The Elderly in a post-war shopping mall

A study on the needs of the elderly in a shopping mall
and the preservation of the value of a shopping mall

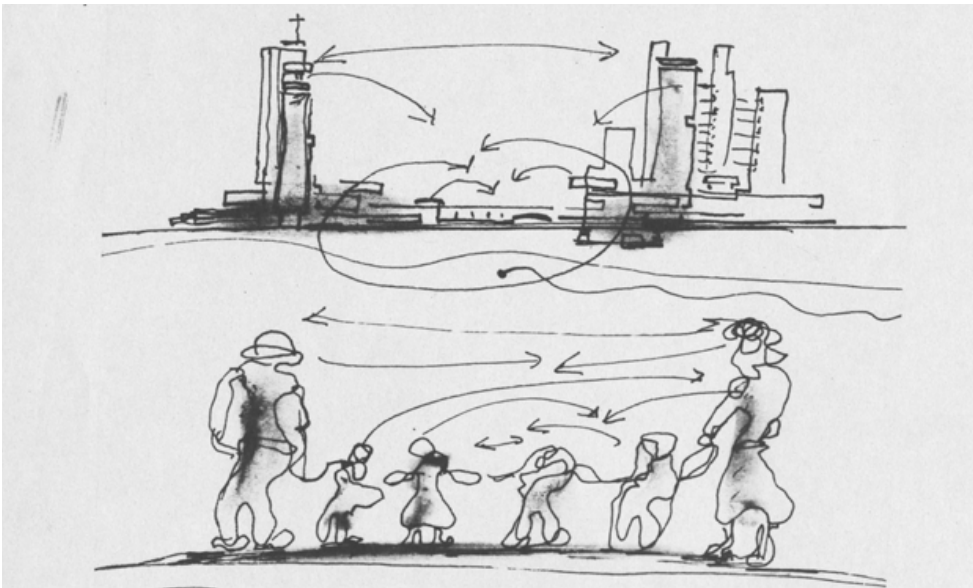Student;

Kristen Delis

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INTRODUCTION

Figure 1,
Friendship diagram,
From Van Es, (2016)

Grijze druk

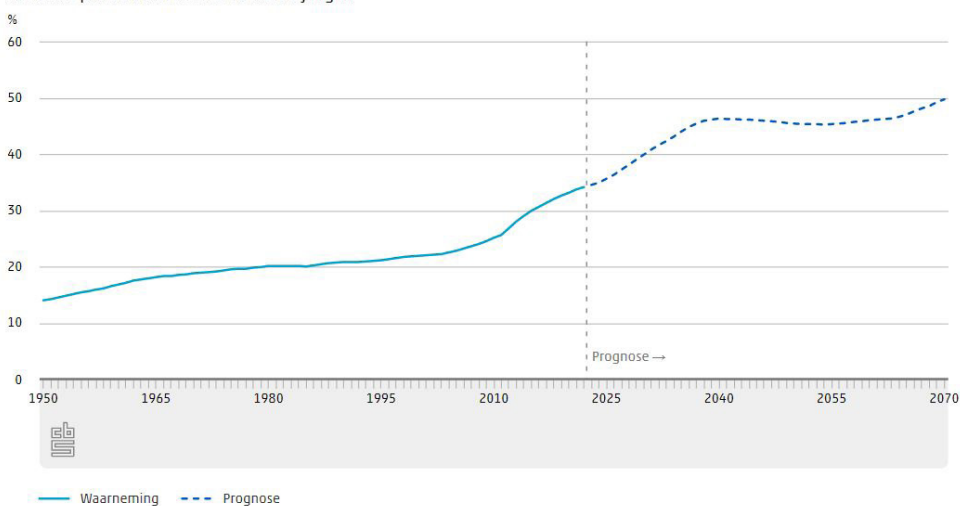Aantal 65-plussers t.o.v. aantal 20- tot 65-jarigen

Figure 2,
Population elderly compaired to the population of between the age of 20-65 years.
From CBS (2022)

In the Netherlands, the shopping mall concept gained popularity in 1953 with the Lijnbaan in Rotterdam as the instigator of the rise of malls. The Lijnbaan, which was the first pedestrian mall in the Netherlands and Europe, was inspired by the friendship model by Van den Broek en Bakema (figure 1) (Gramberg, P. & Truijens, B., 1993, Van Es, 2016). This model was based on the notion that the function of retail and housing should be separated with the lower retail buildings in the middle and the higher housing embracing the lower buildings. However, over the years the design of the shopping mall has changed. For example, in the 70s and 80s, the indoor mall gained popularity with designs such as Hoog Catherijne (Gramberg, P. & Truijens, B., 1993). Now the trend is to renovate old malls completely an example of this is the Mall of the Netherlands (Van Raaij, 2023).

