P5 Report

CREATING SPACE TO LEARN AND GROW

How Spatial Strategies Can Support Children's Learning and Development in Socioeconomically Segregated Neighbourhoods

June 2025
Fenne Manshande

“SEGREGATION IN EDUCATION IS PERSISTENT, AND THE FUTURE OF MANY CHILDREN IS ALREADY DETERMINED IN PRIMARY SCHOOL. ‘THE PLACE WHERE YOUR BABY COT STANDS IS DECISIVE.’ ”

Elibol, R., & van der Linde, I. (2019, May 8). *Sommigen hebben nóg gelijkere kansen.* De Groene Amsterdammer. https://www.groene.nl/artikel/sommigen-hebben-nog-gelijkere-kansen

COLOPHON

CREATING SPACE TO LEARN AND GROW
How Spatial Strategies Can Support Children's Learning and Development in Socioeconomically Segregated Neighbourhoods

Masters Thesis P5 Report
MSc Architecture, Urbanism and the Building Sciences
Track, Urbanism
Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment
TU Delft

AUTHOR:
Fenne Manshande

STUDIO:
Planning Complex Cities

FIRST MENTOR:
Dr. Caroline Newton
Section of Spatial Planning & Strategy

SECOND MENTOR:
Dr. Reinout Kleinhans
Section of Urban Studies

Every effort has been made to correctly reference all images and other potentially copyrighted materials, in accordance with their respective licenses. If you believe that any content included in this report infringes copyright or has been misattributed, please contact the author. All photographs featured on chapter divider pages were taken by the author during fieldwork.

TU Delft
BK Bouwkunde

June 2025
Delft, The Netherlands

Fig. 1 Children Documenting Their Neighbourhood: A Young Girl Captures a Vibrant Mural During a Photowalk in Laak, The Hague (KijkLab, 2022)



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of many people. I'm very grateful for the help, kindness and encouragement I received along the way.

First of all, I want to thank my mentors, Caroline and Reinout, for their constant support and feedback. I really appreciated the freedom they gave me to openly explore my own interests and shape the project in my own way. I especially want to thank them for their positive and kind attitude in their guidance, the kind of support I needed to stay motivated during the more challenging moments of the past year.

I also want to thank all the professors and teaching staff who supported, encouraged, and inspired me. Not just during the writing of this thesis, but throughout the entire master's. Especially the moments this past year, when teachers showed genuine interest in my project and took the time to share their thoughts and ideas, were moments that meant a lot to me and also sparked a sense of pride. I have really valued and appreciated the positive energy and openness within the Urbanism track for the past two years.

Next, a big thank you to my parents, sisters, friends and housemates. Thank you for being there for me, for cheering me on, for lifting me up when I doubted myself, and for dragging me through stressful times. A special thanks to my fellow urbanism students: I'm grateful for all the input and feedback we shared.

And finally, the biggest thank you goes to all the primary school students I've worked with over the past five years, who probably don't even realise how much I learn from them, and how much they, and their stories, inspire me every single day. I can only hope they learn as much from me, and feel even a little of the inspiration they give me. In many ways, this research project is my attempt to give something back by bringing their daily realities and perspectives to attention, and by starting a conversation about the insufficiently considered relationship between learning, development and educational opportunities, and spatial planning.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the role of spatial planning in improving access to, and the quality of, pedagogical learning environments in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods in The Hague, with the overarching aim of promoting systemic equity. The study is grounded in the recognition that children in The Hague experience substantial disparities in educational opportunities due to persistent socioeconomic segregation. These divisions not only restrict access to high-quality learning environments but also reinforce cycles of social inequality from an early age. Despite awareness of the interconnectedness between neighbourhoods and educational outcomes, research and policy interventions addressing these issues holistically remain limited.

Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, the research integrates theory, spatial analysis, and anecdotal evidence collection to examine spatial dimensions of segregation and its effects on shaping educational outcomes. The study is structured into three phases: analyse, expose, and propose. The analyse phase establishes a theoretical and spatial understanding of segregation in The Hague, defining its roots and implications for children's educational access. The expose phase highlights the lived experiences of growing up in these segregated spaces, employing theory, mixed media, mapping, and socio-spatial analysis to bridge theoretical discourse with on-the-ground realities. Finally, the propose phase develops a framework for intervention, translating the research findings into a set of spatial and procedural objectives for improving pedagogical learning environments in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods. These objectives are synthesised into a structured overview of categorised strategic actions, offering a practical and adaptable guide for evaluating and implementing improvements—drawing inspiration from, but not strictly following, the logic of a pattern language. To ground the strategies in context, the study includes illustrative neighbourhood zoom-ins of exemplary learning environments in The Hague that demonstrate the framework's practical application.

Bringing the research together, this report outlines the systemic roots and spatial manifestations of inequality within the urban landscape in which children grow up, ultimately providing policymakers and urban planners with targeted strategies to mitigate the effects of socioeconomic segregation and to foster more inclusive, enriching spatial learning environments throughout The Hague.

KEY WORDS
children; educational equity; neighbourhood effects; pedagogical learning environment; socioeconomic segregation; spatial planning; strategic actions; The Hague; urban inequality

Fig. 2 Children Documenting Their Neighbourhood: Broken Glass as a Reflection of Safety Concerns (KijkLab, 2022)



Fig. 3 Children Documenting Their Neighbourhood: Boys Playing on the Football Court, Photographed in Response to Feelings of Exclusion (KijkLab, 2022)



CONTENTS

Fig. 4 Children Documenting Their Neighbourhood: Capturing Informal Play on Urban Infrastructure (KijkLab, 2022)



4 Colophon
6 Acknowledgements
8 Abstract

12 INTRODUCTION
i. Motivation and Positionality
ii. Relevance and Urgency
iii. Where to Start?
iv. Research Scope
v. Problem Statement

24 RESEARACH FRAMEWORK
i. Project Framework
ii. Conceptual Framework
iii. Methods
iv. Intended Outcomes
v. Project Timeline

38 ANALYSE

40 1. SOCIOECONOMIC SEGREGATION
1.1. Definition and Context
1.2. Distribution of Socioeconomic Indicators
1.3. Mapping Socioeconomic Segregation
1.4. Conclusions

50 2. HISTORIC CONTEXT
2.1. Longitudinal Analysis
2.2. City-Level Developments: The Hague

66 3. THE HAGUE TODAY
3.1. Layers of The Hague
3.2. Mobility and Accessibility
3.3. Children's Landscape
3.4. Educational Landscape
3.5. Income and Economic Division
3.6. Ethnic and Social Composition
3.7. Primary Schools: Results
3.8. Primary Schools: Quality

80 4. CHILDREN AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT
4.1. 'Pedagogical Learning Environment' as a Concept
4.2. A 'Good' Pedagogical Learning Environment

92 EXPOSE

94 1. LIVED EXPERIENCE
1.1. Life Through Children's Eyes
1.2. Self-Perception
1.3. Feelings of Safety
1.4. Housing Conditions
1.5. Public Space Conditions
1.6. Conclusions

132 2. ON-THE-GROUND REALITIES
2.1. Informal Conversations
2.2. The Lived Neighbourhood
2.3. Personas

154 3. INSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES
3.1. The Web of Institutionalisation
3.2. Institutional Problems and Opportunities

166 PROPOSE

168 1. CONDITIONS FOR CHANGE
1.1. Connecting Insights, Objectives, and Actions
1.2. Socio-Spatial Objectives
1.3. Strategic Actions

190 2. TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES
2.1. Bouwlust en Vrederust
2.2. Context Assessment
2.3. Needs-Based Interventions
2.4. Opportunities-Based Interventions
2.5. Impact on Daily Life
2.6. Alternative Futures

224 CONCLUSION
i. Sub-Research Questions
ii. Main-Research Question

230 REFLECTION

236 REFERENCES
i. Literature References
ii. Image References
iii. References for Media Excerpts and Statistical Material
iv. Cartographic and Spatial Data References

INTRODUCTION

i. Motivation and Positionality

ii. Relevance and Urgency

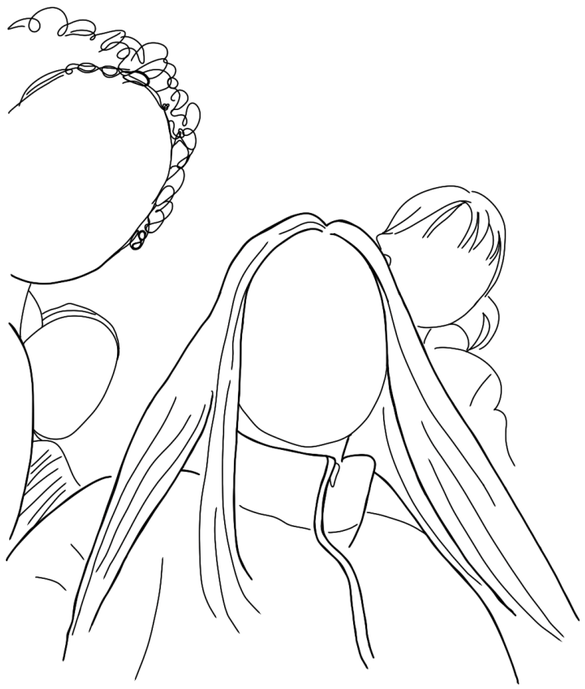
iii. Where to Start?

iv. Research Scope

v. Problem Statement

i. MOTIVATION AND POSITIONALITY

Fig. 5 Drawing From a Photo of the Researcher's Own Position in a Dual Professional–Research Context (author)



MOTIVATION

For the past five years, I have worked at a primary school in The Hague Zuidwest—a neighbourhood that faces significant challenges, scoring below average on various socioeconomic indicators compared to the rest of The Hague. While the specifics of this neighbourhood will become clearer later in this project, it is undeniably a space marked by socioeconomic segregation. Working here has given me a close view of the lived realities of the community, particularly schoolchildren, whose opportunities are deeply affected by systemic inequalities over which they have no control.

This confrontation is a constant reminder of the stark contrast with my own upbringing. Growing up in a predominantly white, middle-to-upper-class neighbourhood, my educational opportunities and circumstances were vastly different. This juxtaposition has certainly been my main source of motivation to address these disparities and advocate for systemic changes that can help level the playing field.

Through my work, I have come to see and witness the inescapable effects of socioeconomic segregation on children's lives and their direct futures. My aim, whether working in the educational field or as an urban planner, is to use my position to contribute to efforts that counteract these effects in any way that I can.

POSITIONALITY

As Secules et al. (2021) argue, researchers engaged in critical studies on equity and inclusion must assess how their own positions and experiences influence their interpretations of others' lived experiences. With this in mind, and in the spirit of self-reflexivity, I acknowledge that my background as a white, native Dutch woman who grew up in a socioeconomically privileged environment undoubtedly shapes my perspectives.

This research seeks transparency in how my identity as a researcher relates to the topic and the participants involved. Positionality statements, as suggested by scholars, allow researchers to clarify how their personal contexts influence their work and provide an opportunity to reflect on the power and privilege embedded in their roles (Muhammad et al., 2015). My experiences, biases, and privilege inevitably influence not only the research process but also how findings are framed and communicated.

The recognition of power dynamics is essential in this research, especially as it incorporates unstructured conversations and anecdotal evidence. As someone working at a primary school in The Hague Zuidwest, I interact informally with colleagues, parents, and students, often as a trusted and familiar figure. This relationship can create a dynamic of comfort and openness, but it also underscores the need to remain aware of the inherent power imbalances in these interactions. Muhammad et al. (2015) emphasise that principles of community-based research cannot be fully realised without addressing unequal power relations. These dynamics become especially complex when I consider how students perceive me—as a person of trust or someone they look up to, but also as someone they view as distinct from their lived experiences. For example, children often express surprise at my identity as a white, native Dutch woman, praising traits such as my blonde hair or, conversely, some can be quick to label situations as racist, even when something has very little to do with race, highlighting their awareness of societal dynamics and the pervasive influence of socioeconomic segregation in shaping their perspectives.

This example, where children are quick to use terms like "racist" when something isn't to their liking, shows me how complicated the power dynamic can be, especially when discussing topics more related to the current research. It sometimes makes me question the authenticity of their words and stories—whether a situation genuinely reflects the way they perceive it, or if some children are simply responding in ways that reflect their broader understanding of societal dynamics. However, it becomes even more complicated when, as their teacher, I am seen as both a figure of authority and a source of support. I must remain mindful of the role I play in shaping their perceptions and the potential influence I have on their understanding of power structures.

At the same time, I am left wondering: Who am I to determine when a situation truly reflects their lived experiences? As a white woman, my perspective may be far removed from their own, raising the question of whether I have the right to question the significance they attach to their perceptions. This tension makes navigating the power dynamics of my role even more challenging.

Following the epistemological assumptions of the social constructionist/interpretivist paradigm, I recognise that this research does not claim to represent a singular reality. As Daly (2007) notes, multiple realities can be articulated based on the values, standpoints, and positions of the author. The findings presented in this thesis are therefore one interpretation, informed by my standpoint and positionality.

By situating myself within the research and remaining critically reflexive, I aim to approach this work with humility and an understanding of its limitations. Reflexivity is crucial for producing findings that, while shaped by my perspective, strive to contribute to addressing the systemic inequalities that shape the lives of the children in The Hague.

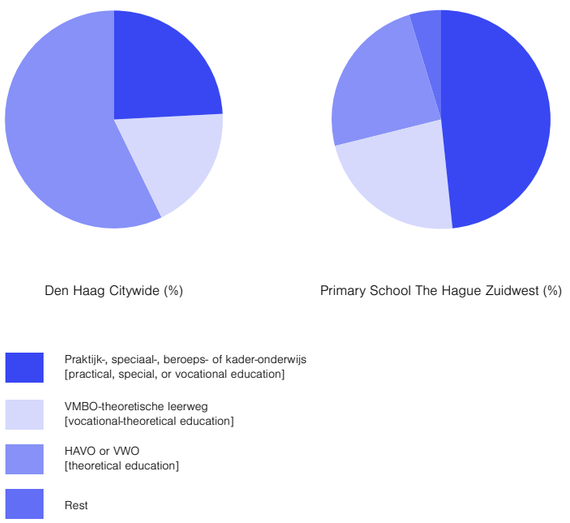
ii. RELEVANCE AND URGENCY

“Inequality in educational opportunities starts as early as primary school, and it primarily depends on the location of the school” (Trouw, 2021). This recent newspaper headline perfectly captures a society-wide problem that should concern everyone across the Netherlands; students in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods face far greater challenges in accessing educational opportunities compared to their peers in wealthier, predominantly white neighbourhoods just a few kilometres away.

The fact that children’s futures are determined more by their environment than by their abilities or efforts should be a cause for serious concern since this disparity not only sustains systemic inequalities but also reinforces intergenerational cycles of segregation, trapping part of the Dutch population in a persistent cycle of disadvantage.

This societal issue—so perfectly summarised in the newspaper headline—is also painfully evident in my own experience at the primary school where I work. To illustrate this, consider the outcomes for students leaving this primary school: while nearly half of ‘groep 8’ students move on to practical, special, or vocational education, only a quarter transition to higher academic tracks such as HAVO or VWO. This stands in stark contrast to city-wide averages, where most students access higher tracks (see figure 6). Based on my own experience, I would confidently argue that this gap is not due to lower intelligence or substandard teaching. Rather, the location of the school—and the structural inequalities tied to it—plays a decisive role in shaping these educational outcomes, just as the newspaper headline highlighted.

Fig. 6 Educational Transitions from *Groep 8* in The Hague in 2022: Citywide Average vs. Specific Primary School in Zuidwest (AlleCijfers, 2022)



This problem is not only pressing but also under-researched. As early as 1997, Karsten highlighted that segregation studies have largely overlooked children and development opportunities, despite the local dimension of children’s everyday and the growing number of segregated schools.

Yet more recently, Kuyvenhoven and Boterman (2021) indicate that his research gap remains alarmingly relevant today. Their work emphasises the ongoing connection between place and opportunity, revealing that unequal distributions of educational resources give children in well-served areas a distinct advantage, while those in underserved neighbourhoods face compounded disadvantages. Given the long-term consequences for children in these environments, this research gap should no longer persist.

By bridging the fields of spatial planning and educational equity, this research seeks to address these critical gaps and propose pathways towards fairer opportunities for all children, regardless of where they live.

Fig. 7 Research Gap (author)



The urgency of addressing educational inequalities in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods cannot be overstated. As Karsten (2010) notes, children’s daily lives are deeply shaped by the environments in which they grow up. Unlike adults, children’s mobility is restricted, and they depend heavily on their schools and neighbourhoods for social interaction and development opportunities.

Moreover, education plays a crucial role in social mobility. However, Karsten (2010) also points out that the educational system has historically not only facilitated upward mobility but has also reproduced existing inequalities. For children in segregated neighbourhoods, this means that the educational system, rather than serving as a tool for advancement, often reinforces their position within the social hierarchy.

The primary school years—roughly ages 4 to 12—are particularly critical. In the Dutch education system, children are already sorted into different educational tracks at a very young age, often based on the perceived potential of the child. This early sorting has long-term consequences, as the type of education a child receives greatly influences their future opportunities. Those who are placed in ‘lower’ educational tracks are more likely to experience limited career prospects and fewer opportunities. Therefore, the unequal educational opportunities children encounter are not just a present concern but have big implications for their future trajectory.

Inaction risks deepening systemic inequalities that will affect not only the current generation of children but also future generations.

Fig. 8 Newspaper Headline Showing Societal Relevance (Trouw, 2021)

[Inequality in educational opportunities starts as early as primary school, and it primarily depends on the location of the school]

Kansenongelijkheid begint al op de basisschool, en dat gaat voornamelijk om de plek waar die school staat



Beeld HH, ANP

Marco Visser 18 juni 2021, 07:00

iii. WHERE TO START?

In addressing the challenge of unequal educational opportunities faced by children in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods, it becomes immediately clear that this issue spans multiple domains—sociocultural, institutional, and spatial. The interconnectedness of these domains complicates the problem, as children's educational opportunities are not merely a matter of individual factors or policy decisions in one area. Rather, they are influenced by a web of circumstances that overlap and interact with one another.

For this master's thesis, the focus is on the spatial domain, which deals with the physical environment and how this impacts educational opportunities. This domain considers the role of spatial planning. However, it is important to acknowledge that the problem at hand is not confined to spatial issues alone. The socioeconomic challenges children face, their family dynamics, health, cultural factors, and so on, all play a role in shaping their educational outcomes.

This thesis recognises that while the spatial domain is the central area of focus, there is significant overlap between the domains. The figure below illustrates this overlap, showing the three domains—sociocultural, institutional, and spatial. The figure on the right shows the same domains but in more detail, with each subdivided into smaller categories. As the diagram suggests, the boundaries between the domains somewhat overlap; they are fluid and interconnected.

The simplification of these domains into separate categories in the diagram is necessary for conceptual clarity, but it must be understood as only this—an oversimplified representation of a far more complex reality. In practice, the boundaries between these domains are blurred, and all factors must be considered together to form a comprehensive understanding of the challenges at hand. For this reason, although the focus of this thesis is on spatial planning, the potential influence of other factors will not be completely excluded. Any relevant aspects of the sociocultural and institutional domains that intersect with spatial issues will be integrated into the analysis and proposed strategic actions.

Ultimately, this approach aims to address the problem holistically, recognising the multifaceted nature of the issue, while still providing a clear and actionable focus for the research. By concentrating on the spatial domain, this thesis aims to contribute to institutional change, while acknowledging that this change will require comprehensive efforts across all relevant domains.

Fig. 9 The Spatial Domain as the Central Focus of This Research Project (author)

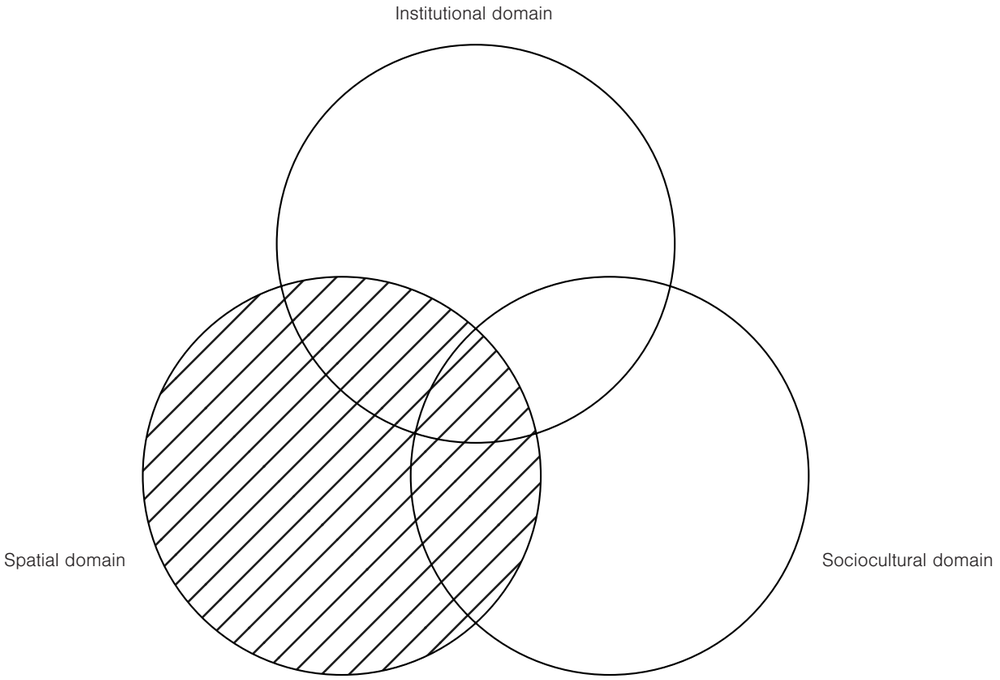


Fig. 10 Domains Influencing Educational Opportunities (diagram compiled by the author, based on Meyer & Westrik, 2020, and Fishman, Cooper, & Newman, 1971)

POLITICAL SYSTEMS: Governance, policy frameworks, and commitment to equitable education.

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS: Curriculum design, quality standards, and inclusivity in teaching methods.

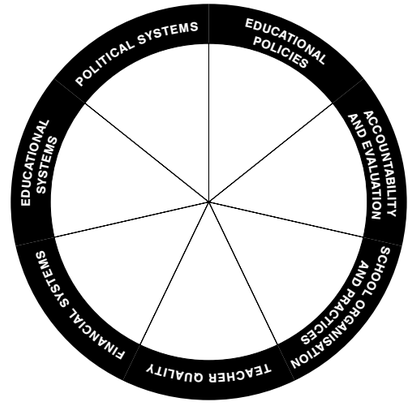
FINANCIAL SYSTEMS: Funding structures, disparities in resource allocation, and affordability of education.

TEACHER QUALITY: Skilled, motivated, and well-educated teachers.

SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND PRACTICES: Administrative practices and organisation styles affecting school performance.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND EVALUATION: Monitoring of educational outcomes.

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES: Role of governances in shaping educational policies.



INSTITUTIONAL DOMAIN

SPATIAL QUALITY OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: Infrastructure, design, and physical quality of public learning environments.

ACCESSIBILITY TO LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: Proximity, transportation availability, and accessibility.

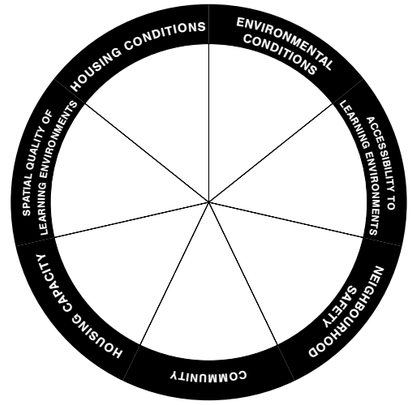
ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS: Impact of climate, pollution, and other environmental conditions on learning spaces.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES: Distribution of schools, libraries, community centres, extracurricular activities.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY: Influence of crime rates and perceived safety on the ability to explore the urban environment.

HOUSING CAPACITY: Density of the population and the suitability or adequacy of housing for different groups.

HOUSING CONDITIONS: Stability and quality of living situations.



SPATIAL DOMAIN

FAMILY DYNAMICS: Family structure, support systems, stability, and involvement in education.

PARENTAL EDUCATION: The educational attainment of parents and its impact on students.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: Physical and mental health.

RELIGION AND CULTURAL BELIEFS: Influence of religious and cultural practices on educational priorities.

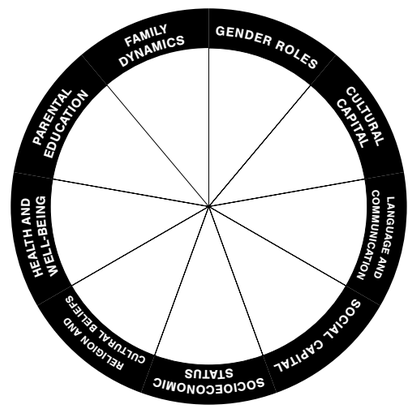
SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS: Income levels, employment stability, and access to resources.

SOCIAL CAPITAL: Networks, community engagement, and peer influences.

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION: Language barriers and the availability of multilingual resources.

CULTURAL CAPITAL: Knowledge, skills, and experiences that students bring to the classroom.

GENDER ROLES: Cultural expectations and societal norms surrounding gender and education.



SOCIOCULTURAL DOMAIN

iv. RESEARCH SCOPE

Understanding the connection between space and educational opportunities necessitates a clear delineation of the spaces under consideration. The concept of “spaces” in this context is inherently broad and multifaceted. To address this complexity, this chapter seeks to demarcate the spaces under consideration.

To better understand the spaces that shape children’s daily experiences, Moore (1986) identifies three ranges of explored urban environments: habitual, frequented, and occasional. These categories provide a framework for conceptualising the different spatial realities of children’s lives:

1. Habitual range: This range encompasses the immediate environment surrounding a child’s home, including everyday destinations such as schools and nearby playgrounds. These spaces are central to a child’s daily routine and are typically within walking distance or easily accessible without parental supervision.

2. Frequented range: As children grow, their mobility increases, extending their spatial reach. The frequented range includes spaces visited regularly but less frequently than those in the habitual range, often influenced by seasonal or situational factors. This may include a local park across a busy road, a friend’s house a few blocks away, a neighbourhood library, or a sports field on the edge of the district. Access to these spaces depends on parental restrictions, physical barriers, and the availability of transportation.

3. Occasional range: This range represents the outer boundary of a child’s explored environment, including spaces visited infrequently and under specific conditions. These locations remain largely unfamiliar to the child and are often associated with unique or rare experiences.

By categorising children’s environments into these ranges, Moore’s framework provides a structured lens through which to analyse the spatial dynamics of educational opportunities from a child’s perspective.

For this research project, the focus is on spaces within the habitual range. This decision is based on two key considerations: the habitual range reflects the restricted mobility of children, serving as their primary sphere for interaction and exploration. These are the environments most directly accessible to children, requiring no parental guidance or supervision. Furthermore, these spaces are encountered daily, making them crucial in shaping children’s perceptions, behaviours, and development.

However, there is one question to take into consideration: whether certain spaces fall within the habitual range for some children but belong to the frequented or occasional range for others. For example, spaces that are easily accessible to more privileged children might remain out of reach for others. This question will accompany us throughout the next phases of this research project.

Fig. 11 Diagram of the Three Ranges of Explored Urban Environments (author, based on framework by Moore, 1986)

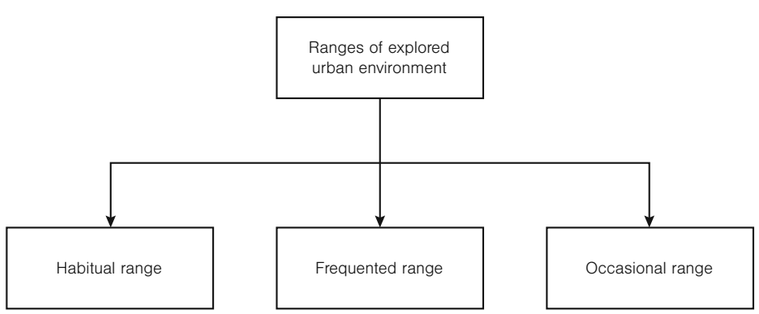
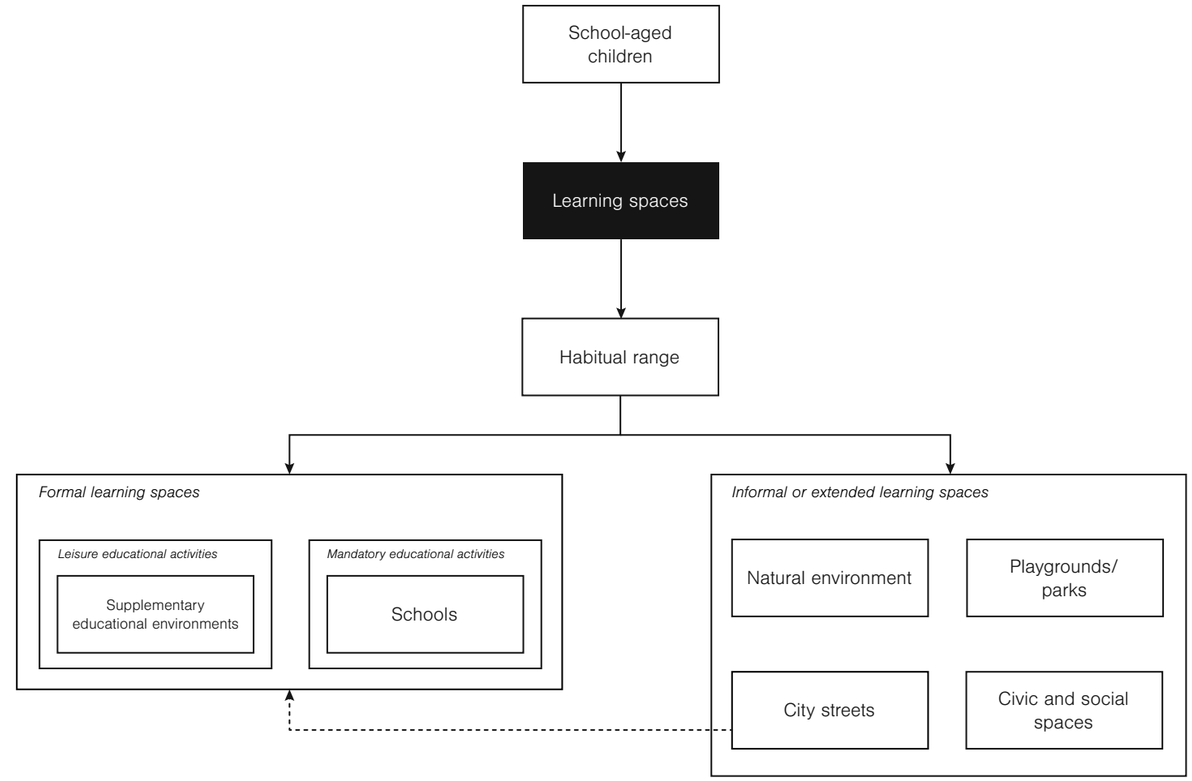


Fig. 12 Diagram of Learning Spaces (author)

This diagram illustrates the learning spaces within the habitual range, categorising them into formal spaces and informal spaces.



Having defined the range of explored environments, it is necessary to clarify the types of spaces where children can learn and create opportunities for development. Learning spaces can broadly be categorised as formal and informal.

Formal spaces include schools and supplementary educational environments such as libraries and tutoring centres. These settings are specifically designed to foster structured learning experiences.

Informal learning spaces, on the other hand, extend beyond formal settings. Children learn and develop through their interactions with their surroundings. Jane Jacobs (2011) emphasises the importance of city streets as vital learning environments, offering unstructured opportunities for exploration and socialisation. Similarly, well-designed outdoor play spaces can provide enriching experiences that support children’s learning. Natural environments also play a significant role, offering opportunities for informal learning and fostering cognitive and emotional development (Raith, 2015).

These insights demonstrate that the informal learning spaces already becomes a bit vague and shows that there is virtually no limit to the spaces where children can learn. The urban environment, with its countless formal and informal spaces, provides abundant opportunities for learning and developmental growth.

By narrowing the focus to the habitual range and considering the diverse spaces where children can learn, this research defines its spatial scope. While informal learning can occur almost anywhere, this project concentrates on those spaces within children’s immediate daily environment.

v. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Children in The Hague face significant challenges due to high levels of **socioeconomic** and **school segregation**, which limit, their access to educational opportunities, **reinforcing social inequalities** from a young age. Despite recognition of the interrelatedness between neighbourhoods and educational outcomes, little research has addressed these intersecting contexts together or advocated for the policy changes needed to address them.

From a perspective of fairness and justice, all children—regardless of their neighbourhood and background—should have adequate levels of **accessibility** to **qualitative** learning environments to ensure **equity in learning and development opportunities**, and break the cycle of systemic inequality that may otherwise limit their future opportunities.



RESEARACH FRAMEWORK

i. Project Framework

ii. Conceptual Framework

iii. Methods

iv. Intended Outcomes

v. Project Timeline

i. PROJECT FRAMEWORK

The diagram below outlines the framework of this project. For the research structure, I have adopted Marcuse's Critical Planning approach (2009). This approach uses critical urban theory as a tool to analyse practice within existing urban societies, developing their potential and exposing their problems while simultaneously informing the future directions. The approach aims to respond to the principles of progressive planning, addressing issues of social justice such as race, discrimination, and segregation. This foundation shaped the project into three distinct phases: analyse, expose, and propose.

The analyse phase delves into the context and history of the problem. This stage is crucial for understanding the foundations of the issue and setting the stage for informed critique and action. By exploring the historical and contextual layers of the case, we uncover the deeper roots of the challenges at hand.

The expose phase focuses on theory to better understand and explain the practice of socioeconomic segregated neighbourhoods. Here, global urban theories are examined and immediately tested against the case of The Hague. This comparative analysis ensures that theoretical insights are contextualised and relevant.

In this phase, exposure leads to a position not only critical in the sense of negative criticism, but also critically exposing the positive and the possibilities of change. As Marcuse (2009) suggests, this involves identifying what is wrong and requires change, as well as recognising what is desirable and worth building on. In this project, the expose phase serves as a foundation for the next phase, using critical theory to guide the development of actionable needs.

The propose phase usually focuses on collaboration with affected groups to create proposals, programmes, and strategies aimed at achieving desired outcomes. While working directly with the affected group in this project may be challenging due to ethical considerations tied to the age group involved, indirect methods such as anecdotal evidence and observations will provide valuable input.

This structure aims to bridge the gap between critical urban theory and radical urban practice. By moving through analyse, expose, and propose, the project integrates theory with actionable strategies, offering both a critique of the present and a roadmap for transformative change.

Key Words

Socioeconomic segregation

Systemic equality

Children

Educational opportunities

Problem Field

Vicious circle of segregation

Spatial & systemic injustice

Academic performance reinforcing socioeconomic inequalities

Inaction sustains inequalities for future generations

Interrelatedness neighbourhood & educational outcomes

Location

The Hague

Problem Statement

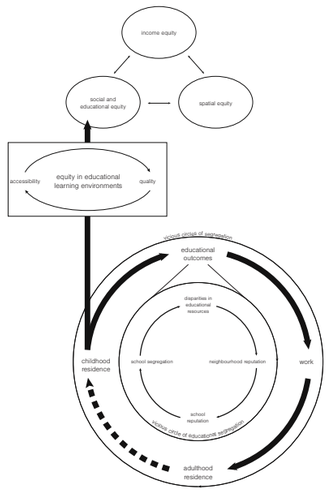
Children in The Hague face significant challenges due to high levels of socioeconomic and school segregation, which limit their access to educational opportunities, reinforcing social inequalities from a young age. Despite recognition of the interrelatedness between neighbourhoods and educational outcomes, little research has addressed these intersecting contexts together or advocated for the policy changes to address them.

From a perspective of fairness and justice, all children, regardless of their neighbourhood and background, should have adequate levels of accessibility to qualitative learning environments to ensure equity in learning and development opportunities, and break the cycle of systemic inequality that may otherwise limit their future opportunities.

Main Research Question

How can spatial planning improve access and quality of pedagogical learning environments in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods in The Hague to promote systemic equity?

Conceptual Framework



Research Approach

ANALYSE

How has socioeconomic segregation evolved over time, and how has it shaped living conditions from the perspective of children in The Hague?

Where in The Hague are patterns of socioeconomic segregation most pronounced, and how are these reflected in the spatial distribution of learning environments and child-related facilities?

How do children navigate and experience their urban environment, and what factors shape the scope and quality of their urban environment?

EXPOSE

What lived disparities shape the everyday experiences of residents in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods, and how do these manifest in the context of The Hague?

How do current spatial policies and procedural systems in The Hague address, overlook, or reinforce inequalities in access to a high-quality pedagogical learning environment?

PROPOSE

What targeted needs and disparities must be addressed to maximise children's learning and development opportunities in the urban environment?

What spatial planning strategies and policy changes can be implemented to improve access to quality educational environments in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods?

Methods

Literature review

Policy & regulation analysis

Mixed media review

Mapping

Socio-spatial analysis

Contextual applicability analysis

Informal conversations

Personas

Case study

Scenarios of strategies

Outcomes

ANALYSE

The aim of the analyse phase is to establish a theoretical and spatial understanding of socioeconomic segregation in The Hague, defining the problem within the Dutch context and its impact on children's educationional opportunities.

EXPOSE

The expose phase seeks to connect theory to reality by exploring the lived experiences of growing up in segregated neighbourhoods in The Hague, using evidence-based analysis to identify their strengths and weaknesses and find out the needed spatial strategies to maximise potential of learning environments.

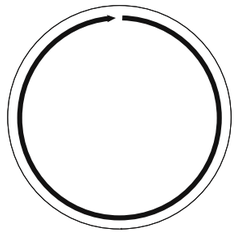
PROPOSE

The propose phase aims to develop a comprehensive set of strategic actions, to guide long-term spatial interventions that improve access to quality learning environments and promote equal development opportunities for children in The Hague's segregated neighbourhoods.

ii. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

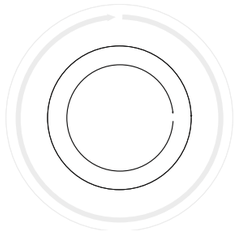
The conceptual framework showcases socioeconomic segregation as a multi-domain process, highlighting how inequalities are produced, reproduced, and perpetuated. It consists of four parts.

Part 1. Intergenerational Vicious Circle of Segregation



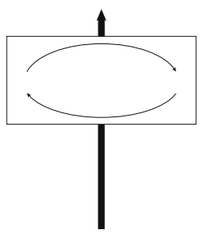
The first part, based on the framework by Tammaru et al. (2021), focuses on the intergenerational vicious circle of segregation, where early-life segregation is transmitted across generations. The dotted line represents the intergenerational connection.

Part 2. Urban and Educational Segregation



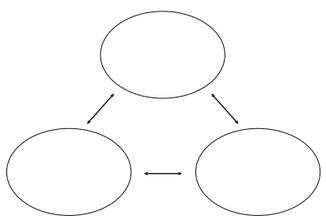
The second part draws on Bernelius et al.'s (2021) work on the link between urban and educational segregation, showing how school reputation drives school choices and perpetuates resource disparities between neighbourhoods and schools. This dynamic creates another vicious circle within the broader cycle of segregation. Poorly resourced schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods often struggle to improve outcomes, which reinforces negative perceptions and limits opportunities for young students.

Part 3. Equity in Learning Environments as Transformative Force



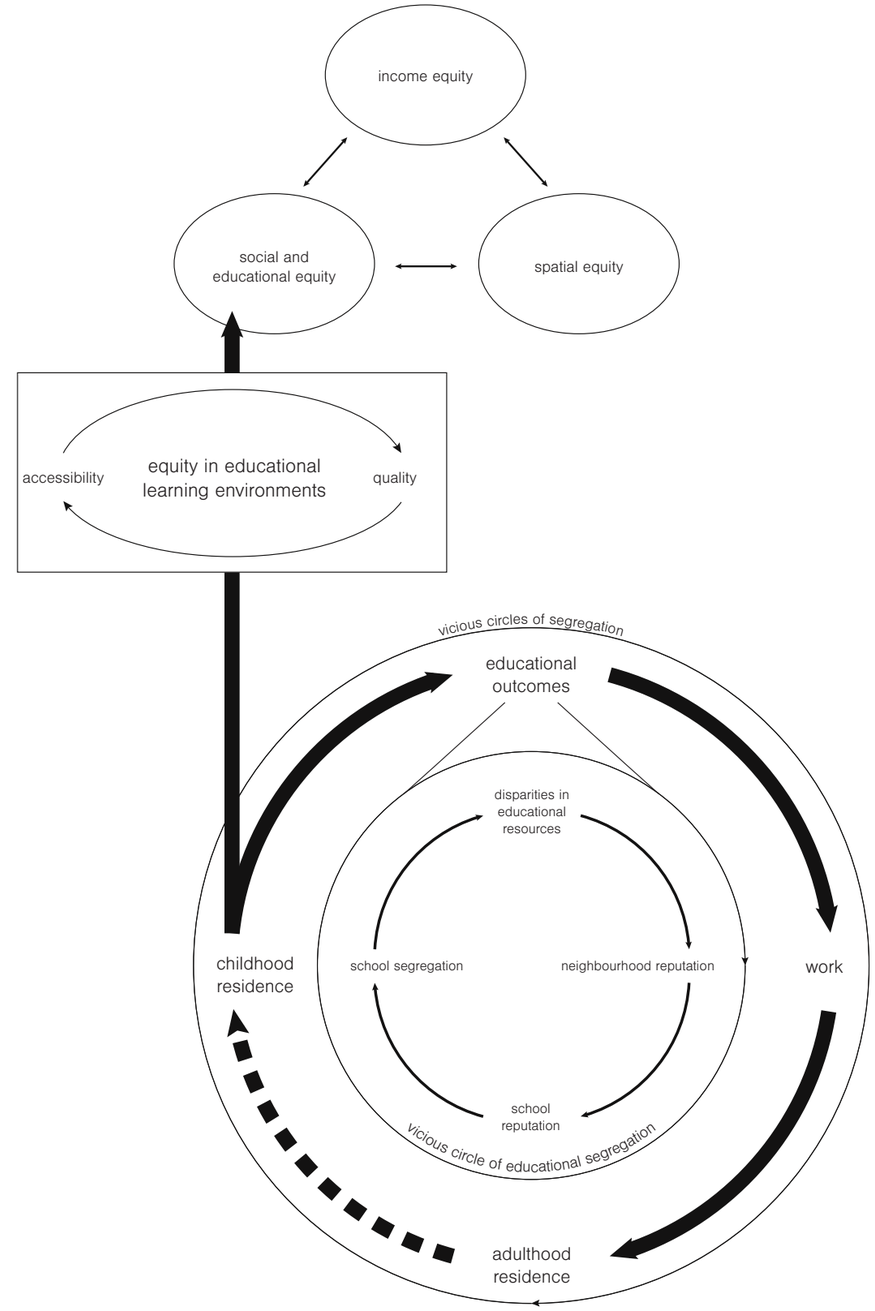
The third part shows the potential of equity in educational environments to break these, based on research findings by ACLU (2024). Or in other words, equity in educational environments can act as a transformative force to disrupt these existing patterns. The graduation project focuses on this critical aspect, aiming to intervene and contribute to breaking the cycles of segregation by focusing on accessibility and quality of learning environments.

Part 4. Interconnectedness of Life Domains



Finally, the fourth part highlights the interconnectedness of educational, income, and spatial inequalities, demonstrating that advantage reinforces advantage (spillover effects), and vice versa, explained by Tammaru et al. (2021). Spatial and policy interventions in one domain could impact the other domains.

Fig. 13 Conceptual Framework (author)



Main research question:

MQ How can spatial planning contribute to improving accessibility and quality of learning environments in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods in The Hague to promote systemic equity?

Sub-research questions:

ANALYSE

SQ1 How has socioeconomic segregation evolved over time, and how has it shaped living conditions from the perspective of children in The Hague?

SQ2 Where in The Hague are patterns of socioeconomic segregation most pronounced, and how are these reflected in the spatial distribution of learning environments and child-related facilities?

SQ3 How do children navigate and experience their urban environment, and what factors shape the scope and quality of their urban environment?

EXPOSE

SQ4 What lived disparities shape the everyday experiences of residents in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods, and how do these manifest in the context of The Hague?

SQ5 How do current spatial policies and procedural systems in The Hague address, overlook, or reinforce inequalities in access to a high-quality pedagogical learning environment?

PROPOSE

SQ6 What targeted needs and disparities must be addressed to maximise children's learning and development opportunities in the urban environment?

SQ7 What spatial planning strategies and policy changes can be implemented to improve access to quality educational environments in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods?

LR Literature review

MMR Mixed media review

MA Mapping

SSA Socio-spatial analysis

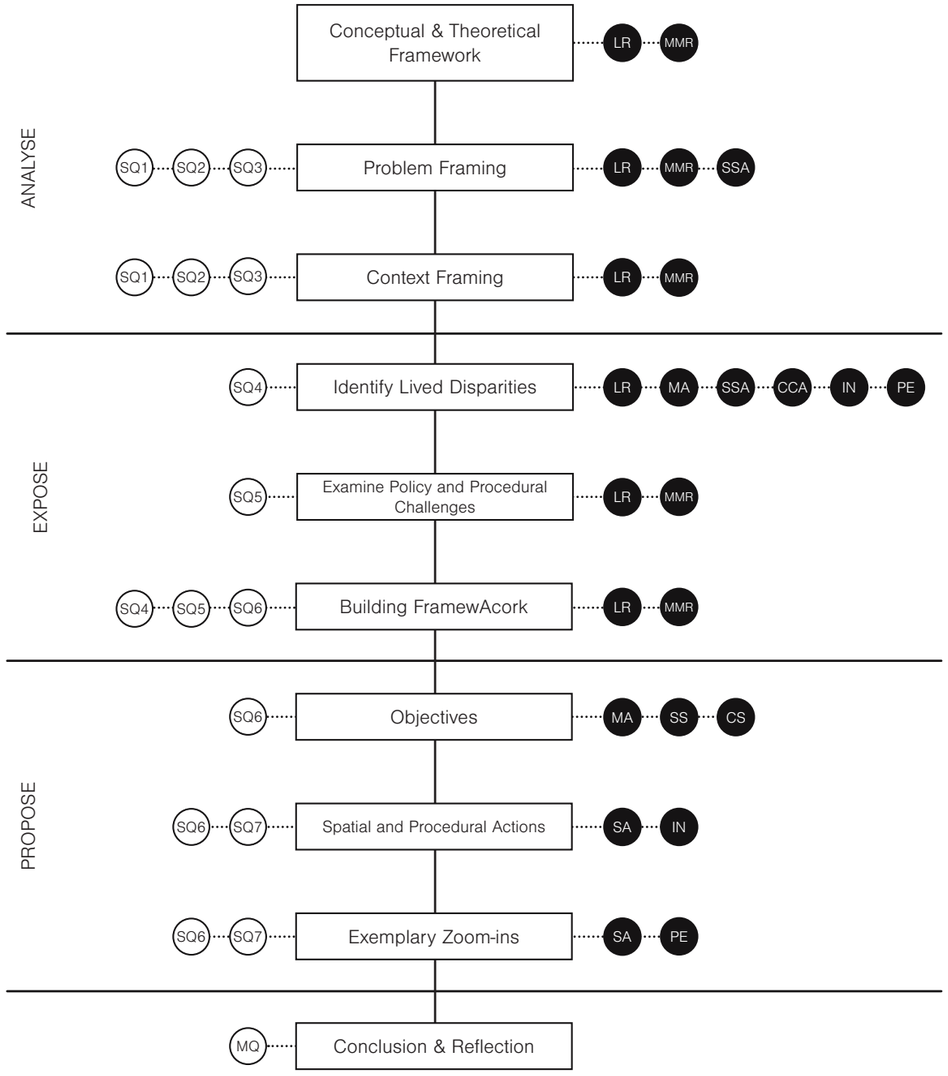
CAA Contextual applicability analysis

IN Informal conversations

PE Personas

CS Case study

SA Strategic actions



iii. METHODS

Literature review

PURPOSE: To fully understand the context, collect and synthesise relevant theories and concepts related to the project.

PROCEDURE: The literature review critically surveys scholarly articles, books, and diverse sources, building a theoretical and contextual framework through summary and evaluation. The approach is exploratory.

Mixed media review

PURPOSE: Gather insights from diverse media sources that highlight the complexities and key challenges of the selected case and provide a richer, multidimensional understanding beyond traditional academic resources.

PROCEDURE: The mixed media review will be done by exploring diverse sources—such as newspapers documentaries, local stories, and other media.

Socio-spatial analysis

PURPOSE: To analyse the current issues within different neighbourhoods, examine spatial conditions, and characterise the built environment.

PROCEDURE: This method combines qualitative and quantitative data to analyse how different factors influence spatial conditions.

Mapping

Mapping is a key method of spatial analysis and is highlighted separately here because of its significant role in the graduation project.

PURPOSE: Mapping and overlay techniques are essential tools for understanding spatial challenges and identifying potential intervention opportunities. The mapping part will involve collecting spatial data and analysing it through GIS tools and other visualisation methods to identify patterns and relationships within the built environment.

Socio-spatial analysis

PURPOSE: To analyse the current issues within different neighbourhoods, examine spatial conditions, and characterise the built environment.

PROCEDURE: This method combines qualitative and quantitative data to analyse how different factors influence spatial conditions.

Observations

PURPOSE: To gain a better understanding and collect qualitative insights into lived experiences from a child's (or parent's) perspective.

PROCEDURE: Semi-structured observations will be conducted in The Hague. These observations will capture dynamics within the learning environment.

Informal conversations

In this project, "interviews" are not formal or structured but take the form of unstructured conversations and anecdotal evidence. As someone working at a primary school in The Hague Zuidwest, I interact informally with colleagues, parents, and students. These natural interactions provide insights grounded in trust and familiarity, offering valuable, though subjective, data.

PURPOSE: To gain a better understanding and collect qualitative insights into lived experiences from a child's (or parent's) perspective.

PROCEDURE: Informal conversations with colleagues, parents, and students to gather anecdotal evidence and qualitative insights.*

*The full set of extracted materials from the informal conversations can be made available upon request by contacting the author.

Personas

PURPOSE: To identify the key players and forces involved in injustices, as well as the stakeholders at various scales who can advocate and drive change.

PROCEDURE: This involves identifying key stakeholders at different scales and examining their roles, interests, power dynamics, and willingness to engage, as well as understanding the cooperation and conflicts among various stakeholder groups.

Contextual applicability analysis

PURPOSE: To evaluate whether and how a theory applies in a specific real-world context, identifying its relevance, applicability, and limitations.

PROCEDURE: Select a theory, gather qualitative or quantitative data from the and analyse the data to assess and refine the theory's applicability.

Personas

PURPOSE: To synthesise diverse experiences into relatable, representative profiles that illustrate key challenges and needs within the urban environment, and to ground design decisions in lived realities.

PROCEDURE: Translate qualitative fieldwork insights into fictional yet evidence-based personas that reflect recurring patterns in the data.

Strategic actions

PURPOSE: To develop actionable strategies that could be transferred into other similar context and leverage opportunities for change.

PROCEDURE: This method will involve developing strategies based on research findings with solutions that are context-sensitive.

Case study

PURPOSE: To explore and analyse specific aspects of the urban learning environment by applying the developed framework to focused "zoom-ins".

PROCEDURE: With the literature review and contextual applicability analysis developing a framework with defined qualities and needs for the urban learning environment. Use this framework to carry out case studies on specific zoom-ins, collecting and analysing data to evaluate how well the needs and qualities are addressed.

iv. INTENDED OUTCOMES

RESEARCH AIM

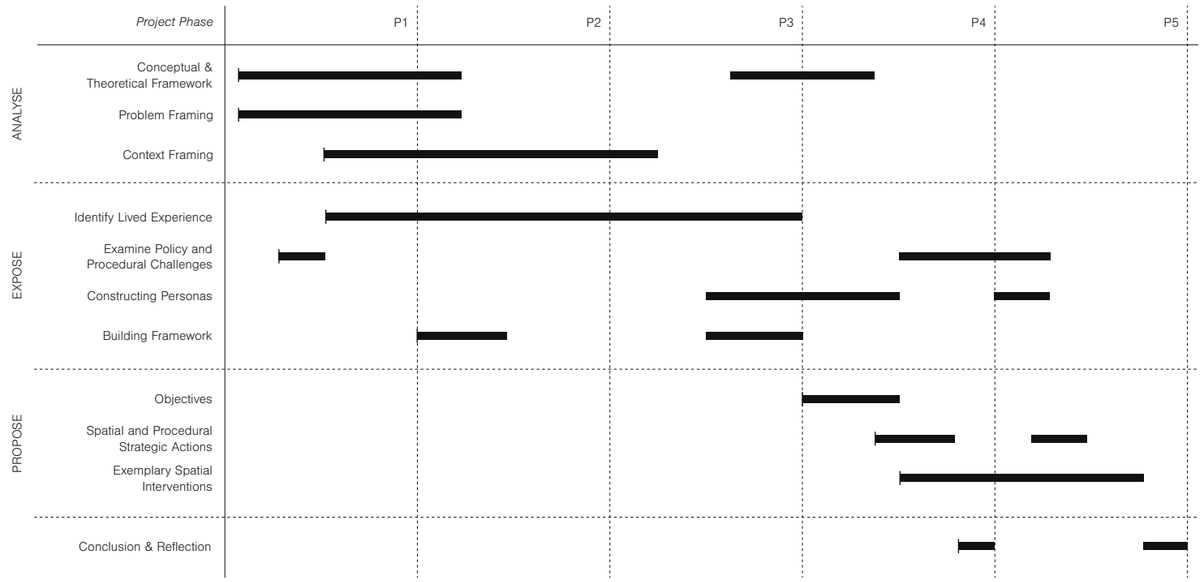
This research is an exploration of the interconnectedness between space and learning and educational opportunities, focusing on educational equity as a critical pathway to addressing systemic inequalities. It aims to ensure equity in accessibility to, and quality of, learning environments for all children, irrespective of their socioeconomic background. By bridging spatial planning and developmental opportunities, the study aims to find possibilities to disrupt cycles of socioeconomic segregation. Through this research, barriers impeding *kansengelijkheid* (equal opportunities) are examined, with the goal of advocating for transformative change. The study aims to generate strategic actions for spatially inclusive and supportive learning environments, promoting fairness and justice while contributing to a more equitable future for new generations in The Hague.

PROJECT SEGMENT	PHASE	INTENDED OUTCOMES
Problem Framing Context Framing	Analyse	The aim of the analyse phase is to establish a theoretical and spatial understanding of socioeconomic segregation in The Hague, defining the problem within the Dutch context and its impact on children's educationional opportunities.
Identify Lived Disparities Examine Policy and Procedural Challenges Building Framework	Expose	The expose phase seeks to connect theory to reality by exploring the lived experiences of growing up in segregated neighbourhoods in The Hague, using evidence-based analysis to identify their strengths and weaknesses and find out the needed spatial strategies to maximise potential of learning environments.
Objectives Spatial and Procedural Strategic Actions Exemplary Zoom-ins Conclusion & Reflection	Propose	The propose phase aims to develop a comprehensive set of strategic actions, to guide long-term spatial interventions that improve access to quality learning environments and promote equal development opportunities for children in The Hague's segregated neighbourhoods.

v. PROJECT TIMELINE

Regarding the phasing of the project, an explorative approach is essential to find the most effective way to comprehensively understand the lived experiences of children growing up marginalised areas in The Hague. At the same time, it explores how these realities and feelings can be compiled and communicated in a way that allows the reader not only to understand them, but to feel them as well. To structure the process, the research has been divided into sections, each falling into one of three phases: analyse, expose, or propose. The diagram outlines the proposed timeframe for each section, along with the period during which that part of the research was carried out.

Fig. 14 Research Project Timeline (author)



Analyse.

01.
Socioeconomic Segregation

02.
Historic Context

03.
The Hague Today

04.
Children and the Urban Environment

1. SOCIOECONOMIC SEGREGATION

1.1. Definition and Context
1.2. Distribution of Socioeconomic Indicators
1.3. Mapping Socioeconomic Segregation
1.4. Conclusions

Socioeconomic segregation is not a concept with a single, fixed definition. It cannot be universally captured by one measurement or one number. It is shaped by complex, layered processes — and understood differently across disciplines and contexts. Precisely for that reason, it is important to pause here and clarify how this thesis uses the term, and what is meant when talking about socioeconomic segregation in relation to children growing up in The Hague.

First, the concept of socioeconomic segregation cannot be meaningfully discussed without addressing its intersection with ethnic segregation. Although these were often studied separately in the past, in practice they are deeply intertwined (Musterd & van Kempen, 2009; Sleutjes et al., 2019). In Dutch cities, people with a non-Western migration background are overrepresented in low-income groups and are more likely to live in marginalised neighbourhoods (Musterd et al., 2017). **As a result, socioeconomic and ethnic segregation tend to reinforce each other.** It is precisely this interaction that produces distinct spatial patterns.

While some groups are constrained by allocation systems, discrimination, or limited access to social housing (Musterd & van Kempen, 2009), others make residential choices based on proximity to co-ethnic networks or cultural familiarity (Zorlu & Mulder, 2008). On the other hand, the trend of 'white-flight' persists, where high-income native households often opt for living in more desirable parts of the city (Atkinson & Blandy, 2006), voluntarily distancing themselves from more diverse or lower-income areas.

These patterns are not merely social but deeply spatial. The classic assumption in segregation research is that **spatial distance mirrors social distance** (Duncan & Duncan, 1955). That is, physical patterns of residence reflect and reinforce existing societal divides. In this sense, cities become maps of social inequalities.

These spatial divisions are not only abstract. **They manifest in the everyday environments children grow up in**—in the streets they walk through, the housing they return to, and the classrooms they sit in. The unequal geography of the city shapes not only access to resources, but the atmosphere of learning itself, reinforcing patterns of separation that are both seen and felt by children, day in day out.

In the Dutch context, these patterns are particularly urgent. **Inequality has been on the rise since the mid-1970s**, where the rich have become richer and existing policies and institutions have been mostly unsuccessful in reducing these growing inequalities (Atkinson, 2015). However, as Tammaru et al. (2016) note, we still lack systematic, comparative studies on the changing nature of socioeconomic segregation in European cities.

So, even though segregation is widely recognised as a problem, its measurement remains the subject of ongoing debate. For the purposes of this project, however, it feels necessary to identify and visualise the areas in The Hague where inequalities are most concentrated. In the absence of a clear standard, this project develops its own index to spatially analyse socioeconomic segregation in a way that makes sense for the research focus. This is based on the spatial layering of several key indicators: the residential distribution of children aged 0–15, residents with a non-Dutch migration background, low-income households, and parental education levels.

In light of these dynamics, this thesis does not aim to propose a singular or static definition of socioeconomic segregation. Instead, it uses the term to refer to the spatial concentration of disadvantage. When this thesis talks about socioeconomic segregation, it is not simply describing who lives where, but asking: **how do place and social position co-produce opportunity, or restrict it?**

Fig. 15 Classroom View – The Hague Centrum (Wattman)



Fig. 16 Classroom View – The Hague Escamp (author)



1.2. DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS

1.2.1. Children Aged 0-15

This map shows the distribution of residents aged 0–15 across The Hague. While the youth population is relatively evenly spread, higher concentrations are visible in the Schilderswijk and Transvaalkwartier neighbourhoods, with subtle increases also noticeable in areas of The Hague Zuidwest and Laak.



