1.2.3 The high rise wave and the Bijlmermeer flats

In the 1950, the political debate about solving the Dutch housing shortage led to a shift towards favoring high rise as the primary construction typology. The influential report “Laag of hoog bouwen? (“Buidling Low or high rise?”) took five years and tested three scenarios: building mainly high rise buildings, low-rise flat or single family housing. The result favored significantly high rise typology in urban density and outlined the associated advantages. The motivation according to the report was: privacy in combination with nature and space, ideal for the new modern residents (Commissie Hoogbouw-Laagbouw, 1961; Mentzel, 1989). So far, new developments were mainly low-rise flats. In 1963 an additional 25% subsidy was given for every dwelling built in this prefab housing system, which was the highest number for housing at that point (van der Schaar, 1994). The production time in the Netherlands for high rise was 600 hours, while traditional housing costs 2000 hours (Vreeze,1993; Van Geest,2001).

The report of 1961 motivated new high rise developments, such as the Bijlmermeer flats. The Bijlmermeer flats is the most extreme case in the Netherlands of a modern high rise building that suffered from its outcomes. Siegfried Nassuth and Pi de Bruijn started the design in 1968 and in 1975 13,000 dwellings in 31 repetitive blocks were realised, surrounded by park landscapes visible in figure 1.5, showing the original urban plan. Each block consisted of ten storeys of 200-300 meters. It was built to attract middle income residents. Foreign examples followed some of the ideas of the CIAM and Team 10 (Verhagen, 1987). However, the Bijlmermeer flats served as a blueprint, adopting all the original ideas as described in “Ville Radieuse”. The four functions of the city were separated, the traffic was raised above ground level and open blocks surrounded by green space were created (van Kempen & Wassenberg, 1996). The ratio of private to public space was 1:9, which was the highest ratio in the Netherlands so far (Verhagen, 1987).

Figure 1.5
The Original Plan for the Bijlmermeer

Note. From [Photograph of the Bijlmermeer original plan], by K. Leeming and T. Shakur, 2003, Global Built Environment Review, 3(3), p. [paginanummer]. Copyright 2003 by the authors [of Global Built Environment Review].



P1.2.4 Corridors of the Bijlmermeer

The Modern ideals of equality, community and “light, air, space” were directly translated into the design of the Bijlmermeer flats, shaping the spatial layout of the corridors. Figure 1.6 is a section of the original plans of 1973 of the Kleiburg flat, showing the standardization and repetition of the dwellings. These plans were repeated over 10 stories, which in combination with the open block structure and the galleries gave equal exposure to “light, air and space” to all residents (Mumford, 2000). The result that every unit, floor and building are similar, envisioned equality and marked the uniformity of the galleries as visible in figure 1.7 (Mentzel, 1989).

One vertical circulation core will give access to at least a hundred dwellings, connecting the galleries to the communal facilities in the “rue interieure”. The galleries and “rue interieure" serve to host social interaction by concentrating activity within these corridors. Section 1.8 shows that these are separated and elevated from ground level, while the ground floor is kept free from facilities and activity. This is in line with Team 10 “street in the air” concept. To ensure efficiency and provide as much space on the ground floor for recreation, the circulation and entrance halls are kept minimal. (Blair & Hulsbergen, 1993).

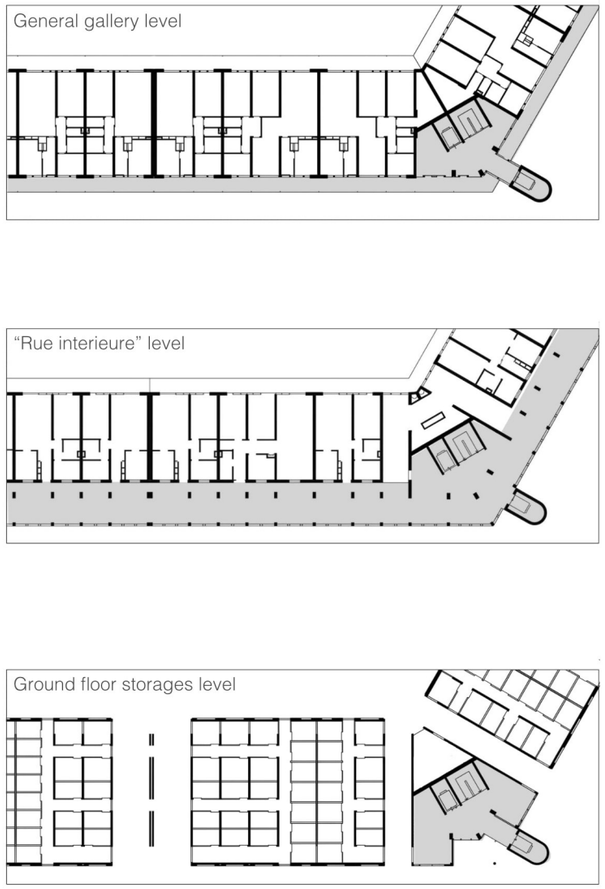


Figure 1.6
Architectural Layout of the Bijlmermeer Kleiburg flat
Created by author (2026).

Figure 1.8
Cross section Kleiburg flat before renewal
Note. From [Diagram of the Kleiburg flat cross section], by NL Architects and XVW Architectuur, 2017, ArchDaily (https://www.archdaily.com/806243/deflat-nl-architects-plus-xvw-architectuur). Copyright 2017 by NL Architects and XVW Architectuur.

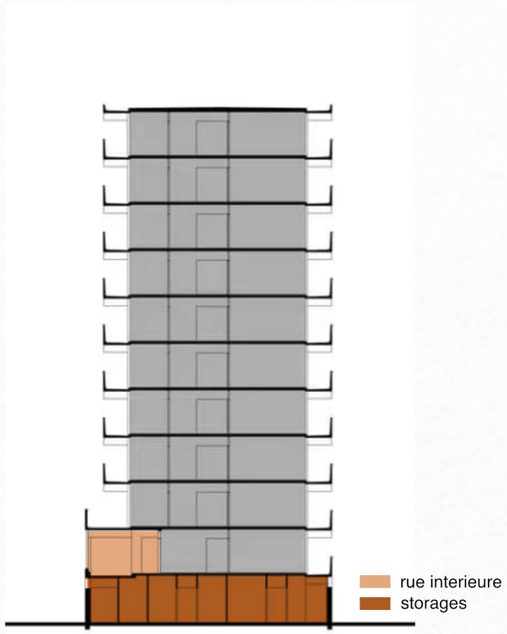


Figure 1.7
Uniformity of the galleries
Note. From "De flatneurose bleek een modeverschijnsel," by J. van der Zee, 2015, Het Parool. (https://www.parool.nl/amsterdam/de-flatneurose-bleek-een-modeverschijnsel~b7e78dd1/). Copyright 2015 by Het Parool.



Figure III
Elevated Metroline
Created by author (2026)

P1.3 Decay and critical discussions

1972 - 1983

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze how the architectural form has devolved from ideas of community, equality and “light, air, space" into poverty, crime and social isolation. Starting with the broader context of the critiques by the post modern architects and how these became reality. As a result, the fall of the Modern Movement and cessation in the high rise production across Europe. Furthermore, it gives the social perspective of the mismatch in the demand in the Netherlands and zooms in on the severe circumstances in the Bijlmermeer flats. After understanding the social perspective, we zoom to what extent the physical layout affected these conditions. The concepts of separation of functions, standardization and the communal facilities, led to uniformity, “no-mansland” and “blind spots”, fostering crime and neglect within the corridors. Drawing on theories of Oscar Newman (1972) and Jane Jacobs (1961), who reasoned the physical layout as a result of lack of social control and social surveillance. Ultimately, this chapter answers the question: What spatial elements in the corridors contribute to the unwanted social behavior during the decay of the Bijlmermeer flats?

P1.3.1 Critiques on modernism and the rise of postmodernism

The unpromised consequences of the modernist developments led to international discussions as the stigma of modern living turned into physical and severe social circumstances. The statistics substantiated the concerns, showing the large scale of the buildings contributing to unintended consequences such as crime and poverty (Turkington et al, 2004). The communal parks and semi-public spaces lacked ownership and led to “no-mans land”, dead areas and spaces of insecurity (Newman,1972). The anonymity of these spaces in combination with insufficient maintenance by authorities and lack of social control caused physical decay and further invited crime and anti-social behavior (Wilson & Kelling, 1982; Elsinga & Wassenberg,1991). Apart from the physical decay, the social-economic shift showcased that the intended middle class family demanded for a more suburban single family housing situation. The high rise buildings became a place for the vulnerable part of society, including low-income, unemployment and immigration (Power,1997). The high rises became a place of poverty and social isolation. The overall cycle of decline, rising crime rates and deterioration led to a stigmatized reputation for high rise buildings, leading to demolition programs all over Europe (Hastings,2004).