The mall's design has changed since the rise of the mall in the 50s and will probably change again in the future. The changing society can have an influence on the future design of the shopping mall, with changes such as digitalization, a shift in mobility and different demographics. This thesis will focus on the latter, different demographics, namely the increase in elderly people in society. Predictions are that the percentage of elderly will keep rising in the coming years. In The Netherlands, the ageing population is a trend that has been going on for years. In 1990 12.5% of the Dutch population was aged above 65. In 2022 that same age group accounted for 20% of the Dutch population (CBS, 2022). This age group will rise in the coming years, as seen in figure 2. This figure shows the percentage of elderly (age 65+) in relation to the age group of people between 20 and 65 and it estimates an upward trend in the coming years. Does the increase in elderly pose a problem and what do these problems mean for the future design of the mall?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Shopping malls can play an important role in providing for the needs of the elderly[1] , such as providing opportunities for social interaction and daily movements (White, 2015). However, shopping malls can only be effective in providing for these needs if they are designed to cater to these needs. In order for that to happen the problems within the mall need to be solved. Therefore, this thesis will focus on the problems the elderly encounter when visiting shopping malls, with a focus on three key problems.

The first issue is the problem of social interaction among the elderly. The emergence of the term 'hangouderen', which translates to elderly people gathering in shopping malls and other public spaces, highlights the need for better-suited spaces for social interaction. Despite the fact that social interaction is good for the elderly to combat loneliness (Findlay, 2003), the 'hangouderen' do create a nuisance in the shopping centre (Van Doorn et all., 2008). To solve the annoyance people experience designers should look into better suiting places in the mall where the elderly could gather.

The second problem is the shopping habits of the elderly. Unlike younger people, the elderly tend to shop differently, due to having most of the things they need. This results in a lower need for non-food-oriented shops (ABNAMBRO, 2022). As a consequence, future shopping malls targeting the elderly may face higher vacancy rates if they do not consider the shopping preferences of the elderly. In this thesis, the exact shopping habits of the elderly will be researched in order to give stakeholders a clearer image of the shopping preferences of the elderly to help prevent vacancies in the shopping mall.

The third problem is mobility within shopping malls. Two mobility-related problems can be distinguished; how the elderly move to the shopping mall and how they move within the shopping mall. Elderly exclusion can occur on both these scales, making it crucial for designers to address these problems (White, 2015). Even small elements such as a threshold when entering a store or an escalator that does not work can exclude the elderly from the shopping mall. On a bigger scale getting to the shopping mall can also provide difficulties because of the long walking distance without a place the elderly could sit down or problems with using public transport. These problems make it more probable that the elderly will use the neighbourhood shopping malls[2] that are close by instead of the more urban shopping malls[3] that can be found in city centres or areas that are more difficult to reach. In combination with the problem of the shopping habit of the elderly, the neighbourhood mall probably will become the day-to-day shopping place whereas the urban shopping malls will become a place where people will go for a fun shopping experience (ABNAMBRO, 2022). This does not have to be a problem in the future, however, it will become a problem, if the shopping mall owners will not anticipate these changes.

This research will focus on finding suitable solutions to these problems for the neighbourhood shopping mall, while still maintaining the values of the shopping mall for the neighbourhood. The shopping mall should not become a place where only the elderly feel welcome, it should be a place where the neighbourhood can come together. In other words, the aim is to create a mall that will be a place where the elderly feel comfortable spending time and that caters to their needs while keeping the values of the mall intact.

1. Most research and statistics (such as CBS, 2022) regard the elderly being a group that is 65 years and older. However, in this research people in the age group 67+ are considered the elderly. In The Netherlands people of 67 are of age to retire, therefore this age signifies a new period in life where people have more free time. This also means that there is a different in lifestyle between people that are 65 years old and 67 years old.

2. Definition of the neighbourhood shopping mall; 'A neighborhood shopping center is the smallest type of shopping center, [...]. It provides for the sale of convenience goods (food, drugs, and sundries) and personal services that meet the daily needs of an immediate neighborhood trade area. [...]' (Marketing Dictionary, 2023)

3. Definition of the urban shopping mall; The phrase urban mall is used to define a mall of a bigger scale than the neighbourhood mall. Instead of just attracting people from a neighbourhood, this mall attracts people from a bigger urban area. This means that the mall is not just for daily use but provides the means for a whole-day shopping experience.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research has two focus points, on one hand, it focuses on the needs of the elderly within the post-war neighbourhood shopping mall[4], on the other hand, it focuses on the values the shopping mall has for the neighbourhood. These two topics will be brought together by posing the question:

'How will the needs of the growing population of the elderly in The Netherlands influence the design of the post-war shopping mall and the values it has for the neighbourhood?'