Fig. 17 Children Aged 0-15 (author)

1.2.2. Residents With a Non-Dutch Background

According to CBS (2019), residents with a non-Dutch background are defined based on the country of birth of the individual or one of their parents. This includes individuals with both western and non-western migration backgrounds, and excludes those whose parents and themselves were born in the Netherlands. The map reveals a clear spatial contrast, with a visible line running from the southwest to the northeast of the city, separating areas of higher and lower concentrations.

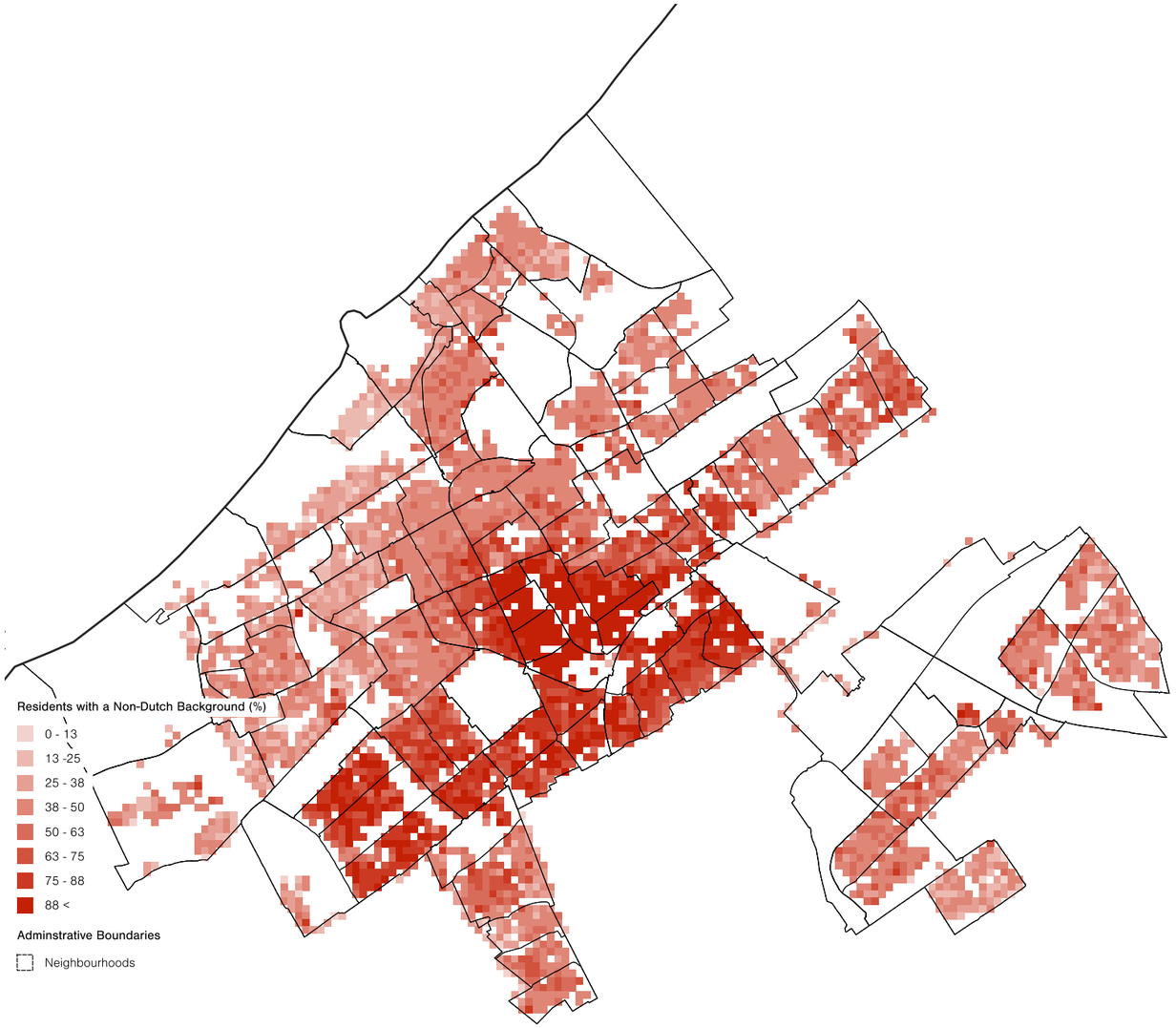


Fig. 18 Residents With a Non-Dutch Background (author)

1.2. DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS

1.2.3. Distribution of Low-income Households

Low-income households are definitely somewhat unevenly distributed across The Hague, with the highest concentrations found in the southern parts of the city. Due to data sensitivity, the figures are aggregated to a broader spatial resolution.



Fig. 19 Distribution of Low-income Households (author)

1.2.4. Educational Attainment

This map shows the share of residents aged 15 and older with a low level of educational attainment, based on their highest completed education and limited to those registered in the municipality. According to CBS, ‘low education’ includes primary education, VMBO, the first three years of HAVO or VWO, entry-level vocational training (MBO1), and practical education. Again, due to the sensitivity of this data, information on educational attainment is only available at the urban district level.



Fig. 20 Educational Attainment (author)

1.3. MAPPING SOCIOECONOMIC SEGREGATION

To analyse patterns of socioeconomic segregation among children in The Hague, an index was developed by combining these four spatial indicators. Combined, they reveal where disadvantage is most concentrated.

To compare these indicators—each expressed in different statistical forms, such as absolute counts or percentages—it was necessary to standardise them (referring to the transformation of raw values into z-scores, which express how far a value lies from the mean in standard deviation units). This made it possible to aggregate the variables. Weights were then applied to reflect their relative importance. The result is a spatially explicit index of socioeconomic segregation among children.

$$\text{Index} = (\ 0.1 \times Z_{0–15}\ ) + (\ 0.3 \times Z_{\textit{Non-Dutch Background}}\ ) + (\ 0.3 \times Z_{\textit{Low-Income Households}}\ ) + (\ 0.3 \times Z_{\textit{Low Educational Attainment}}\ )$$

Or, the same formula but presented visually:

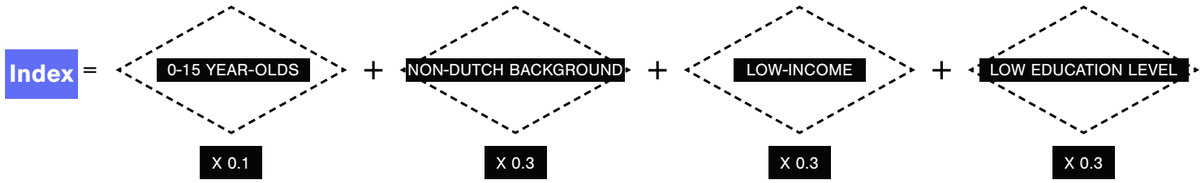
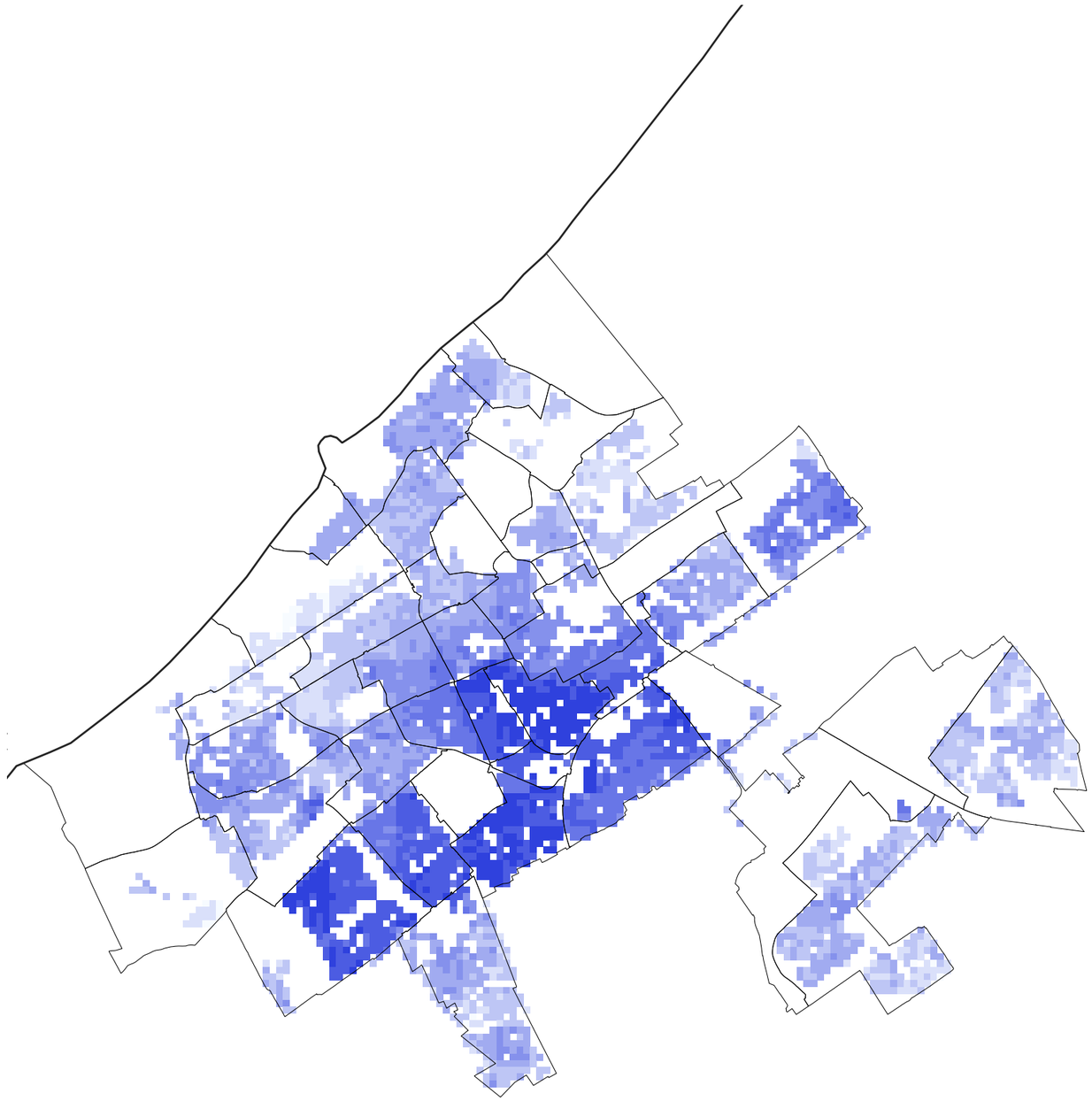


Fig. 21 Socioeconomic Segregation Index of Children in The Hague (author)

This map shows the segregation index for children aged 0–15, based on parental education, non-Dutch background, and low-income households.



2. HISTORIC CONTEXT

2.1. Longitudinal Analysis

2.2. City-Level Developments: The Hague

Fig. 22 Timeline of Autonomous Trends and Structural Drivers of Socioeconomic Segregation in Dutch Cities (1930–Present)

A synthesis based on key academic literature, including Blok et al. (2000), Boterman (2013), Hochstenbach (2022), Savini et al. (2016), Sleutjes et al. (2019), Tammaru et al. (2016), Tieleman (2013), and Van Schuppen (2006).

POST-WAR PLANNING

Pre-war Housing Shortages and the Rise of Social Housing


i.

Already in the 1930s, major cities faced overcrowding and poor housing conditions. Early examples of social housing and "garden city" ideals emerged to provide better living conditions for the working class.

Institutional Urban Order

State involvement in housing construction increases (post-WWII): The Dutch government took strong control over housing provision, including subsidies and planning. A large-scale, centrally coordinated social housing programme was launched.

Pillarisation (*verzuiling*): Dutch society was divided into ideological "pillars" (Catholic, Protestant, Socialist, Liberal), each with their own institutions, including schools, housing cooperatives, and neighbourhoods — shaping spatial separation along ideological lines.

Post-war Suburban Expansion

Large-scale construction of new residential districts on the urban periphery to solve housing shortages.


ii.

NEOLIBERAL SHIFT

Growth of "City Marketing": Policy began to focus on attracting the middle class, talent, and investment, reinforcing gentrification processes.

Limited new construction of social housing resulting in less space for low-income households in new developments; waitlists and spatial mismatch grow.


vii.

Decentralisation of social policy to municipalities, where municipalities receive more responsibility but fewer resources, weakening support systems.

Beginning of the Welfare State's Restructuring

First neoliberal reforms: slight shifts towards individual responsibility and reduced redistribution.

Welfare state marketisation: Broader turn to market-oriented welfare: weakening redistributive capacity; increasing inequality and segregation.

Large-scale restructuring of post-war neighbourhoods: Replacement of social housing with owner-occupied housing; aimed at "social mix," but often led to displacement of low-income residents.

Policy-driven dispersal of social housing: 'Spreidingsbeleid' aimed at reducing concentrations of poverty and migration.

Rotterdam Act (2006)

Intensifying Gentrification (Especially in Major Cities)

Inner-city neighbourhoods became attractive for middle-income households; with policy highly promoting this trend.


v.

Pre-war & Reconstruction Period | Growth, Welfare Expansion & Labour Migration | Economic Restructuring & Institutional Shifts | Neoliberalisation | Gentrification & Housing Pressure | Segregation Deepens

1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 2020

Class-based spatial segregation (informal but visible)

Industrial Growth and Blue-collar Job Expansion

Economic boom created job opportunities for low- and semi-skilled workers; lower levels of socio-economic segregation due to widespread employment.

Guest Workers Dominating the Immigration Figures

Labour migration: First Italian, Spanish and Yugoslavian workers; later large inflow of Turkish and Moroccan guest workers.


iii.

Colonial migration: After Suriname's independence, a significant number of Surinamese migrants moved to the Netherlands, followed later by Antilleans.

Concentration of migrants in social housing: Migrants settled in low-cost rental housing, often located in post-war peripheral districts; started shaping ethnic and class-based residential patterns.

Shifting Labour Demands


iv.

Deindustrialisation & decline of low-skilled jobs: Manufacturing jobs disappeared; low-educated and migrant workers faced rising unemployment and marginalisation.

Professionalisation: Rising demand for highly educated workers; increasing socioeconomic divide.

Tightening housing market: Housing shortages, rising rents and house prices pushed vulnerable groups out of well-located areas.

Displacement of lower-income and migrant families. A shift from central to peripheral neighbourhoods.

Housing Market Crisis

Rapidly rising housing costs intensified spatial divides, as low-income groups are increasingly pushed out of more 'desirable' urban areas.


vi.

Selective middle-class migration back to the city: "Back to the city" trend accelerates socioeconomic polarisation between central and peripheral areas.

Image References:
i. Van Eesteren Museum (2023)
ii. Van Eesteren Museum (2023)
iii. Martens (1975)
iv. Noord-Hollands Archief (n.d.)
v. Van Denderen & Hof (2016)
vi. Van Lonkhuijsen (2016)
vii. ANP (2013)

2.2. CITY-LEVEL DEVELOPMENTS: THE HAGUE

2.2.1. Peat and Sand // ‘Hagenezen’ and ‘Hagenaars’

“Until well into the 19th century, the rich, the poor, and everyone in between lived side by side in the old city centre,” according to Hans Gramberg of the Haags Historisch Museum (as cited in Dirks, 2017). This changed dramatically from the mid-19th century onwards, as The Hague expanded rapidly beyond its original moat-ringed centre. Between 1850 and 1900, the population nearly tripled—from 72,000 to over 200,000—leading to the development of new residential districts.

A spatial pattern soon emerged that would shape the city’s social geography for generations: the division between sand and peat. The higher, dry sand ridges in the west and northwest—towards the dunes and Scheveningen—became the site of prestigious neighbourhoods. These areas appealed not only for their beauty and proximity to the coast, but also for health-related reasons. Contemporary sources described the low, damp peatlands as unhealthy, even warning of malaria risks. As a 19th-century brochure for Duinoord claimed: *“The pure soil is of undeniable significance for the health of its residents”* (Schmal, 1995).

Meanwhile, the lower-lying peat areas to the south and east were developed for industrial and working-class housing. Neighbourhoods such as Schilderswijk, Transvaal, and Laakkwartier were densely built with little attention to hygiene, light, or ventilation. Houses were often poorly constructed, with weak foundations and substandard materials (Schmal, 1995; Van Schuppen, 2006). In contrast to the careful layout of wealthier districts, these working-class areas consisted of cramped alleys and hidden courtyards.

This urban development produced a lasting socio-spatial divide. Sandy districts were reserved for the elite, while peatlands were left to speculative builders and, later, social housing projects.

Even with increased planning from 1900 onwards—such as Berlage’s extension plan and later post-war developments—the core pattern persisted. As Schmal notes, the division between “high and low,” and “rich and poor,” continued to follow the sand-peat divide.

This spatial separation was not merely a passive outcome of geography; it was actively maintained and reinforced by planners, developers, and local narratives. The perception of certain neighbourhoods as either “respectable” or “deprived” shaped how residents, investors, and city officials treated them. The urban structure was, in this sense, co-produced by both formal policies and social imaginaries (Schmal, 1995; Van Schuppen, 2006).

While gentrification has blurred some boundaries—such as rising demand in formerly peat-based areas like the Zeeheldenkwartier, where proximity to the city centre now outweighs subsoil—a deeper divide remains. Experts point to more persistent lines, such as the Loosduinsekade, south of which lie Transvaal and the Schilderswijk (Dirks, 2017). Here, the historical divide remains legible in the urban fabric. Income levels, housing quality, and access to amenities still reflect the deep imprint of 19th-century expansion logic.

The cultural distinction between ‘*Hagenaars*’ (typically referring to the well-mannered middle and upper classes of the sandy districts) and ‘*Hagenezen*’ (associated with the working-class residents of the peat areas) is often cited as a symbolic legacy of this urban division. While the terms may now be used playfully or ironically, they reflect a deep-rooted and uniquely Hague-based identity split, tied to historical patterns of class and place.

Fig. 23 Children on the Sand: Scheveningen, 1960s (Van Wijk)

Associated with the ‘Hagenaars’ identity and upper-middle class respectability.

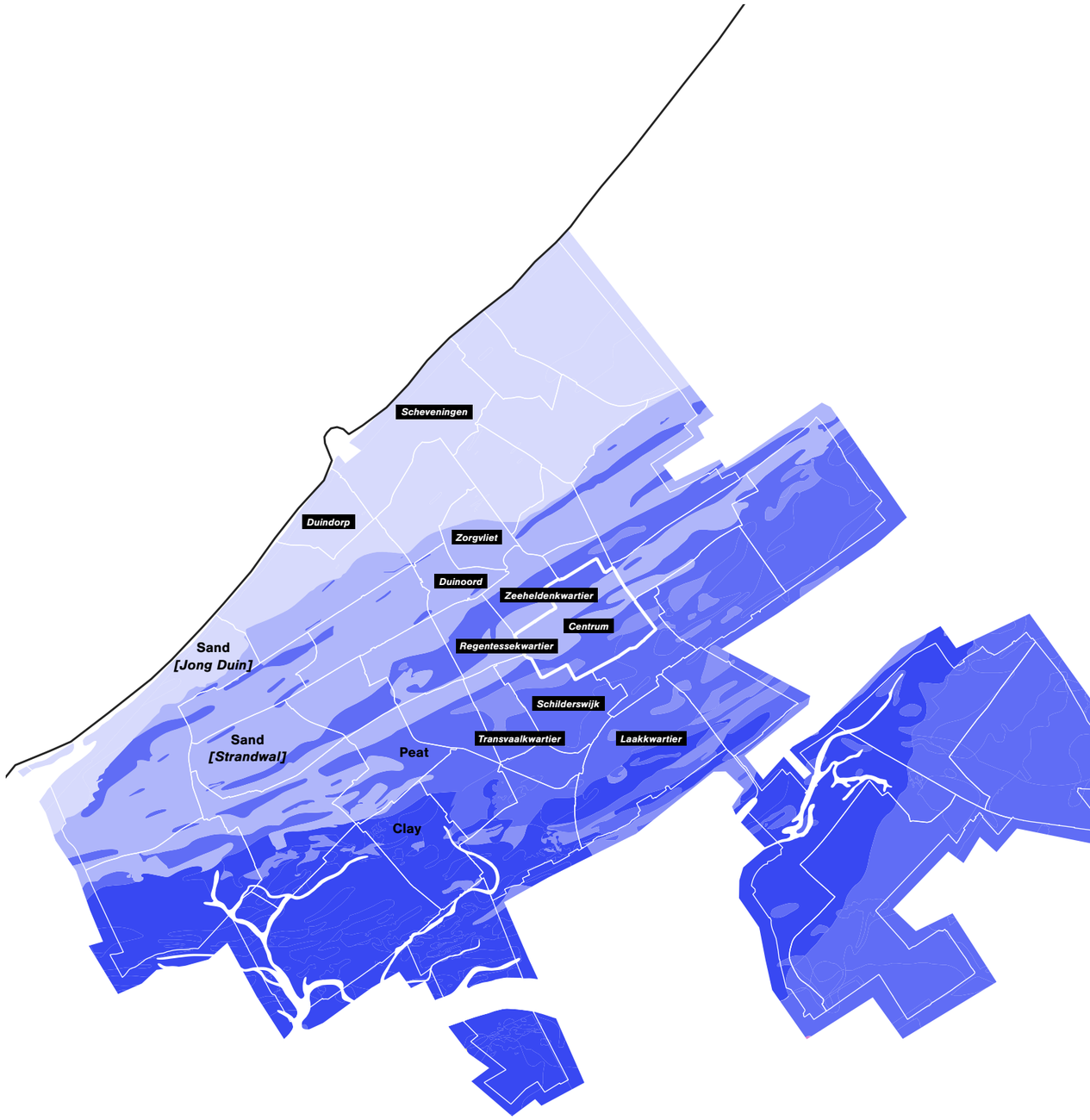


Fig. 24 Children on the Peat: Schilderswijk, late 1970s (Duivesteijn)

Reflecting working-class identity and the ‘Hagenezen’ character.



Fig. 25 Geographical Layout of Soil Types in The Hague (author)



2.2. CITY-LEVEL DEVELOPMENTS: THE HAGUE

2.2.2. Expansion and Zoning in the Early 20th Century

Between 1890 and 1920, The Hague's population more than doubled, leading to a growing consensus that urban expansion could no longer be left to the free market. It was in this context that architect H.P. Berlage presented his *Uitbreidingsplan* in 1908—an 'upgraded' version of earlier plans by I. Lindo, whose proposals had been rejected by the municipality (Van Schuppen, 2006). Berlage's plan aimed to combine functional expansion with beauty and social order. Yet its execution fell short under pressure from rapid growth, municipal planners simplified the design. In peat-based areas, Berlage envisioned large new residential neighbourhoods with playful street layouts, such as Benoordenhout, Laakkwartier, Rustenburg-Oostbroek, the Vruchtenbuurt and Mariahoeve. Some of these neighbourhoods were eventually built, but often in a more sober and standardised form than originally intended (Reiling, 2025). This resulted in monotonous, low-rise housing of poor architectural quality, while sand-based neighbourhoods retained more of Berlage's ambition. The outcome was a sharp spatial contrast between working- and middle-class districts.

In the decades that followed, the city continued to grow. In 1935, W.M. Dudok was appointed as The Hague's independent urban designer. He presented his first expansion plan that year, covering the Escamppolder, Madepolder and Ockenburgh. It proposed an ambitious reorganisation of the city's southwest. Unlike Berlage's aesthetic ideals, Dudok introduced a rational, functionalist layout, based on zoning principles separating living, working, recreation and traffic (Reiling, 2025; Teunissen, 2015).

Although the 1935 plan was never formally adopted—due to the economic crisis and housing surplus—it introduced an open block structure with parallel housing strips and public green spaces. This approach broke with the tradition of closed perimeter blocks and private courtyards. While only parts of Moerwijk were built before the war, the design principles later shaped much of the post-war city.

After the war, Dudok returned to The Hague with renewed authority. In 1949, he presented the *Structuurplan voor Groot 's-Gravenhage*, a regional framework extending beyond municipal boundaries. Though officially rejected by the city council, the plan was used for decades as a guiding vision by the Department for Reconstruction and Urban Development (Reiling, 2025; Teunissen, 2015).

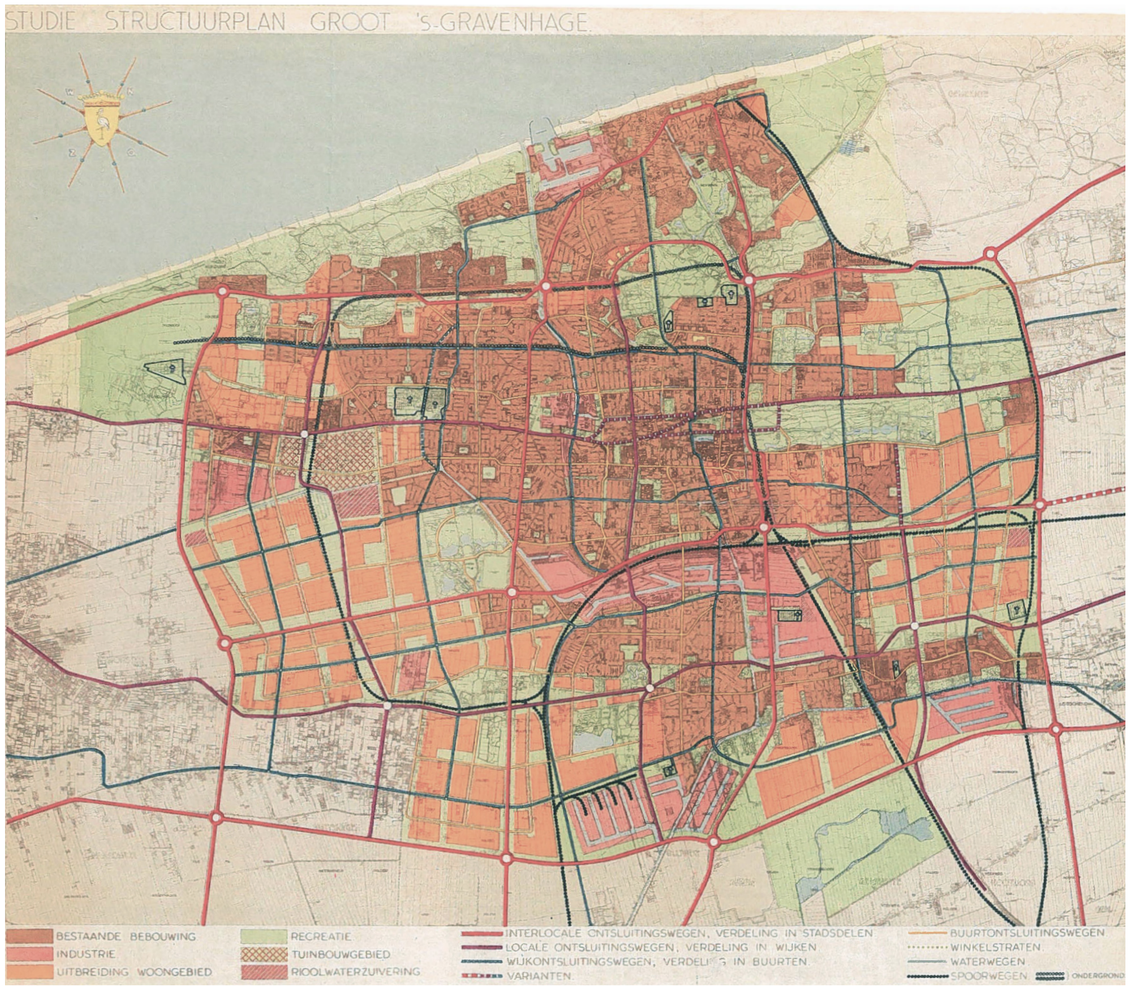
This second plan was zoned and based on a strict functional hierarchy. The city was to be surrounded by a ring road and filled with orthogonal street grids and green buffers (Van Schuppen, 2006). Central areas would house denser, connected neighbourhoods, while the outskirts—particularly in the southwest—were to be more dispersed and self-contained. New industrial zones and transport corridors supported this layered structure.
In practice, much of the post-war development in Escamp followed Dudok's outline. Its repetitive housing typologies and rigid street patterns led to monotony and social isolation. Variations were introduced, but the overarching structure remained (Reiling, 2025; Van Schuppen, 2006).

Though neither of Dudok's plans was officially fully realised, their spatial logic has had a lasting influence on The Hague's urban form. Nowhere is this more visible than in Escamp, where the combination of zoning, uniformity, and functional separation has contributed to a continued sense of disconnection from the rest of the city. Much of this expansion took place not on the sand, but on the peat or clay—thereby reinforcing older spatial divides: 'sand versus peat', 'rich versus poor', 'Hagenaar versus Hagenees'.

Fig. 26 Dudok's 1935 Plan for Ockenburgh, Escamp and Madepolder (Haags Gemeentearchief)



Fig. 27 Dudok's 1949 Structuurplan (Haags Historisch Museum)



2.2. CITY-LEVEL DEVELOPMENTS: THE HAGUE

2.2.3. Post-War Reconstruction and the Car-Oriented City

The post-war decades marked a new phase in The Hague's urban development. Neighbourhoods like Moerwijk, Morgenstond and Bouwlust reflected the spatial logic of Dudok's vision: a strict grid layout, functional zoning, and the separation of housing from green space and infrastructure. But this modernist approach came with its own costs.

After 1945, urban redevelopment was guided by ideals of efficiency, hygiene, and infrastructure. Roads and car traffic were prioritised—ruim baan voor de auto—reshaping the city's layout. Entire streets were widened or redrawn to facilitate car movement, while working-class areas were subject to large-scale demolition (Van Schuppen, 2006).

Moerwijk and Morgenstond, developed around the Zuiderpark, became key test grounds for Dudok's decentralised model of urban growth. These neighbourhoods were structured around an orthogonal street grid, with long, repetitive housing blocks lining major roads such as the Erasmusweg and Leyweg. Interior spaces featured modest housing variations, green strips, and public amenities, creating a spatial logic of order and containment—but also monotony (Van de Beek & Van der Heijden, 1987).

Elsewhere, projects such as *Van Grijs naar Groen* in the Schilderswijk proposed high-rise flats, open green zones, and broad traffic corridors. Yet many commercial ambitions and visions of 'city formation' failed to materialise.

Displacement followed. Residents of demolished neighbourhoods like the Schilderswijk and Spuikwartier were moved to newly built areas in the southwest, such as Escamp. These relocations occurred in the context of a *severe woningnood* (housing shortage) and often involved little resident input. Although renewal was framed as technical progress, it deeply disrupted local communities and social ties. Entire streets were boarded up for years, awaiting renovation plans that were slow to materialise (Blasweiler, 2012).

The post-war ideal of light, air and space often resulted in fragmentation, limited cohesion, and low return migration. What was meant as renewal ultimately reinforced spatial divides. Today's spatial inequalities—between centre and periphery, between rental and ownership—remain shaped by these post-war planning choices.

Fig. 28 Leyweg in the 60s: Post-War Urban Design Prioritising the Car (Jospe, 1965)



Fig. 29 Impression of the '*Van Grijs naar Groen*' Plan: High-Rise Flats Along Van der Duynstraat in Schilderswijk (Blasweiler, n.d.)

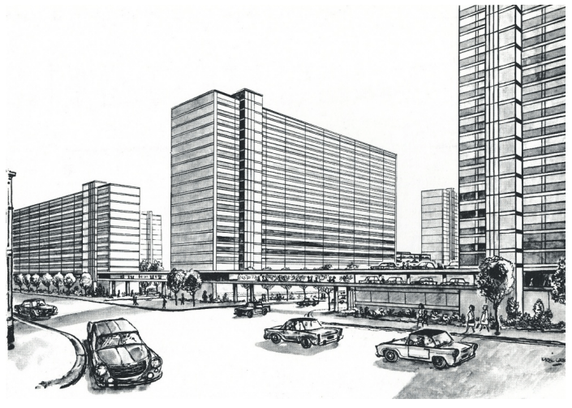
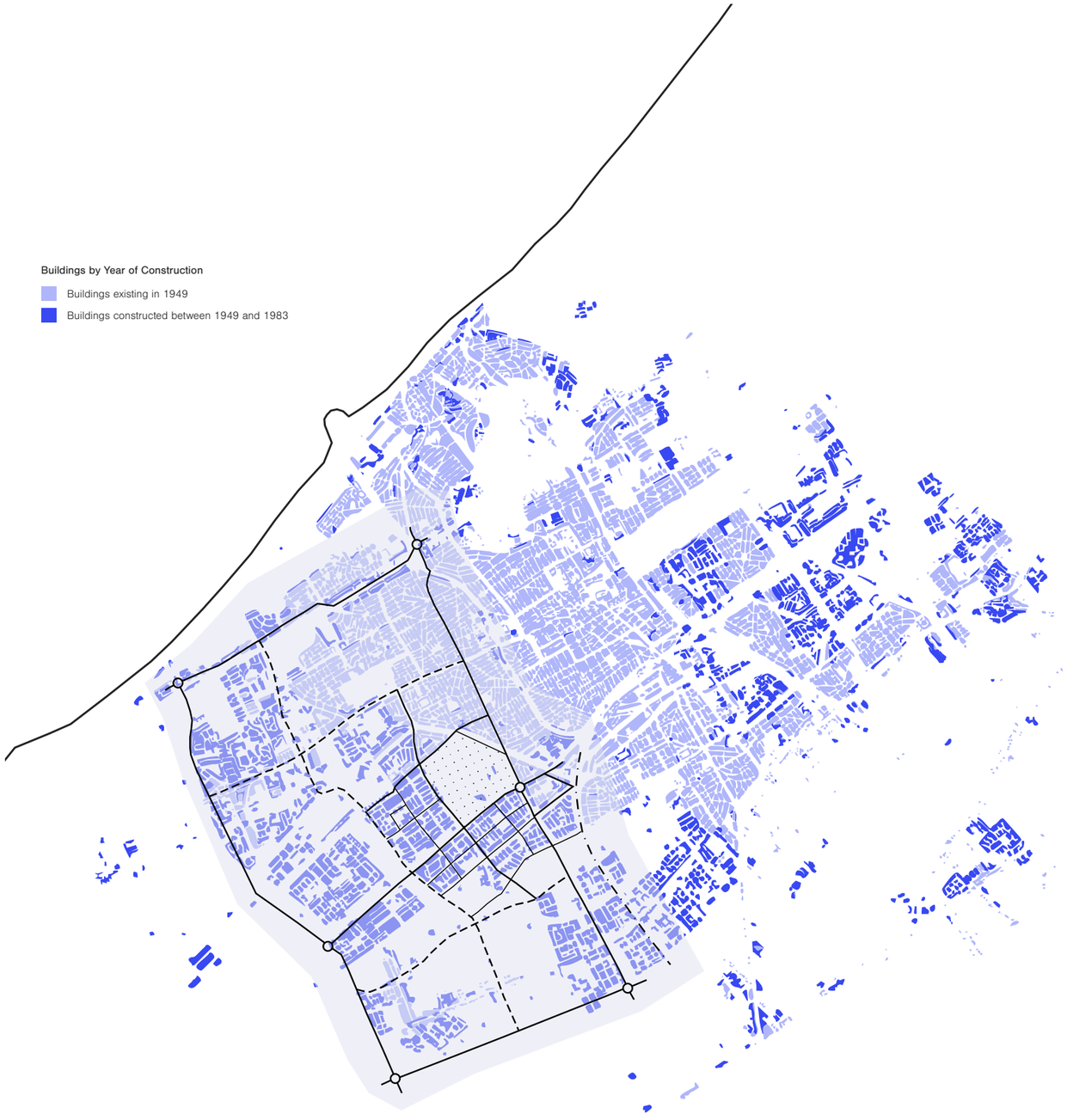


Fig. 30 The Hague's 1983 Building Footprint Aligned with Dudok's 1949 Structure Plan (author)

Visual comparison of the built environment in 1983 in relation to the grid and street layout proposed by Dudok in his 1949 structure plan. Buildings already present in 1949 are shown in light blue; developments added between 1949 and 1983 are marked in dark blue.



2.2. CITY-LEVEL DEVELOPMENTS: THE HAGUE

2.2.3. Post-War Reconstruction and the Car-Oriented City

Fig. 31 Aerial View of Zuidwest's Grid Layout During Construction (HaAC, n.d.)



Fig. 32 Children on a Demolition Site During 1970s Renewal in Schilderswijk (Duivesteijn)



Fig. 33 Children at Protest During Minister Udink's Visit to the Schilderswijk in 1971 (Haags Gemeentearchief)

During the protest against the neglect and decay of the Schilderswijk, residents voiced their discontent with the municipality's urban policies. As noted by former resident Maaike van Charante, the city's failure to intervene in the 1960s and 70s led to the deliberate decline of the neighbourhood and the erosion of its working-class fabric (Charante, 2022).



2.2. CITY-LEVEL DEVELOPMENTS: THE HAGUE

2.2.4. New Citizens

Post-war immigration brought new layers to The Hague's urban and social fabric. While earlier migration waves—such as German domestic workers between the World Wars—had already contributed to the city's diversity, it was the arrival of new groups from the Mediterranean and former colonies that reshaped entire neighbourhoods.

From the 1950s onward, the city became a hub for incoming workers from Indonesia, Turkey, Morocco, Suriname, and later, the Antilles. Nationally, guest workers dominated immigration figures during the 1960s and 1970s, and big cities like The Hague followed this broader trend (Sleutjes et al., 2019). Many of these newcomers settled in the more affordable housing stock located on the city's peat soils—neighbourhoods like Schilderswijk, Transvaal, and Laakkwartier—which had long served as reception zones for lower-income groups (van Schuppen, 2006).

Foreign labourers were often housed in overcrowded pensions, sometimes described as "*gastarbeiderspakhuisen*"—worker dormitories in name only. They took up employment in The Hague's industrial sector. In the 1970s, this pattern was intensified by a new wave of Surinamese immigrants following independence, and by the large-scale family reunification of Turkish and Moroccan migrants during the 1980s.

These new arrivals did not only add population numbers; they redefined the social and cultural identity of whole areas. The physical geography of segregation—long shaped by the sand-versus-peat logic—now overlapped with ethnic and class distinctions. Immigrants typically moved into the cheaper, older housing in already stigmatised districts. This concentration reinforced existing socioeconomic vulnerabilities, and, over time, contributed to the emergence of urban "islands": spatially proximate but socially and culturally separate communities.

While there have been shifts—such as some Surinamese residents "climbing the sand" into better-off neighbourhoods or outer Vinex districts—many minority communities continue to live in historically marginalised zones. Religious and cultural infrastructure, such as mosques and temples, now visibly mark these neighbourhoods. The cityscape reflects both transformation and continuity: while minarets now rise where once only church towers stood, the underlying geography of inequality has proven to be resilient.

The settlement patterns of new citizens have become entwined with the city's deeper structures of spatial divides. Immigration did not simply diversify The Hague; it layered new forms of difference onto an already uneven urban terrain.

Fig. 34 Guest Workers in a Coffeeshop, Hoefkade, The Hague (Blokhuis, 1976)

Artwork by Peter Blokhuis from the series Gastarbeiders. The piece is intended to reflect the isolation and marginal position of guest workers in 1970s Dutch society. Blokhuis coloured the figures in detail while leaving their surroundings sketch-like and minimal, creating a visual contrast that emphasises their detachment from their environment. The series aimed to confront viewers with the lived reality of labour migrants, caught between respect in their home countries and marginalisation in the Netherlands.

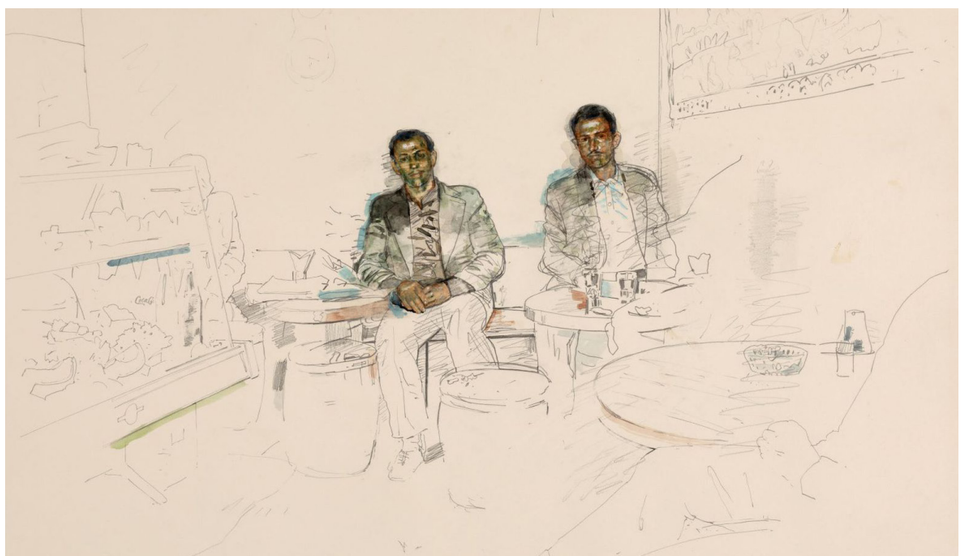


Fig. 35 The Mobarak Mosque in Benoordenhout, The Hague — First Mosque in the Netherlands (EenVandaag, c. 1980s)



2.2. CITY-LEVEL DEVELOPMENTS: THE HAGUE

2.2.5. Life Now

After tracing the historic roots of socioeconomic segregation in The Hague, this photo series shifts to the present. These images capture daily life in neighbourhoods beyond the sand—shaped by a history of working-class housing, post-war planning, modernist housing blocks, migration, and cultural diversity. This is not a narrative of victimhood or decline, but of contrast—a reminder that vibrant everyday life continues in areas that remain geographically close to the city centre, yet continue to experience a significant degree of social and spatial separation.

Fig. 36 Everyday Life at a playground, Schilderswijk (ANP, 2025)



Fig. 37 Post-War Portiekflats in Moerwijk & Zuidwest (Nijhuis, 2017; Take The Hague, n.d.)



Fig. 38 Multicultural Shops and Street Life in Schilderswijk (Kok, 2016)



3. THE HAGUE TODAY

3.1. Layers of The Hague

3.2. Mobility and Accessibility

3.3. Children’s Landscape

3.4. Educational Landscape

3.5. Income and Economic Division

3.6. Ethnic and Social Composition

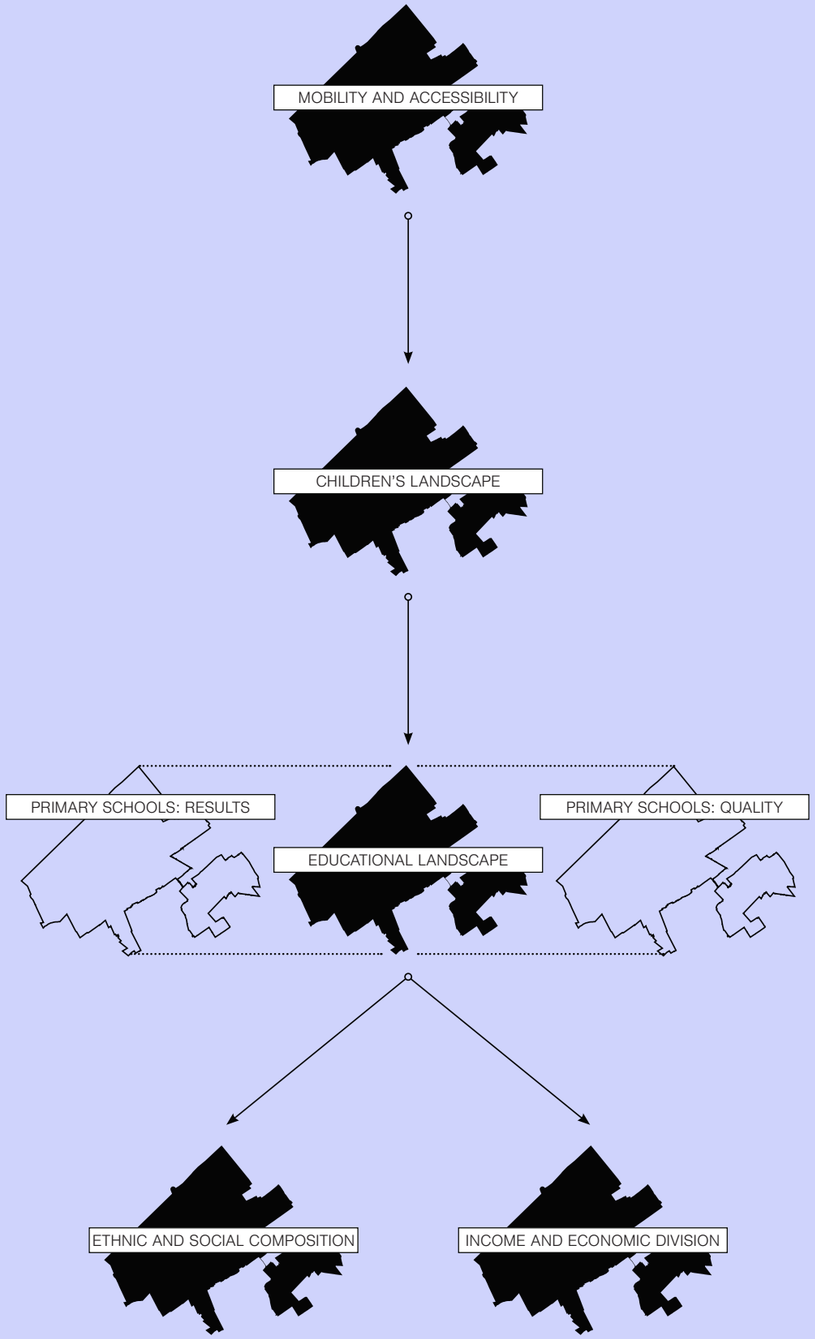
3.7. Primary Schools: Results

3.8. Primary Schools: Quality

3.1. LAYERS OF THE HAGUE

This section presents a layered analysis of The Hague, combining spatial data on demographics, poverty, mobility, and education. Each layer offers insight into the urban conditions shaping children's everyday environments. When stacked, these layers help identify patterns and relationships between social-spatial inequalities and educational outcomes.

Fig. 39 Dimensions of Spatial Contrasts and Children's Urban Contexts (author)



3.2. MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Fig. 40 Mapping Urban Mobility Infrastructure in The Hague (author)

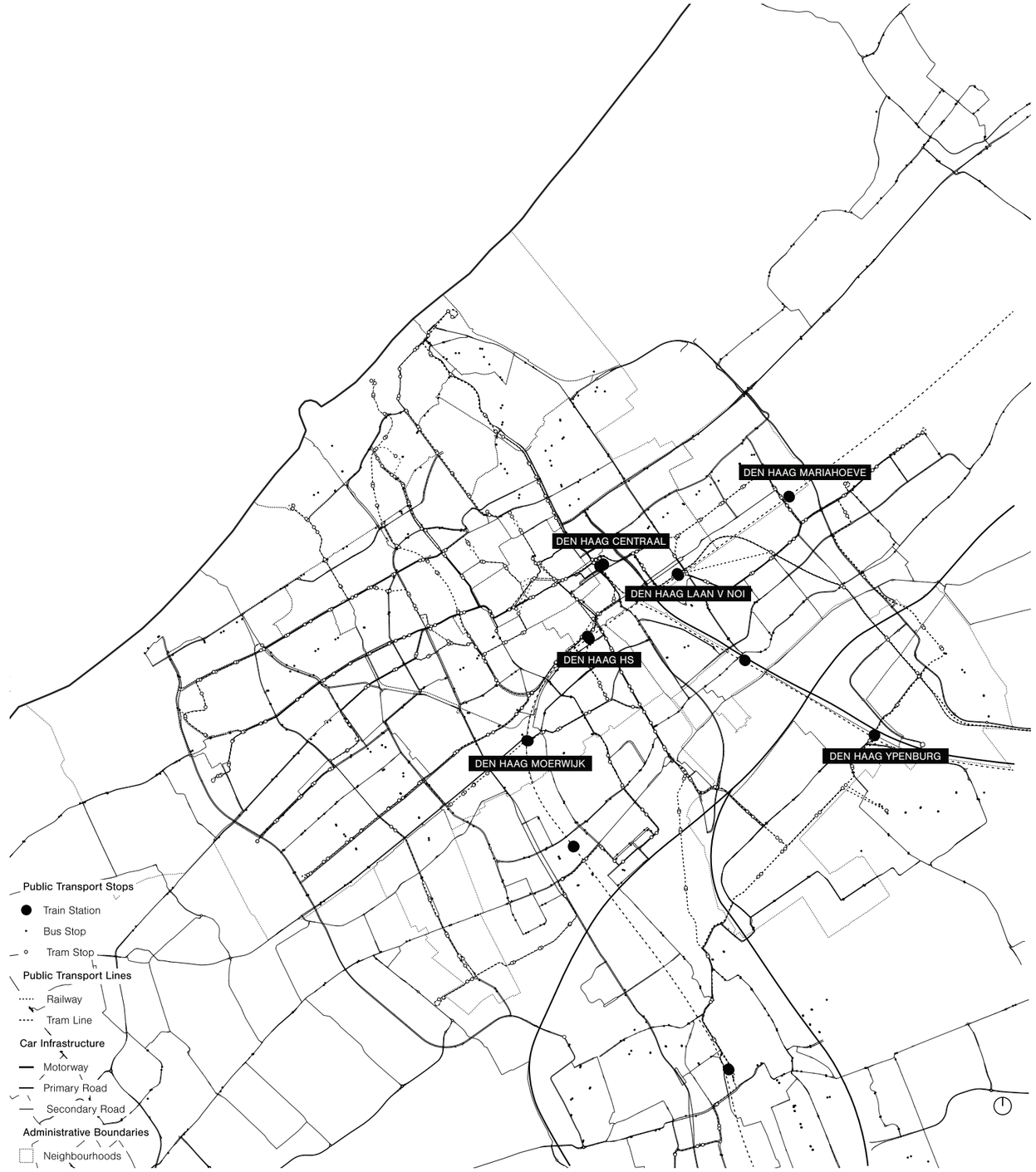


Fig. 41 Mapping Everyday Spaces for Children in The Hague (author)



Fig. 41A Community Centre het Couvéehuis (Welzijn Scheveningen, 2025)



Fig. 41B Community Centre Bouwlust (PvdA Den Haag, n.d.)

Note for ◆ : Only sports clubs related to ball sports, athletics, equestrian sports, dance, and gymnastics are included. Clubs are selected for their relevance to structured, youth-oriented activity.
Example counts: **34** football clubs, **27** dance schools, **6** gymnastics clubs, and **3** athletics clubs.

Facilities seem to be fairly evenly distributed across the city, with a slight concentration of community centres in the city centre.

Public Transport Stops
- Train Station
- Bus Stop
- Tram Stop

Public Transport Lines
- Railway
- Tram Line

Car Infrastructure
- Motorway
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road

Administrative Boundaries
- Neighbourhoods

Children's Landscape
- Play Areas / Playgrounds
- Community Centres
- Sports Clubs

References:
i. (Den Haag FM, 2022)
ii. (AD, 2025)
iii. (Dagblad070, 2024)
iv. (Omroep West, 2019)
v. (Den Haag FM, 2025)
vi. (AD, 2024)
vii. (De Telegraaf, 2024)
viii. (Omroep West, 2024)
ix. (NOS, 2017)
x. (Omroep West, 2023)
xi. (NOS, 2017)
xii. (Den Haag FM, 2022)

Fig. 42 Mapping Educational and Cultural Resources in The Hague (author)

△ Highlights whether a safety-related incident was reported in the news over the past eight years near or at a primary school. Though informal, it explores the intersection between physical and social safety in the educational landscape.

The concentration of museums in the city centre reflects historical development and cultural clustering — not surprising, though creating a certain spatial imbalance within the educational landscape.

iv. Traffic safety concerns

ix. Ceiling collapse incident

xii. Playground safety concerns

vi. Parental violence incident

iii. Tensions over Islamic school identity

v. Drugs found near school

Laak faces the largest teacher shortage in the Netherlands, with a primary education FTE deficit of 27.2%. Together with Centrum (21.0%), these urban districts far exceed The Hague's average of 17.5% — nearly double that of Utrecht (9.3%).

△• i. Traffic safety concerns

In Laak, Escamp, and Centrum, vaccination rates are worryingly low — a trend the municipality of The Hague finds deeply concerning, particularly for primary schools.

x. Violence among parents

xi. Discrimination lawsuit

vii. Abuse allegation unrest

viii. Firework bomb incident

ii. Poor school building conditions

Public Transport Stops
- Train Station
- Bus Stop
- Tram Stop

Public Transport Lines
- Railway
- Tram Line

Car Infrastructure
- Motorway
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road

Administrative Boundaries
- Neighbourhoods

Educational Landscape

Primary Schools: number of enrolled students
- < 270
- 270 - 400
- > 400

- Museums
- Libraries

Fig. 43 Mapping Socioeconomic Vulnerability in The Hague (author)

This map presents the average percentage of low-income households per neighbourhood. The classification is based on the national bottom 40% of disposable household income.

The neighbourhoods of

Schilderswijk, **Moerwijk**, **Transvaalkwartier**, and **Bouwlust en Vrederust**

have some of the highest percentages of households with underage children living on a low income in The Hague — in all of these areas, over 50% of households are classified as low-income, and in almost all of them, more than 30% live below the official low-income threshold (CBS, 2017).

By contrast, in neighbourhoods like **Westbroekpark en Duttendel** and the **Vogelwijk**, less than 4% live below the low-income threshold.

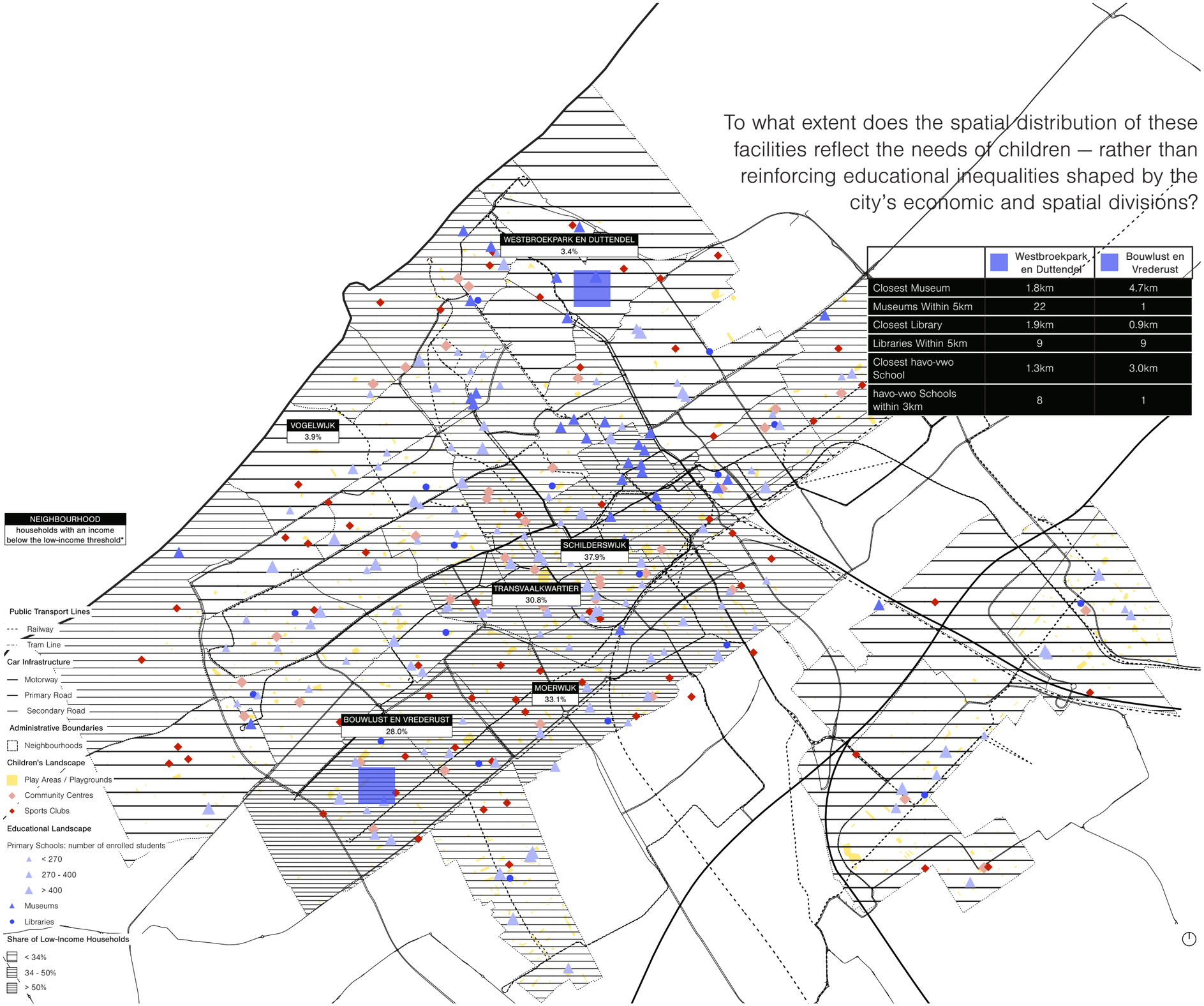
Children from low-income households are significantly less likely to attend havo/vwo — only half as many reach this level compared to their peers.

havo/vwo level (ages 12–18)
LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS **21%**
OTHER HOUSEHOLDS **39%**

At the same time, they are overrepresented in vmbo, highlighting a clear educational divide.

vmbo level (ages 12–18)
LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS **36%**
OTHER HOUSEHOLDS **24%**

To what extent does the spatial distribution of these facilities reflect the needs of children — rather than reinforcing educational inequalities shaped by the city's economic and spatial divisions?



	Westbroekpark en Duttendel	Bouwlust en Vrederust
Closest Museum	1.8km	4.7km
Museums Within 5km	22	1
Closest Library	1.9km	0.9km
Libraries Within 5km	9	9
Closest havo-vwo School	1.3km	3.0km
havo-vwo Schools within 3km	8	1

*Neighbourhood classifications are based on the national bottom 40% of incomes, while the highlighted percentages refer to households with an income below the official low-income threshold, which varies according to household composition.

Fig. 44 The Everyday Educational Landscape: A School in Westbroekpark en Duttendel (De Vrije School Den Haag, 2025)



Fig. 45 The Everyday Educational Landscape: A School in Bouwlust en Vrederust (Noordhollands Dagblad, n.d.)



3.6. ETHNIC AND SOCIAL COMPOSITION

In some neighbourhoods of The Hague, **60%**, **70%**, or even more than **80%** of residents have a non-Dutch background.

According to the GGD (2022), it is **no coincidence** that these are also the same neighbourhoods where large numbers of young children experience delays in speech, and moreover, broader difficulties with language development — challenges that are closely associated with long-term consequences for educational achievement and participation in society.

But these children do not only face disadvantage shaped by their developmental environment — the system continues to work against them regardless of individual performance, as their migration background remains a determining factor, despite being entirely beyond their control.

In The Hague, students with a non-Western migration background continue to face disproportionately high rates of ‘underadvising’ — even when their test results suggest they qualify for a higher school placement (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2018).

