Fenna Verkerk

Social Inclusion of Children with Physical Disability in Two Schools in the Netherlands

"Everybody is different"

Master's thesis

NTNU
Kunnskap for en bedre verden

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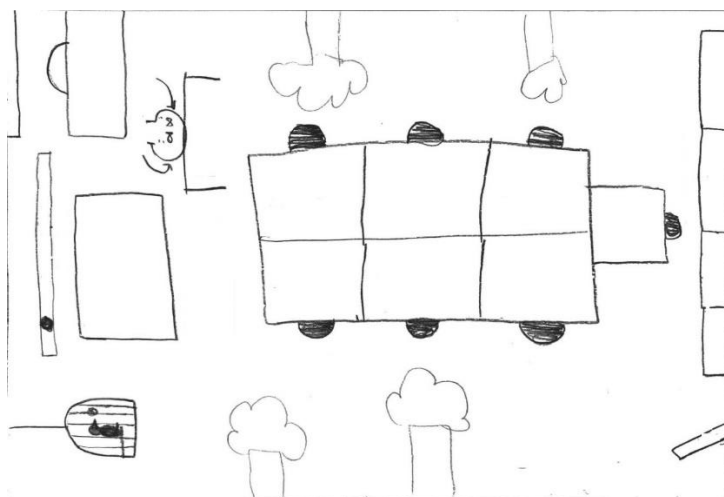Master's thesis in Childhood Studies
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Science and Technology

Abstract

Children with physical disabilities are as significant as everyone else in society. However, children with a physical disability do not often receive the chance to speak up and to be heard. Voices of people with disabilities have been excluded for a long time in research (Hove et al., 2012; Ytterhus, Egilson, Traustadóttir, & Berg, 2015). In this study, children with disabilities are considered first and foremost as children with the same needs and rights as other children.

Inclusion is the worldwide trend for children with disabilities, entailing teaching children with different special needs at regular schools instead of teaching them in special schools. This has been internationally supported as found in documents like the Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons (CRPD). Children with disabilities should not be "excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability and receive the support required within the general education system to facilitate their effective education" (United Nations, 2006).

The general aim of this work is to describe the social dynamics in two classrooms with a child with a physical disability at regular schools in the Netherlands. This research took place in two different regular schools in two different areas in the Netherlands. The total sample consisted of 49 informants, 25 boys and 24 girls, including two key informants. In both classes, there was one child with a physical disability, both a boy and a girl, and they were both included in my study.

To be able to fulfill the research aim, different child-friendly methods were used to ensure triangulation. The methods used in this research are focus group interviews, participant observation with social interaction analysis, and drawings. Besides that, theories and key concepts from childhood studies and disability studies were the basis for this study. The different perspectives on social inclusion and disability are taken into consideration and used as a theoretical basis for the analysis, reflecting constructions of disabilities and approaches towards social inclusion.

In this research, the main results are that both children with a physical disability seem well included. In addition, the perception of children of social inclusion is diverse. This might suggest that children have an awareness that children express feelings of social inclusion and exclusion in different ways. All the children seemed content in their classes and they mentioned three different factors with a considerable influence on social wellbeing, which are: friendships, bullying, and teacher influence. When comparing the social welfare in both schools, there is a clear difference between both classes both in terms of social cohesion as in social well-being of the children. When it comes to bullying and exclusion, the children seemed to associate these concepts with feelings of being popular. The availability of peers seemed to be a protective factor that could help tackle social exclusion and/or bullying from happening.

For policies, this research points at the influence of the teacher that is present after the child acquires the disability on social inclusion. In general, also for children with a congenital disability, communication found to be a possible key factor in preventing social exclusion from happening and stimulating the social inclusion of children with disabilities in a regular class. For further research, more children with a physical disability could be researched and they could be, as key informants, more thoroughly interviewed and observed or included in other research methods.

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List of Abbreviations

CRPD: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

UN: United Nations

UNCRC: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

1 Introduction

In this chapter, the background of this thesis will be outlined. Secondly, personal motivation for this thesis topic will be provided. After that, the relevance of the topic will be described, and research objectives and research questions will be mentioned. Lastly, the structure of this thesis will be explained.

1.1 Background to the topic

Children with disabilities are one of the most excluded and marginalized groups in society. Estimates suggest that there are at least 93 million children with disabilities in the world (UNICEF, 2020). Children with disabilities have the same rights as any other child and should be seen as "children first" (Priestley, 1998), instead of focusing on their impairment. Children with disabilities should be socially included in society and in regular education to become a valued and contributing member of the community (Koller, Pouesard, & Rummens, 2018). However, because of stigmatization and discrimination, children with disabilities are often denied opportunities for integration and participation.

The growing international consensus about children`s right to inclusive education is visible in documents like the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) and conventions like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989) and the Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons (CRPD) (United Nations, 2006). Including children with special needs in regular schools leads to different challenges, such as how to create classrooms that are fully inclusive (Nilholm, 2020). Different conditions need to be met to make inclusive education a success (Smeets, Ledoux, & van Loon- Dikkers, 2019). These conditions are on the school level, on the teacher level, characteristics of education, and the quality of interventions.

The implementation of the Appropriate Education Act in the Netherlands in 2014 aimed to give all the children with special needs a fitting place in education and especially in regular education as much as possible (Smeets et al., 2019). As a result, it has aimed to reduce the number of children in special education. Education can be important to create an inclusive society and change the attitudes in society towards children with disabilities (Koster, Nakken, Pijl, & Van Houten, 2009). This is in line with an international growing trend because students with disabilities are gaining more access to general education classrooms, schools, and curriculum in more countries (Ferguson, 2008).

Despite the Appropriate Education Act and the inclusion of children in regular schools, some children with disabilities are still excluded. Being included in a regular school does not automatically mean that these children are also socially included (Nilholm & Alm, 2010). Physical inclusion is only a basic condition and does not imply that becoming part of a group is an automatism (Pijl, Frostad, & Flem, 2008). Children and youth with disabilities are bullied and excluded at disproportionately high rates (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012). They have fewer relationships, are less popular, and participate less often as a member of a sub-group (Pijl et al., 2008). This research wants to explore if the children that participate in this research, also experience social exclusion in different ways and their perceptions of social inclusion.

1.2 Personal motivation

One of the reasons for choosing this topic is my interest in research about social inclusion for children with physical disabilities. In 2018, I participated in an evaluation research project of inclusive education after the implementation of the Appropriate Education Act, as documented in Smeets et al. (2019), and the interest in inclusive education developed since then. In this research project, I learned how to interview teachers and get to know about their opinion on and experiences with inclusive education. I talked with them about the challenges they face when teaching children with special needs and their opinion about the effects of this new law that got implemented in 2014. These interviews were part of a bigger evaluation project funded by the Dutch government and used by the government to evaluate the new law that they implemented. The results of this project are documented in Smeets et al. (2019). This bigger project focused on many factors like the experiences of the teachers, money flows, statistics of how many children went to special schools, and policies inside the school. However, in my opinion, an important factor was not taken into consideration, namely, the experiences of the children themselves. This gave me a good reason to focus on the experiences of children with physical disabilities in classrooms in this thesis.

In addition to that, I have experience with children with physical disabilities because of an internship at a special school in the Netherlands. I experienced that these children face different difficulties and stigmatizations in society and at schools. With this research, I want to give them a voice without stigmatizing them or Othering them[1].

1.3 Relevance of the topic

The objective is to explore social dynamics in a class with a child with a physical disability. The need for studies with a focus on the inclusive processes in regular classrooms has been pointed out (Nilholm & Alm, 2010). This could help us to get a better understanding of the possible exclusion that these children experience. Research has been done about this topic in different countries. In the Netherlands; however, a lot of the research has been conducted before the change with the law of the Appropriate Education Act in 2014. This work will be relevant for the research after the implementation of this law in 2014.

The Netherlands has around 2 million persons with a moderate to severe mental or physical disability (Centraal Bureau voor de Statisitiek, 2019a). In most of the Dutch primary schools the number of students with special needs is limited (Koster, Pijl, Nakken, & Van Houten, 2010). Despite the change in the law in 2014, there are not many reports written yet about the effect of this law on the social inclusion of children with disabilities. Evaluation of appropriate education has been executed by Smeets et al. (2019) and Ledoux and Waslander (2019), which show that the main aim of the law, to decrease the number of students in special education, has not been achieved. However, none of these reports focus on the social inclusion of children with disabilities and their experiences from their perspective.

The social dimension of inclusion is important to research from society`s point of view (Koster et al., 2009). The relationship between students can be seen as a key issue in inclusive education (Flem & Keller, 2000). Social inclusion is perceived as a prerequisite for inclusion, or in other words by Nilholm (2020, p. 5): "inclusion means that all pupils should be participating socially and learn according to their prerequisites". Therefore, this

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[1] See subchapter 6.5

research can contribute to the existing evaluations of appropriate education in the Netherlands, with a focus on social inclusion.

This work has a goal to let the voices of children to be heard. It has also been shown in earlier research to be an important factor, for example when it comes to bullying and exclusion: "In order for us to determine whether successful environments are being created, we need to listen to the voices of children with disabilities to establish whether they perceive their needs are being met through appropriate physical and emotional support" (Bourke & Burgman, 2010, p. 361). Research done by Koller et al. (2018) suggests that there is a lack of research that shows how children perceive social inclusion. There is research done by for example Barron (2015) about social inclusion in Sweden, however, this research has a theoretical focus on the concept in connection to, for example, Othering, without having the focus on the perspective of the children. Koller et al. (2018) suggest that this is a gap in research and therefore this work contributes to a research area where more knowledge from the perspective of children seems needed

To sum up, this thesis tries to contribute to prior knowledge of children´s experiences in a class with a child with a physical disability, and on the different factors that define and might influence social inclusion.

1.4 Research objectives
The main aim of this research is to explore the social dynamics in a class with a child with a physical disability. The following objectives were formulated:

1. Explore the ways the children experience social inclusion and social exclusion in their class
2. Explore five different factors that might influence social inclusion: teachers, accommodations, class characteristics, normalizing and Othering, and stigmatization.

1.5 Research questions
The main research question is: "How do children experience social inclusion in a regular classroom with children with a physical disability and which factors are influencing social inclusion and exclusion?" To fulfill the research objectives, the following research questions are formulated:

1. Social inclusion and exclusion from the perspective of children
    a. How do children perceive social inclusion?
    b. What kind of social interactions do children with physical disabilities have?
    c. What are the experiences of children with bullying and exclusion?
2. Factors influencing social inclusion and exclusion
    a. What is the influence of teachers on social inclusion and how do teachers handle situations of social exclusion?
    b. Which accommodations have been made to promote social inclusion?
    c. Which characteristics of the class might influence social inclusion?

To be able to answer these questions, different methods were used in this study. Participant observation has been used to explore the social interactions in the class. During participant observation, different sociograms were made to get an overview of the social dynamics between children and possible visible social exclusion.

To explore the experiences of the children, different participatory methods were used. Both drawings and focus group discussions with visual stimuli made it possible for

children to let their voices be heard and to express their experiences with both social inclusion and exclusion.

Additionally, interviews were used to get to know more about the perspective of the teachers and special needs coordinators. These interviews were focused on answering the research questions about different special accommodations, characteristics in the class, school policies, and their perspectives on both social inclusion and exclusion.

1.6 Outline of this thesis

This first chapter in this work is the introduction of the thesis. The second chapter is about the context in which this research takes place, and describes historical perspectives, perspectives on research with children with disabilities, international influence, and the Dutch school system. The third chapter forms the theory chapter of this thesis. In this chapter childhood studies and social constructionist approaches will be presented. After that, the general concepts of disability studies will be described. This deals with both the construction of disability as with identity and self-image. The last part of this chapter is about inclusive education. Social inclusion in classrooms and for children with disabilities will be described. The influence of teachers on social inclusion will also be addressed. Lastly, the concepts of normalizing, Othering, and stigmatization will be briefly outlined.

The fourth chapter outlines the methodology and methods related to this work. It describes and discusses the process of designing the research, the methods that are used in the field, the process of analyzing, and after that the ethical considerations.

The fifth chapter and the sixth chapter are the analysis chapters. These chapters are written with the knowledge of the theory chapter (chapter three) in mind. The chapters are organized in the following way: chapter five focuses on the experiences of children with social inclusion. Chapter six concentrates on the factors that might have an impact on the social inclusion of children with physical disabilities in different ways.

The seventh chapter is the last chapter of this thesis. This chapter summarizes the findings of the analysis chapters and presents the answers to the research questions. Furthermore, recommendations for future work are given based on the information that has been given throughout this thesis.

2 Background

Each research takes place in a context that is both historically and culturally influenced. In this chapter, the aim is to look at this background to get a better understanding of the context in which this research is conducted. In this chapter, the focus is on the following topics: historical and international perspectives on disability and disability research, the Dutch school system, and the specific school policies at both schools where I conducted my research.

2.1 Historical perspectives, disability research, and international influence

2.1.1 Historical perspectives on disability

Attitudes to disability and disability care are not static but have been changed during the time due to different factors (Berger, 2013; Munyi, 2012; Nijgh, Bogerd, & Bogerd-van den Brink, 2015; Oswin, 1999). In the nineteenth century, the situation started to change when philanthropists rescued children from the streets to give them basic education and to take care of them (Oswin, 1999). This change can also be seen in the Netherlands when the "idiot school" was established by van Koetsveld in the Hague in 1855 (Bakker, Noordman, & Rietveld-van Wingerden, 2010a). The founding of this school represents the start of specialized care for disabled people in the Netherlands. However, most of the care took place in institutions far away from their friends and family and their emotional needs were not taken into consideration (Oswin, 1999). The persons with disabilities were blamed for different "urban diseases" like laziness, sexual promiscuity, pauperism, and they were labeled with terms like "idiots", imbeciles" and "idiots" (Oswin, 1999).

In history, three discourses played a role in the policies regarding disabled children. The concept of discourses will be elaborated in the theory chapter. From the 19th century onwards until the 1950s, there was a therapeutic discourse in which disabled persons were seen as patients with a disease, also called the "defect vision" (Boneschansker, 2014; Maaskant, Kerkhof-Willemsen, & Sinnema, 2010). The problems that these people faced were considered as individual problems rather than problems in the society. The people were segregated from society, by putting them in institutions (Boneschansker, 2014). These institutions were based on the "hospital model", which means that the doctor decided what was good for the person with a disability and this person had no right to speak for himself or herself (Broeders, 1997). When the Compulsory Education Act was established in 1901, children with mental retardation were diagnosed earlier than before (Nijgh et al., 2015). Connected to this model, it was believed that "services should involve active treatment with the goal of making people less disabled" (Tøssebro, 2015, p. 42).

However, criticism started to develop on the institutions, after revealing pictures about the circumstances in there (Tøssebro, 2015). Children were dehumanized in these institutes (Boneschansker, 2014). Associated with this, there was a change towards a second discourse, concentrating on normalization and integration (Tonkens & Weijers, 1997). Normalization is defined as making the normal life circumstances accessible for persons with disabilities so that they can fulfill social valuable roles (Brants, van Trigt, & Schippers, 2017; Van Gennep, 1997). In the Netherlands, this normalization principle was not implemented because the disability institutions stayed segregated and not connected to normal life (Brants et al., 2017). Integration is a phase in the process of

normalization and there are three different forms of integration: physical integration, functional integration, and social integration with the goal of improving the quality of life of disabled people (Schuurman, 2014). Due to the normalization discourse, there was a movement of deinstitutionalization, leading to that "the preference for growing up at home has been an uncontested principle" (Tøssebro, 2015, p. 37). Instead of building big institutes, the goal was to build small-scale facilities closer to the rest of the community and to focus more on the individual development of disabled persons (Tonkens & Weijers, 1997). However, the social interactions were limited to the family members and professionals in the institute (Brants et al., 2017). Because of criticism on normalization and integration, the third discourse evolved focused on citizenship (Schuurman, 2014). The idea behind this discourse is that people with disabilities should be able to live in society as a participating citizen (Boneschansker, 2014). The offered support is based on the empowerment of their status (Schuurman, 2014).

As a result of this discourse, laws started to change and parent associations were founded. The Children`s Act was implemented in 1948. However, this law did not protect children with physical impairment and learning difficulties (Oswin, 1999). This changed later in that year by the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human rights including article 25 which "gives every person with disability right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family and right to security" (UN General Assembly, 1948, p. 6). Furthermore, parents fought together for better care and positions for people with disabilities (Tonkens & Weijers, 1997). The old diagnosed-based segregated system started to be questioned (Tøssebro, 2015).

Integration has been changed to the term inclusion, according to the CRPD that was put into effect in 2007 (United Nations, 2006). In this declaration, there is a strong focus on the quality of life, services, choice, self-determination, and empowerment (Maaskant et al., 2010; Oswin, 1999). The Netherlands reacted late and ratified this convention in 2016 (Schuurman, 2014). Right now, the policies in health care are aiming at the quality of the lives of people with disabilities and their social participation (Nijgh et al., 2015; Schuurman, 2014). The quality of life is about designing your own life according to general normal and specific life circumstances so that the person is happy with their own existence (Van Gennep, 1997). This is also legally documented with a participation law and a law for equal treatment of disabled persons (Schuurman, 2014). Because of the change in the Netherlands towards decentralization in 2015 the institutes got smaller. Instead of personal care, the focus is directed towards support for the lives of persons with disabilities to give them a normal life full of chances (Schuurman, 2014). The support is given by the social community and is adjustable to every person (Van Gennep, 1997). This is documented in the law "societal support" that was implemented in 2015, aiming to keep as many persons as possible living at their own house for increasing the participation of disabled people in the society (J. Kool, 2008). However, reaching to social integration and inclusion seems still hard to achieve (Schuurman, 2014). It leads us to the paradoxical situation nowadays that is changing slowly: "Many people with disabilities live within a normal society, but in a social sense they are functioning in a separate world" (Brants et al., 2017, p. 160).

2.1.2 Research with children with disabilities
Connected to the earlier discussed historical perspectives, this subchapter will explore researches with disabled children. Disability studies is a new academic discipline in the Netherlands and started in 2011, after failing attempts during the 1980s and 1990s (Brants et al., 2017). This is 30 years after the rise of disability studies in the United

Kingdom, Canada, and the United States of America (Berger, 2013). According to the CRPD (United Nations, 2006), disability studies as an academic discipline is dedicated to adhering to "that in spite of our difference, or perhaps because of them, we are all equally valuable human beings" (Berger, 2013, p. 227). Disability studies aim to contribute to the quality of life for people with disabilities and want to promote an inclusive society (Brants et al., 2017), by listening to people with disabilities about how they want to participate and how we can support them to enhance this participation (Van de Putte & De Schauwer, 2016). In the CRPD, it is also emphasized that governments should research children with disabilities in different fields, for example, to gather their experience in medical services (Safe the Children, 2009).

Disability studies developed different models about how to conceptualize disability. Different models and understandings of disability, as described in disability studies and elaborated in the theory chapter of this work, bring contrasting approaches to research (Goodley, 2011). An example is the role of non-disabled researchers. Research about disability done by non-disabled researchers is widely accepted (Goodley, 2011). "How you study disability is depending on how you define good research, the methods and the questions you want to ask" (Goodley, 2011, p. 24). Voices of disabled people have been excluded in research for a long time (Hove et al., 2012; Ytterhus et al., 2015). The lives of disabled children were seen through the eyes of non-disabled adults (Shakespeare & Watson, 1998; Ytterhus et al., 2015). Moreover, a lot of research has been conducted with organizations, parents, and family members of children with disabilities (van Hove, Cardol, Schippers, & De Schauwer, 2016). However, the voice of the family members or other persons that are close to the person with a disability, cannot be seen as a substitute for the voices of persons with disabilities (Hove et al., 2012). This movement towards the inclusion of the perspectives of disabled children is in line with the sociology of childhood, which will be discussed in the theory chapter of this thesis (Alderson, 2008; Shakespeare & Watson, 1998).

2.1.3 International influence

The first internationally and governmental presentation of inclusive education can be found in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (UNESCO, 1994). Followed up by other international support for inclusive education from conventions and statements like the UNCRC (United Nations, 1989) and CRPD, in particular, article 24 which ensures that students with disabilities "are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability and receive the support required within the general education system to facilitate their effective education" (United Nations, 2006, p. 14). The Salamanca Statement specifies that "regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all" (UNESCO, 1994).

The UNCRC is ratified in the Netherlands in 1995. However, there were three reservations made by the Netherlands. The Netherlands does not want to guarantee social security for children (article 26) but wants to keep criminal laws for adults also applicable for children of 16 and 17 years old (article 37), and wants to restrict legal assistance and appeal for small offenses (article 40) (Ruitenberg, 2003). Every country that ratified the convention will receive concluding observations from the United Nations (UN) committee every five years based on the implementation of the children´s rights in that country (United Nations, 1989). The latest concluding observations that the Netherlands got are from 2015 and in these concluding observations, the focus was

placed on inclusive education (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 8 June 2015). The committee was worried about the number of children with disabilities that spent time out of school, and advised to ensure that there are sufficient places for all children in the mainstream education system and that access to inclusive education is provided without delays (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 8 June 2015).