In order to gather enough information to answer this question multiple sub-questions will be posed. These sub-questions are;

1. What are the needs of the elderly in a neighbourhood shopping mall and its surroundings?

2. Which of the needs of the elderly are currently implemented in the neighbourhood shopping mall?

3. What are the values of the post-war shopping mall for the neighbourhood?

After gathering answers to these questions the findings will be tested through design. For this design research two more questions have been posed;

4. In what way can the missing needs of the elderly be implemented in the post-war neighbourhood shopping mall?

5. What values will change when the needs of the elderly are implemented in the mall?

4. Definition of post-war neighbourhood shopping mall; The definition of the neighbourhood mall has been explained in note number 2 on page 6. The addition of post-war gives an indication of the year the mall was built. Post-war means after the war, therefore when talking about the post-war shopping malls this thesis means a shopping mall built between 1945-1999

RELEVANCE

This thesis will contribute to the knowledge of designing shopping malls for the increasing elderly population in The Netherlands. This research focuses on the aspects of shopping habits of the elderly, the socialization of the elderly within the shopping mall and the needs of the elderly. The societal relevance of the research lies in shedding light on the needs of the elderly population within the shopping mall, particularly in how the shopping mall can help to deal with social isolation and help maintain physical activity. The academic relevance of the research lies in contributing to the knowledge on designing for an ageing population and shedding light on how the retail industry should respond to changing demographics. Overall the research will help inform designers and stakeholders on how to deal with an ageing population with regard to the design of the shopping mall.

FRAME OF REFERENCE

ELDERLY

TARRAFA PEREIRA DA SILVA, A. M., & PEREIRA RODERS, A. R. (2012). CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT AND HERITAGE (IMPACT) ASSESSMENTS.

HOWARD, P. (2003) *HERITAGE, MANAGEMENT, INTERPRETATION, IDENTITY.* LEICESTER UNIVERSITY PRESS

HISTORIC

SHOPPING MALL

HARDWICK, J. M. (2004) *MALL MAKER; VICTOR GRUEN, ARCHITECT OF AN AMERICAN DREAM.* UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESS

CURRENT

KOMMUNESEKTORENS ORGANISASJON (KS) (2020), *HANDBOOK FOR AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES,* HTTPS://WWW.KS.NO/GLOBALASSETS/FAGOMRADER/ VELFERD/UNIVERSELL-UTFORMING/HANDBOOK-FOR -AGE-FRIENDLY-COMMUNITIES-F41-WEB.PDF

ARUP (2019) *CITIES ALIVE; DESIGNING FOR AGEING COMMUNITIES,* HTTPS://WWW.ARUP.COM/-/MEDIA/ARUP/FILES/PUBL ICATIONS/C/CITIESALIVE_DESIGNING_FOR_AGEING_ COMMUNITIES.PDF

WHITE, R., TOOHEY, J., ASQUITH, N., (2015) SENIORS IN SHOPPING CENTRES. *JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY, VOL. 51(3),* 582-595. DOI: 10.1177/1440783313507494

BITTENCOURT, M. C., DUARTE DO VALLE PEREIRA, V. L., PACHECO JR. W., (2012) THE ELDERLY IN SHOPPING CENTERS; THE USABILITY STUDY OF SEMIPUBLIC SPACES AS ATTRACTIVENESS GENERATOR. *WORK, VOL. 41.* 4163-4170. DOI: 10.3233/WOR-2012-0713-4163
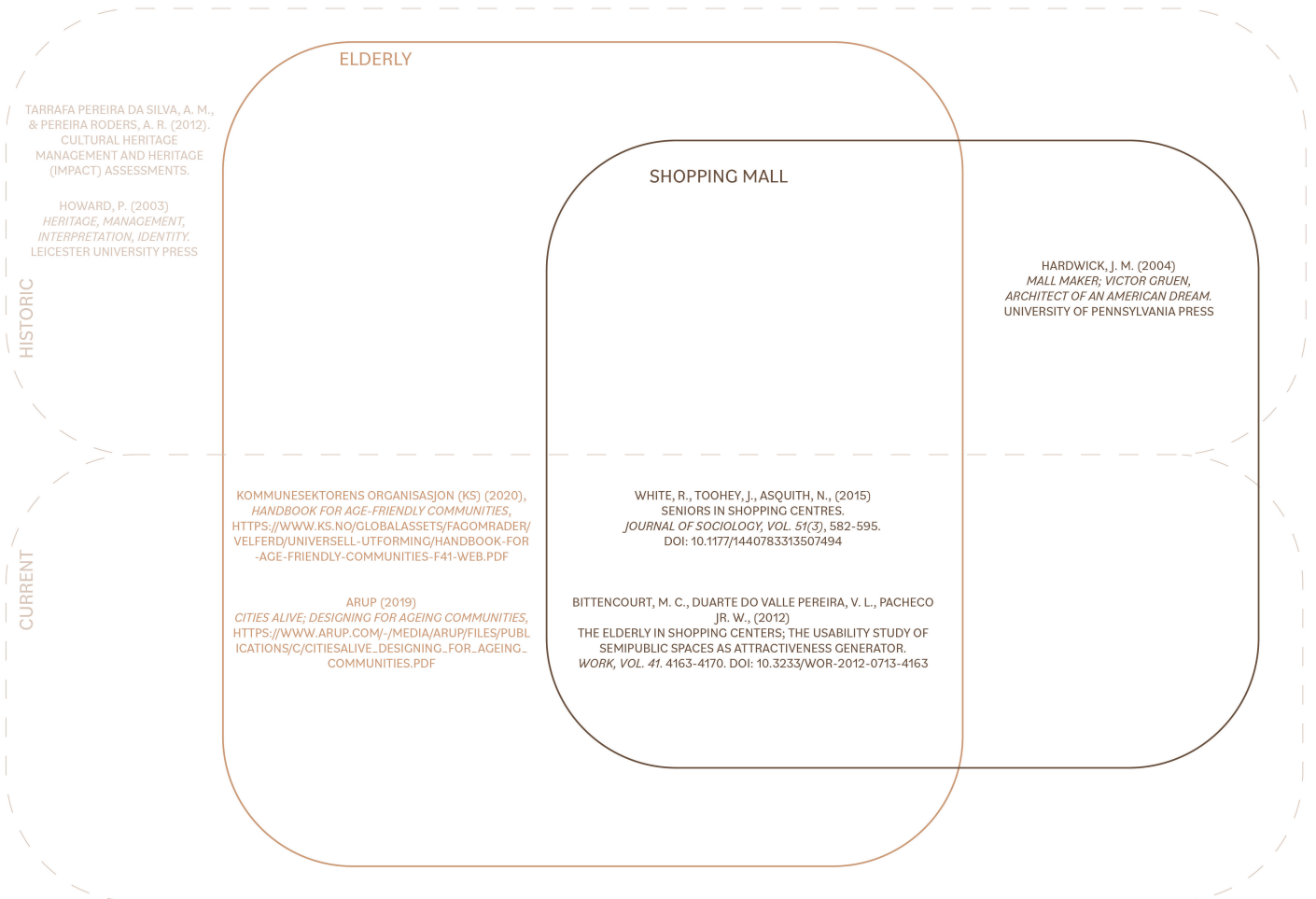
Figure 3,
Frame of reference,
From, K.K.Delis (2023)