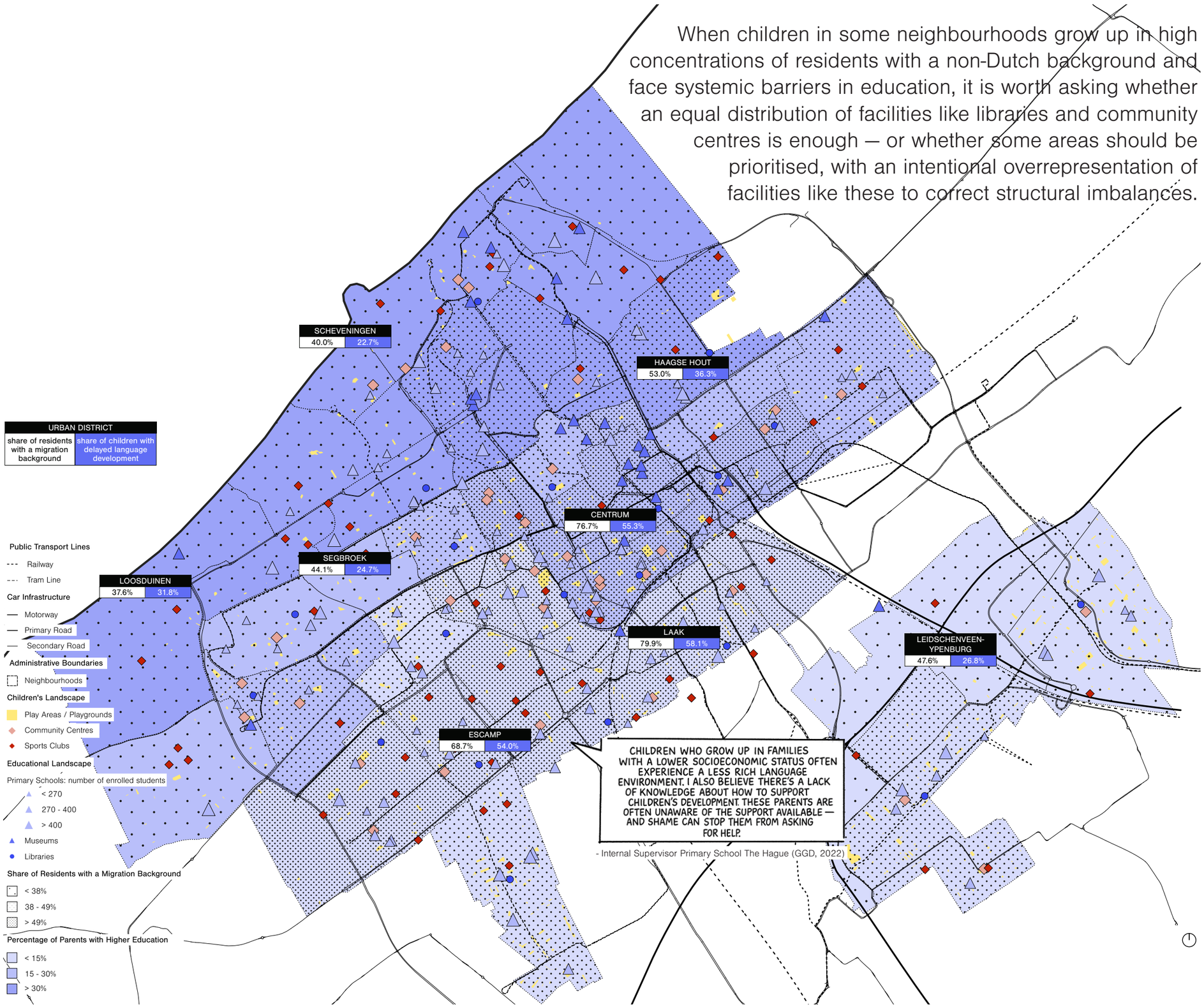
While underadvising of at least one full level across the four major cities (G4) in the Netherlands affects around **11%** of native Dutch pupils, this rises to nearly **19%** among (second-generation) non-Western pupils (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2018).

These patterns are reflected in school placement, with children from a migration background being significantly less likely to be placed in havo or vwo compared to those without a migration background (CBS, 2024).

havo/vwo level (age 12)
NATIVE DUTCH **58%**
MOROCCAN BACKGROUND **50%**
TURKISH BACKGROUND **44%**
SURINAMESE BACKGROUND **49%**
ANTILLEAN BACKGROUND **36%**

Fig. 46 Mapping Demographic Composition and Cultural Diversity in The Hague (author)

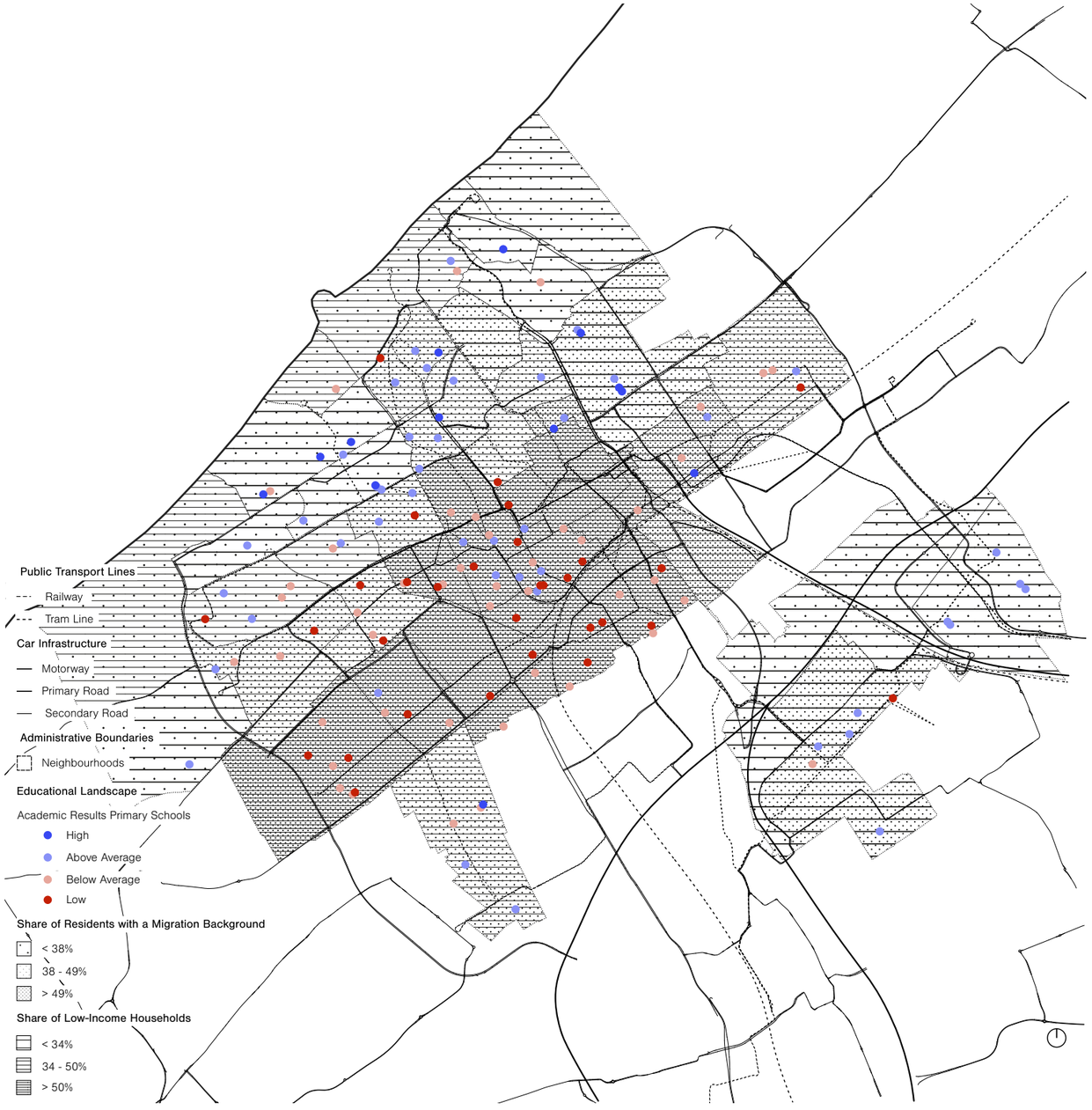
This map visualises the average share of residents with a migration background (Western or non-Western) per neighbourhood. It reflects the degree of cultural diversity by calculating the proportion of residents without a Dutch background.



3.7. PRIMARY SCHOOLS: RESULTS

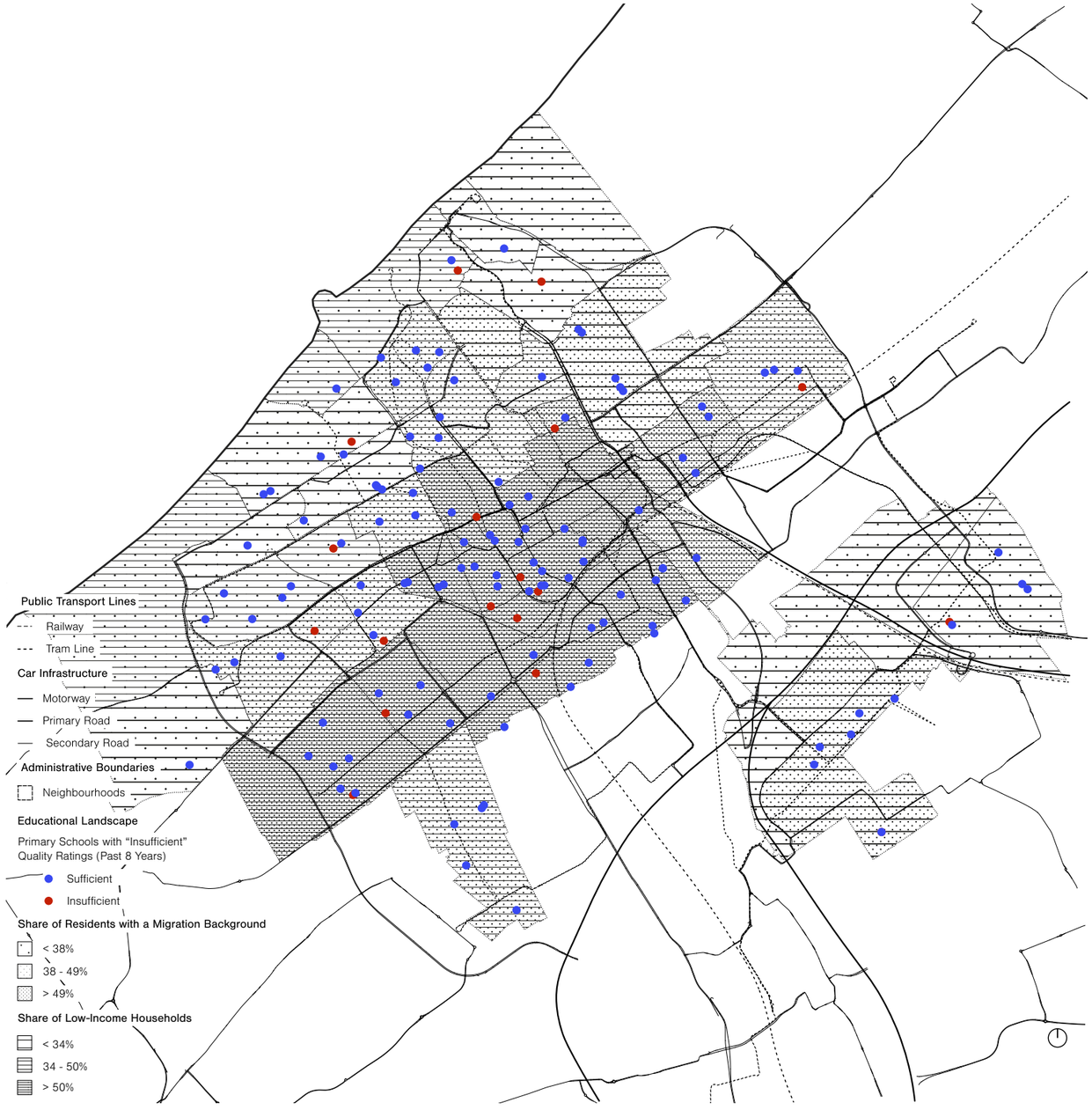
These final maps reveal a clear spatial pattern in school outcomes across The Hague. Based on the data presented on the previous pages, it now becomes evident that, as expected, primary schools with **below-average results are concentrated in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas**, while schools with higher outcomes are largely located in more affluent neighbourhoods. This leads to the conclusion that there is, in some way, **a strong relationship between place and educational opportunity**.

Fig. 47 Mapping Educational Performance of Primary Schools in The Hague (author)



3.8. PRIMARY SCHOOLS: QUALITY

Fig. 48 Mapping Quality Assessments of Primary Schools in The Hague (author)



4. CHILDREN AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

4.1. ‘Pedagogical Learning Environment’ as a Concept

4.2. A ‘Good’ Pedagogical Learning Environment

5.1. ‘PEDAGOGICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT’ AS A CONCEPT

As discussed earlier, Moore’s concept of the habitual range is central to this thesis. The habitual range includes everyday destinations that are central to a child’s daily routine and are typically within walking distance and often easily accessible without parental supervision. These are the spaces where children spend most of their time, and that shape their daily lives and experiences.

Rasmussen’s institutionalised triangle provides a useful framework for understanding how the spaces defined in the habitual range fit into a broader structure. Rasmussen (2004) describes children’s daily lives as structured around three key locations: the home (indoor and outdoor), the school and schoolyard, and recreational spaces (see figure 49). Notably, these are all places for children designed by adults. The places are institutionalised to the extent that architects and planners intend them to be ‘special’ places for children; they often intentionally put children in contact with ‘professional’ adults – the pedagogues, social workers, teachers, psychologists and even parents who staff these institutions.

Another essential part of this framework is the legs connecting these spaces. City streets function as these crucial “corridors” that link the three key locations. Since children rely heavily on walking, the act of moving between places becomes an important part of their daily lives. Streets and pathways are not simply means of transport but integral to the broader explorable urban environment.

LEARNING SPACES IDENTIFIED IN THE HABITUAL RANGE:

Formal learning spaces:
- Supplementary educational activities
- Schools / schoolyards

Informal or extended learning spaces:
- Home / garden
- Playgrounds / public spaces
- Parks
- ‘Informal spaces’
- City streets

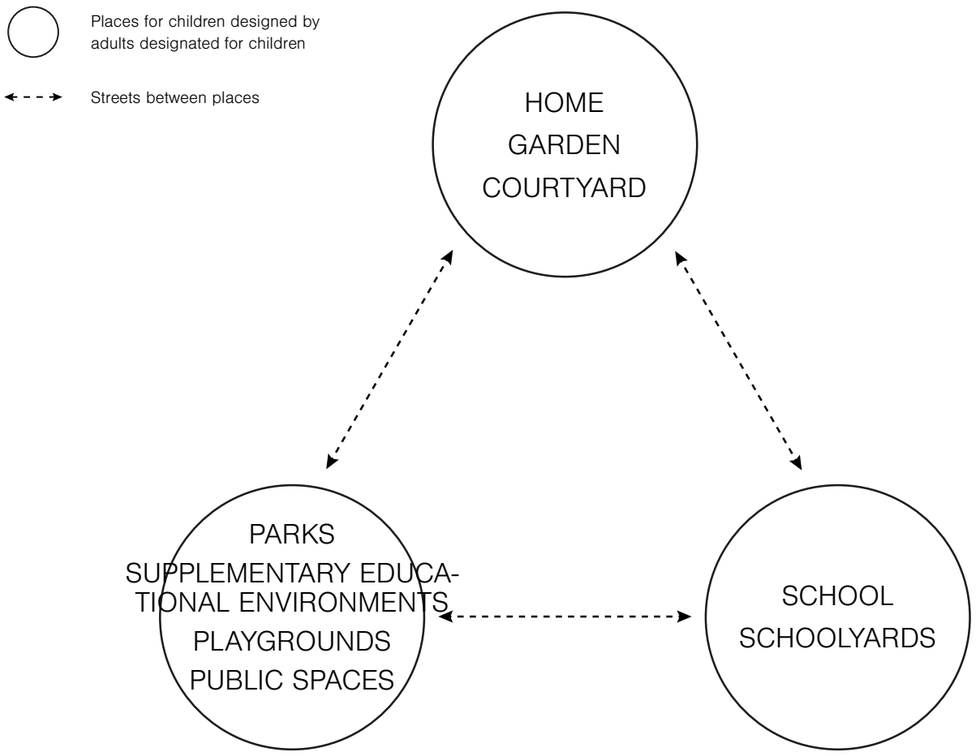


Fig. 49 The Triangle of Children’s Daily Environments: Institutionalised Environments (author)

Based on Rasmussen (2004)

However, children’s favourite places can extend beyond these formal locations and streets. Researchers like Valentine (2004) and Blinkert (2004) suggest that these places aren’t always the intended ‘places for children’, but rather ‘children’s places’. If you ask a child to show their most valued places, they will often take you to unexpected spaces: hidden corners, natural areas, underground tunnels, vacant fields—or what we’ve previously referred to as ‘informal places’ in the habitual range conceptualisation. The ‘children’s places’ are undefined spaces that children adapt, fill in and make their own. Children create their own emotional connection to these places, their own sense of belonging and even ownership.

Since it has already been established that children learn and develop in all these different spaces, we can now combine these concepts into a broader framework. Instead of viewing these spaces as separate, we can argue that together they form what we might call the *‘Pedagogical Learning Environment’*.

From this point forward, we will focus on the *pedagogical learning environment* as a concept for understanding how urban environments shape children’s development. Instead of evaluating these spaces as isolated, stand-alone learning spaces, we now view them as interconnected elements where roads/streets function as vital corridors linking and supporting this environment.

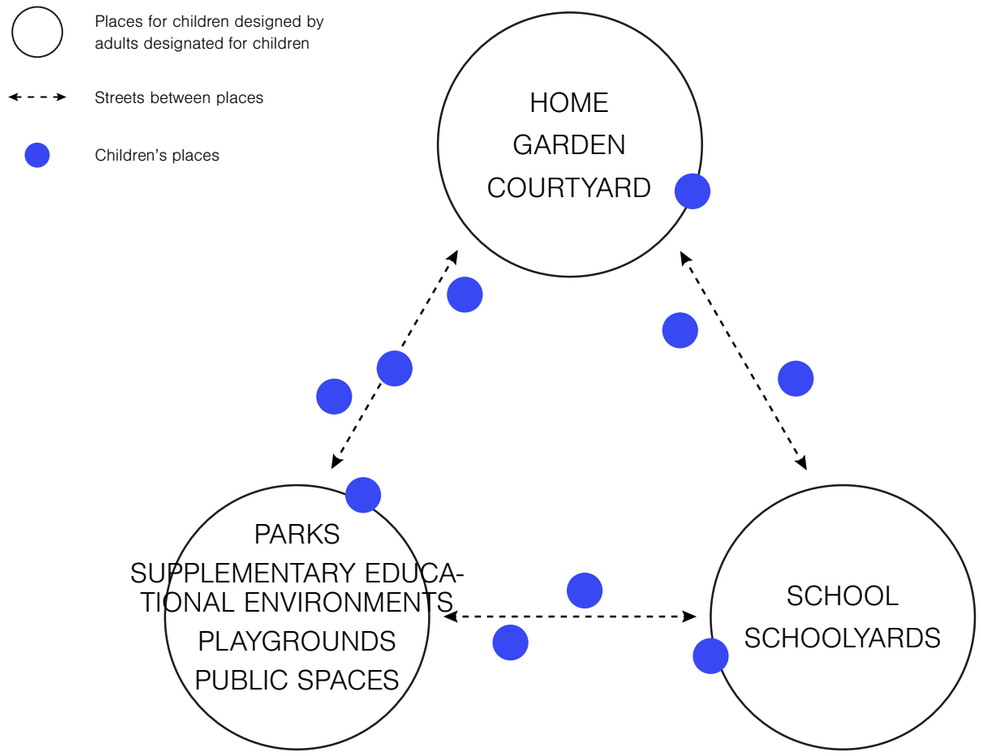


Fig. 50 The Triangle of Children’s Daily Environments as the ‘Pedagogical Learning Environment’ (author)

Based on Rasmussen (2004)

5.1. ‘PEDAGOGICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT’ AS A CONCEPT

To further explore how children experience and navigate their pedagogical learning environment, we can turn to *time-space geography*. First developed by Hägerstrand (1970), this framework provides a valuable lens for understanding how individuals move through space and time. It describes how each person follows unique daily trajectories (see figure 51).

Researchers such as Hoelzel and Scheiner (2022) and Erel and Ryan (2019) argue that studying spatial and social mobility solely at a macro level is insufficient. Instead, it is necessary to examine geographies of opportunity at a micro level, mapping the specific places that hold significance within an individual’s daily life. By tracing everyday mobility and spatial interactions, we can gain a deeper understanding of how different individuals experience their environments and the opportunities available to them.

When looking at children’s spatial experiences, time-space geography provides a useful way to understand the pedagogical learning environment as something unique to each child. Since each child moves through space differently, the pedagogical learning environment is never a fixed or uniform construct. Instead, it is shaped by a child’s daily movement patterns, accessibility to spaces, time they are willing to spend somewhere, and the obstacles they encounter. Some children have unrestricted access to a wide range of spaces, while others face significant barriers.

By using time-space geography to eventually map children’s movement and spatial opportunities, we can better understand how the pedagogical learning environment functions as a dynamic and personal system, shaped by both physical and social structures. While the home and school environments—what happens behind the front door or inside the classroom—are undoubtedly part of this broader system, improving those internal conditions falls beyond the scope of this project. Instead, the focus lies on spatial planning and the urban environment that surrounds and connects these places. Additionally, in this context, a larger pedagogical learning environment refers to a wider range of spaces within the urban fabric and more time spent engaging with them.

Once the theoretical foundation is fully established and a thorough understanding of children’s experiences in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods is developed, the next step will be to apply these concepts to real-world contexts. This project will specifically examine the diversity of children’s pedagogical learning environments within these neighbourhoods. By mapping their spatial movements and access to opportunities, we can uncover differences in the size, scope, and time spent within these environments. Additionally, this analysis will highlight the barriers—whether physical, social, or motivational—that some children face, revealing opportunities for change and implications for spatial strategies to address these challenges.

Fig. 51 Visualising Time-Space Geography: Individual Trajectories as Pedagogical Learning Environments (author)

This diagram shows how children's pedagogical learning environments differ based on their unique spatial and temporal trajectories.

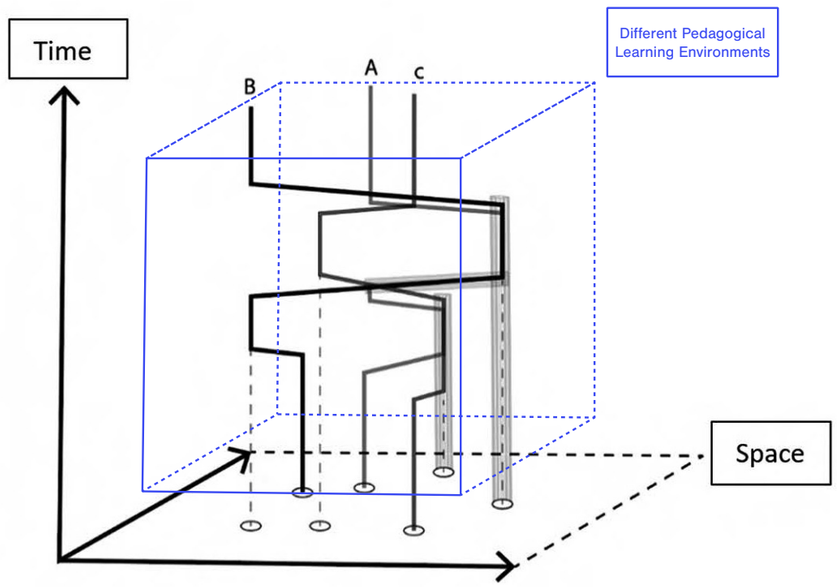


Fig. 52 Example of a Children’s Place (author)

A photograph taken in Delft showing an informal space used and adapted by children, illustrating how children claim their own places beyond formal, adult-designed environments.



As researcher Korthals Altes explains in *Creating Spatial Justice from the Start: At the Child’s Level* from the book *Our City*, what she describes as the child’s urban environment—referred to in this project as the pedagogical learning environment—plays a crucial role in shaping children’s development. In a rapidly evolving world, driven by exponential advancements in technology, artificial intelligence, and automation, children need to build up their domain knowledge but at the same time learn different ‘21st century skills’, like problem solving, innovative and creative thinking. Additionally, ‘soft skills’ will become increasingly important; think of teamwork, empathy, understanding and persistence (Korthals Altes, 2020).

For example, research by Daschütz (2006) shows that—besides formal education— children primarily develop these key skills through outdoor exploration and interaction with other children, with free play being particularly important. Engaging in free play provides many opportunities for social learning. The social abilities that children acquire while playing in public space unaccompanied by parents are particularly valuable.

Building on these insights, the next section will outline the fundamental principles for a ‘good’ pedagogical learning environment—one that not only supports development of these 21st century skills, provides learning opportunities, and enhances cognitive growth but also creates an inviting, engaging, and enjoyable space for children. For now, the focus is on identifying key planning considerations for general settings. Later in this project, we will explore whether additional or different considerations are needed to create the most effective pedagogical learning environment for children in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods.

How do children move through spaces?

Connectivity, Routes and Streets
Since children primarily rely on walking and cycling, children need safe and inviting routes to move freely and explore their surroundings. Their level of freedom is often shaped by adult attitudes, with parental rules significantly influencing mobility. Pedestrian-friendly streets and well-designed cycling infrastructure are essential for independent mobility and expanding children’s access to different spaces.

Beyond safe travel routes, spaces for children and children’s spaces must be strategically placed within a child’s range, ensuring easy access without dependency on adults. Thoughtful urban planning should create a network of varied ‘spaces for children’ and ‘children’s spaces’ integrated along children’s daily routes, maximising possible engagement (Korthals Altes, 2020).

How can we design ‘spaces for children’*?*

Diverse Play Spaces
Children play for longer, feel less bored, and return more often when play areas offer a variety of experiences (Kingery-Page & Melvin, 2013). Instead of relying solely on equipment, play spaces should incorporate diverse surfaces and simple, open-ended elements that encourage creativity and self-directed play. Providing different types of play opportunities ensures that all children—regardless of personality, culture, background—can find a space that suits their interests and preferences.

Design for Abilities
Truly inclusive play environments accommodate a broad spectrum of physical and cognitive abilities. Discussions on inclusivity often focus on wheelchair accessibility, but there are numerous disabilities that designers should account for when designing play areas. The key is to differentiate and to design for abilities. Children with disabilities naturally seek to challenge themselves and improve their skills, just like all other children, making it essential to provide varying levels of difficulty in ‘play’ structures. By designing for abilities rather than disabilities, play spaces can encourage mixed-ability interaction and ensure that all children can participate meaningfully (Korthals Altes, 2020).

Gender-Inclusive Design
Inclusive design for spaces for children goes even further—it must also challenge gendered patterns of space use. Spaces for children often unintentionally favour certain groups, particularly boys, who tend to dominate large open spaces, often using them for competitive activities such as football. Meanwhile, girls gravitate towards enclosed or peripheral areas, where they engage more in sedentary play, verbal play, and social activities (Thomson, 2005; Walker & Clark, 2023; Prabawa-Sear, 2024). This spatial imbalance is not inevitable but rather a result of limited design diversity.

That said, in today’s society, this dichotomy between boys and girls is somewhat precarious. Differences in age, culture, education, personality, and family position can lead to significant variations among both girls and boys. This means that sex is not always the defining factor; rather, it is more about gender—shaped by social, cultural, and psychological influences (Helleman, 2022). As gender is a social construct, it is therefore variable. However, for the sake of readability and the purpose of this project, I follow Helleman’s approach by referring to the distinction between boys and girls and—with some reluctance—accept the generalisations and stereotypes that come with it. This only to serve one central goal: to highlight that our spaces for children are more often designed for and used by certain groups and bodies.

So, to promote inclusion, play spaces must offer a broad range of activities that appeal to all children. Multi-modal spaces with diverse play structures, social areas, and flexible layouts naturally encourage broader participation. This issue is not about excluding boys but about recognising how design influences who feels comfortable using public spaces. Spaces that primarily cater to those with specific skills and equipment send an implicit message about who belongs there. Rather than expecting underrepresented groups to adapt to male-dominated environments, urban design should proactively create spaces where all children feel welcome and included.

Spaces for Adolescents
Older children and teenagers often feel unwelcome in public spaces, as they are frequently perceived as disruptive. However, adolescents also require spaces to socialise, play sports, and engage in unstructured activities. When urban design fails to account for their needs, they often end up occupying spaces intended for younger children. As a result, children may feel intimidated or excluded from areas originally designed for them.

A well-balanced urban environment should provide dedicated spaces for adolescents alongside the spaces for children. Informal gathering spots, multi-use sports elements, and seating areas that encourage social interaction can help meet their needs. By ensuring that teenagers have places designed for them, cities can prevent their presence from (unintentionally) displacing younger children.

Integration with Nature
Designing spaces for children requires more than just play equipment—access to nature through green elements such as tree-lined streets, small urban forests, and accessible water features is essential. Regular encounters with nature support children’s holistic development and strengthen their connection to their surroundings (Laboy, 2021).

Play and Learning Opportunities
Urban environments and spaces should provide diverse learning and play opportunities, incorporating elements like public art, varied textures, and natural materials to engage children and support their growth (Galway, 2022). Access to community centres, libraries, sports clubs and other spaces for supplementary educational activities can further enrich children’s experiences and growth. Designing spaces that combine play and learning creates environments that stimulate cognitive, social, and creative growth.

And ‘children’s spaces’*?*

Not all play occurs in structured environments. Children are naturally drawn to undefined, unplanned spaces—vacant lots, patches of greenery, and small urban nooks where they can create their own play experiences. These ‘rough edges’ are an essential part of a good pedagogical learning environment, as they allow for creativity, exploration, and self-directed learning (Valentine, 2004; Blinkert, 2004).

Integrating informal spaces along children’s daily routes increases spontaneous engagement. When these areas are positioned along well-travelled paths—between home, school, and recreational spaces—children are more likely to encounter and use them. A balance between designed play spaces (spaces for children) and informal, adaptable spaces (children’s spaces) is a key consideration for maximising the potential of the pedagogical learning environment.

Considerations

Community engagement is a fundamental aspect of spatial planning. It is essential for informed decision-making, as it facilitates the production of local knowledge. By integrating both expert and lay insights, it creates a more inclusive and context-sensitive planning process (Hamdi, 2010; Natarajan, 2017). Effective community engagement strengthens spatial strategies, ensures long-term sustainability, and leads to better outcomes for the people who use these spaces (Hamdi, 2010). Without meaningful participation, planning risks being disconnected from the needs and realities of the communities it serves.

This participatory approach is just as important when planning for children. They have the right to be involved in urban planning processes, and their perspectives should be actively considered in decision-making. Rather than making assumptions, planners should directly engage with children to ensure their participation is meaningful and to gain insight into their perspectives (Ataol et al., 2019; Hanssen, 2019). Equally important is understanding how and where their input contributes to the development of plans and urban design, ensuring their voices have a tangible impact on the spaces being created.

Conclusions

A ‘good’ pedagogical learning environment is one that has inclusive, accessible, and engaging spaces for children. These spaces must be well-distributed across the urban landscape, ensuring that all children can access them without reliance on adults. Equally important are connectivity and safe mobility, as well-designed routes allow children to move independently between these spaces.

Beyond designated spaces for children, the importance of children’s spaces cannot be overlooked. Rough edges along children’s daily routes encourage creativity, exploration, and self-directed play. A balance between structured and informal spaces maximises the potential of the pedagogical learning environment.

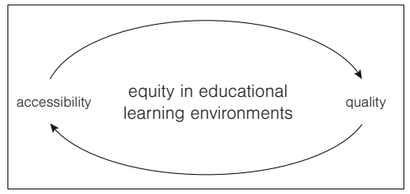
Lastly, community engagement is key to designing spaces that truly meet children’s needs. Meaningful participation ensures that their voices shape the environments they use daily. Planning for children should not be based on assumptions but on actively involving them in the process.

5.2. A ‘GOOD’ PEDAGOGICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The tree diagram returns to the conceptual framework, which provided the basis for understanding how equity in the pedagogical learning environment is shaped. The framework established that equity depends on two core elements: quality and accessibility. These two dimensions determine whether children have the opportunity to learn, play, and develop within the urban environment in a way that supports their full potential.

Fig. 53 Learning Environments as Part of the Conceptual Framework (author)

The conceptual framework establishes that equity in the pedagogical learning environment is shaped by quality and accessibility as its two core dimensions.



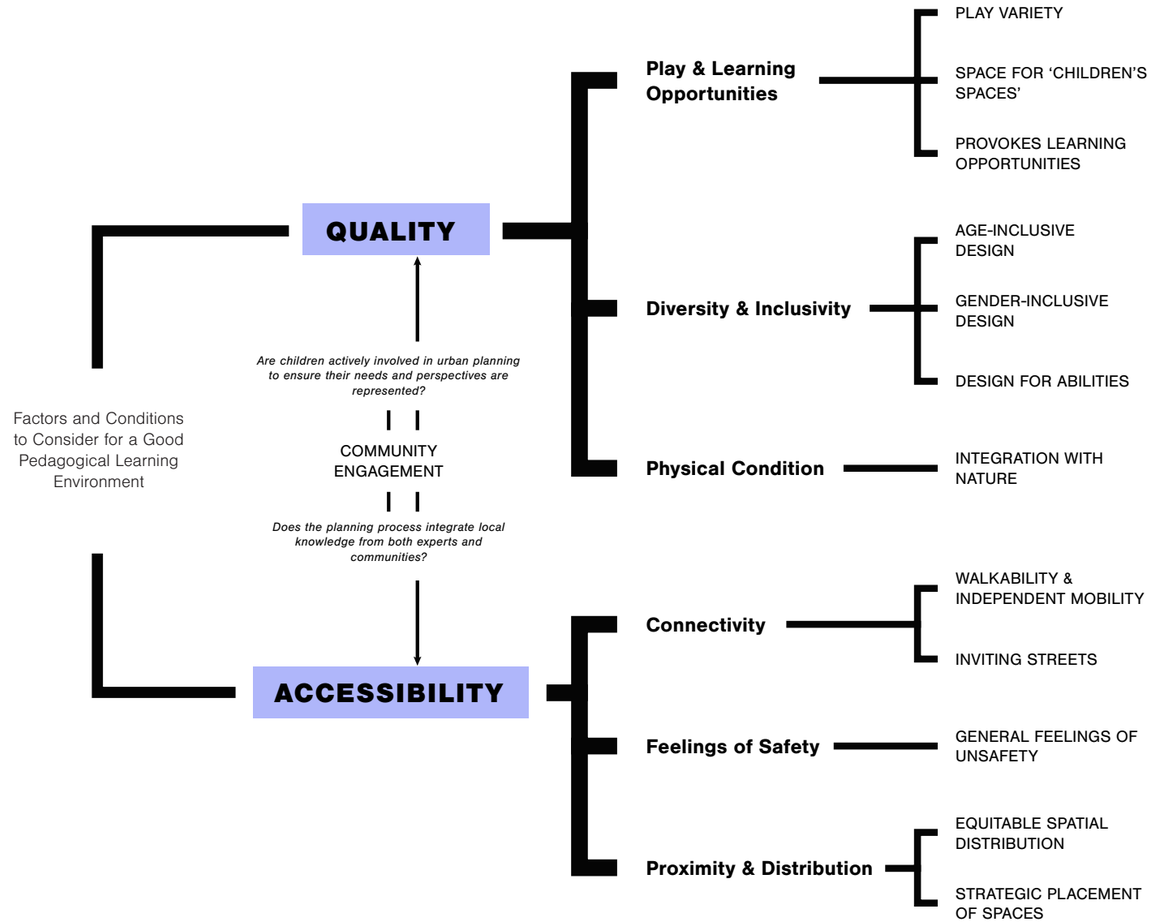
This tree diagram builds on that foundation by going a step further—it breaks down what quality and accessibility actually entail in spatial terms. While the conceptual framework provided the overarching structure, this diagram delves deeper into the specific aspects that define a strong pedagogical learning environment; it adds complexity by specifying the key factors that influence both quality and accessibility, making it a more detailed tool for analysis and evaluation.

This tree diagram is structured around the idea of what shapes a child’s pedagogical learning environment. However, it does more than just describe its physical characteristics—such as its size or the number of spaces available for children. More importantly, it serves as a framework for evaluating whether a space truly functions as an optimal pedagogical learning environment. When a setting meets all the outlined criteria and can answer each question within the tree diagram positively, it indicates that the maximum potential of a child’s learning environment is realised. In such a case, the urban environment offers the best possible learning opportunities, fostering cognitive, social, and creative growth.

For now, this tree diagram is built on a theoretical basis that primarily focuses on general settings for all children. As the project progresses, we will explore whether additional considerations or extra points of attention are needed for children growing up in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods. Ultimately, the goal is to understand how spatial planning can contribute to equity in learning environments in these neighbourhoods, helping to promote systemic equity.

Fig. 54 Key Determinants of the Pedagogical Learning Environment (author)

This tree diagram breaks down the spatial factors that shape the pedagogical learning environment, detailing how quality and accessibility, are key considerations for maximising the potential of the pedagogical learning environment.



Different Types of Activities
Gehl (2010) introduces the concept of “life between buildings” in his book Cities for People, which includes all of the different activities people engage in when they use common city space. Walking, he notes, is always the starting point, the foundation of these interactions.

He categorises activities in city spaces on a scale of necessity. At one end are purposeful necessary tasks, for children these include school and the streets they need to travel, which occur regardless of conditions.

At the other end are the largely recreational, optional activities, such as playing in playgrounds. Popularity and attractiveness depend on the quality—in the broadest sense of the word—and accessibility of the space where they take place. As discussed earlier in Lived Disparities, these factors can vary significantly depending on neighbourhood.

Finally, there is a large group of more or less planned common activities such as street hang-outs, community gatherings, or organised play. For children, social activities include all types of interaction with peers or with adults in city spaces, which rely on the presence of others. If a city space is desolate and empty, these activities don’t happen.

Spatial Quality and Accessibility Matter
The quality and accessibility of the physical environment directly impact how much children can benefit from the pedagogical learning environment (see fig 55). Necessary tasks, such as going to school, will take place regardless of conditions. However, optional and social activities are much more dependent on spatial quality and accessibility. In areas where urban spaces are of lower quality or less accessible, nothing happens.

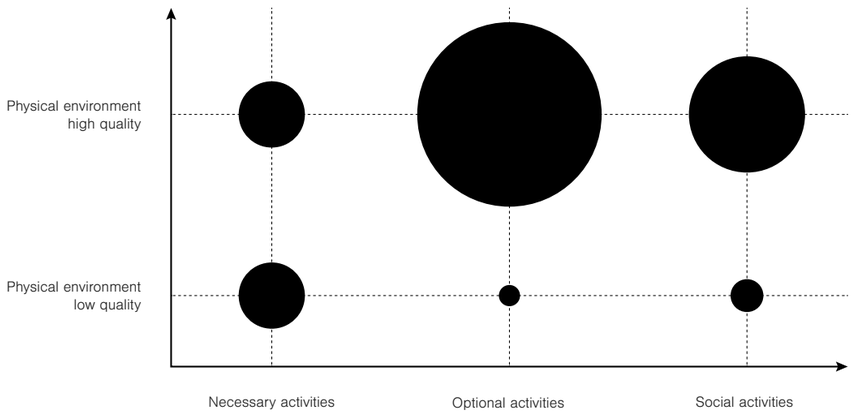
However, the quality and accessibility of spaces for children in marginalised neighbourhoods differ significantly from those in other areas, as seen in The Hague. As a result, children in these socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods are likely to spend less time engaging with the wider pedagogical learning environment that the urban fabric provides. In other words, their learning environment becomes smaller.

Interconnectedness of Urban Spaces
The pedagogical learning environment consists of more than just individual spaces to explore—it thrives on the interconnectedness of these spaces. Drawing on Jane Jacobs’ (1992) insights, we can understand how different spaces in the pedagogical learning environments—schools, streets, playgrounds, and community areas—mutually enhance each other.

Jacobs describes how this interconnectedness can set off a snowball-like dynamic in urban development. Improvements across different spaces with the collective whole and bigger picture in mind, strengthen one another and can create an environment where learning opportunities thrive. However, focusing on improving spaces in isolation risks triggering a negative snowball effect, particularly in marginalised areas, where poorly integrated interventions can exacerbate inequalities or lead to unintended consequences like struggling to attract users or become a haven for undesirable activities, or even gentrification.

Fig. 55 Outdoor Quality and Activity Levels (adapted from Gehl, 2010)

A visual representation of the relationship between quality and activities. Enhancing quality notably boosts optional activities, which in turn leads to a significant rise in social interactions.



From Foundation to Framework: Understanding and Assessing the Pedagogical Learning Environment
Building on the analytical groundwork, the pedagogical learning environment is now conceptualised through two key dimensions: quality and accessibility. Together, they form the foundation for the tree diagram introduced here. However, it also becomes clear at this stage that the current elaboration of these two dimensions—that if we are to meaningfully address the learning environments of children in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods—is not sufficient and additional factors or extra attention points must be considered.

This expanded framework not only helps ‘describe’ a child’s pedagogical learning environment, but also serves as a tool for assessing its effectiveness. The connection to Gehl’s theory becomes clear: when spatial conditions—related to either quality or accessibility—are weak or overlooked, the pedagogical learning environment becomes smaller or/and less effective. While necessary tasks like attending school still occur, optional and social activities—those that rely on both the quality and accessibility of public space—are less likely to take place. As a result, children in these neighbourhoods miss out on the full potential the learning environment could be.

The diagram also reflects, in line with Jacobs’ insights, the deeply interconnected nature of these spaces. To strengthen the pedagogical learning environment, interventions must consider the whole system. Only then can children not only complete necessary tasks but also engage in the broader range of activities that allow them to thrive—and only then can we speak of equitable learning opportunities in the urban landscape.

Fig. 56 When Nothing Happens (author)

The photo shows public urban space in The Hague Zuidwest, where poor spatial conditions result in a lack of activity—highlighting how the absence of quality discourages use and interaction.



Exposé.

01.
Lived Experience

02.
On-the-Ground Realities

03.
Institutional Procedures

1. LIVED EXPERIENCE

1.1. Life Through Children's Eyes

1.2. Self-Perception

1.3. Feelings of Safety

1.4. Housing Conditions

1.5. Public Space Conditions

1.6. Conclusions

Acknowledging the importance of place as the lived experience of young individuals and groups, this part of the thesis draws on Sutton and Kemp's (2011) assertion that understanding the lived experience of place—the on-the-ground, emplaced perspective of daily life—requires attention to the social processes, place meanings and attachments that shape them. Sutton and Kemp explain that this approach aligns with the anthropological concept of the emic, or resident-citizen perspective, which participatory researchers and practitioners recognise as vital local knowledge. By focusing on these perspectives, it becomes possible to understand both the experience of place and the impacts of displacement, offering insights into ways to enhance—or hinder—redevelopment programs, in any shape or form.

The chapter examines the significance of place experience and local knowledge, emphasising the gap between the dominant rhetoric of severe distress often associated with marginalised spaces and the—sometimes nuanced—lived experiences of residents within these environments. By highlighting this disparity, the discussion challenges oversimplified narratives and advocates for a more grounded understanding of how individuals engage with and perceive their surroundings in marginalised areas.

To deepen this exploration, studying everyday practices in urban neighbourhoods from a child's point of view offers a unique and valuable lens for understanding segregation processes (Karsten, 1998). Gaining insight into daily life experiences in the context of segregation—especially from the perspective of growing up in such circumstances—requires broadening the scope of research: it is essential to move beyond the structural level and consider how broader demographic and spatial changes in cities affect the daily lives of these young residents (Karsten, 1998). What does it actually mean to grow up in a more or less marginalised residential environment? By centring children's perspectives, this chapter seeks to uncover how young individuals interpret, reshape, and live their surroundings amidst these larger structural forces.

1.1. LIFE THROUGH CHILDREN'S EYES

This opening chapter offers a first glimpse into how children see and experience their own urban environment. It builds a foundation for what follows. Rather than beginning with theory or numbers, it begins with children's eyes.
The photo series shown here comes from a broader photovoice project, organised by KijkLab (2022) with local schoolchildren carried out in Molenwijk, Laak, The Hague. As seen earlier, a neighbourhood that scores high on the socioeconomic segregation index. In many ways, primarily demographically, the neighbourhood mirrors other segregated areas in the city.

The children participating in this project were given cameras and asked to capture what mattered to them. The result is a selection of images that speak for themselves. Each photograph reflects a small story, a moment, a concern, or a joy.

These images offer a starting point. They provide a child's perspective on growing up in areas often spoken about but rarely seen through the eyes of those who live there. The following chapters will build further on this foundation by exploring broader lived disparities—sometimes not even consciously aware of by the children themselves—through a theoretical, literature-based approach.

Fig. 57 Children Documenting Their Neighbourhood: A Young Girl Captured Boys Playing on the Football Court (KijkLab, 2022)

Photo taken in response to feelings of unsafety and exclusion. The girl noted: "At the Ketelveld, it's only boys. And I'm scared of men. [...] I don't really play outside anymore. I don't know, I just have this feeling of being too scared."



Fig. 58 Children Documenting Their Neighbourhood: A Young Girl Captures a Vibrant Mural During (KijkLab, 2022)

Reflecting on this particular photograph, the girl later remarked: "Beautiful colours and a nice contrast. I love the mural. [...] This is something nice for the neighbourhood."



Fig. 59 Children Documenting Their Neighbourhood: A Young Girl Captures a Large Pile of Litter (KijkLab, 2022)



1.1. LIFE THROUGH CHILDREN'S EYES

Fig. 60 Children Documenting Their Neighbourhood: Capturing Informal Play on Urban Infrastructure (KijkLab, 2022)



Fig. 61 Children Documenting Their Neighbourhood: Photo Set Depicting Elements That Evoke Feelings of Unsafety or Hostility (KijkLab, 2022)

Reflecting on this photo set, one girl remarked: "This makes the neighbourhood feel unsafe. Sometimes you see people who are really drunk. At the supermarket, there's always a group of men doing drugs. Groups of men often act strange."





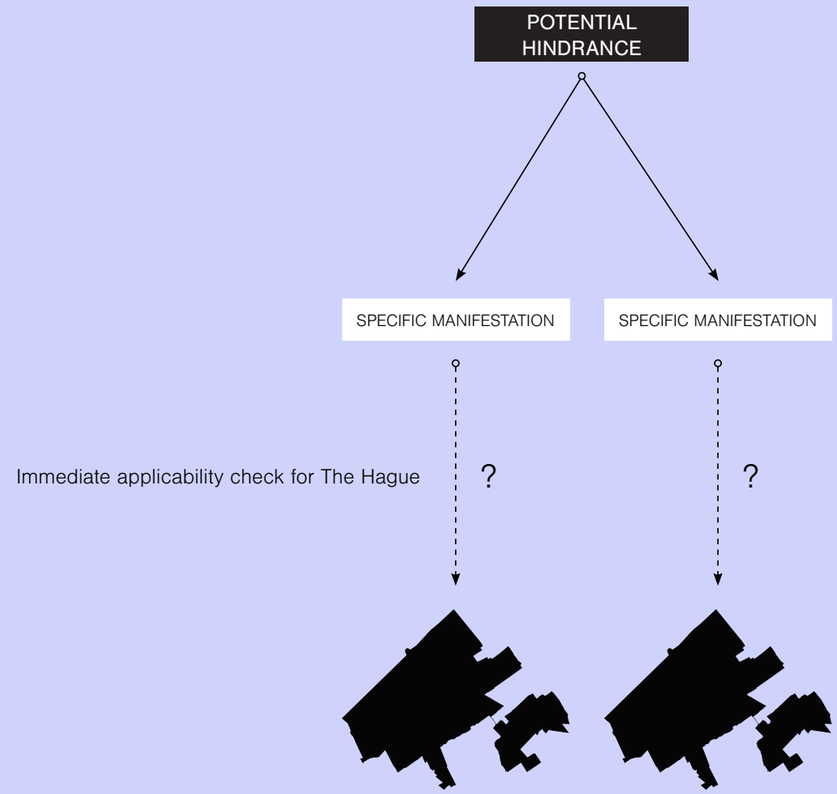


The photovoice series offered a glimpse into the city through children's eyes and laid a valuable foundation for understanding their lived realities. To build on this—and to gain a fuller understanding of these realities, including challenges that may not be visible in photographs or that children aren't even consciously aware of themselves—**the following section turns to theory**.

The approach is grounded in extensive literature review, with **a central role for *The Paradox of Urban Space*** by Sutton and Kemp (2011). Insights from this work, combined with anecdotal knowledge and further theoretical investigation, informed the identification of key lived disparities that may hinder learning and educational opportunities. While not exhaustive, these themes represent the **most relevant recurring patterns of disadvantage** that impact children's learning and development.

Each identified potential hindrance is **explored in the context of The Hague.** Through maps, mixed-media analysis, statistics, and reports, the relevance of each theme is tested. This grounded approach helps **uncover how more complex societal structures shape everyday childhood experiences** as well.

Fig. 62 Understanding the Lived Experience: Identifying Potential Hindrances Through a Theory-Driven Approach (author)

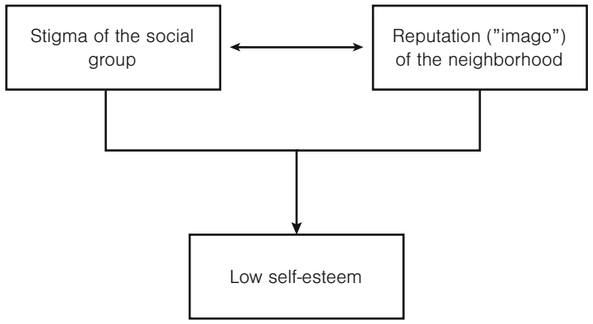


Growing up in marginalised neighbourhoods has a profound impact on the self-esteem of young residents, as evidenced by research conducted by Kullberg et al. (2021) in Kanaleneiland, Utrecht—a neighbourhood comparable to different marginalised neighbourhoods in The Hague. Their study highlights how societal rejection and public stigma associated with growing up in a specific neighbourhood contribute to low self-esteem among children and young adolescents. According to Kullberg et al., the societal climate, characterised by public rejection and negative stereotyping of specific groups, becomes internalised by young residents, leading to diminished self-expectations and, in some cases, a fatalistic outlook on their futures. This internalisation reflects the deep connection between external perceptions of a neighbourhood and the self-image of its residents.

Testimonies from young boys in Kanaleneiland, along with insights from educators and social workers, indicate that the negative image of the neighbourhood reinforces feelings of social exclusion. Kullberg et al. explain that the stigma of the neighbourhood and the stigma of the social group are deeply intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Professionals working in education and social services observe that children often feel trapped by overlapping stigmas: being Moroccan, Muslim, young, non-white and from a neighbourhood like Kanaleneiland. While some find resilience and pride in these identities, others are hindered by them, facing barriers to personal development and self-confidence.

This sense of rejection creates a defensive solidarity among young people, leading them to retreat into their social circles as a coping mechanism against external hostility. Tatum (2017) describes this behaviour in *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?,* linking systemic exclusion and racial stereotyping to the formation of an 'oppositional identity,' where young people distance themselves from the dominant culture. While Tatum's research focuses on racial segregation in the United States, I think its core insights are applicable in the Dutch context. In The Hague, this 'oppositional identity' may not necessarily centre around being 'black' but rather encompasses any identity perceived as 'non-white' or 'other.'
Figure 64 illustrates these findings, demonstrating how a neighbourhood's reputation and group stigma reinforce each other. This feedback loop shapes the self-esteem of younger generations, emphasising the impact of external perceptions, societal rejection, and internalised stigma on self-image.

Fig. 64 Reinforcing Stigmas and Self-Perception (author)



Furthermore, urban design plays a critical role in shaping the lived experiences of young residents in marginalised neighbourhoods. As King (1988) highlights, urban design is not a neutral or apolitical process but a deliberate practice of creating meaning through the relationships between spatial elements. In capitalist societies, this design often prioritises the needs and values of dominant social groups. This practice perpetuates systemic exclusion by neglecting the identities and lived realities of minority communities.

Sutton and Kemp (2011) similarly argue that urban policies standardise spaces for dominant cultural values, often overlooking the needs and cultural practices of the less-dominant communities: spaces are clearly not designed with the identities, needs, or cultural practices of the communities that live there today in mind. For children growing up in these neighbourhoods, this spatial exclusion can contribute to a subtle but powerful message: that their identity does not fully belong in these spaces. Playgrounds, public facilities, and communal areas may not reflect their cultural experiences or provide spaces where they feel truly seen and valued. This disconnect creates a sense of alienation from an early age, subtly shaping their self-image and reinforcing feelings of being unrecognised as equal members of society.

In my own experience working at a primary school in The Hague, I have witnessed similarly exclusionary patterns play out within educational spaces. Some teachers, particularly from older generations, occasionally fail to learn how to pronounce the names of children from non-Dutch backgrounds. Though seemingly minor, this occurrence communicates a message of exclusion and non-recognition. When authority figures—who are supposed to guide young children—fail to acknowledge something as fundamental as their names, it reinforces a damaging narrative about their worth and place in society.

These moments, whether intentional or not, are part of a broader pattern of societal exclusion that begins in childhood and continues into later life.

Figure 65 also illustrates how urban spaces, institutional practices, and societal attitudes intersect, create a pattern of non-recognition for children growing up in marginalised neighbourhoods. This systemic exclusion reinforces low self-esteem and oppositional identity, and preserves inequality while limiting opportunities for growth and integration.

Fig. 65 Non-Recognition to Self-Perception (author)

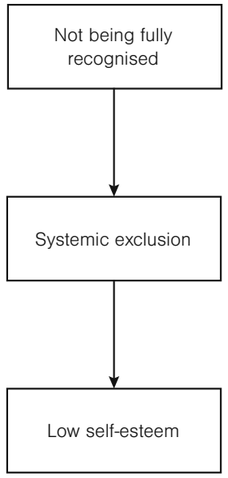


Fig. 63 Hostility and Oppositional Identity (GeenStijl, 2014)

The image captures a video still of an individual wearing a "HAAGS BLOED" shirt while being interviewed on their way to a Pro Patria ["Voor het Vaderland"] protest, an event aimed at rallying against the perceived 'non-Dutch' identity of the Schilderswijk neighbourhood.



Fig. 66 Exposing Youth to Far-Right Ideology (L1 Nieuws, 2023)

A banner displaying the far-right slogan "Jeugd de toekomst, stop omvolking" [Youth is the future, stop population replacement], was displayed at a secondary school in Heerlen, the Netherlands. The image illustrates how extremist views are introduced to children, pushing them into an oppositional identity from a young age by framing them as part of a threatened group.

Fig. 67 Hostility and Oppositional Identity (NU.nl, 2014)

The protest against the perceived 'non-Dutch' identity of the Schilderswijk neighbourhood exemplifies the societal stereotyping and rejection that contribute to the creation of oppositional identities among marginalised communities.



1.2. SELF-PERCEPTION

For children growing up in marginalised neighbourhoods, the stigma attached to their environment exacerbates existing challenges. Negative perceptions of these areas are often internalised, fostering feelings of inferiority and low expectations for themselves. This low self-esteem, shaped by societal rejection and negative stereotyping, significantly impacts minority students' academic self-concepts and educational outcomes (Cohen et al., 2009; Cvencek et al., 2018; Steele et al., 2002). When students internalise such low self-worth, they may disengage from academic tasks, perceiving themselves as less capable. This disengagement directly impacts academic performance, further entrenching lower achievement outcomes, which ultimately reinforces and widens the achievement gap (Cvencek et al., 2018).

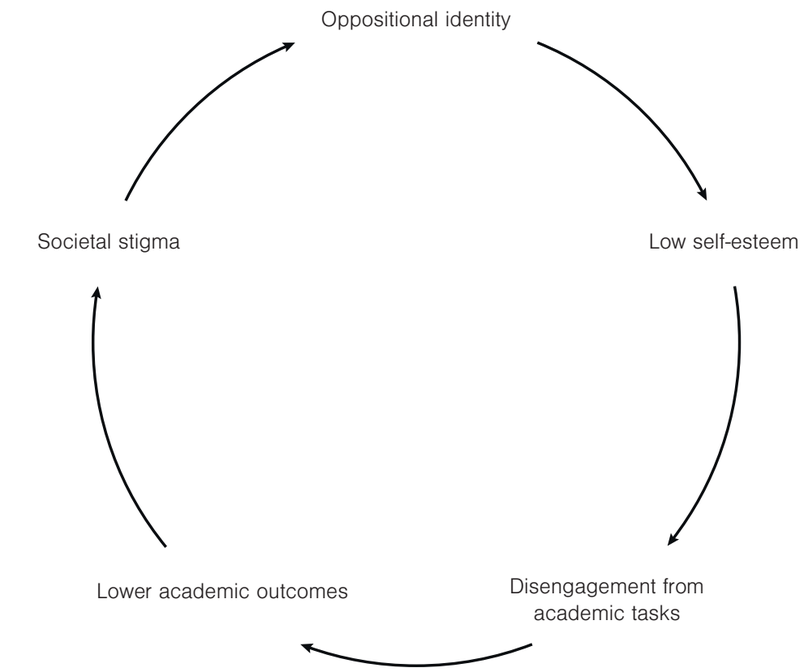
Academic self-concept—students' beliefs about their abilities in school—is closely tied to how they perform and engage in educational settings. Cvencek et al. (2018) found that, while both minority and majority students report positive academic self-concepts, minority students' perceptions are significantly less positive, even at a young age. This disparity, intensified by implicit biases and societal stigma, reinforces motivation and strengthens the perception that certain groups are inherently less capable than others.

This dynamic creates an unequal starting point in education, where minority students growing up in marginalised neighbourhoods not only face systemic barriers but also contend with the internalised belief that they are less "smart" or "capable." These perceptions, reinforced by societal attitudes and institutional practices, widen the gap between groups and hinder efforts to achieve equitable educational opportunities (Cohen et al., 2009).

While the insights discussed above are highly relevant to children growing up in marginalised neighbourhoods in The Hague, it is important to recognise that these patterns do not apply uniformly to every child and resident. Individual experiences vary, shaped by many other factors like family dynamics, community support, and personal resilience. Although societal stigma, systemic exclusion, and negative stereotyping can significantly influence self-esteem and academic outcomes, these variables interact differently for each individual. Acknowledging this diversity is essential to avoid oversimplifying the challenges faced by children in these neighbourhoods.

Fig. 68 Interplay of Identity, Self-Esteem, and Academic Achievement (author)

This diagram illustrates the self-reinforcing cycle of societal stigma, internalised low self-esteem, and academic disengagement, showing how external perceptions and systemic barriers contribute to persistent educational and social inequalities.