P1.3.2 The end of the Modern high rise construction

After the statistics showing the different outcomes than the CIAM architects expected, the end of the modern high rise developments is marked with the demolition of Pruit-Igoe in the USA in 1972. Thirty two housing buildings were claimed with the only solution of demolition because of the high rates of social uncontrollability, social insecurity and unsafety. The demolition was broadcasted which led to a symbol of failure of the Le Corbusier style high rise buildings (Wassenberg et al., 2004) At this point the USA's high rise wave stopped, while in Europe the construction was still continuing (Turkington et al, 2004). Hugo Priemus stated in his “model of decay" that the Pruit -Igoe example was the start of many other concerns regarding the only solution of demolition for buildings with the same problem (Prak & Priemues, 1986). For example for the Bijlmermeer flats the question was raised, since they had remarkable similarities in numbers of poverty, population groups, vacancies, crime and stigmatization.

P1.3.3 Bijlmermeer: sinkhole of poverty and crime

In 1974 the Bijlmermeer flats showed multiple problems resulting in a turnover rate of 30% and uncontrollable circumstances of poverty, illegal immigrants, crime, high truancy and drug abuse (Blair and Hulsbergen, 1993). The problems can be categorized into three factors. The first one is the unfinished amenities and transport to the city, which turned the site into a satellite area with no life on the street (Greenberg, 1999: Luijten 1997). The second factor is the mismatch of the housing market. The intended middle class residents preferred suburban single family housing over high rise. The dwellings attracted mostly low income or unemployed social groups and immigrants. In total only 20% have Dutch roots (Kwekkeboom,2002). The third factor is the physical layout of the buildings. The numerous uncontrollable public and collective spaces like entrees and 110 kilometers of galleries turned into blind spots within the buildings instead of meeting spaces. According to Oscar Newman (1972) and Alice Coleman (1985) the wrong design is the main reason for the decay and residential behavior. Each block contains 400 dwellings with thousands of undefined semi-public spaces. The lack of eyes on the streets and no feeling of responsibility for the spaces causes the problems (Stichting Wijkopbouwoprgaan, 1980). A survey uncovered that 80% of the residents mentioned “pollution, degradation, vandalism and lack of safety” as the main problems in the flats (Helleman & Wassenberg, 2001). Crime and physical deterioration are the most critical factors for neighborhood quality. You can improve the building by social to economic to physical strategies, but if these two factors are not being fixed, the renewal strategies will have no effect (Greenberg, 1999).

P1.3.4 The behavior in the corridors of the Bijlmermeer

In the media, images of corridors filled with drug dealers, trash and homeless concerned architects as Oscar Newman (1972) and Jane Jacobs (1961), starting questions of redesign of the physical layout. Their theories explains the lack of social control and social surveillance as a driver for this severe degradation.

Oscar Newman noticed the absence of social control because of the lack of “defensible space” in the corridors (Newman, 1972). He explains it as the absence of territoriality, which occurs when spaces are undefined resulting in residents not being able to identify with the space. In the Bijlmermeer flats, this has to do with the uniformity as a result of the equality and standardization. On top of that, galleries are shared by up to 20 dwellings and the entrance and circulation core connect up to 100 dwellings. No one feels responsible for the “no man's land”, which incites social unsafety and vandalism. Newman's research shows that 37% of the criminality in semi public space happens in high rise buildings and 5% in low rise because of this lack of territoriality. Kevin Lynch research in 1960 on identity underlines this aspect. He states that people cannot identify with a space when there is no differentiation (Lynch, 1960; forthcoming Sluis,2003).
According to Jane Jacobs, the spatial layout of high rise buildings misses “eyes on the street” (Jacobs, 1961). This gives a lack of social surveillance which makes the space insecure. The reason for this is the separation of functions, which creates “blind spots” in the corridors during certain parts of the day. Another spatial aspect is the invisibility of certain corridors because of the placement indoors (“rue intérieure”) and the height of the buildings in combination with the stacked layout of the galleries.



Figure 1.9
The Demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project in St. Louis
Note. From [Photograph of the demolition of Pruitt-Igoe], by S. Jeffries, 2012, The Guardian (https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/feb/26/pruitt-igoe-myth-film-review). Copyright 2012 by Guardian News & Media Limited

Conclusion Part 1

The first part of the research explains the historical reasoning of the construction of the Bijlmeer flats with a focus on the role of the corridors during its development. The answer is developed by analyzing the origins of the Modern Movement and their ideas on the corridors, how this shaped the corridors of the Bijlmermeer flats, and how these contributed to the social behavior of residents?

The origins of the Modern corridors lies in the ideas of creating community, equality and “light, air, space” by standardization and repetition on a large scale, as a solution to the housing shortages. These were adopted in the modern urban planning strategies in the Netherlands, which led to a high rise peak. The new typology got critiques on the uniformity and anonymity of the structures. Team 10 and other renowned architects aimed for a more human approach. Dutch politics supported the high rise construction, resulting in the construction of Bijlmermeer flats. The design was a blueprint of the CIAM, including the concepts of the “rue interieure”, galleries and “streets in the air”. Internationally the high rise buildings showed uncontrollable circumstances of crime, poverty and social isolation, which led to demolition in many cases.
The historical analysis of the decay of the Bijlmermeer and the theories on the spatial layout demonstrated that the design led to two main problems that attracted crime and social isolation.The lack of social control in the corridors was caused by the high amount of dwellings and uniformity which made the spaces a "nomansland”. The lack of social surveillance arose because of the separation of function and the invisibility of the corridors missing “eyes on the streets”.
The understanding on what spatial elements are decisive for problems of crime and social isolation in the decay of the Bijlmermeer flats, helps to move forward to how this influenced the spatial renewal strategies. In particular, how the renovation of the layout of the corridors shifts the residential behavior to restore the social interaction and identity.

PART 2

The Renewal:
Restoring social behavior

P2.1 The Renewal of the Kleiburg flat
1983-2017

The failure of the modernist design of the Bijlmermeer flats led to programs of re-evaluation and restructuring. The designs of the “rue interieure” and the “street in the air” turned out to attract uncontrollable circumstances of crime and social isolation, calling for the need of fundamental changes. The first paragraph explains the transition from the top-down planning of the original construction to the human-centred approach for a series of renewal strategies, implemented between 1982 and 2016. This will give the foundation for the primary research on the social behavior in the corridors in P2.2
The renewal started with small top-down intervention, but led eventually to the “Final Plan of Approach". This resulted in demolition of 70% of the structures of the original urban plan (Helleman & Wassenberg, 2004). The Kleiburg flat was one of the surviving structures and the successful example of renewal instead of demolition. The renewal, done by NL Architects and XVW Architectuur, introduced the concept of the “Klusflat” (“DIY House”), which gave ownership of the layout of the dwellings to new residents (Mies Arch, 2017). On top of that they activated the plinth and renovated the corridors. The interventions on the corridors were influenced by Oscar Newman's “fefensible Space” (1972) and Jane Jacobs “eyes on the street” (1961), correcting several original modern ideas of the CIAM by combating the anonymity, blind spots and lack of identity with transparency, quality and ownership.

P2.1.1 Physical and other strategies van Bijlmermeer

In 1983 a series of unsuccessful top-down interventions exposed the fundamental mistake within the physical layout of the development. Early strategies focused on improving physical security by implementing amenities, closing the covered walkways and adding surveillance cameras Luijten 1997. However, the behavior of the residents did not improve and the vacancies reached a peak of 25% in 1985 (Van Kempen and Wassenberg 1996:, Kwekkeboom, 2002). After a long debate, the physical layout of the flats was labeled as the fundamental mistake, the high rise was too massive and too uniform. This concluded that even more physical renewal was needed. Following this evaluation, a questionnaire was held among the residents. The outcome (figure 2.1) was shocking. 70% of the residents agreed on demolishment of the Bijlmermeer flats, even 60% when it includes your own house. The other 40% agreed on selling or renovating the dwellings (Ouwehand, 1999). The reasons were about the circumstances of living in a high rise. An explanation for the high numbers also holds in the help that the residents receive in finding a new home when their dwelling is being demolished. Following this questionnaire, the “Final Plan of Approach” was approved in 2010. Figure 2.2 shows how almost 70% of the remaining flats were demolished and replaced for low-rise dwelling. In total 15 blocks of the original 31 remain. So far this is the biggest restructuring project of the Netherlands (Helleman & Wassenberg, 2004).