Prior to doing the research, it is important to relate the research to the existing literature. Knowing what knowledge exists makes it possible to contribute something new. Also creating a base of knowledge on the topics, heritage, shopping malls, and the elderly is crucial in order to create a starting point for the research. This paragraph will illustrate the base of knowledge and the literature that exists on the three topics of heritage, shopping malls, and the elderly or a combination of these topics (figure 3). The literature mentioned in the following paragraphs will be used as a starting point. During the research, the list of literature will most likely be expanded.

Heritage - The topic of heritage[5] is important during this research to help determine the values of the shopping mall. The values of the shopping mall are not solely based on the current opinions and current activities or trends. The history of the malls plays an important role in how the mall is perceived and valued by the stakeholders. To identify these stakeholders the book Heritage, Management, Interpretation, Identity by Howard (2003) is of particular interest. The book provides insight into how heritage can be defined and by whom. While this book provides a base to start the research into the values of the shopping mall, the book does not provide a base of knowledge to identify and categorize the values. For this part of the research, the paper by Tarrafa Pereira da Silva and Pereira Roders (2012) on Cultural heritage management and heritage (impact) assessments will be used. This paper provides a framework for categorizing the values of the shopping mall.

Shopping mall - On the subject of shopping malls two types of literature are of interest. First, literature on historic visions and trends of shopping malls. Within this topic, the book 'Mall Maker' by Hardwick (2004) will be used as a reference point. This book describes the first ideologies of shopping malls and their evolution in the post-war period. This is relevant literature for the topic of historic value. Knowing how the malls came to be is crucial in understanding how they developed and what their essence and value are in historic and current terms. The second type of literature is the one that combines shopping malls with the topic of the elderly. Of this type of literature, I would like to highlight two papers: 'Seniors in Shopping Centres' (White, 2015) and 'The Elderly in Shopping Centers; The Usability Study of Semi-Public spaces as attractiveness generators' (Bitencourt, 2012). These papers discuss the benefits the elderly could experience from visiting shopping centres and they give some general guidelines on how to make the elderly feel comfortable in a shopping mall. With this starting base the research takes this knowledge and builds on that with additional guidelines and how to implement it in the built environment.