The CRPD has been ratified in the Netherlands in 2016. This is relatively late after it has been put into effect in 2007. There are 7 interpretative declarations about different articles chosen by the Dutch government. To meet the targets of this convention, different laws have been changed and adjusted. The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights supervises compliance with the treaty and how it is put into practice. The last report about the situation in the Netherlands is dated from 2019 (College voor de Rechten van de Mens, 2019). This report states that the physical accessibility for people with disabilities is increasing, but that the informative and the communicative accessibility must be improved. Besides this report, the Netherlands also has to deliver a rapport the first two years after implementation and then every four years to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (De Meulder, 2016). The latest report from 2018 written by the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, concludes that there are steps taken to promote inclusion. However, the pace at which these adjustments are made is low (Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, 2018). Moreover, the Institute is worried about the fact that not all the municipalities have planned the implementation of the Convention. Specifically, the institute is concerned about a large number of children with disabilities that are still attending schools for special education, while the goal of the Appropriate Education act is to increase the number of children in mainstream education. However, mainstream schools are often not equipped to accommodate children with disabilities and therefore children end up in separate special schools (Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, 2018).

2.2 The Dutch school system

In this subchapter, I will describe more about the Dutch school system. In the first part, I will give a short overview of disability and education in the Netherlands. In the second part, I will describe the situation of teaching special needs in the Netherlands in 2019. Lastly, I will describe the Dutch school system and give some numerical facts.

2.2.1 Disability and education in historical perspective in the Netherlands

In general, there are four developments in the history of special education in the Netherlands. Firstly, from segregation in the earlier years to customized education for integration nowadays. Secondly, differentiation outside the school by sending different children to different schools to differentiation inside the school to keep all the different children in one school. Thirdly, the transition from distributive education policies to constructive education policies. Lastly, from centralization and the national government deciding to decentralization by local authorities (van Rijswijk & Kool, 1999). These four movements will be expanded further on in this subchapter but first, we start with the start of special education.

The special education in the Netherlands started in 1790 in Groningen, with a special school for deaf children established by Guyot (Bakker, Noordman, & Rietveld-van Wingerden, 2010b; Brants et al., 2017). This school marks the start of a new area where disabled children were not only seen as in need of medical support but also as in need of pedagogical and moral development in the form of education (Bakker et al., 2010b). Schools around that time are established by enlightened protestant elites, "who wanted

to uplift the people by developing specific education for specific groups (Brants et al., 2017, p. 153)

In the nineteenth century, there was an interest in persons that are deaf and/or blind, and other groups with physical disabilities were neglected (Brants et al., 2017). The compulsory education act was implemented in 1901 and this meant that all children had to go to school (Graas & Ledoux, 2017). However, this law had a minimum impact. Every year a new special education school was established (Tonkens & Weijers, 1997). The primary education law implemented in 1920, had more effect. This law caused people to recognize for the first time that there are children who are unable to attend regular education because of behavioural, physical, or mental causes (de Beer, 2012). These schools were defined as "out of ordinary education" (Bakker et al., 2010b). However, there was only education for mentally retarded, deaf, and blind children. Schools for both physically disabled and for children that are difficult to educate were established in 1931 (van Rijswijk & Kool, 1999).

The increase of out of ordinary education had two main reasons. Firstly, it was implemented to get rid of the children that were slowing down or disturbing the regular education, and secondly, the government stimulated successful teaching of disabled children in special schools (Graas & Ledoux, 2017). At that time there was a common understanding that there are children that need special education and who cannot be educated in regular schools (Graas & Ledoux, 2017).

After the second world war, the idea developed that care for people with disabilities should be regulated by the government (Brants et al., 2017). The common understanding at that time was that out of ordinary education helps children with problems better than regular education (van Rijswijk & Kool, 1999). Segregated education was expending again, in both numbers as well into 15 different types of out of ordinary education during these years (Bakker et al., 2010b; Brants et al., 2017; Tonkens & Weijers, 1997). Especially the schools for children with learning and upbringing problems expanded rapidly because a lot of children were applicable to attend these schools (Bakker et al., 2010b). This school was seen as the perfect fit for children who developed problematically (E. Kool & van Rijswijk, 1999). Also, the term special education got used instead of out of ordinary education in 1985 (van Rijswijk & Kool, 1999).

The described exponential growth of special education caused concerns about high costs, problems with differentiation, giving children the right fitting education, future employment opportunities (Borsay, 2011), and the integration of these children (Bakker et al., 2010b; van Rijswijk & Kool, 1999). This led to a change to a "together to school" policy (Graas & Ledoux, 2017). This implied a 2% regulation in 1995, where the total amount of children attending special education had to be brought back to 2% (Bakker et al., 2010b). Besides that, clear criteria were needed to be able to differentiate between the different school types and to put all children at the right school for them (van Rijswijk & Kool, 1999). Additionally, more attention was paid to the improvement of regular education, to keep more children inside regular schools with the help of extra remedial teaching. Special education changed to policies about how to support children with disabilities to attend regular education (Brants et al., 2017). The following subchapter will explore further on this view on education.

2.2.2 The present situation of teaching children with special needs

More and more disabled children worldwide are nowadays been taught in local mainstream schools (Goodley, 2011; van der Veen, Smeets, & Derriks, 2010). The policy of inclusive education is enshrined in documents such as "World Declaration on Education for all" (article 3) (UNESCO, 1990), "Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action of Special Education" (UNESCO, 1994), UNCRC (article 23) (United Nations, 1989) and the CRPD (article 24 and general comment no.4) (United Nations, 2006). These initiatives aim to "ensure inclusive education system at all levels and that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system" (United Nations, 2006, p. 14). In the Dutch context, disabled children are included when possible in the regular education system and when that is impossible they go to special education (Ledoux & Waslander, 2019). This means that the Dutch law does not say that the Dutch educational system is inclusive. The Appropriate Education Act is implemented in 2014. One of the important goals of this law is to make sure that all children with special needs get a good place, as much as possible in regular education. Additionally, it tries to give schools support to help them achieve this and to prevent that children do not attend school for a longer period (Smeets et al., 2019). However, these goals are not met yet, because it became clear in the latest evaluation, that the number of students in special education is increasing since 2016 (Ledoux & Waslander, 2019). Moreover, there are more students not attending school, there is more flexibility in giving extra support and teachers experience more pressure on giving the right support to students with extra needs (Ledoux & Waslander, 2019). Education in the Netherlands is mostly organized at local level and there can be huge differences in each municipality for example regarding the quality of the teachers in handling children with special needs (Graas & Ledoux, 2017).

2.2.3 Short description of the school system in the Netherlands

The school career of a Dutch child can start at daycare centers. Around 52% of the Dutch children aged two to three are attending these centers one or more days a week (OECD, 2016). Furthermore, there are also pre-kindergarten facilities that focus on a more formal type of early childhood education. Around 37% of the children are attending this (Centraal Bureau voor de Statisitiek, 2015). Around 9% receive daycare in homes by childminders. Compulsory primary education in the Netherlands starts at the age of five, however, most of the children attend primary school when they are four years old (OECD, 2016). Children go to primary school until the age of 12. There is a high level of decentralization between the schools because schools have a lot of freedom in determining the content and methods of teaching (OECD, 2016). At the end of primary school, students get advice for their secondary education based on the view of their primary school teacher and objective test results. There are three types of secondary education; the first one is pre-vocational secondary education which lasts four years (VMBO) with four different study programs, the second one is general secondary education (HAVO) which lasts five years and lastly, pre-university education (VWO) which last six years. All young people must attend school until they are 18 or until they have a basic qualification.

There are three different types of special schools in the Netherlands. Firstly, there is special primary education for children with moderate learning and or behavioural difficulties. Secondly, there is special education for students with severe disabilities. Thirdly, there is secondary special education. Special education for both primary and secondary students exists out of 4 different clusters. Cluster 1 is for blind, visually impaired children. There is only 0.9% of the children with special needs that attend this

type of education. Cluster 2 is for deaf, hearing impaired, and/or communication disorders and children with language or speech development disorders. 20.9% of the children with special needs are attending schools in this cluster. Cluster 3 is for motor physically and/or intellectual disabilities and chronic physical illness and cluster 4 is for children with mental disorders and behavioural problems. In total 78.2% of children with special needs are going to school in these clusters (Centraal Bureau voor de Statisitiek, 2019b). This means that most of the special needs children go to cluster 3 or cluster 4 education.

2.2.4 Numerical facts about disability and special education in the Netherlands

There were around 17.5 million people in the Netherlands in 2019 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statisitiek, 2019a). A total of 11 percent of adults below 80 years has one or more moderate to severe disabilities. This is around 2 million of the total population. There are 3,2 million people younger than 18 years in the Netherlands. This is 18.4 percent of the population (Centraal Bureau voor de Statisitiek, 2018). Of this group, there are almost 93.500 children with a disability in the Netherlands of which 30%, around 28.050 have a physical disability (Tierolf, Gisling, & Steketee, 2017). More and more children with disabilities go to regular schools (Smeets et al., 2019). However, 68 432 students went to special schools in the Netherlands in 2018 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statisitiek, 2019c). On top of that, 30.868 children go to special primary schools because of their disability, which is 4% of the children in the Netherlands (Inspectie van het onderwijs, 2019; Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, 2018). These special primary schools differ from special schools because they are only for children with "mild" disabilities or special needs. This entails that most of the children with disabilities still attend special schools or special primary schools, and this amount is slowly increasing again despite the efforts of the Appropriate Education Act (Ledoux & Waslander, 2019).

3 Theoretical perspectives and key concepts

This chapter presents the theoretical perspectives underlying my analysis and the framework for this thesis. In this chapter, the theoretical concepts that are used in my analysis will be described and discussed. First childhood studies will be shortly explored, as a general basis for my thesis. Secondly, different disability perspectives from literature, as well as research on identities and self-image within disability research, will be discussed. Thirdly, key concepts that I used for my analysis will be presented: inclusive education, social inclusion, and social exclusion, child-teacher relationships, and Othering.

In this chapter, the terms "special needs", "special education needs" and "children with disabilities" will be used. These terms are used interchangeably because "pupils with special needs" refers to "pupils with various (combinations of) impairments and/or difficulties in participating in education" (Pijl et al., 2008, p. 389). However, despite the use of these terms I want to make clear that children with disabilities first and foremost are children and have the same needs and rights as other children (Priestley, 1998).

3.1 Childhood Studies

This chapter starts with a description of the social constructionist approach on childhood. The following part will focus on discourses. Thirdly, this subchapter will explore the concept of power. Lastly, the key features of childhood studies will be described.

3.1.1 Social constructionist approach

Ideas about children have changed throughout history. An important historian that researched changing conceptions of childhood is Ariès (Brockliss & Montgomery, 2013). With his research interpreting cultural expressions like paintings, he stated that in medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist (Brockliss & Montgomery, 2013). The idea that childhood is a different period of life started to emerge in the seventeenth century. Additionally, the so-called creation and diffusion of childhood happened at the same as two other social developments of the modern family and the rise of the bourgeoisie. According to Ariès, childhood is a cultural invention (Brockliss & Montgomery, 2013). While the work of Ariès has been criticized, the general idea remained that childhood changed over time (Brockliss & Montgomery, 2013).

Developmental psychology influenced defining childhood in different life stages and transitions that take place (Woodhead & Montgomery, 2003). One of the most influential developmental theorists is Jean Piaget with his theory of cognitive development (Rogers, 2003). The dominant understanding of childhood changed from a developmental psychological and biological perspective to a sociological and anthropological perspective in the last 40 years. The growth of sociological and anthropological interest in children started specifically around 1970 with social constructionism (Brockliss & Montgomery, 2013).

Social constructionism is a broad perspective, applied in different scientific fields (Nilsen, 2017). In childhood studies, the view of childhood changed from childhood as a description of a natural and intrinsically biological stage of life (Nilsen, 2017), to childhood as a social construction produced in different ways in particular times and places (L. Gallacher & Kehily, 2013). The social constructionist approach understands that the different ideas about children and childhood exist simultaneously as products of different world views. This means that the understandings of children and childhood are created by people (Nilsen, 2017). Social constructivism is not about gaining universal

objective truth, however, it displays the alternative ways of thinking and the effects of thinking in a certain way (Rogers, 2003). Different social constructivists even deny that there are universal facts about children and childhood (Montgomery, 2003). The ideas about childhood have consequences for the way children are treated and how research is conducted. Research with a social constructionist approach tries to unfold the different beliefs about different social phenomena (Rogers, 2003). In the present study, the different opinions and views of children about social inclusion are unfolded by talking with the children and listening to their opinions about this topic.

In childhood studies, children are seen as social constructions (L. Gallacher & Kehily, 2013; Montgomery, 2013; Prout & James, 2015; Rogers, 2003). This means that childhood is understood by what a particular group, culture, or society thinks about it. These thoughts about childhood are based on different factors like context, history, geography, etc. It can be argued that the ideas around childhood depend on the time in which and the place where the child has been born. Understandings of childhood are changing and this in relation to space and time (Nilsen, 2017). There are different examples of anthropologist`s descriptions of cultures around the world that show that there are different ways of perceiving children (Montgomery, 2003). Additionally, this is also influenced by adults' experiences of being a child (L. Gallacher & Kehily, 2013). Even when researching with children, researchers create a version of "the child". This idea that children should be seen as social constructions has implications. "The ways that children are perceived have important implications for understanding how children experience childhood and how they are treated by adults" (Montgomery, 2013, p. 183). For example, the belief that a child becomes an adult at the age of 18. However, in many societies, this idea is not applied, but becoming an adult is seen as a gradual process in many different societies in the world (Montgomery, 2003). The concept discourse around childhood will be further explained in the rest of this chapter.

Despite this social constructionist approach, certain minority-world beliefs and values about childhood are becoming globalized (Ansell, 2016; Montgomery, 2003; Woodhead, 2013). "An ideal of childhood is constructed as a time of dependency, play and learning, carried out mainly at home and school" (Woodhead, 2013, p. 135). Children are seen as innocent and passive and in need of protection from the world (Ansell, 2016). These beliefs are seen as relevant to the whole world. This ideal of childhood is the premise of the UNCRC (United Nations, 1989). It is seen as an ideal that people aspire (Ansell, 2016). However, different anthropologists who emphasize the importance of understanding the local perspectives, criticize this universal model of childhood. "The idea of childhood as a universal stage or period of life characterized by protection and freedom from responsibilities turns out to be specific and geographically distributed (Montgomery, 2003, p. 71)". The globalization of ideas about childhood is seen as not culturally relative and is also not in line with social constructivism but based on the premise that children need special protection, provision, and rights of participation and that these rights are not discussable (Montgomery, 2013).

3.1.2 Discourses
Discourse as a concept used by Foucault, cannot be defined easily (Nilsen, 2017). This subchapter will expand on the concept of discourses. Therefore, two working definitions of the concept discourse will be presented here.

> Discourses are a "whole set of interconnected ideas that work together in a self-contained way, ideas that are held together by a particular ideology or view of the world" (Rogers, 2003, p. 21).

And the following used definition:

> "Discourses - systems of thought, which are made up of ideas, attitudes, course of action, beliefs and practices – actively constructs our sociocultural world (regimes of truth – Foucault)" (L. Gallacher & Kehily, 2013, p. 223)

This means that discourses are not simply ideas but those ideas are rooted in a historical, social, and political context (Montgomery, 2003). "Representations and discourses shape cultural practice, they influence the treatment of children and young people and in turn shape their growth and development (Woodhead & Montgomery, 2003, p. 8). Discourses are not just certain beliefs, but also influence people`s lives and how people understand the world.

3.1.3 Power

Both people with disabilities and children can be seen as minority groups, not in the quantitative sense but in the sense that they are qualitatively the target of discrimination (Nilsen, 2017). Children have different positions in society and when these positions are investigated, a pattern of social competence and social relations is visible (Barron, 2015). Power plays an important role in the way identities are constructed (Barron, 2015). When it comes to power relationships, there are different ways of thinking about power both in disability studies and in childhood studies.

One way of describing power is done by childhood scholars as Alanen (2009). She used the concept of generational order to describe power relations (Alanen, 2009). The process of generational ordering is recognized as socially constructed just like other concepts like social class, ethnicity, sexuality, and (dis)ability (Alanen, 2009). This means that "generation and disability are produced and regulated in similar ways" (Barron, 2015, p. 135). Disability and generation are perceived as categories that are socially constructed through culture, connected to labelling based on different biological characteristics like physical appearance (Priestley, 2003). Particularly for children, generational perspective plays an important role because the adult generation is generally viewed as the group with power (Nilsen, 2017). This applies also to children with disabilities and also for adults with disabilities. Adults with disabilities can have an asymmetrical relationship with persons without disabilities because of dependency. This implies unequal power relationships between people without disabilities and people with disabilities (Holt, 2010). Connected to disability studies, "disabled children are even more subject to unequal power relationships with their primary "care" givers than disabled adults" (Priestley, 1998, p. 213).

Children`s lives in schools, like in the present study, are studied a lot and the participation of children and their roles as informants is vital (Montgomery, 2009). To research the contextual factors, researchers often conduct their work in a place where there are a lot of children together, for example, schools. Schools can be seen as micro spaces situated in a particular time and space (Holt, 2004). The power relationship between adults and children in classrooms is asymmetrical (Nilsen, 2017), adults as the powerful ones, and the children and young people as the powerless (Tisdall, 2014). Additionally, there is a "hidden curriculum" at schools through which the powerful ideas about appropriate generational, gendered, and sexualized identities are taught and were parts of the individual medical model of disability were dominated (Holt, 2004).

However, there is a change in the use of participation. Children are more and more included in (political) decision making. "Arguments are being made that young disabled people must be part of this new 'culture of participation" and that they should be

included in all decisions that affect their lives (Tisdall, 2014, p. 30). Schools are often used as an institution for participation, even though schools can also be seen as the places with the least space for participation because of the earlier discussed power relationships. Additionally, schools are also the arenas for social life for children and thus play an important role in the social inclusion and social exclusion of children with disabilities in the society (Røgeskov, Hansen, & Bengtsson, 2015).

3.1.4 Key features childhood studies

Both psychology and sociology played a significant role in the contemporary understandings of childhood, by focusing both on the individual child and the children as a social group (L. Gallacher & Kehily, 2013). However, sociocultural researchers were dissatisfied with the psychological, biological, and sociological concepts to children and childhood. The researchers criticized both the models of childhood socialization that perceive children as passive towards socialization processes and the universal set of developmental stages that were described in developmental psychology. This caused a shift in 1970 from studies about and on children, towards the understanding of children`s lives by using children as informants. This caused the movement of the "sociology of childhood" that included child-centered analysis focusing on their agency and their experiences. However, there are also arguments against this perspective because of the following reasons (Montgomery, 2009): the power differences between children and adults are undermined in child-centered anthropology, that children are not always asked for their consent and that emphasizing children`s voices does not necessarily help with the difficulties in the previous studies (Montgomery, 2009). The final report of children`s voices will be selected by the researcher, can be quoted without criticism, etc. Many anthropologists working with children use specific methods to overcome those difficulties, for example, the use of photographs, drawings, and other participatory methods.

Prout and James (2015) wrote a position paper about the key features of the "so-called paradigm" of the sociology of childhood in 1997. These key features were influential in childhood studies and Prout and James (2015) were the first ones to present this in 1997. The goal of writing this paper for Prout and James (2015) was to give the sociocultural researchers principles that they could use to work with when studying children and childhood.

The following key features are presented first by Prout and James (2015). The key features of the sociology of childhood are that childhood is understood as a social construction. "Childhood is both constructed and reconstructed both for children and by children" (Prout & James, 2015, p. 6). Secondly, childhood is a variable in social analysis. Childhood is perceived as a permanent structural form that cannot be separated from other variables like class, ethnicity, and gender. This means that from a societal point of view, childhood stays a category in life that never disappears (Qvortrup, 2009). "Childhood is, in other words, both constantly changing and a permanent structural form within which all children spend their personal childhood period" (Qvortrup, 2009, p. 26). It implicates that childhood does not come to an end when children are becoming adults, but that childhood continues to exist as a generational category. Thirdly, childhood, and children`s social relationships and culture are worthy of study in their own right (Prout & James, 2015). This means seeing childhood as constructed and reconstructed for and by children (Prout & James, 2015). Fourthly, children are active in the construction of their own social life, this is relevant for this research and will be referred to later in this theory chapter. Children are accomplished members of society (Barron, 2015). Fifthly, ethnography is a useful method to study the world of children (Prout & James, 2015).

Lastly, a new paradigm of childhood is a response to the process of reconstructing childhood in society (Prout & James, 2015). It is thus not only describing the phenomena but also altering and constructing the world and the phenomena (L. Gallacher & Kehily, 2013).