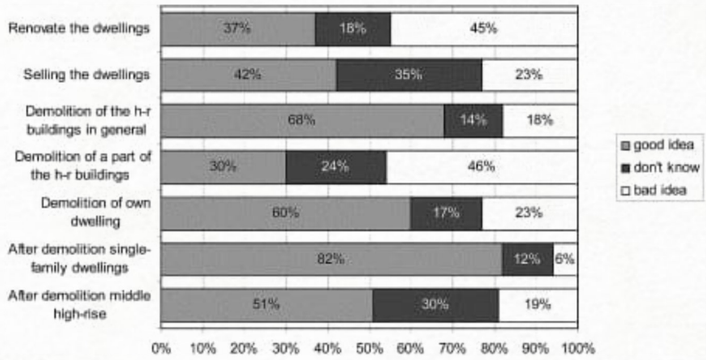


Figure 2.1
Opinion about the physical renewal per measure (in percent).
Note. From [Graph of opinions on physical renewal], by G. Helleman and F. Wassenberg, 2001, Bewonersonderzoek Finale Plan van Aanpak Bijlmermeer [Residents Survey Final Plan of Approach Bijlmermeer], p. [paginanummer], DUP Satellite. Copyright 2001 by DUP Satellite.

P2.1.2 Kleiburg: from uniformity to diversity

The Kleiburg flat is one of the last remaining honeycomb structures of the Bijlmermeer flats after the demolition in 2010. It went through another severe renovation consisting of a bottom-up approach. The renewal was done by NL architects and XVW Architectuur and started in 2011 (Mies arch, 2017). The structural and architectural interventions had a subtractive focus: the building was stripped and the modernist flaws were corrected. They introduced the “Klushuis” (DIY House) concept. The building was left as a shell, where the dwellings were sold for one euro to new residents. In contrast to the standardized CIAM approach, the residents could come up with their own layout. This gave ownership and a feeling of territoriality of the space (Wassenberg, 2013). The old collective sinkhole was now focusing on adding individualism to the dwellings. Qualitative interventions made the semi-public more inviting, increasing the feeling of safety. Finally, figure 2.4 shows how the blind plinth of the building was activated by adding working and housing units into the old garages (Mies arch, 2017). The interventions contrasted the original ideas of the CIAM. The anonymous state managed high rise was redesigned to be human-centered, increasing the diversity. The transformation was internationally recognized and won the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture, Mies van der Rohe Award in 2017.

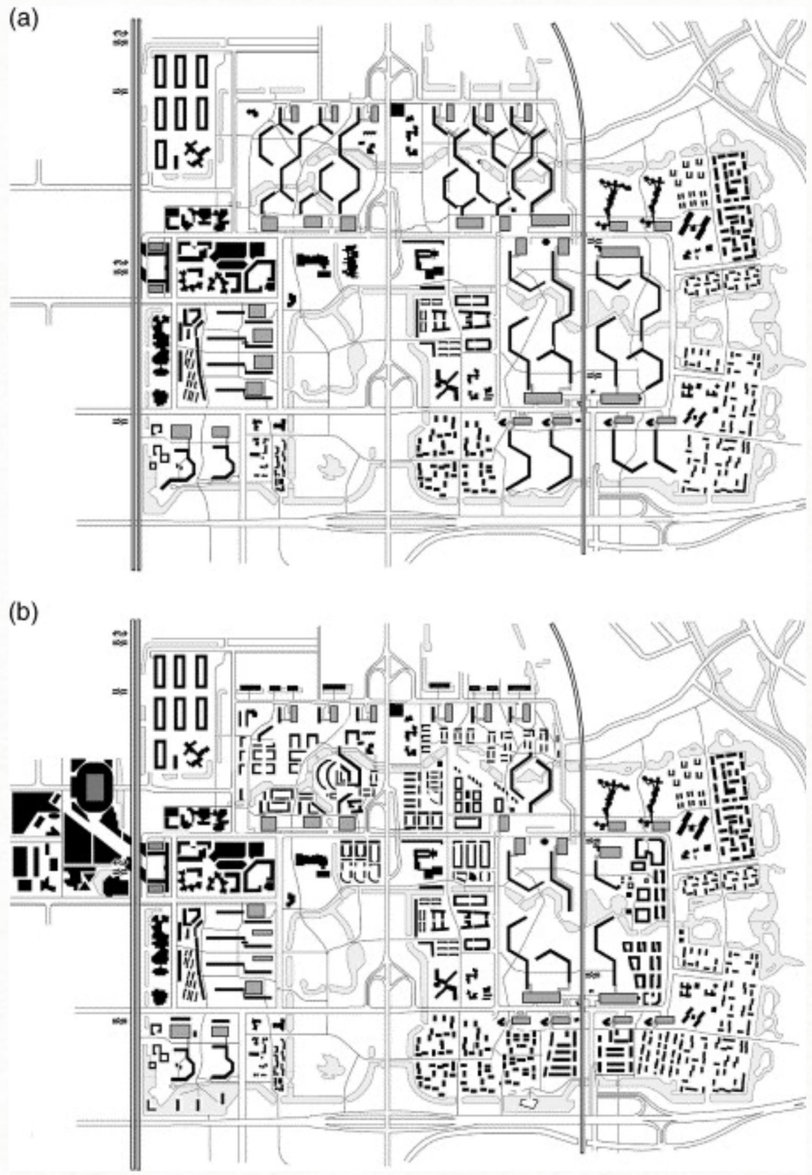
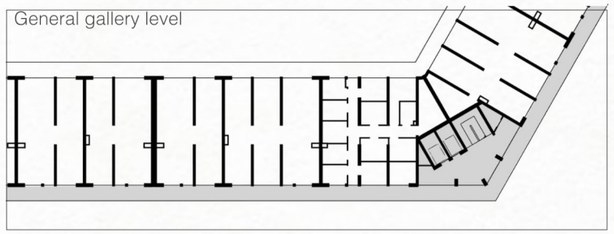


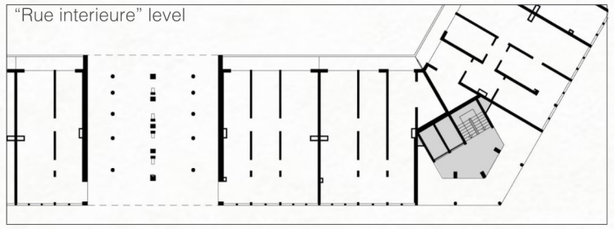
Figure 2.2
The Transformation of the Bijlmermeer: (a) Situation in 1992 and (b) Plan for 2010
Note. From [Map of the physical renewal of the Bijlmermeer], by W. Moser, 2014, Chicago Magazine (https://www.chicagomag.com/city-life/january-2014/what-are-european-cities-doing-about-segregation/). Originally published in Helleman and Wassenberg (2004). Copyright 2014 by Chicago Tribune Media Group.

P2.1.3 The spatial renovation of corridors

NL architects and XVW Architectuur (2017) focussed on correcting functional design with the major amount of corridors without territorial control, by adding light, activity and quality to improve social surveillance and social control in the corridors (Wassenberg, 2013; Mies arch, 2017). According to Nygen (2025), social interaction happens for 46% in the circulation spaces of high rise buildings. Following with 16,2% in the open public space and 15,9 % in the dwellings. Improving the corridors is crucial for restoring social control.

Figure 2.3 show the new floor plans of the Kleiburg flat. The focus of introducing light and transparency gave more overview and a visual connection between indoor and outdoor. To combat the chance of hiding that attracted the crime, the dark solid walls in the entrance hall and circulation spaces were made transparent and a mezzanine level was added. This provides a clear threshold of visual integration before entering, a crucial element for hallways to encourage spontaneous contact according to Nuygen. On top of that, instead of the “street in the air”, the renewed design reactivated the plinth of the buildings. The “rue interieur" and storages serving as “blind spots” were transformed into transparent live and work units and connected to the street. This creates “eyes on the street” and social surveillance (Wassenberg, 2013). Finally, high quality and light toned materials increased the safety and social control, because residents feel the need to take care of the space (Newman, 1972).