Elderly - On the subject of the elderly, there are two types of literature as well. The first one is the combination of the topics of the elderly and shopping malls. This is the same type as mentioned in the previous paragraph, since the topic overlaps it will not be repeated in this paragraph. The second type is literature on the elderly. For this type, I will use two references: the 'Handbook for Age-Friendly Communities' (KS, 2020) and 'Cities Alive; Designing for ageing communities' (ARUP, 2019). These booklets describe how to design for the elderly on a more urban scale. This provides a base of knowledge for the general urban needs of the elderly. This knowledge will be used as a starting point for determining the needs of the elderly in shopping malls.
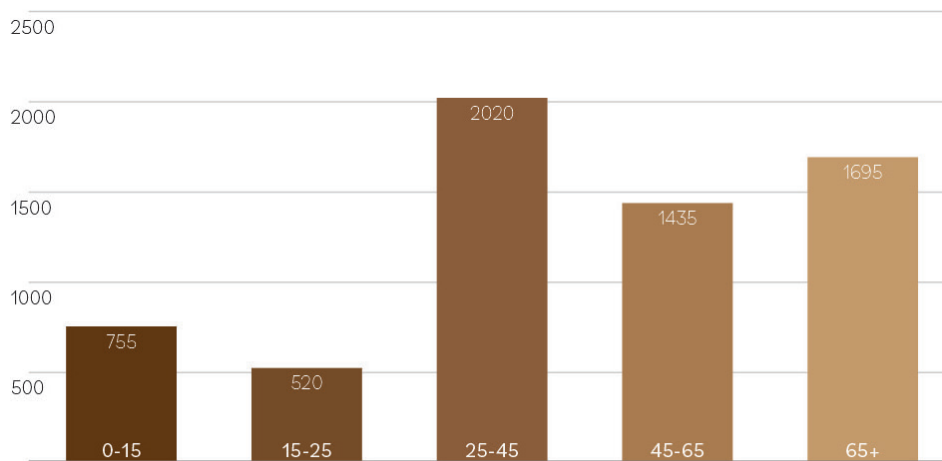
5. The definition of heritage; 'Heritage is taken to include everything that people want to save, from clean air to morris dancing, including material culture and nature. It is all pervasive, and concerns everyone.' (Howard, 2003)

METHODOLOGY
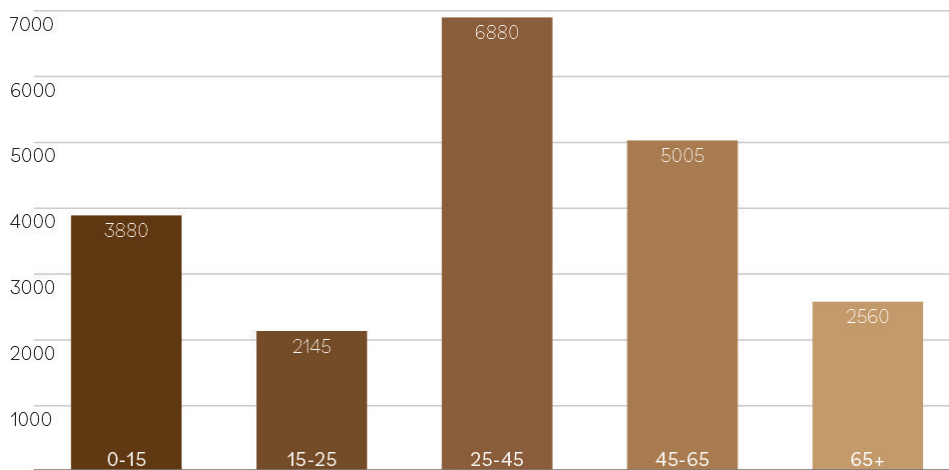
Inhabitants per age group - Morgenstond

Inhabitants per age group - Wijk 06

The purpose of this research is to examine the value of shopping malls to a neighbourhood and the needs of the elderly. To achieve this objective, the research will use two research cases; Leyweg in The Hague and Bogaard in Rijswijk. Both shopping malls are situated centrally in their neighbourhood and have similar num-bers of shops and visitors (AR3AH105 Graduation Studio, 2023). Additionally, the demographics of these neighbourhoods fit the scope of this research, as they have a large number of elderly and a significant popu-lation aged between 45-65, who will become the target group in the future and will benefit most from this research (Figure 4 en 5). By doing two case studies the findings from each case will be compared to provide a more objective outcome for this research. For each of these malls, the value and the needs will be re-searched through methods that will be clarified per research questions in the following paragraphs.

What are the needs of the elderly in a neighbourhood shopping mall and its surroundings? - To answer this question, a literature review will be conducted to establish a base of knowledge on the topic of the needs of the elderly. During the literature reviews sources such as books and papers on the topic of the needs of the elderly and the way the elderly shop will be reviewed. In addition to these sources, knowledge will be gathered from an architectural competition called 'who cares' commissioned by Rijks-bouwmeester (Who Cares, 2017). This competition gives access to multiple elderly-proof designs which by comparing them can add to the base of knowledge on the topic of the needs of the elderly. Subsequently, interviews will be conducted with the elderly in the neighbourhoods of the two research cases to gather more in-depth knowledge. The interviews will focus on the shopping routine of the elderly, such as how often they shop, where they shop, and how much time they spend in the shopping mall. Additionally, the interviews will investigate what aspects of the shopping mall function well and what needs improving, ac-cording to the elderly. To find willing participants, community centres will be approached as well as the groups 'hangouderen' that are gathering in the shopping malls. The combination of the qualitative data gath-ered through the interviews and the quantitative data gathered through the literature reviews and the re-view of the architectural composition will allow for a deeper understanding of the needs of the elderly.