However, this sociology of childhood caused a set of established dichotomies like childhood as social structure and children with agency, nature/culture, and becoming/being (Prout, 2011). Scholars nowadays are moving beyond the dichotomies by revising traditional approaches and building upon the existing achievements of childhood research (L. Gallacher & Kehily, 2013), to be able to re-include the excluded middle of childhoods sociology (Prout, 2011). This implies to stop looking at the strict opposites but using overlapping concepts that include both dichotomies.

3.2 Disability Studies

There are parallels between developments in childhood studies and disability studies. Both studies are trying to generate theoretical perspectives on the constructions of social inequality and exclusion. Besides that, the perspectives are both emphasizing the need for participatory methods for making the excluded voices heard (Priestley, 1998). "Childhood researchers will need to engage with new perspectives on disability, and not only focus on the "disabled" label on children whose identities and experiences are shaped by wide range of social influences and social barriers and disability researchers will need to engage with new perspectives on childhood" (Priestley, 1998, p. 220). This subchapter will first describe the different constructions of disability and secondly will explore identities and self-image connected to disability.

3.2.1 Constructing disability

The perspectives on disability changed during the years. There is no accepted consensus about what constitutes a disability and how to measure it (Mitra, 2006). Different definitions can have different implications. In this subchapter, I would like to describe the theoretical models on the construction of disability and their development. Three main models in disability studies and other ideas that define disability in different ways will be discussed. Each disability model can bring a useful perspective on disability in a context because there is not any model that could describe disability completely (Mitra, 2006).

In this section, the first model addressed is the medical approach that developed during the enlightenment (Berger, 2013). This model implies that "disability is seen as a property of the individual body" (Siebers, 2008, p. 25). The health condition of the individual is seen as the cause of the disability (Barnes, 2003; Vehmas, 2015). Disability is seen as something "abnormal", as a random tragic event, located within the body or mind of the person (Holt, 2004). As a consequence, care and research are aimed at the individual rather than the social context (Shakespeare & Watson, 1998). However, this model also entails that people with disabilities are educable (Berger, 2013). Critics believe that there is an ableist view determining this model, "that assumes that some people (and bodies) are "normal" and superior while other people (and bodies) are "abnormal" and inferior, and it entails institutional discrimination on the basis of this distinction" (Berger, 2013, p. 14). According to this view, society does not need to change but persons with disabilities do (Berger, 2013). An implication from the medical model is that many people with disabilities were sent to residential and/or segregated institutions, where they tried to be "normalized"[2] (Tisdall, 2014).

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[2] See examples of normalizing in subchapter 6.5

In contrast to this medical model, disability activists and academics developed the social model of disability with a new vision on disability from the 1990s on (Goodley, 2011; Holt, 2004). The CRPD marks the shift from the medical model to the social model (De Meulder, 2016). The convention emphasizes the social construction of disability and insists on the states to take the social barriers down. The social model of disability puts the location of the cause of the disability from the individual to society (Holt, 2004). This model entails that the socially imposed barriers construct disability as social status and devalues life experiences (Berger, 2013). There is an important distinction between "impairment", the functional limitation on the body itself, and the "disability", the disadvantage or restriction of activities (J. Kool, 2008). This is caused by the society which takes little or no account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from the mainstream of social activities (Holt, 2004). It prevents persons with disabilities from fully participating in society (Barnes, 2003; Holt, 2004; Shakespeare & Watson, 1998). The social model for disability implies that research should be designed in a way that it is accessible to and includes persons with different impairments (Barnes, 2003). Additionally, the research "should focus on the structural, physical, and institutional barriers to social inclusion that children with disabilities face, rather than on impairments, or the failure of children to "adapt" to the expectations of others" (Priestley, 1998, p. 215).

However, the social model got some criticism. For example, Siebers (2008, p. 25) argues that "the medical model pays too much attention to embodiment and the social model leaves the body out of the picture altogether". It is overestimating what can be accomplished with changes in the environment (Tøssebro, 2004). Besides that, it is argued that with the use of the social model, differences between people with disabilities are underrepresented. Thirdly, it could easily exclude people who have mind differences instead of bodily differences (Holt, 2004).

As a reaction to these comments, a change towards the complex interaction between the person, the society, and the cultural context took place in disability studies. The experience of disability does not only depends on the situation where the person is in but also on how the person deals with it (Hoppe, 2012). The phenomenological perspective, the lived experience of embodied human was seen as the starting point for understanding disability (Berger, 2013). Siebers (2008) calls it the "theory of complex embodiment" and Holt (2004) calls it the "embodied geographies of disability". It is not only illuminating the effects of the social environment but also the effects and experiences from the body itself (Siebers, 2008), and this creates space for disabling body and mind differences (Holt, 2004). The body is defined as both a material and a social construct. Besides that, "there is a need for a challenge of the conventional typifications of people with disabilities as abnormal, inferior, or dependent people who at best should be pitied, treated as objects of charitable good will, or offered ameliorative medical treatment" (Berger, 2013, p. 29). By the use of this model, the scholars aim for a change towards an interdisciplinary and broader perspective on disability as a historically contingent, socio-culturally constructed category (Grue, 2016).

Additionally, there are trends in particular parts of the world. In North American disability studies, scholars came up with a cultural model of disability (Goodley, 2011). This model illustrates disability as imbedded in both cultural and historical perspectives and they state there is no firm distinction between disability and impairment because biology and culture affect each other. Additionally, in the Nordic countries, a Nordic relational model of disability has been developed (Goodley, 2011). Disability is impossible to study

without studying the interactions between individuals and contexts (Gustavsson, Tøssebro, & Traustadóttir, 2005). According to this model, disability studies have three main assumptions about disability. Disability is seen as a person-environment mismatch. Besides that, disability is situational instead of only focused on the essence of a person, because there are also situations where the disability is not or less present. Thirdly, disability is relative to the environment (Tøssebro, 2004). This model concentrates on the positive influence of professionals on people with disabilities (Goodley, 2011). Furthermore, Mitra (2006) contributes to the understanding and investigating of disability, with the capability approach that is focusing on two levels, namely the capability level, and the functioning level. Additionally, it adds the economic burden on the construction of disability because impairments limit the earning capacity (Mitra, 2006).

As shown by the description of the different models, disability is constructed in different ways. This does not only have implications for research but also for policies (Tøssebro, 2004). In this research, the definition from the UNCRC will be leading. This convention describes a person with a disability as "someone who has long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (United Nations, 2006, p. 4). This indicates that disability and impairment are seen as two different concepts and that a person´s impairment does not necessarily result in disablement. This definition is most in line with the last described model, the model that is described as the phenomenology perspective. However, it is important to avoid using only the "disabled" label onto children and try to define this disability. Their experiences and identities are shaped by a lot of different social influences and barriers (Priestley, 1998).

3.2.2 Identities and self-image

There is little attention for self-image in disability research and this means that the experiences of persons with disabilities have mostly been ignored (Barron, 2015). Disability as a label is not associated with one physical difference but is an ambiguous label for a lot of different persons with a lot of different characteristics (Grue, 2016). This can cause that disability is seen as a singular or simply structured category, while people with disabilities are a complex, diverse and heterogeneous group, and putting these people under one label encourages Othering and homogeneity that does not exist (Barron, 2015; Lewis, 1995). Yet, it is important to examine the understandings and conceptualizations of normality and difference regarding (disabled) childhood and what the consequences are for social inclusion (Barron, 2015). According to Tisdall (2014), there is a necessity to create a more socially inclusive society by stopping to use categories that put this heterogeneous group together.

However, some researchers listen to the voices of people with disabilities. For example, Ann Lewis is a researcher who is interested in the viewpoints of children with disabilities and particularly children with learning disabilities. According to Lewis (1995), children are often limited by expectations and labeling from others. Children are holding misunderstandings about disability, possibly caused by misinformation by adults or children that have picked up the wrong information (Lewis, 1995). Disabilities with sensory or physical indicators like a wheelchair, will be recognized and understood at an earlier age in comparison to "invisible" disabilities. Listening to the voices of disabled children was also the main focus in the qualitative research project "Growing up with disability". This project was focused on the experiences of children with disabilities and

youth with disabilities (Smith & Traustadóttir, 2015), in which it became clear that the label disability has more influence on the experiences of youth than on the experiences of children.

It is possible that persons with disabilities identify themselves as members of distinct categories of ill or impaired people like for example "deaf people" and that they do not identify with "disability" as understood in research, policies, and treaties (Grue, 2016). Impairments are playing an essential part in the identity building of children with disabilities (Barron, 2015). Their identity building is compared with the so-called normal child development and therefore judged as "social problem" and as "failing" (Barron, 2015). This is, in particular, the issue in the current culture that is focused on the bodily image and specifically on the ideal and beautiful bodies (Barron, 2015). Particularly, this is relevant for the teenage years in which includes the formation of identities and which forms a body competitive period (Smith & Traustadóttir, 2015). Additionally, limitations in the bodies (sensory, physical, intellectual) will lead to limitations in everyday lives (Barron, 2015). To have the assumption that bodily impairment is important for the identification of people, contributes to the earlier discussed medical model that defines people by their impairment (Shakespeare & Watson, 2001). Individuals can identify themselves in different ways at different times as a person with a disability of a person with a certain age or gender (Shakespeare & Watson, 2001).

However, impairments are not often a major obstacle in the lives of children with disabilities and youth with disabilities (Smith & Traustadóttir, 2015). The social self-perception of students with special needs do not differ from those of students without special needs (Koster et al., 2010). Rather the environment is seen as not adapted to human diversity and the existence of impairments. This corresponds with the social model, as earlier discussed. The identification of "disabled" comes after experiencing the reaction of the society towards the impairments. "The child becomes disabled if the impairment causes him or her to experience significant social, cultural, or physical barriers in everyday life (Smith & Traustadóttir, 2015, p. 96)". Therefore, some persons with disabilities would not accept this identification as disabled (Grue, 2016). Other identities, like belonging to the family or gender identity, could be seen as more important (Smith & Traustadóttir, 2015). People with physical impairments want to be seen as "normal" (Barron, 2015), and not as an Other. Later in this chapter (3.4), this process of Othering will be described.

3.3 Inclusion and education

This subchapter is about the concept inclusion and will further explore inclusive education, social inclusion, social inclusion for children with disabilities, the influence of teachers on social inclusion, and the concept of Othering.

Inclusion can be interpreted in different ways within and between different contexts and in different policies and practices (Dukpa & Kamenopoulou, 2018). The different attitudes towards inclusion are linked to different values, conceptual and empirical matters (Norwich, 2005). Attitudes towards inclusive education are in this chapter used as an individual`s viewpoint or disposition towards a particular "object" so in this case towards inclusive education, that strongly depends on the social context (De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011; Pijl & Meijer, 1997). Attitudes are seen as having three components; cognitive, affective, and behavioural components (De Boer et al., 2011).

This subchapter will go more in detail about this concept and will describe the different components.

3.3.1 Inclusive education

There is a worldwide trend to teach children with special needs in mainstream schools instead of teaching them in special schools (Ferguson, 2008). The move towards inclusive education started with different groups of people who were critical to the existing education provision for children with disabilities (De Meulder, 2016; Dukpa & Kamenopoulou, 2018). However, what is understood as inclusive education variates between scholars and also inside schools and countries (Ainscow & César, 2006; Dukpa & Kamenopoulou, 2018). Inclusion is a complex concept that could mean different things to different people in different contexts (Dukpa & Kamenopoulou, 2018).

In general terms, inclusion is seen as a philosophy of acceptance where all people are valued and treated with respect and where they feel and behave as full members of the community (Dukpa & Kamenopoulou, 2018). Applied on education, this contains that "all pupils should be participating socially and learn according to their prerequisites" (Nilholm, 2020). Despite these definitions, there are many different conceptualizations of inclusive education and this highlights different understandings and different emphasis that can be given by different authors and stakeholders (Messiou, 2017).

With the use of the literature analysis done by Ainscow, Booth, and Dyson (2006), the conceptualizations of inclusion are organized and summarised in six different ways. Firstly, the understanding that inclusion is focusing purely on placing children with disabilities and special educational needs in mainstream schools, is still the most prevailing construction of inclusion. This understanding is also the dominant definition used in the majority of works found in a similar analysis done by Amor et al. (2019); Dukpa and Kamenopoulou (2018) and Nilholm and Göransson (2017). In their researches, almost all participants associated the notion of inclusion as physically including pupils with disabilities in schools alongside children without disabilities. According to Dukpa and Kamenopoulou (2018), this is problematic because inclusion is not only about the physical placement of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. Furthermore, focussing on the "disabled" or "special needs" part ignores all the other ways why a child may be impeded or enhanced in inclusion. Besides that, there are important differences in the experience of exclusion between children with disabilities and they cannot just be seen as one homogenous group (Norwich, 2005).

Secondly, inclusion can be understood as a response to disciplinary exclusions. Some children with "special educational needs" are identified as having behaving problems regularly and these children will be included again in mainstream education. Thirdly, inclusion considered as social inclusion, as about including all groups vulnerable to exclusion. This is in line with Norwich (2005), who emphasizes inclusion as being relevant to all groups that experience disadvantage and discrimination, and children with special needs are just one of several groups. Fourthly, inclusion as the promotion of "the school for all", as the development of comprehensive schools. Fifthly, inclusion as part of the "Education for all" movement. Lastly, Ainscow et al. (2006) and Messiou (2017) used the concept of inclusion as a principled approach to education and society. According to Ainscow et al. (2006, p. 25) "inclusion is concerned with *all* children and young people in schools; it is focused on presence, participation and achievement". This definition moves away from the focus on the physical location where children are educated and emphasizes *all* the children rather than on certain groups of students (Messiou, 2017). The six above described conceptualizations are not exclusive but reflect the main positions that are taken towards this topic (Amor et al., 2019).

Inclusive education is still dominated by the individual medical model, even though the constructs around disability changed from the medical model to the social model, *as described in 3.2.1* (Holt, 2003; Shaw, 1998). Education is based on the assumption that a child "develops normally" and any deviation from this is located in this child instead of in the potential disablement of the school (Holt, 2003). This assumption seems to be in line with the medical construction of disability, *as discussed in 3.2.1*. The most effective way of teaching children with special needs, according to the medical model, is taking the child out of the regular class for intensive educational support (Wendelborg & Tøssebro, 2010).

Consequently, there is often limited consideration about changes that could be done in the schools or social surroundings for children with disabilities, since the focus is on the individual medical improvements that can be made (Holt, 2003). To plan inclusive education based on the social model of disability, it is necessary to accept impairments and difficulties as everyday school experiences (Shaw, 1998). According to Wendelborg and Tøssebro (2010), the best way to help individuals with special needs is to reduce the barriers that keep them from having access to the same academic benefits as children without special needs.

3.3.2 Social inclusion in classrooms

In this project, the focus is on the social inclusion of children with physical disabilities in two mainstream classrooms. Social inclusion is used together with concepts like social participation and social integration. From the analysis done by Koster et al. (2009), the concept of social integration and the related concepts, social inclusion, and social participation are used as synonyms. The concepts are used in similar ways and therefore social inclusion will be discussed here as exchangeable with the concepts social integration and social participation.

Social inclusion, as a largely subjective theoretical concept, is included in different research. But when is a child socially included in a class? There is an ambiguity in the definitions that are used by different researchers and in different reforms (Amor et al., 2019; Krischler, Powell, & Pit-Ten Cate, 2019).

According to (J. M. Davis & Hill, 2006, p. 1) "social inclusion is about being allowed or enabled to take part, while participation entails taking part". According to Farrell (2000), social inclusion can be achieved when students with special educational needs are actively taking part in the life of the mainstream school and seen as members of the school community. However, social inclusion is realized by only removing physical barriers (de Leeuw, de Boer, Bijstra, & Minnaert, 2017; Pijl et al., 2008). Cullinan, Sabornie, and Crossland (1992, p. 340) suggest that "pupils with special needs are socially included if they are accepted members in class, if they have at least one mutual friend and if they take part in group activities". In line with this definition, Koster et al. (2009) determined with their literature analysis four aspects that are part of the definition of social participation namely friendship, interaction, social self-perception, and acceptance by classmates. These four aspects imply that social inclusion of pupils with special needs in regular education can be achieved when there is "the presence of positive social contact/interaction between these children and their classmates; acceptance of them by their classmates; social relationships/friendships between them and their classmates and the pupils' perception they are accepted by their classmates" (Koster et al., 2009, p. 135).

Being socially included is considered as having a positive influence on the wellbeing of children in a class (N. Thomas, Graham, Powell, & Fitzgerald, 2016). According to both the teachers and the children in their research, interpersonal relationships are important for the wellbeing at a school. Wellbeing in this research is used in the way, to find out if children are "enjoying their time at school" and feel at ease in their class. Social wellbeing specifically is defined as "the ability to have good relationships with others and to avoid disruptive behaviour, delinquency, violence or bullying" (Watson & Emery, 2012, p. 2).

The opposite of social inclusion is social exclusion. Social exclusion refers to the marginalization or stigmatization of certain groups based on characteristics, such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, or disability (Koller et al., 2018). Social inclusion and exclusion of children does not only happen in classrooms but takes many forms like in material circumstances, economic conditions, decision making, rights, and citizenship (J. M. Davis & Hill, 2006). Social exclusion will be further discussed in the subparagraph about Othering and social exclusion.

3.3.3 Social inclusion of children with disabilities and special needs

The social inclusion of children with different disabilities got stimulated by removing the physical barriers for interaction between children with and without disabilities, for example among other things due to the implementation of the Salamanca Statement in 1994 (UNESCO, 1994). More and more children with disabilities went to regular schools. The relationship between students can be seen as a key issue in inclusive education (Flem & Keller, 2000). Parents choose regular schools for their children with disabilities based on this idea. Parents have the assumption that the contact that their children will have with other peers without disabilities and that this might have a positive influence on the social-emotional development of their child (Koster et al., 2009). Additionally, it increases the possibilities for their child to participate socially in peer groups with or without disabilities (De Boer et al., 2011; Koster et al., 2009).

First of all, according to the literature review done by Koller et al. (2018) is there limited research that has specifically examined how children with disabilities perceive social inclusion. This can be seen as a gap in research. Nonetheless, there is research about how adults with disabilities perceive social inclusion: "Adults with disabilities tend to define social inclusion as active and meaningful engagement, choice and control, societal responsibilities and a social connection to the community" (Koller et al., 2018, p. 8). Inclusive education is seen as stimulating social inclusion. But do children with disabilities feel themselves more socially included when taking part in inclusive education?

Although it is one of the main motives for parents, attending regular schools does not automatically lead to the social inclusion of children with disabilities (De Boer et al., 2011). Pijl et al. (2008, p. 401) show "that pupils with special needs are less popular, have fewer friendships, and participate less often as members of a subgroup". Children with disabilities are less socially included in classrooms in comparison with children without disabilities (Holt, 2004). Around 20-25% of the children with special educational needs are experiencing problems with social participation (Pijl et al., 2008). Also, research done by Flem and Keller (2000) about the implementation of inclusion in Norway using semi-structured interviews with professionals as informants, shows that the biggest challenge of the implementation of inclusion seems to be the social integration. The professionals observed that children with disabilities were often isolated and did not have friends or children to identify with. This applies in particular for children with physical disabilities. Finnvold (2018, p. 193) describes that "children with a physical

disability are not as socially active as their peers". They concluded this from the perspective of the parents who based it on the visit of friends of their children at their homes, and their children visiting their friends at their homes. On top of that, social inclusion decreases if the age and/or the severity of their condition increases. The physical barriers to social activities become more visible in comparison to their peers when children grow older and children have an increased awareness that they differ from the norm (Priestley, 1998; Wendelborg & Tøssebro, 2010). Children with physical disabilities often interact with staff members, family members, or other children with disabilities (Finnvold, 2018).

Being a person with a disability or not, is just one of the many factors that could become a reason for exclusion (Shaw, 1998). Impairments can affect the social abilities of children and can cause a desire to establish social relations in different ways (Røgeskov et al., 2015). "Whether children are included or excluded in/from mainstream schools can depend upon children's personal characteristics, particularly the level, type, or severity of a child's impairment(s)" (Holt, 2003, p. 121). Children could also get bullied because of race, not able to perform a certain activity, background et cetera (Holt, 2004). However, in mainstream schools, "children with all kinds of mind-body differences experienced a greater level of exclusion and stigmatization within children's cultures than their peers and many children with mind-body differences had relatively problematic 'friendships', and/or fewer friends" (Holt, 2004, p. 230). Children with learning disabilities and children with behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties experience more exclusion and punishment than children with physical disabilities (Holt, 2004).

A possible explanation for these difficulties with social participation for children with disabilities could be because of factors that could influence successful inclusion of children. For example, the characteristics of the teachers like their abilities to make adaptions, the characteristics of the school like the organization of the special services, the financial resources and the cooperation with parents, staff, between schools and between professionals (Flem & Keller, 2000). On top of that, institutional factors like access to transport could hinder the social inclusion (Priestley, 1998) and hinder the access to social arenas for these children (Røgeskov et al., 2015).