1.3. FEELINGS OF SAFETY

Feelings of safety in marginalised neighbourhoods encompass more than just the concentration of crime or the visible presence of law enforcement. A critical distinction must be made between objective safety—the actual occurrence of criminal activities—and perceived safety, which reflects how safe residents feel in their environment. In marginalised neighbourhoods in The Netherlands, residents may perceive an increased sense of insecurity not only due to crime but also because of strained relationships with law enforcement. These feelings are made worse by the stigma surrounding these neighbourhoods and their residents, which intertwines with police practices and societal perceptions. As previously mentioned, marginalised neighbourhoods and their predominantly minority populations in the Dutch context are often subject to negative stereotyping, reinforcing cycles of mistrust and exclusion.

Perceived safety is, among other things, influenced by a lack of collective social control, which refers to the ability of neighbourhood residents to regulate behaviour and maintain order informally. In areas where this form of control is insufficient, residents may rely on formal authorities like the police to fill the gap. However, marginalised communities often exhibit significant distrust in law enforcement (Bell, 2016; Kirk & Papachristos, 2011; Kullberg et al., 2021). This distrust is compounded by discriminatory practices, such as disproportionate ID checks and fines—as found in Kullberg et al,'s research (2021) —, which are perceived as unjust. Such experiences not only undermine trust in the police but also undermine confidence in the broader legal system, a phenomenon Bell (2016) describes as "legal cynicism." This distrust prevents residents from seeking help through official channels, which in turn reinforces feelings of unsafety.

A particularly noteworthy example of these dynamics comes from a mother I know in The Hague Zuidwest. She shared how her teenage son, a young Moroccan-Dutch boy, was stopped and interrogated by the police without cause, an experience she believes was motivated by racial profiling. As a result, she now restricts her children's movements to shield them from potential harm not only from crime but also from police encounters. This coping mechanism, common in marginalised communities, mirrors findings in Bell's (2016) research on African-American mothers in high-poverty U.S. neighbourhoods, highlighting similar experiences of policing and mistrust.

Despite the differences between marginalised neighbourhoods in The Hague, The Netherlands and high-poverty neighbourhoods in the United States, Bell's findings on legal cynicism resonate in the Dutch context: Research shows lower trust in the police among Dutch citizens of Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese, and Antillean descent, with calls to address discrimination and racism within law enforcement. This aligns with Kullberg et al.'s findings that residents in marginalised neighbourhoods are less inclined to report crimes or seek police assistance, reinforcing a cycle of perceived unsafety.

Fig. 69B Index of Trust and Reputation of the Police in the Netherlands (Politie, 2022)

Citizens with a Moroccan, Turkish, and Surinamese migration background have less trust in the police (moderate) compared to citizens with an Antillean/ Aruban migration background (fair) or other non-Western backgrounds (good).

DUTCH
57

NON-WESTERN
43

MOROCCAN **36**
TURKISH **35**
SURINAMESE **36**
ANTILLEAN **43**
OTHER **52**

Fig. 69A Public Expectations for Building Trust in the Police (Politie, 2022)

When asked the question, "What should the police do to gain more trust?" the graph presents the responses from Dutch residents.

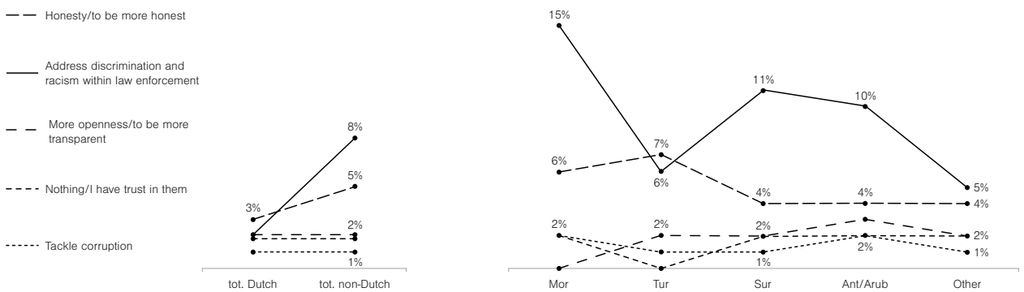


Fig. 70 Crime Rates by Neighbourhood (author)

This map shows the objective crime rates across neighbourhoods, highlighting the distribution of criminal activities across neighbourhoods in The Hague.

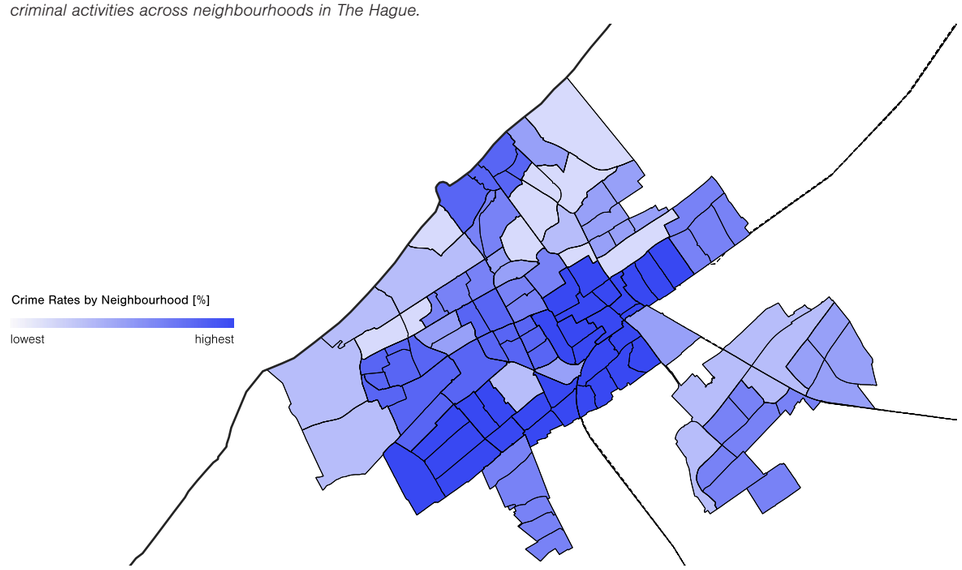
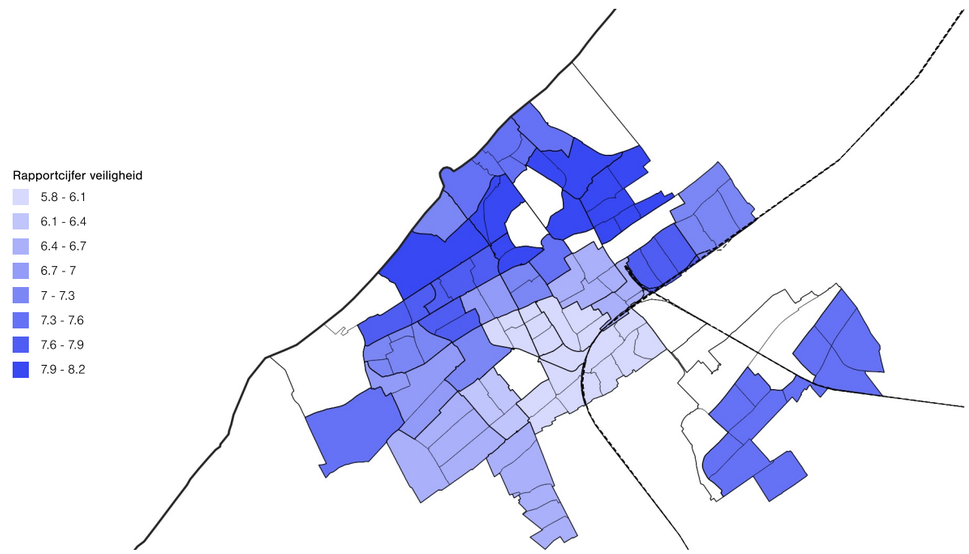


Fig. 71 Neighbourhood Safety Ratings (author)

This map depicts residents' perceived safety levels across neighbourhoods in The Hague.



1.3. FEELINGS OF SAFETY

The impact of these dynamics on residents' daily lives cannot be understated. Feelings of mistrust and insecurity limit young children's engagement in community activities, exploration of public spaces, and educational opportunities. According to Kullberg et al. (2021), young people in these neighbourhoods may withdraw from outdoor spaces to avoid potential confrontations with the police, further exacerbating their isolation. This withdrawal can impede their personal development and reinforce the cycle of marginalisation.

Bell's (2016) findings on African-American mothers' strategies to shield their children from harm resonate strongly with the Dutch context. As highlighted by a mother in The Hague Zuidwest, similar concerns about both crime and discriminatory policing lead to self-imposed restrictions on children's movements. This pattern is further supported by Karsten's (1998) research, which shows that while 70% of Dutch children in Amsterdam are permitted to explore their neighbourhoods independently, only 40% of ethnic minority children enjoy the same freedom. Karsten also found that Dutch children in marginalised neighbourhoods in Amsterdam play outside less frequently, participate less in clubs, and travel less by bike or car compared to other Dutch children in the city. This highlights that, even for Dutch children with no ethnic minority background, growing up in a lower-class neighbourhood restricts their opportunities for exploration. It underscores how socioeconomic status, alongside fear of crime and police encounters, creates unequal access to public spaces for young children growing up.

Visser et al. (2013) emphasise the crucial role of trust—or lack thereof—in shaping feelings of unsafety. Distrust in law enforcement, compounded by experiences of discrimination or stereotyping, acts as an important factor of both fear of crime and generalised feelings of unsafety. Skogan's (2009) research reinforces this view, demonstrating that distrust in the police intensifies fear of crime. As illustrated in the diagram, 'Fear of Crime' and 'Feelings of Unsafety' stem from a confluence of different factors, including distrust in law enforcement, generalised social distrust, and neighbourhood stigma.

Fig. 72 Fear of Crime and Feelings of Unsafety (author, based on framework by Visser et al., 2013)

This framework outlines the factors that directly influence fear of crime and feelings of unsafety, based on the model by Visser et al. (2013). Dotted lines represent controlled paths.

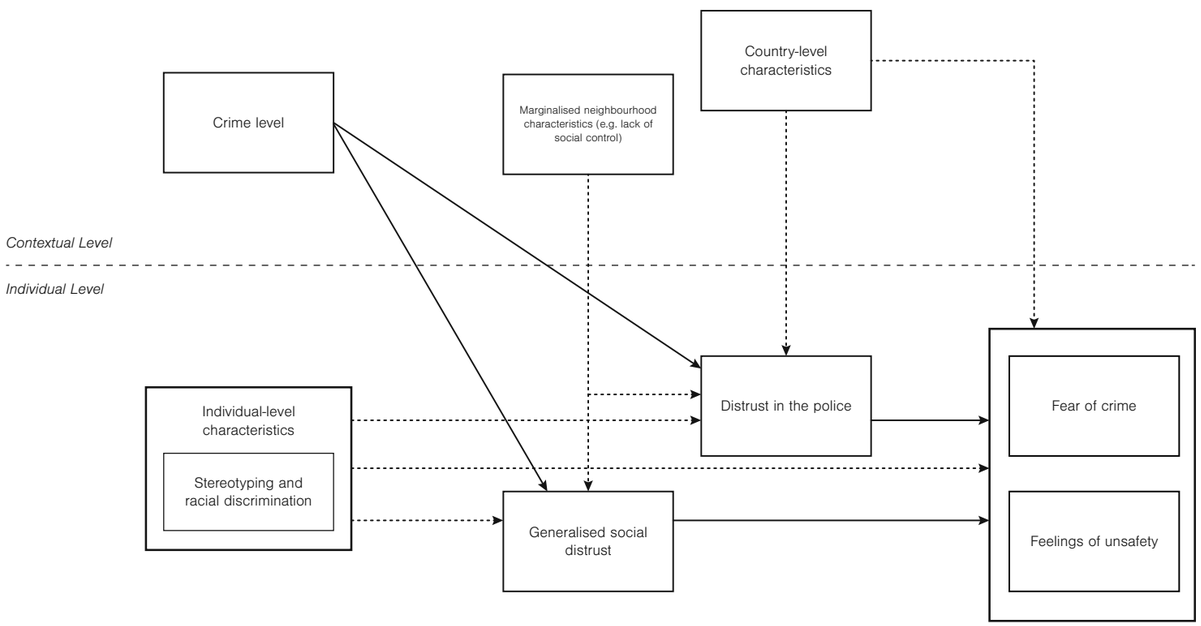


Fig. 73 Impact of Unsafety on Children's Freedom to Space (author)



These feelings of fear and unsafety not only affect individual emotions but also significantly influence behaviour and movement patterns. For vulnerable groups like children, such fear heavily restricts access to public spaces, limiting their ability to explore, play, and interact freely within their communities. The second diagram, which links 'Fear of Crime' and 'Feelings of Unsafety' to 'Restricted Freedom to Explore Outdoor Spaces,' captures how these limitations affect a child's developmental trajectory. Restricting access to outdoor spaces and informal peer networks narrows children's opportunities to engage in qualitative learning environments. Kullberg et al. (2021) find that such restrictions hinder the development of social skills and networks, leading to isolation and continuing cycles of disadvantage.

This cycle also impacts children's educational outcomes and overall well-being. Living in a neighbourhood characterised by high crime and unemployment rates often leaves children feeling unsafe and demotivated (Katz et al., 2001). These feelings can disrupt the learning process, leading to poorer academic performance and limited future opportunities. The withdrawal from outdoor and communal spaces, combined with reduced participation in extracurricular activities (Karsten, 1998), deprives children of essential developmental experiences that contribute to cognitive, social, and emotional growth.

While it's important to acknowledge that factors such as cultural differences, family dynamics, and individual circumstances also influence children's opportunities for exploration, these do not entirely overshadow the broader patterns identified. The interplay of socioeconomic status, fear of crime, and discriminatory experiences still plays a significant role in restricting access to public spaces, disproportionately affecting children in marginalised communities. This narrative remains relevant, even as other variables contribute to the complexities of children's mobility and development.

1.4. HOUSING CONDITIONS

Housing conditions play a critical role in shaping the lived experiences and developmental trajectories of children growing up in marginalised neighbourhoods. These environments often reflect broader socioeconomic and racial inequalities embedded in urban landscapes, affecting not only the physical well-being of residents but also their educational development. Contemporary developmental theories recognize that while genetic and extrafamilial factors influence children's outcomes, the home environment serves as a crucial mediating factor through which these influences are channeled (Collins et al., 2000; Adam, 2004). Therefore, examining housing conditions is essential for understanding the challenges faced by children in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods.

The most pressing issues identified in literature for such neighbourhoods include overcrowding, health hazards, and rental instability (Contreras et al., 2019; Lorentzen et al., 2024; Sutton & Kemp, 2011). These housing challenges are exacerbated in neighbourhoods marked by high levels of poverty and racial segregation. Such areas are often isolated from economic opportunities and essential resources, creating a cycle of disadvantage that profoundly affects children. As Bruner (2017) and Acevedo-Garcia et al. (2008) highlight, the lack of access to "opportunity neighbourhoods" worsens disparities in health, long-term well-being, and education, laying the foundation for inequality that extends beyond childhood, shaping the trajectory of their entire lives.

Conley's (2001) conceptual model underscores the importance of housing as a mechanism for transmitting socioeconomic and racial advantage. According to this framework, family background influences housing conditions (Arrow A), which in turn affect educational outcomes through household-level and neighbourhood-level mechanisms (Arrow B). Simultaneously, family background and economic resources also exert a direct effect on educational attainment, independent of housing (Arrow C). This model highlights the crucial role housing plays in mediating the relationship between socioeconomic status and children's developmental outcomes, providing a foundation for examining the specific housing challenges faced by children in marginalised neighbourhoods in The Hague.

The subsequent sections will explore these challenges—overcrowding, quality dwellings, and rental instability—in detail, situating them within the broader socioeconomic and policy context of The Hague's neighbourhoods.

Fig. 74 Role of Housing in Educational Attainment (adapted from Conley, 2001)

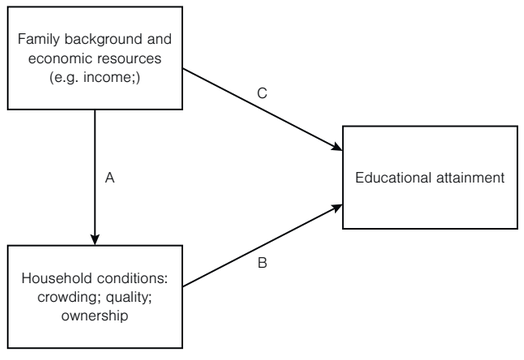


Fig. 75 Housing Typologies and Building Distribution in The Hague (author)



1.4. HOUSING CONDITIONS

1.4.1. Overcrowding

Lack of space and precarious conditions of a household can significantly affect children's development. Overcrowding, commonly defined by a high person-per-room ratio, is strongly linked to social deprivation, poverty, and, often, ethnic dimensions (Lorentzen et al., 2024). This issue is particularly prevalent in socioeconomically marginalised neighbourhoods. The resulting challenges—such as limited privacy, inadequate access to quiet study spaces, and disrupted sleep—directly impact their well-being and academic achievement.

Overcrowding is also quite common in particular neighbourhoods in The Hague—evident on the map right—where poverty and segregation further reinforce the conditions that preserve housing challenges. Families in these areas often lack financial resources to afford adequately sized homes, forcing them to live in arrangements that exceed the dwelling's capacity. Lorentzen et al. (2024) highlight this as both a consequence and a cause of socioeconomic disadvantage. Overcrowding subsequently limits children's opportunities to succeed academically and socially, while a low-income household in turn restricts families' access to better housing—again—creating a self-reinforcing cycle of disadvantages.

Participants in Lorentzen et al.'s study described how overcrowded households limit children's ability to study effectively. Many children lack a dedicated space for homework and are often disturbed by siblings or other residents. Poor sleep due to cramped conditions further hinders concentration and learning. Parents in these neighbourhoods sometimes also struggle to provide essential resources, such as computers. This lack of opportunities not only limits children's educational progress but also fosters feelings of exclusion and frustration.

Fig. 76 Children Aged 0–15 Growing Up in Low-Income Households (author)



Fig. 77 Overcrowding: Density of Residents per Square Metre per Dwelling (author)



1.4. HOUSING CONDITIONS

1.4.1. Overcrowding

Empirical studies have long demonstrated the detrimental effects of overcrowding on children's intellectual and psychological development. Booth and Johnson's (1975) study on Toronto families showed that children in overcrowded homes often lag behind their peers in school, a finding supported by subsequent research across different socioeconomic and cultural contexts (Contreras et al., 2019). In France, Goux and Maurin (2005) identified a strong negative correlation between overcrowding and academic performance, even after controlling for factors such as family size, parental socioeconomic status, and sibling composition.

Overcrowded living environments aggravate stress and social tensions within families, which can further weaken children's mental health and ability to focus. Sutton and Kemp (2011) observed that overcrowding disrupts constructive social interactions, often leading to heightened irritability and strained family relationships. These disruptions are compounded by a lack of physical spaces conducive to learning, where distractions from other household members undermine children's ability to complete homework or concentrate on studies (Lorentzen et al., 2024).

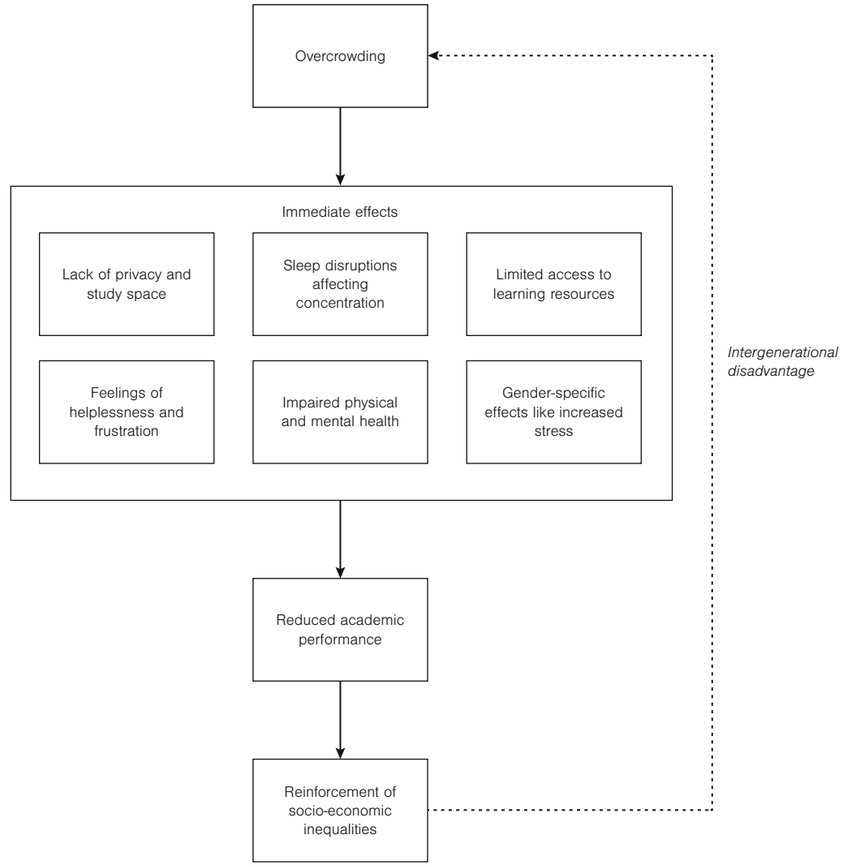
The pathways through which overcrowding influences educational outcomes are multifaceted. Evans et al. (1998) highlighted how chronic overcrowding contributes to learned helplessness, elevated stress levels, and impaired parent-child relationships, each of which has significant effects on school performance. For instance, boys in overcrowded homes exhibited higher blood pressure, while girls showed increased helplessness, also illustrating the gendered dimensions of these challenges. Solari and Mare (2012) further emphasised how overcrowding hinders skill development, peer interactions, and even physical health, all of which are critical for academic success.

Overcrowding also has long-term implications, particularly by contributing to the intergenerational transmission of disadvantages, which further entrenches socioeconomic inequalities (Bruner, 2017; Acevedo-Garcia et al., 2008).

Overcrowding in marginalised neighbourhoods in The Hague is not merely a symptom of socioeconomic inequality but also a driving force behind it. The lack of space and precarious household conditions undermine children's educational opportunities, well-being, and social integration.

Fig. 78 Impact of Overcrowded Housing (author)

A visual representation of how overcrowding leads to immediate effects such as stress, lack of privacy, and disrupted sleep, which contribute to reduced academic performance. This, in turn, reinforces socioeconomic inequalities, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of intergenerational disadvantage.



1.4. HOUSING CONDITIONS

1.4.2. Environmental Stressors

In marginalised neighbourhoods, poor housing quality often reflects broader socioeconomic and racial disparities. Children in such environments are more likely to face exposure to various health hazards—including mould, poor ventilation, noise pollution, and infestations of insects or rodents— which in turn exacerbate existing inequalities in education and life chances (Sutton & Kemp, 2011).

While much of the literature on the relationship between housing conditions and health hazards originates outside the Netherlands, its findings provide valuable insights that can be cautiously projected. For example, studies from the United States, the United Kingdom, and other European countries consistently highlight the detrimental effects of poor housing on children's health and academic achievement (Conley, 2001; Forns et al., 2016; Lorentzen et al., 2024; Sutton & Kemp, 2011; Von Simson & Umblijs, 2021; Zhang & Navejar, 2018). Although the Dutch context may differ in specific details— such as the materials used in construction or the prevalence of lead, asbestos, and ventilation issues— the broader trend remains relevant: marginalised neighbourhoods in the Netherlands are similarly characterised by being more likely to have substandard housing conditions and environmental risks, which in turn are likely to undermine children's well-being and educational opportunities.

1. Mould and Poor Ventilation
Substandard ventilation and moisture-related issues are a recurring concern in poorly maintained housing (Lorentzen et al., 2024). Research by Lorentzen et al. (2024) on residents in Stockholm, highlights that higher-density flats frequently experience excess moisture, often resulting from insufficient airflow and the necessity of drying clothes indoors. In some cases, air vents are intentionally blocked to avoid draughts or conserve heat, exacerbating the problem. The resulting mould growth can have significant health implications, including respiratory problems, which contribute to increased school absenteeism and diminished cognitive performance (Conley, 2001).

In my own experience, there's one student I work closely with who often mentions and complains about the overcrowded conditions in his home, where his aunt now lives with him and his family due to her own mould-infested house. This personal account demonstrates the link between overcrowded, substandard housing and the health difficulties children may encounter, affecting both their well-being and educational outcomes.

2. Noise Pollution
Noise pollution, another common feature of poor housing and overcrowded urban areas, has far-reaching implications for children's well-being. High levels of noise from traffic, neighbours, or aircraft can disrupt sleep, increase stress, and hinder concentration (Basner et al., 2014; Zhang & Navejar, 2015). Von Simson and Umblijs (2021) found that exposure to noise pollution in the home and school environments correlates with lower academic performance, particularly in reading and memory skills.

3. Pests and Environmental Toxins
Decaying dwellings in socioeconomically deprived areas frequently harbour pests such as cockroaches and rodents, which can exacerbate allergies, asthma, and other health conditions (NCCP, 1990). Additionally, older housing stock may contain asbestos or lead paint, both of which pose long-term health risks (Conley, 2001).

Fig. 79 Neighbourhoods with the Highest Noise Complaint Registrations (author)

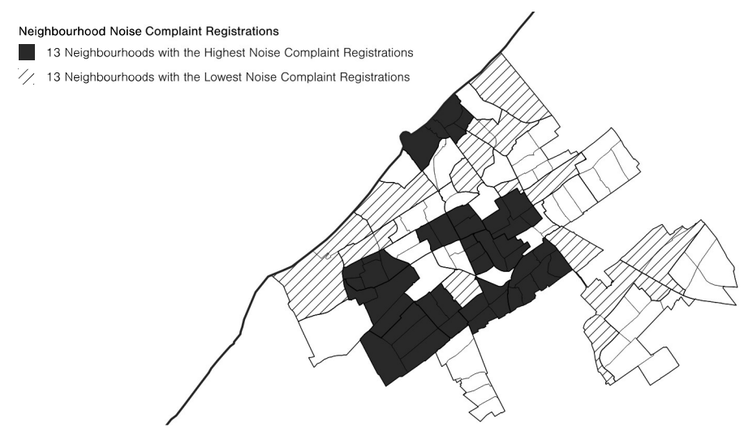


Fig. 80 Newspaper Header Explaining Study into Housing Quality in The Hague (Omroep West, 2020)

This article reports on an extensive study being conducted in The Hague to map the condition of housing in the city, highlighting concerns over health and safety issues in poorly maintained homes, including problems with moisture, mould, and asbestos.

Moisture, mould, asbestos, pipes: extensive study into the quality of housing in The Hague.

THE HAGUE - The Hague is set to map out the condition of housing quality in the city. [...] The research is prompted by concerns regarding the health and safety of residents living in poorly maintained or unsafe homes.

Fig. 81 Newspaper Header Illustrating Mould Issues in The Hague's Moerwijk Neighbourhood (NRC, 2024)

This piece discusses the struggles of Moerwijk residents with persistent mould problems, peeling paint, and a musty smell in their homes, shedding light on the ongoing health risks posed by substandard housing conditions.

In The Hague's Moerwijk, residents are struggling with mould in their homes: 'If I can shower at the gym, I do.'

At Gewoon Sociaal's roundtable, all visitors can share their experiences with mould. About walls discoloured in shades of grey, peeling paint, and an incessant musty smell in the house. "That smell gets to your lungs," says Wilco Bakker, founder of Gewoon Sociaal, kicking off the conversation.

1.4. HOUSING CONDITIONS

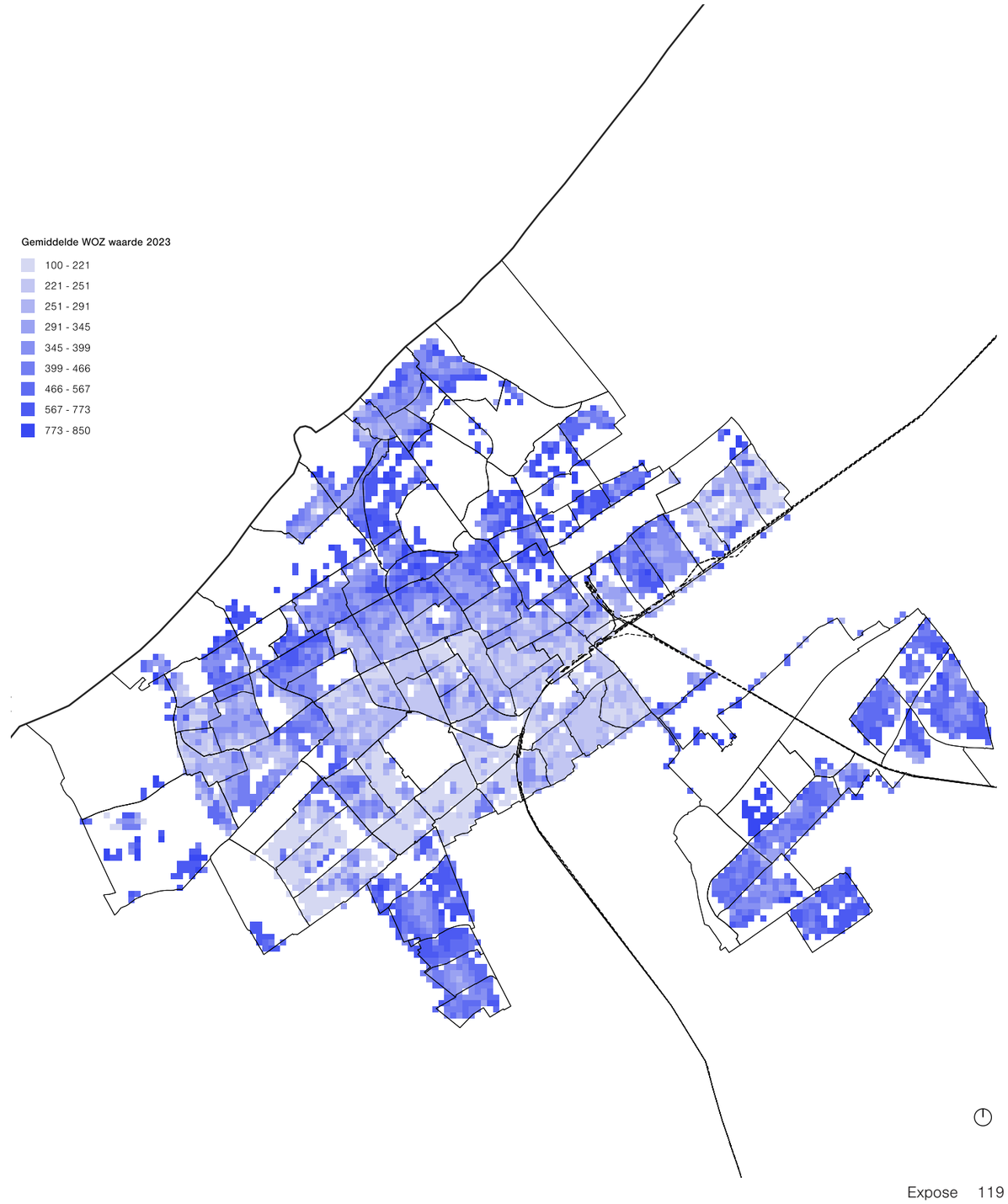
1.4.2. Environmental Stressors

The combined effect of these health hazards is severe. Children living in homes with mould, noise pollution, or pest infestations are more likely to experience disrupted sleep, chronic illness, and elevated stress levels—all of which directly impair academic performance. For instance, Solari and Mare (2012) observed that illnesses spread in poorly ventilated homes increase school absenteeism. Similarly, Stansfeld et al. (2005) found that high noise levels significantly worsen reading skills among primary school children, demonstrating how environmental stressors undermine educational attainment.

Although specific data on these health hazards in marginalised Dutch neighbourhoods is sparse, the Netherlands is not immune to the socioeconomic dynamics that link marginalised neighbourhoods to poor housing quality. While these hazards are less well-documented in the Dutch context and concrete evidence or numbers are difficult to find, anecdotal evidence suggests they remain a concern in low-income neighbourhoods, though the extent of the issue remains a bit unclear. Given this, it is not unreasonable to assume that marginalised communities in cities like The Hague are likely facing some sort of similar challenges to those identified above.

Fig. 82 Average Property Value (author)

The map displaying the gemiddelde WOZ waarde (average property value) in The Hague offers an overview of property values across the city. While it doesn't solely reflect the quality of dwellings, property values are influenced by factors like size, location and general upkeep. Lower WOZ values may indicate areas where housing conditions are more likely to be substandard. Although the map doesn't capture the full picture, it does provide a general sense of housing quality disparities.



1.4. HOUSING CONDITIONS

1.4.3. Residential Stability

Aside from the conditions within the home, tenure status also has an important impact on academic achievement (Conley, 2001). This is found to be particularly the case in marginalised neighbourhoods, where short-term leases and frequent relocations are more common, making rental stability a critical factor. These housing conditions can disrupt family life and hinder children's ability to establish routines essential for academic success.

Children from families facing frequent moves experience significant educational disruptions. Studies such as Pribesh and Downey (1999) have shown that high rates of residential mobility correlate with lower academic achievement, even when controlling for other family characteristics. Interruptions to schooling often result in difficulties adapting to new educational settings, disrupted relationships with teachers and peers, and decreased participation in extracurricular activities—all factors that contribute to poorer educational outcomes. Families with stable housing are more likely to provide consistent support for children's schooling, as they are not burdened by the stress of finding and affording new accommodation. In contrast, frequent relocations strain parental well-being and parenting quality, as noted by Adam (2004), compounding the challenges children face.

Psychologically, unstable housing undermines children's emotional security, contributing to feelings of isolation and difficulty in forming long-term friendships (Bures, 2003). This lack of social integration, coupled with the stress of repeated changes, negatively impacts self-esteem and overall well-being (Oishi & Talhelm, 2012). Parental stress from housing instability often filters down to children, further impairing their ability to focus and succeed in school.

The broader implications of rental instability are significant, perpetuating cycles of socioeconomic disadvantage. Families living in precarious rental arrangements are often excluded from "opportunity neighbourhoods," where stable housing is more accessible. As Aarland and Reid (2019) demonstrate, homeownership and stable tenures are strongly associated with improved developmental outcomes.

While these findings might generally be applicable to marginalised neighbourhoods worldwide, it is important to acknowledge that the context of The Hague presents some differences (see figure 85). In many marginalised neighbourhoods of The Hague, turnover rates do not always reflect the high levels of residential mobility seen in other marginalised areas globally. This suggests that while rental instability can affect families, the situation in The Hague—or in the general Dutch context—may not always align with the patterns of instability documented elsewhere.

Dutch housing policies, which include rent control measures and relatively strong tenant protections, provide a degree of security not commonly found in other countries (Huisman, 2016). Families in The Hague's marginalised neighbourhoods, especially in those areas with lower turnover rates, often benefit from longer-term tenancies, which theoretically should provide greater stability. However, it is crucial to consider that these stable housing conditions do not eliminate the underlying psychological and emotional impacts of housing insecurity. Particularly in areas like Zuidwest, where substantial redevelopment is underway and residents face uncertainty regarding their future housing (Brakema, 2022). The ongoing threat of gentrification, the demolition of existing housing, and the potential for displacement contribute to feelings of insecurity that can be just as disruptive as frequent moves.

Fig. 83 Moerwijk's Transformation in Progress (Bond Precaire Woonvormen, n.d.)

The image depicts a stark contrast between the vacant, boarded-up buildings in Moerwijk and a billboard showcasing a futuristic building project. The boarded-up area represents the displacement of existing residents, while the billboard highlights the planned redevelopment.



Fig. 84 Residents Express Concerns in The Hague Zuidwest (NOS, 2021)

In Zuidwest, residents voice their concerns to councillor Martijn Balste about the demolition of approximately 2,000 homes in their neighbourhood. Despite promises of new housing, they fear displacement and the loss of community, highlighting their anxieties over the future of their homes.

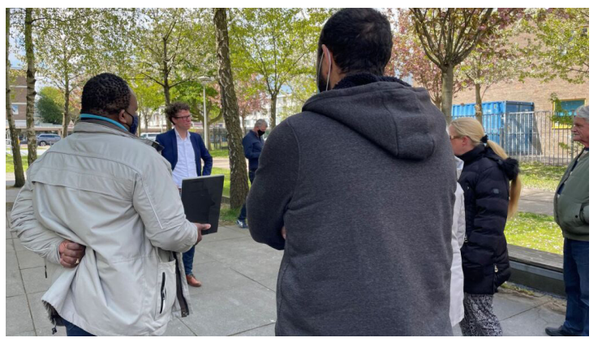
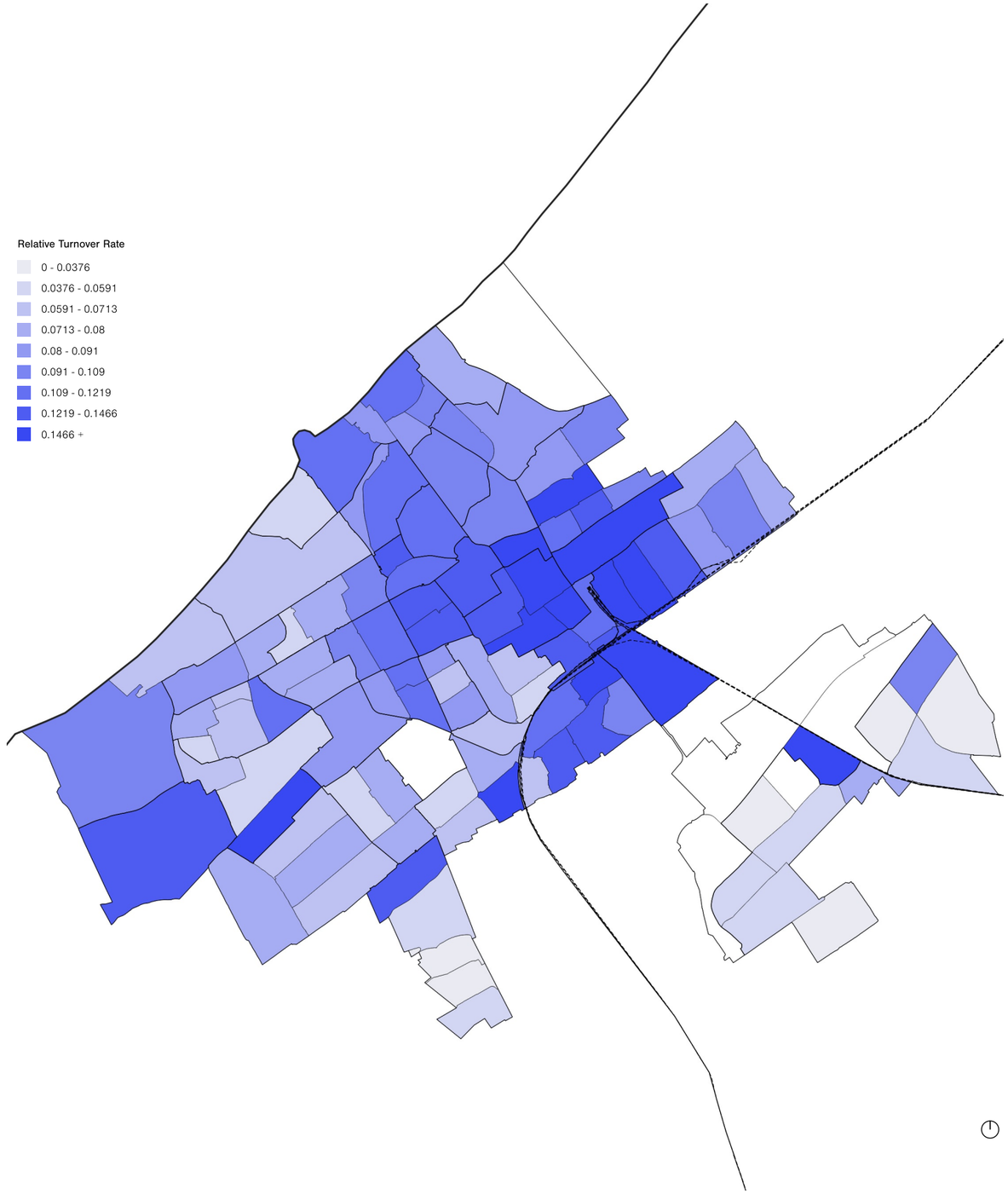


Fig. 85 Household Turnover Rates Across The Hague's Neighborhoods in 2022 (author)

This map shows the household turnover rates across The Hague's neighbourhoods in 2022, highlighting areas with higher residential mobility and those with more stable housing conditions. The rates were calculated as the total number of moves divided by the total households in each neighbourhood.



1.5. PUBLIC SPACE CONDITIONS

Over the years, research on physical learning environments has almost solely focused on school buildings and classroom design, overlooking the broader role of outdoor public spaces (Li et al., 2019). While schools are central to the pedagogical learning environments, we've seen before that learning spaces extend beyond classroom walls.

Public spaces play a significant role in shaping the lives of children growing up urbanised environments. These spaces, including schools, parks, playgrounds and—very importantly but often overlooked—streets, serve as sites for social interaction, recreation, and development (Jacobs, 1992). However, their accessibility and quality often reflect broader inequalities, mirroring the socioeconomic and racial divisions embedded in urban landscapes (Rigolon, 2016).

Research suggests that public spaces can play a significant role in shaping children's cognitive, social, and emotional development (Karsten & Felder, 2016). Outdoor play, for example, enhances creativity, spatial awareness, and problem-solving skills, while also offering opportunities for social integration and peer bonding. However, research has shown that children in marginalised areas often encounter barriers that prevent them from fully benefiting from these spaces (Hoffimann et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2020). These barriers can range from unsafe environments—discussed earlier under Feelings of Safety—to unequal distribution and poor-quality spaces that discourage inclusive use.

The unequal distribution and quality of public spaces in urban areas not only impact individual development but also reinforce patterns of informal segregation (McKeown & Dixon, 2017). While public spaces are often idealised as these 'democratic forums' where individuals from diverse backgrounds can engage on equal terms, in practice, these spaces frequently reflect and reinforce socioeconomic divides. Understanding the day-to-day practices and barriers that shape how children use these spaces is critical to addressing the inequalities that affect their developmental opportunities.

This section examines the conditions of public spaces in marginalised neighbourhoods, with a focus on their quality and role in fostering—or hindering—social integration among young residents. In doing so, it highlights how the physical and social dimensions of public spaces intersect to influence children's experiences and opportunities for growth in these urban environments.

Fig. 86 Neglected Football Field in Hannemanplantsoen, Schilderswijk (Dagblad070, 2023)

This image shows the poor condition of the football field in Hannemanplantsoen, Schilderswijk. Residents have reported severe safety hazards, limiting its usability for children. Councillor Carlos Martinez van Andel highlights how the lack of a safe play space restricts children's freedom to play and move.



Fig. 87 Streets Overflowing with Rubbish in Escamp (Omroep West, 2025)

The image shows the excessive rubbish and discarded furniture littering the streets, a recurring issue also in neighbourhoods like Rustenburg-Oostbroek, Schilderswijk, Transvaal, and parts of Laak. Member of the city council Martijn Balster acknowledges that these issues requires significant investment to improve the urban environment and the quality for residents.



1.5. PUBLIC SPACE CONDITIONS

1.5.1. Urban Trees and Green Spaces

Today, more than half of the world's population lives in urban environments, a trend that is expected to rise to 70% by 2050 (UNPD, 2012). As urbanisation accelerates, the typical daily environment for many people shifts from largely natural, vegetated spaces to built-up areas, creating a "nature-deficit disorder" (Louv, 2008). This growing disconnect from nature has significant implications for the well-being of urban populations, particularly for children who spend much of their time in these environments. This disconnection from greenery has been linked to troubling trends in children's health, influencing spiritual and cognitive growth, and mental and physical well-being (Kahn & Kellert, 2002).

Research also demonstrates that it is not only the lack of green spaces that has been linked to troubling trends, but also that the presence of natural environments can actually offer great benefits (Wu et al., 2014). Green spaces help rejuvenate cognitive resources and reduce stress, particularly for children (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). Unfortunately, urban environments often lack sufficient natural elements, making it harder for children these areas to access these spaces.

Children growing up in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods experience this disconnection from nature even more acutely than their peers in more affluent areas. Research by Richardson et al. (2017) in Scotland, for example, found that natural environments—especially private gardens—contribute to better social, emotional, and behavioural outcomes for children. In contrast, such spaces are a luxury often unavailable in marginalised neighbourhoods in The Hague, where many children live and grow up in apartment buildings with no access to private gardens. As a result, the lack of green space is not just a missed opportunity for these children; it actively leaves them at a developmental disadvantage compared to children in wealthier neighbourhoods, where access to natural spaces is easier and more abundant.

Moreover, tree canopy cover has also been associated with improved academic performance, particularly in reading skills, even after accounting for socioeconomic factors (Hodson & Sander, 2017). This suggests that the presence of trees around schools and outdoor learning environments is not merely an aesthetic enhancement but could also serve as a potential tool for reducing educational inequalities.

Figures and maps of The Hague reveal that the total amount of trees across neighbourhoods does not appear to differ significantly between the wealthiest and the poorest areas (see figure 88). However, when tree height is considered, a noticeable disparity emerges. Particularly between Zuiderpark and the city centre (Centrum), tree height is much lower. This raises the question of whether this difference in tree height might play a significant role in influencing cognitive growth and improving academic performance for children. If so, the reduced height of trees in these areas could limit the potential positive effects for reducing educational inequalities.

Fig. 88 Distribution of Trees Across Neighbourhoods in The Hague (author)

This figure presents four maps showing the distribution of trees across two of the poorest neighbourhoods (Schilderswijk and Transvaalkwartier) and two of the wealthiest neighbourhoods (Zorgvliet and Willemspark) in The Hague. The visualisation indicates no significant difference in the number of trees per neighbourhood, if anything showing evidence of a slightly greater tree presence in Schilderswijk and Transvaalkwartier.

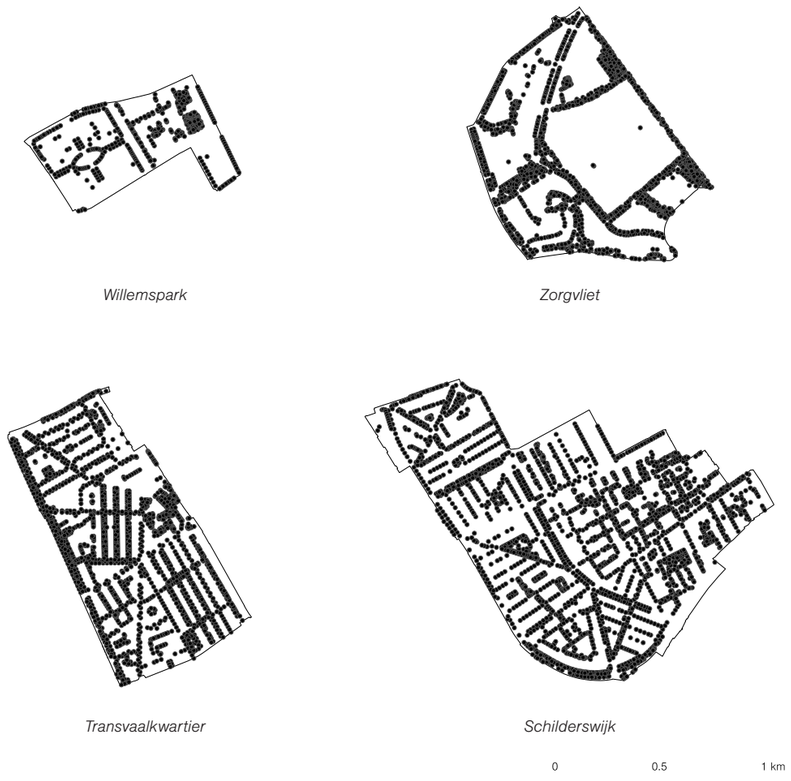
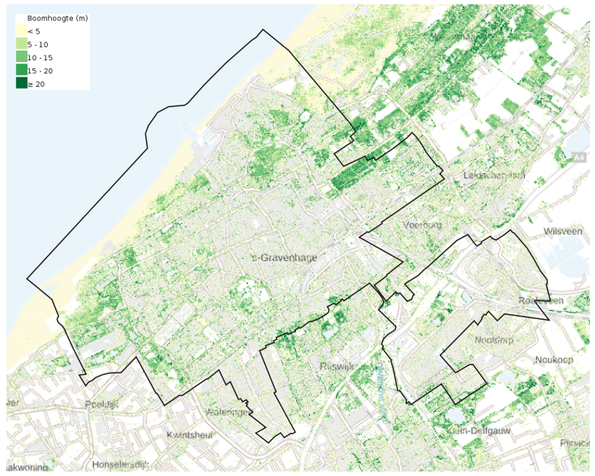


Fig. 89 Tree Height Across Neighbourhoods in The Hague (RIVM, 2022)

This map illustrates the distribution of tree height across The Hague. Tree height is significantly lower between Zuiderpark and the city centre.



improving academic performance for children. If so, the reduced height of trees in these areas could limit the potential positive effects for reducing educational inequalities.

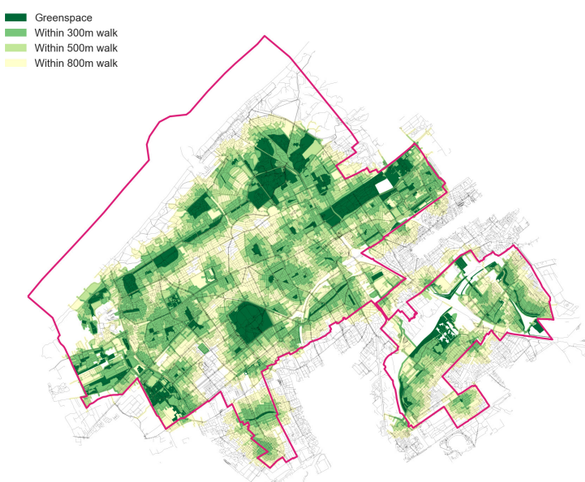
At the same time, marginalised neighbourhoods are often characterised by limited access to green spaces, as highlighted by studies in diverse contexts such as Mexico City and Southern Europe (Ayala-Azcarraga et al., 2023; Hoffimann et al., 2017). But again, while this trend appears widespread, the situation in The Hague presents another notable exception. Figures and maps of the city reveal no significant differences in the distribution of green spaces between socioeconomic areas (see figure 90). Nonetheless, two critical considerations arise:

1. The Quality of Green Spaces: While the distribution of green spaces may appear somewhat equitable, this does not say anything about their quality. Features such as maintenance, usability safety, and accessibility can significantly influence the extent to which these spaces benefit children and their communities. The issue about Safety has already been discussed earlier, while the aspects of maintenance, usability, and accessibility will be explored further in this thesis to assess whether disparities in these areas contribute to the self-reinforcing cycle of disadvantage.

2. Applicability of Findings from Other Contexts: It is also possible that findings from studies conducted in other countries or contexts simply do not apply directly to The Hague. This suggests that, unlike in some other urban contexts, access to green spaces may not be a primary factor reinforcing the cycle of disadvantage in marginalised neighbourhoods within The Hague, suggesting that other factors may play a more prominent role in shaping academic outcomes for children.

Fig. 90 Greenspaces and Pedestrian Accessibility in The Hague (Delft University of Technology, 2023)

The data suggests that green spaces are fairly evenly distributed across the city.



1.5. PUBLIC SPACE CONDITIONS

1.5.2. Urban Heat Exposure

Urban heat exposure has been consistently linked to residential segregation, with extensive research across the United States demonstrating that communities with lower socioeconomic status and communities of colour are more likely to experience higher temperatures and urban heat exposure than affluent, predominantly wealthy and white areas (Johnson, 2022; Mitchell & Chakraborty, 2018; Renteria et al., 2022). Figures 92 and 93 provide a clear visual representation of this pattern in Sacramento, CA, as presented in Johnson's (2022) research, Population-Based Disparities in U.S. Urban Heat Exposure from 2003 to 2018. The maps show the overlap between higher heat exposure and areas with predominantly minority populations, showing the connection between thermal inequity and residential segregation. While this issue of thermal inequity has been extensively studied in the U.S., its application in the Dutch context remains underexplored and requires further research.

Heat and its impact on human health and well-being has been a central theme in biometeorological research, with children identified as particularly vulnerable to thermal environmental conditions (Antoniadis et al., 2020). Due to their age, body, and metabolic differences, children are more sensitive to hot ambient conditions than adults (Zomorodian et al., 2016). Beyond its impact on physical health—such as cardiovascular function (Vanos, 2015)—implications of poor thermal comfort extend beyond the physical, also influencing psychological well-being, productivity, and learning capabilities (Trout et al., 2003; Katafygiotou & Serghides, 2014; Vanos, 2015; Zomorodian et al., 2016).

This highlights the importance of addressing thermal conditions in environments where children spend considerable amounts of time. As Faustman et al. (2003) and Forns et al. (2015) stated, indoor environments in schools should be of particular public concern due to this this greater vulnerability to some environmental pollutants compared to adults and significant time spend in these environments.

Beyond indoor spaces of schools, one of the urban outdoor environments that children spend almost one third of their school time is the schoolyard. Additionally, outside of school hours, these schoolyards, streets, playgrounds and parks serve as spaces for recreation, play, relaxation, and social interaction with classmates, making them an integral and just as important part of children's daily lives (Antoniadis et al., 2020). The microclimatic design of these outdoor spaces play a crucial role in shaping the thermal environment, which in turn has the potential to significantly impact a child's overall health, functionality, and development, particularly in relation to learning activities (Vanos, 2015).

When examining the situation in The Hague, a more nuanced picture of urban heat island (UHI) effects emerges. The map of land surface temperatures in The Hague reveals that while there are overlaps between socioeconomic patterns and UHI intensity, the relationship is not absolute. For instance, Schilderswijk, one of the city's most economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods, experiences the most severe effects of the UHI. Conversely, wealthier neighbourhoods such as Zorgvliet and Van Stolkpark exhibit relatively cooler temperatures, turning blue on the map. However, this pattern is not consistent across the city, as areas like The Hague Zuidwest, another neighbourhood with lower socioeconomic status, do not display significant UHI effects. These findings suggest that while the socioeconomic disparities in UHI effects observed in U.S. cities provide valuable context, they cannot be directly or uniformly applied to The Hague.

Fig. 91 Land Surface Temperature in The Hague (Van Oorschot et al., 2021)

This map shows variations in land surface temperature across The Hague, highlighting areas of higher and lower heat on a summer day (July 28th, 2018).

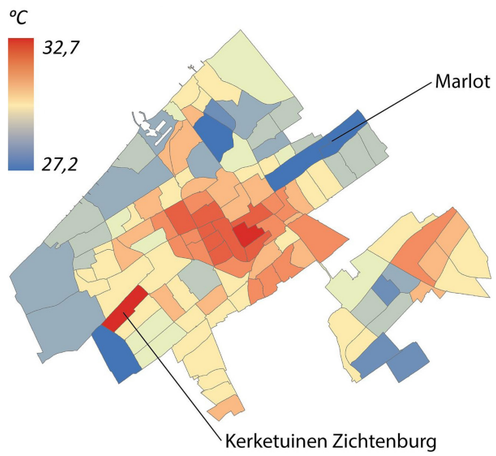


Fig. 92 Racial and Ethnic Divisions in Sacramento, CA (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)

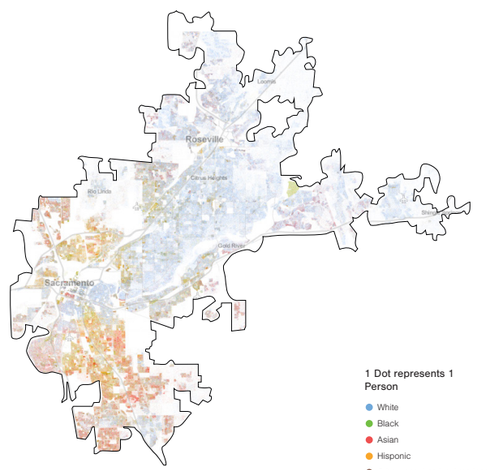
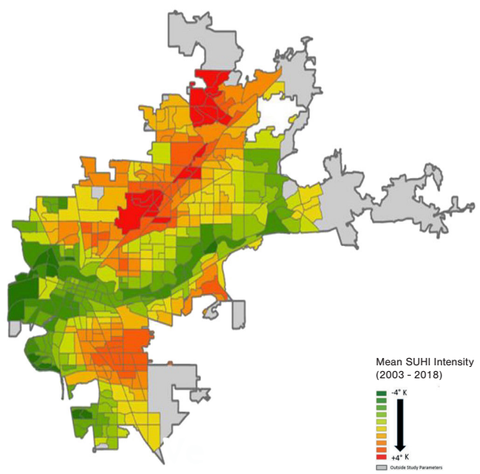


Fig. 93 Overlay of SUHI Intensity and Census-Designated Urban Areas in Sacramento, CA (Johnson, 2022)



1.5. PUBLIC SPACE CONDITIONS

1.5.3. Quality and Maintenance

The condition and upkeep of public spaces play an essential role in determining their accessibility and utility for residents, particularly children. Well-maintained public spaces provide opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and informal learning, which are crucial for the development of children (Richardson et al., 2017; Bates et al., 2018). However, for children growing up in socioeconomically marginalised neighbourhoods, the quality and maintenance of these spaces often fall short, reflecting broader patterns of inequity (Rosenbaum & Harris, 2001; Browne-Yung et al., 2016).

Jacobs (1984) argues that streets and sidewalks are far more than pathways for traffic; but critical social public spaces that promote safety, social cohesion and community life. Jacobs emphasises the role of “eyes on the street” in fostering safety, trust, and community life. When these streets are well-maintained, with even pavements, sufficient lighting, and minimal obstructions, they encourage children to explore their surroundings, build social connections, and develop independence. For children, these important corridors not only connect homes, schools, and play areas but also serve as informal learning environments while travelling from one space to another where they experience and interact with their surroundings (Jacobs, 1984, 1992).

However, studies have shown that streets in low-income and racially segregated neighbourhoods are often characterised by physical disorder, uneven sidewalks, and poor maintenance (Kelly et al., 2007; Franzini et al., 2010). These conditions not only pose physical risks but also discourage the use of streets as social spaces, limiting children’s opportunities for informal learning and outdoor play.

In addition to streets, public spaces in high-poverty neighbourhoods frequently display signs of neglect as well, with broken play equipment, litter, and vandalism impairing their usability (Browne-Yung et al., 2016; Rosenbaum & Harris, 2001; Zhu & Lee, 2008). The presence of these signs of disrepair sends a clear message to residents—particularly children who are very much restricted to their own neighbourhoods—that their environment is undervalued. This perception can contribute to a sense of neglect and exclusion, reinforcing the feelings of a diminished self-esteem—something we’ve come across earlier in this thesis as well (Browne-Yung et al., 2016).

The quality and maintenance of public spaces and streets are directly linked to the social and emotional outcomes for children. Spaces that are poorly maintained and perceived as unsafe discourage outdoor activity and social interaction, contributing to a cycle of physical inactivity and social isolation (Richardson et al., 2017; Bates et al., 2018). Conversely, clean, safe, and well-kept environments promote feelings of safety and belonging, essential for the healthy development of children.