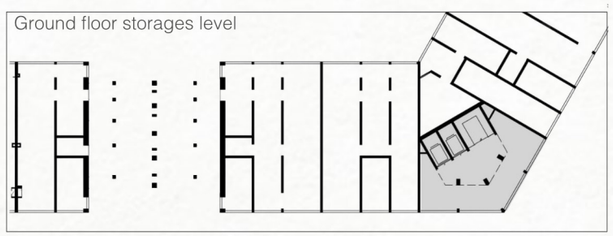


Figure 2.4
Architectural Layout of the Bijlmermeer Kleiburg flat after renewal
Created by author (2026).

Figure 2.3
Cross section Kleiburg flat after renewal
Note. From [Diagram of the Kleiburg flat cross section], by NL Architects and XVW Architectuur, 2017, ArchDaily (https://www.archdaily.com/806243/deflat-nl-architects-plus-xvw-architectuur). Copyright 2017 by NL Architects and XVW Architectuur.



P2.2 Examining the Renewal
2026

The renewal of the Kleiburg flat has a lot of recognition due to the major shift in circumstances and residential behavior. The series of physical renovations focussed on light, quality and activity to combat the lack of social control and social surveillance. The physical renovations of the corridors focussed on improving the social interaction and identity within the spaces. This paragraph will investigate what elements within the corridors drive certain behavior, using quantitative and qualitative primary research of behavioral mapping, observations, interviews and questionnaires. Answering the question: How does the physical renewal of the corridors of the Kleiburg flat drive contemporary social behavior of residents?

Paragraph 2.1 provides the reasoning for inventions on spatial design to shift the residential behavior within the corridors of the Kleiburg flat. To provide a theoretical framework for identifying the residential behavior, these interventions are connected to theories of Oscar Newman's Defensible Space (1972) and Jan Gehl's Life Between Buildings (2011). The mapped spaces are the "corridors" within the Kleiburg flat, as defined throughout the paper. The first floor gallery level, one general gallery level, the entrance including the mezzanine level and the circulation core connected to the examined galleries.
On top of the observations, qualitative research will be conducted through interviews and a questionnaire to substantiate the observations.
Connecting the results of the primary research to Part 1: The historical analysis, will provide an overview on how the social behavior has changed according to the renewal strategies. This will demonstrate insights on how spatial design of corridors can facilitate certain goals. It's the synthesizing step in answering the overarching question: **How can historical research of the construction and renovation of the corridors of the Kleiburg flat demonstrate the influence of spatial design on social behavior?**

P2.2.1 Identifying the activities

As a result of paragraph 2.1.3, a theoretical framework is provided to define the behavior in relation to the lack of social surveillance and social control. Synthesizing Newman (1972) and Ghel's (2011) theories on the level of identity and social interaction, categories of activities is provided as a foundation for the observations.
The sense of identity is explained in Oscar Newman's Defensible Space (1972).
The physical layout discourages people from identifying with the space. This has to do with the level of control over the space around your home, lobbies and corridors. When there is a high level of control, a sense of territoriality and safety will arise. When there is a low level of control, anonymity will show. The purpose is to allow people to take control of the space so they can realize their values and lifestyles (Newman, 1972).
Newman refers to different modes of territoriality which are categorized in figure 2.6 in three levels to collect data from the observations.
The level of social interaction is defined in Jan Ghel Life Between Buildings (2011). He mentioned that different types of "social activities" are influenced by the physical form of the space (Gehl, 2001). Gehl states five levels of social interaction from passive contact to close friendships. Within these levels of contact there are different types of activities defined from seeing, hearing and talking. We combine these two analyses to three levels of social interaction, described in figure 2.7.

"Social activities include children at play, Greetings and conversations, communal activities of various kinds, and finally – as the most widespread social activity – passive contacts, that is, simply seeing and hearing other people"
(Gehl, 2011, p.12)

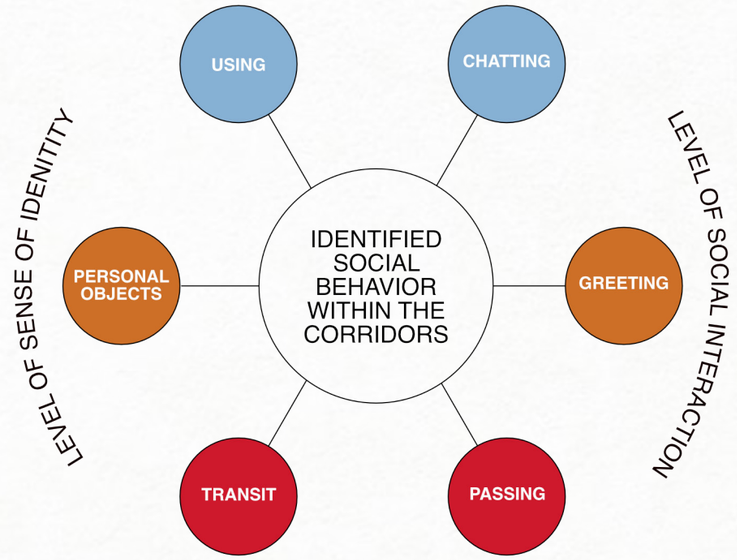


Figure 2.5
Diagram of examined social behavior
Created by author (2026).

Level of identity	Theoretical description	Examples
Maximal	**Using** Residents are actively using the corridors as if it's their own space by spending time on personal activities. Newman refers to this as “proprietary feelings”, which reaches a high level of safety.	Children playing, reading, smoking, eating.
Average	**Personal objects** When residents place personal objects, it indicates that people feel a sense of control over the space. Newman refers to these as real or “symbolic barriers” showing ownership over the corridors.	Plants, doormats, benches, tables.
Minimal	**Transit** When residents experience low sense of control over the space, the corridors are used exclusively for transit to their homes. The space feels like a “no-man’s land” and lacks safety.	Walking, hurrying, avoiding eye contact.

Figure 2.6
Diagram on activities of sense of identity
Created by author (2026).

Level of social interaction	Theoretical description	Examples
Maximal	**Chatting** The highest level of social interaction is chatting. According to Gehl, this start often when people are occupied with the same activities, no matter if they are strangers.	Short conversation, mentioning, assisting, checking-in.
Average	**Greeting** Brief encounters happen when people greet each other but don't stay for a chat. This often happens in spaces that are sufficiently narrow, yet wide enough to allow room for maneuver.	Nodding, waving, saying hello, holding the door, smiling.
Minimal	**Passing** The low-intensity contacts are passive contacts, but necessary for the other forms of contact to grow from. Residents see and hear each other, but they don't get encouraged to say hi.	Ignoring, use of phone, avoiding eye contact, maintaining distance.

Figure 2.7
Diagram on activities of social intercation
Created by author (2026).

P2.2.2 Mapping the space

The mapping of social behavior is defined by the space between the public outdoor and the private dwellings. Following Van Eyck's crucial in-between space, these spaces have the potential to break anonymity by providing a space for people to come home and meet. (Eyck, 1962). Following Newman's definition of the “semi-public spaces", the mapping will examine the entrance space, including the mezzanine level, the circulation core and two gallery levels (Newman, 1972).
The Kleiburg flat exists on ten levels. The ground floor and first level are accessible directly from the plinth, the gallery levels are exclusively accessible from the entrance hall. To ensure visual clarity and due to the scale of the building, the mapping is concentrated around the circulation core and includes the first gallery level and the seventh gallery level. Taking into consideration that activity is representative for the entire gallery level and visible in pictures. The qualitative data will include the entire length to provide a comprehensive overview of the gallery. Figure 2.8 and 2.9 defines the examined spaces: the entrance, mezzanine floor, the first floor and seventh floor, including the circulation core for exclusively these levels.



Figure 2.8
Diagram on mapping the space I Created by author (2026).

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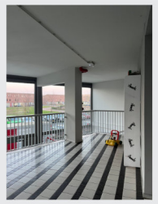
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The entrance space starts at the front door (1). In the space there are letterboxes and a pin board. The entire space including mezzanine is considered as the entrance space because of the visual connections and no obvious boundaries within the space (2). The mezzanine level that can be entered by the stairs or elevator of the circulation core (3).

First impression
The entrance space was a focus point during the renovation. It's an open, light and clear space, with a transparent facade covering two levels. The use of patterns of stone materials provides a sense of quality (2-3).