Due to the above described social exclusion of children with disabilities, some professionals argue in favour of special education. A possible advantage of special schools is that pupils meet peers with similar interests, needs, difficulties, and with a similar by which their self-esteem could develop (Flem & Keller, 2000). According to research done by Morina Diez (2010) segregated special schools seem better in the "integration" of the special needs children because of the support that has been given. Also, Finnvold (2018) claims that segregation is still the preferred way to organize education and to most effectively equip children with physical disabilities.

3.3.4 Influence of teachers on inclusion

The different ways in which school spaces are regulated, both by the staff and by the pupils is a central theme in the literature about social inclusion (M. Gallacher, 2006). This focus on teachers and the implications of their behaviour for social inclusion is also of relevance for this work[3].

Teacher practices and the organization of the class can place different expectations and constraints on the performances of children (Holt, 2004). There is a wide variation in how

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[3] See analysis subchapter 6.1

schools organize the special services provided in their schools (Pijl & Meijer, 1997). Pupils with special needs are physically included in the same school as other pupils but will spend most of their time out of the class to get the support they need. Additionally, the cooperation of schools to find ways of taking care of students with special needs can be essential to include children with special needs in regular schools (Pijl & Meijer, 1997).

The attitudes and the knowledge of teachers towards inclusive education are important for successful inclusion (Flem & Keller, 2000; Lewis, 1995). As stated in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), schoolteachers have the obligation to facilitate the inclusion of all students and meet their academic and social needs (de Leeuw et al., 2017). Teachers are the ones who can implement inclusive practices in schools, therefore they are important in any inclusive development (de Leeuw et al., 2017; Dorji & Schuelka, 2016). Additionally, teachers' attitudes are seen as important in how children experience inclusion or exclusion within the school setting (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012).

How teachers will realize inclusion depends on their attitudes towards special needs and on the resources that they have available (Pijl & Meijer, 1997). Resources contain factors as available instruction time, materials, knowledge, and skills acquired for the teachers. "How teachers conceptualize and understand the concepts "inclusion" and "disability" will have significant implications on the successful implementation of inclusive approaches" (Dukpa & Kamenopoulou, 2018, p. 75).

The attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education depend on different factors. Teachers have different attitudes towards different disabilities (De Boer et al., 2011). This can be related to the knowledge and understanding the teachers have of certain disabilities (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012). Teachers have more negative attitudes towards children with emotional and behavioural difficulties than children with other disabilities (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000). Teachers hold more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of children with physical disabilities and sensory impairments, like the key informants in this study (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; De Boer et al., 2011). Years of experience is also a factor that makes a difference. Teachers with fewer years of experience show a more positive attitude, however, teachers with experience in inclusive education have more positive attitudes than those who do not have experience (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Smaller class size is a positive component for having a positive attitude (De Boer et al., 2011). Teachers at regular schools often feel unprepared to teach children with special needs (Berger, 2013; De Boer et al., 2011), while "successful implementation of inclusion depends to a large extent on the attitude and level of teacher competence" (Dukpa & Kamenopoulou, 2018, p. 75). They might feel that their skills are not enough in light of the growing expertise of special education (Goodley, 2011). In general, "teachers are negative or undecided in their beliefs about inclusive education" (De Boer et al., 2011, p. 347). Besides that, teachers are not always able to impose their views on "disability" of "social inclusion" because this can be in conflict with the school policy (Holt, 2003).

Additionally, the relationship between teachers and pupils is not symmetrical. Even though the power-relationship/actor/generational relationship between adults and children in classrooms is asymmetrical (Nilsen, 2017), children can still contest the expectations of adults (Holt, 2004). Children can still perform their own culture at school and this contains that there might be a distinction between two cultures of the school, the formal adult curricula, and the informal child culture.

3.4 Othering and stigmatization

This subchapter will explore more about the sociological concepts of Othering and stigmatization, which both can be connected to experiences of children and persons with disabilities.

3.4.1 Othering and social exclusion

Othering is an important concept from the perspective of children with disabilities and inclusion. When we make a person exclusively "an Other", we see the person as somebody else and as somebody we fear and reject (Barron, 2015). The Other is seen as unique because of her/his differences (Ytterhus, 2005). Our theoretical understandings of what Others are is related to the notion of how we are defining ourselves and what we are not (Traustadóttir, 2001). Marginalized groups, like disabled persons and feminists, have challenged the way dominant groups have silenced them and have spoken for them and about them (Traustadóttir, 2001).

Interpretations of the behaviour of children are often referenced to the standard of what is constituted as "normal" development (Lewis, 1995). This causes that the variability of what is "normal" is underemphasized and that what typifies the majority, is seen as what is usual (Lewis, 1995). These concepts of "normality" and "deviance" have their roots in developmental psychology and standardize what is expected from children according to their age. These concepts have been reproduced in research (Nilsen, 2017).

The process of Othering expands when children are growing older. When children are getting older, they have an increased awareness that they differ from the norm. They realize that there is a gap between the educational achievements, that there decreased levels of tolerance and the physical barriers to different social activities become more apparent (Priestley, 1998). Children that have one or more different disabilities experience a greater level of exclusion and stigmatization than their non-disabled peers (Holt, 2004). However, this concept of "Othering" is not only based on their disabilities but on a variety of grounds like failing to perform (Holt, 2004).

Othering is a common concept in both childhood studies and disability studies. Both childhood studies and disability studies are critical on the dichotomy of dependence and independence, which contributes to the process of Othering. and one can claim that the concepts of dependence and independence belong to a continuum (Tisdall, 2014). The idea of physical independence is challenged, with the idea that independent living is about making choices and decisions and not only about enacting themselves (Tisdall, 2014). Both children and disabled persons can contribute to their families and society and cannot be regarded only as independent persons (Tisdall, 2014).

Children and people with disabilities are spending a lot of their time in institutions like schools, day-care centers, etc. (Tisdall, 2014). If they are not in institutions, people with disabilities are often explicitly or implicitly still excluded from public space because of different obstacles or because of their dependence on Others for social activities. Children are expected to be with their families (Tisdall, 2014). As Holt (2003) describes in her article, staff from schools think it is important that children are treated "the same" whether they have disabilities or not, to "normalize" them.

According to Holt (2003), whether children with disabilities are included in mainstream schools or not is depended on the level of the impairment. This perspective focusses on the limitations of the individual child. Children can be labeled as special or abnormal, and thus as different if they do not follow the hegemonic representation of childhood and do not meet the norms and age-related expectations of the developmental psychology (Holt,

2003). Following these "diagnosis process", there are parallels with the earlier discussed medical model of disability, *see subchapter 3.2.1*, because the focus is put on the individual instead of how the society contributes to the disability. However, it can also be connected to the social model of disability, because some people in the society refer to somebody as "abnormal".

Additionally, Othering can lead to social exclusion. Social exclusion is seen as a multidimensional, complex, dynamic, and social process that denies the fundamental rights (Morina Diez, 2010). Howard (1999) as cited in (Morina Diez, 2010), states both educational and social exclusion are connected and that people with disabilities are the most vulnerable group to exclusive processes. From the analysis done by Morina Diez (2010), special needs students perceive more limitations than advantages in their school experiences. There can be many different reasons why social exclusion occurs like behavioural reasons, group norms, different interests, and parental expectations (Nowicki, Brown, & Stepien, 2014).

A form of social exclusion is the concept of bullying. Children with disabilities experience bullying (Røgeskov et al., 2015). Bullying is described as "a repeated act which physically and/or mentally harms an individual and takes place in the context of an interpersonal relationship" (Røgeskov et al., 2015, p. 187). Bullying affects the self-esteem of children. From research at the existence of bullying done by Røgeskov et al. (2015), it became evident that the risks of being a victim of bullying for 11-year-olds doubles by simply having a physical or psychosocial impairment in comparison to 11-year-olds without a disability. However, it is unclear if this caused by the impairments or by the reaction of peers. Also, Lindsay and McPherson (2012) describe that children with physical disabilities are bullied to a larger extent both in implicit and explicit forms. According to this research, the explanation of this could be the social exclusion and seeing such children as "different".

However, the process of Othering can be changed. In research done by Shaw (1998), children said that after they came in contact with their classmates with disabilities they think differently about them and realize that they have much in common. This means that friendship can develop between children with and without a disability. During the current study, different friendships were observed. Mutual friendships are a condition for social inclusion in a class (Cullinan et al., 1992). Friendship like Corsaro (2017) observed during his study in preschools, is producing shared activity together in a specific area, and protecting that from the involvement of Others. This means that the children have the power to decide who is joining and who cannot join their activity and this can include "Othering" of children with disabilities (Holt, 2004). The attitudes towards children with disabilities are not fixed but changeable. Additionally, an important factor in the process of "Othering" is the use of language. If Othering is done by using language, this means that it can also be undone by the use of inclusive language (Traustadóttir, 2001).

3.4.2 Stigmatization
The concept of stigmatization is connected to Othering and social exclusion. People with physical disabilities often get stigmatized and this can stand in the way of social inclusion (Green, 2007). Stigmatization is a type of social control, that is excluding a person from a relationship or a society (Dijker & Koomen, 2007). Stigma consists of interactions between individuals that have differences and individuals that do not have differences (Green, 2007).

Goffman has analyzed this process of stigmatization (Goffman, 1968, as cited in Winance, 2007). He made a distinction between a "normal" person and a "stigmatized" person. According to Goffman, a normal person is an individual who during the interaction fulfills other people´s expectations of him (Goffman, 1968, as cited in Winance, 2007). A stigmatized person or "non-normal" person is someone who is discovered to have an attribute, for example, and "abomination of the body" which disqualifies him/her in belonging to the expected category (Goffman, 1968, as cited in Winance, 2007). Goffman researched the interactions between the normal individual and the stigmatized individual and according to him, there are two scenarios (Goffman, 1968, as cited in Winance, 2007).

There is a scenario where the stigma is not visible and the person tries to pass for a "normal person" and he/she tries to belong to the category of normal people. The second scenario is relevant for this study because this scenario is about a visible stigma and the person tries to cover this stigma to reduce the effects on the interactions and try to be "as normal as possible" (Goffman, 1968, as cited in Winance, 2007). This means that this person tries to "normalize" his or her characteristics. However, for the interactions between nonstigmatized persons and stigmatized persons, this can be seen as problematic. The stigmatized person does everything to be seen "as if" he or she is normal. Besides that the persons, who the stigmatized person interacts with, do everything to see this person "as if" he or she is normal (Goffman, 1968, as cited in Winance, 2007). This interaction creates a distance between these people because the stigmatized person can never be seen as "completely normal". For persons with a disability, the "as if" interactions lead to two different possibilities. The first possibility is that the person accepts his or her disability and that this person is behaving like he or she is expected to behave but without pretending to be truly normal (Winance, 2007). Society accepts the person as a "person with a disability". The other possibility is that the person with a disability is completely segregated from the "normal" society.

However, the theories of Goffman also got criticized. As Winance (2007) shows the interactions between the "normal" person and the person with an impairment does not need to be disturbed. People can have visible impairments but yet not disturb the interaction and vice versa. This means that "a person is therefore not defined as being normal or stigmatized simply by considering pre-existing social frameworks or normative expectations" (Winance, 2007, p. 633), but defined by interaction and due to the expectations that are influencing the interaction. "Normality" or "difference" are built by interaction and are not objective characteristics (Winance, 2007). What it means to "live like others and among others" is considered and defined by actors and context and can take different forms.

Additionally, Goffman put in his research the focus on stigma as happening in social relationships but others claim that stigmas are more about the individual characteristics that are negatively evaluated by others (Green, 2007). Dijker and Koomen (2007, p. 6) defined stigmatization "as a process by which an individual´s or group´s character or identity is negatively responded to on the basis of the individual´s or group´s association with a past, imagined or currently present deviant condition, often with harmful physical or psychological consequences for the individual or the group". To conclude this chapter a stigma can be defined as "drawing attention to the intersection among bodily impairment, personal identity, cultural norms, and social structural barriers" (Green, 2007, p. 329). This means that the perceptions that lead to stigma can be changed to reduce the existing stigma (Susman, 1994).

4 Methodology

This chapter contains descriptions and reflections on the process of designing and conducting my study. This chapter aims to present a description of the process of how this research has been conducted, to create transparency about the followed path and the changes that have been made along the way. This chapter is divided into five main parts. The first part of this chapter is about the methodological reflections that follow up the described theory in the previous chapter. The second part of this chapter will focus on the process of designing this research. Thirdly, I will describe information about the methods that I used for the data collection. Additionally, in the fourth chapter, I will explain the process of leaving the field, reciprocity, and the methods that are used for analyzing. In the fifth and last subchapter, I would like to address some ethical considerations and limitations that can be made connected to this research.

4.1 Qualitative research and methodological reflections

This work is a qualitative research. How children are viewed, as objects or subjects, determines the research methodology (Beazley & Ennew, 2006). In line with the previous theory chapter and the sociology of childhood, children are seen as subjects rather than objects of research (Alderson, 2008; Shakespeare & Watson, 1998). Children are seen as social actors (James, 2007; Skelton, 2008) and as capable of "providing expert testimony about their experiences, associations, and lifestyles" (Thomson, 2009, p. 1). With qualitative research, researchers are flexible and do not have to keep to predetermined rigid methods. This is specifically necessary when researching a diverse group such as children with disabilities (Kelly, 2007). Qualitative research methods are used to let children "speak" in their own right and report their valid views and experiences (Alderson, 2008). Interviewing, for example, "allows children to give voice to their own experiences and understanding of their world" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 145). By giving children a voice and expressing this in their work, researchers attempt to gain a better understanding of childhood (Spyrou, 2011).

The philosophy that children should be heard also when it comes to research, is among other things based on the UNCRC and in particular in article 12, the right to participation (United Nations, 1989). Researchers are increasingly involved in exploring the different ways in which children can engage in research (Abebe, 2009). With my research, I follow this line of approaching childhood and methodology.

4.2 Process of designing the research

Firstly, the research design will be discussed. Secondly, the implications of designing research with children with disabilities will be addressed. What follows is a description of the process of getting access to the research site, the description of the research site, and the sampling methods. Lastly, the participants will be described.

4.2.1 Research design

The process of designing this research started with determining the rationale of the research project and why this rationale is important, (D. R. Thomas & Hodges, 2010). The rationale of this research is to explore the social dynamics at a regular school in a regular class including children with physical disabilities. A plan was made on how to get access to the research site. When thinking about my design, I tried to anticipate the resources that were available to me and considering the time, money, and availability of the schools (D. R. Thomas & Hodges, 2010). With the objective in mind I started to develop research questions. The main research question is how children experience social

inclusion in a regular classroom with children with a physical disability and which factors are influencing social inclusion and exclusion. The research question determines the methods. In this research, qualitative child-friendly methods are chosen, that support their rights to express themselves in different ways (Ennew et al., 2009). I chose participant observations with a focus on social interactions, focus group interviews with drawings, and interviews with adults.

4.2.2 Research with children with a disability

The objective of my work is to let the voices of *all* children be heard in my research. Research with children with disabilities is showing us only limited parts of their lives (Ytterhus et al., 2015). One of the reasons for this is that the society views the impairment as problematic and the society views children with a disability as pathetic, dependent and incapable of having their own views (Shakespeare & Watson, 1998). Consequently, many problems that children with disabilities face, have nothing to do with the impairment but are a result of the social relations, cultural representations, and the behavior of adults (Shakespeare & Watson, 1998). This is in line with the social model as discussed *in the theory chapter in 3.2.1.* The society takes little or no account of people with physical impairments (Holt, 2004). I reflected upon the adjustments I could make in my research for including children with disabilities in different ways. By designing this research, I focused on the agency of children with disabilities and not on their medical condition or impairments, according to the social model *as discussed in 3.2.1*. I wanted to know more about the social interactions they have and what they want to tell me instead of focusing on the impairments they have.

Before I started my research, I was not familiar with the medical condition of the key informants. This means that the methods that I wanted to choose had to be flexible and adjustable to the capabilities of the child. Therefore, I chose at first to use participant observation as a method, because this is a flexible approach. Additionally, I wanted the children to engage actively in the research and therefore I chose different participatory methods like drawing.

4.2.3 Getting access to the research site

Getting access to the research site was not easy. To gain children´s consent and involvement, I had to start by contacting the adult gatekeepers (Punch, 2002b). I started with sending emails before the summer holidays to three different kinds of regular schools with a short explanation of the project, when and how often I want to come to the class and the requirements that needed to be met by the school[4]. Additionally, I described in this email what I could contribute with my research to the school and gave the readers a chance to ask questions. I got acceptance from the special needs coordinator of one of the schools before the summer holidays in 2019 to start with my fieldwork in September. To get access to a second school I started sending around ten emails from the beginning of the new school year to different schools, while I was doing my fieldwork already at the first school. Due to no response, or responses that the school did not have the participant that met the criteria, I had to send another 20 emails to schools in another city and surrounding areas. However, I still needed to send around 30 emails with the same content before I found another school that was willing to participate. In total, I sent around 68 emails to different schools before I found the second school. From the 68 schools, I received no response from 46 schools even after a follow-up email. From the 22 schools that I received an answer from, the rejection I got

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[4] The email that have been send to the head of the schools can be found in appendix B

was often based on that they did not have the participant that I needed for my research on their school. This was unexpected. Many children with physical disabilities go to special education, but since the implementation of the "law for inclusive education" in 2014, more and more children go to regular schools (Smeets et al., 2019).

A possible explanation for non-response could be the definition of physical disability. I experienced when talking to the headmasters of the second school, that there is no agreement on the definition, *as described in subchapter 3.2.1.* Moreover, a recent evaluation done on the Appropriate Education Act in the Netherlands shows that there it is not well defined which students are eligible for extra support (Ledoux, Waslander, & Eimers, 2020). I explained to them what physical disability means to me. Hereby I did not focus on the medical needs but more broadly also on the social, educational, and functional needs (Simeonsson et al., 2003). Those needs are the same as everyone else their needs, but the difference is that they are often not met for children who have a physical disability (Shakespeare & Watson, 1998). According to the headmasters, the key informant was not considered formally as a child with a physical disability. However, the headmasters recognized the different needs that she has and that these needs are not met. Therefore, I included her in my research.

The gatekeepers had to get a common understanding of the purpose of the research and my role to prevent any confusion about this in a later stage. This happened at the first school during the first meeting with the special needs coordinator. In this meeting, the special needs coordinator suggested a class where I could conduct my research. The special needs coordinator and I decided to start by getting consent from the parents of the child with a disability. Following the rationale of this research, the focus will not be on this child particularly but on the social dynamics of the whole class. However, the child will be the key informant and therefore it is important to ask the consent from the child and his parents first. After getting consent from these parents, were the other consent forms shared digitally with the parents[5] , and in this way, every parent could decide to let their child participate or not. Consent is both necessary from the parents as well from the children to start with the research (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Punch, 2002b). The school was enthusiastic about the project and shared documents with me from the children from earlier years that they collected about the social status of the children in the class. I will elaborate later on this in the ethical part of this chapter. Before the start of the fieldwork, I had a meeting with the teacher of the class to explain the research and to talk about the planning and to ask him for consent.

Furthermore, I had a short meeting with the second teacher that is teaching on Tuesdays because I will meet him during my research as well and asked him also for his consent. Additionally, there was a meeting with one of the parents of the key informant to give her more information about the research project and the role of her child in the project. The fieldwork started after the meetings were done. I got acceptance from the respondents, the gatekeepers, and almost all the parents, except for the parents of one child. This will be explored further in the part about sampling later in this chapter.

At the second school, there was first a meeting with the two headmasters of the school. This meeting focused on the purpose of the research and exploring the possibilities at the school. The headmasters suggested a class including a child with a physical disability and the researcher agreed on this. After this meeting, the headmasters contacted the mother of the key informant. Approximately one week later there was a meeting with the mother

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[5] This information letter and consent form can be found in appendix D

of this child and one of the headmasters. The mother was in the opportunity to ask all her questions. After acceptance from the mother of the child, I had to wait for consent from the father of the child. After one week of no-response to my email, I called him and during this conversation, all questions were answered, and he gave his consent for the research. After this, the consent forms were shared with the other parents and teacher of the class. All the parents and the teacher gave consent and all the children from this class participated. The consent of the children was asked before they participated in the research. All children agreed on participation. After receiving the written consent from all the gatekeepers and informants, the planning of the research was established in agreement with the teacher.

4.2.4 Research sites

The research took place in two different classes in two different primary schools. The first school is located in a rural area in the northwest of the Netherlands, located on a busy street with a playground in front of the school. The second school is located in an urban area in the southeast of the Netherlands, in a quiet neighborhood with a lot of space for children to play in the woods connected to the playground. Both schools are public without any religious affiliation. The first school has 322 pupils at their school and the second school has 420 pupils.