In the context of The Hague, expected patterns based on these findings show when examining the distribution of reports on deterioration—which include litter, dog waste, and graffiti—in public spaces across different neighbourhoods. Marginalised areas consistently show higher numbers of reports (see figure 95). A brief online search using terms like “Deterioration The Hague” and “Maintenance The Hague” yields top results with headlines such as: “Residents take action against deterioration in Transvaal” (Den Haag FM, 2022), “Hart voor Den Haag demands action against deterioration on Dierenselaan and Apeldoornselaan, Oostbroek-Zuid” (Hart voor Den Haag, 2023), and “The Hague can no longer solve the problems in old working-class neighbourhoods such as Laak, Transvaal, Rustenburg-Oostbroek, and Morgenstond on its own” (Omroep West, 2022)—only confirming this spatial pattern further.

In contrast, reports concerning the physical quality of public spaces—which include overgrown greenery, broken playground equipment, uneven paving, and damaged street or traffic signs—appear more evenly distributed across the city (see figure 96). For now, the data suggests that issues with physical quality are present in marginalised neighbourhoods, though they are not exclusive to them. However, it is worth reflecting on whether areas with more amenities, such as play equipment, are naturally more prone to higher reporting rates, potentially distorting the picture of where quality issues are most prevalent.

Fig. 94 Litter on the Street in Transvaal (Omroep West, 2022)

Photograph accompanying the Omroep West article ‘Den Haag kan problemen in oude volkswijken niet meer alleen oplossen’, illustrating the issue of urban decay in the Transvaal neighbourhood.



Fig. 95 Reports of Deterioration of Public Space Across Neighbourhoods in The Hague (author)

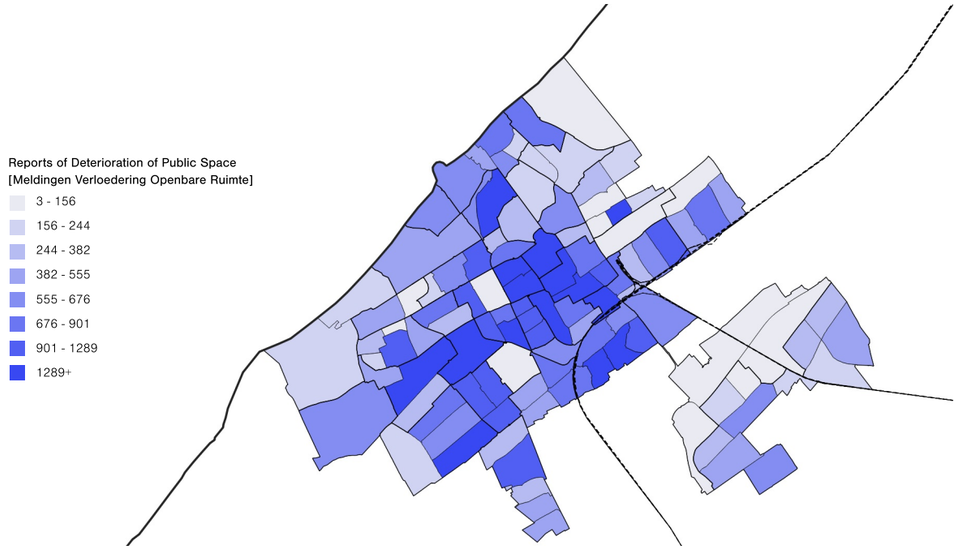
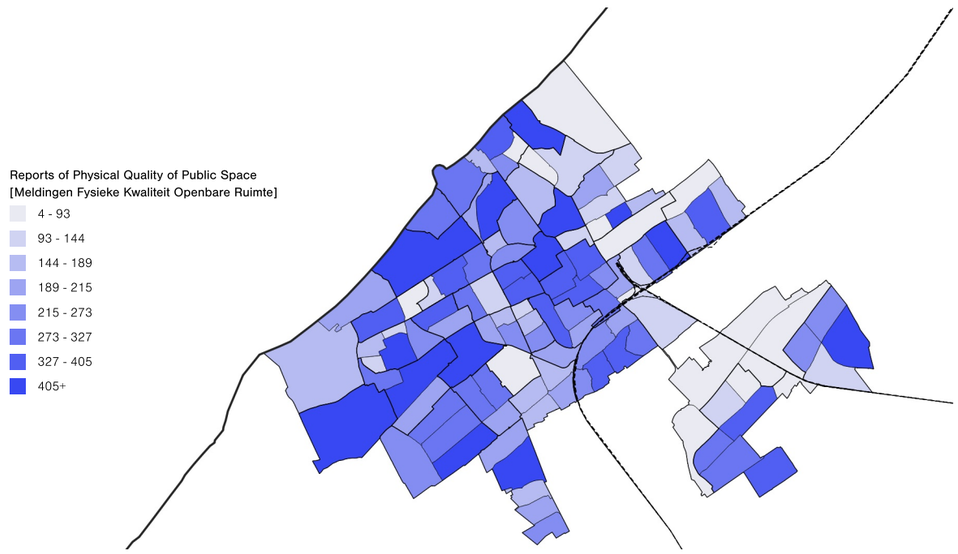


Fig. 96 Reports of Physical Quality of Public Space Across Neighbourhoods in The Hague (author)

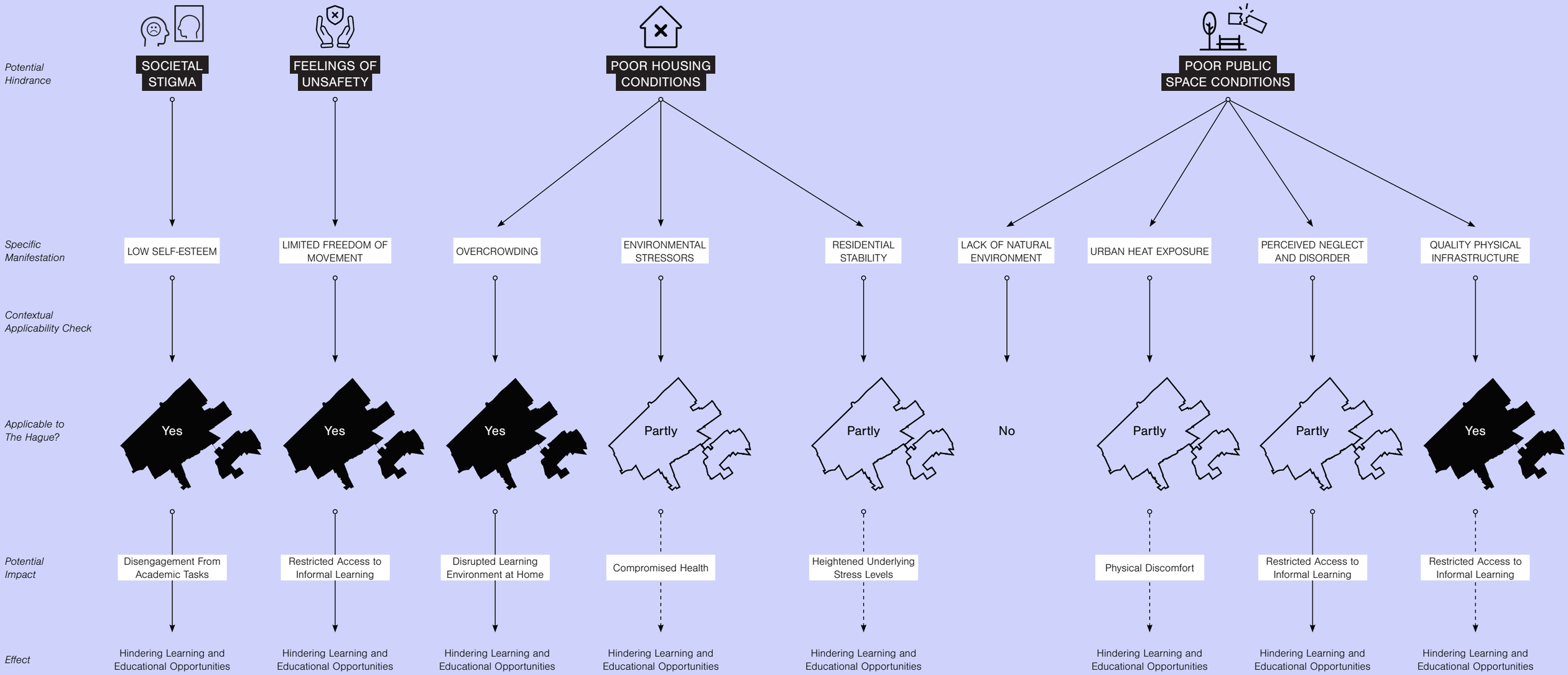


1.6. CONCLUSIONS

The diagram visualises the approach used to identify and assess key lived realities that may influence learning and educational opportunities for children in socioeconomically segregated areas in The Hague. Each potential hindrance is summarised by its specific manifestation, local applicability, and potential impact and effect on children's everyday lives.

Particularly noteworthy are 'Feelings of Unsafety' and 'Quality Physical Infrastructure', as these hindrances are both highly relevant and directly addressable through spatial planning interventions. Factors 'Low Self-Esteem' and 'Overcrowding' are equally important but trickier. They are not directly resolvable through spatial planning. However, spatial planning can still respond to the additional needs these conditions create and should therefore remain an integral part of the response strategy.

Fig. 97 Overview of Lived Experiences and Their Impact on Learning and Educational Opportunities (author)



2. ON-THE-GROUND REALITIES

2.1. Fieldwork

2.2. The Lived Neighbourhood

2.3. Personas

2.4. Building Framework

FOCUS AREA: BOUWLUST EN VREDERUST

To really deepen the understanding of how specific on-the-ground realities and experiences relate to neighbourhood context, this study narrows its focus to the area of Bouwlust en Vrederust. While socioeconomic segregation spans diverse urban typologies in The Hague, a more precise lens is needed to meaningfully ground spatial strategies. This neighbourhood was selected not only due to its extensive ongoing redevelopment plans, but also because of my existing contextual knowledge, professional experience, and social connections within the area.



2.1. FIELDWORK

2.1.1. Informal Conversations

In conducting fieldwork for this project, the complexity and near-impossibility of securing approval for direct engagement with children led to a reorientation of the research approach, in which parents and other adult caregivers became the primary subjects.

FIELDWORK APPROACH

This fieldwork approach was shaped by two key points of reference: **the framework on conditions for a strong pedagogical learning environment**, and the **set of lived challenges** identified in the previous chapter. These served as a starting point for the conversations, offering prompts to open up certain themes, while aiming to touch upon each topic at least once across the conversations. At the same time, space was left for participants to guide the discussion, allowing for a focus on **what mattered most in their experience**. The insights gathered through conversations, combined with the key findings on lived experiences, are later **synthesised into a set of child personas**—an approach that will be further detailed later on.

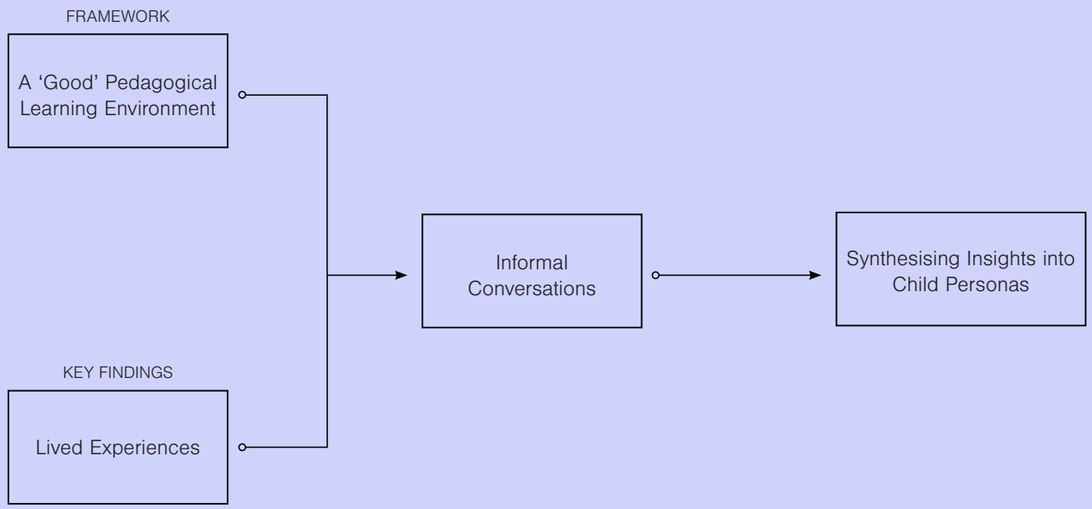
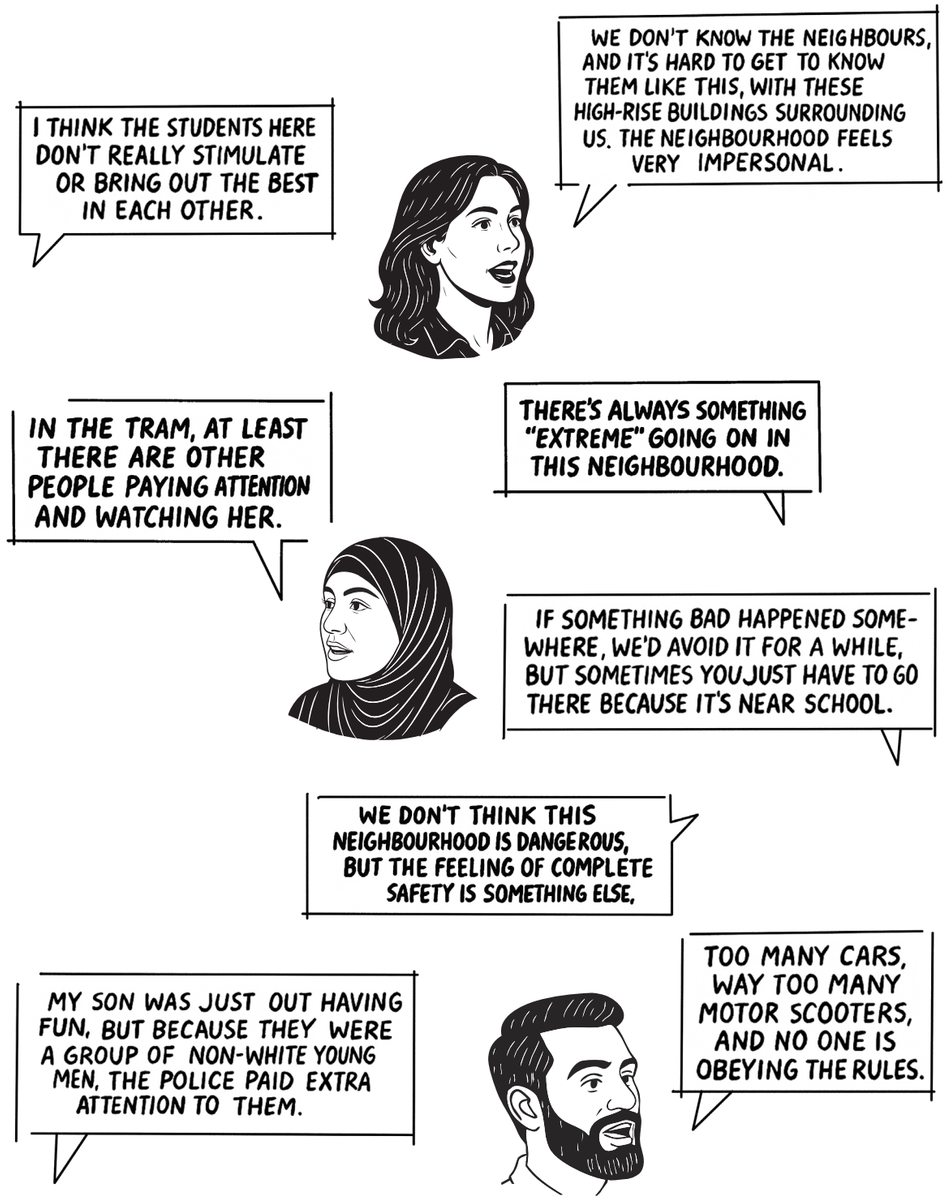


Fig. 98 Diagram Showing the Fieldwork Structure and Approach (author)

Fig. 99 Visual Reflection of Fieldwork Conversations (author)



In retrospect, this reorientation towards parents, proved to be a valuable shift. Through conversations with parents a **broader and more layered understanding of children's spatial experiences** began to emerge. What became evident is that children's engagement with the urban environment is not solely shaped by their own preferences or abilities, but is often **also defined and delimited by the decisions, and therefore experiences and feelings, of adults**.

2.1. FIELDWORK

2.1.1. Informal Conversations

To create a structured overview, all conversation outcomes were compiled into a matrix. This matrix serves to categorise the topics that emerged, offering a structural overview of how frequently and in what context certain themes were mentioned. The matrix is not intended to quantify impact but rather to detect emphasis and relevance as expressed through lived experience.

Feelings of safety–in the broadest sense–emerged as the most frequently discussed concern. While some referred directly to **traffic and street safety**, others focused on more social forms of unsafety: **hang youth groups**, **lack of lighting**, or **lack of passive social control**. These perceptions significantly shaped how and where children were allowed to move through the neighbourhood, effectively narrowing their explorable range.

A second theme that stood out was the presence of **gender differences**. Parents and other interviewees consistently described how **boys and girls were given different freedoms**, **expectations,** and **limitations**. In some cases, girls were actively discouraged from independent exploration or had to stay closer to home.

Some topics were almost entirely absent from the conversations. For instance, neither urban heat exposure nor disability inclusion emerged during any conversation. Not surprising though, residents aren't very likely to constantly be aware of concentrated heat in one neighbourhood more than another and unless a person has direct experience with a disability, it is unlikely to be framed as a pressing spatial concern. This does not mean absence of a problem, but rather reflects the lived relevance of the participants involved.

Ultimately, the conversations painted a layered picture of life in these neighbourhoods. When analysed collectively, clear patterns begin to emerge–highlighting those topics most likely to shape, and be shaped by, adult's spatial experience.

Fig. 100 Matrix Takeaway: Most Frequently Raised Topics by Adults (author)

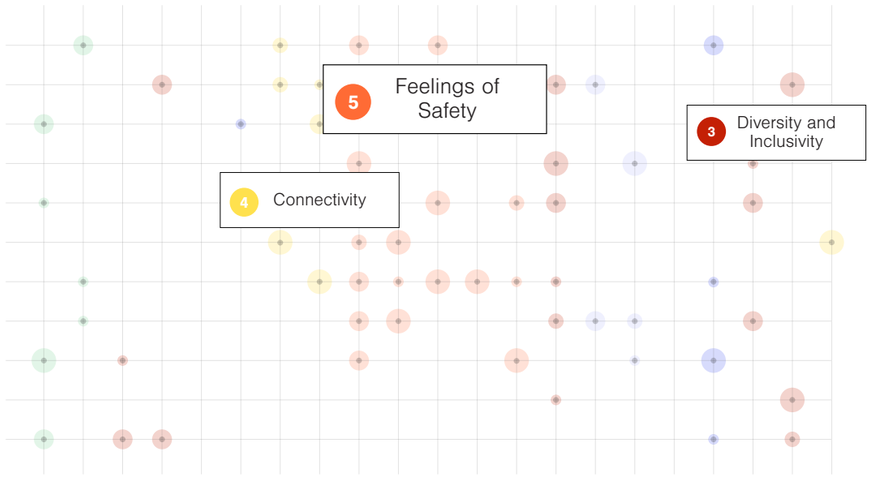
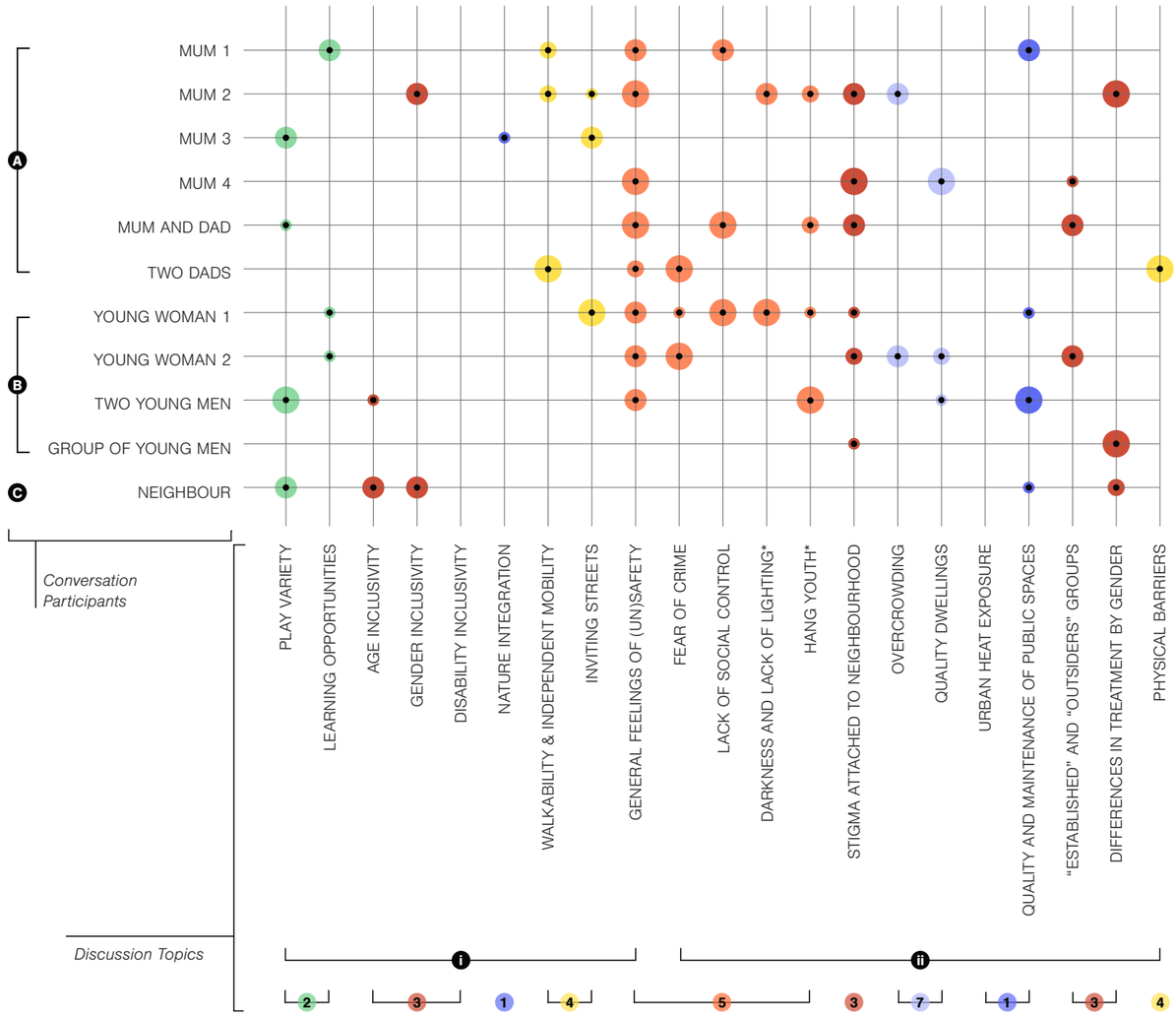


Fig. 101 Overview Matrix of Conversation Participants and Discussion Topics (author)

This matrix shows which discussion topics were mentioned by each conversation participant, along with an importance rating (size of bubble) indicating how central or influential each topic was in their experience. Participants are grouped by perspective: parents, young residents, and observing neighbours.



A. Parents

B. Young Residents's Recalling Their Own Experiences

C. Neighbour Observers

i. Identified Factors for a Good Pedagogical Learning Environment

ii. Challenges from Lived Experiences in Children's Everyday Lives

1. Urban Spatial Quality
2. PLay & Learning Opportunities
3. Diversity & Inclusivity
4. Connectivity
5. Feelings of Safety
6. Proximity & Distribution
7. Housing Conditions & Reasons to go out

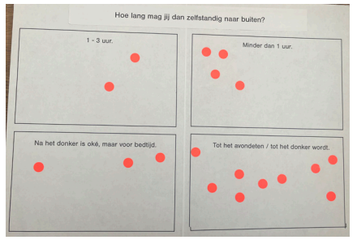
(*) Indicates topics that were added later based on recurring mentions during conversations with local residents.

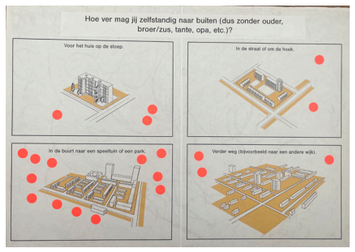
2.1. FIELDWORK

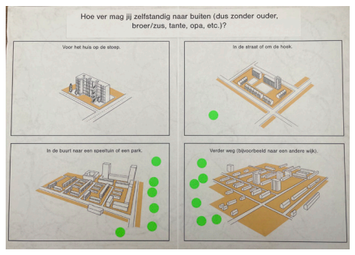
2.1.2. Insights from Children

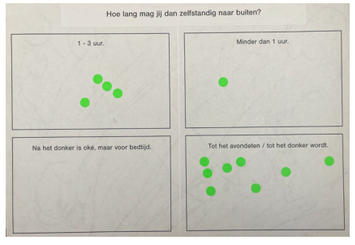
Although it was not possible to formally organise something with children in a research capacity, my work enabled informal yet meaningful engagement with my own students over the past year. Through small exercises and casual conversations, I explored their perceptions of the neighbourhood and their spatial experiences. Several remarks and stories left a lasting impression—some of which are highlighted in the diagram below. The diagram also presents key takeaways, identifying gender differences, the quality and maintenance of public space, housing conditions (and their influence on the desire to spend time outdoors), and general feelings of unsafety as the most prominent themes shaping how children experience their environment.

OPENING EXERCISE → CONVERSATION → INSIGHTS → KEY TAKEAWAYS









GIRLS DON'T REALLY PLAY IN THIS PLAY-GROUND— THEY DON'T COME ONTO THE FOOTBALL COURT BOYS GATHER HERE AFTER SCHOOL. I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE GIRLS GO.

ONE TIME WE EVEN FOUND A KNIFE IN THE PLAYGROUND. THAT WAS SCARY.

WE NEVER GO THERE. THERE ARE ALWAYS THOSE GROUPS OF OLDER BOYS HANGING OUT. ONE TIME WE HEARD THEY EVEN STABBED EACH OTHER AND GOT INTO A FIGHT.

I'M NOT ALLOWED TO PLAY OUTSIDE. (WHEN ASKED IF EVER:) NO, JUST NEVER. MY DAD DOESN'T THINK IT'S SAFE FOR GIRLS.

I CAN'T DO MY HOMEWORK AT HOME. MY AUNTIE IS STAYING IN MY ROOM BECAUSE SHE HAS MOULD IN HER HOUSE. THERE'S NO SPACE FOR ME.

THE FOOTBALL PITCH IS MOSTLY JUST A MUD POOL. YOU CAN'T DO SLIDINGS THEN.

Gender Differences

3 Diversity & Inclusivity

Quality & Maintenance of Public Space

1 Urban Spatial Quality

Quality Dwellings

7 Housing Quality & Reasons to Go Out

General Feelings of Unsafety

5 Feelings of Safety

2.2. THE LIVED NEIGHBOURHOOD

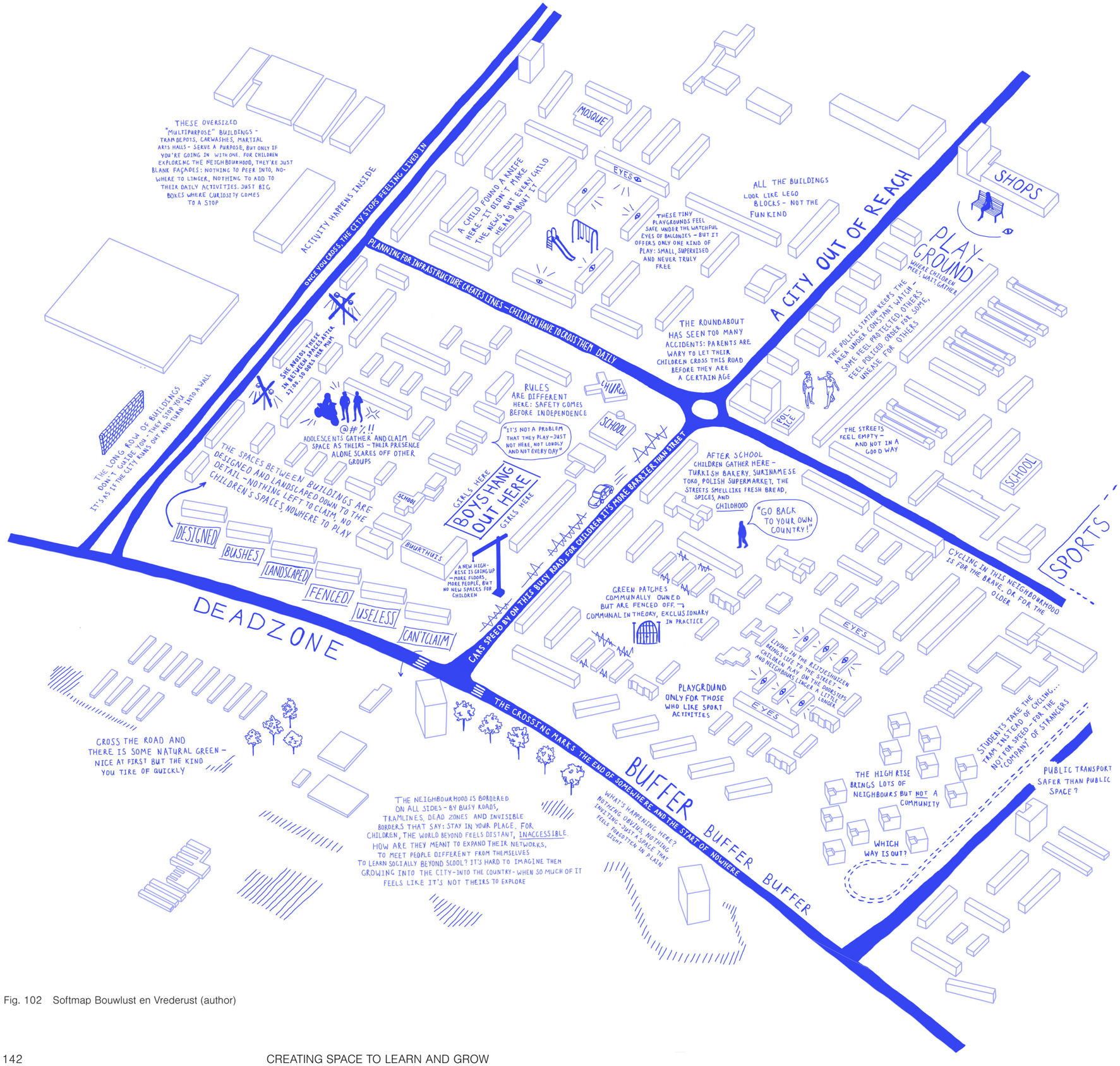


Fig. 102 Softmap Bouwlust en Vrederust (author)

To communicate a comprehensive understanding of lived experiences in Bouwlust en Vrederust the best way possible, the findings from both the conversations with adults, and stories from my own students, were translated into a softmap. Rather than mapping fixed data or physical infrastructure, this softmap captures the more intangible aspects of space: how it is felt, perceived, and used in everyday life. It reflects emotions, feelings, recurring experiences, and areas of tension or comfort.

The softmap is not meant to be technically precise. Instead, it visualises patterns that are difficult to capture in conventional mapping. It focuses on how space is navigated—especially from the perspective of children and parents. Which spaces are avoided? Where do people feel safe or unsafe? Which corners invite lingering, and which are passed through quickly?

Drawing from both the conversations with adults, and stories from my own students, this softmap is rooted in the real, but shaped by interpretation. It helps give form to lived experiences, showing how certain areas may feel more welcoming, while others remain inaccessiblet because of how they are experienced.

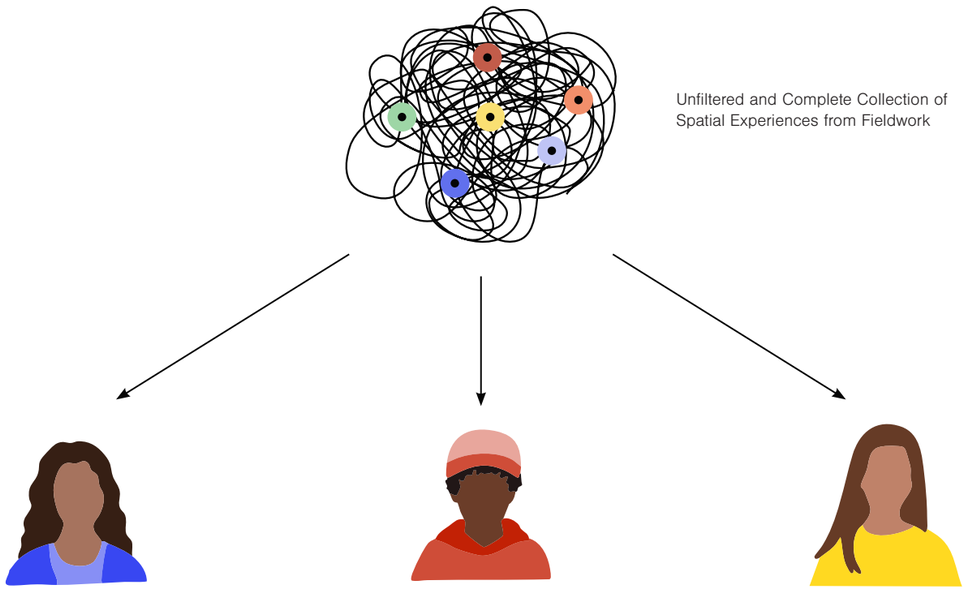
This visualisation is not a final statement. It is a way to bring together voices, stories, and atmospheres, and begin to read the neighbourhood through a different lens.

2.3. PERSONAS

Through both the literature study and the fieldwork, it has become increasingly evident that the built environment does not serve all children the same. Children interact with, experience, are restricted by, and feel the urban space in diverse and sometimes contrasting ways, shaped by their backgrounds, identities, and everyday realities.

As described in the methodology section, a set of child-personas has been developed to give voice to these varied experiences. These personas act as narrative tools to represent the diversity of behaviours, needs, and identities. Rather than being fictional characters, each persona is fully grounded in fieldwork insights, built from recurring patterns in conversations, observations, and my own experiences. The personas are not intended to be one-on-one representations of real individuals but instead serve as composite portraits of groups of children who share similar lived realities.

At the same time, it is important to note that these personas cannot capture the full diversity present in Bouwlust and Vrederust. Some experiences may fall outside their scope. Yet, by focusing on three different perspectives, the personas provide a meaningful lens to understand how spatial conditions can support or hinder the development, safety, and inclusion of children in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods.



Unfiltered and Complete Collection of Spatial Experiences from Fieldwork

Amira

*“I’m not really allowed to play outside... Only right near the house. My dad doesn’t think it’s safe.” **

Rayan

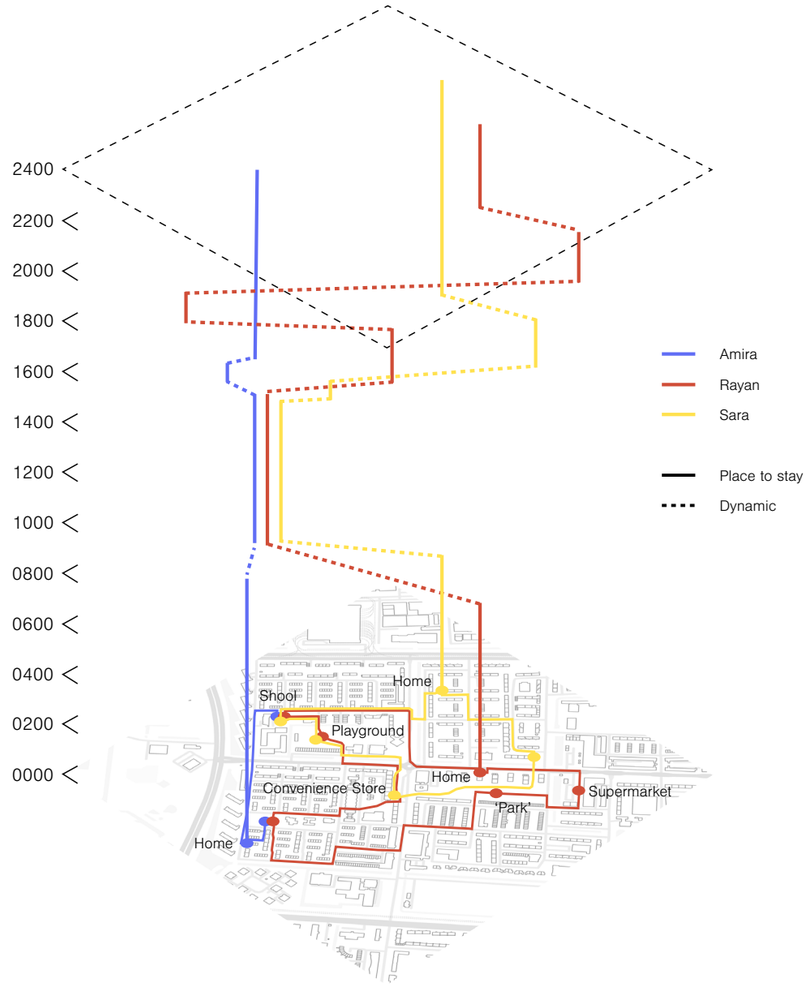
*“I’d rather go outside than stay indoors. I can actually go pretty much anywhere, even Rotterdam would be fine as long as I’ve got my phone with me.” **

Sara

*“Play spaces usually get taken over by older boys, so we just go chill at someone’s house instead.” **

* Quotes are derived directly from fieldwork conversations and have only been slightly modified to align with the persona’s voice and perspective.

Fig. 103 Visualising Individual Trajectories in Time-Space Geography: Amira, Rayan, and Sara (author)



TIME-SPACE GEOGRAPHY

Drawing back on the earlier introduction of time-space geography, this diagram now illustrates the daily trajectories of Amira, Rayan, and Sara, showing how each child has their own pedagogical learning environment differently. Their individual paths highlight variations in mobility, accessibility, and spatial reach, shaped by physical and social constraints.



Amira
10 years old / Girl

Hobbies: Drawing, watching TikTok
Mobility: Limited to immediate surroundings
Main hindrance: Perceived neighbourhood unsafety

Amira is a 10-year-old girl whose experience of the city is shaped by a **strong sense of limitation**. Her parents restrict her movement due to **concerns about heavy traffic** and **neighbourhood safety**, which she has also internalised herself—especially when encountering older youth or walking outside after dark. Her world is small, mostly confined to the space just outside her home. As a result, Amira has l**imited opportunities for urban exploration** and rarely sees peers outside of school, spending much of her time indoors.

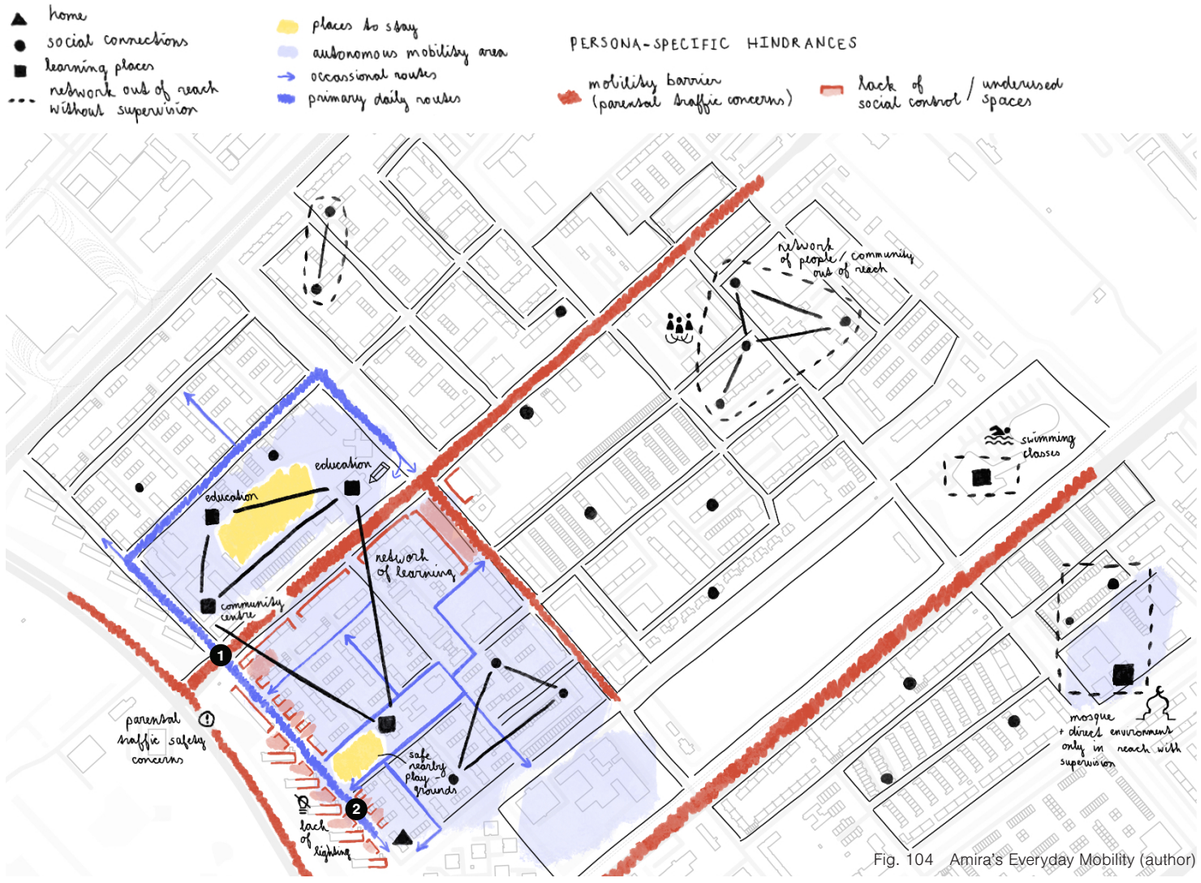
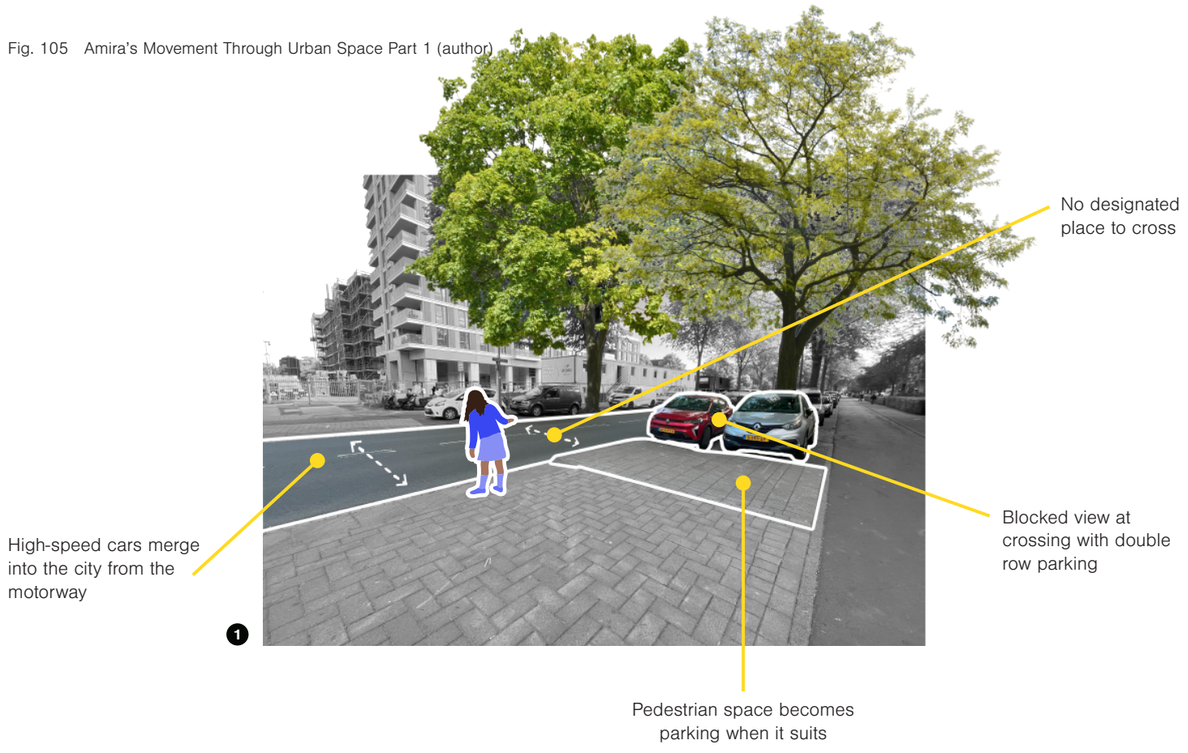


Fig. 104 Amira's Everyday Mobility (author)

Fig. 105 Amira's Movement Through Urban Space Part 1 (author)



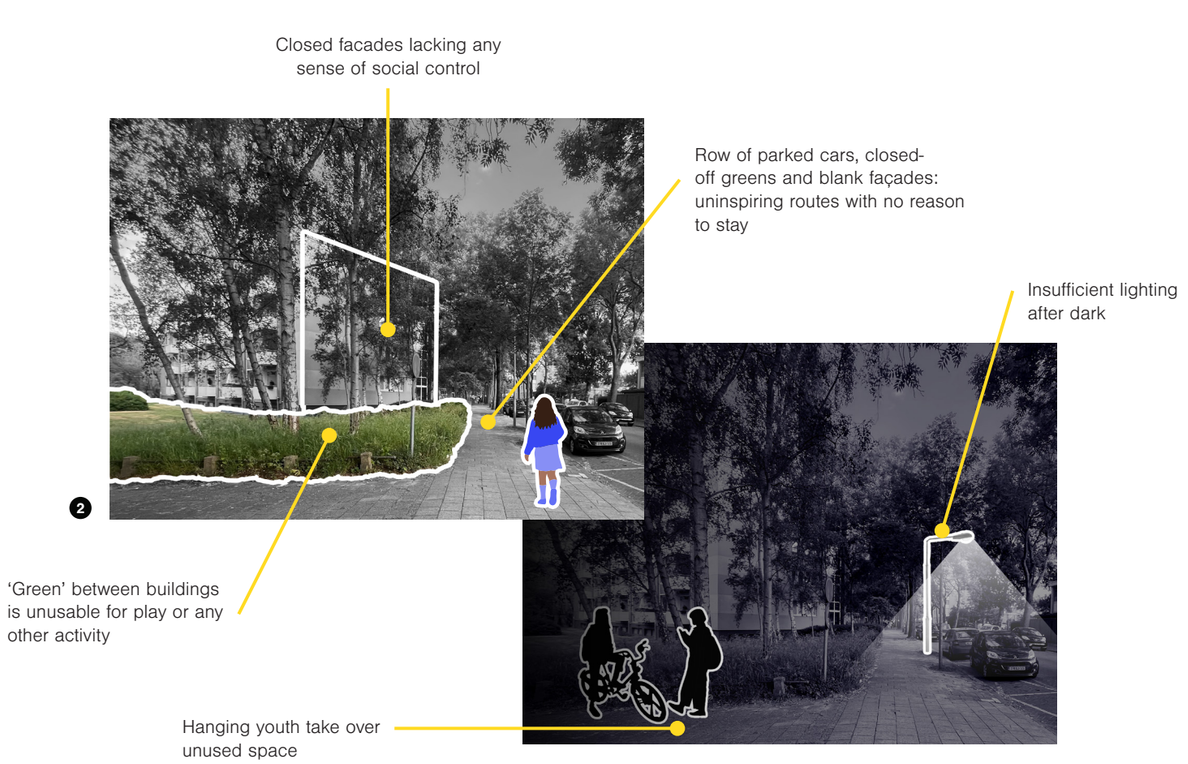


Fig. 106 Amira's Movement Through Urban Space Part 2 (author)



Rayan
11 years old / Boy

Hobbies: Playing football, hanging out with friends
Mobility: High—often outdoors, moves freely through local public space
Main hindrance: Uninspiring and uninviting urban design

Rayan is an 11-year-old boy. **At home, space feels cramped** with his family in a small flat. He also shares a room with his brother and therefore prefers spending time outside, roaming the urban space. Unlike Amira, safety is not a major concern. But once outside, Rayan encounters **an environment that feels uninspiring and unwelcoming**. Various elements send a message that says “keep out” or “there’s nothing here for you” rather than “come in” or “play and stay here.” Over time, this contributes to a subtle, **internalised sense of not belonging**—and a growing **disinterest in dreaming** or **being ambitious**. For Rayan, **the urban space fails to provide the invitation, possibilities, and opportunities** he could have had to **grow, learn,** and **develop** through the urban environment.

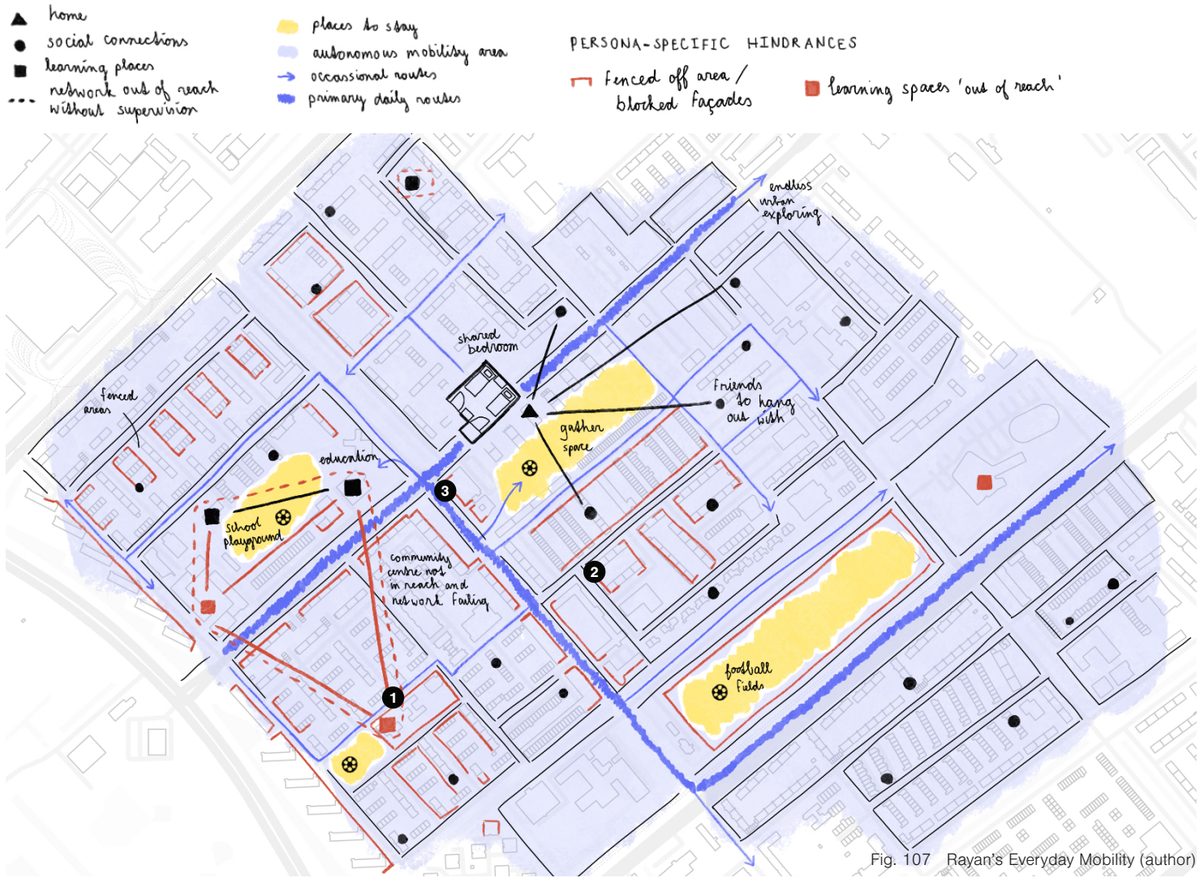


Fig. 107 Rayan’s Everyday Mobility (author)

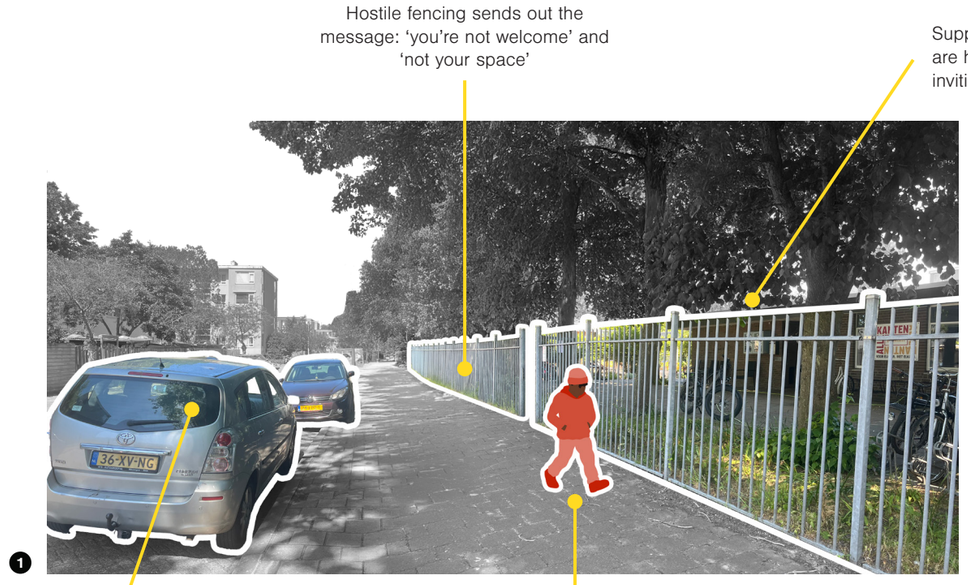


Fig. 108 Rayan’s Movement Through Urban Space Part 1 (author)

Fig. 109 Rayan’s Movement Through Urban Space Part 2 (author)





Fig. 110 Rayan’s Movement Through Urban Space Part 3 (author)



Sara
11 years old / Girl

Hobbies: Hanging out with friends, chatting, dancing
Mobility: Moderate but often feels limited by the lack of suitable spaces
Main hindrance: Lack of inclusive and well-maintained public space for pre-teen girls

Sara is an 11-year-old girl who enjoys spending time with her friends, looking for places to chill and hang out. But in her neighbourhood, there is little on offer. Most play areas consist of nothing more than a **basic football court**, or are **designed for toddlers**. There are few spaces where Sara and her girlfriends feel that the environment reflects their needs or interests. What bothers them too is the **poor condition and lack of maintenance** in the places meant for children. Sara often gets bored when she's outside. Even when she does want to play football, the courts are usually **dominated by boys**, making it harder to join in. For Sara, the **urban space lacks inclusion, care, and variety**—leaving little room to feel engaged, represented, or inspired.