1. Entrance door


2. Entrance hall

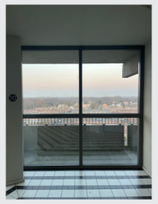

3. Mezzanine

The circulation core contains the stairs (4) and the elevator. On the gallery levels the floor is part of the circulation core until the threshold to the galleries (5). On the entrance level the ground floor and mezzanine floor is part of the entrance space.

First impression
The facade on the levels are transparent to the gallery, which makes the space appear light (5-6). The same materials as the entrance floor are used. The natural light does not adequately reach the staircases, making them dark spots (4).


4. Stairs


5. Circulation core

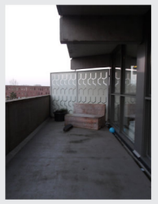

6. Facade

The first gallery level has a width of 4,20 meters. The length of the galleries is 400 meters, but the first gallery is split after 4 dwellings on the northeast side of the building (7). Both gallery spaces starts with the threshold from the door of the circulation space to the gallery (8).

First impression
Many objects are placed that appear frequently used, for example a skateboard (9). The space feels broad and the elements in the space break up the length of the gallery (7).


7. Gallery northeast


8. Threshold


9. Gallery northeast

The seventh gallery level has the same dimensions for the levels 3-10, with a depth of 1,90 meters. These galleries are entirely visually and physically connected and consists of 8 -12 dwellings (10-11).

First impression
The use of concrete and grey materials is strong. There are not many elements that break up the length, apart from doormats which indicates the entrances. The dwellings are overall transparent, but many windows are blinded (12).


10. Gallery northeast


11. Gallery southeast


12. Windows southeast

P2.2.3 Observation process and instruments

The observations will be done with direct visual observations, three different times of the day to increase the level of representativity. The circumstances of these moments are visible in figure 2.10. The results are combined into one behavioral map. For the coding, signs are used and afterwards translated to colored dots to ensure visual clarity. The warmer the color, the higher the level of identity or community. The duration of the observations at each level of the flat is divided equally into 1-1-1.

To substantiate the quantitative data, qualitative data is conducted in the form of interviews and a questionnaire. Seven inhabitants of the Kleiburg flat are interviewed. For the interviews on the streets, two are interviewed on the 4th of March and three on the 7th of March. Also two prearrangement interviews are conducted, one respondent lives on the first gallery floor and one on the 7th floor. The questions and answers can be found in Appendix I. For the questionnaire 70 notes were transferred through the letterboxes and six were answered (Appendix II). Additionally, interviews and questionnaires were conducted for the non-renovated flat Kikkenstein. The answers serve as inspirations, but are excluded in the research.
The examination of observations are the results of the coding, substantiated with the qualitative research and connected to the theoretical framework. The observer is answering the question: what behavior does the data demonstrate and what does this mean for the spatial design?

Date	Time	Duration	Temperature	Conditions
Tuesday 04/03/2026	18:15 - 18:45	30 mins	10° C	Dry and overcast
Saturday 07/03/2026	13:55 - 15:55	120 mins	7° C	Gray, dreary and cold
Thursday 02/4/2026	08:06 - 09:06	60 mins	6° C	Occasionally rainy

Figure 2.10
Diagram on observation circumstances
Created by author (2026).

P2.2.4 Examining the activities

The mapping for the **sense of identity** (figure 2.11) demonstrates the most significant results on the gallery levels. The gallery levels appear the same, apart from the difference in dimension. The width of 4,20 meters of the first gallery floor allows residents to use the space (red dots) and place personal objects (orange dots). The orange dots on the first floor consist mostly of doormats, while the first floor is used as an extension of the house (figure 2.12 and 2.13). According to Newman, residents create “symbolic barriers” when they are allowed and feel safe to take ownership of the space. A respondent mentions that the narrow dimensions of the higher floors does not allow them to place personal objects (Appendix II). The doormats indicate the entrance of the dwellings, but does not show any human presence. This led to anatomy and the gallery serving as a “nomans land”.

The dimension and fire safety rules are of course a barrier for allowance on ownership. Although, the diagram and figure 2.13 and 2.14 show that the first floor gallery on the southeast facade does not have any personal object, while the northeast has multiple. A respondent of the first floor gallery mentions that she shares the gallery with 4 dwellings. She knows them very well and they use and take care of the gallery together (Appendix I; Interview I). This shows that the amount of dwellings has had

"I share this gallery with four other households; we know each other very well. We like to spend time on the gallery, so take care of the space together "
- Resident Kleiburg first floor gallery, 2026 (Appendix I)

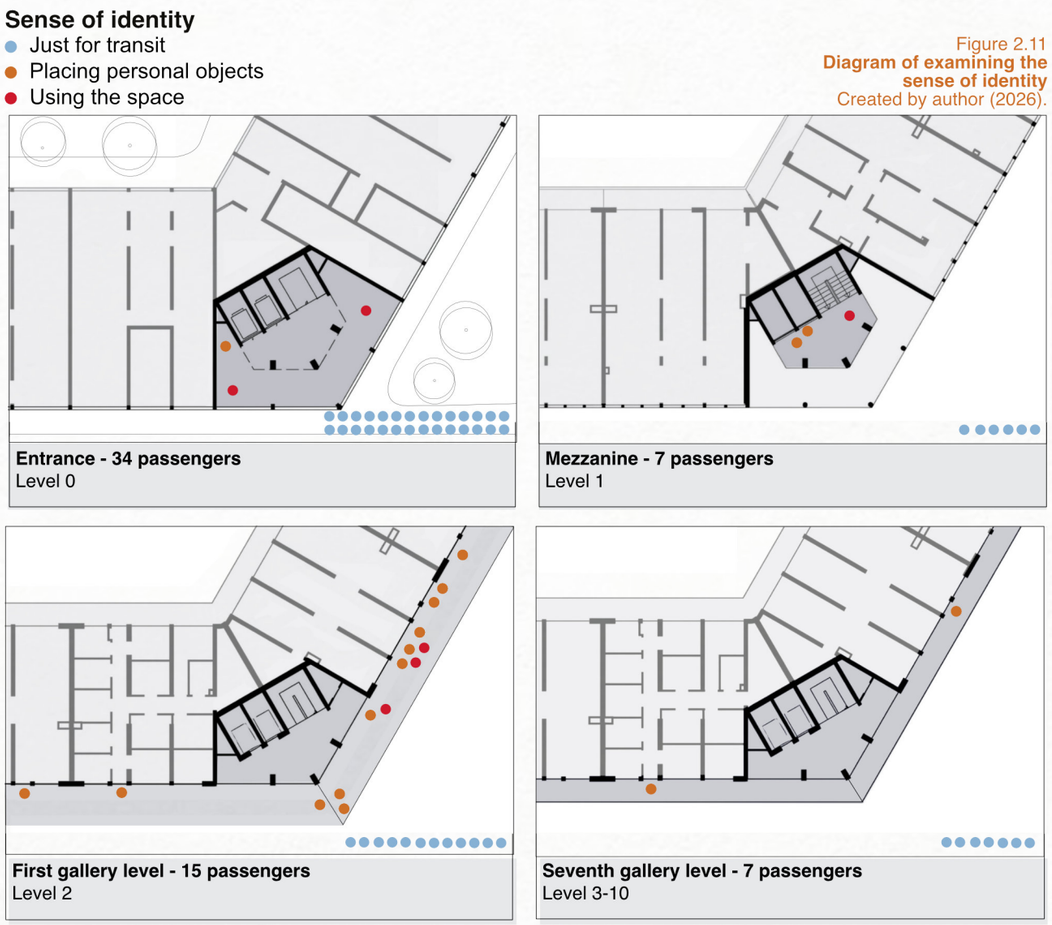


Figure 2.11
Diagram of examining the sense of identity
Created by author (2026).

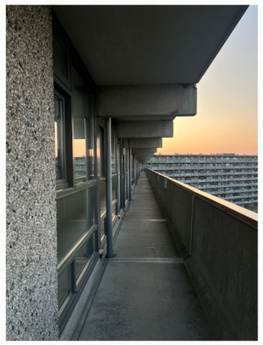


Figure 2.12
Seventh floor gallery with no personal objects
Created by author (2026).



Figure 2.13
First floor northeast gallery with personal objects
Created by author (2026).



Figure 2.14
First floor southeast gallery with no personal objects
Created by author (2026).