I spend one month in each school, starting at the end of August with the first school. The classroom culture in both classes was quite different. In the first class, the tables were divided into small groups of around 4 to 6 children. The teacher was actively involved, moving around the class to get the children energized and to help them when needed. The children had a lot of possibilities to work together. With some subjects, children were sent out of the class to work in different groups. This happened sometimes with an extra teacher but more often alone. Besides that, there was a relaxed informal class atmosphere with possibilities to make jokes, laugh, and ask questions. In the second class, the children were seated in pairs. After the teacher presented the explanation and the children had to work on their worksheets, the children had almost no possibility to work together because they had to stay quiet and work for themselves. The teacher sat often in front of the class, in case a child had questions. The class atmosphere was formal and strict and the children had to focus on the tasks they had. During lunch breaks, creative subjects, and physical activity classes the atmosphere was informal and relaxed with more chances for children to talk. The differentiation in this class took place inside the class with some children making more difficult assignments than others without leaving the classroom or without any help from another teacher. Later in this chapter, *in 4.5.2,* an exploration of the ethical considerations connected to these research sites will be explored.

4.2.5 Sampling

After getting access to the schools, the informants were chosen in agreement with the gatekeepers. Gatekeepers are people who are in children´s lives and that can give you as researcher access to the field (Masson, 2014). The gatekeepers and I have chosen the classes and the pupils that would participate, taking into consideration what would be in the best interest of this research. However, at the second school, there was not another option than to choose the class I did my research in. There was only one class including a child with a physical disability. This means I did not have any influence on choosing a certain age group. This way of sampling is convenience sampling. Participants are selected because they fit the criteria and because of their willingness and availability to participate (Gideon, 2012). In this case, the availability is established by both the

gatekeepers and the teachers of the class. Ethical implications of this are described in part about ethical considerations, later in this chapter. The willingness of the children and the other participants was asked before the start of the research as discussed in 4.5.5.

The total final sample exists of 49 children including one key informant in each class. These key informants were selected because of the following criteria: having a physical disability and attending a regular primary school. The sample is further explored in the following subchapter.

4.2.6 Participants

The sample of my research consisted of two classes of pupils in two different cities in the Netherlands. The class from the rural school was grade 6, 11/12 years old and the class from the urban school was grade 3, this means pupils around 7/8 years old. The total sample consisted of 25 boys and 24 girls. In both classes, there were children with different special needs and they were all included in my study. In both classes, there two key informants with physical disabilities, a boy and a girl. This is important because I want to study inclusion and inclusion involves teaching children with varying characteristics (Nilholm & Alm, 2010).

The key informant from the rural school is a boy, Maurits, around 12 years old with a congenital disability. The key informant from the urban school, Sofie, is a girl of 7 years old with an acquired disability. Both informants started at their schools when they were four years old. Besides the children, I also recruited adults to get more information about the context. In the first class, there was a male teacher with three years of working experience and in the second class, there was a female teacher with thirty years of working experience. Additionally, I interviewed the former teacher from the class from the second school. I decided to interview her because the key informant acquired her disability, in the year she was the teacher of the class. Lastly, I included the special needs coordinators of both schools as informants in my research. The special needs coordinator of the first school was also the gatekeeper for entering this school. Also, from all these adults I received consent to participate in my research.

4.3 Methods

In this subchapter I will elaborate on the different methods that have been used and the connection between those methods. The following methods are chosen in agreement with the objectives for this research (D. R. Thomas & Hodges, 2010) and inspired by similar research with similar research methods conducted by Goodwin and Watkinson (2000) and Nilholm and Alm (2010). The methods will be described in the right order of the way that they were used and why they were used. After the description of the methods, the changes to the preliminary plan will be discussed. Thirdly, the importance of using multiple methods in this research will be discussed.

4.3.1 Participant observation

Participant observation is one of the ethnographic methods and the primary method used by anthropologists during fieldwork (De Munck & Sobo, 1998). Participant observation is comparable with what every individual would do when encountering a new social situation (Spradley, 2016). It is more than just observing, it is also about the engagement in a situation. It involves participation in the social world in divergent roles and to be reflective about this (Spradley, 2016). The different roles I had to take in the research, are broadly discussed *in the subchapter 4.5.3*. This method is chosen to start with, because of the following considerations.

Firstly, I wanted to enter the field with the least preconceptions, expectations, or prejudices. I chose participant observation as the method to start with, trying to prevent that I would be too focused already on something that I am trying to find (Lyså, 2018). Besides that, it created an important foundation for the rest of the research. It allowed me to generate an idea of how the research site looked like and how I can develop my research further on. It is especially helpful to ue unstructured observations to develop new research questions that can be explored later with other methods (Ennew et al., 2009). In my research, I used observations to develop the questions that I wanted to ask the children during the focus group interviews. Moreover, it helped me to build rapport with the children to gain their trust by reacting to children and follow their guidelines (Punch, 2002b). Additionally, participant observation can be a suitable method for researching children with disabilities, especially when their disability is unknown before the research started because all children with disabilities can be observed (Kolesar, 1998). Participant observation was the chosen method for answering my research questions because it allowed me to engage in different activities with the children and to learn from them (Spradley, 2016). For my research, the social interactions in the class, and outside the class were observed.

During the participant observations, I had a lot of informal dialogues with the children. I learned a lot about the different social interactions the children have in non-supervised moments in their classroom, in their physical activity classes, at the playground, or when they are cycling to the physical activity class. During these periods with minimal adult intervention and supervision, the peer culture thrives (Holmes, 1998). By observing children in different social settings (Hamilton, 2005), one can already learn a lot about the interactions, preferences, and social relationships the children have.

The participant observations are conducted during the complete research period. This means that in both schools, observations were done for four weeks for around four hours a day. In both schools, I spent the first week only doing participant observations. The observations were unstructured. The observations were held both in classroom settings as in playground settings because the social interactions between these settings were expected to be different. The playground might be an important context for this research to get to know more about bullying and exclusion. Since the social behavior is unconstrained by the influences of adults (Boulton, 1999). Additionally, children with special needs can be isolated in the playground (Lewis, 1995).

This research method aimed to observe the social interactions between the children and in particular the social relations with the child who has a physical disability. A standard observation sheet was filled in before every observation day[6]. To contain the quality of the observations, I divided the fieldnotes in a part about the objective actual record of what happened during the observations and my preliminary interpretations of these events (Riddall-Leech, 2005). Additionally, I kept a fieldwork journal to write down all the personal experiences as another important source of data (Spradley, 2016).

Next to all the strengths of this method for my research, there are also weaknesses of using this method. Participant observation is sensitive to bias in different ways. There is a chance of bias based on the characteristics of the researcher that can influence the way you observe, analyze, and make the interpretation (Kawulich, 2005). Another limitation is that it does not let the children speak and report valid views and experiences when you only observe them (Alderson, 2008). Lastly, it is important to be aware of the effect of

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[6] An example of an standard observation sheet can be found in the appendix J

"overload" when actively trying to remember and catalog everything (Spradley, 2016). The participant requires that a researcher raises his level of attention to be able to observe a broader spectrum (Spradley, 2016). Due to these limitations, other research methods were also used.

4.3.2 Social interaction observation

In the second week of doing participant observations at both schools, I started to focus more on the social interactions in the classroom. Sociograms is a method that is often used in classes to analyze social interactions. A sociogram is a drawing or a map showing the social networks inside a group (Leung & Silberling, 2006). These sociograms are made based on the answers that children give to the researcher about their preferences in the class. However, I decided not to use sociograms in my research. It puts the children in a certain hierarchy and is assigning numbers to the children instead of getting an overview of the social relationships. This might show a dejected image of the social position of children with special needs (Chambers & Kay, 1992). Besides that, it is a simplified way of social relationships because the children are represented as either connected or disconnected, and the strength of this relationship is not displaced (Bakkenes, De Brabander, & Imants, 1999). Lastly, by making sociograms in an established time frame, you are limited to this period and situation while the social relations and views of the children can be different in another time frame (Riddall-Leech, 2005).

Nevertheless, I still wanted to analyze the social relations of the children in the class. General observational data can give a nuanced picture of the relationships between children (Martinsen, Nærland, & Vereijken, 2010). With that in mind, I chose to observe the social interactions and report it inspired by Corsaro (2003).

I observed by using two different techniques. Firstly, I observed a group of children for an established period while they were working on a task or during a break. These groups were based on the positions the children had in the class. During the time I was observing them, I drew lines based on the interactions the children had with each other but also when there was communication with members outside this group in this time frame[7]. Moreover, I explored the relationships between the participants during the participant observations, and when talking with the children. The children told me who they played with at the weekend, with who they fought and with who they regularly work together. Additionally, I observed with who they were playing at the playground, talking with during lunch breaks, and which children they chose when working together in small groups. Finally, during the focus group interviews by asking questions about who they would like to work with, the children often confirmed what I already observed. I collected all this information in two different tables of both classes, to have an overview of the children and the 3 or 4 peers they spend most of their time with.

4.3.3 Focus group interviews

Interviews are a suitable method for letting the children speak about their own thoughts, which cannot be explored by doing observations only. Interviews are also to ask the children questions, to validate the data that participant observation revealed (Nilholm & Alm, 2010). According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009): "Qualitative research interviews attempt to understand the world from the subject´s point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (p.1). Focus group interviews specifically are interviews that collect data through group

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[7] An example of this can be found in appendix H

interaction about topics that are determined by the researcher (Morgan, 1996). Focus group interviews have the purpose of bringing up different viewpoints on different issues (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Also, holding group interviews demonstrates the social skills of children and show aspects of the social relationships they have (Mayall, 2008). This method is flexible in use and can be adapted to different purposes (Morgan, 2002). The focus group interviews in this study were held with around five to six children in each group.

Before I started the focus group interviews, I made use of an energizer for around 8 minutes to release energy and get the children focused on the interview. Children were enjoying the small game, got to know the researcher (Punch, 2002b) and the game created a warm and trusting atmosphere. After the game, the focus group interviews started. I used an interview guide[8] for every discussion, however, my role as moderator was often little because of the group interaction (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The interviews started semi-structured and the interviews got more structured at the end of the fieldwork because of decisions that I made about the questions after conducting the first interviews (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

The main themes in the interviews were the following: exclusion, bullying, children's perceptions of the teacher and the children in their class, feelings of belonging, group forming, social inclusion, and social relations. The focus group interviews were fairly short and took approximately 20 minutes for every group. They were audio-recorded with permission and transcribed afterwards. The focus group interviews started in the last weeks of my attendance at the schools. The reason for this is the possibility to build up a relationship with the children before asking them about topics like bullying and excluding. The focus group interviews took place in a separate room in the school and the participating children were put together in groups randomly by the teacher. All children of both classes participated; this entails that there was a total of nine different groups.

With the children from the second school, I also made use of visual stimuli during the interview. I used two different pictures of two different situations[9] and with questions about these stimuli, children discussed in response to what they saw and tried to emphasize with the children on the pictures. Later, in this chapter (cf. 4.3.6.), I will expand on the arguments for adding visual stimuli for this younger age group.

A limitation of focus group interviews could be, that the amount of input that every child can give in a group interview can differ. Some children are shyer or not feeling comfortable enough to communicate (Spyrou, 2011). Additionally, having interviews in a group with five or six other children can cause social desirability bias. Another possible limitation could be, that children are easily led by the questions of adults. For example by repeating the words the interviewer is using in the questions or giving unreliable answers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

4.3.4 Drawings
Besides the use of verbal interviews with the children, I chose to make use of a visual method. After the focus group discussions, I asked the children to draw. I asked them to make a drawing about how their class would look like if they would be the ones in charge[10]. They got 15 minutes to make the drawing. The drawings were made in the

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[8] The interview guidelines can be found in appendix I
[9] These visual stimuli can be found in appendix F
[10] Three examples of the drawings can be found in appendix G

existing groups after the interviews and the children also discussed their interpretations of the drawings in this group. During the process of drawing children already expressed different reasons for drawing certain things and made comparisons with other drawings.

Drawings can be a powerful method. According to Nieuwenhuys (1996), "Drawing can be more effective in bringing out the complexities of their experience than methods and techniques used by/with adults" (p.3). Additionally, visual methods can help children let them express themselves more easily especially for children that have problems expressing themselves verbally (Guillemin, 2004), also when it comes to emotions (Thomson, 2009). Besides that, it can also make their participation in the research more pleasurable (Spyrou, 2011). By making use of not only the drawing but also the participants´ interpretation of the drawing, the researcher gets more knowledge about how children see the world in a particular space and time (Guillemin, 2004). Because of these reasons, drawing is seen as a "child-centered" research method that puts the child at the center as an "expert" (Leitch, 2008; Mitchell, 2006). Additionally, it is minimizing the power imbalance that can exist between the researcher and the children by giving children their own freedom to draw (Barker & Weller, 2003). These reasons let me decide to also use drawings as part of my research.

However, a possible limitation is the validity of children´s drawings. Drawings are literally and socially constructed, just like other visual images (Thomson, 2009). The interpretation of the drawings can differ among different researchers and is subjective (Guillemin, 2004; Jolley, 2010; Thomson, 2009). In addition to that, drawings cannot be seen as a substitute for children's voices. The researcher needs to be careful when doing the interpretations to not misinterpret it, because the interpretation can reflect the perceptions of adults more than the perceptions of children (Mitchell, 2006; Punch, 2002b). Therefore, children got the chance in this research to explain what they were drawing and what it meant to them. Furthermore, it should be taking into consideration that children with visual disabilities can have problems with making a drawing. However, I did not notice any problems with the key informant.

4.3.5 Interviews with other informants

Besides the use of interviews with the children, I chose to interview other informants as well. These interviews gave me information about the background and context of the school, policies, background information about the children, and more information about the classes. I held interviews with both the coordinators for special needs at both schools, the teachers of both the classes and for the class at the second school I also interviewed the teacher from the year before. I chose this teacher to participate because she was the teacher when the child with a physical disability had an accident that caused her disability. I wanted to know more about the way she dealt with this in her class and her role in social inclusion. The teachers and special needs coordinators were all asked for their consent[11].

The interviews with the teachers were structured and recorded with permission and transcribed afterwards. The interviews with the special needs coordinators were not recorded, because they both did not permit recording. The interviews took approximately 30 minutes each. The main themes in the interviews were anti-bullying programs, social relationships in the class, classroom community, classroom management, policies, and social inclusion.

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[11] These consent forms can be found in appendix E

4.3.6 Deviation from the plan

Before entering the field, I was unknown with the age group of the respondents. With designing the research, I tried to take into consideration the primary school age group from 4 until 12. When entering the field and starting the research at the first school, I experienced that the methods were applicable with these children of around 11 and 12 years old and that the methods were suitable concerning the objectives of my research (D. R. Thomas & Hodges, 2010). During the first weeks at the first school, I experienced that these methods created knowledge that could contribute to answering my research questions. I decided not to change anything for this class because I wanted to prevent including methods that will create knowledge about topics and questions that are unlikely to be relevant to the research objectives (D. R. Thomas & Hodges, 2010). When starting the research with the children around 7 and 8 years old in the second school, I experienced I had to make a small change to the interview guideline. I experienced during the first week of participant observation and the small talks I had with these children, that I had to make the interview more suitable for a younger age. By talking to them I experienced that they were less concentrated on the question and talked more about other stuff that was not related to the question I asked them.

Due to this pattern of answering differently in comparison to older children, I decided to use visual stimulus materials during the group interview. I used two pictures[12], where I talked about with the children. These images were helpful for the children to start the discussion (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Ennew et al., 2009). These pictures were exposed around 8 or 9 minutes after the interview started because at this point children started to lose attention. By showing them pictures at that time, it took away the pressure of direct questioning and helped to make the group interview more fun and interesting for them by using different techniques (Punch, 2002a). Next to the changes connected to the group interviews, I decided also that I would observe more on the playground at the second school. This is based on my experiences at the first school that the observations I did on the playground, gave me new insights into the social relationships between the children. The playground is an important space in children´s daily geographies because of the time spent and activities that are experienced there (Yantzi, Young, & Mckeever, 2010).

4.3.7 Triangulation

I chose to use different methods during fieldwork, also known as triangulation. Ennew et al. (2009) their definition of triangulation is "the systematic comparison of data from different research tools and groups of participants to increase the validity of research analysis" (p.10.22). There are three main reasons for this cross-checking. Firstly, as shown above, every method has its own limitations. Using different methods is strengthening the research because a limitation of one of the methods, can be a strength of another method (Abebe, 2009). Secondly, not every child likes the same method (Punch, 2002a). Therefore, the use of different methods like both visually and orally can be suitable for different children depending on their preference. The third reason is that the use of multiple methods helps to develop a better understanding of a concept (Morrow & Richards, 1996; Oliver-Hoyo & Allen, 2006). There is a need for researchers to compare and contrast the information that they gathered from different methods (Ennew

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[12] These pictures can be found in the appendix F

et al., 2009). Relying on only one or two methods could lead to misinterpretation of the results (Oliver-Hoyo & Allen, 2006).

4.4 After fieldwork

In this subchapter, the focus will be on the reciprocity after fieldwork and on the analyses that are conducted once the fieldwork was over.

4.4.1 Reciprocity

During the first meeting with the gatekeepers of the second school, the headmasters asked what kind of benefits there would be there for them to participate in my research. In agreement with them, I guaranteed that I will send the final thesis with the results to them. Additionally, they requested a written action plan for how to socially include physically children and what they can do as a school to create the ideal circumstances for these children to flourish socially at school. However, I will not provide the school with this, because I do not feel competent enough to write an action plan. This is also not the purpose of my stay at the school. For the first school, the final thesis will be sent to both the teacher and the special needs coordinator. They did not request a written action plan. Children will be also included in the group with whom the research results are shared (Ennew et al., 2009). By communicating the findings to both the participants and also the policymakers, I attempt that my findings could cause improvement in the lives of the key informants (Abebe, 2009). I did not give any presents or treats to children after they participated in my research. On the last day at school, I thanked them all for their participation and I had a small treat for the special needs coordinator of the first school and the teacher of the second school because they arranged a lot in respect of the fieldwork.

4.4.2 Dealing with the data

I used thematic analysis to analyze my data. I used hereby the step-by-step guide of Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis of the data already started with the transcription of all my data into a written form. This was the first step in getting familiar with my data. After that, I read all my data multiple times. I tried to pay special attention to possible patterns that occur. When reading all the data I used two different highlighters to mark all the important information. I worked in a structured way and tried to give equal attention to each data item. I highlighted both the information that corresponded with each other, but also the information that was contradicting with each other. This means that I first tried to code as many potential themes and patterns as possible. After that, I used these codes to collate them into potential bigger themes. I wrote first the different codes down that I wanted to use and discovered in my data and tried to formulate these trends to bigger themes by generating all the information into this theme. Here I made a difference between the main-themes and sub-themes. When having a collection of themes with corresponding codes, I tried to write down what the themes mean, and which "codes" fit into these themes. I created a big schedule with themes and the explanation, concepts connected to these themes and quotes, and examples that resemble this theme. After having this schedule, I read the data again to explore if the themes cover all the data, and if the themes are representing the data in a good way. After reading the data another time, I added more information to the schedule and made small nuances between the different themes. After these adjustments, I read the data again with this time a special focus on the research questions. Do the themes give answers to the questions where I want to find an answer for in this study?

After continuously reading the data and creating the theme schedule, I started to analyze the data with the use of Microsoft Excel to structure the data. I put all the questions in a big file and wrote all the different answer possibilities down with the number of how many children answered with this response. There were different patterns visible after I structured all the data. Microsoft Excel was especially helpful to not lose the overview of all the answers that the children gave. However, this program cannot replace any type of analysis and was just used to structure the data. After both the use of excel and the use of thematic analysis, I felt like I was ready to start writing. During the writing process, different quotes are used and these are checked with the data if they represent where I wanted to use them for.

4.5 Ethical considerations

In this chapter, I would like to reflect on six aspects of my research. First of all, I want to reflect shortly on the field entry. After that, I would like to focus on the fieldwork context. Thirdly, I would like to reflect upon the different roles I had during the fieldwork. And connected to that, the relationships with the children will be discussed. Lastly, both the privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality, and validity and reliability will be explored.