Which of the needs of the elderly are currently implemented in the neighbourhood shopping mall? - This question will be addressed by using the insights gained from the previous question to conduct a case study into the research cases. The study will focus on the architectural floorplans, sections, detailing, and images of the shopping malls to identify which needs of the elderly are already implemented. By identifying the implemented needs, a list of needs that are still missing in the shopping malls will be established. The output of this method will be architectural drawings and diagrams of how needs are currently implemented and a list of aspects and needs that are still missing.

METHODOLOGY

Research question;

How will the needs of the growing population of the elderly in The Netherlands influence the design of the postmodern shopping mall and the values it has for the neighbourhood?

↓

Sub- question;
What are the needs of the elderly in a neighbourhood shopping mall and its surroundings?

> Literature study
> Output; base of knowledge for
> the interviews

> Interviews
> Output; List of needs of the elderly

↓

Sub- question;
Which of the needs of the elderly are currently implemented in the neighbourhood shopping mall?

> Case study
> Output; Diagrams and drawings of
> implemented needs

↓

Sub- question;
What are the values of the post-war shopping mall for the neighbourhood?

> Literature study
> Output; Value map

> Archival research
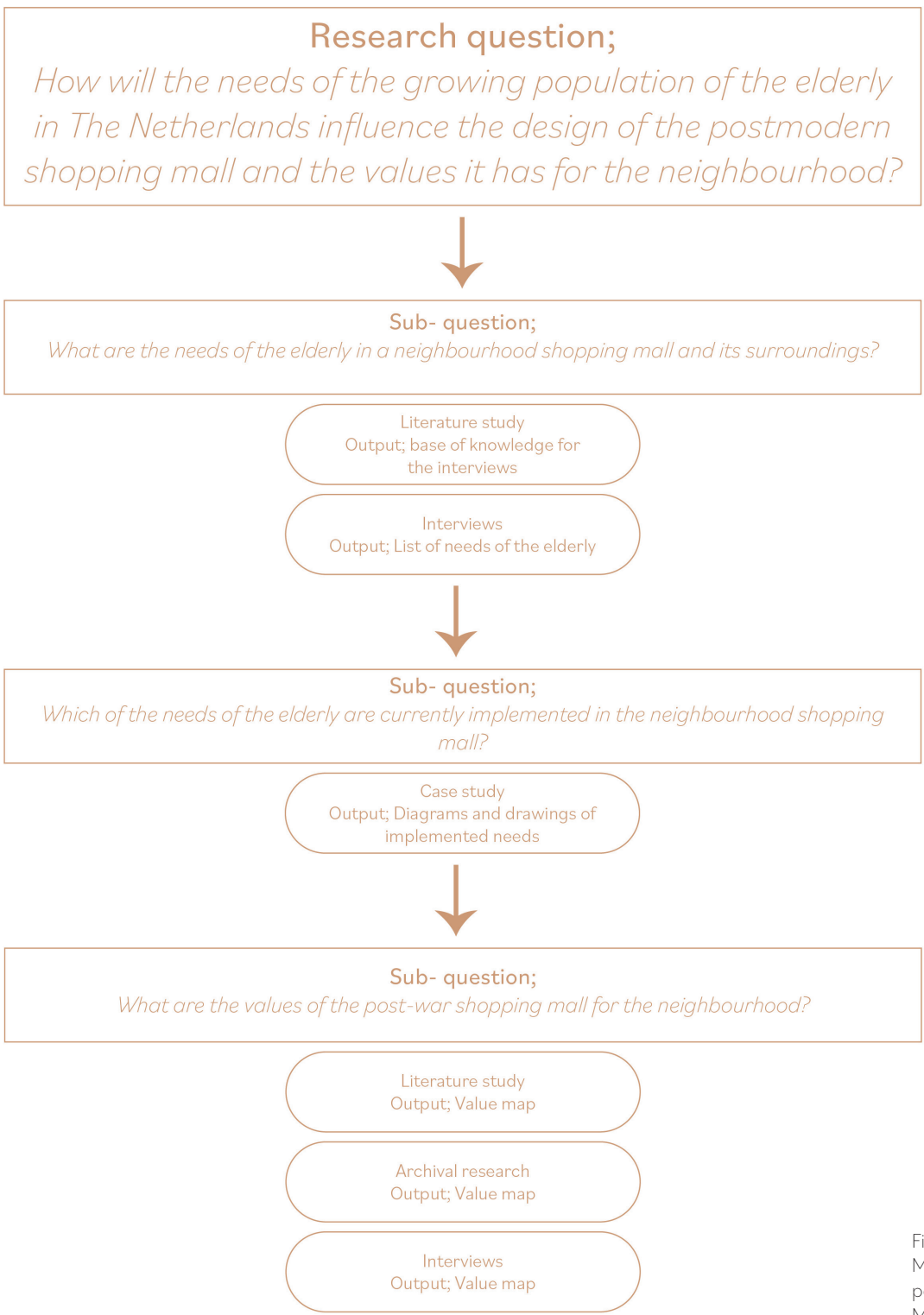> Output; Value map

> Interviews
> Output; Value map

Figure 6,