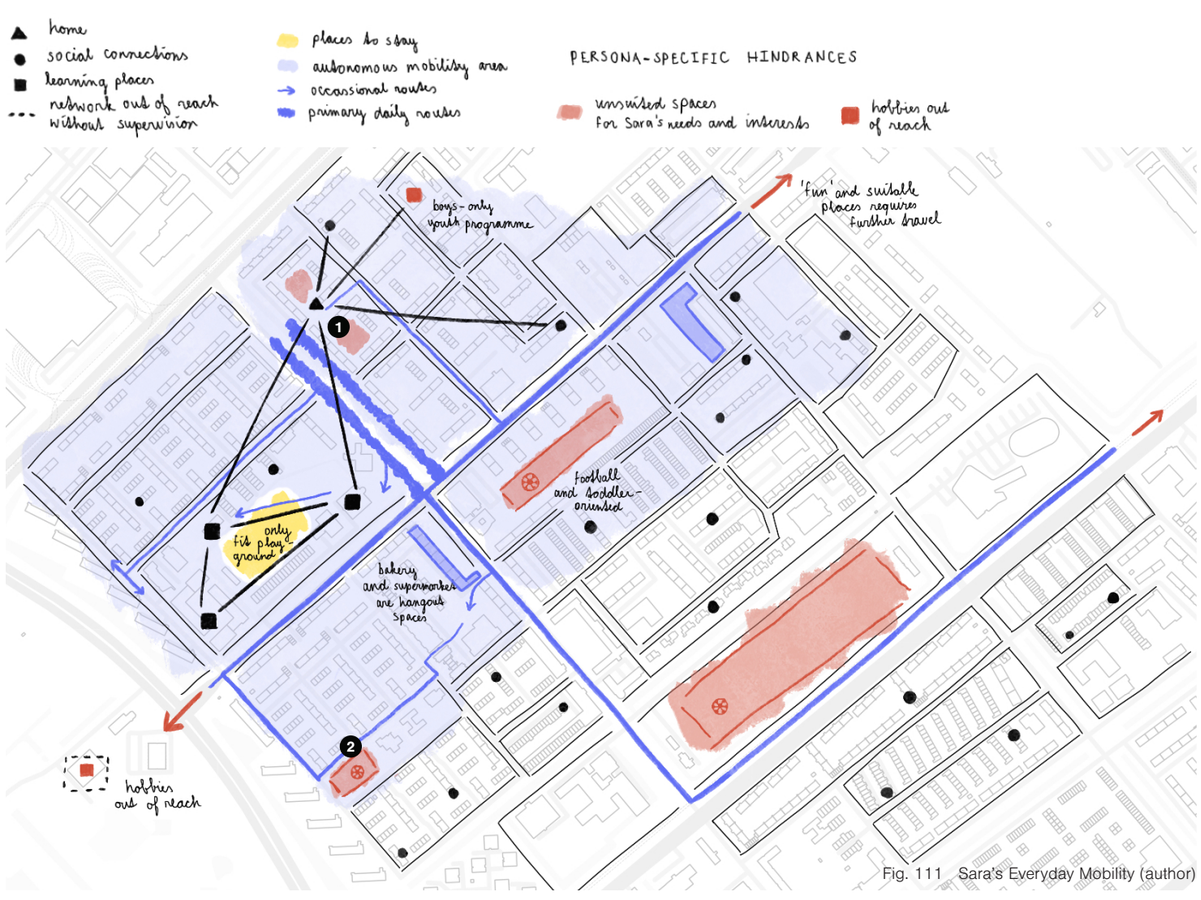


Fig. 111 Sara's Everyday Mobility (author)

Fig. 112 Sara's Movement Through Urban Space Part 1 (author)

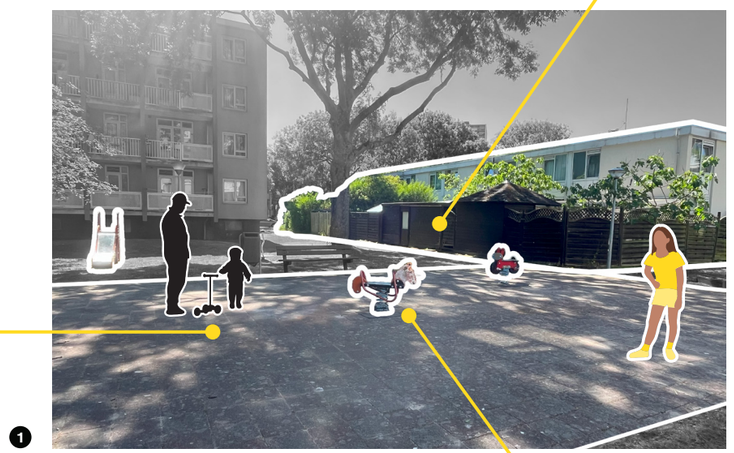
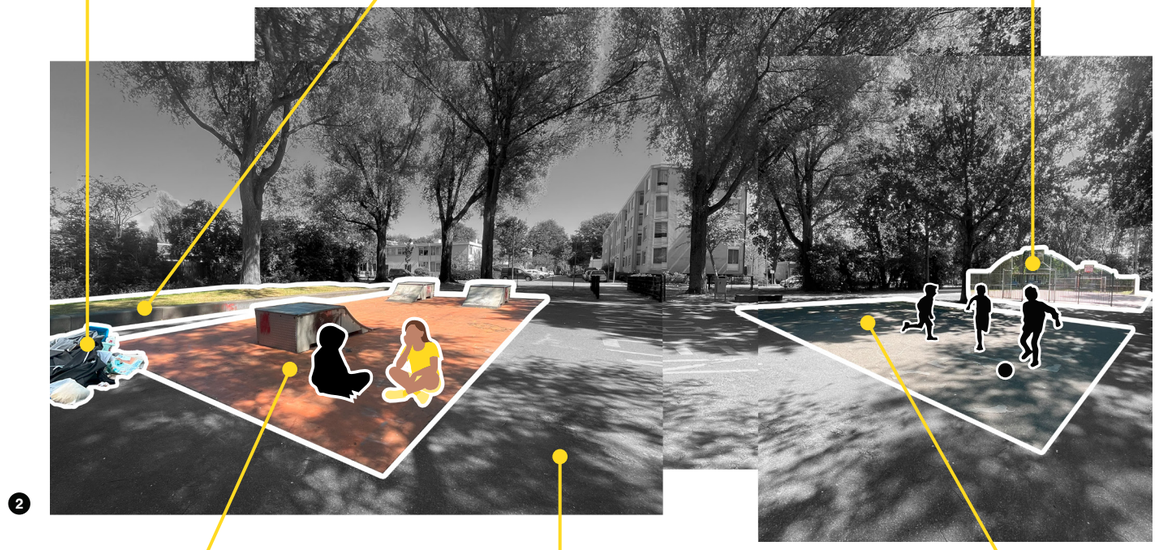
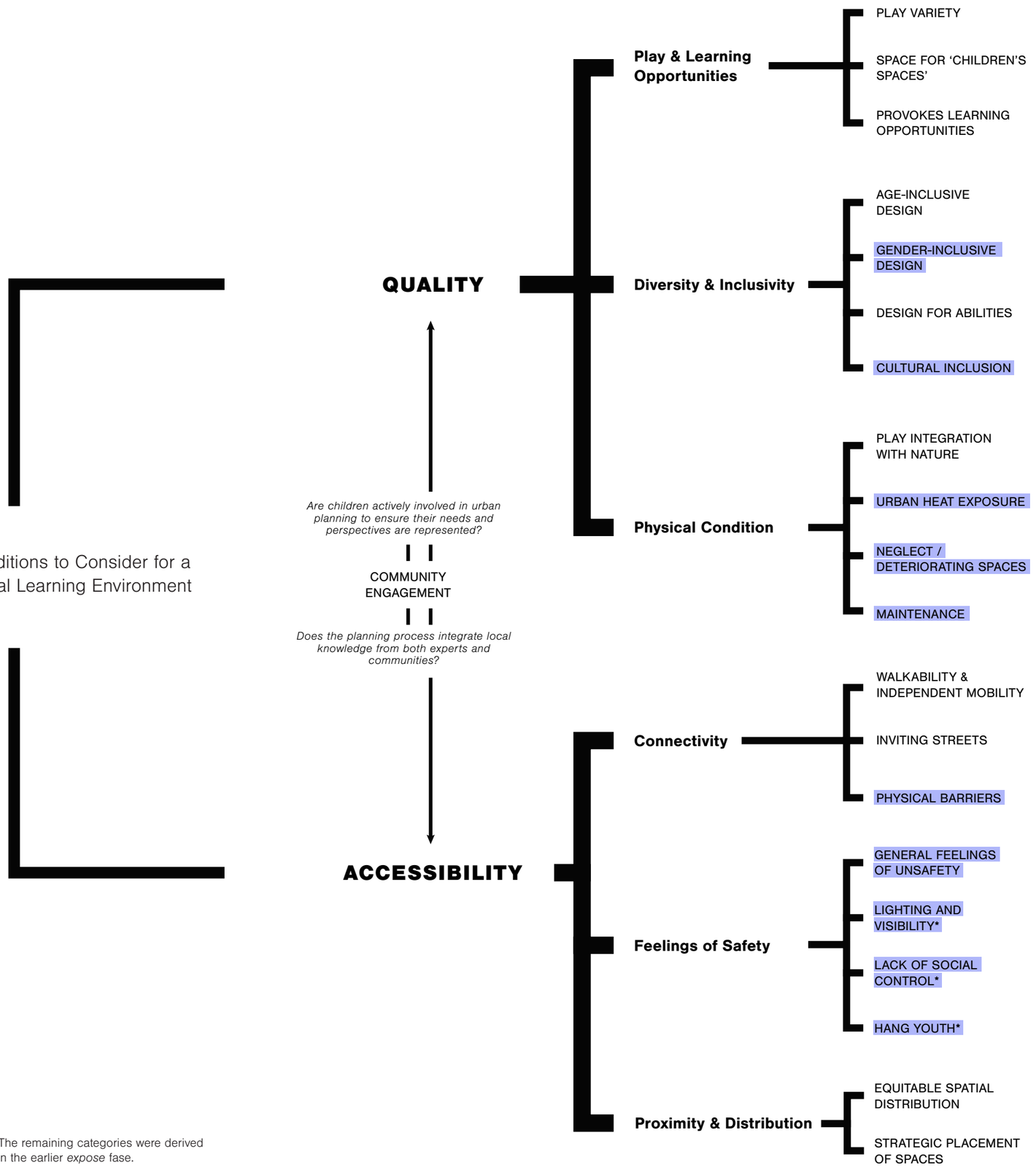


Fig. 113 Sara's Movement Through Urban Space Part 2 (author)



With a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences and challenges faced by children in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods, it is now possible to return to the earlier framework on what constitutes a strong pedagogical learning environment. The insights gathered on the lived experiences and on the ground realities allow us to refine and build on this framework—highlighting additional conditions and attention points that are especially relevant in marginalised urban contexts. This ensures the framework becomes more responsive and grounded in the specific needs of children growing up in these settings.



Factors and Conditions to Consider for a Good Pedagogical Learning Environment

(*) Indicates topics that were added later based on recurring mentions during informal conversations with local residents. The remaining categories were derived from insights from literature, theory, and spatial analysis of socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods, as discussed in the earlier *expose* fase.

3. INSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES

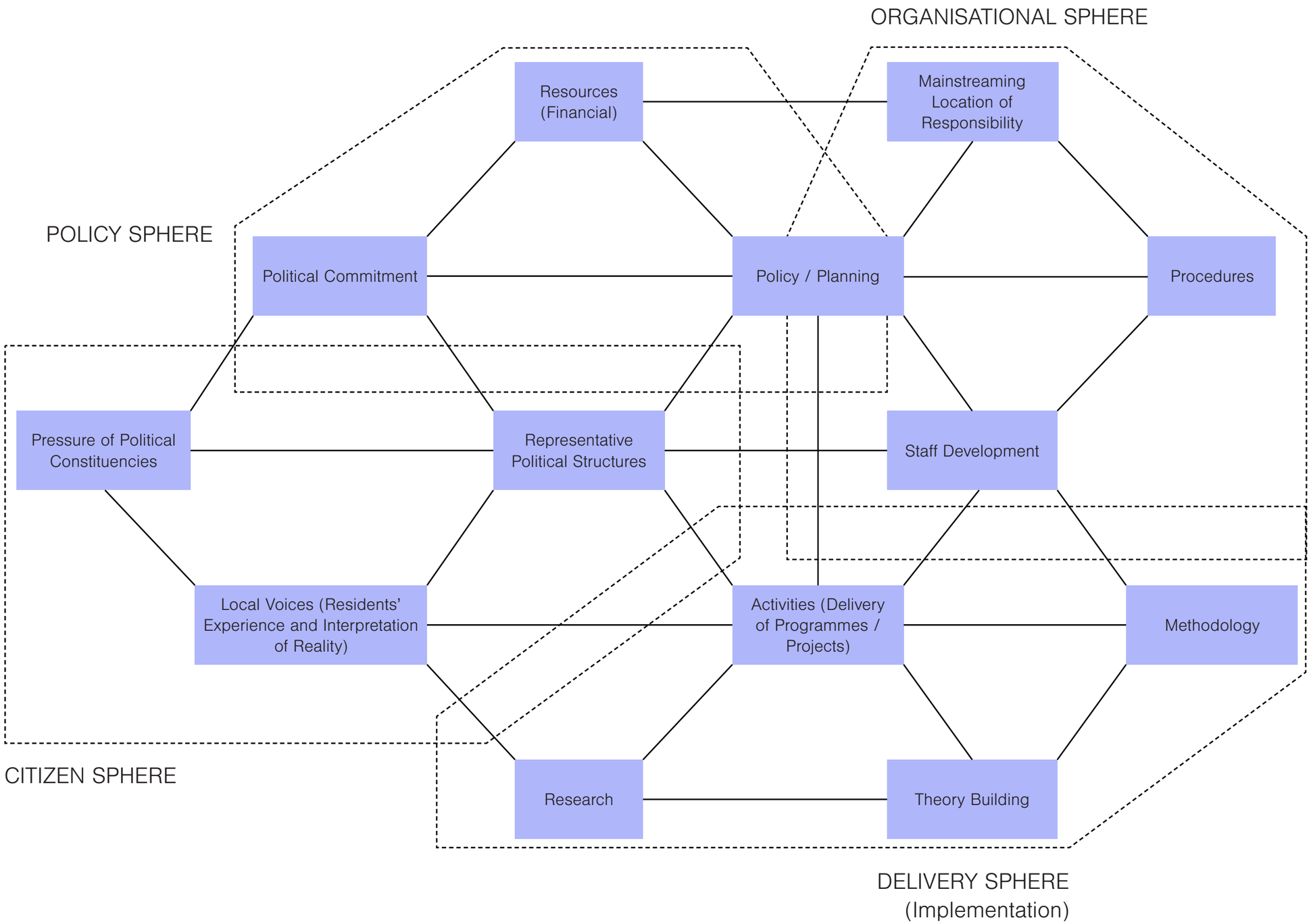
3.1. The Web of Institutionalisation

3.2. Institutional Problems and Opportunities

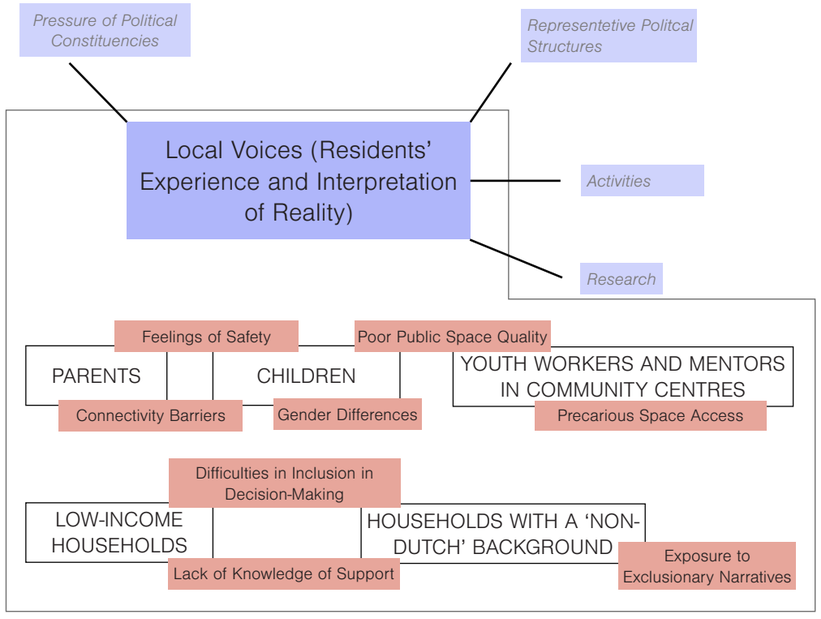
The Web of Institutionalisation, developed by Levy (1996), is framework designed to **analyse how effectively an organisation or policy integrates a specific value into its structures and practices**. The model underscores the importance of a **coordinated, multi-dimensional approach to change**—highlighting that isolated efforts are unlikely to produce lasting impact.

On the next pages, the web is used to assess how the value of **equitable access to strong pedagogical learning environments** is supported across different institutions, with a particular focus on the municipality of The Hague. It serves as a lens to **identify problems**, **gaps**, and **strengths**—laying the groundwork for more targeted recommendations in the project's next phase.

Fig. 114 The Web of Institutionalisation (adapted from Levy, 1996)



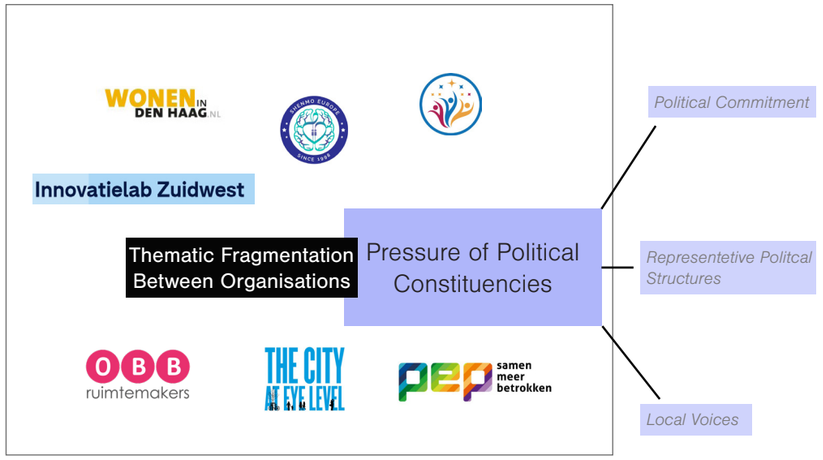
3.2. INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES



LOCAL VOICES

This part of the web of institutionalisation addresses the lived experiences of residents affected by interventions in the pedagogical learning environment—or the absence thereof. The groups included here represent overlapping identities, all situated within the neighbourhood context, yet facing different spatial conditions, constraints, and expectations. Though not mutually exclusive, they reflect distinct roles and perspectives in relation to the learning environment.

The problems outlined represent key spatial barriers that shape residents' daily realities. Each of these problems also carries within it the potential for transformation, should the conditions for change be enabled.



PRESSURE OF POLITICAL CONSTITUENCIES

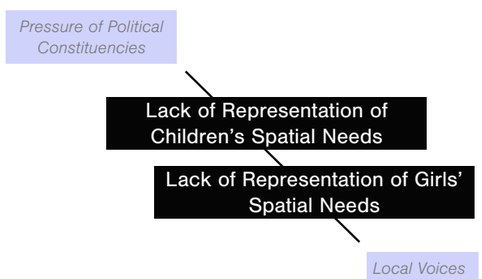
The Pressure of Political Constituencies refers to the collective organisations in civil society which claim to represent the interests of different groups of actors. These can include community centres, academia, but the majority consists of NGOs. In the diagram, only a selection of these organisations is represented, visualised through their logos.

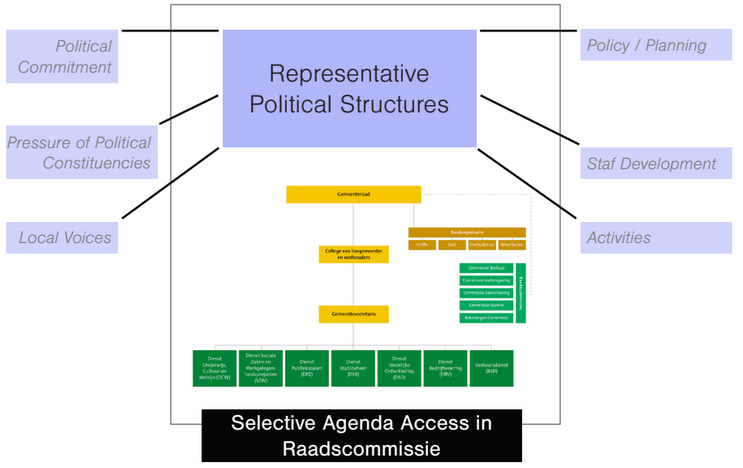
When thinking about their relationship and role to how spatial planning can contribute to improving accessibility and quality of the learning environment, it is necessary to reflect on who these organisations are and how they operate.

A key problem—and potential opportunity—in improving the accessibility and quality of the learning environment lies in the fact that, although many organisations work on community empowerment and inclusive learning, they often remain siloed within their own thematic or institutional domains, lacking coordination across shared goals or target groups.

RELATIONSHIP

This part of the web highlights the relationship between *Pressure of Political Constituencies* and *Local Voices*, focusing on the extent to which civil society organisations represent the lived experiences of residents. A key issue is the representational gap: focus on children's spatial needs are rarely a central concern in civil society agendas related to spatial planning. Similarly, a focus on specifically girls' spatial and learning needs is often overlooked.





REPRESENTATIVE POLITICAL STRUCTURES

This is about the different elective bodies—the different representative bodies—which should represent residents' interests through some kind of democratic accountability or process. In the case of The Hague, this includes the city council and extends down a broader hierarchy. The city council is the highest elective body at the city level. Beneath it, there is a whole range of structures, among which the raadscommissie plays a particularly important role.

The raadscommissie is a key point of access for Local Voices and Political Constituencies into the formal political structure. It advises the city council on decisions and can place issues on the public agenda—such as proposals, letters from aldermen or citizens, and urgent social themes. However, Proposals or community initiatives are only placed on the raadscommissie agenda if the commission agrees—this means that decisions are not necessarily based on the urgency or societal relevance of the issue. Making it both a channel and a gatekeeper for democratic input.

RELATIONSHIPS

When looking at the relationship between *Representative Political Structures* and the other parts of the citizen sphere—*Pressure of Political Constituencies* and *Local Voices*—it is essential to ask whether the different layers of elective structures truly represent and are accessible to residents at the grassroots level. It is equally important to consider to what extent these structures are open to lobbying or advocacy efforts by civil society organisations.

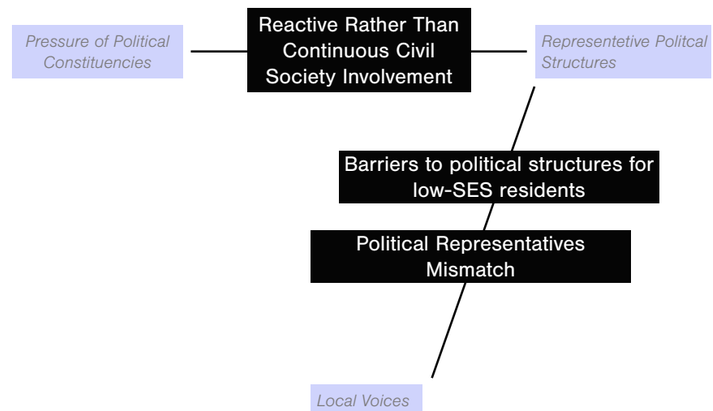
When examining the relationship between Representative Political Structures, Pressure of Political Constituencies, and Local Voices, some problems emerge:

Political Representatives Mismatch: Residents from low-income households or with a non-Dutch background may vote for representatives who do not reflect their interests, often due to limited access to clear political information, unfamiliarity with party positions, or the appeal of populist rhetoric. This mismatch is reinforced by the lack of diversity within the city council, which does not reflect The Hague's demographic reality.

Limited procedural access for low-SES residents: While the raadscommissie is formally accessible to all, residents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often lack the knowledge or resources to engage with these political procedures effectively.

Insufficient support from political constituencies: *Political Constituencies* could bridge this gap, but there is a lack of organisations focused specifically on the intersection of space, children, and learning, leaving many voices unsupported.

Reactive role of civil society: Civil society's involvement in spatial development is often reactive rather than structural, meaning organisations tend to step in only when problems become urgent, rather than being continuously engaged in shaping long-term planning or preventive approaches.



3.2. INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

POLITICAL COMMITMENT

This area is about the public commitments that are made to issues in relation to improving accessibility and quality of the learning environment. What public commitments are made by organisations or high-level political figures. The kind of things that are being made public statements about during for examples electives.

If political commitments are made by for example NGOs, in the civil society sector, often they'll have a mission statement on their website or something similar. These are not detailed policies, they are parties, individuals or organisations saying what they value and what they're supporting. These are tools they can be held accountable for.





POLICY AND PLANNING

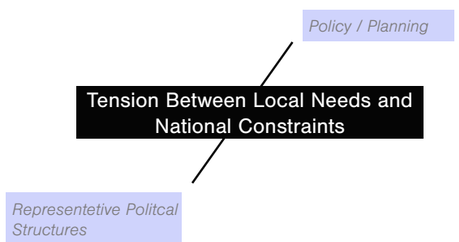
Policy and Planning are the actual policy commitments in which different actors, in particular governmental organisation, outline what they intend to do. These are the policy agreements and the ways in which they are translated into concrete public plans.

While equal opportunities in education and equal opportunities in relation to space are both addressed in policy, the connection between the two—how spatial planning and education can be integrated to promote equity—is largely absent. Ministries and municipal departments tend to operate in isolation, with little coordination across domains, each working within their own institutional bubble.

A second issue concerns the municipal policy landscape itself. In The Hague, relevant policies are not easily accessible or clearly consolidated, but scattered across departments, platforms, and formats. This fragmentation makes it difficult to identify a coherent or up-to-date policy framework, undermining both public accountability and the potential for integrated, evidence-based planning.

Another critical question is: what policies are actually being implemented in practice? It is important not to assume that the presence of a policy on paper equates to meaningful impact. Formal commitments often carry little weight if they are not backed by coordinated action or embedded in real planning processes.

RELATIONSHIP



These different elected bodies, which are responsible for developing policies, are mirrored by another hierarchy of organisations tasked with implementing them. A critical question is the extent to which the resources and power to do so are actually decentralised, and at what level this implementation truly takes place.

In the Netherlands, policy development and implementation are structured across multiple levels of government, with a formally decentralised model. Municipalities like The Hague are responsible for implementing a wide range of policies—in areas such as education, social support, and spatial planning. However, while decentralisation is formally in place, the actual distribution of resources and decision-making power is uneven.

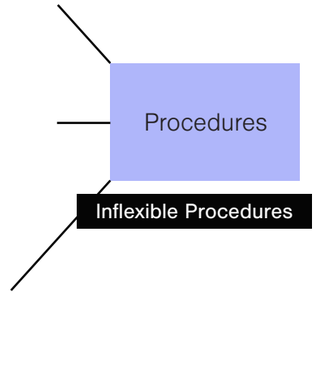
The national government and ministries still set much of the policy agenda and control resources, which limits the autonomy of local governments. The result is a tension between local needs and national constraints.

MAINSTREAMING LOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

In the area of *Mainstreaming Location of Responsibility*, it is critical to ask: who holds responsibility for addressing equity in learning environments? Which actors or parts of the organisation are tasked with implementing relevant measures, and to what extent do they possess the influence, authority, and resources to do so effectively?

In this context, departments responsible for education tend to focus narrowly on the formal school system, with equity addressed primarily within the boundaries of classroom access, performance, and institutional resources. Meanwhile, departments concerned with (public) spatial development rarely consider children as active users of space—let alone engage with the intersection between children's spatial experience and their learning environments. As a result, responsibility for equitable learning conditions remains compartmentalised, with little coordination between sectors that together shape children's daily realities.





PROCEDURES

the area of Procedures refers to the formal and informal rules, routines, and processes that structure how decisions are made, how actions are taken, and how institutions function on a day-to-day basis. These are not just about written regulations or official protocols, but also about how things are done in practice—the operational habits that either enable or block institutional change.

In The Hague, as in many Dutch municipalities, administrative routines are shaped by structured policy calendars and departmental workflows. These are typically not designed to support flexible, cross-sectoral collaboration.

These more-or-less rigid procedures also limit the potential for in-depth community engagement, making it difficult to gather meaningful insights into the lived experiences of children and parents. While participatory mechanisms such as wijkgesprekken and raadplegingen exist, they are often short-term, consensus-oriented, and insufficient for addressing complex issues that require deep, emotionally nuanced understanding. As a result, valuable local knowledge is frequently overlooked in favour of institutional efficiency and procedural regularity.

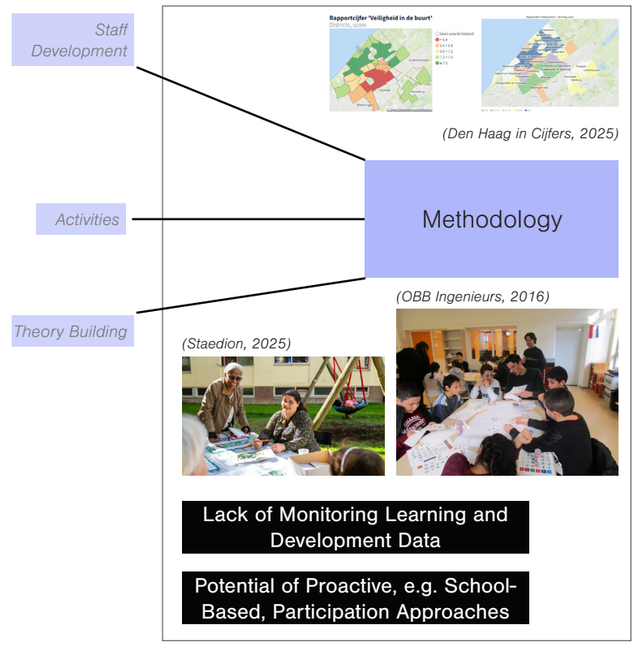
METHODOLOGIES

The area of Methodologies refers to the set of tools, practices, and approaches used by staff and organisations working on equity in learning environments, spatial development, and education. These tools shape how problems are defined, how interventions are designed, and how outcomes are measured.

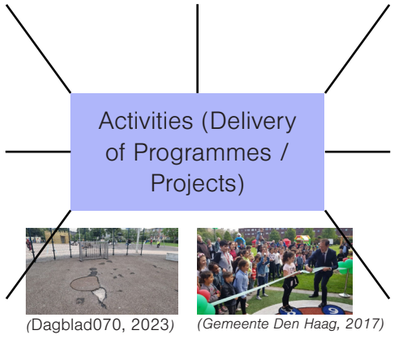
In the case of The Hague, the municipality makes use of extensive mapping, statistical analysis, and enumeration across neighbourhoods to inform policy and planning.

Community participation is another important methodological tool in this context, though it typically relies on residents taking the initiative to engage. In recent years, however, there have been promising shifts toward more proactive outreach models, such as an example of an organisation visiting a school directly to initiate participation. This active approach should be strengthened and more widely implemented, and could be further expanded by engaging parents through school-based outreach, particularly in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods, in order to lower barriers and improve accessibility to participation.

Currently, school performance data is the primary—if not the only—metric used to monitor children's learning and development. There is no broader framework in place to assess development beyond the school context across neighbourhoods, nor is there a system for monitoring change. Given the multifactorial nature of school outcomes, relying solely on these results to measure progress provides limited insight into changes in equitable learning environments.



3.2. INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES



(Dagblad070, 2023) *(Gemeente Den Haag, 2017)*

ACTIVITIES

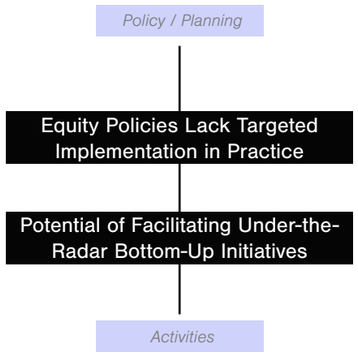
Activities refer to the actual delivery of programmes, projects, and interventions by institutions, organisations, and local actors. In the context of equity in learning environments, this involves not only what is implemented, but also how, where, and for whom. It concerns the extent to which actions on the ground are aligned with the needs of different communities, particularly in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods, and whether initiatives are consistent, inclusive, and responsive to the lived experiences of children and families.

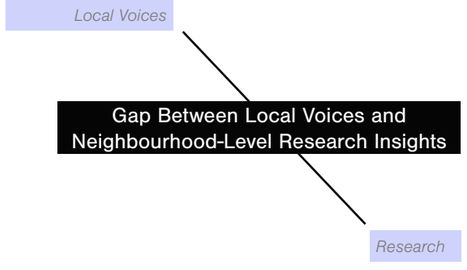
RELATIONSHIP

Now, turning to the relationship between *Policy / Planning and Activities*, this link is critical for asking a fundamental question: we may have all these promising spatial, social, and educational development plans and policies, but to what extent are these policies—agreed upon on paper—actually reflected in what is happening in practice?

In this context, there are clear examples where the gap between policy and practice becomes visible. Social policy has strongly emphasised reducing *kansenongelijkheid*, yet in reality, inequalities have only increased (Wolbers, 2024). Similarly, while there are ambitions to create safer and more accessible public spaces for all, this research shows that such efforts have not yet translated into truly equitable outcomes across the city. These are just two examples, but they illustrate how policies often fall short of their intentions in practice.

Another important question is: to what extent are policies learning from changes already happening in practice? From my own experience for example, parents and community members do come to schools voluntarily, eager to contribute, but the available spaces, resources and structures are insufficient to accommodate them. This shows that policies are not yet responsive to these kind of bottom-up initiatives and could play a stronger role in facilitating and scaling up these emerging forms of community involvement.



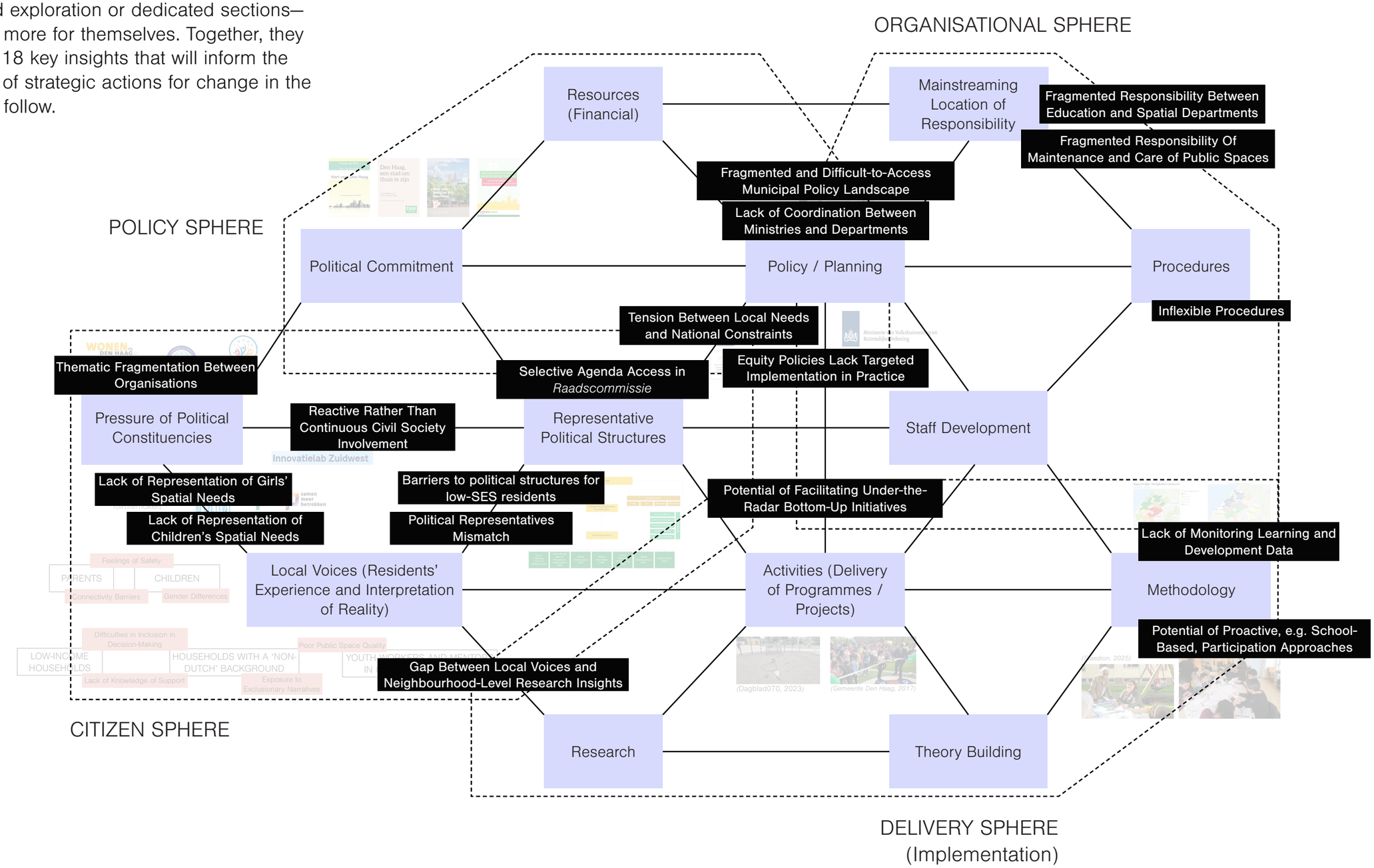


RELATIONSHIP

Now, turning to the relationship between *Local Voices / Research*, it is imortant to acknowledge the role of research in capturing and articulating the lived realities of residents. This includes disaggregating needs and experiences, across different groups in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods. While there are indeed methodological differences and increased attention to local voices in many studies, a significant research gap remains between individual experiences and broader understandings of neighbourhood effects—as demonstrated in the early stages of this project. As a result, it becomes difficult to formulate an adequate and well-targeted response, as the precise entry points for change often remain undefined or too generalised.

3.2. INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

This page presents a complete overview of all identified problems and opportunities within the Web of Institutionalisation. While some have been explored in greater depth than others—through a more detailed exploration or dedicated sections—others speak more for themselves. Together, they form a set of 18 key insights that will inform the development of strategic actions for change in the chapters that follow.



Proposal.

01.
Conditions for Change

02.
Transformation Strategies

03.
Conclusions

1. CONDITIONS FOR CHANGE

1.1. Connecting Insights, Objectives, and Actions

1.2. Socio-Spatial Objectives

1.3. Strategic Actions

1.1. CONNECTING INSIGHTS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

The foundation for Conditions for Change builds on key findings from earlier phases of the project. These were drawn from theory, mapping, mixed media review, professional experience, and fieldwork. In the diagram, these insights are represented in the top layer as coloured squares, each reflecting a cluster of the most important and relevant findings.

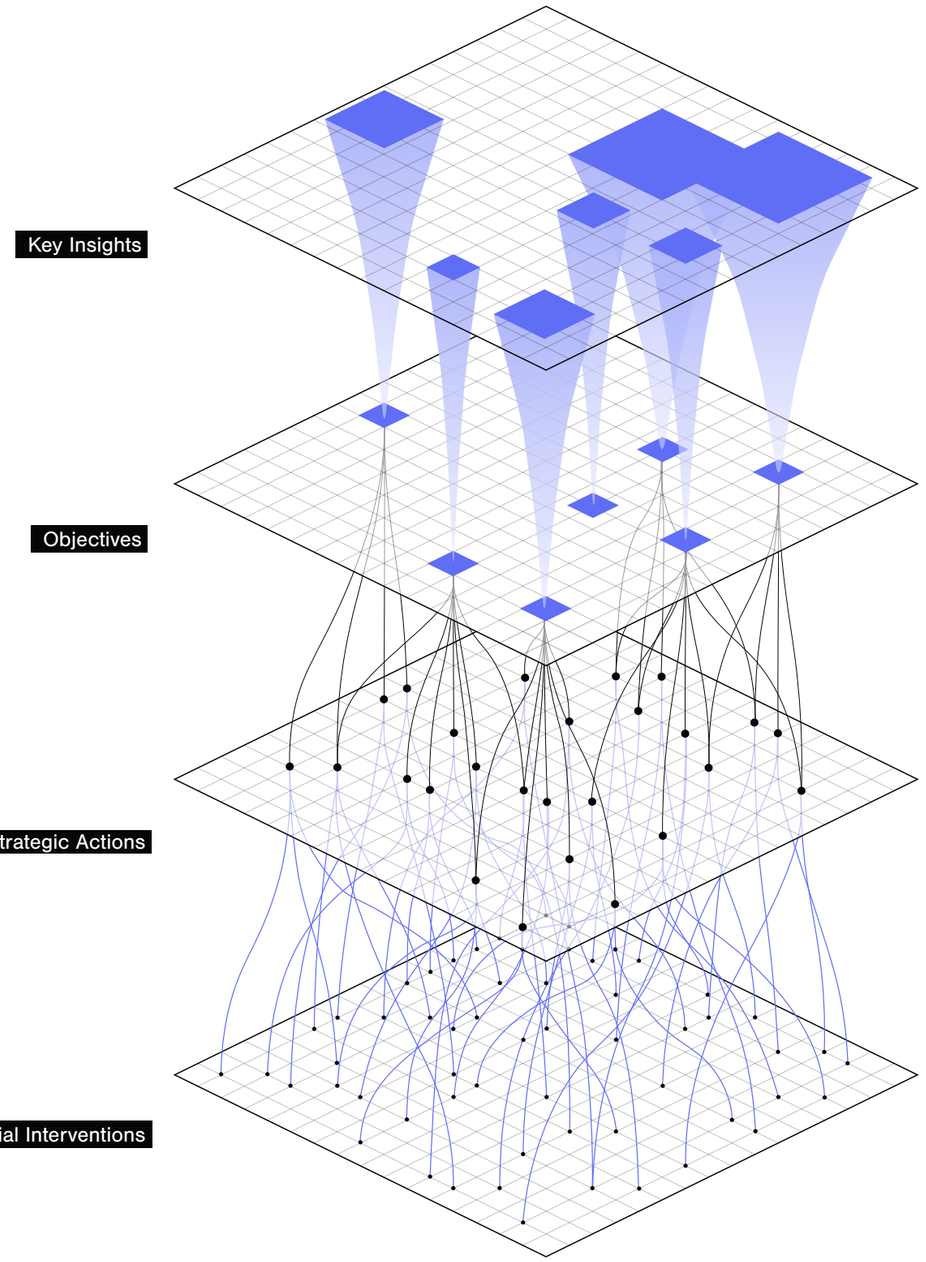
The conclusionary findings form the basis for a set of objectives, represented in the second layer of the diagram. Here, the cones from the layer above connect to evenly sized squares, each symbolising one of the objectives that addresses a specific aspect of maximising the potential of the pedagogical learning environment.

The third layer introduces the strategic actions—visualised as small circles—that stem from the objectives. These actions translate general goals into actionable directions for socio-spatial change. The connecting lines show how certain strategic actions support more than one objective, highlighting areas of overlap and synergy. While still abstract in nature, these strategic actions help structure the thinking around what types of interventions may be needed.

In the bottom layer, the many smaller circles represent potential specific spatial interventions. These are not defined exhaustively in this project, but their multiplicity illustrates the flexibility of the framework: one strategic action can lead to many different spatial solutions, depending on the context. The project does not attempt to explicitly define all of these, but rather focuses on building the structure through which they can be explored.

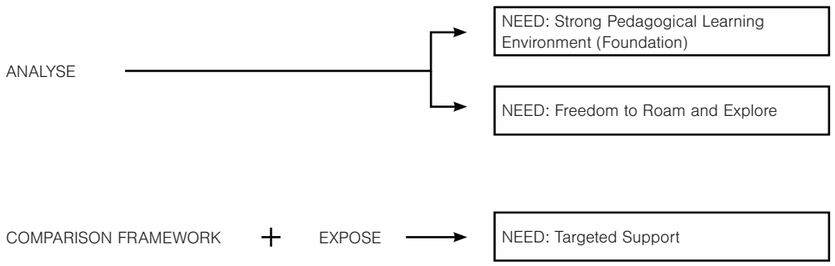
The chapters that follow will unpack this framework in more detail. First, we will examine how the objectives were shaped by findings from the research and analysis phases. Then, we move into the set of associated strategic actions. Lastly, two exemplary zoom-ins will demonstrate how these actions can translate into context-sensitive spatial interventions.

Fig. 115 Framework for Conditions for Change (author)

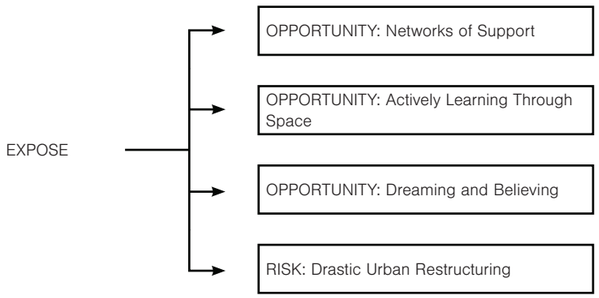


1.2. SOCIO-SPATIAL OBJECTIVES

The first socio-spatial objectives are derived from the analyse phase, where it is quickly established that a set of fundamental spatial conditions is essential to maximise support for children's learning and development within the urban environment. By comparing this foundational framework with the lived realities uncovered during the expose phase, it becomes clear that there is an additional need for targeted support to ensure equitable opportunities in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods.



The expose phase also brought to light existing foundations, positive aspects, successful strategies from other cities, residents' feelings and experiences — elements that could be used to create opportunities to strengthen support in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods and help compensate for structural disadvantages. It also revealed risks that should be actively avoided.



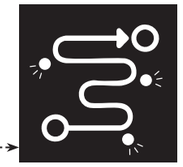
NEEDS: Things that must be in place.

1. STRONG LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (FOUNDATION)



A strong pedagogical learning environment ensures the best possible relation between the urban environment and children's learning and growth. It forms the basic standard for all learning environments, regardless of neighbourhood or context.

2. FREEDOM TO ROAM AND EXPLORE



'Children's spaces' and routes that connect formal 'spaces for children' are essential parts of the pedagogical learning environment. Although included in the broader foundation, their role in enabling independent movement, claiming spaces, and linking places for children, warrants emphasising this as a distinct need.

3. TARGETED SUPPORT



In socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods, learning environments require targeted support to address structural inequalities.

OPPORTUNITIES: Things that should be actively pursued.

4. NETWORKS OF SUPPORT



Building and expanding on existing foundations, there is an opportunity to strengthen networks of supportive structures focused on learning, growth and education.

5. ACTIVELY LEARNING THROUGH SPACE



Integrating formal learning opportunities into the urban environment provokes learning and cognitive growth outside the classroom.

6. DREAMING AND BELIEVING



Purposefully fostering positive self-perception to counteract negative societal stigma and encourage children to dream and believe in themselves.

RISKS: Things that must be avoided.

7. DRASTIC URBAN RESTRUCTURING



Avoid pursuing solutions through drastic urban restructuring, fuelling stress and displacement, improving statistics at the expense of existing communities, and ultimately leading to gentrification.

1.3. STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1.3.1. Socio-Spatial

The earlier defined objectives each call for their own set of strategic actions to support their aims. Some actions contribute to multiple objectives, highlighting the objectives' interrelatedness. The strategic actions are organised into categories derived from the previously established framework. This categorisation is a tool for clarity; in practice, actions may overlap between categories, reflecting the integrated and multidimensional nature of the needs and opportunities they address.

URBAN SPATIAL QUALITY

USQ1 Embed natural elements into the urban learning environments to enhance experiences.

PLAY & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

PLO1 Diverse play environments to maximise engagement and sustain children's interest over time.

PLO2 Create play environments that stimulate cognitive, physical, and social development.

PLO3 Integrate elements that stimulate learning and curiosity within everyday spaces.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

DI1 Design spaces that accommodate a full range of age groups, including for adolescents.

DI2 Design spaces for a broad spectrum of physical (and cognitive) abilities.

DI3 Ensure connecting streets are welcoming and usable for all abilities.

CONNECTIVITY

C1 Prioritise pedestrian-friendly and cycling connections between children's spaces and daily destinations to strengthen independent mobility.

C2 Streetscapes that look inviting and accessible to children.

FEELINGS OF SAFETY

FS1 Mitigate environmental factors that negatively impact children's perceived safety.

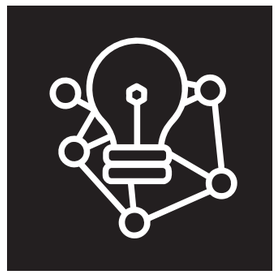
PROXIMITY & DISTRIBUTION

PD1 Distribute spaces for children equitably across neighbourhoods to ensure fair access.

PD2 Strategically locate spaces for children along routes to maximise visibility, engagement, and use.

STRONG LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (FOUNDATION)

A strong pedagogical learning environment ensures the best possible relation between the urban environment and children's learning and growth. It forms the basic standard for all learning environments, regardless of neighbourhood or context.



1.3. STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1.3.1. Socio-Spatial

URBAN SPATIAL QUALITY

PLAY & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

DI3 Ensure connecting streets are welcoming and usable for all abilities.

CONNECTIVITY

C1 Prioritise pedestrian-friendly and cycling connections between children's spaces and daily destinations to strengthen independent mobility.

C2 Streetscapes should look inviting and accessible to children.

C3 Continuity of children's pedestrian networks by minimising physical and perceptual barriers.

C4 Promote the visibility and accessibility of existing structures to ensure that all families can easily engage with available opportunities.

FEELINGS OF SAFETY

FS1 Mitigate environmental factors that negatively impact children's perceived safety.

FS2 Enhance safety perception by activating streets.

FS3 Slow down traffic and reduce car dominance.

PROXIMITY & DISTRIBUTION

PD1 Distribute spaces for children equitably across neighbourhoods to ensure fair access.

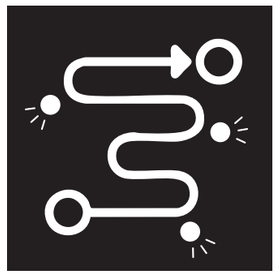
PD2 Strategically locate spaces for children along routes to maximise visibility, engagement, and use.

PD3 Ensure children's spaces are located near all children's living environments to support independent use and reduce dependency on adults.

PLO5 Leave 'rough edges' and undefined spaces along children's everyday routes to stimulate exploration and spontaneous play.

Routes and *'children's spaces'* that connect formal '*spaces for children'* are essential parts of the pedagogical learning environment. Although included in the broader foundation, their role in enabling independent movement, claiming spaces, and linking places for children, warrants emphasising this as a distinct need.

FREEDOM TO ROAMD AND EXPLORE



1.3. STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1.3.1. Socio-Spatial

URBAN SPATIAL QUALITY

USQ2 Provide sufficient shade, greenery, and cooling elements to reduce heat stress.

USQ3 Address and reverse physical neglect.

USQ4 Ensure continuous maintenance, waste management.

USQ5 Where urban development takes place, prioritise liveable, and affordable housing that foster active street life and human-scale environments.

USQ6 Reinforce the role of underused green spaces by promoting multifunctionality and everyday relevance.

USQ7 Introduce visual variety, permeability, and active edges along connecting streets.

PLAY & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

DI1 Design spaces that accommodate a full range of age groups, including for adolescents.

DI4 Ensure gender-inclusive spatial design that feels equally inviting and safe to all children.

DI5 Challenge gendered patterns of space use.

DI6 Foster social connectedness by embedding opportunities for informal encounters within the urban environment.

DI7 Accommodate and visibly reflect diverse cultural norms beyond the dominant standard.

CONNECTIVITY

C3 Continuity of children's pedestrian networks by minimising physical and perceptual barriers.

FEELINGS OF SAFETY

FS3 Slow down traffic and reduce car dominance.

FS4 Strengthen visibility and spatial legibility through thoughtful lighting strategies.

FS5 Promote passive social control.

FS6 Address challenges associated with hanging youth groups by offering constructive and socially accepted alternatives.

FS7 Foster safety and trust through inclusive spatial practices, avoiding over-reliance on policing and promoting community-based presence.

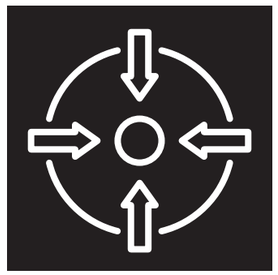
PROXIMITY & DISTRIBUTION

PD1 Distribute spaces for children equitably across neighbourhoods to ensure fair access.

PD3 Ensure children's spaces are located near all children's living environments to support independent use and reduce dependency on adults.

TARGETED SUPPORT

In socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods, learning environments require targeted support to address structural inequalities.



1.3. STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1.3.1. Socio-Spatial

URBAN SPATIAL QUALITY

USQ8 Stimulate hybrid spaces where educational, cultural, and social activities overlap and reinforce each other.

PLAY & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

PLO7 Strengthen the role of libraries, community centres, and schools as multifunctional hubs for learning, support, and community interaction.

PLO8 Foster partnerships between institutions and informal community networks to broaden access to learning and development opportunities.

PLO9 Facilitate volunteer-led initiatives that expand educational support, mentoring, and after-school activities for children.

PLO10 Facilitate local capacity-building by creating spaces for knowledge exchange between professionals, experts, and the community.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

DI6 Foster social connectedness by embedding opportunities for informal encounters within the urban environment.

CONNECTIVITY

C4 Promote the visibility and accessibility of existing structures to ensure that all families can easily engage with available opportunities.

FEELINGS OF SAFETY

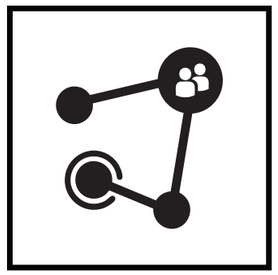
PROXIMITY & DISTRIBUTION

PD4 Locate formal learning and play spaces close to community anchors (schools, libraries, community centres) to reinforce access.

PD5 Monitor existing supportive structures and identify underused capacities to better integrate resources across the community.

NETWORKS OF SUPPORT

Building and expanding on existing foundations, there is an opportunity to strengthen networks of supportive structures focused on learning, growth and education.



1.3. STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1.3.1. Socio-Spatial

URBAN SPATIAL QUALITY

USQ1 Embed natural elements into the urban learning environments to enhance experiences.

PLAY & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

PLO2 Create play environments that stimulate cognitive, physical, and social development.

PLO3 Integrate elements that stimulate learning and curiosity within everyday spaces.

PLO4 Integrate spatial cues that provoke cognitive engagement.

PLO6 Embed thematic spatial elements into public space to connect locations around a shared educational theme.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

DI7 Accommodate and visibly reflect diverse cultural norms beyond the dominant standard.

DI8 Represent diverse role models, histories, and futures visibly within the urban environment.

CONNECTIVITY

FEELINGS OF SAFETY

PROXIMITY & DISTRIBUTION

Integrating formal learning opportunities into the urban environment provokes learning and cognitive growth outside the classroom.

ACTIVELY LEARNING THROUGH SPACE



1.3. STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1.3.1. Socio-Spatial

URBAN SPATIAL QUALITY

PLAY & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

PLO6 Embed thematic spatial elements into public space to connect locations around a shared educational theme.

PLO9 Facilitate volunteer-led initiatives that expand educational support, mentoring, and after-school activities for children.

PLO10 Facilitate local capacity-building by creating spaces for knowledge exchange between professionals, experts, and the community.

PLO11 Incorporate symbolic spatial gestures that invite imagination to envision themselves in aspirational roles.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

DI2 Design spaces for a broad spectrum of physical (and cognitive) abilities.

DI4 Ensure gender-inclusive spatial design that feels equally inviting and safe to all children.

DI5 Challenge gendered patterns of space use.

DI7 Accommodate and visibly reflect diverse cultural norms beyond the dominant standard.

DI8 Represent diverse role models, histories, and futures visibly within the urban environment.

CONNECTIVITY

C2 Streetscapes should look inviting and accessible to children.

FEELINGS OF SAFETY

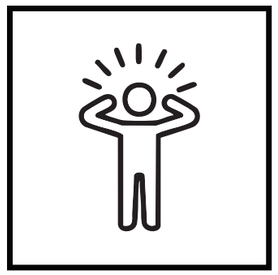
FS1 Mitigate environmental factors that negatively impact children's perceived safety.

FS7 Foster safety and trust through inclusive spatial practices, avoiding over-reliance on policing and promoting community-based presence.

PROXIMITY & DISTRIBUTION

DREAMING AND BELIEVING

Purposefully fostering positive self-perception to counteract negative societal stigma and encourage children to dream and believe in themselves.



1.3. STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1.3.1. Socio-Spatial

This page presents an overview of all strategic actions across categories. While earlier pages grouped actions by objective, the objectives should in reality be approached as an integrated whole, where one cannot be pursued in isolation. Especially in similar-typology socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods, no hierarchy should exist between objectives. Notably, while most actions work together and rely on each other as well, specific environments may call for different emphases—as some actions are more relevant than others depending on context—allowing for focus without undermining the objectives.

URBAN SPATIAL QUALITY

USQ1 Embed natural elements into the urban learning environments to enhance experiences.

USQ2 Provide sufficient shade, greenery, and cooling elements to reduce heat stress.

USQ3 Address and reverse physical neglect.

USQ4 Ensure continuous maintenance, waste management.

USQ5 Where urban development takes place, prioritise liveable, and affordable housing that foster active street life and human-scale environments.

USQ6 Reinforce the role of underused green spaces by promoting multifunctionality and everyday relevance.

USQ7 Introduce visual variety, permeability, and active edges along connecting streets.

USQ8 Stimulate hybrid spaces where educational, cultural, and social activities overlap and reinforce each other.

PLAY & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

PLO1 Diverse play environments to maximise engagement and sustain children's interest over time.

PLO2 Create play environments that stimulate cognitive, physical, and social development.

PLO3 Integrate elements that stimulate learning and curiosity within everyday spaces.

PLO4 Integrate spatial cues that provoke cognitive engagement.

PLO5 Leave 'rough edges' and undefined spaces along children's everyday routes to stimulate exploration and spontaneous play.

PLO6 Embed thematic spatial elements into public space to connect locations around a shared educational theme.

PLO7 Strengthen the role of libraries, community centres, and schools as multifunctional hubs for learning, support, and community interaction.

PLO8 Foster partnerships between institutions and informal community networks to broaden access to learning and development opportunities.

PLO9 Facilitate volunteer-led initiatives that expand educational support, mentoring, and after-school activities for children.

PLO10 Facilitate local capacity-building by creating spaces for knowledge exchange between professionals, experts, and the community.

PLO11 Incorporate symbolic spatial gestures that invite imagination to envision themselves in aspirational roles.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

DI1 Design spaces that accommodate a full range of age groups, including for adolescents.

DI2 Design spaces for a broad spectrum of physical (and cognitive) abilities.

DI3 Ensure connecting streets are welcoming and usable for all abilities.

DI4 Ensure gender-inclusive spatial design that feels equally inviting and safe to all children.

DI5 Challenge gendered patterns of space use.

DI6 Foster social connectedness by embedding opportunities for informal encounters within the urban environment.

DI7 Accommodate and visibly reflect diverse cultural norms beyond the dominant standard.

DI8 Represent diverse role models, histories, and futures visibly within the urban environment.

CONNECTIVITY

C1 Prioritise pedestrian-friendly and cycling connections between children's spaces and daily destinations to strengthen independent mobility.

C2 Streetscapes should look inviting and accessible to children.

C3 Continuity of children's pedestrian networks by minimising physical and perceptual barriers.

C4 Promote the visibility and accessibility of existing structures to ensure that all families can easily engage with available opportunities.

FEELINGS OF SAFETY

FS1 Mitigate environmental factors that negatively impact children's perceived safety.

FS2 Enhance safety perception by activating streets.

FS3 Slow down traffic and reduce car dominance.

FS4 Strengthen visibility and spatial legibility through thoughtful lighting strategies.

FS5 Promote passive social control.

FS6 Address the challenges associated with hanging youth groups by offering constructive and socially accepted alternatives.

FS7 Foster safety and trust through inclusive spatial practices, avoiding over-reliance on policing and promoting community-based presence.

PROXIMITY & DISTRIBUTION

PD1 Distribute spaces for children equitably across neighbourhoods to ensure fair access.

PD2 Strategically locate spaces for children along routes to maximise visibility, engagement, and use.

PD3 Ensure children's spaces are located near all children's living environments to support independent use and reduce dependency on adults.

PD4 Locate formal learning and play spaces close to community anchors (schools, libraries, community centres) to reinforce access.

PD5 Monitor existing supportive structures and identify underused capacities to better integrate resources across the community.