4.5.1 Field entry

The field entry *as described in 4.2.3* has some ethical implications that I would like to discuss. Since I did not influence the selection of participants, I had no influence on the age group, characteristics of the key informants, or any other characteristics of the class. Therefore, I had to prepare my fieldwork for any possible age group and also any possible physical disability. This had as an implication that my plan for the fieldwork was flexible and adjustable to different age groups and different disabilities. I could only prepare myself for the likely environment for my research (D. R. Thomas & Hodges, 2010). Additionally, it meant that the gatekeepers had a large influence on the way the research is conducted. Therefore, it was important to stick to the original research design for conducting the research and to not let the gatekeepers influencing the following steps in the research by making more decisions for me. This worked out well because after the gatekeepers assigned me to the class, I got in charge again by contacting the teachers myself and starting the interactions with the children. Nevertheless, it needs to be argued, that the gatekeepers are necessary for getting access to the children (Cree, Kay, & Tisdall, 2002; Punch, 2002b). They have a protective function and testing the motives for the people who want to have access to researching with them (Masson, 2014). Access is necessary to be secured through gatekeepers and parents, but also the children that are being studied need to give consent (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

4.5.2 Research setting

It is important to take the implications of a research setting into consideration (Punch, 2002b). This research took place in two schools. This context has some ethical implications. A school is an adult controlled research environment (Holmes, 1998). Researching a school has the ethical implication that children may feel pressure to give the right answers to the questions that are asked (Punch, 2002b). The researcher should make clear to the children that they are allowed to give any answer they want and that there is no correct answer. I made sure that the group interviews would not be in their classes. In both schools, the research took place at another location than their class, in a part where the children are normally not spending any time. At the first school, the interviews were conducted, and drawings were made in the room for after school care. At the second school, it took place in the staffroom. Another important implication of researching a school is that it should be clarified to children that their participation in the

research is voluntary (Ennew et al., 2009) and that it is not taken for granted that all the children have to participate (Denscombe & Aubrook, 1992). In a school everything is compulsory and this can cause that children may feel that they are not in the position to dissent (Morrow & Richards, 1996). Also, the teachers were not involved in this part of the research at all, this meant that the teachers did not force anyone to participate. More on the consent is *written in 4.5.5.*

4.5.3 My role in the field

Reflecting on my own role in the field, I felt that I was in a contradictory position. Connolly (2008) describes in his article about his position as an adult researcher at a school, that it feels like having two completely different positions. I recognize my position in this research in that. On one hand, the children saw me as a teacher in the formal spaces of the classroom, playground, and physical education room. This started when the teacher from the second introduced me with "teacher Fenna" from the first day on. On the first day at the second school, I had to sit next to the teacher and had to shake the hands of all the children and parents when entering the class. I introduced myself to the children as somebody that is going to see how social the class is and with who they like to play. During the fieldwork period, the teacher started also to expect from me to do teacher related tasks like supervising during tests, interfering with inappropriate behavior, and helping children in small groups with their tasks (J. Davis, Watson, & Cunningham- Burley, 2017). Therefore, children also started to ask when I would be a "real teacher". After the teacher asked me for teacher-related tasked, I had a conversation with her about this and made clear that I was only in the class for conducting my research.

On the other hand, I tried to avoid being associated with the classroom teacher (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) or any other adult role (Christensen, 2004), because I wanted to talk about different subjects with the children where the teacher would possibly not talk about. Luckily, I was also seen as somebody that children could have trust in. I noticed this because children started to talk about certain "adult inappropriate topics" that would normally be perceived as a taboo to talk about with your teacher. Besides that, my role as researcher changed from situation to situation from being a participant to being an observer (Spradley, 2016). At some moments I was sitting in the back of the class, taking notes and observing what happened in the class, and in other situations, I was participating in the activities to learn more about their behavior and could for example join in a football game. This means that I gathered different information from different perspectives, both as participating researchers and as observing researchers. There was also a situation at the second school in which I was seen as a teacher to help out in a fight*, see analysis chapter 5.4.2*. It changed from passive participation to complete participation (Spradley, 2016). When comparing the two schools, my role as a participating researcher was stronger at the second school than at the first one, where I was more an observing researcher. These conflicting roles can have an impact on the products of the participation and the analyses (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). It also had an influence on the relationships with me and the children, which I will describe in the following part.

4.5.4 Relationships with the children

In my research, one of the first aims was to build a trusting relationship with the children in the field. Building rapport is necessary to encourage more forthcoming responses (Punch, 2002b; Scott, 2008). During the fieldwork, I had a lot of informal conversations with the children, helped them in the playground, and played some games with them

during playtime. By building this trust I tried to reduce the imbalance between myself as an adult researcher and the children (Connolly, 2008). However, an unequal relationship between me and the researcher still existed. Besides the physical differences (Holmes, 1998), do "children regard their lives as largely controlled by adults" (Mayall, 2008, p. 121). Children are used to having to try to please adults, thinking it is necessary to respond quickly with the "right" answers and they may be afraid of their reactions (Punch, 2002b). This power imbalance between children and adults means that it is difficult to research with children as participating informants (Sparrman, 2005). The methods, research population, and the interpretation of the data are influenced by the view of children we have and the choices we make as adult researchers (Morrow & Richards, 1996). In contrary to this, James (2007) argues that having children as researchers helps to diminish these power imbalances. The different standpoints from children and adults must be acknowledged (James, 2007).

The process of building rapport with the children differed in both classes. I did not participate a lot in the first class because the teacher did not often allow me to do this. Only during group work, I was walking around and talking with the children. At that point in the research, I thought I was doing it the right way by not participating more, trying to not be associated as a teacher, and try to keep a researcher role. In contrast to this, I participated a lot in the second school by doing teacher related tasks when the teacher requested me to do that and got more socially included with the children. Besides the expectations of both the teacher about my role in the class, my personal growth as a researcher also influenced the level of participation. I realized after spending time at the first school and finishing my research there, that I wanted to reach to a more personal level with the children to speak to the children at a deeper level. These different levels of participation influenced the process of building rapport with the children. The relationship with the children from the first school was good but there was a certain distance between me and the children, while at the second school I engaged with the children at a personal level in a warm, open, respectful, and humane way (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2008). This meant that when I left school, the children were hugging me and made drawings for me because they got attached to me in a short time. The different relationships I had with the children, could be influencing the data that is collected. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that besides the rapport that I built up with the children, I needed to build up a rapport with the adult gatekeepers like the teachers, special needs coordinators, and the parents (Punch, 2002b).

4.5.5 Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality
In research with children, both the protection of children and the rights of children should be the central concern (Skelton, 2008). For this research, all the children, teachers, and special needs coordinators got fictitious names. This means that none of the informants are identifiable. Also, all the names are abbreviated in the data to a code of two letters to maintain confidentiality (D. R. Thomas & Hodges, 2010). The key informants are Sofie, the girl who has burns on her body, and Maurits who has a visual disability. From the two key informants, sensitive personal information about their physical health is shared orally with the researcher. This information is not used in this thesis and is not documented somewhere. Besides that, the first school shared non-anonymized documents with me from the children from earlier years that they collected about the social status. Consent for sharing this information is not asked from the parents or the staff, and therefore I think this is not ethical to use for my research. The data is permanently deleted after receiving it from the school because the information is not received in an ethical way.

All respondents are asked preliminary to the interview if they are fine with tape-recording or if they would like me to take notes instead (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). During the group interviews, the children were concerned with the privacy of the interview. The children thought I would share the information with other adults and I reassured them that I would only listen to it and not tell it to other persons, see (Christensen, 2004). All the informants were asked for consent before the research, also the professional gatekeepers (Abebe, 2009). The common assumption is that permission of parents or caregivers is sufficient (Alderson, 2008), but by asking children for consent I am acknowledging children as social actors, who can make their own decisions about participation. For the children, a short leaflet was given to them in child-friendly language to ask them for consent with a short explanation of the research, their role in the research, that they can stop participating in the research at any time without a given reason for that and the reason why the researcher wants to record it[13]. In my case, children with disabilities were able to give consent themselves. However, this could be different, and I was not known with their situation before the fieldwork started. Therefore, I explored other ways to get consent.

All the children gave consent for participating in the research. However, the parents of one of the participants from the first school did not give consent for the participation of their child. In contrast to the child, who was keen to participate (Skelton, 2008). He did still participate in the focus group interview in agreement with the parents, to prevent him from feeling excluded as the only one not participating and joining me outside the class. I am not using any of the information the child told me in this interview or mentioning him in any of the observations. This means that the final research sample exists of 49 children participating including two key informants, and 5 adults.

To protect the informants, there is a risk of overprotection and denying the autonomy of the children (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). By following the guidelines from the data protection act of 1998 (Alderson & Morrow, 2011) and by registering the project at NSD[14] and following their advice, I tried to respect the privacy of the respondents and at the same time still give the autonomy to the children.

4.5.6 Validity and reliability

Children are perceived by developmental psychologists as less competent as adults (Morrow & Richards, 1996). Following this argument, the validity of research with children can be challenged. This is a possibility because children can be lying due to a topic that is sensitive, through fear or shame, or that they are saying to the researcher what he wants to hear (Punch, 2002b). This is less likely to happen when the respondents have built up a good rapport with the researcher. Another possible issue for the validity could be with the use of drawings, where the children could have copied the drawings from friends or books (Punch, 2002b). This is something I experienced during the drawing sessions because some children started to draw something similar to the children next to them. This might be an effect of drawing in a group. In my research, I am interested in the social experiences of the children I spoke to. By talking to them, talking about their drawings, playing with them I learned more about their own experiences in the class and at school. I see them as "the experts of their own lives" where we can learn from (Roberts, 2008). Therefore, what they tell us is valid because it reflects their own experiences.

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[13] The consent forms for children can be found in the appendix C

[14] The NSD acceptance letter can be found in appendix A

5 Experiences of children with social inclusion and exclusion

In the analysis, I will make use of the concepts of childhood studies and different sociological theories as earlier described in the theory chapter. In this chapter, the focus is on the first part of the main research question namely: "How do children experience social inclusion in a regular classroom with children with a physical disability and which factors are influencing social inclusion and exclusion?" This implies that this chapter is focussing on the experiences of the children. The three sub-questions that will be explored in this part of the analysis are the following:

1. How do children perceive social inclusion?
2. What kind of social interactions do children with physical disabilities have?
3. What are the experiences of children with bullying and exclusion?

This chapter describes the different experiences of two groups of children including two children that are physically disabled. In this chapter, the experiences of the children are described. Listening to their voices provided valuable, in-depth, and rich experiences (Bourke & Burgman, 2010). As described in the methodology chapter, these experiences are exposed using drawings, focus group interviews, and participant observations including focus at social interactions. The context in which this research took place, should be considered when analysing the data. This chapter is about the everyday life experiences of both physically disabled and non-disabled children in two classes in regular schools in the Netherlands. The class from the first school is described as the rural, older class and the class from the second school as the urban, younger class. This chapter starts with a description of how the children in this study perceive social inclusion. Secondly, the social interactions in the two different classrooms will be described. Thirdly, the experiences of two children with a physical disability will be explored. The fourth subchapter will be about bullying and exclusion.

5.1 How do children perceive social inclusion?

In this subchapter, I will elaborate on the perceptions of the children in my study on social inclusion. The first part of this subchapter focusses is on the reasons why children consider people together as a group. Secondly, the perception of children being socially included or not will be discussed. The different beliefs about social inclusion will be discussed following the social constructionist approach (Rogers, 2003), *as elaborated in the theory chapter.*

5.1.1 What is a group?

During the interviews, I asked the children about their ideas about how to define a group. There were many different answers given to this question. The most given answer was that the children consider themselves as a group "because they play together". An example of this from the interview in the rural school is the following:

> *Bas: When they do not exclude anyone… When everybody plays with each other.*

The first part of the answer of Bas is given more often by other children, children that mention a class belongs together "when they do not exclude or bully anyone". A group can only be a group when children do not exclude or bully each other. This shows the importance of including everybody in the class to be able to form a group. With bullying and exclusion, this is not possible. The mentioned absence of bullying and exclusion is

also important to have a "good group where people feel comfortable" as *discussed further in 5.2.1.* Another answer that is given often to the question "how to define a group" is that they are a group "because they are nice to each other" and "because everybody plays with each other". Additionally, children answered with "because we belong together" or "because we are a class". An example from the second school of this is the following:

> *Richard: I think everybody is belonging because everybody is in the class.*

This opinion from Richard shows how "easy" it may seem to be. According to Richard, everybody belongs to the class and nobody is left out because everybody is in the class. This example might suggest that this child did not experience any form of exclusion himself. Or maybe he did, but he might be thinking that exclusion is something that should not take place because everybody is in the same class no matter how you look, behave or communicate. Another example from one of the children from the second school shows the same way of thinking:

> *Douwe Sjoerd: Because…. one thing is just not a group, but more people together is a group.*

The children from the first school did not agree on when you can define something as a group:

> *Fenna: Oke, what is according to you guys a group?*
> *Laura: Everybody that belongs*
> *Thomas: Everybody that is nice for each other*
> *Fenna: When is something a group?*
> *Bas: When there are 24 children …..*
> *Laura: When there are many people*
> *Fenna: Why does a group stay together?*
> *Bas: When they are nice to each other…*
> *Laura: When they like each other*
> *Bas: When they do not exclude anyone…. When everybody plays with each other.*
> *Fenna: So you think, that your class is also really a group?*
> *Bas: Yes*
> *Laura: No not really, not everybody is nice to each other.*

This example shows, with the rest of the examples given that the children are not agreeing on the reasons that keep a group together. Furthermore, they are not agreeing on the answer to the question if their own class is a group of not. This is also dependent on the definition the children have of what a group is. For example, if they think like the example from Douwe Sjoerd that more people together form a group, then this also implies that they see their own class as a group. Connected to this in the following subchapter, I asked the children about their ideas of social inclusion.

5.1.2 When is a child socially included?

To get an understanding of the perception of the children of social inclusion, I wanted to ask them about their experiences with social inclusion. However, a lot of children did not know the concept of social inclusion and therefore I decided to start by asking the children about the opposite of social inclusion, namely social exclusion. The children were also asked about how they notice if somebody is bullied or excluded. Different children talk about their experiences with social exclusion, for example when they were walking

alone, playing alone, and working alone. According to Douwe Sjoerd from the younger class, there are clear signs when somebody is not belonging to the group anymore:

> *Fenna: I mean if there is somebody in the class that does not belong to the class how do you notice that?*
> *Douwe Sjoerd: Exactly what Marieke said but I also have some other things, … just as …, in the class nobody wants to talk to him[15], he always works alone when we have to work together and … when the teacher is making buddies and … he is with a person, then this person will just work with somebody else so that actually nobody is working with him.*

This example shows that these children associate exclusion with being alone and not being capable of finding a buddy to work with. What is interesting, is that when the children were asked to imagine that they are bullied, only one child mentions the feeling of loneliness *(see subchapter 5.4.2).* This seems to suggest that children define exclusion with children that are alone, but children do not mention the feelings of being alone when being excluded.

Additionally, there are many different answers given to the question of how to notice somebody is excluded, in both classes. This might suggest that there are different signs of exclusion. Only one child mentioned bullying, two children mentioned that nobody wants to play with the children that are excluded, four children mentioned that nobody wants to work with the child, two children mentioned that nobody wants to talk to the excluded child(ren), two children mentioned that the excluded child(ren) is crying, three children that the excluded child (ren) cannot participate anymore, one child that it is not going so well with the excluded child(ren) et cetera. This shows that the children are aware that feelings of being excluded can be expressed in different ways and it suggests that it can be difficult to determine if somebody gets excluded or not.

What is also interesting is that the idea of Douwe Sjoerd about exclusion suggests that an excluded child does not influence the fact that he or she is excluded, but that the exclusion is done by others. He mentions that other children choose to work with somebody else instead of working with the excluded child. However, the next example from Laura from the rural school suggests another idea:

> *Fenna: So oke, when do you notice somebody is not belonging to the group anymore?*
> *Laura: Then that person cannot participate anymore, and this person is like*
> *Thomas: Excluded*
> *Laura: Yes, yes. But it also depends, …, if you are a boy or a girl and also how it depends on yourself, like how you look and that kind of stuff.*

This quote is interesting because it seems to suggest that Laura thinks that being excluded can also be based on the characteristics of the person itself. This is in disagreement with the view of exclusion described above. Social exclusion is not necessarily about other children that exclude somebody or stop working together with somebody. Laura makes clear it can also be about the look, gender, or the behavior of the child itself. This is corresponding with the definition of social exclusion based on certain characteristics like gender, race, or disability like used in the definition of Koller et al. (2018).

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[15] "Him" in this example is the child that is excluded.

On the other hand, as for Lina from the urban school, it does not matter how somebody looks or how old this person is, everybody belongs to the class:

> Lina: *"Well, everybody is different, one is a bit taller and one is a bit smaller, the other is younger, the other is older and still, everybody belongs in the class".*

When thinking about social inclusion these examples suggest that the children have two different opinions about social inclusion in this study. The first opinion is that there are children that suggest that social inclusion might be based on the child itself, on the looks and behaviour of the child *(as seen in the example of Laura).* The second opinion is that social inclusion is not only dependent on the child itself, but also on interaction with other children. Children answered that somebody belongs to the class if they work together, play together, communicate together, participate together, feels well in the class, and do not get bullied. In this study, a relationship between the age of the children and the different opinions cannot be established.

Cullinan et al. (1992, p. 340) their definition of social inclusion is the following, *as elaborated in the theory chapter 3.3.2*: "Pupils with special needs are socially included if they are accepted members in the class, if they have at least one mutual friend and if they take part in group activities". The definition of Cullinan et al. (1992) seems to be in line with what the children mentioned about being part of group activities and accepted members in the class. However, children did not explicitly mention the part of one mutual friend. This suggests that there are different perceptions of social inclusion based on the different experiences the children had. There is no "one truth" or "one definition" that covers it all, as also suggested by the definition of teacher Mark, *(cf. 6.1.1),* but the definition of social inclusion seems rather depended on the context.

The interpretations of the children of the term social inclusion are taken into consideration when analyzing the answers and drawings in the following subchapter about the social interactions in both the classrooms.

5.2 The social interactions in two classrooms with a physically disabled child

To be able to learn about social interactions in both classrooms, different methods were used in my fieldwork. Drawings, focus group interviews, and participant observations with the focus on social interactions were used to get to know more about the social dynamics in both classes.

5.2.1 Social wellbeing in both classes

All the children seemed to be content in their class. During the interviews, the children were asked to give a grade from 0 to 10 to their class based on their satisfaction and experiences with the class. The average grade that has been given is 7.13. However, there are different opinions and differences between the classes. This will be discussed in *the following subchapter 5.2.2. and 5.2.3*. In the following part, the different factors that influence social wellbeing in the classroom according to the children will be discussed.

The presence of friends is according to most of the children, the most important factor that influences their social wellbeing in the class. 15 different children had an answer pointing to the presence of friends. An example from the first school:

> Fenna: Why do you like your class?
> Bas: Because my friends are in the class and it is nice, the same as they said.
> Teunia: Also, because I am with my friends in the same class.

This example shows that children value having friends in their class. This means that they can play together in the breaks, work together in small groups, and talk together during and between different classes. Children seem to be feeling well in a class when they are together with their friends. During the observations on the playground, I also saw that a lot of children were playing with other children from other classes. An example is that Sofie[16] played with many other girls from another class. Additionally, she also has friends in her own class and plays with them in the class, during lunch breaks, and physical activity lessons.

It is possible to have friends from the other classes, but still, be socially excluded in the class the child is in. In the class, the children spend most of their time and have most of their social possibilities at school. It entails that they can have fun with other children in their class and that they are feeling comfortable in the class when there are friends around. Also, in the question of who they would choose when they have to make small groups work together, most of the children would choose their best friends. This means that they prefer choosing their friends above choosing somebody that they can work well with. Again, this illustrates the importance of having friends in a classroom.

That friendship is important for the well-being of the children in the class can also be found in the literature. When children do not have friends in the class, this could mean that children are socially excluded. A child can have friendships with multiple children. Friendship is often defined as a reciprocal choice, that two children choose each other as friends (Frostad & Pijl, 2007). Mutual friendship is an important condition for being socially included in a classroom (Cullinan et al., 1992). Having friends also has a positive influence on social self-perception (Koster et al., 2010). Friends can be a buffer for being bullied (Pellegrini & Long, 2002), *as further explored in 5.4.1*. Friends are particularly important for children with disabilities because they are more vulnerable to being bullied or excluded.

The children made clear that the wellbeing in the classroom depends also on the presence or absence of bullying. 14 children in total showed in the interviews that the absence of bullying is a prerequisite for having a good class atmosphere. Three similar examples of answers at the question "What is a good group?" from children from the rural school are the following:

> *Marte: People that are nice to each other and who do not bully each other or tease each other.*

> *Lisa: A calm group and a nice group in which there is not much bullying and like that, just with a nice teacher…*

> *Bas: If people bully in the class this can really ruin the nice class.*

These examples show the importance of good social well-being and the absence of bullying to have a class where children feel good. This illustrates that children of the first school do not feel at ease in a class where children are bullied and excluded. This is in line with the definition used by Watson and Emery (2012), *as elaborated in the theory subchapter 3.3.2*.

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[16] The child that has burns from the second school

These examples are all from children from the older age group. But also, children from the younger age group answered that the absence of bullying is an important factor in having a good class atmosphere. An example from the class from the second school is when I asked them why they gave a high score to their own class in terms of well-being in the class[17]:

> *Fenna: Wow that is really high, why?*
> *Harm: Just because I like all the children*
> *Marieke: And also that there is not a lot of bullying.*

That having friends and the absence of bullying is positive for the wellbeing in classrooms, is also in line with Lahelma (2002). When she asked children to describe their ideal school, she found that pupils liked their school because of the "informal layer" of having friends, getting along with others, and not too much teasing. However, important to note is that teasing cannot be seen as completely the same as bullying. Additionally, it corresponds with Lindsay and McPherson (2012) in their interpretation of children`s definition of social inclusion that is including the absence of bullying, peer acceptance, and support and making peers aware of their disability.