Methodology and research output
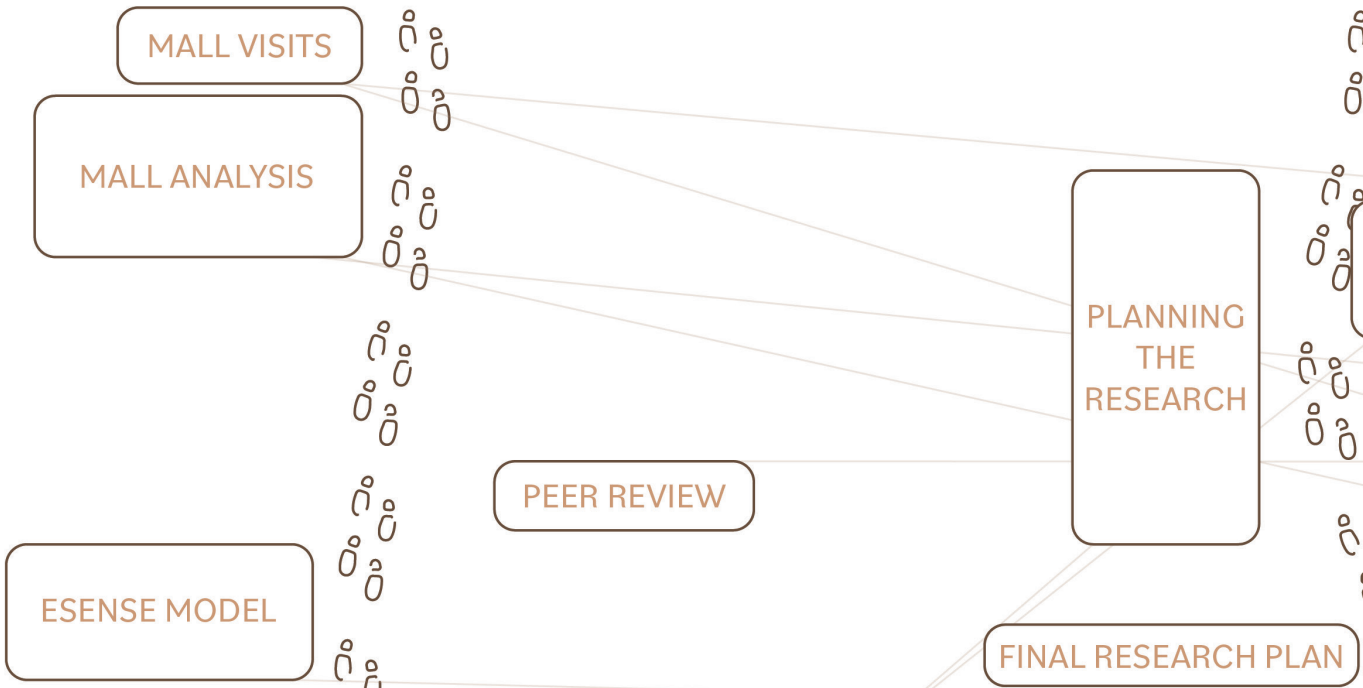per sub-question
Made by, K.K.Delis (2023)

What are the values of the post-war shopping mall for the neighbourhood? - To address this question, three research methods will be used. First, a literature review will be conducted to gather information on the two research cases on the topic of how the shopping mall functions within the neighbourhood. Zoning or transformation plans will be of particular interest, as they can provide insight into the aspects that are of value to the neighbourhood. Additionally, neighbourhood reports might mention what aspects of the shopping malls function well and which do not. Second, archival research will be conducted to gather information on the initial ideas of the shopping mall and what the vision was of the designers, as well as information on how the shopping mall has been perceived by the neighbourhood over time. Lastly, shop-pers, shop owners and staff of the shopping mall will be interviewed to gain insight into the specific ele-ments, tangible or intangible, of the shopping mall that are of value to the neighbourhood. The values will then be placed within the framework of Tarrafa Pereira da Silva and Pereira Roders (2012) to categorize them.

To illustrate the methodology and the corresponding schedule of activities, two diagrams have been created. These diagrams outline the necessary steps and their corresponding timeline to gather sufficient data through the research to answer the main research question. For these diagrams please refer to figure 6 and 7.