1.3. STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1.3.2. Procedural

The procedural strategic actions derive directly from the procedural problems and opportunities identified with the framework of the Web of Institutionalisation. By translating these into targeted actions, it ensures a direct response to the challenges previously outlined. At the same time, it helps build on existing institutional strengths—aiming to improve the processes and structures that shape how change is initiated and sustained.

x16

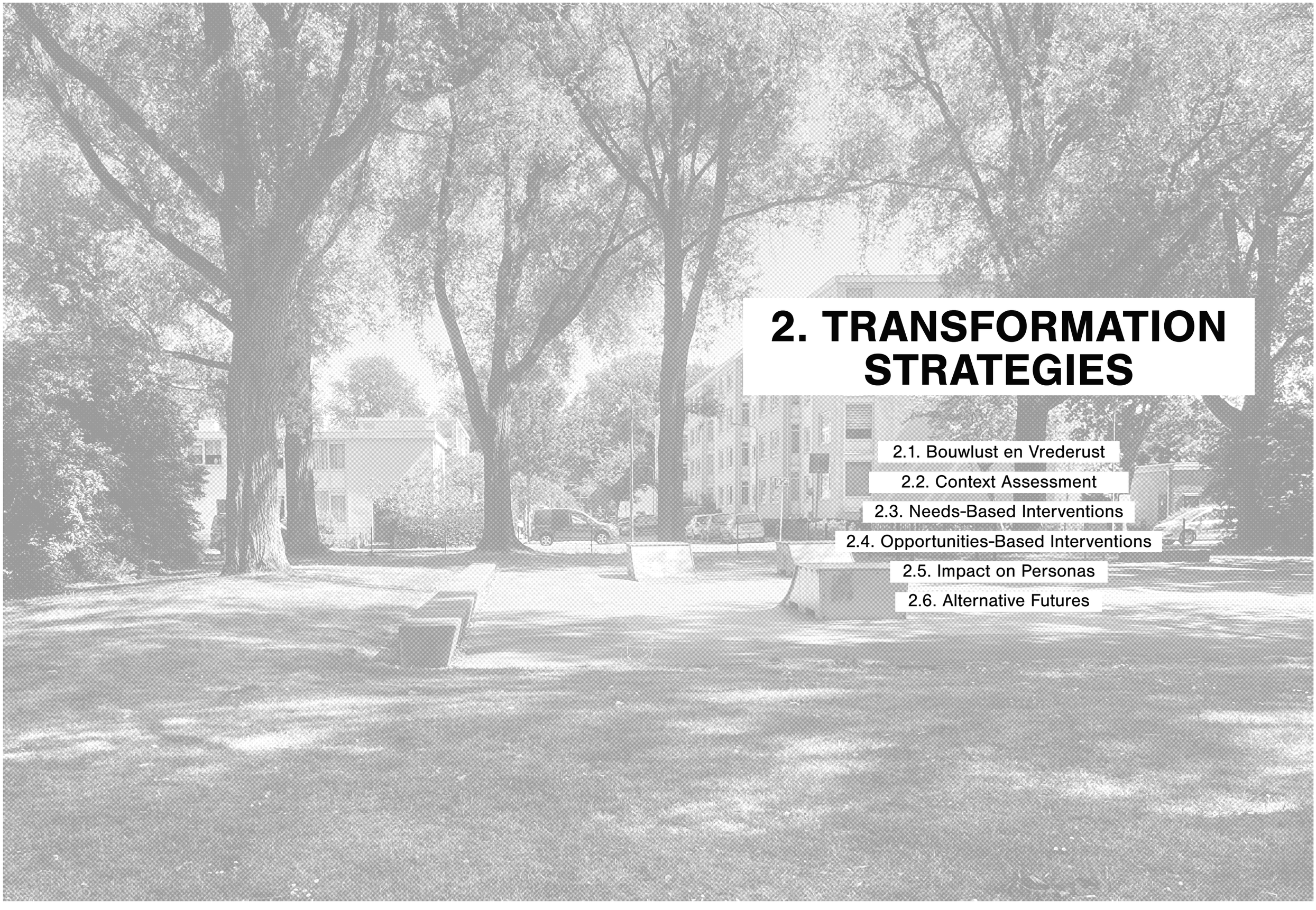
Procedural Problems and Opportunities

→

x16

Translating Insight into Strategic Action

Thematic Fragmentation Between Organisations	Address thematic fragmentation between organisations by stimulating cross-domain collaboration around shared goals related to everything children's general well-being
Lack of Representation of Girls' Spatial Needs	Ensure girls' spatial needs are systematically represented in planning and engagement efforts through gender-sensitive research and outreach
Lack of Representation of Children's Spatial Needs	Strengthen the inclusion of children's spatial needs in civil society agendas and formal planning processes by supporting child-focused advocacy and participation
Gap Between Local Voices and Neighbourhood-Level Research Insights	Bridge the gap between local voices and neighbourhood-level research by developing methodologies that translate individual lived experiences into broader, actionable insights
Reactive Rather Than Continuous Civil Society Involvement	Promote continuous civil society involvement through structural roles in planning processes
Barriers to political structures for low-SES residents	Lower barriers to political structures for low-SES residents by providing tailored information, simplified procedures, and outreach through trusted local actors.
Political Representatives Mismatch	Mitigate political representative mismatch by encouraging inclusive political education and supporting representative diversity.
Selective Agenda Access in Raadscommissie	Improve accessibility of the raadscommissie agenda by introducing transparent criteria and low-threshold entry points for community proposals.
Potential of Facilitating Under-the-Radar Bottom-Up Initiatives	Facilitate informal and bottom-up initiatives by creating flexible funding streams and institutional openness for community-based experiments.
Tension Between Local Needs and National Constraints	Alleviate tensions between local and national policy agendas by advocating for greater municipal autonomy
Equity Policies Lack Targeted Implementation in Practice	Translate equity policies into targeted local action by specifying goals, timelines, and metrics aligned with on-the-ground realities.
Fragmented and Difficult-to-Access Municipal Policy Landscape	Make the municipal policy landscape more accessible through a consolidated and user-friendly platform that integrates relevant policies.
Lack of Coordination Between Ministries and Departments	Foster coordination between ministries and departments through interdepartmental or cross-cutting policy teams.
Fragmented Responsibility Between Education and Spatial Departments	Clarify and align responsibilities between education and spatial departments.
Fragmented Responsibility Of Maintenance and Care of Public Spaces	Resolve fragmented maintenance responsibilities by establishing coordinated care models involving multiple departments and community stakeholders.
Inflexible Procedures	Make procedures more adaptive and cross-sectoral by revising rigid planning calendars and institutional workflows.
Lack of Monitoring Learning and Development Data	Broaden monitoring beyond school performance by developing, and monitoring, more indicators for children's development
Potential of Proactive, e.g. School-Based, Participation Approaches	Scale up proactive participation models such as school-based outreach, especially in marginalised neighbourhoods.



2. TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES

2.1. Bouwlust en Vrederust

2.2. Context Assessment

2.3. Needs-Based Interventions

2.4. Opportunities-Based Interventions

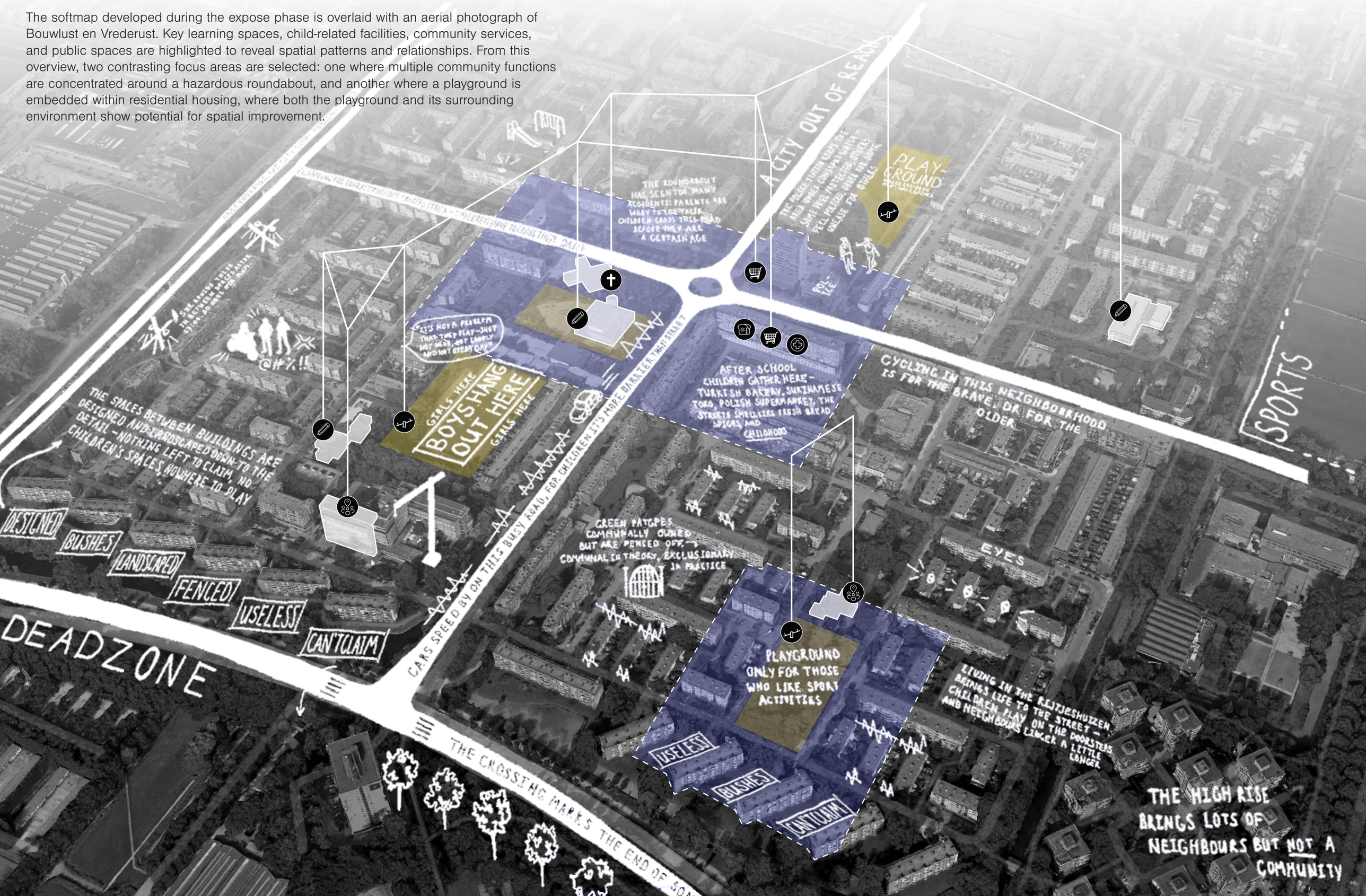
2.5. Impact on Personas

2.6. Alternative Futures

2.1. BOUWLUST EN VREDERUST

2.1.1. Spatial Overview and Selection Rationale

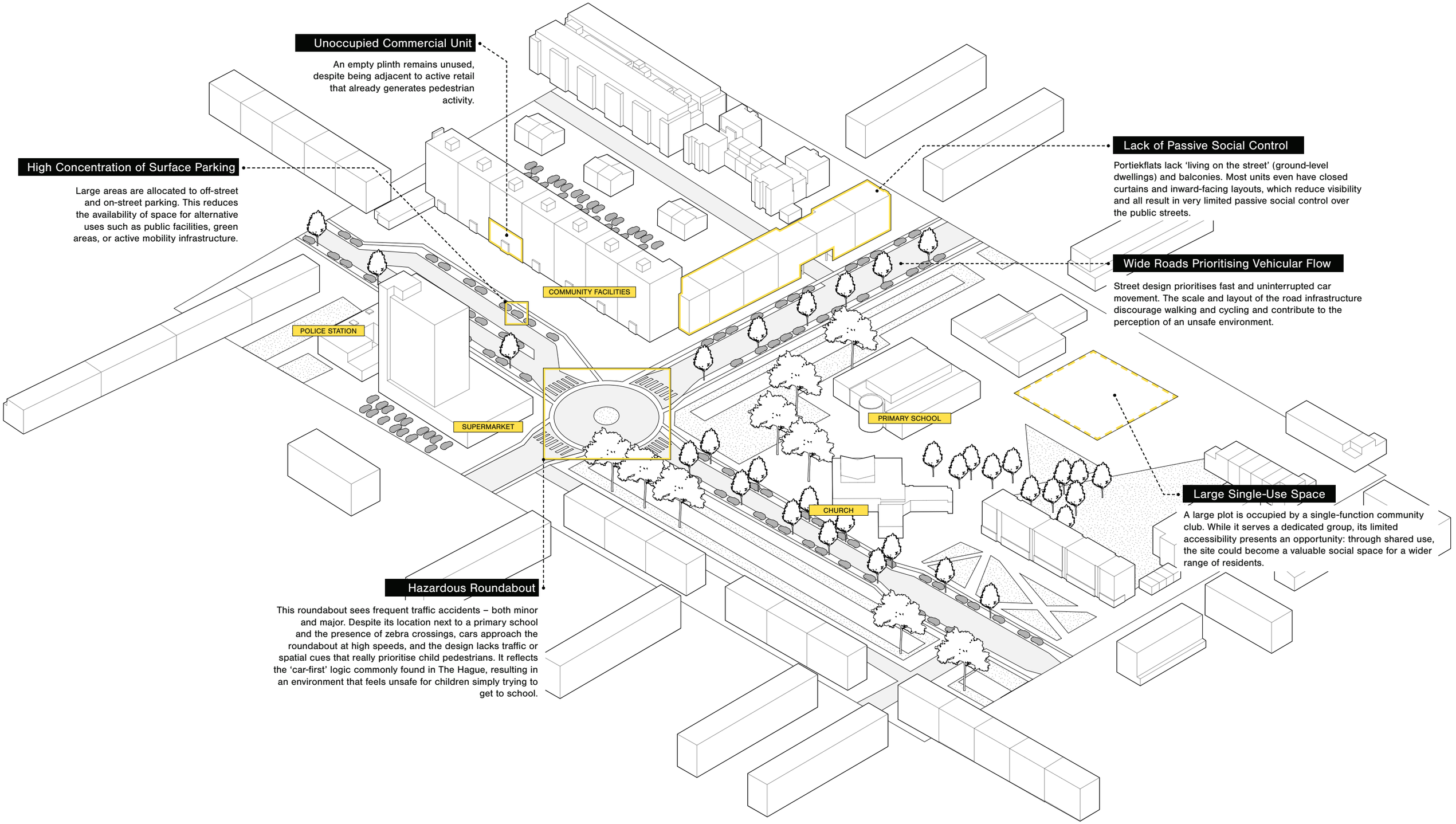
The softmap developed during the expose phase is overlaid with an aerial photograph of Bouwlust en Vrederust. Key learning spaces, child-related facilities, community services, and public spaces are highlighted to reveal spatial patterns and relationships. From this overview, two contrasting focus areas are selected: one where multiple community functions are concentrated around a hazardous roundabout, and another where a playground is embedded within residential housing, where both the playground and its surrounding environment show potential for spatial improvement.



2.2. CONTEXT ASSESSMENT

2.2.1. Roundabout Node

Focusing on a key node in Bouwlust en Vrederust, this page examines spatial conditions around a roundabout and adjacent spaces. This area brings together several necessary activities—including a primary school, supermarket, and community facilities—making it a central point for local activity. Despite its significance, the space presents several spatial challenges and offers clear targets for strategic intervention.



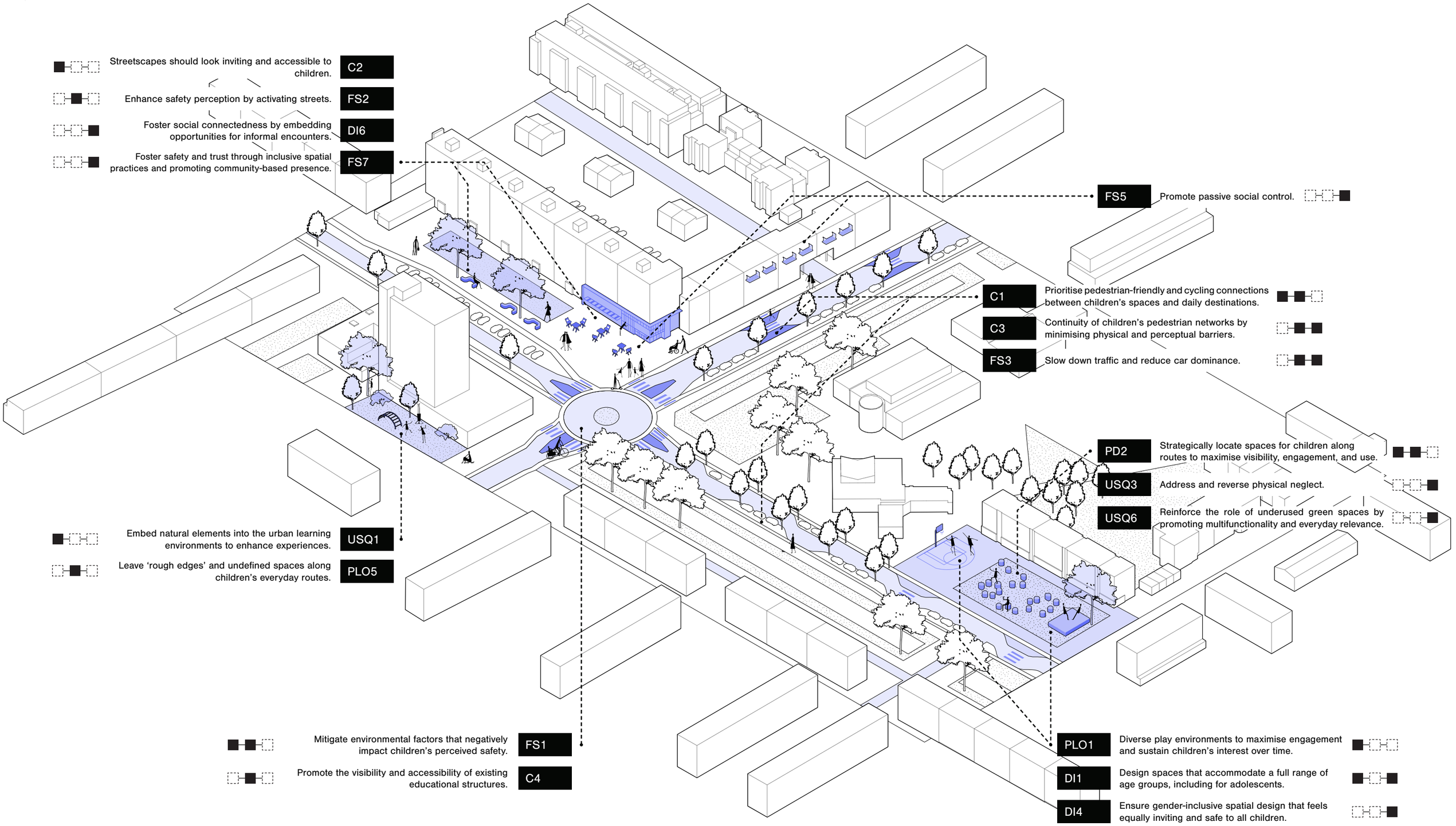
2.3. STRATEGIC ACTIONS: NEEDS-BASED INTERVENTIONS

2.3.1. Roundabout Node

This drawing illustrates how different spatial interventions can respond to identified needs in the roundabout context. Highlighted in blue, the design exemplifies possible spatial implementations of strategic actions. The relationship between each action and the three needs objectives—*Strong Learning Environment (Foundation)*, *Freedom to Roam and Explore*, and *Targeted Support*—is represented through a visual coding system for quick reference.



URBAN SPATIAL QUALITY	PLAY & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES	DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY	CONNECTIVITY	FEELINGS OF SAFETY	PROXIMITY & DISTRIBUTION
USQ1	PLO1	DI1	C1	FS1	PD2
USQ3	PLO5	DI4	C2	FS2	
USQ6		DI6	C4	FS3	
				FS5	

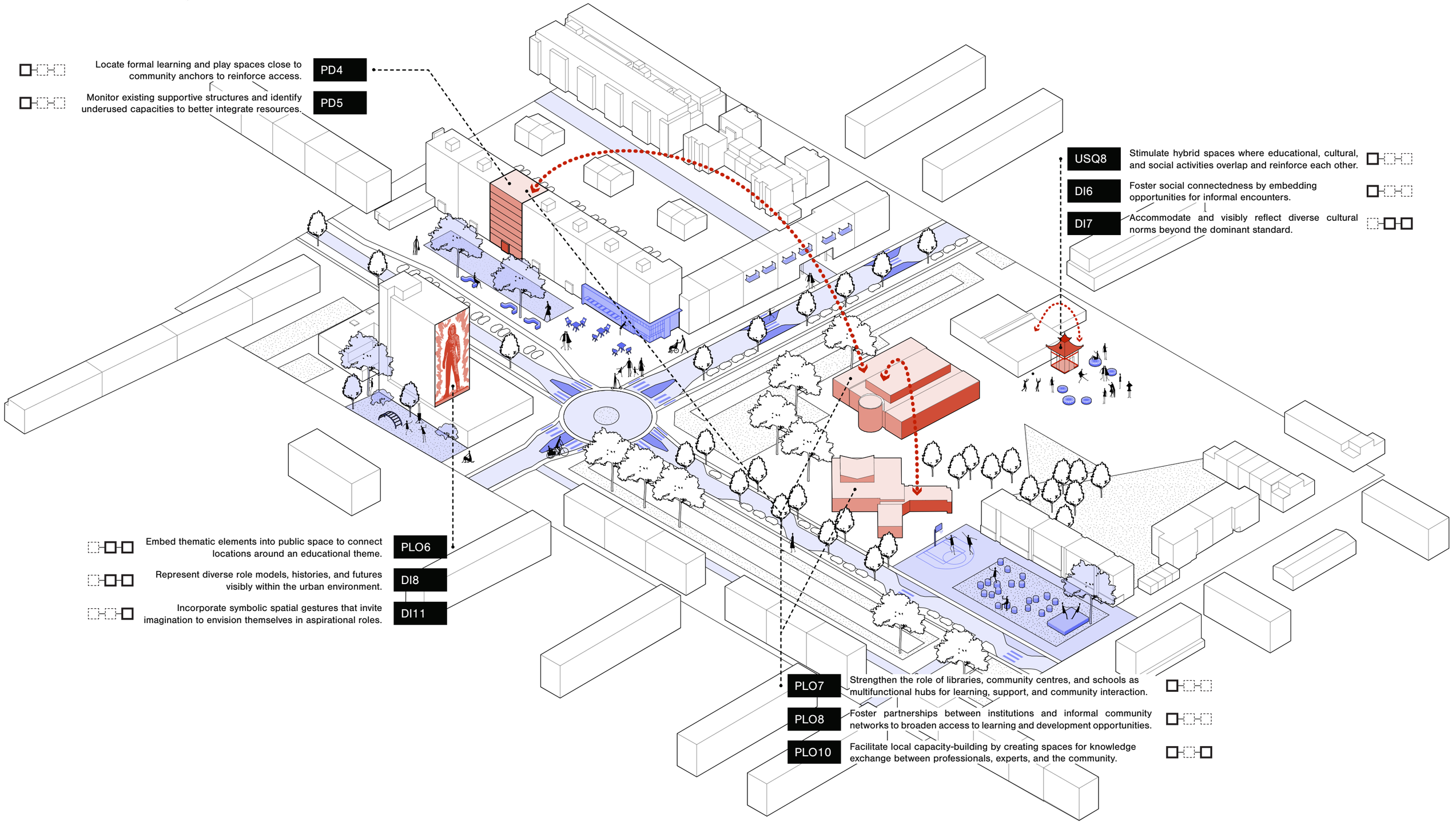


2.4. STRATEGIC ACTIONS: OPPORTUNITIES-BASED INTERVENTIONS

2.4.1. Roundabout Node

Building on the needs-based interventions, this new layer explores how opportunities-based objectives can be activated in space. New interventions are highlighted in red, illustrating additional strategic actions that align with the objectives of *Networks of Support*, *Actively Learning Through Space*, and *Dreaming and believing*. Together, they expand the potential of the environment beyond addressing needs, towards enabling broader developmental and imaginative possibilities.

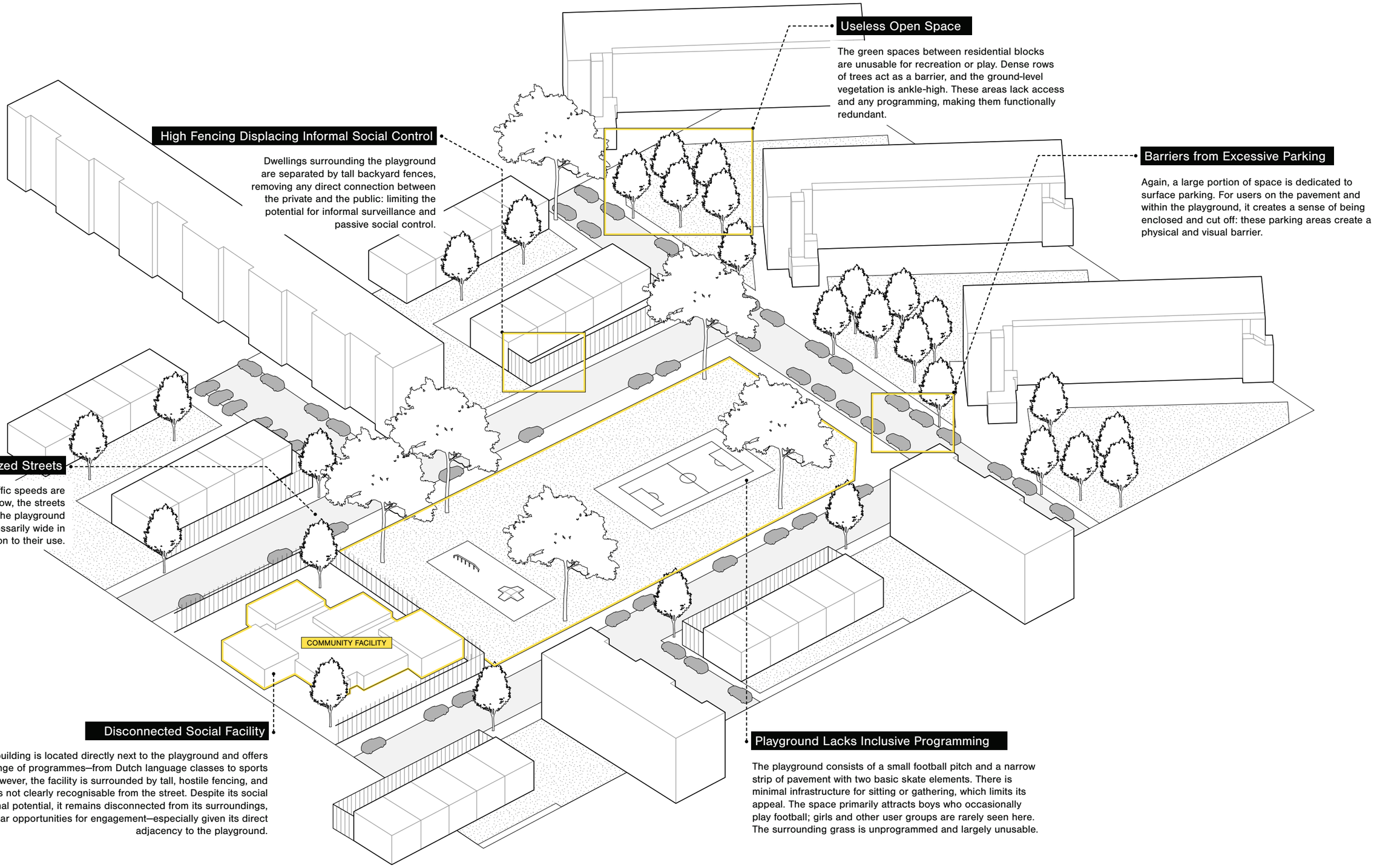
URBAN SPATIAL QUALITY	PLAY & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES	DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY	CONNECTIVITY	FEELINGS OF SAFETY	PROXIMITY & DISTRIBUTION
USQ8	PLO6	DI6			PD4
	PLO7	DI7			PD5
	PLO8	DI8			
	PLO10				



2.2. CONTEXT ASSESSMENT

2.2.2. Playground Setting

Moving on, this next neighbourhood zoom-in focuses on a playground and its immediate surroundings—an environment already centred around a dedicated space for children. The area includes a play space, adjacent housing, and a nearby community facility—elements that should, in theory, make it an important setting for local children's everyday lives, as well as social and recreational activity. However, the environment reveals several spatial limitations and missed opportunities in terms of attractiveness, accessibility, inclusivity, and passive social control.



Useless Open Space

The green spaces between residential blocks are unusable for recreation or play. Dense rows of trees act as a barrier, and the ground-level vegetation is ankle-high. These areas lack access and any programming, making them functionally redundant.

High Fencing Displacing Informal Social Control

Dwellings surrounding the playground are separated by tall backyard fences, removing any direct connection between the private and the public: limiting the potential for informal surveillance and passive social control.

Barriers from Excessive Parking

Again, a large portion of space is dedicated to surface parking. For users on the pavement and within the playground, it creates a sense of being enclosed and cut off: these parking areas create a physical and visual barrier.

Oversized Streets

While traffic speeds are relatively low, the streets surrounding the playground are unnecessarily wide in proportion to their use.

Disconnected Social Facility

A community building is located directly next to the playground and offers a wide range of programmes—from Dutch language classes to sports activities. However, the facility is surrounded by tall, hostile fencing, and its function is not clearly recognisable from the street. Despite its social and educational potential, it remains disconnected from its surroundings, missing clear opportunities for engagement—especially given its direct adjacency to the playground.

Playground Lacks Inclusive Programming

The playground consists of a small football pitch and a narrow strip of pavement with two basic skate elements. There is minimal infrastructure for sitting or gathering, which limits its appeal. The space primarily attracts boys who occasionally play football; girls and other user groups are rarely seen here. The surrounding grass is unprogrammed and largely unusable.

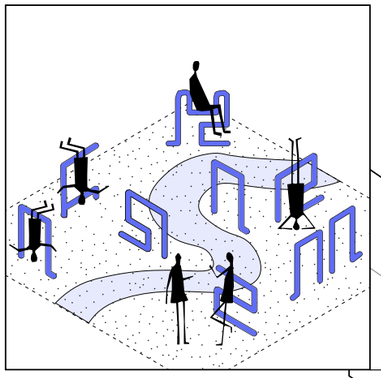
2.3. STRATEGIC ACTIONS: NEEDS-BASED INTERVENTIONS

2.3.2. Playground Setting

Shifting focus to the playground context, this spread applies the same strategic framework to explore how spatial interventions can respond to children's needs in an environment that appears already dedicated to children, but falls short in practice. Highlighted in blue, the proposals demonstrate how interventions in this residential setting can contribute to the three needs objectives—*Strong Learning Environment (Foundation)*, *Freedom to Roam and Explore*, and *Targeted Support*.



URBAN SPATIAL QUALITY	PLAY & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES	DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY	CONNECTIVITY	FEELINGS OF SAFETY	PROXIMITY & DISTRIBUTION
USQ2	PLO1	DI1	C2	FS3	
USQ3	PLO3	DI2	C3	FS4	
USQ6		DI4		FS5	
USQ7		DI5		FS6	
				FS7	



PLO3 Integrate elements that stimulate learning and curiosity within everyday spaces.

DI4 Ensure gender-inclusive spatial design that feels equally inviting and safe to all children.

This intervention introduces multifunctional, playful elements that prioritise social interaction—responding to both insights from the ongoing master's thesis of a friend, research by Tiggelman (2025), which focuses on designing public space for young teenage girls, and references from Make Space for Girls (2025). These elements offer an alternative to competitive play, supporting more open-ended use that invites co-presence, creativity, and comfort in shared space.

FS5 Promote passive social control.

FS7 Foster safety and trust through promoting community-based presence

USQ6 Reinforce the role of underused green spaces by promoting multifunctionality and everyday relevance.

USQ7 Introduce visual variety, permeability, and active edges along connecting streets.

Streetscapes should look inviting and accessible to children. **C2**

Slow down traffic and reduce car dominance. **FS3**

Diverse play environments to maximise engagement and sustain children's interest over time. **PLO1**

Design spaces that accommodate a full range of age groups, including for adolescents. **DI1**

FS6 Offer constructive and socially accepted alternatives to hanging youth groups.

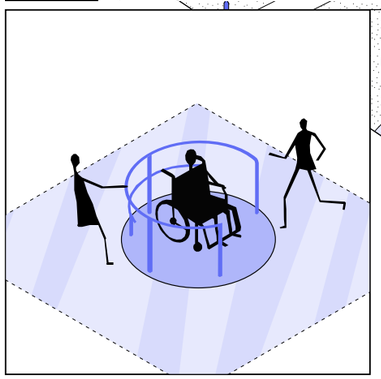
USQ2 Provide sufficient shade, greenery, and cooling elements to reduce heat stress.

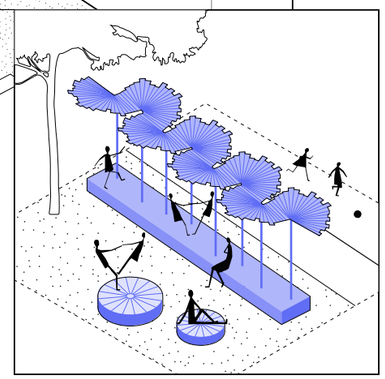
USQ3 Address and reverse physical neglect.

DI4 Ensure gender-inclusive spatial design that feels equally inviting and safe to all children.

DI5 Challenge gendered patterns of space use.

DI2 Design spaces for a broad spectrum of physical (and cognitive) abilities.





These exemplary spatial interventions are also based on recommendations from Make Space for Girls (2025). The first addresses gendered patterns in public play space by replacing one court with two. With only one pitch, boys often dominate the space. Providing multiple courts gives everyone a chance to play, challenging this pattern and encouraging girls to join activities typically seen as 'boy activities'.

Beyond sports, girls often seek spaces that are versatile, social, imaginative, and offer shelter—but these qualities are missing. In response, a multifunctional platform is added alongside the courts, featuring playful canopy elements and interactive posts. It offers shelter and supports a range of uses—such as informal gathering, creative play, or dance—ensuring a gender-inclusive environment that feels inviting and safe for girls.

Promote the visibility and accessibility of existing structures. **C3**

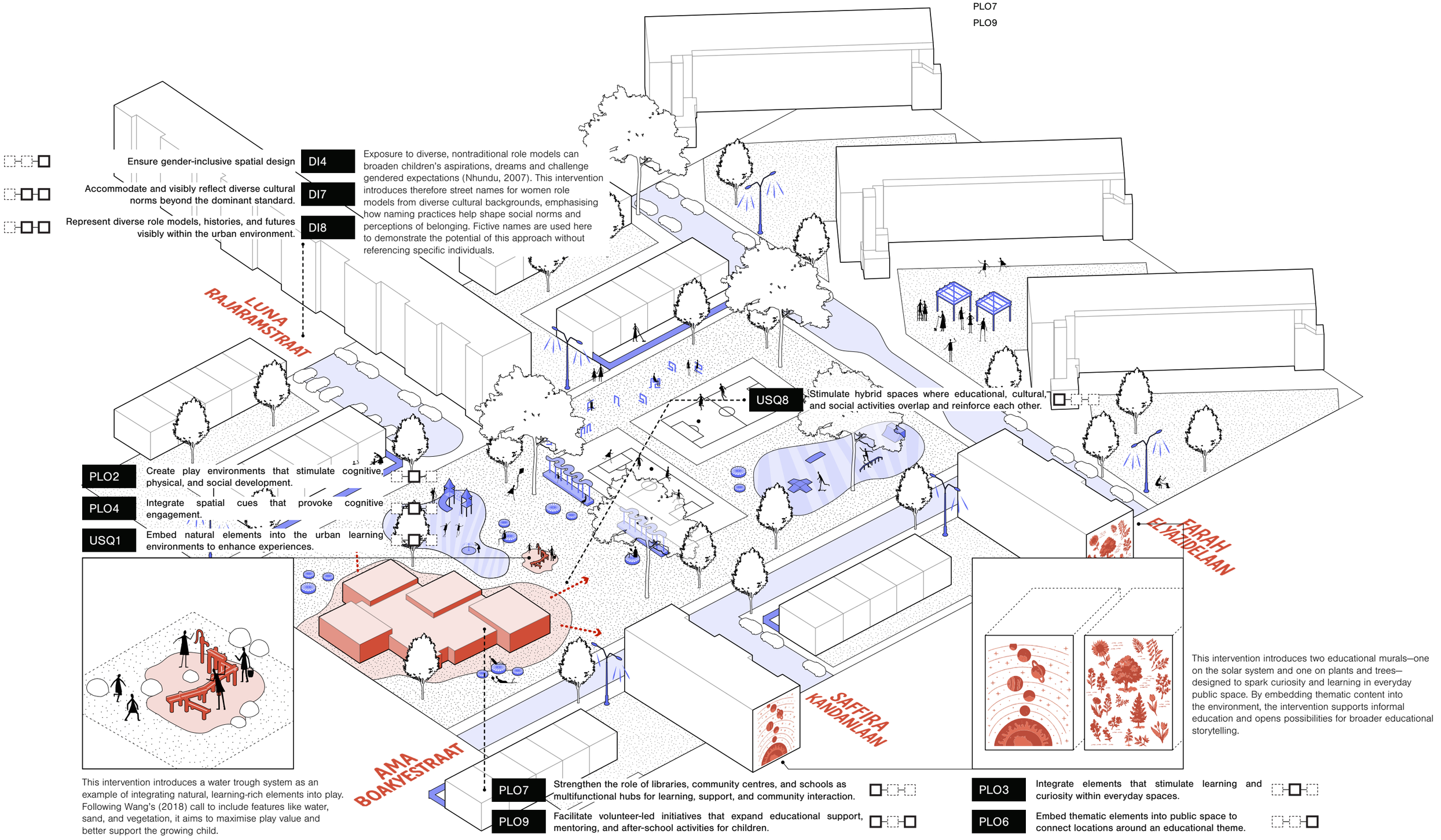
FS4 Strengthen visibility and spatial legibility through thoughtful lighting strategies.

2.4. STRATEGIC ACTIONS: OPPORTUNITIES-BASED INTERVENTIONS

2.4.2. Playground Setting

Following the same structure, the opportunities-based layer is now applied to the playground context. Highlighted in red are other exemplary spatial interventions linked to strategic actions, aiming to unlock spatial potential in line with the objectives of *Networks of Support*, *Actively Learning Through Space*, and *Dreaming and Believing*.

URBAN SPATIAL QUALITY	PLAY & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES	DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY	CONNECTIVITY	FEELINGS OF SAFETY	PROXIMITY & DISTRIBUTION
USQ8	PLO2	DI4			
	PLO3	DI7			
	PLO4	DI8			
	PLO6				
	PLO7				
	PLO9				



This intervention introduces a water trough system as an example of integrating natural, learning-rich elements into play. Following Wang's (2018) call to include features like water, sand, and vegetation, it aims to maximise play value and better support the growing child.

This intervention introduces two educational murals—one on the solar system and one on plants and trees—designed to spark curiosity and learning in everyday public space. By embedding thematic content into the environment, the intervention supports informal education and opens possibilities for broader educational storytelling.

2.5. IMPACTS ON DAILY LIFE

2.5.1. Revisiting the Personas

In the following section, the strategic actions are tested at street level in Bouwlust and Vrederust. Three different settings are reimagined by working through eye-level views*. The visuals aim to **show how spatial planning can directly respond to the needs of the personas** by addressing issues like **safety**, **accessibility**, and **inclusivity**, while also responding to the urgent need for **spaces that inspire and support**.

Each setting is taken from a persona's personal story. These were contexts where spatial planning and urban design have, in different ways, shaped environments that failed the personas. The gaps identified in their lived experiences eventually informed the development of strategic actions. These actions are now **translated into local interventions** that respond directly to the challenges raised.

In an alternative universe, where the strategic actions proposed in this thesis are immediately treated as top-priority, this is how the near futures of Amira, Rayan, and Sara might unfold.

AMIRA

Amira has limited access to the urban environment. **Safety concerns**, both from her parents and herself, keep her mostly inside the home. Moreover, the neighbourhood **lacks inspiration** or **hinders use** for any type of activity. Nothing draws her in. The urban environment feels **inaccessible and uninspiring**. As a result, her pedagogical learning environment is very small. She cannot benefit from learning and development opportunities through space like others. Interventions should focus on **increasing perceived safety** and **reactivating her interest in public space**.

RAYAN

Rayan has every reason to go out. The home environment is overcrowded, leaving little space for privacy, concentration or focus on personal development. However, once outside, his time turns into aimless wandering or infinite games of football. The rest of the neighbourhood sends indirect signals that there is **nothing there for him**, or that he **isn't wanted or welcome**. While some supportive structures that fit Rayan's needs exist, they **aren't reaching him**. Interventions should focus on reinforcing his sense that this **neighbourhood is also his**, and on improving the **visibility and approachability of supportive learning spaces**.

SARA

Sara enjoys spending time with her friends. However, she is often disappointed by the **lack of suitable places** in the neighbourhood to hang out with her girlfriends. The few designated spaces for pre-teens are often **taken over by boys** and **do not meet their needs or interests**. Additionally, **poor maintenance** in public space makes her feel overlooked by the city. Interventions for Sara should focus on offering a wider variety of **child-centred**, **gender-inclusive spaces** and on **ensuring the quality and upkeep** of these environments.







* All photographs and reimagined visuals presented on the following pages were created by the author

BEFORE



AFTER

A reimagined street setting shows how specific spatial interventions can completely transform Amira's experience. Improved lighting, the activation of passive social control and promoting stronger neighbourly connections increase her and her parents' sense of safety. The environment also invites and inspires more child-centred activities, motivating Amira to go outside, play and explore.



BEFORE



AFTER

A reimagined urban setting shows how specific spatial interventions can strengthen Rayan's sense of belonging. Child-centred, welcoming, and legible spaces signal that this neighbourhood is also designed for him. He feels that he belongs, understands what the urban environment offers, and knows where to go for the right supportive structures for his needs.



BEFORE



AFTER

A reimagined playground setting shows how specific spatial interventions can enhance Sara's experience. With special attention to diversity and the needs of pre-teen girls, the space now invites children of all ages and genders to engage. Sara regularly spends time here with her friends—playing, relaxing, dancing—while feeling safe and seen.



2.6. ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

Urban inequality is often treated as static. But what if we shift that view? This project has shown how spatial interventions can support equity. Still, it also makes clear: spatial change alone is not enough.

The bottom arrow shows business as usual. No real shift. Policies continue, neighbourhoods stay divided, and children's opportunities remain unequal. This path is familiar—and it leads us nowhere new.

The second arrow asks: what happens if we drastically change the spatial domain? We redesign streets, improve playgrounds, and change procedural systems for the better. These changes matter. They can help. But they only reach so far without institutional or systemic support.

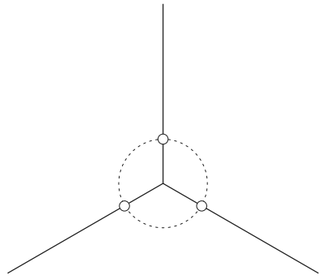
Then comes the third arrow. Here, spatial planning and one other domain—like education or policy—change together. They reinforce each other. Momentum builds. What once seemed out of reach becomes possible.

The final arrow imagines something bigger. All three domains change together—spatial, institutional, and societal. The curve starts steep, driven by their mutual reinforcement. This is the future we're told is unrealistic.

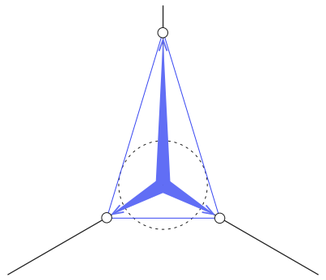
The preferable future will be somewhere in between. However one thing is for sure: if we **continue along the current path**, a **preferable future** will remain **out of reach**.

Where we go from here depends on which arrow we follow. This framework was just a start. The rest is open.

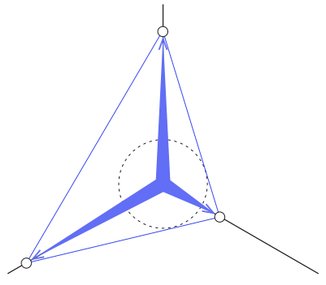
No Structural Change



Single-Domain Change: Spatial



Dual-Domain Change: Spatial x Institutional or Educational



Systemic Change Across All Domains

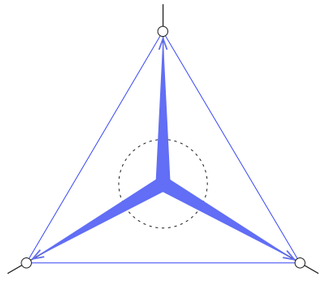
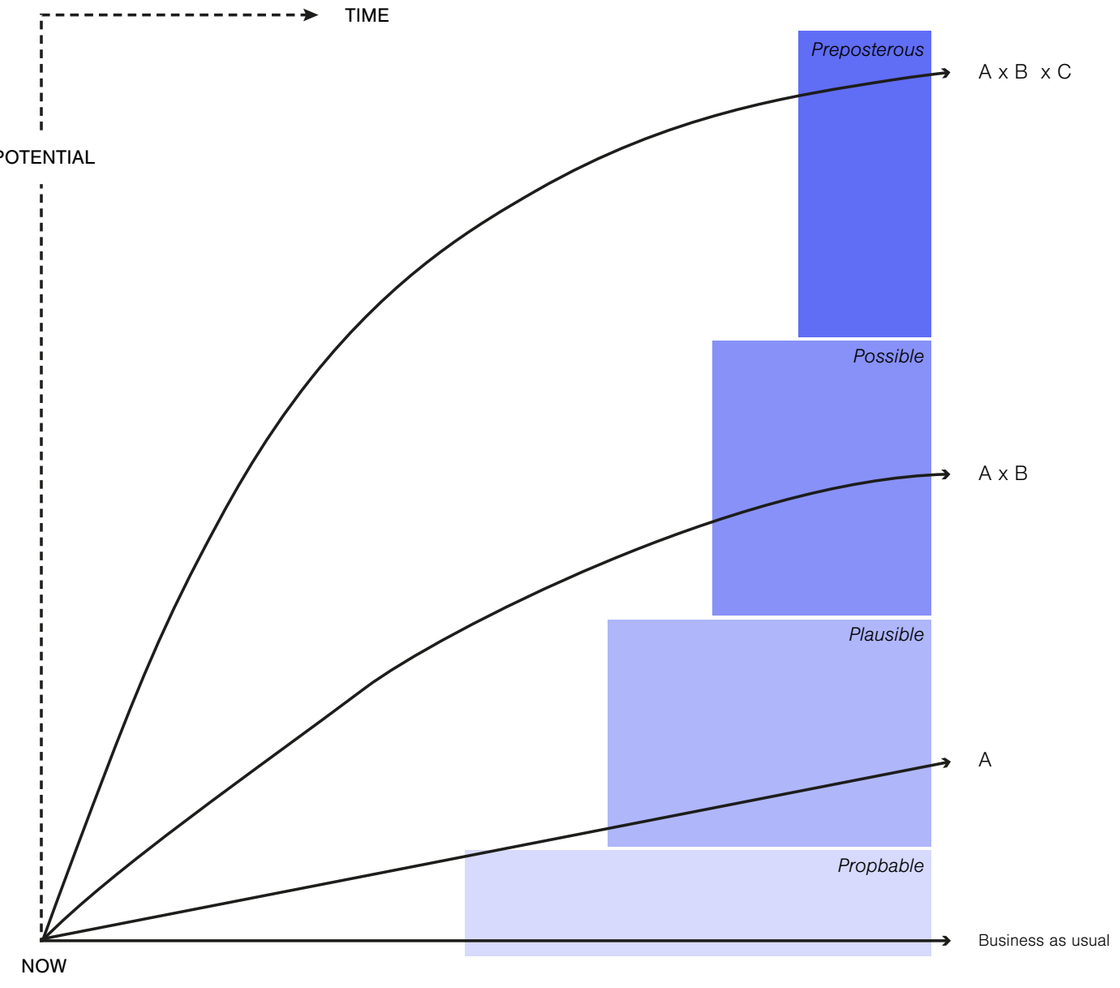


Fig. 116 Scenario Paths for Systemic Transformation (adapted and extended from Voros, 2003)

This diagram visualises four future scenarios based on varying levels of intervention across the spatial, institutional, and educational domains. The steepness and direction of each path reflect the assumed degree and interaction of systemic change, ranging from 'business as usual' to transformative futures where all domains reinforce each other's acceleration.



Alternative Futures of Intervention

Wrap-Up.

01.
Conclusion

02.
Reflection

03.
References



CONCLUSION

i. Sub-Research Questions

ii. Main-Research Question

i. SUB-RESEARCH QUESTIONS

HOW HAS SOCIOECONOMIC SEGREGATION EVOLVED OVER TIME, AND HOW HAS IT SHAPED LIVING CONDITIONS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHILDREN IN THE HAGUE?

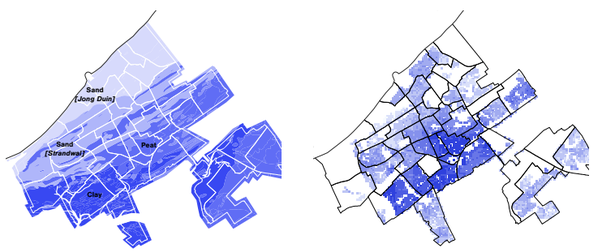
By analysing the historical development and context across time and through scale, a deeper understanding has emerged of how socioeconomic segregation has shaped The Hague. Tracing both autonomous trends and deliberate planning decisions shows that this segregation is not incidental or coincidental, but structurally embedded in the history of the city's development.

The Hague has proven to be unique in its combination of circumstances, where processes like labour migration, and economic restructuring further, all come together. From very specific post-war zoning expansion plans, and patterns of migrant settlement, the city's urban structure has consistently reflected and deliberately reproduced socio-spatial contrast.

But, one of the most persistent dividing lines is the everlasting contrast between the sand and peat. This natural topography formed the basis of an early spatial distinction, which soon became a socioeconomic one—richer households settling on higher ground, while lower-income groups were concentrated in the peat areas. Over time, this has evolved from a geographic logic into a social hierarchy that still echoes in the city today.

As a result, children growing up in these neighbourhoods are embedded in environments shaped by decades of socio-spatial separation. Daily realities of where children live, play, and go to school—are directly influenced by this legacy. This historical perspective provides crucial context for understanding the inequalities that continue to shape children's urban experiences in The Hague today.

Fig. 117 Persistent Patterns of Overlap Between Soil Composition and Socioeconomic Segregation (author)



WHERE IN THE HAGUE ARE PATTERNS OF SOCIOECONOMIC SEGREGATION MOST PRONOUNCED, AND HOW ARE THESE REFLECTED IN THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND CHILD-RELATED FACILITIES?

By creating a Socioeconomic Segregation Index based on the concentration of low-income households, residents with a low educational level, residents with a migrant background, and the presence of children aged 0–15, clear patterns of segregation emerge. Neighbourhoods such as Bouwlust en Vrederust, Transvaalkwartier, Schilderswijk, Moerwijk, Laak, and parts of the Centrum stand out as areas with the highest levels of socioeconomic segregation. Strikingly, these patterns align closely with the historical sand and peat divide, as seen in the previous sub-research question—showing clearly how structural inequalities really remain spatially embedded in the city's geography.

The distribution of child-related facilities, such as playgrounds, sports fields, and community centres, appears relatively even across the city. However, nothing is said yet on their quality, accessibility, or effectiveness. When looking at the educational landscape, the contrast becomes sharper. Social safety reports tend to cluster in segregated neighbourhoods, and schools offering higher levels of education (havo/vwo) are disproportionately located in more affluent areas. This raises a critical question: do current spatial distributions of facilities respond to children's needs—or do they reinforce existing inequalities?

The outcome disparities are clear. Children from low-income households and those with a migrant background are statistically less likely to attend higher education tracks. In neighbourhoods with high segregation scores, a large proportion of children experience development and language development delays—issues that significantly affect long-term educational trajectories. These findings suggest that early neighbourhood effects matter deeply. It also prompts reflection on whether equal distribution of educational and supporting-structures infrastructure is enough—or whether structural disadvantage should be met with targeted, place-based investment that actively works to correct these imbalances.

HOW DO CHILDREN NAVIGATE AND EXPERIENCE THEIR URBAN ENVIRONMENT, AND WHAT FACTORS SHAPE THE SCOPE AND QUALITY OF THEIR URBAN ENVIRONMENT?

Children's spatial experience can be understood through the framework of Rasmussen's institutional triangle, which outlines the three main pillars in a child's everyday life: home, school, and recreational space. These are interconnected by city streets, which function as vital corridors in a child's habitual range. However, as time-space geography reveals, children do not all move through this triangle in the same way. Each child's trajectory is shaped by personal, social, and spatial conditions, resulting in a highly individualised and dynamic pedagogical learning environment.

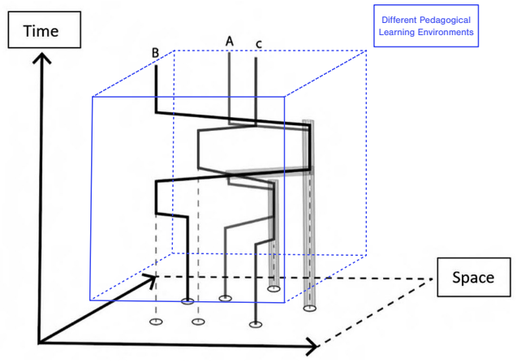
To better understand this complexity, but also how space supports children's development, this project introduces the concept of the pedagogical learning environment. This term refers to the complete set of spatial conditions that enable children to play, learn, socialise, and grow. As such, the pedagogical learning environment is not a fixed spatial unit but a layered system of experiences, constraints, and potentials.

Children growing up in socioeconomically segregated areas often face barriers that reduce their ability to benefit from what the urban fabric has to offer. Understanding how children experience, live and navigate disparities in these landscapes is therefore essential to getting an understanding of differences between explorable urban environment.

But, before considering targeted interventions or context-specific disparities, it is important to first define what constitutes a strong foundational environment for all children. Drawing from theory, literature, and spatial planning principles, this foundation can be assessed through two decisive dimensions: quality and accessibility. These elements serve as the basis for evaluating whether a given environment offers the conditions necessary to realise the full potential of children's learning and development, regardless of neighbourhood context.

While necessary tasks like attending school occur regardless of spatial conditions, optional and social activities—such as playing or engaging with peers in public space—are highly dependent on them. When these conditions are not met, the child's environment becomes limited in reach, reducing opportunities for informal learning, social interaction, and exploration.

Fig. 118 Time-Space Geography: Individual Trajectories as Pedagogical Learning Environments (author)



WHAT LIVED DISPARITIES SHAPE THE EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES OF RESIDENTS IN SOCIOECONOMICALLY SEGREGATED NEIGHBOURHOODS, AND HOW DO THESE MANIFEST IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HAGUE?

To understand how socioeconomic segregation is experienced in daily life, it was essential to first establish a theoretical base. Literature and existing research helped identify common disparities in marginalised neighbourhoods—such as spatial stigma, restricted access, and social exclusion—that often remain hidden in spatial or policy-level analyses. These broader insights served as a crucial base or foundation for conversations during fieldwork.

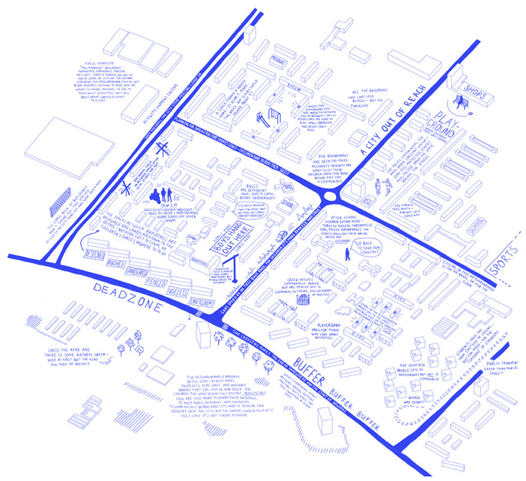
However, this theoretical groundwork alone could not capture the full depth of lived experience. Conversations with residents—particularly parents—revealed how strongly feelings shape spatial reality. Parental perceptions of safety, social expectations, and daily routines often determine the boundaries of a child's explorable urban environment. These decisions don't necessarily always follow predictable patterns, but instead emerge from personal and emotional reasoning. What became clear is that freedom of movement, and thus opportunity, is filtered through the lens of lived emotion.

Lived disparities are not always easily measurable; they manifest in personal perceptions that vary across individuals. However, certain patterns did emerge from conversations. Many residents described poor housing conditions—ranging from overcrowding and soil subsidence to a lack of privacy or outdoor space—which shaped daily life in constraining ways. In response, parents and young adults (reflecting on their own childhoods), expressed a reliance on the surrounding urban space to compensate for these limitations at home. Gender also played a role: girls were more often subject to stricter parental controls, limiting their freedom to explore the neighbourhood and reinforcing unequal access to public space.

Across all conversations, one factor stood out significantly: the overall feelings of unsafety. ranging from traffic dangers to social tensions, from unease about the police to discomfort after dark—but together they formed the most persistent barrier to freedom of movement.

This means that achieving spatial equity in the pedagogical learning environment demand targeted support and additional attention to address the felt limitations and perceptions that reduce access and engagement. A sensitive and place-specific approach is needed to unlock the full developmental potential that the urban environment can offer to all children.

Fig. 119 Softmap of Everyday Perceptions and Lived Realities in Bouwlust en Vrederust (author)



i. SUB-RESEARCH QUESTIONS

HOW DO CURRENT SPATIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURAL SYSTEMS IN THE HAGUE ADDRESS, OVERLOOK, OR REINFORCE INEQUALITIES IN ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY PEDAGOGICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?

To address the question of how current spatial policies and procedural systems in The Hague engage with inequalities in access to high-quality pedagogical learning environments, the framework of Levy's (1996) Web of Institutionalisation was used. The assessment revealed major structural and procedural gaps. While formal policies acknowledge equity in education and spatial development, the connection between the two is rarely made. Institutional responsibilities remain siloed, coordination is weak, and procedural systems often exclude the lived realities of children and families—especially in socioeconomically segregated areas. Civil society plays a role but remains fragmented, and political representation fails to reflect or act on these spatial inequities. Although some promising methodologies and local initiatives exist, their impact is limited by fragmented planning, rigid procedures, and lack of follow-through. These findings point to a clear need for more integrated, inclusive, and responsive institutional frameworks.

WHAT TARGETED NEEDS AND DISPARITIES MUST BE ADDRESSED TO MAXIMISE CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DE-VELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT?

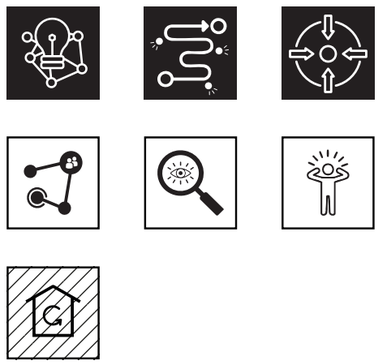
Maximising the potential of the pedagogical learning environment requires recognising that equal provision is not the same as equitable support. The analysis and fieldwork revealed that disparities in lived experience deeply affect how children engage with their environments. It is therefore clear that these areas require targeted atten-tion to overcome structural disadvantages that have built up over time.

Seven objectives have been identified that address different dimensions of the pedagogical learning environment. They reflect areas where the urban context either hinders or holds potential for children's development. The overlap between these objectives reveals that challenges in these neighbourhoods are not isolated but interconnected—reinforcing the need for comprehensive and integrated strategies.

To operationalise these objectives, a set of strategic actions was developed. These actions are intentionally abstract—not tied to fixed design solutions—but instead structured to support adaptability. The focus is not on prescribing specific interventions, but on outlining a conceptual toolkit that can be tailored to different contexts. One strategic action may support multiple objectives, and one objective may require various forms of intervention depending on local conditions. This layered, non-linear structure makes the framework transferable to other cities facing similar patterns of inequality, particularly those shaped by post-war urban typologies.

Ultimately, the most urgent disparities to address are not only spatial but also emotional and perceptual—though they can be meaningfully addressed through spatial means. In many of these neighbourhoods, feelings of unsafety or exclusion limit how much of the city a child can truly engage with. By targeting these less tangible but equally critical dimensions—through inclusive design, programming, and engagement—cities can begin to unlock the full potential of the urban environment as a space for learning, growth, and equity.

Fig. 120 Overview of the Seven Socio-Spatial Objectives (author)



ii. MAIN-RESEARCH QUESTION

HOW CAN SPATIAL PLANNING IMPROVE ACCESS AND QUALITY OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IN SOCIOECONOMICALLY SEGREGATED NEIGHBOURHOODS IN THE HAGUE TO PROMOTE SYSTEMIC EQUITY?

The analysis conducted throughout this thesis has shown how spatial planning can play a critical role in shaping children's access to learning and development opportunities—especially in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods. By tracing historic divides, mapping spatial conditions, and engaging with lived experiences, it has become clear that inequality is embedded not just in outcomes, but also in the built environment that surrounds children every day. Addressing this requires context-sensitive support.

Understanding the pedagogical learning environment as both a physical and social construct allows for a more layered perspective. When these environments are perceived as fragmented, unsafe, or uninviting, children's ability to explore—and with it, their learning and development opportunities—declines. The most pressing needs to address are therefore not limited to physical neglect, but include gaps in diversity, safety, and inclusion.

To move from findings to actionable strategies, this project developed a framework based on evolving insights into what constitutes the best possible pedagogical learning environment. Throughout the research, this understanding was continuously refined—serving as a guiding thread across all phases of the project. Based on this foundation, seven objectives were identified, each addressing a key condition for improving children's spatial learning opportunities. These objectives are supported by strategic actions that remain abstract enough to adapt across contexts, yet concrete enough to inform meaningful spatial interventions. This approach recognises that urban inequality is layered and systemic, and must be addressed through integrated, adaptable strategies rather than one-size-fits-all solutions.