As shown already in the second example by Lisa, another factor that plays an important role in the wellbeing of children in classrooms is the teacher. The teacher is mentioned multiple times in the interviews by children from both classes as influencing the group atmosphere. An example from the second school is the following:

> *Sofie: I like the school because of Teacher Alicia.*

When talking with the children about less nice classes, children mentioned often the teacher as a factor.

> *Rick: I did not like group 4 because the teacher was really strict and at my old school I was bullied a little bit but….*

These examples underscore that the teacher influences the atmosphere in the class. If children do not like the teacher, this can negatively influence their experiences in the class. Also, in the interviews, the children showed that children like the class because of the teacher. At the first school, four children answered with "because of the teacher, who is really nice", to the question "Why do you like your class?". At the second school, only one child answered with "the teacher". However, when asking if they like their teacher, 73% of all the children answered that they have a nice teacher. Important to note is that it is likely that children have different relationships with different teachers. This is in agreement with literature that shows that the teacher-student relationship is an important factor in the wellbeing of the students in the classroom (Östberg, 2003). The role of the teacher will *be discussed further in 6.1.*

All in all, the wellbeing of the children in the class seems to depend on relational factors, like having friends, having a good relationship with the teacher, and the absence of bullying. This relational component is corresponding with the definition of wellbeing by N. Thomas et al. (2016), *as elaborated in theory subchapter 3.3.2.*

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[17] See beginning of this subchapter

5.2.2 The social interactions in the first school

In this subchapter, the social interactions in the first school will be described. First, a general idea of the well-being will be described based on the interviews with the children. After that, parts of the interviews will be used as examples to describe situations that occurred. In this part, part of observations and interviews with the teacher will also be used. Lastly, the drawings will be used as a reference.

When asking children if they like their class, almost all the children answered with "yes". There was only one child who answered with "a little". Also, when asking about the school, most of the children answered with "nice". Four children answered with "a little bit nice". When asking the children about grading their class based on their well-being[18] with a grade between 0 and 10, the average grade taken from all these answers is 8.0.

The general impression of this class can be described as a class in which children are working hard, listening well to both the teachers, having fun in the times that they are allowed to have fun, and also of a social class. There were no clear small groups where children belonged to, but the group seemed like a whole.

When children were asked about the social inclusion in their class, most of the children answered that all the children are included. Two children answered with "almost everybody" and three children with "most of the time". One child answered with "a little bit". This illustrates that most of the children think that all the children are socially included in their class. When asking the children about exclusion in their class, one the children of this class answered:

> *Julia: Well it is not really like if you say that somebody does not belong to the class, then this person will feel immediately excluded…*
> *Fenna: Hmm*
> *Julia: I do not know if somebody of you can mention somebody? [looks around] I think that will not work.*

This example suggests that for Julia there is no one in the class excluded. She also looked around when mentioning this to see if somebody else would mention somebody. However, none of the children reacted to this by mentioning somebody that is excluded. A possible reason for this can be that Julia is making a statement and that it is maybe hard to go against that particularly if it is about a sensitive topic like excluding. It is kind of unlikely that somebody will react to this question, with that he or she is excluded. This implies that with this statement it is difficult to determine if the statement is applicable for the whole class or that it is just the personal opinion of Julia.

When asking the teacher about exclusion in his class, he mentions the following:

> *Fenna: Do you have any idea if there are children in the class now that are excluded?*
> *Teacher Mark: Hmmm [silence] no, no. There are some "islands"[19] that you have…*
> *Fenna: Hmm*
> *Teacher Mark: and some also have this feeling, for example, Tobias has for example really that feeling.*

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[18] See beginning subchapter 5.2.1

[19] Islands in this context is coming from a Dutch expression meaning that there are some people alone on their "island" and not belonging to the mainland, so some children are sometimes alone and do not belong to the rest of the class

According to the teacher, there are children sometimes feeling that they are excluded, however, according to him these children are not excluded by others. This fits what the children told me about their experiences when making groups together. When they do that, they feel that they can exclude others like the teacher also explains in his answer. This suggests that children can be or can feel socially excluded when it comes to making groups. However, in general, they are not standing out according to the teacher. However, the meaning of the teacher should be read with caution because not all children feel that they can talk about it with their teacher (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012). Additionally, the use of the word "islands" as done by the teacher, can be interpreted in multiple ways.

However, despite the mentioned ideas of the children and the teacher, some children feel that they are excluded. An example of a part of the interviews when talking about this is the following:

> *Fenna: But if somebody in the class/group does not belong to the class/group, how do you notice that?*
> *Jake: I do not really have somebody. Everybody is pretty nice but I do not have really someone that comes often to me….everybody is going first to others. What also happened just now, when I asked Steven if we could work together, then he said: "I will [silence] look first if others can work together and if they aren't able to work together then I will come to you"…*
> *Anouk: "sad"*
> *Jake: so then he prefers others.*

This piece is of interest because it shows a form of social exclusion. What is interesting is that the child first describes that everybody is "pretty nice" in his class. But even though the fact that the children are nice in his class, he is experiencing a form of social exclusion when it comes to making pairs when they have to work together.

Jake is not the only child that is experiencing such situations. Later in the interview when I ask about who the children would choose when they are doing an assignment, he and Nadia react to this with the following:

> *Jake: I often have it the other way around, when I want to work together there is nobody.*
> *Nadia: Yes I have that too. When I want to work together, there is nobody to work with ….*

This example illustrates that both children experienced situations where they had problems with finding someone to work with. *As can be read in 5.4.1,* children associate exclusion with being alone. In this light, working alone can feel like and can be considered by them as being socially excluded. Therefore, these expressions from both children should be taken seriously. However, during the observations, both children were surrounded by many friends and were playing with others at the playground. And based on a situation in which he had to work together, and all boys seemed eager to work with him in a small group, he did not seem socially excluded.

This can imply different things. It can imply that both children feel socially excluded, but that they were not explicitly excluded because they were still included in most other situations like games, talking and playing. It can also imply that they were only socially included when it comes to making groups work together because they have for example skills in certain subjects and children know this. Another explanation can be that what I

observed during the observations, were exceptions and that the children also feel socially excluded in these situations.

Even though the teacher and children do not acknowledge that children are being excluded, some children might have the feeling that they are excluded sometimes, or it can be part of the social dynamics among children. Therefore, when making conclusions about if these children are excluded or not, their feelings and their words should be taken seriously. If these children feel that they are socially excluded when it comes to creating groups, then this is something to consider for both the teacher and the other children.

Additionally, I asked the children to draw their "ideal class", as a way to strengthen my data[20]. This led to many different drawings with different interpretations of this "ideal class" [21]. They could draw what they want to draw, as long as it was their own interpretation. A lot of children chose to make a drawing with the children including the children they want to have in their "ideal class". This was useful information for me, to get indirectly an idea of who the children would like to be in a class. What is interesting, is that there is a small group of six children that is mentioned multiple times in the drawings located together. This suggests that this group of girls is seen as a small group in the class that belongs together and are seen by the others as a subgroup in the class. These results do not correspond with the observations. During the observations, this subgroup was not standing out or seen as such. An explanation for this can be that the subgroup is divided into different groups in the class and is not seated together. During the lunch breaks these children were playing together, but also here different children joined their group.

Three girls from this group are mentioned the most times on the drawings and are mentioned the most of all children. Maurits, the child with a physical disability, is only mentioned once, in Nadia`s drawing. This result will be *discussed further in 5.3.1.*

Additionally, where there also around seven drawings without any names or children. These children chose something else to draw. The task was open for any possibility and did not request asking any children or mentioning any names. However, it can mean that they do not have specific friends where they really want to be in a class and that they also do not have children where they do not want to be in a class. These interpretations are speculations and cannot be confirmed either disconfirmed based on just this information.

5.2.3 The social interactions in the second school

In this subchapter, the social interactions in the second school will be described. First, a general idea of the well-being of the class is described based on the answers in the focus-group interview. After that situations of social exclusion will be described based on examples from the interviews from both teachers and children. In the last part, the drawings will be discussed.

During the interviews, the children were asked what they think about their class. Most of the children (16 children) thought that they have "a nice class". Six children mentioned that the class is "almost completely nice", one child thought that the class is a "little nice" and two children did "not think that the class is nice". Looking at the grades that have been given based on the social wellbeing in the class between 0 and 10, the opinions are diverse. The average of the grades that have been given is 6.6. Four children answered

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[20] See methodology chapter 4.3.7

[21] An example of a drawing from the first school that is made anonymous can be found in the appendix.

with 1. This means that there are four children in the class, that give their class the lowest score possible. It is interesting to find out why these children gave these scores. Three children that answered 1, were in the same group that I took out for the interviews. I asked one of them for the reason for why he answered with the number 1:

> *Fenna: Why are you grading the class with a 1?*
> *Theun: Because the class is really stupid.*

The other children after Theun reacted with a similar answer. However, these answers left me a bit in doubt if they really mean this answer or that they just tried to be cool and answer the same as their friends. When they graded their class with a 1, the other children started to laugh, and this reaction can affect that other children also want to answer with the same number. Additionally, the explanation is not solid and still leaves a lot of questions open. This does not count for the answer given by Anne when asking about why she would give a 3 to the class.

> *Fenna: Why are you grading your class with a 3?*
> *Anne: Because sometimes I think that the class is not well-taking care of each other but sometimes this is also really different.*

This answer shows the reasoning behind the given grade. It also suggests that this child is frustrated that the class is not well-taking care of each other. She cannot appreciate that.

This class exists out of a lot of different small groups. The groups do not have strong social cohesion. Different children hang out with different other children, but the class does not seem to be a group and is more organized based on groups of friends. This is also visible when children had to make small groups. Most of the children (11) would choose their friends.

However, when asking the children if they think everybody is included in the classroom, most of the children answered positively. However, three children answered with "No". Two children answered with "almost everybody". Furthermore, one child answered with "a little bit" and one child answered with "I do not know".

However, later during the interviews with the children, some children gave me a different answer:

> *Fenna: But are there also children sometimes excluded in your class?*
> *More children at the same time: Yes*
> *Rick: Really often even.*

Another example that shows that exclusion might be happening in this class, when asking if he feels the same as the boy on the visual stimuli[22]

> *Matthijs: Not like this, but I am excluded once….*
> *Fenna: And what did you do?*
> *Matthijs: Then I just played with other kids who did not exclude me.*

These answers suggest that the children experience exclusion in the class. However, these answers do not say anything about how often the children experience social exclusion, and if the same children experience the exclusion or that different children are

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[22] The visual stimuli number 1 is included in the appendix

experiencing it. When looking at the social exclusion in the classroom, both the teacher and the physical education teacher gave their opinion about who they think are socially excluded in this class. An example is that the physical education teacher came to me during her lesson and told me that Fardau sometimes gets excluded in her class. Based on the observations and on what the physical education teacher told me, Fardau can be considered as somebody that is not on purpose socially excluded but even though left out in certain situations.

With the teacher, I also talked about exclusion in her class. The teacher made clear in her answer that Sofie is not one of the children that are excluded. This will be further *described in 5.3.2*. However, she mentions two names of other children that sometimes are taking another path than other children in her class.

> *Fenna: That everybody just belongs to the class or are there children that are falling out of the class?*
> *Teacher Alicia: Hmmm, well I think in this class that everybody belongs to the class. Do not think that children here are on purpose excluded but I think there are children in the class that has easily contact with others and children that have less easy contact with the rest. Mark, I think really belongs in the class, Luca belongs to the class completely, Sofie belongs in the class completely …. I would not say it like that child or that child does not belong in the class but sometimes you see that Mark makes his own plan and Luca also and Sofie not, she is really adapting to what happens around her, like that.*

The teacher shows that according to her all children belong to the class. However, she also admits that some children do not adapt that much to other children and follow their own plan. This can sometimes lead to conflicts with other children. She is giving examples of Mark and Luca. Both Mark and Luca are during my observations playing with other children, however, they are always playing with the same children. I recognize what Teacher Alicia talks about in the interview. There are different situations in which Mark gets angry in the class because he does not go the way he expected or the way he wants it to go. This creates tensions between him and the teacher but also between him and other children in the class. Luca is often sitting alone in the classroom and not next to someone because he needs this to concentrate better. Besides that, Luca is also often playing alone, as observed during the social interaction analysis.

Also, in this class, I asked the children to draw their "ideal class", to strengthen my data[23]. In this class, it also led to different interpretations of this "ideal class" [24]. Different children chose to make a drawing with the children where they want to be in a class. Additionally, different children chose to draw a fantasy classroom with for example a horror theme, a game theme, or an animal theme. These drawings cannot be used for this purpose, because they do not show any preferences of who they want to be in a class with. The drawings show two pairs of children that are put together multiple times at the drawings. These couples are Jasmijn and Vera, Lisanne, and Marieke. The drawing made by Jasmijn shows most of the children and the children that she put next to each other on the drawing, match with the friends that I observed and heard about in the interviews. What is also interesting is that Jasmijn is mentioned most in all the drawings. However, during the observations, she was only spending her time with a few other girls and seemed rather shy and not participating that much. However, the drawings seem to

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[23] See method chapter 4.3.7
[24] An example of a drawing from the second school that is made anonymous can be found in the appendix.

illustrate that she is liked by other children and therefore it seems that she is well included in the class.

Another interesting drawing is made by Harm. He drew a class full of empty chairs and he only put his name on a chair[25] because he wanted to be alone in the class. However, during observations, he did not seem to be a child that is excluded or a child with not having friends. He showed during the observations that he is socially active. Therefore, I assumed this drawing does not imply social exclusion.

5.2.4 Differences between the first and second school

Based on the descriptions of both schools it can be concluded that there were strong differences between the schools. These differences should be taken into consideration when using the data from both schools as one dataset for example when talking about bullying and exclusion[26]. This subchapter will shortly address these differences.

As mentioned *in the methodology chapter 4.2.4*, the classroom culture in both classes was quite different. The class from the second school was more formal and regulated than the class at the first school. One of the biggest differences between the schools is that the class from the first schools seems more socially inclusive than the class at the second school. Interestingly, the class from the second school that has been the longest together in this composition seems to be less socially inclusive than the class from the first school. A possible explanation for this could be, that the class from the second school has a weaker social cohesion. In addition to that, children had more chances to work together in the first school compared to the children in the second school. The second class existed out of different small subgroups while the other class seems more together as a whole. This could be due to different factors, for example, the use of social methods for group binding. Moreover, both schools were in different geographical areas in the Netherlands. This implies that many factors in these different environments could explain the differences.

Besides that, children from the first school seem more content in their class than children in the class at the second school. This is based on the grades the children gave to both their classes. The first school had an average of an 8, while the second school had an average of 6.6. Besides that, there were only two children at the second school that answered with "no" to the question if they like their class. At the first school, all the children answered positively. This suggests that children have different experiences at both schools with regards to their social wellbeing. However, it is important to consider that the experiences for me as a researcher were also different at both schools, *as mentioned in the methodology chapter 4.5.4*. With the children at both schools, I had different relationships. At the urban school, the relationship was more personal, close, and warm instead of the more distant researcher – child relationship I had with the children from the first school. This might be a factor that influenced the way I experienced social wellbeing in both classes.

As shown in the theory chapter, an inclusive environment where children have friends is important to socially include a child successfully (Norwich, 2005), to prevent Othering and social exclusion from happening (Cullinan et al., 1992). Therefore, it is important to keep the context of both schools in which the children with a physical disability are, in mind when analysing their experiences of social interactions in the following subchapter.

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[25] This drawing can also be found in the appendix
[26] See this chapter, subchapter 5.4

It is difficult to study disability without studying the interactions between the individual and the contexts (Gustavsson et al., 2005).

5.3 Experiences of social interactions of children with a physical disability

In this subchapter, the social interactions experienced by both key informants will be used and described based on interviews, observations, and drawings.

5.3.1 Maurits at the first school

In this subchapter, I will address the social interactions of Maurits. Maurits has a visual disability. During the observations, Maurits seemed to be playing and communicating with different boys in his group. With the use of social interaction observation, Maurits seemed to spend most of his time with three boys. In the classroom, he is seated in a small group together with one boy and two girls. However, with these children, he does not seem to have a lot of contact during the lessons or outside. During the structured settings, he does not seem to show a lot of social contact with other children either. Also, during the lunch breaks inside, when everybody was eating his or her lunch, he does not have any contact with the children in his small group. Only when two of his friends walk by, he talks with them. When small groups need to be made for a project, he works together with Timo and Tobias. These observations suggest that Maurits has a few friends.

In the drawings, Maurits was only mentioned once by a drawing made by Nadia*, as described in 5.2.2*. An explanation for this can be that the friends of Maurits, (Steven, Geert, and Timo) did not make a drawing with names on them but made another creative way of showing their ideal class. This could suggest, in line with the observations, that he is most of the time socially active with his friends and less with other children from his class. Also, during the breaks at the playground, he was socially active with a few friends. He played with the other boys in his class a game with a ball. It did not seem that he had any problems with participating. When somebody wanted to skip him in the line, he interfered by telling him that he belongs at that spot in the line. This also shows that Maurits can stand up for himself. According to Teacher Mark, Maurits does not get socially excluded:

> *Everybody is kind of fitting well with each other in a group and then it does not matter what the background is of somebody and we see that for example with Maurits.*

According to the teacher children only get excluded because of their behaviour, *see 6.4.1,* and then it does not matter what the background is of somebody, like for example the ethnicity, class, or disability. With this quote, the teacher shows that the teacher thinks that Maurits is not excluded in his class because the behaviour of Maurits does not cause that he might get excluded. Later in the interview, he mentions again:

> *Teacher Mark: No, but for the rest, at this moment, no. I do not think there is somebody excluded. Some children have some specialties or a special background, and because of this, these children find a hard to interact compared to the rest of the class (…) but also they have enough children where they can more or less do something with, in the class, in the breaks of outside school so if you look at that everybody is in the group and part of the group.*

Again, this example illustrates also that the teacher does not think that Maurits is excluded in the class. The teacher illustrates that children might have a disability or any other special need but that the children around this child, can still make this child feel included. This seems to be in line with the earlier mentioned social model[27] that the society around the child, in this case, the class, can positively or negatively influence the participation of the child (Holt, 2004). In the case of Maurits, this seems positive, because he has different friends. These mutual friendships are a condition that needs to be met, for social inclusion in a class (Cullinan et al., 1992). That agrees with the idea of Koster et al. (2009) that social inclusion (cf. 6.1.1.), that being a part of a group and taking part in group activities are requisites for being socially included. Applying this to Maurits shows that he seems socially included in this class because he has a few friends he is actively social with.

5.3.2 Sofie at the second school

In this subchapter, I will address the social interactions of Sofie at the second school. During the observations, Sofie seemed a social girl that was playing with different children. I was told by teacher Ellen that Sofie experienced bullying and exclusion in the period after the acquiring of her disability and before I started my fieldwork. However, during the observations and the interviews with her and the other children, there was no obvious sign of bullying or exclusion. She played with different children at the playground also with children from other classes. In the class, she communicated with many different children. She also showed that she can stand up for herself and to tell other children when she does not like that something is happening in that way. An example of this *can be found in 6.6* when a child wants to stand in front of Sofie and she is telling him "but I can do it".

Sofie spends most of her time with the children Lina, Vera, Roos, and Marieke, as observed during the social interaction observations. She also has friends in other classes. She is playing with them on the playground. During the observations, three girls entered from the other class. Sofie then turns around and says to me: "Look they are my friends. One of them has her birthday today". This example shows that Sofie is spending time with these girls from the other class. Another example from the observations, that shows that Sofie is fitting well in the group is on the day that there is a sponsored run organized for Sofie. All the classes are running as many rounds as they can in the park and in that way, they are collecting money for the children burns foundation that organizes holiday weeks for children with burns. All the children from the class support this idea and Sofie and they run as much as they can. At the end of the day, there is a ceremony and Sofie is surrounded by five of her best friends. This day showed clearly that Sofie was included by both her class and her friends. Additionally, when Sofie got a new cover for her bandage for her burns on her head, one of the children made a mummy gesture to her[28]. Sofie laughs about this. This example shows an acceptance and that children can even make fun of it. Besides these observations, both the teacher Alicia and the physical education teacher Saskia told me in the interviews that they think Sofie is well included.

> *Saskia: Sofie is belonging well to this group, she is standing up for herself and always has someone around her. During the physical education lessons, she is not bothered by her impairment. She can participate in everything; it is possible that*

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[27] See theory chapter 3.2.1

[28] The mummy gesture comes from the "normalization" tools teacher Ellen used. More about this can be found in 6.5.

with swaying the rings she gets some pain on her skin. It is such a pity because she had such a beautiful face in the first grade.