Figure 2.15
Litter in the circulation core
Created by author (2026).

The larger the number of people who share a communal space, the more difficult it is for people to identify it as theirs or to feel they have a right to control or determine the activity taking place within it.
(Newman, 1974, p.17)

an impact on social control and territoriality. Newman explains that a lower amount of dwellings combat anonymity. Conversely, higher density makes people feel invisible which results in neglect. For example the circulation core has a higher number of users, which attracts possibilities for litter visible in figure 2.15.

The dwellings have windows providing an opportunity for “eyes on the street”, visually extending the dwelling to the gallery. Unfortunately, as visible in figure 2.16, almost all the windows on the seventh floor are blinded, while on the first level the windows are more transparent . This shows a strong relation between transparency and territoriality. The respondent on the seventh floor mentions that the feeling of coming home starts when he enters his dwellings, while the woman on the first floor mentions the threshold of the gallery (Appendix I: Interview I-II). This shows that the higher level of anonymity drives more visual privacy. This creates self-reinforcing cycles where the spaces lack even more social surveillance.

"The moment I step onto our gallery, I feel like I'm home. It's not just a walkway; it feels like it's already part of our own space."
- Resident Kleiburg first floor gallery, 2026 (Appendix I)



Figure 2.16
Seventh floor gallery with blinded windows
Created by author (2026).

The diagrams demonstrate the concentration of **social interaction** in the circulation core and entrance level. Between the galleries there are no visual connections because the galleries are stacked and the distance between the slabs of the honeycomb are too big to have visual connection. According to Gehl (2011), low-intensity contact in these cores are fundamental for more complex interactions between residents to grow from. Diagram 2.17 shows that this distance is a fundamental factor for brief encounters. More orange dots (greeting) are observed when the space gets tight, for example at the threshold and elevator. Breaking the "personal zone" forces recognition and promotes greeting over passing.

Two times a resident was waiting in the entrance hall. They increased the distance from the activity by waiting on the edge of the space. Other residents chose passing over greeting the waiting residents. This shows Ghel's theory of the "edge effect". They can observe the room with an overview and feel covered by the edge, which makes them more invisible. On top of that, a homeless man with his belongings entered the space and went up to the mezzanine floor. He distanced himself from the activity and everyone passed him over greeting so he was able to stay the whole duration of the mapping. This shows that the mezzanine floor feels comfortable for intruders, serving as a "blind spot".

"At the edge of the forest or near the facade, one is less exposed than if one is out in the middle of a space. One is not in the way of anyone or anything. One can see, but not be seen too much"
Gehl, 2011, p.149

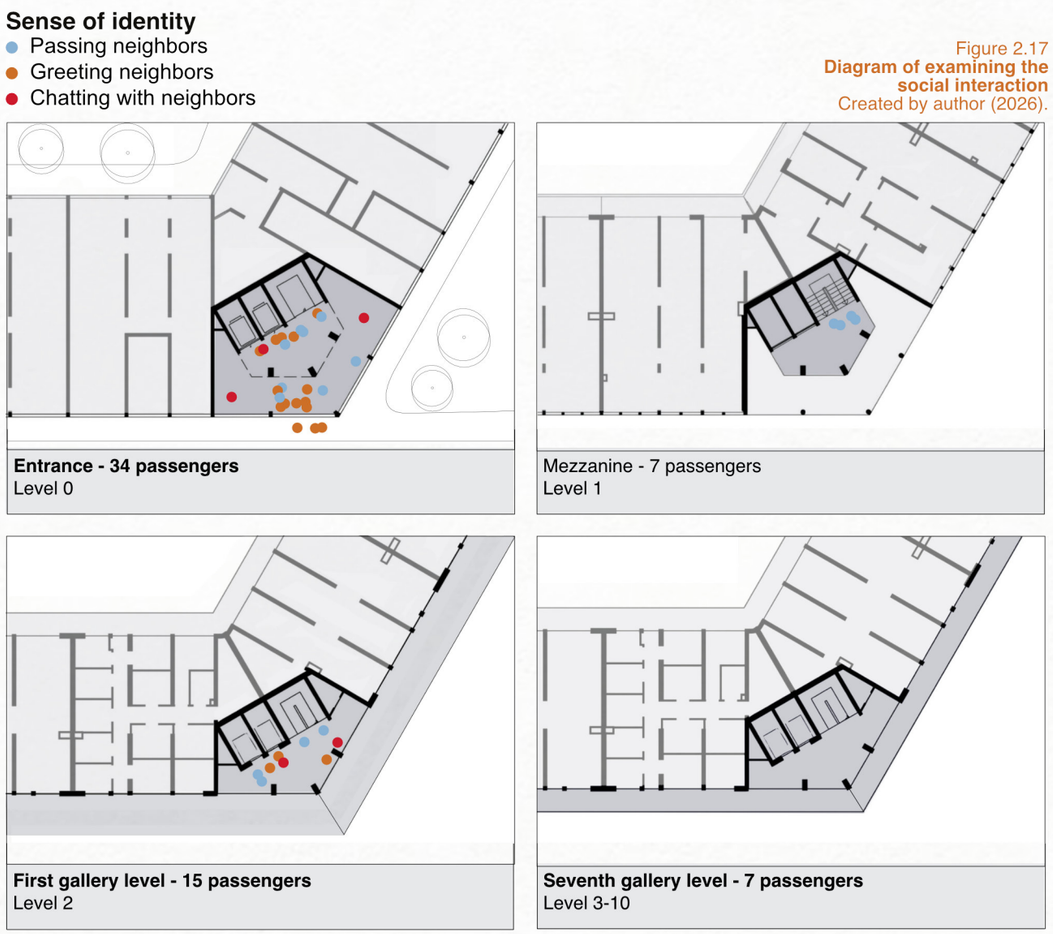


Figure 2.17
Diagram of examining the social interaction
Created by author (2026).

Finally, the mapping showed how direction and time influences the level of social interaction.
People spending more time in the same room or going in the same direction are more likely to start a conversation. Lynch explains this as "sharing paths" as the connecting factor between residents, for example when people are waiting for the elevator or taking something from the letterbox. On the other hand, when efficiency is playing a role in peak hours, we see the number of interactions decreasing significantly. Figure 2.18 shows the different majorities of social interaction on the different times of the day.



Figure 2.18
Diagram of examining the social interaction during different times of the day
Created by author (2026).

P2.2.5 Limitations

The behavioral mapping has limitations on the level of representativity. For the research one entrance hall is chosen out of the four within the building. On January 1st of 2026, the Kleiburg flat consisted of 519 dwellings with 1.030 inhabitants (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2026). The observed entrance connects 106 of them which are calculated to an average of 210 residents. The mapping included 63 passengers, among which it's unsure if they are residents or visitors. This is a representativity 6,11% of the inhabitants of the building and 30% using this entrance. Seven interviews are conducted which means 0,68% of the inhabitants of the building and 3,33% using this entrance.
A respondent mentioned that the atmosphere of the building is influenced by the fact that some wings are 80% owner-occupied housing and some are still left social housing. The wing that is observed is owner occupied, which influences the atmosphere of the buildings. To broaden the horizon on the spatial design of the corridors, the non renovated Kikkenstein buildings are also taken into the research. The building consists of approximately 90% of social housing (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2026). These are not used for conclusions but as back up to increase the focus on the spatial design.
For the scope, three different days of the week with three different times of the day are chosen. The peak hours during the weekdays, a morning and an evening, and an afternoon during the weekend. Still the total hours of observations is 210 minutes (= 3 hours and 30 minutes). The weather could also be a factor, especially during the weekend. The weather on Saturday the 7th of March was dreary which will demotivate people from going outside. During the peak hours on weekdays this would be less a factor because of appointments.
At last, the presence of the observer can be an influential factor. Some people started a chat or greeted the observer. These activities not taken into the research, but could be interesting for further research, for example on how they react to an unfamiliar face.



Figure IV
Kleiburg
Note. Photograph taken by the author, 2026

Conclusion Part 2

This chapter has investigated the renewal of the corridors of the Kleibur Flat and how it influenced the contemporary behavior of the residents. The aim was to analyse how spatial design was the decisive factor for social interaction with the use of behavioral mapping.