On a neighbourhood scale, spatial planning must respond to the specific social and physical context. In the example zoom-ins explored in this project, this meant ensuring accessibility through safe walking and cycling routes, while discouraging car dominance by reducing speeds and limiting traffic flow. In terms of play space design, incorporating multifunctional and versatile equipment supports unstructured, creative forms of physical activity—particularly valuable for girls, who tend to prefer more open-ended modes of engagement. Educational murals placed in public space, covering themes such as the solar system or local ecology, offer everyday moments for informal learning. Seemingly simple interventions, like renaming streets after diverse female role models, can carry symbolic weight by broadening narratives and shifting perceptions of who belongs and who leads. And, identifying and repurposing underused buildings into spaces for education, or local knowledge exchange can strengthen the broader pedagogical infrastructure and help build community capacity in underserved areas.

In conclusion, spatial planning has the potential to meaningfully support systemic equity—if it dares to look beyond surface-level provision. The conceptual framework introduced early in this project illustrated how educational, income, and spatial inequalities are mutually reinforcing. It showed how segregation becomes cyclical, partly through neighbourhood conditions, but also through perceptions of schools and access to resources. By targeting equity in the pedagogical learning environment, this project aimed to disrupt these patterns. The strategic focus on accessibility and quality is not just about designing better spaces, but about intervening in a system that otherwise reproduces itself. Spatial planning, when framed around children's lived realities and layered needs, holds transformative potential—not just to improve environments, but to break the cycles that have held too many in place for too long.

REFLECTION

REFLECTION

PERSONAL PROGRESS

Over the course of this thesis, I've kept a personal log of moments that challenged me most—either intellectually, methodologically, or emotionally. Rather than just looking back at the final product, I wanted to reflect on the process in a way that captures the in my experience challenging considerations and decisions I faced along the way. This has left me with a (mostly) chronological list of key points that marked turning moments in my thinking, and that now form the structure of this first part of the reflection. Each passage touches on one of these moments—some more conceptual, others more practical—and together they tell the story behind the research, writing, and designing that made up this project.

1. Spatial Lens
One of the earliest and most persistent challenges I faced was fully committing to a spatial approach to this topic. The inequalities faced by children growing up in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods are a problem I'm passionate about. I've worked in the educational field, did my minor in educational sciences, and have long focused on inequality in education and childhood. Naturally, this background informed the choice of my thesis topic, and a desire to do it justice.

However, writing this thesis within the discipline of urbanism—specifically in the Planning Complex Cities studio—required me to reframe the subject through a spatial lens. Initially, I found it challenging to set aside certain aspects of the topic that I know and care about as well, but that could not be meaningfully addressed within the spatial scope of the thesis. This tension between disciplinary perspectives definitely required considerable effort and back and forth reflection.

The turning point came when I began working on the theoretical framework around lived disparities where I explored how neighbourhoods conditions shape everyday experiences of inequality from the perspective of a child. This offered a conceptual bridge between the social and the spatial. From that moment on, I was better able to translate my existing knowledge into a spatial framework. It clarified where the educational and spatial domains meaningfully intersect, and allowed me to approach the project with greater clarity and coherence.

2. Play, Learning and Education
One of the conceptual challenges I encountered early in the analysis was the blurry dividing line between play, learning, developmental opportunity and education. In neighbourhood research, educational outcomes are often the only measurable indicators available to assess a child's development. At the same time, it became clear in my analysis that play—being more spatially grounded and observable—has a strong and direct relationship with learning and development. Yet drawing a straight line between play and formal educational outcomes is too reductive, creating a narrow frame that risks oversimplifying the broader and more complex ways in which environments shape children's development.

Rather than forcing a strict division or making claims I could not substantiate, I chose to work with the broader concept of a pedagogical learning environment—a term that allows for a more holistic understanding of how children encounter all types of learning and development opportunities in space. This approach gave me the flexibility to recognise the significance of play, informal learning, and spatial design without being constrained to either formal educational settings like schools or solely to play-based environments.

3. Linking Practice to Theory
During the period between P2 and P3, the structure of my project had started to lose clarity—particularly in how the fieldwork connected to the theoretical base. Although the connections were clear to me internally, they weren't yet evident in the narrative of the thesis. This prompted me to take a few steps back and develop a more explicit framework: the Pedagogical Learning Environment. This framework became a crucial turning point, helping to structure my argument and serving as a guiding thread to which new findings could be anchored and further developed.

4. Reframing Purpose of the Project
In the second half of the project, I found myself increasingly questioning the exact aim of the thesis. I had initially placed a great deal of pressure on myself to deliver something almost 'ground-breaking'— an entirely new insight or a bold, innovative solution. I began to realise that the nature of my approach wasn't leading towards that kind of outcome—and perhaps didn't need to.

What followed was a shift in mindset: perhaps the contribution of this project isn't rooted in offering something radically new, but in giving renewed attention to a persistent issue. By delving deeper into the relationship between learning and developmental opportunities and the spatial qualities of the neighbourhood, I found value in shedding light on how these connections shape children's everyday realities. The goal, then, became to frame the problem from new perspectives and to make it visible in a way that not only invites renewed reflection and spatial action, but also ensures the issue continues to receive the attention it, in my professional opinion, urgently deserves.

5. Narrative Framing
A recurring challenge throughout the project was finding the right narrative for addressing socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods. For me, there was a risk in focusing too heavily on disadvantage: it can easily slip into a narrative of victimisation, where residents are portrayed as helpless or defined solely by what they lack. This not only takes away the complexity of lived experience, but overlooks the everyday vibrancy, resilience, and sense of community that also characterises these areas.

At the same time, there is a spatial contrast that cannot be ignored—one that is structurally imposed and that leads to unequal access to opportunities and support, with long-term consequences not just for individuals, but for society more broadly. Capturing both sides—acknowledging resilience without downplaying inequality—required constant reflective attention throughout the project. The aim has been to present a layered narrative: one that recognises the depth of lived experience while still clearly confronting the systemic spatial injustices.

REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Because this project focused on socio-spatial dynamics, I quickly realised that a straightforward, pattern-based approach wouldn't work. The complexity of the topic didn't allow for a simple 'when A, then B' logic. Children's spatial experiences are shaped by a wide range of interrelated factors—emotional, social, and physical—which required a more layered and adaptive research approach.

Due to the DMP, privacy rules, and the need for ethical approval, I was not permitted to formally involve children in interviews or workshops. However, because I work at a primary school in the selected research area, I was able to engage with children informally. These were not formally planned or structured, but they were meaningful. This constraint also led me to adapt my fieldwork approach, shifting my focus more explicitly toward parents and other adults. In hindsight, this adjustment proved valuable. It gave me a fuller understanding of considerations in children's, and how parental perceptions shape the boundaries of explorable space.

Early in the process, I had assumed that children's perspectives would be the central focus of the research. But because of the fieldwork with parents, it became clear that parents play a much larger role than I had anticipated. It is their decisions—driven by perceptions of safety, social norms, and everyday logistics—that often determine how much freedom children have to explore their neighbourhood. Feelings and experiences, both from parents and children, emerged as a crucial layer in understanding how young people interact with space today.

Setting up a strong theoretical foundation helped me identify the themes I wanted to explore in fieldwork and gave direction to the informal conversations that followed. But truly understanding people's spatial experiences meant listening—allowing participants to guide the conversation rather than sticking to a rigid interview format. This meant I had long, extensive conversations and heard many stories—even when more than half wasn't directly connected to my research. Often, the most meaningful insights came in these moments of openness.

Because many of the findings were so emotionally and perceptually grounded, I felt the need for another method—one that could help communicate these insights visually and spatially. This is where soft mapping and the use of personas came into the process, even though it was not something I had planned from the start. Not everything could be traced back to a clear causal relationship—there was rarely a moment where one could say, "this is exactly why a child cannot do A or B." Instead, there was an overall atmosphere: an interrelatedness of constraints, feelings, and experiences, both positive and negative, that together defined how a neighbourhood is lived.

Eventually, all of this came together in the formulation of strategic actions. These actions were never meant to be one-to-one solutions, but rather conceptual tools—based on the identified objectives—that could help structure future thinking. Since the issue at hand is highly contextual and emotionally layered, there is no single spatial response. A single strategic action might take very different forms depending on the context. To show how these actions might take shape on the ground, I developed two exemplary zoom-ins—each with distinct spatial and social characteristics.

In conclusion, undertaking this type of exploratory research challenged me to accept uncertainty and complexity as part of the process. As an urban designer, it deepened my awareness of how spatial practices intersect with emotion, perception, and social structure. It taught me to balance theoretical grounding with responsiveness in the field, and to find ways to give form to intangible experiences.

SOCIETAL RELEVANCE

This thesis centres around a problem that is both urgent and painfully visible in Dutch society today: the unequal educational opportunities tied to place. The idea that a child's future is shaped more by their environment than their ability should be a concern to everyone. Through both my research and my daily work in a primary school located in a socioeconomically segregated neighbourhood, I've seen how this inequality plays out in real life. Children in these areas are not only navigating educational systems that tend to reinforce disadvantage, but also growing up in environments that shape and limit their access to opportunity in more indirect but powerful ways. This project aims to draw attention to these place-based inequalities—not just through school-level data, but by zooming into the lived and spatial realities that help explain why certain urban environments support development, but moreover, why others do not. By framing these issues spatially, and making visible the subtle ways in which segregation is reinforced, I hope this work contributes to a wider understanding of what fair and just cities for children should look like.

SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Scientifically, this thesis responds to a well-documented but still under-addressed research gap: the relationship between neighbourhood effects and educational outcomes for children. As earlier explained in the thesis, research has pointed out, studies on urban segregation have long neglected how place influences child development and educational pathways—despite the fact that children experience the city locally and rely heavily on their immediate surroundings for learning, play, socialisation and development. This project contributes to that gap by explicitly connecting spatial conditions to developmental opportunity, offering a framework to think about education

REFLECTION

not only in schools, but in the neighbourhood as a broader pedagogical environment. Methodologically, the work combines grounded theory, both informal and formal fieldwork, and spatial analysis. While the outcomes are exploratory and situated, they open up new ways of thinking about the role of urban design in addressing inequality.

TRANSFERABILITY

From the outset, this project was designed with transferability in mind—not in the sense of producing one-size-fits-all outcomes, but by identifying how certain spatial conditions relate to specific developmental needs. By first defining a theoretical foundation in lived disparities between feelings and experiences tied to growing up in socioeconomically segregated neighbourhoods more broadly, I was able to develop a foundation of themes that could apply to multiple urban contexts. I then checked for applicability to the case of The Hague, which helped me determine which topics were relevant in this particular city and which were less so. This filtering process means that while the specific findings may not apply universally, the underlying framework and set of thematic entry points could support similar research or design work in other cities.

Eventually, the project ended up zooming in even further to a very specific urban typology: the post-war, suburban, car-oriented neighbourhood. Within this context, I explored what a strong pedagogical learning environment should entail, and proposed targeted support interventions suited to this neighbourhood type. While some spatial nuances may vary, many Dutch cities have similar neighbourhoods, meaning the general structure of the findings is likely to be relevant elsewhere—albeit with contextual adjustments. Moreover, because the strategic actions developed remain intentionally abstract—reflecting the fact that the core challenge turned out to be improving more an overall ‘feel’ or ‘experience’ of a neighbourhood rather than solving a particular spatial set of elements—they are not tied to fixed interventions. This makes them adaptable and open to interpretation, allowing for context-specific applications depending on local conditions. In that sense, the project offers both a conceptual foundation and a flexible toolkit for thinking about child-centred, equitable neighbourhoods in other settings.

REFERENCES

i. Literature References

ii. Image References

iii. References for Media Excerpts and Statistical Material

iv. Cartographic and Spatial Data References

i. LITERATURE REFERENCES

Aarland, K., & Reid, C. K. (2019). Homeownership and residential stability: Does tenure really make a difference? International Journal of Housing Policy, 19(2), 165–191. https://doi.org/10.1080/19491247.2017.1397927

Acevedo-Garcia, D., Osypuk, T. L., McArdle, N., & Williams, D. R. (2008). Toward A Policy-Relevant Analysis Of Geographic And Racial/Ethnic Disparities In Child Health. Health Affairs, 27(2), 321–333. https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.27.2.321

Adam, E. K. (2004). Beyond Quality: Parental and Residential Stability and Children's Adjustment. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 13(5), 210–213. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0963-7214.2004.00310.x

Akkose, G., Meral Akgul, C., & Dino, I. G. (2021). Educational building retrofit under climate change and urban heat island effect. Journal of Building Engineering, 40, 102294. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jobe.2021.102294

Anderson, E. (2023). Hermeneutic Labor: The Gendered Burden of Interpretation in Intimate Relationships between Women and Men. Hypatia, 38(1), 177–197. https://doi.org/10.1017/hyp.2023.11

Antoniadis, D., Katsoulas, N., & Papanastasiou, D. (2020). Thermal Environment of Urban Schoolyards: Current and Future Design with Respect to Children's Thermal Comfort. Atmosphere, 11(11), 1144. https://doi.org/10.3390/atmos11111144

Ataol, Krishnamurthy, & Van Wesemael. (2019). Children's Participation in Urban Planning and Design: A Systematic Review. Children, Youth and Environments, 29(2), 27. https://doi.org/10.7721/chilyoutenvi.29.2.0027

Atkinson, R., & Blandy, S. (2005). Introduction: International Perspectives on The New Enclavism and the Rise of Gated Communities. Housing Studies, 20(2), 177–186. https://doi.org/10.1080/0267303042000331718

Atkinson, T. (2015). What can be done about inequality? Juncture, 22(1), 32–41. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2050-5876.2015.00834.x

Augé, M. (2000). Non-places: Introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity (Reprint). Verso.

Ayala-Azcarraga, C., Diaz, D., Fernandez, T., Cordova-Tapia, F., & Zambrano, L. (2023). Uneven Distribution of Urban Green Spaces in Relation to Marginalization in Mexico City. Sustainability, 15(16), 12652. https://doi.org/10.3390/su151612652

Barker, A., Holmes, G., Alam, R., Cape-Davenhill, L., Osei-Appiah, S., & Warrington Brown, S. (2022). What Makes a Park Feel Safe or Unsafe? The views of women, girls and professionals in West Yorkshire. University of Leeds. https://doi.org/10.48785/100/108

Bates, C. R., Bohnert, A. M., & Gerstein, D. E. (2018). Green Schoolyards in Low-Income Urban Neighborhoods: Natural Spaces for Positive Youth Development Outcomes. Frontiers in Psychology, 9, 805. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00805

Beebeejaun, Y. (2017). Gender, urban space, and the right to everyday life. Journal of Urban Affairs, 39(3), 323–334. https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2016.1255526

Beharrie, T. M., & Mabitsela, T. (2023). Emotional labour as experienced by women in leadership positions. SA Journal of Industrial Psychology, 49. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v49i0.2119

Bell, M. C. (2016). Situational Trust: How Disadvantaged Mothers Reconceive Legal Cynicism. Law & Society Review, 50(2), 314–347. https://doi.org/10.1111/lasr.12200

Ben-Shlomo, Y. (2002). A life course approach to chronic disease epidemiology: Conceptual models, empirical challenges and interdisciplinary perspectives. International Journal of Epidemiology, 31(2), 285–293. https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/31.2.285

Bernelius, V., Huilla, H., & Lobato, I. R. (2021). 'Notorious Schools' in 'Notorious Places'? Exploring the Connectedness of Urban and Educational Segregation. Social Inclusion, 9(2), 154–165. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i2.3838

Bettencourt, L., Dixon, J., & Castro, P. (2019). Understanding How and Why Spatial Segregation Endures: A Systematic Review of Recent Research on Intergroup Relations at a Micro-Ecological Scale. Social Psychological Bulletin, 14(2), e33482. https://doi.org/10.32872/spb.v14i2.33482

Blinkert, B. (2004). Quality of the City for Children: Chaos and Order. Children, Youth and Environments, 14(2), 99–112. https://doi.org/10.1353/cye.2004.0064

Boterman, W. R. (2022). School choice and school segregation in the context of gentrifying Amsterdam. Housing Studies, 37(5), 720–741. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2020.1829563

Brakema, M. (2022, November 7). Forse kritiek op plannen voor Den Haag Zuidwest: Raad niet goed geïnformeerd. Omroep West. https://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/4648464/forse-kritiek-op-plannen-voor-den-haag-zuidwest-raad-niet-goed-geinformeerd

Browne-Yung, K., Ziersch, A., & Baum, F. (2016). Neighbourhood, Disorder, Safety and Reputation and the Built Environment: Perceptions of Low Income Individuals and Relevance for Health. Urban Policy and Research, 34(1), 17–38. https://doi.org/10.1080/08111146.2016.1138855

Bruner, C. (2017). ACE, Place, Race, and Poverty: Building Hope for Children. Academic Pediatrics, 17(7), S123–S129. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2017.05.009

Bures, R. M. (2003). Childhood Residential Stability and Health at Midlife. American Journal of Public Health, 93(7), 1144–1148. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.93.7.1144

Charante, M. van. (2022). Het verdriet van de Schilderswijk: Over de teloorgang van een Haagse volkswijk (1960-1980) (J. Sweijen, Ed.; 2e druk). Uitgeverij Blauwburgwal.

Ciciolla, L., & Luthar, S. S. (2019). Invisible Household Labor and Ramifications for Adjustment: Mothers as Captains of Households. Sex Roles, 81(7–8), 467–486. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-018-1001-x

Cohen, G. L., Garcia, J., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Apfel, N., & Brzustoski, P. (2009). Recursive Processes in Self-Affirmation: Intervening to Close the Minority Achievement Gap. Science, 324(5925), 400–403. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1170769

Conley. (2001). A Room with a View or a Room of One's Own? Housing and Social Stratification. Springer, 16(2), 263–280.

Contreras, D., Delgadillo, J., & Riveros, G. (2019). Is home overcrowding a significant factor in children's academic performance? Evidence from Latin America. International Journal of Educational Development, 67, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2019.01.006

Cvencek, D., Fryberg, S. A., Covarrubias, R., & Meltzoff, A. N. (2018). Self-Concepts, Self-Esteem, and Academic Achievement of Minority and Majority North American Elementary School Children. Child Development, 89(4), 1099–1109. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12802

Daly, K. (2007). Qualitative Methods for Family Studies & Human Development. SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452224800

Devine, R. T., & Apperly, I. A. (2022). Willing and able? Theory of mind, social motivation, and social competence in middle childhood and early adolescence. Developmental Science, 25(1), e13137. https://doi.org/10.1111/desc.13137

Devine, R. T., Grumley Traynor, I., Ronchi, L., & Lecce, S. (2024). Children in ethnically diverse classrooms and those with cross-ethnic friendships excel at understanding others' minds. Child Development, 95(5), 1447–1461. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.14085

Dixon, J., Tredoux, C., & Clack, B. (2005). On the Micro-Ecology of Racial Division: A Neglected Dimension of Segregation. South African Journal of Psychology, 35(3), 395–411. https://doi.org/10.1177/008124630503500301

Duncan, O. D., & Duncan, B. (1955). A Methodological Analysis of Segregation Indexes. American Sociological Review, 20(2), 210. https://doi.org/10.2307/2088328

Elias, N., & Scotson, J. (1994). The Established and the Outsiders: A Sociological Enquiry into Community Problems. SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446222126

Erel, U., & Ryan, L. (2019). Migrant Capitals: Proposing a Multi-Level Spatio-Temporal Analytical Framework. Sociology, 53(2), 246–263. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038518785298

Ergler, C., & Smith, M. (2023). Connecting Schools with Local Communities Through Walkable Urban Design. In B. Cleveland, S. Backhouse, P. Chandler, I. McShane, J. M. Clinton, & C. Newton (Eds.), Schools as Community Hubs (pp. 131–145). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-9972-7_9

Evans, G. W., Lepore, S. J., Shejwal, B. R., & Palsane, M. N. (1998). Chronic Residential Crowding and Children's Well-Being: An Ecological Perspective. Child Development, 69(6), 1514–1523. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.1998.tb06174.x

Faber Taylor, A., & Kuo, F. E. (2009). Children With Attention Deficits Concentrate Better After Walk in the Park. Journal of Attention Disorders, 12(5), 402–409. https://doi.org/10.1177/1087054708323000

Faustman, E. M., Silbernagel, S. M., Fenske, R. A., Burbacher, T. M., & Ponce, R. A. (2000). Mechanisms underlying Children's susceptibility to environmental toxicants. Environmental Health Perspectives, 108(suppl 1), 13–21. https://doi.org/10.1289/ehp.00108s113

Fishman, J. A., Cooper, R. L., & Newman, R. M. (1971). Bilingualism in the Barrio.

Forns, J., Dadvand, P., Foraster, M., Alvarez-Pedrerol, M., Rivas, I., López-Vicente, M., Suades-Gonzalez, E., Garcia-Esteban, R., Esnaola, M., Cirach, M., Grellier, J., Basagaña, X., Querol, X., Guxens, M., Nieuwenhuijsen, M. J., & Sunyer, J. (2016). Traffic-Related Air Pollution, Noise at School, and Behavioral Problems in Barcelona Schoolchildren: A Cross-Sectional Study. Environmental Health Perspectives, 124(4), 529–535. https://doi.org/10.1289/ehp.1409449

Franzini, L., Taylor, W., Elliott, M. N., Cuccaro, P., Tortolero, S. R., Janice Gilliland, M., Grunbaum, J., & Schuster, M. A. (2010). Neighborhood characteristics favorable to outdoor physical activity: Disparities by socioeconomic and racial/ethnic composition. Health & Place, 16(2), 267–274. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2009.10.009

Galway, N. (2022). Urban playground: How child-friendly planning and design can save cities. Journal of Urban Design, 27(6), 717–718. https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2022.2075635

Gehl, J. (2010). Cities for people. Island Press.

Gomez, J. (2004). Violent crime and outdoor physical activity among inner-city youth. Preventive Medicine, 39(5), 876–881. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2004.03.019

Gönültaş, S., Selçuk, B., Slaughter, V., Hunter, J. A., & Ruffman, T. (2020). The Capricious Nature of Theory of Mind: Does Mental State Understanding Depend on the Characteristics of the Target? Child Development, 91(2). https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13223

Goux, D., & Maurin, E. (2005). The effect of overcrowded housing on children's performance at school. Journal of Public Economics, 89(5–6), 797–819. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2004.06.005

Guy, M. E., & Newman, M. A. (2004). Women's Jobs, Men's Jobs: Sex Segregation and Emotional Labor. Public Administration Review, 64(3), 289–298. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2004.00373.x

Hägerstrand, T. (1970). What about people in Regional Science? Papers of the Regional Science Association, 24(1), 6–21. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01936872

Hamdi, N. (2010). The Placemaker's Guide to Building Community (0 ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781849775175

Hanssen, G. S. (2019). The Social Sustainable City: How to Involve Children in Designing and Planning for Urban Childhoods? Urban Planning, 4(1), 53–66. https://doi.org/10.17645/up.v4i1.1719

Hochstenbach, C. (2022). Uitgewoond: Waarom het hoog tijd is voor een nieuwe woonpolitiek. Das Mag Uitgevers.

Hodson, C. B., & Sander, H. A. (2017). Green urban landscapes and school-level academic performance. Landscape and Urban Planning, 160, 16–27. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2016.11.011

Hoekstra, N. A. H., Van Den Berg, Y. H. M., Lansu, T. A. M., Mainhard,

i. LITERATURE REFERENCES

M. T., & Cillessen, A. H. N. (2023). Teachers' goals and strategies for classroom seating arrangements: A qualitative study. Teaching and Teacher Education, 124, 104016. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104016

Hoelzel, D., & Scheiner, J. (2022). Mapping opportunity in time and space: An inductive approach. Journal of Transport and Land Use, 15(1), 207–229. https://doi.org/10.5198/jtlu.2022.1903

Hoffimann, E., Barros, H., & Ribeiro, A. (2017). Socioeconomic Inequalities in Green Space Quality and Accessibility—Evidence from a Southern European City. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 14(8), 916. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph14080916

Holloway, S. L., Hubbard, P., Jöns, H., & Pimlott-Wilson, H. (2010). Geographies of education and the significance of children, youth and families. Progress in Human Geography, 34(5), 583–600. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132510362601

Huisman, C. J. (2016). A silent shift? The precarisation of the Dutch rental housing market. Journal of Housing and the Built Environment, 31(1), 93–106. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10901-015-9446-5

Jacobs, J. (1984). Cities and the wealth of nations: Principles of economic life (1. ed). Random House.

Jacobs, J. (1992). The death and life of great American cities (Vintage books ed). Vintage Books.

Johnson, D. P. (2022). Population-Based Disparities in U.S. Urban Heat Exposure from 2003 to 2018. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19(19), 12314. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191912314

Kahn, P. H., & Kellert, S. R. (Eds.). (2002). Children and nature: Psychological, sociocultural, and evolutionary investigations. MIT Press.

Kaplan, R., & Kaplan, S. (1989). The experience of nature: A psychological perspective. Cambridge Univ. Press.

Karsten, L. (1998). Growing Up in Amsterdam: Differentiation and Segregation in Children's Daily Lives. Urban Studies, 35(3), 565–581. https://doi.org/10.1080/0042098984916

Karsten, L. (2011). Children's Social Capital in the Segregated Context of Amsterdam: An Historical-geographical Approach. Urban Studies, 48(8), 1651–1666. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098010375318

Karsten, L., & Felder, N. (2016). De nieuwe generatie stadskinderen: Ruimte maken voor opgroeien. nai010 uitgevers.

Karsten, L., Kuiper, E., & Reubsaet. (2001). Van de straat? De relatie jeugd en openbare ruimte verkend. Nature Genetics - NAT GENET.

Katafygiotou, M. C., & Serghides, D. K. (2014). Thermal comfort of a typical secondary school building in Cyprus. Sustainable Cities and Society, 13, 303–312. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scs.2014.03.004

Katz, L. F., Kling, J. R., & Liebman, J. B. (2001). Moving to Opportunity in Boston: Early Results of a Randomized Mobility Experiment. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 116(2), 607–654. https://doi.org/10.1162/00335530151144113

Kelly, C. M., Schootman, M., Baker, E. A., Barnidge, E. K., & Lemes, A. (2007). The association of sidewalk walkability and physical disorder with area-level race and poverty. Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health, 61(11), 978–983. https://doi.org/10.1136/jech.2006.054775

King, R. J. (1988). Urban Design in Capitalist Society. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 6(4), 445–474. https://doi.org/10.1068/d060445

Kingery-Page, K., & Melvin, R. (2013). Site as Experiential Playground: Artistic Research for a Learning Landscape. The International Journal of Pedagogy and Curriculum, 19(4), 71–89. https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-7963/CGP/v19i04/48940

Kirk, D. S., & Papachristos, A. V. (2011). Cultural Mechanisms and the Persistence of Neighborhood Violence. American Journal of Sociology, 116(4), 1190–1233. https://doi.org/10.1086/655754

Kullberg, J., Mouktadibillah, R., & de Vries, J. (2021). Opgroeien in een kwetsbare wijk: Over buurteffecten en persoonlijke ervaringen van jongens en jonge mannen. Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.

Kuyvenhoven, J., & Boterman, W. R. (2021). Neighbourhood and school effects on educational inequalities in the transition from primary to secondary education in Amsterdam. Urban Studies, 58(13), 2660–2682. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098020959011

Leventhal, T., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2000). The neighborhoods they live in: The effects of neighborhood residence on child and adolescent outcomes. Psychological Bulletin, 126(2), 309–337. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.126.2.309

Levy, C. (1996) 'The Process of Institutionalising Gender in Policy and Planning: The "Web" of Institutionalisation', Working Paper No.74, Development Planning Unit, University College London: London.

Li, D., Chiang, Y.-C., Sang, H., & Sullivan, W. C. (2019). Beyond the school grounds: Links between density of tree cover in school surroundings and high school academic performance. Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, 38, 42–53. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2018.11.001

Lorentzen, J. C., Georgellis, A., Albin, M., & Jonsson, M. (2024). Residential overcrowding in relation to children's health, environment and schooling – a qualitative study. Scandinavian Journal of Public Health, 52(7), 829–837. https://doi.org/10.1177/14034948231198285

Louv, R. (2008). Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature-deficit disorder (updated and expanded). Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

Marcuse, P. (2009). From critical urban theory to the right to the city. City, 13(2–3), 185–197. https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810902982177

McKeown, S., & Dixon, J. (2017). The "contact hypothesis": Critical reflections and future directions. Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 11(1), e12295. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12295

Meier, K. J., Mastracci, S. H., & Wilson, K. (2006). Gender and Emotional Labor in Public Organizations: An Empirical Examination of the Link to Performance. Public Administration Review, 66(6), 899–909. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00657.x

Meyer, H., & Westrik, J. (2020). Stedenbouw: kern en perspectieven.

Mitchell, B. C., & Chakraborty, J. (2018). Exploring the relationship between residential segregation and thermal inequity in 20 U.S. cities. Local Environment, 23(8), 796–813. https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2018.1474861

Moore, R. C. (1986). Childhood's domain: Play and place in child development. Croom Helm.

Muhammad, M., Wallerstein, N., Sussman, A. L., Avila, M., Belone, L., & Duran, B. (2015). Reflections on Researcher Identity and Power: The Impact of Positionality on Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Processes and Outcomes. Critical Sociology, 41(7–8), 1045–1063. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920513516025

Musterd, S., Marcińczak, S., Van Ham, M., & Tammaru, T. (2017). Socioeconomic segregation in European capital cities. Increasing separation between poor and rich. Urban Geography, 38(7), 1062–1083. https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2016.1228371

Musterd, S., & Ostendorf, W. (2003). 3.5. Understanding Segregation in the Metropolitan Area of Amsterdam. In W. Salet & S. Musterd (Eds.), Amsterdam Human Capital (pp. 181–198). Amsterdam University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9789048505180-011

Musterd, S., & Ostendorf, W. (2008). Integrated urban renewal in The Netherlands: A critical appraisal. Urban Research & Practice, 1(1), 78–92. https://doi.org/10.1080/17535060701795389

Musterd, S., & Ostendorf, W. (2023). Urban renewal policies in the Netherlands in an era of changing welfare regimes. Urban Research & Practice, 16(1), 92–108. https://doi.org/10.1080/17535069.2021.1983861

Musterd, S., & Van Kempen, R. (2009). SEGREGATION AND HOUSING OF MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS IN WESTERN EUROPEAN CITIES. Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie, 100(4), 559–566. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9663.2009.00558.x

Natarajan, L. (2017). Socio-spatial learning: A case study of community knowledge in participatory spatial planning. Progress in Planning, 111, 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.progress.2015.06.002

Nhundu, T. J. (2007). Mitigating Gender-typed Occupational Preferences of Zimbabwean Primary School Children: The Use of Biographical Sketches and Portrayals of Female Role Models. Sex Roles, 56(9–10), 639–649. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-007-9204-6

Nieuwenhuis, J., & Xu, J. (2021). Residential Segregation and Unequal Access to Schools. Social Inclusion, 9(2), 142–153. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i2.3606

Oishi, S., & Talhelm, T. (2012). Residential Mobility: What Psychological Research Reveals. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 21(6), 425–430. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721412460675

Paajanen, P., Seppälä, T., Stevenson, C., Riikonen, R., & Finell, E. (2023). Keeping Apart on the Playground: Construction of Informal Segregation on Public Playgrounds in Multiethnic Neighborhoods. Social Psychology Quarterly, 86(1), 53–73. https://doi.org/10.1177/01902725221116632

Pribesh, S., & Downey, D. B. (1999). Why are residential and school moves associated with poor school performance? Demography, 36(4), 521–534. https://doi.org/10.2307/2648088

Quist, W., van Meer, M., & Terpstra, A. (Eds.). (2015). Het werk van Dudok, 100 jaar betekenis. Het Werk van Dudok, 100 Jaar Betekenis, Delft. Delft Digital Press.

Raith, A. (2015). Informal nature experience on the school playground. International Journal for Transformative Research, 2(1), 18–25. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijtr-2015-0004

Rasmussen, K. (2004). Places for Children – Children's Places. Childhood, 11(2), 155–173. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568204043053

Renteria, R., Grineski, S., Collins, T., Flores, A., & Trego, S. (2022). Social disparities in neighborhood heat in the Northeast United States. Environmental Research, 203, 111805. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2021.111805

Richardson, E. A., Pearce, J., Shortt, N. K., & Mitchell, R. (2017). The role of public and private natural space in children's social, emotional and behavioural development in Scotland: A longitudinal study. Environmental Research, 158, 729–736. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2017.07.038

Rigolon, A. (2016). A complex landscape of inequity in access to urban parks: A literature review. Landscape and Urban Planning, 153, 160–169. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2016.05.017

Rosenbaum, E., & Harris, L. E. (2001). Low-Income Families in Their New Neighborhoods: The Short-Term Effects of Moving From Chicago's Public Housing. Journal of Family Issues, 22(2), 183–210. https://doi.org/10.1177/019251301022002004

Ross, C. E., Mirowsky, J., & Pribesh, S. (2001). Powerlessness and the Amplification of Threat: Neighborhood Disadvantage, Disorder, and Mistrust. American Sociological Review, 66(4), 568–591. https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240106600405

Santos Nouri, A., Charalampopoulos, I., & Matzarakis, A. (2018). Beyond Singular Climatic Variables—Identifying the Dynamics of Wholesome Thermo-Physiological Factors for Existing/Future Human Thermal Comfort during Hot Dry Mediterranean Summers. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 15(11), 2362. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15112362

Schmal, H. (1995a). Den Haag of 's-Gravenhage?: De 19de-eeuwse gordel, een zone gemodelleerd door zand en veen. Matrijs.

Schmal, H. (1995b). Den Haag of 's-Gravenhage?: De 19de-eeuwse gordel, een zone gemodelleerd door zand en veen. Matrijs.

Secules, S., McCall, C., Mejia, J. A., Beebe, C., Masters, A. S., L. Sánchez-Peña, M., & Svyantek, M. (2021). Positionality practices and dimensions of impact on equity research: A collaborative inquiry and call to the community. Journal of Engineering Education, 110(1), 19–43. https://doi.org/10.1002/jee.20377

Sivak, E., & Glazkov, K. (2017). Life Outside the Classroom: Everyday Mobility of School Students. Voprosy Obrazovaniya / Educational Studies Moscow, 2, 113–133. https://doi.org/10.17323/1814-

i. LITERATURE REFERENCES

9545-2017-2-113-133

Skogan, W. G. (2009). Concern About Crime and Confidence in the Police: Reassurance or Accountability? Police Quarterly, 12(3), 301–318. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611109339893

Slaughter, V., Imuta, K., Peterson, C. C., & Henry, J. D. (2015). Meta-Analysis of Theory of Mind and Peer Popularity in the Preschool and Early School Years. Child Development, 86(4), 1159–1174. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12372

Sleutjes, B., Ooijevaar, J., & De Valk, H. A. G. (2019). Residential Segregation in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Region: A Longitudinal Analysis Using Scalable Individualised Neighbourhoods. Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie, 110(3), 359–377. https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12356

Solari, C. D., & Mare, R. D. (2012). Housing crowding effects on children's wellbeing. Social Science Research, 41(2), 464–476. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2011.09.012

Stansfeld, S., Berglund, B., Clark, C., Lopez-Barrio, I., Fischer, P., Öhrström, E., Haines, M., Head, J., Hygge, S., Van Kamp, I., & Berry, B. (2005). Aircraft and road traffic noise and children's cognition and health: A cross-national study. The Lancet, 365(9475), 1942–1949. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(05)66660-3

Steele, C. M., Spencer, S. J., & Aronson, J. (2002). Contending with group image: The psychology of stereotype and social identity threat. In Advances in Experimental Social Psychology (Vol. 34, pp. 379–440). Elsevier. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(02)80009-0

Sutton, S. E., & Kemp, S. P. (Eds.). (2011). The paradox of urban space: Inequality and transformation in marginalized communities (1st ed). Palgrave Macmillan.

Swyngedouw, E. (2013). The Segregation of Social Interactions in the Red Line L-Train in Chicago. Symbolic Interaction, 36(3), 293–313. https://doi.org/10.1002/symb.64

Talen, E. (2001). School, Community, and Spatial Equity: An Empirical Investigation of Access to Elementary Schools in West Virginia. Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 91(3), 465–486. https://doi.org/10.1111/0004-5608.00254

Tammaru, T., Knapp, D., Silm, S., Van Ham, M., & Witlox, F. (2021). Spatial Underpinnings of Social Inequalities: A Vicious Circles of Segregation Approach. Social Inclusion, 9(2), 65–76. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i2.4345

Tatum, B. D. (2017). 'Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?': And other conversations about race (Third trade paperback edition). Basic Books.

The Housing and Regeneration Agency. (2023). Inclusive spaces and places for girls and young people: An introduction for Local Government.

Trout, A. L., Nordness, P. D., Pierce, C. D., & Epstein, M. H. (2003). Research on the Academic Status of Children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders: A Review of the Literature From 1961 to 2000. Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 11(4), 198–210. https://doi.org/10.1177/10634266030110040201

Valentine, G. (2017). Public Space and the Culture of Childhood (0 ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315245638

Van Schuppen, S. (Ed.). (2006). Historische atlas van Den Haag: Van hofvijver tot hoftoren. SUN.

Vanos, J. K. (2015). Children's health and vulnerability in outdoor microclimates: A comprehensive review. Environment International, 76, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2014.11.016

Veen, M. M. van, Veen, M. van, & Kersing, V. L. C. (1994). Wonen op het zand en in het veen: Opgravingen in de Annastraat en Boekhorststraat. Gemeente Den Haag, Dienst Stadsbeheer.

Vial, A. C., & Cowgill, C. M. (2022). Heavier Lies Her Crown: Gendered Patterns of Leader Emotional Labor and Their Downstream Effects. Frontiers in Psychology, 13, 849566. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.849566

Visser, M., Scholte, M., & Scheepers, P. (2013). Fear of Crime and Feelings of Unsafety in European Countries: Macro and Micro Explanations in Cross-National Perspective. The Sociological Quarterly, 54(2), 278–301. https://doi.org/10.1111/tsq.12020

Von Simson, K., & Umblijs, J. (2021). Housing conditions and children's school results: Evidence from Norwegian register data. International Journal of Housing Policy, 21(3), 346–371. https://doi.org/10.1080/19491247.2020.1814190

Wang, X., Woolley, H., Tang, Y., Liu, H., & Luo, Y. (2018). Young children's and adults' perceptions of natural play spaces: A case study of Chengdu, southwestern China. Cities, 72, 173–180. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2017.08.011

Weir, L. A., Etelson, D., & Brand, D. A. (2006). Parents' perceptions of neighborhood safety and children's physical activity. Preventive Medicine, 43(3), 212–217. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2006.03.024

Wu, C.-D., McNeely, E., Cedeño-Laurent, J. G., Pan, W.-C., Adamkiewicz, G., Dominici, F., Lung, S.-C. C., Su, H.-J., & Spengler, J. D. (2014). Linking Student Performance in Massachusetts Elementary Schools with the "Greenness" of School Surroundings Using Remote Sensing. PLoS ONE, 9(10), e108548. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0108548

Wu, J., He, Q., Chen, Y., Lin, J., & Wang, S. (2020). Dismantling the fence for social justice? Evidence based on the inequity of urban green space accessibility in the central urban area of Beijing. Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science, 47(4), 626–644. https://doi.org/10.1177/2399808318793139

Zhang, B., & Navejar, R. (2018). Effects of Ambient Noise on the Measurement of Mathematics Achievement for Urban High School Students. Urban Education, 53(10), 1195–1209. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085915613555

Zhu, X., & Lee, C. (2008). Walkability and Safety Around Elementary Schools. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 34(4), 282–290. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2008.01.024

Zomorodian, Z. S., Tahsildoost, M., & Hafezi, M. (2016). Thermal comfort in educational buildings: A review article. Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews, 59, 895–906. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rser.2016.01.033

Zorlu, A., & Mulder, C. H. (2008). Initial and Subsequent Location Choices of Immigrants to the Netherlands. Regional Studies, 42(2), 245–264. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343400601145210

ii. IMAGE REFERENCES

ANP. (2013). [Photograph]. In W. de Gelder, Overheid neemt 3.500 flexwerkers in dienst. de Volkskrant. https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/overheid-neemt-3-500-flexwerkers-in-dienst~bea19107/

ANP. (2025, January 30). Kinderen spelen in speeltuin Schilderswijk [Photograph]. Den Haag FM. https://www.denhaagfm.nl/dhfm/4929917/souhail-10-wil-meer-speeltuinen-buiten-spelen-moet-voor-iedereen-kunnen

Blasweiler, J. (n.d.). Enkele impressies van de Haagse stadsvernieuwing uit de jaren tachtig van de vorige eeuw. Dienst Stedelijke Ontwikkeling, Den Haag. Retrieved April 10, 2025, from https://anemaa.home.xs4all.nl/ges/herinneringen/impressies_stadsvernieuwing_01.htm

Blokhuis, P. (1976). Gastarbeiders [Painting]. Haags Historisch Museum. https://www.haagshistorischmuseum.nl/nl/over-het-museum/collectie/topstukken/turks-koffiehuis-hoefkade-den-haag

Bond Precaire Woonvormen. (n.d.). De gentrificatie van Moerwijk, Den Haag [Photograph]. https://bondprecairewoonvormen.nl/2020/05/de-gentrificatie-van-moerwijk-den-haag/

Dagblad070. (2023, September 5). Gevaarlijke speeltuin Hannemanplantsoen vereist dringend aandacht [Photograph]. https://dagblad070.nl/politiek/gevaarlijke-speeltuinhannemanplantsoenvereist-dringend-aandacht

Delft University of Technology. (2023). How to map the accessibility of urban green spaces. https://www.tudelft.nl/en/2023/io/may/how-to-map-the-accessibility-of-urban-green-spaces

Duivesteijn, A. (1970s). Leefbaarheid in de Schilderswijk [Photograph]. https://www.adriduivesteijn.nl/deleefbaarheid-in-de-schilderswijk-in-1980/

Dulfer, C. (1970s). Photograph of Schilderswijk urban renewal, 1970s [Photograph]. In Fotoboek Schilderswijk. Retrieved from https://indebuurt.nl/denhaag/toen-in/schilderswijk-in-de-jaren-70~74210/#slide-14

EenVandaag. (c. 1980s). Eerste moskee in Nederland [Photograph]. EenVandaag. https://eenvandaag.avrotros.nl/item/eerste-moskee-in-nederland-bestaat-60-jaar/

GeenStijl. (2014, August 11). VanLeeuwen bij ProPatria-demo [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/jJsB3jt2Bxs?si=3GQLVuYFOOQ3aWm5

Gemeente Den Haag. (n.d.). De mobiliteitsgebieden. In Den Haag leefbaar, verkeersveilig en bereikbaar houden. Gemeente Den Haag. https://www.denhaag.nl/nl/verkeer-en-vervoer/den-haag-leefbaar-verkeersveilig-en-bereikbaar-houden/

HaAC. (n.d.). Oude Luchtfoto van Den Haag Zuidwest [Photograph]. Retrieved from https://www.haacs.nl/den-haag-zuidwest-in-transformatie-balanceren-tussen-oud-en-nieuw/

Haags Gemeentearchief. (1971). Children at protest during Minister Udink's visit to the Schilderswijk [Photograph].

Haags Gemeentearchief. (1935). Dudok's uitbreidingsplan voor Ockenburgh, Escamp en Madepolder uit 1935 [Map]. Inventory numbe: z.gr.D 1848.

Haags Historisch Museum. (1949). Structuurplan van W.M. Dudok, 1949 [Map].

Johnson, D. P. (2022). Population-Based Disparities in U.S. Urban Heat Exposure from 2003 to 2018. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19 (19), 12314. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191912314

Jospe. (1965). Leyweg in 1965: Post-war urban design prioritising the car [Photograph]. Haags Gemeentearchief. https://indebuurt.nl/denhaag/toen-in/beelden-uit-het-archief-den-haag-in-de-jaren-60~268769/#slide-3

KijkLab. (2022). Photovoice Molenwijk [Photo series]. https://www.kijklab.nl/project/photovoice

Kok, R. (2016, April 30). Toko China Trading in Den Haag [Photograph]. https://www.flickr.com/photos/asianingredients/26801030036/in/photostream/

L1 Nieuws. (2023, February 27). Spandoek met fascistische leuzen verwijderd van school [Photograph]. https://www.l1nieuws.nl/nieuws/2143878/spandoek-met-fascistische-leuzen-verwijderd-van-school

Martens, P. (1975). Illegale gastarbeiders in een pension, Amsterdam [Photograph]. Nederlands Fotomuseum (NFA Collection).

Nijhuis, P. (2017, September 26). Portiekflats in Zuidwest. In Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), Bijna 21 duizend Haagse kinderen met risico op armoede. https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2017/39/bijna-21-duizend-haagse-kinderen-met-risico-op-armoede

Noord-Hollands Archief. (n.d.). Oproep migrantenverhalen [Photograph]. https://noord-hollandsarchief.nl/nieuws/nieuwsoverzicht/1068-oproep-migrantenverhalen

Noordhollands Dagblad. (n.d.). [Photograph]. https://www.noordhollandsdagblad.nl/binnenland/minister-zet-inspectie-op-islamitische-school/10828859.html

NOS. (2021, July 8). Drastische verbouwing Den Haag Zuidwest: Dit staat de bewoners te wachten [Photograph]. https://nos.nl/regio/zh-west/artikel/154232-drastische-verbouwing-den-haag-zuidwest-dit-staat-de-bewoners-te-wachten

NU.nl (2014, August 18). Nog twee verdachten vast om rellen in Schilderswijk [Photograph]. https://www.nu.nl/binnenland/3855249/nog-twee-verdachten-vast-rellen-schilderswijk.html

NRC. https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2016/04/19/straks-wonen-alleen-nog-de-rijken-in-de-stad-1610078-a1032373

OBB Ingenieurs. (2016). Inspraakmiddag Hengelolaanpark Den Haag [Photograph]. https://www.obb-ingenieurs.nl/inspraakmiddag-hengelolaanpark-den-haag/

Omroep West. (2022, June 3). Den Haag kan problemen in oude volkswijken niet meer alleen oplossen [Photograph]. https://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/4583811/den-haag-kan-problemen-in-oude-volkswijken-niet-meer-alleen-oplossen

Omroep West. (2025, January 14). Woonwijk glijdt af: Gemeente vraagt Rijk om steun, tientallen miljoenen euro's nodig [Photograph]. https://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/4923592/woonwijk-glijdt-af-gemeente-vraagt-rijk-om-steun-tientallen-miljoenen-euros-nodig

PvdA Den Haag. (n.d.). Bezoek Bouwlust. Retrieved from https://denhaag.pvda.nl/agenda/bezoek-bouwlust-2/

Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu (RIVM). (2022). Kaarten [Interactive maps]. Atlas Leefomgeving. https://www.atlasleefomgeving.nl/kaarten

Staedion. (2025, January 13). of Binnentuinen Challenge in Den Haag Zuidwest [Photograph]. https://www.staedion.nl/over-staedion/nieuws/eindresultaten-binnentuinen-challenge-den-haag-zuidwest

Take The Hague. (n.d.). Moerwijk [Photograph]. https://takethehague.nl/nl/location/moerwijk

U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). 2010 Census block data. https://www.census.gov/

Van Denderen, A., & Hof, R. (2016). [Photograph]. In M. Remie, Straks wonen alleen nog de rijken in de stad.

Van Eesteren Museum. (2023). Tuinsteden. https://www.vaneesterenmuseum.nl/tuinsteden

Van Lonkhuijsen, R. (2016). [Photograph]. ANP. https://nieuws.nl/utrecht/honderden-demonstranten-bij-woonprotest-in-utrecht

Van Oorschot, J., Sprecher, B., Van 't Zelfde, M., Van Bodegom, P. M., & Van Oudenhoven, A. P. (2021). Assessing urban ecosystem services in support of spatial planning in the Hague, the Netherlands. Landscape And Urban Planning, 214, 104195. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2021.104195

Van Wijk, E. (n.d.). Scheveningen Boulevard [Photograph]. Haags Historisch Museum.

Vrije School Den Haag. (2025, February 14). [Photograph]. Instagram.

Wattman. (2011, April 15). Den Haag, Galvanischool [Photograph]. https://www.flickr.com/people/mars1940/

Welzijn Scheveningen. (2025, February 19). Het Couvéehuis [Photograph]. In Activiteitenaanbod 2025.

iii. REFERENCES FOR MEDIA EXCERPTS AND STATISTICAL MATERIAL

AD. (2024, March 15). Ruzie op schoolplein loopt uit de hand. https://www.ad.nl/den-haag/ruzie-op-schoolplein-loopt-uit-de-hand-ouders-gaan-met-elkaar-op-de-vuist~ab45f55f/

AD. (2025, February 20). Islamitische school ziet na ruzie met gemeente af van geplande nieuwbouw. https://www.ad.nl/den-haag/islamitische-school-ziet-na-ruzie-met-gemeente-af-van-geplande-nieuwbouw-we-gaan-wel-elders-bouwen~a355b20d/

AlleCijfers. (2022). Uitstroom groep 8 samengevat. https://allecijfers.nl/basisscholen/den-haag/

Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS). (2017, September 26). Bijna 21 duizend Haagse kinderen met risico op armoede. https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2017/39/bijna-21-duizend-haagse-kinderen-met-risico-op-armoede

Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS). (2024). Integratie en samenleven.

Dagblad070. (2024, April 26). Protest tegen delen schoolgebouw met islamitische basisschool Aida. https://dagblad070.nl/Den%20Haag%20&%20Regio/protest-tegen-delen-schoolgebouw-met-islamitische-basisschool-aida

De Telegraaf. (2024, May 23). Verontruste ouders willen Haagse Erasmusschool binnendringen na vermeend misbruik. https://www.telegraaf.nl/nieuws/638797598/verontruste-ouders-willen-haagse-erasmusschool-binnendringen-na-vermeend-misbruik-het-is-toch-je-kind-he

Den Haag FM. (2022, January 11). Bewoners komen in actie tegen verloedering in Transvaal: Buren verhuizen naar andere buurten. https://www.denhaagfm.nl/dhfm/4512211/bewoners-komen-in-actie-tegen-verloedering-in-transvaal-buren-verhuizen-naar-andere-buurten

Den Haag FM. (2022, July 5). Zet pleinstewards en cameratoezicht in tegen groepjes vervelend tienertuig in speeltuin Waldeck. https://www.denhaagfm.nl/dhfm/4600918/zet-pleinstewards-en-cameratoezicht-in-tegen-groepjes-vervelend-tienertuig-in-speeltuin-waldeck

Den Haag FM. (2022, October 21). Opstoppingen en auto's ontwijken: verkeerssituatie basisschool Ypenburg 'te gevaarlijk'. https://www.denhaagfm.nl/dhfm/4642902/opstoppingen-en-autos-ontwijken-verkeerssituatie-basisschool-ypenburg-te-gevaarlijk

Den Haag FM. (2025, March 16). Kinderen vinden drugszakjes tijdens opruimactie Laak. https://www.denhaagfm.nl/dhfm/4945620/kinderen-vinden-drugszakjes-tijdens-opruimactie-laak-waarom-gooien-mensen-dit-op-de-grond

Den Haag in Cijfers. (n.d.). Various data sets. Retrieved between October 2024 and January 2025, from https://denhaag.incijfers.nl

Elibol, R., & van der Linde, I. (2019, May 8). Sommigen hebben nóg gelijkere kansen. De Groene Amsterdammer. https://www.groene.nl/artikel/sommigen-hebben-nog-gelijkere-kansen

GGD Haaglanden. (2022). Epidemiologisch bulletin: Spraaktalachterstanden, én moeilijkheden met gedrag en het contact maken met anderen (Jaargang 57, Nr. 4).

Hart voor Den Haag. (2023, July 31). Hart voor Den Haag eist aanpak verloedering Dierense- en Apeldoornselaan. https://www.hartvoordenhaag.nl/hart-voor-den-haag-eist-aanpak-verloedering-dierense-en-apeldoornselaan/

Inspectie van het Onderwijs. (2018, April). Technisch rapportage onderwijskansen en segregatie: De Staat van het Onderwijs 2016/2017.

NOS. (2017, May 17). Moeder eist 10.000 euro van Haagse basisschool om moslimdiscriminatie. https://nos.nl/artikel/2173575-moeder-eist-10-000-euro-van-haagse-basisschool-om-moslimdiscriminatie

NOS. (2017, June 7). Kinderen vrij na instorten plafond van Haagse school. https://nos.nl/artikel/2176993-kinderen-vrij-na-instorten-plafond-van-haagse-school

NRC. (2024, August 7). In de Haagse Moerwijk kampen de bewoners met schimmel in huis: 'Als ik bij de sportschool kan douchen, doe ik dat'. https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2024/08/07/in-de-haagse-moerwijk-kampen-de-bewoners-met-schimmel-in-huis-als-ik-bij-de-sportschool-kan-douchen-doe-ik-dat-a4862049

Omroep West. (2019, May 3). Veel gevaarlijke situaties rond scholen. https://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/3827700/meldpunt-onveilig-verkeer-veel-gevaarlijke-situaties-rond-scholen

Omroep West. (2019, July 10). Intimidatie, fraude en vriendjespolitiek op Haagse hindoeschool. https://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/3863552/intimidatie-fraude-en-vriendjespolitiek-dit-ging-er-mis-op-haagse-hindoeschool

Omroep West. (2020, April 3). Vocht, schimmel, asbest, leidingen: omvangrijk onderzoek naar kwaliteit Haagse woningen. https://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/4024328/vocht-schimmel-asbest-leidingen-omvangrijk-onderzoek-naar-kwaliteit-haagse-woningen

Omroep West. (2022, June 3). Den Haag kan problemen in oude volkswijken niet meer alleen oplossen. https://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/4583811/den-haag-kan-problemen-in-oude-volkswijken-niet-meer-alleen-oplossen

Omroep West. (2023, January 24). Ruzie tussen vaders escaleert op schoolplein, celstraf voor steken met schroevendraaier. https://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/4676587/ruzie-tussen-vaders-escaleert-op-schoolplein-celstraf-voor-steken-met-schroevendraaier

Omroep West. (2024, May 30). Jongen gooit vuurwerkbom in school. https://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/4845566/jongen-gooit-vuurwerkbom-in-school-om-wil-hem-gevangenis-in

Politie. (2022, February). Vertrouwen en reputatie: Rapportage burgeronderzoek [Report No. 244410192]. https://www.politie.nl/binaries/content/assets/politie/nieuws/2022/april/244410192-kantar-public-onderzoek-vertrouwen-en-reputatie-politie-bij-burgers-met-niet-westerse-migratieachtergrond—februari-2022.pdf

Trouw. (2021, June 18). Kansenongelijkheid begint al op de basisschool, en dat gaat voornamelijk om de plek waar die school staat. https://www.trouw.nl/binnenland/kansenongelijkheid-begint-al-op-de-basisschool-en-dat-gaat-voornamelijk-om-de-plek-waar-die-school-staat~b7b72915/

iv. CARTOGRAPHIC AND SPATIAL DATA REFERENCES

The datasets and existing maps listed below were used as source material to construct the maps presented in this report. They are listed in the same order as the maps appear in the report. Some datasets have been used for multiple maps and therefore appear more than once in the list of references.

Socio-Economic Segregation Index of Children in The Hague

Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS). (2019). Kaart van 500 meter bij 500 meter met statistieken. https://www.cbs.nl

Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS). (2023). Kaart van 100 meter bij 100 meter met statistieken. https://www.cbs.nl

Den Haag in Cijfers. (n.d.). Various data sets. Retrieved between October 2024 and January 2025, from https://denhaag.incijfers.nl

Geographical Layout of Soil Types in The Hague

Esri Nederland, & Community Maps Contributors. (2021). Archeologische-geologische kaart van Den Haag en Rijswijk: Geologische ondergrond met 202 Haagse en 74 Rijswijkse vindplaatsen.

Van Veen, M. M. A., & Kersing, V. L. C. (1994). Wonen op het zand en in het veen: opgravingen in de Anostraca en Boekhorststraat.

The Hague's 1983 Building Footprint Aligned with Dudok's 1949 Structure Plan

Haags Historisch Museum. (n.d.). Haagse Kaart: Groeikaart [Interactive map]. Haagse Kaart. http://www.haagsekaart.nl/

Van de Beek, T., & Van der Heijden, H. (1987). W.M. Dudok en het Haagse stadsbeeld.

All Maps In The Hague Today

Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS). (2019). Kaart van 500 meter bij 500 meter met statistieken. https://www.cbs.nl

Den Haag in Cijfers. (n.d.). Various data sets. Retrieved between October 2024 and January 2025, from https://denhaag.incijfers.nl

OpenInfo. (2024, November 6). Dataset based on BRIN (Basisregister Instellingen), processed and enriched by OpenInfo. OpenInfo. https://www.openinfo.nl

Crime Rates by Neighbourhood & Neighbourhood Safety Ratings

Den Haag in Cijfers. (n.d.). Various data sets. Retrieved between October 2024 and January 2025, from https://denhaag.incijfers.nl

Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), & Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid. (n.d.). Veiligheidsmonitor [Data set]. Retrieved January 2025, from https://www.cbs.nl

Neighbourhoods with the Highest Noise Complaint Registrations

Den Haag in Cijfers. (n.d.). Various data sets. Retrieved between October 2024 and January 2025, from https://denhaag.incijfers.nl

Overcrowding: Density of Residents per Square Metre per Dwelling

Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS). (2023). Kaart van 100 meter bij 100 meter met statistieken. https://www.cbs.nl

Kadaster. (2025). Basisregistratie Adressen en Gebouwen (BAG). https://www.kadaster.nl/zakelijk/registraties/basisregistraties/bag

Average Property Value

Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS). (2023). Kaart van 100 meter bij 100 meter met statistieken. https://www.cbs.nl

Neighbourhoods with the Highest Noise Complaint Registrations Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS). (2024). Dashboard overlast in de buurt. https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/visualisaties/politie/dashboard-overlast-in-de-buurt

Household Turnover Rates Across The Hague's Neighborhoods in 2022

Den Haag in Cijfers. (n.d.). Various data sets [Data sets]. Retrieved between October 2024 and January 2025, from https://denhaag.incijfers.nl

Distribution of Trees Across Neighbourhoods in The Hague

Gemeente Den Haag. (2025). Bomen Shape. Dataplatform.nl. https://ckan.dataplatform.nl/dataset/bomen-shape/resource/

AlleCijfers. (2022). Hoogste en laagste inkomen per wijk in de gemeente Den Haag. https://allecijfers.nl/ranglijst/hoogste-en-laagste-inkomen-per-wijk-in-de-gemeente-den-haag/

Reports of Deterioration of Public Space Across Neighbourhoods in The Hague

Den Haag in Cijfers. (n.d.). Various data sets [Data sets]. Retrieved between October 2024 and January 2025, from https://denhaag.incijfers.nl

Reports of Physical Quality of Public Space Across Neighbourhoods in The Hague

Den Haag in Cijfers. (n.d.). Various data sets [Data sets]. Retrieved between October 2024 and January 2025, from https://denhaag.incijfers.nl

Thank you.