MALL VISITS

MALL ANALYSIS

PLANNING
THE
RESEARCH

FO

PEER REVIEW

ESENSE MODEL

FINAL RESEARCH PLAN

Research question; *How will the needs of the growing population of the elderly in The Netherlands influence the design of the postmodern shopping mall and the values it has for the neighbourhood?*

LITERATURE
RESEARCH

Sub-question; *What are the needs of the elderly in a neighbourhood shopping mall and its surroundings?*

Sub-question; *Which of the needs of the elderly are currently implemented in the neighbourhood shopping mall?*

LITERATURE
RESEARCH

Sub-question; *What are the values of the post-war shopping mall for the neighbourhood?*

PERSONAL FASCINATION

PROBLEM STATEMENT

ORMULATING RESEARCH QUESTION

GATHER INFORMATION ON TOPIC

DRAFT RESEARCH PLAN

Reflection

CHOOSING DESIGN CASE

P1

PREPAIRING THE INTER-VIEWS

STUDY OF ARCHITECTURE COMPETITION

DOING INTERVIEWS

CASE STUDY LEYWEG BOGAARD

Reflection

ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

Reflection

FINDING SITE FOR DESIGN

INTERVIEWS ON VALUE

Reflection

TESTING RESEARCH IN DESIGN

P2

Reflection

P3
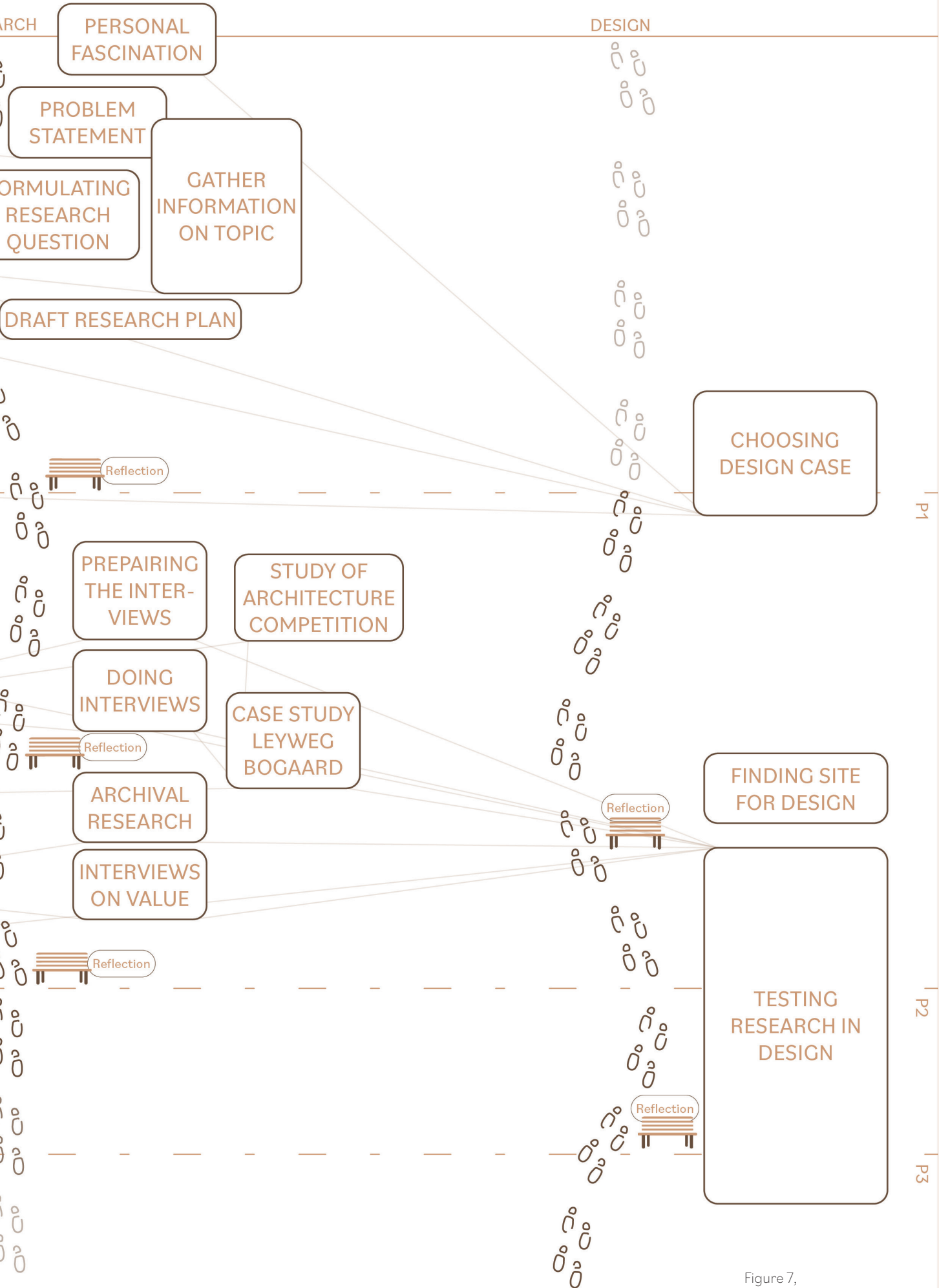
Figure 7,
Research diagram
Made by, K.K.Delis (2023)

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