The most significant relations between the spatial design and the sense of the identity is the dimension of the space and the mount of dwellings. The wider first floor is more broad and a smaller cluster of dwellings. This gives more space to place objects and use the space. The smaller amount of dwellings make it easier to know your neighbors, which invites you to take ownership of the space. This increases the wish for connection with the street, visible in the less blinded windows. On the top floor we see a higher level of anonymity, which results in using the space just for transit. So even though the quality and visibility is increased, the dimensions and amount of dwellings are crucial to allow people to give a sense of identity and increase the relationship between neighbors. So anonymity is combatted by giving the opportunity of ownership by scale and reducing the level of dwellings to be able to create relations.
Looking at data observation of the social interaction, the interventions on the transparency, double height of the entrance hall and the quality of materials corrected the blind spots which made the space more safe to use for the residents. The people waiting inside the semi public space makes this visible. We see that encounters increase when the distance is smaller, so tighter spaces increase brief encounters. When spaces are bigger people have more of a feeling of being unseen because they feel protected having an overview on the edge of the space. On top of that, the more intense contacts are created when people share the same path or activity. For example waiting in front of the elevator shows the most cases of a chat. When efficiency plays a role, brief encounters and passing increases, people stop less often for a chat.

In essence, social interaction is dependent on the proximity of the space. The gallery level can combat anonymity by reducing the amount of dwellings in combination with increasing dimension to allow and invite to take ownership of the space. While on the circulation core and entrance hall the higher number of residents is inevitable, brief encounters appear when the space tightens but visibility is maintained. To increase the level of interaction, shared paths and shared activities can invite longer conversation.

Conclusion:

The spatial influence of corridors

This research aimed to answer the overarching question: How can historical research of the construction and renovation of the corridors of the Kleiburg flat demonstrate the influence of spatial design on social behavior? By conducting a historical analysis on the reasons for construction and decay of the corridors of the Bijlmermeer flats and the contemporary behavioral mapping, insights have been retrieved regarding the relationship between the spatial design and the residential social behavior.

The historical analysis on the original corridor design of the Bijlmeermeerflats inspired by the CIAM architects explains how they failed to foster social interaction and a sense of identity.
Instead, due to ideas on standardization and repetition they created a uniform “nomansland” that caused lack of social control. The idea of the separation of functions created poor visibility and inefficient “eyes on the street”, which caused a lack of social surveillance. Both aspects contributed in attracting uncontrollable crime and social isolation which became the image of the Bijlmermeer Flats.
The study on the renewal of the Kleiburg flat demonstrated that spatial interventions can contribute to correcting these circumstances. The renewal focussed on increasing the transparency, visibility and improving the material quality which eliminated blind spots and made the corridors more inviting and safer. On top of the renewal interventions, the primary research indicated that the dimensions and amount of residents of the spaces are the most decisive factors. On the gallery levels the level is indeed higher when the space is wider, combined with smaller clusters of dwellings, This encourages to take ownership and use the space, contributing to knowing your neighbors and reducing anonymity. Furthermore, within the circulation core and the entrance hall, the increase of the amount of residents and anonymity is inevitable. In these spaces the social interaction will be dependent on the proximity and shared paths. When spaces become tighter, such as the threshold, residents are more likely to greet each other over passing. Sharing paths, as waiting for the elevator, will promote starting a conversation. To ensure the level of influence, all the factors should be considered.
Further research could improve the representativity of the primary research to validate the results and deepen the obtained insights. Focussing on deepening the existing research, comparative studies of other Bijlmermeer flats such as the Kikkenstein, could distinguish what behavior is shaped by different social groups and what is shaped by the spatial design of the corridors. Focusing on the next steps of the research is connecting it to design studies to examine how the insights could be implemented on further design projects in high rise buildings.

Ultimately, this study demonstrates how spatial design influences the social behavior of residents within the corridors, which can contribute to design strategies with a focus on creating social interaction and a sense of idenity in future or renewal high rise projects. However, the renewal of severe social conditions as the Bijlmermeerlflats requires an integrated approach of social, economic and demographic factors are taken into account, The transition of the original Bijlmermeer layout to the renovated Kleiburg design, shows that spatial design can contribute in restoring the social behavior without demolition.

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Appendix I

Interview questions

1. Where exactly does the boundary of your feeling of "home" lie? Do you already feel at home as soon as you enter the central hall, on the walkway of your floor, or only once you are inside your own apartment?

2. Do the hallways, walkway, and elevator feel like spaces you can actually use? Somewhere you could place your belongings or spend some time? Or do you use them strictly as a route to and from your home?

3. How do you use the space in front of your own front door? Do you ever put things there (plants, a small bench) or do you ever sit outside?

4. Are there any "dead zones" or spots in the building where you feel uncomfortable and tend to walk past quickly? If so, where?

5. Do you consider the hallways to be light and open, or rather dark and narrow?

6. Do you know your neighbors well?

7. Do you often greet others or have a chat with fellow residents? And where does this usually happen: in the entrance hall, in the stairwell, or on the walkway?

8. Old pictures of the corridors. How do you perceive this space?

9. What are your favourite spaces of the building in terms of spatial design/ atmosphere and why? The entrance, stairscase/elevator or gallery?

10. Is there anything you would add to the building to improve the design?

Interview I
Woman (42) living in the first dwelling on the first gallery floor with her children and man.

1. T**he moment I step onto our gallery, I feel like I'm home. It’s not just a walkway; it feels like it’s already part of our own space**. I don't feel that typical transition where you're still "outside" until you hit the front door; the atmosphere on this level is just very welcoming.

2. We definitely use it as an extension of our living room. There is a table set up where we eat during the summer, and my children play there daily because it is wide enough to be safe and contained. I can comfortably leave them there while I'm busy inside because I can see them through the windows.

3. In the summer, we are almost always sitting out front. We even organized a barbecue with the four households sharing this specific section of the gallery. It’s great because it feels like a shared courtyard rather than a public corridor.

4. I don’t really visit the other floors, so I can't speak for the rest of the building. However, the corners near the elevator and the stairwell are a bit hidden, and you can't always see who is standing there until you're right on top of them.

5. It is incredibly bright and airy. Especially on our floor, the width makes everything feel much more open and less like a standard apartment block.

6. I share this gallery with four other households; we know each other very well. We like to spend time on the gallery, so take care of the space together. We also have a group chat with the people living directly above us, but if I’m honest, the real connection is here on our own gallery level.

7. Yes, I greet people all the time, usually in the hall or on the walkway. Since my home is practically right next to the entrance hall, I see everyone coming and going, so a quick chat is very common.

8. Looking at those old photos, the building is almost unrecognizable. You can still

pick out a few architectural details, but it looks so much darker and more intimidating. I would not have found this a nice place to live back then; it looks very kill and industrial.

9. Our gallery is definitely my favorite spot in the whole building. I am so happy with the extra space, and I honestly don't know how I would have liked it on a different floor, especially with the kids needing room to run around.

10. If I could change one thing, I would make the galleries this wide on every single floor. It really changes the social dynamic. I would also add some more play equipment for the older boys in the grass area downstairs.

Interview II
Man (34) living on the seventh gallery floor by himself.

1. For me, "home" starts once I step inside the flat and close the door behind me. The gallery is fine, but it still feels like a public space where I am just passing through.

2. Not really. For me, the walkway is just a place to catch a breath of fresh air or look at the view for a moment. It’s a route to get from the elevator to my front door, and it’s a bit too narrow to really use for sitting or keeping things.

3. I just have a doormat. There isn't really enough room to put out furniture or plants without making the path feel cramped for the neighbors.

4. The area outside on the ground floor can feel a bit uncomfortable at night when it’s dark.

5. It is very light because of all the glass, which is nice. It looks modern, but it also feels quite chilly and sterile in a way.

6. A little bit. We have a WhatsApp group with a few people on this level, but we don't see each other as often.

7. Usually, I say hello by the elevator or while walking on the gallery. But a conversation mostly in the elevator. It’s the one place where you are stuck together for a few seconds, so you naturally end up acknowledging each other.

8. It looks very grey and quite industrial in the old pictures. I recognize the basic shape of the honeycomb, but it looks dirty..

9. I think the entrance hall is my favorite space. I love the feeling of stepping inside from the street into that big, bright, open volume.

10. I would add an inviting outdoor space specifically designed for the residents on the higher floors. It would be great if there was a reason to linger outside our apartments so we could get to know the neighbors a bit better.

The notes of the interviews are developed using Gemini.
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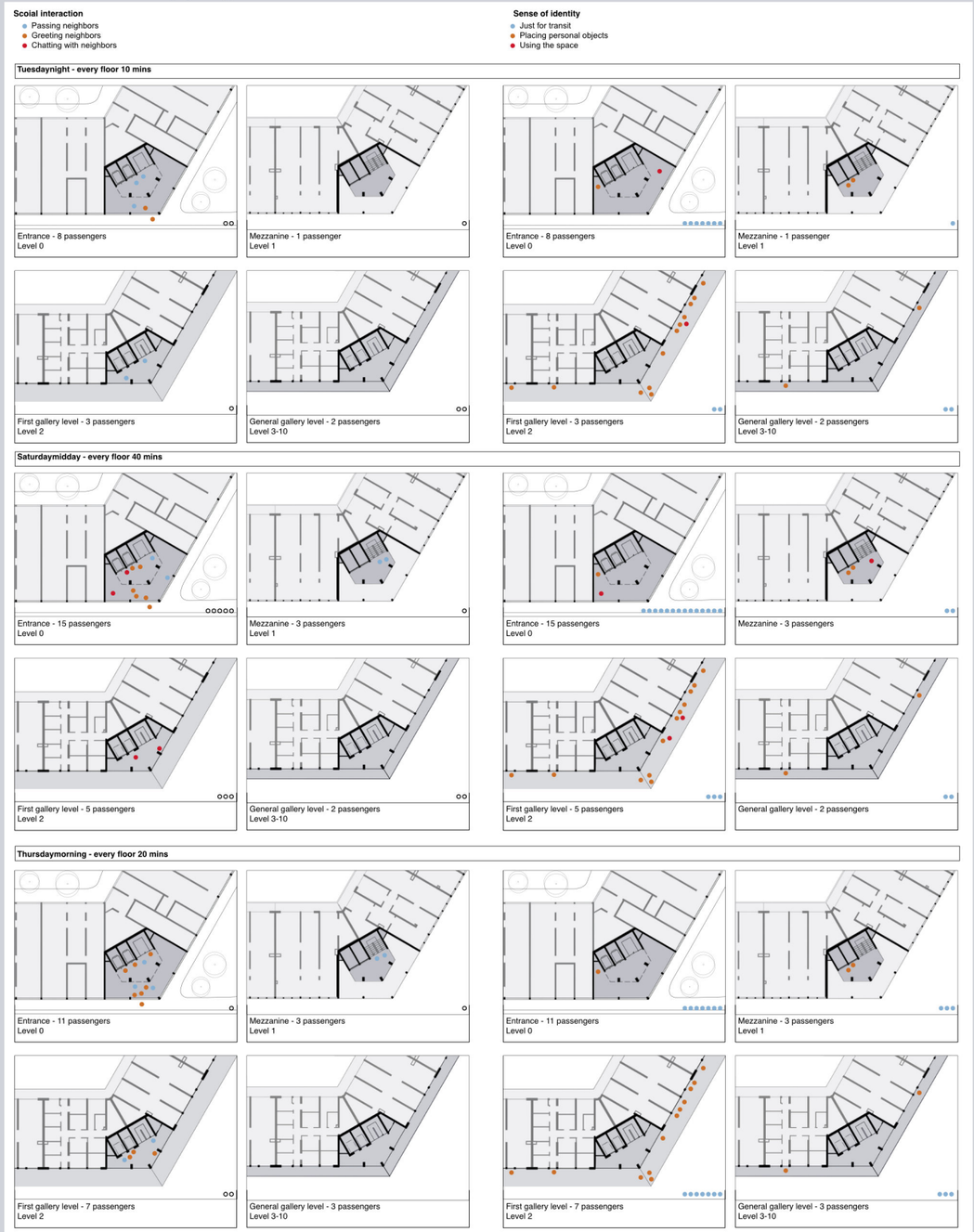
Appendix II

Questionairre

Tijdstempel	In welke flat woon je?	Waar ligt voor u de grens van uw thuisgevoel? Voelt u zich al thuis bij binnenkomst in de centrale hal, op de galerij van uw verdieping, of pas binnen in uw eigen woning?	Voelen de gangen, galerij en lift een plek die je kan gebruiken? Waar je je spullen kan neerzetten en waar je wel eens verblijft? Of gebruik je het alleen als de route van en naar je huis?	Hoe gebruik je de ruimte voor je eigen voordeur? Zet je daar weleens spullen neer (planten, bankje) of zit je er weleens buiten?	Zijn er "dode hoeken" of plekken in het gebouw waar je je ongemakkelijk voelt en snel langsloopt? Zo ja, waar?	Beschouw je de gangen als licht en open, of juist als donker en smal?	Ken je je buren goed?	Groet u vaak anderen of maakt u weleens een praatje met medebewoners? En waar gebeurt dit meestal: in de entreehal, in het trappenhuis of op de galerij?	Hoe ervaar je deze ruimte? (Verbinding tussen oud en nieuw, open versus gesloten)	Wat zijn je favoriete ruimtes in het gebouw wat betreft ruimtelijk ontwerp/atmosfeer en waarom? (De entree, het trappenhuis/de lift of de galerij?)	Is er iets wat je aan het gebouw zou toevoegen om het ontwerp te verbeteren?
9-3-2026	Kielburg	Pas binnen.	De galerij is functioneel, maar prettig door uitzicht.	Niks. Het is echt erg frustrerend dat je vanwege de brandveiligheid helemaal niets mag neerzetten.	Some bij de bergingen onderin het gebouw.	Licht.	Nee.	In de gang / lift.	De foto oogt gesloten. Nu is het veel opener en ik vind het fijn dat je alleen bij de hoofdentree een code nodig hebt.	De galerij, je ziet je buren daar toch het vaakst.	Een gezamenlijke plek die de community echt versterkt.
10-3-2026	Kielburg	Centrale entree.	Route.	Een klein tafeltje voor de post, maar dat wordt streng gecontroleerd door de VvE.	Nee, voelt prima en veilig na de verbouwing.	Licht.	Ja, maar vooral via de bewonersvergaderingen, niet echt spontaan bij de deur.	Lift.	De foto voelt heel 'ingesloten'. Nu is het opener, maar de sfeer is ook wat zakelijker geworden.	De entreehal, die ziet er verzorgd uit.	Meer zitplekken om buencontact te stimuleren.
10-3-2026	Kielburg	Zodra ik de lift uitstap op mijn verdieping.	Vooral route, galerij voelt als een veilige buitenruimte waar je over de rand kunt kijken.	Niks, we houden de galerij nooitgedwongen vrij door de regels.	De overgang naar het trappenhuis.	Erg licht door witte muren en glas.	Ja, herkennen elkaar van kusdagen, maar verder is het contact oppervlakkig.	Op de galerij.	De oude foto is erg 'enclosed'. Nu is het opener en je koopt zonder codes direct naar je deur.	De galerij, het geeft een ruimtelijk gevoel.	Meer groen in de gedeelde ruimtes.
11-3-2026	Kielburg	Pas binnen.	Route.	Matje. Meer mag niet, best irritant.	Nee, veilig.	Licht en modern.	Op mezelf.	Kort in de lift.	Foto oogt koud. Nu is het warmer, maar de gezelligheid valt tegen.	De lift, die werkt prima.	Kleur in de gangen.
11-3-2026	Kielburg	Eigen woning.	Puur route.	Alleen een matje. Ik vind het jammer dat planten verboden zijn.	Some de garage, maar het gebouw zelf is erg veilig.	Licht.	Nauwelijks, het is een beetje een anonieme hotel-vibe.	N.v.t.	Vroeger was het een echte betonkolos. Nu voelt het open, maar de echte community ontbreekt nog.	De lift, die is modern en snel.	Een digitaal bord met info in de hal.
12-3-2026	Kielburg	Op de galerij.	Ik verblijf er weleens om van de zon te genieten.	Niks bijzonders.	Nee.	Heel open.	Ja, maar vooral via de bewonersvergaderingen, niet echt spontaan bij de deur.	Op de galerij.	Het beton op de foto ziet er massaal uit. De doorloop is nu gezelliger zonder extra codes bij elke deur.	De galerij, daar gebeurt het sociale leven nog een beetje.	Iets warmere verlichting voor 's avonds.

Appendix III

Behavioral mapping



Cover: Figure V
High rise flat of the galleries
Note. From [Photograph of Bijlmermeer], by B. Hulsman, 2015, Vrij Nederland (https://www.vn.nl/iedereen-even-ongelukkig-in-de-vinex-wijk). Copyright 2015 by Vrij Nederland.

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