This example shows that Sofie is included in a way that she participates in everything despite her physical impairment. This is an example of a teacher that sees the possibilities of the child for participation instead of the impairment as a problem. When looking at the construction of disability, this seems to be in line with the social model, *as elaborated in the theory chapter 3.2.1*. An example of this is that swaying with the rings might be painful but letting Sofie participate in all the activities in the physical education lesson. By creating an environment in which Sofie can participate in all the activities, the disability is not seen as "an functional limitation of the body itself" but as just a possibility for getting restricted in activities (E. Kool & van Rijswijk, 1999).

Teacher Alicia is the teacher Sofie has right now[29]:

Sofie belongs in the class completely…. I would not say it like that child or that child does not belong in the class but sometimes you see that Mark makes his own plan and Luca also and Sofie not, she is really adapting to what happens around her, like that.

Additionally, also teacher Alicia shows in this example that she thinks that Sofie is adapting to what happens around here and therefore is included in the class *"completely"*. Based on these opinions from both teacher Saskia and teacher Alicia it seems that Sofie is well included.

When talking with the children about social inclusion in the interviews, the children mention the social inclusion of Sofie as well:

Vera: Yes, even if you have a disability you belong with us in the class
Christiaan: Even if you have a burn.

5.4 Bullying and exclusion

In this subchapter, the focus will be on the process of bullying and exclusion as experienced by all the children that participate in this research[30]. *As shown in 5.1.1*, the absence of bullying and exclusion is an important prerequisite for a good class atmosphere. As mentioned by teacher Ellen, Sofie had experienced bullying and exclusion in the period after the acquiring of her disability. During the time I was in the class, Sofie was not excluded or bullied. During the observations, there were sometimes other children that were excluded. The child with a visual disability, Maurits, did not experience any exclusion or bullying either. In his class, other children were more likely to be bullied and/or excluded. Being a child with a disability is just one of the many factors that could become a reason for exclusion (Shaw, 1998). This chapter looks at the context in which the bullying takes place. Three themes that are extensively discussed with the children in the interviews are the importance of friends, children´s experiences of bullying and exclusion, and dealing with bullying and exclusion.

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[29] This quote is used earlier in 5.3.2, but this time the focus is on Sofie
[30] This means that data is used from both schools

5.4.1 Children´s experience of bullying and exclusion

To be able to know more about the experiences of children with bullying, I used an indirect method. I made use of visual stimuli[31]. I used this method to get more knowledge about bullying and exclusion which can be considered as sensitive topics for children. This is further discussed in *the methodology chapter.* I asked the children in the focus group interviews, which emotions they consider as connected to the image:

> *Wander: (..) Points at a picture: This one does not like it, because when somebody is bullying him then he feels lonely (..) and he does not like that, for example, he is crying… for example, imagine that you are him and they are laughing at you, I think he does not like that so much.*

This child uses his imagination to understand how it would feel like to be bullied. He is imagining that he is the one that is bullied by others and thinking about how that would make him feel. What is interesting, is that he is the only child that is mentioning "feelings of loneliness". This could mean that the children did not seem to associate being excluded with feelings of being lonely. However, later in this subchapter when asking children about how to notice when somebody got excluded, they mention loneliness. The rest of the emotions that were mentioned often are sadness, angriness, and unhappiness. This illustrates that the children in this research are expecting to experience different negative emotions when they are experiencing such a situation. This different emotional impact that bullying can have is also mentioned in the research done by Bourke and Burgman (2010). They suggest that support should be provided to manage these emotions. Additionally, I talked with the children about the difference between bullying and exclusion. The children from the first school talked about their perception of bullying and exclusion:

> *Laura: But excluding is not completely the same as bullying…*
> *Thomas: Bullying is that you exclude somebody every day and teasing is just…*
> *Laura: But sometimes you also do not notice that you exclude somebody…*
> *Thomas: Then you are just stupid…*

In this example, the children are talking about the two different types of exclusion, both implicit and explicit. These children are not agreeing with each other on the definition. Implicit social exclusion is because of a lack of awareness of the disability or any other reason to bully, while explicit exclusion is active verbal and physical bullying (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012). As Laura mentioned before, excluding somebody is not always noticeable and can happen without intentions with it. Another example of that implicit exclusion can happen is given by another child (Teunia) from the first school:

> *Teunia: Sometimes you also have that the person is not participating, for example, if you have a game that you can only play with six people and then nobody can really join…*
> *Fenna: Yes…*
> *Teunia: because then you can´t play the game.*

This part illustrates that children can also be excluded from joining a game because they cannot join anymore because of a limit of players. This suggests that children can feel excluded in these situations, but that this exclusion is not purposively meant for somebody special but in general for any child that wants to join after the limit has been

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[31] The first visual stimulus I used can be found in the appendix

reached. Additionally, the teacher of urban school mentions this difference between implicit and explicit exclusion. According to teacher Alicia, social exclusion "happens when the same child is always purposely excluded" and "this does not happen in her class, just some children are implicitly and not on purpose excluded".

However, according to Thomas in the earlier mentioned quote, this is not possible because "then you are just stupid" and you would notice when you exclude somebody. During the observations at the second school, a situation of implicit exclusion happened on the playground with playing a game. Five children were playing a game and one of the boys, Christiaan, wanted to join. One of these children, Luca, did not want that Christiaan was going to join. This is the reason why Christiaan felt excluded, was angry, and was running away. Christiaan told me then "that Luca cannot treat him like this". When talking with Luca about it, he started to realize that he excluded Christiaan in the game. This example shows, that even "implicit" and not purposively excluding a child can feel like exclusion and can create feelings of angriness and feelings of not treated in a good way.

With the use of the second visual stimuli[32], the children got the chance to imagine the feelings of the bullies. The question I asked with this stimulus was *"How do the other children feel, who are standing there?".* Most of the children answered this question with *"the children are feeling cool".* An example of a reaction of one of the children from the second school is *Marieke: "Cool, I think and I also think that they feel a little bit proud that they made this boy cry".* This answer shows something unexpectedly. This illustrates seeing exclusion and bullying as something you can be proud of. This idea that bullying can be cool, is mentioned also in other parts of the interview. When asking the children about the grade they would give to their class and why, multiple children from the second school answered with the following:

> *Douwe Sjoerd: I give it a 6 because sometimes children try to be cool and sometimes we got bullied".*

Or this example from the second school:

> *Christiaan: I was in group 1 / 2 where there were 2 children from group 5A (..) and they were sometimes a bit being popular …*
> *Marieke: Yes*
> *Christiaan: and a bit of bullying.*

Maybe this might show that children associate bullying with being popular. According to the children themselves, a possible reason to start bullying can be that these children want to be viewed as cool and popular persons. The attitude towards bullies as children that are "cool" is also seen in research done by Houndoumadi and Pateraki (2010). In their research, more boys seem to consider the bullies as cool than girls. This pattern is not found in this research.

5.4.2 Dealing with bullying and exclusion

From the interviews and the observations, it became clear that when situations of bullying and exclusion occurred, the teachers were the first one to inform and the ones that undertook action. An example of this happens during the observations at the second school:

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[32] The second visual stimulus can be found in the appendix

It was on a Thursday during lunch break when there were two small fights on the playground. The teacher was not present because she was having her lunch break. The children immediately went to me. One child was crying, and he came together with his friend to me. The other child, that was also involved in the fight, came also to me with another friend. They also started to talk about what happened at the same time, and they expected me to give them advice or to help them to solve the situation. The boy that was crying, asked for comfort because he felt excluded. Together with the children, I talked about what happened on the playground and I tried to solve the fight between them to let them play football again with each other. Later at the end of this lunch break on the playground, there was another fight. This time other children came to me to say that two other people were fighting because one of these children was not allowed to participate. This fight was not solved on the playground but was taken into the classroom and discussed there with the teacher and the whole class, *as explained in 6.4.2.*

These examples show that when a situation of exclusion or bullying happens, these children seek for somebody that they trust to help them in solving the fight. They could ask their peers (cf. 5.4.3), or their teachers, as also found in research done by Bourke and Burgman (2010). They seek comfort at the teachers. This is in line with what most of the children of the second school answered in the interview with the question: "What do you do when somebody is getting bullied and/or excluded?". One-third of the children answered that they will get the teacher. An example of a reaction of one of the children from the younger age group (urban school):

Rob: "Then the teacher will say like "guys" for example, "he is excluded who wants to play with him?" Like that and then everybody is raising their finger, or some children raise their finger and then he did not notice, and he is just sitting alone while it all, while everybody wants, or some children want to play with him".

This reaction is an example of how children see the influence of the teacher. The teacher will make the children aware that somebody is excluded and need somebody to play with. The children also believe, that if the teacher will say it this way that children will raise their fingers and thus want to play with the child that got excluded. Here, Rob is mentioning an example of a successful way by which the teacher can stop the exclusion from happening.

However, it is interesting that the children of the older age group (rural school) did not answer with the answer possibility of getting the teacher for help. Their most given answer to the question of what they will do when somebody is getting bullied is: "talking about it with the whole class". This seems a different way of dealing with bullying and exclusion, however, in practice it means that the teacher also gets involved. The possible reason for the different answers could be the age difference. The children from the second school are younger and possibly need more guidance in helping to solve fights. Additionally, another reason could be that the second school focusses more on group conversations. Multiple examples were observed, especially after the lunch break on the playground. At these moments the teacher discussed with all the children what happened during the lunch break on the playground. One of these examples from the urban school is *mentioned in 6.4.2,* when teacher Alicia talks after a bullying event about that she bullied a girl with red hair and tells the children that they should together be "one class". Most of the fights and exclusion during the observations happened on the playground.

Despite all this, Tobias, from the rural school, went to the teacher after exclusion. This happened after he was excluded to work together with other children in a small group on the assignment given. He went to the teacher to tell him "*Steven tells me that I do not*

belong to the group anymore". However, the teacher did not take direct action but let him solve it himself first. When a few minutes later, the teacher heard Steven saying different swear words to Tobias, he interfered and talked to Steven about his behaviour. In the interview with the teacher, he tries to explain this exclusion of Tobias (cf. 6.4.1.). This example shows that getting the teacher when bullying or exclusion happens, can also depend on the situation in which it happened and not necessarily only on the age.

Important to note is that when looking at both schools together, most of the children answered with "walking to the child, talking to the child and helping the child". This shows the importance of having friends and/or peers that can support the child being bullied, *as discussed in 5.4.3*. An example that is given by one of the children from the second school is:

> *Fenna: What will you do when you see something like this happening in the class?*
> *Anne: Then we help these children to stand with him against the children that are bullying because we think it is not good that children are bullying.*

The role of the teacher and why this role is important when it comes to bullying and exclusion will be further discussed in *chapter 6.*

5.4.3 Importance of peers

As mentioned in the analysis subchapter 5.4.2, when children were asked about what they will do when they see that somebody is bullied and/or excluded, most of the children answered with *"walking to the child, talking to the child and helping the child"*. This shows the importance of peers. An example of a reaction of one of the children (Anne) from the second school about what to do when you see excluding happening in your class:

> *Anne: Then we help these children to stand with him against the children that are bullying because we think it is not good that children are bullying.*

Children support each other when they are bullied. They will support each other and make the bullies stop bullying. I observed an example at the playground at the second school, where two children were fighting, *as earlier explained in 5.4.2.* But not only these two children were in a fight, but also their friends were involved in trying to stop the fight from happening and to comfort their friends. These examples show that one of the coping strategies used when it comes to bullying turns to friends for support, in agreement with Bourke and Burgman (2010). Another example is Sofie that got protected by different classmates when she was bullied by others. This is what the teacher of the second school (Teacher Ellen) that was present when Sofie acquired, told me in the interview:

> *Fenna: Did Sofie got bullied and how did you react to that?"*
> *Teacher Ellen: There were situations in which Sofie got negative words shouted to her or that they extensively stared at her, for example by children from another school, and then children from her class were going to stand in front of Sofie and then they told them: "Sofie belongs to us and is a normal girl, so you can guys please stop with this?". This caused that the children stopped with this behaviour because more children were getting against them.*

This example shows the power of having a peer group around the child, that supports the child when something negative happens to her or him or when he or she is treated in a bad way. Due to the effort of teacher Ellen to learn the children that Sofie did not change and is still a normal girl (cf. 6.5)., the children learned to also make sure that other

children treat her like a "normal girl" and prevent that they will bully her. This corresponds with research done by Bourke and Burgman (2010), focused on the bullying of children with disabilities. They found "that friends played a vital role in protecting children with disabilities from bullying. When children with disabilities lack appropriate peer support systems this may increase their vulnerability to bullying" (Bourke & Burgman, 2010, p. 369). This shows that for the social wellbeing of children with disabilities, it is important that they have friends that support them and stand up for them when needed.

However, this vital role for peers does not only imply for children with disabilities. Peer affiliation, like having friends and being liked by peers, can be a buffer for being victimized for bullying (Pellegrini & Long, 2002). Both the key-informants have friends around them and are liked by different children in the class, *as discussed in 5.3.* Especially being liked by many different peers can decrease the change of getting bullied, most likely because the bullies fear their social reputation (Pellegrini & Long, 2002).

However, besides this positive influence peers can have on bullying is there also another side. Bullying and exclusion is often caused by peers (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012). For example, when children are singled out because they look "different" than the others. Children can for example affiliate with peers who show similar behaviour like bullying and aggression (Witvliet et al., 2010). Both children that bully and children that are not bullying, tend to affiliate with each other. This means that bullying can happen led by the contextual actions of peer conformity, rather than the personal characteristics of the bully. Reasons for this behaviour can be to maintain peer relationships, peer status, peer pressure, or as an expression of collective behaviour (Cho & Chung, 2012). The example that is given earlier when Sofie got bullied by others because she was looking different, can be an example of this peer conformity. A possible explanation could be that different children were verbally insulting her and staring at her because she looks different than other children. These children might be conforming to each other by all insulting the same girl that looks different than them and to not stand out as the child that is not confirming to the others by stop insulting her.

6 Different influences on social inclusion in a school context

This chapter focusses on the factors that have an impact on the social inclusion of children with physical disabilities in different ways. This chapter is written from a social model perspective because the focus is on the "structural, physical and institutional barriers to social inclusion that disabled children face, rather than on impairments, or the failure to adapt to the expectations of others" (Priestley, 1998, p. 215), *see theory chapter (chapter 4)*. The main question in this chapter is "Which factors in the school context influence social inclusion and exclusion?" This chapter focusses on the contextual factors that influence social inclusion.

The three sub-questions that will be explored in this part of the analysis are the following:
1. What is the influence of the teachers on social inclusion and how do teachers handle a situation of social exclusion?
2. Which accommodations have been made to promote social inclusion?
3. Which characteristics of the class might influence social inclusion?

Different methods are used to collect data to be able to answer the research questions about what these influences are and how they influence the children. In this chapter, as described in the methodology chapter, there will be a focus on the data from the interviews with teachers and special needs coordinators. Additionally, the data from the interviews with the children are used in this chapter, because in their answers they talk about the different internal and external factors that influence the social hierarchy in their groups. Lastly, observational data is used for adding examples.

This chapter starts with the different influences that teachers have on the social inclusion of children with disabilities. After that, the special accommodations that are taken in the school context will be addressed. The third subchapter will be about bullying and exclusion. The fourth subchapter focusses on the characteristics of the class. The fifth subchapter discusses the concepts of normalizing and othering. Lastly, the sixth chapter talks about stigmatization.

6.1 Influence of teachers

In this subchapter, the influence of teachers will be explored with the use of data from my study. Throughout the different interviews with the teachers, the teachers described their way of dealing with children with disabilities. Additionally, during the observations, the different techniques the teachers used were observed as well.

Teachers are the key persons in making the inclusion a successful process, *as elaborated in the theory chapter 3.3.4*. Teachers are responsible for the education of all the students in their class and they are the ones that determine the quality of integration (Flem & Keller, 2000). They need to facilitate the inclusion of all children and meet both their social and their academic needs and they are the first persons to observe problems in social participation (de Leeuw et al., 2017). Teachers also influence how the attitudes are of peers towards children with disabilities (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012). In the following subchapters, these influences are described with the use of examples from the data.

6.1.1 Staff perspective on social inclusion

During the interviews with the staff, I asked them to explain to me what they consider as social inclusion. In this subchapter, I will discuss three different opinions with the use of different literature. According to the special needs coordinator Tina of the second school:

> *Fenna: What does social inclusion means to you?*
> *Special needs coordinator Tina: Inclusion for me is that all children belong. The word social inclusion does not fit children with cognitive problems, because there is nothing visible happening, while with speech problems social inclusion can be an issue. These children can have issues with communication, and this can lead to problems with fitting to other children or fitting in a group because the language barrier can cause that children do not understand each other well.*

After the special needs coordinator told me this, she explained an example of a child with gender dysphoria that had issues with social inclusion. According to her view, social inclusion is not a term that should be used for all children. Even though this is contradicting the first sentence in her definition. It might suggest that the special needs coordinator thinks that cognitive problems are not a barrier to social interaction with other children because there is nothing visible going on. The examples where social inclusion can be an issue, according to the special needs coordinator, are for children with burns[33], speech problems, half-sided paralysis, spasms, or visual impairment. Thus, according to this special needs coordinator, only for children with visible physical problems or speech problems, social inclusion can be an issue. The focus in this definition is on the disabilities that can cause problems in communication. Therefore this argument is in line with both the medical model of disability and what some teachers explain in Holt (2004). They believe that disability is an internal, fixed, and pathological condition of the individual. According to this view, looking different than others and having problems in communication can cause social exclusion. In this definition of the special needs coordinator, no attention is paid on the possible barriers the environment, staff or peers could impose. An opinion that is in contradiction with this is the opinion of the special needs coordinator Simone of the first school:

> *Fenna: What does social inclusion means to you?*
> *Special needs coordinator Simone: Social inclusion, as to how we are trying to achieve it, contains that pupils with both physical and mental impairments can participate and belong to the class. We make sure that we adapt the classrooms in that way that the barriers that the pupils' experience can be solved. For example, with children with a physical disability, we arrange an audio hub or big sound absorbing carpet for a pupil that cannot listen well, adapted teaching materials, and the optimal place in the classroom for the visually impaired student.*

This example shows that this special needs coordinator focusses on the barriers that can exist and hinder social inclusion. This is in agreement with the argumentation that that social inclusion should be promoted by removing the physical barriers such as removing special schools (de Leeuw et al., 2017; Pijl et al., 2008).

If these barriers are taken away and a child is a part of a group, then a child is included according to this view. Teachers have the responsibility to create access to good learning circumstances by reducing the barriers through accommodations (Holt, 2004). This all

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[33] Like the keyinformant

corresponds to the earlier mentioned[34] social model theory. According to this theory, the impairment might exist, but the child "is disabled" because of the context that imposes different barriers. If these barriers are taken away, this means that the child has the possibility of getting included.

However, according to other literature, it is not enough to just remove the barriers to be able to achieve social inclusion (Pijl et al., 2008). "For social inclusion in the classroom, it is necessary to be part of the class as a participant" (de Leeuw et al., 2017, p. 413). Koster et al. (2009, p. 135) state that social inclusion of pupils with special needs in regular education can be achieved when there is "the presence of positive social contact/interaction between these children and their classmates; acceptance of them by their classmates; social relationships/friendships between them and their classmates and the pupils' perception that they are accepted by their classmates". This is more in line with what the teacher of the first school gives as an answer when I asked him about this. The teacher of the first school:

> Fenna: What does social inclusion means to you?
> Teacher Mark: Hmmm, yes that is a good one, in principle initially how everybody makes part of a group or something like this. You (..) notice that in principle, that here everybody kind of fitting well with each other in a group…. and then it does not matter what the background is of somebody.

This idea about social inclusion focusses on that children are accepted in a class and that they belong to a group. This is about more than just taking away the barriers. This viewpoint also corresponds with Cullinan et al. (1992) who suggest that pupils with special needs are socially included if they are accepted members in the class, if they have at least one mutual friend and if they take part in group activities. The teacher does not mention the part about mutual friendships, but he is mentioning both being a part of a group and taking part in group activities.

This subchapter shows that there are different opinions under the staff about what social inclusion contains and this can have an influence on the way teachers or special needs coordinators handle situations that influence the social inclusion of pupils.

6.1.2 Acquired disability and the influence of the teacher

This part of the analysis is about the teacher's influence when a child acquires a disability during the school year. Teachers can influence the attitudes of peers towards children with disabilities (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012). When a child acquires a disability during the school year, the teacher needs to find a way to deal with the changing situation. In my fieldwork, I talked with the teacher of the child that acquired a disability in the year that she was teaching the class.

When a child acquires a disability, the child returns to the class in a different status than before. In the case of physical disabilities, this change is visible for all children and staff of the school. The teacher that is present just after the child acquired the disability, can have a big impact on the social inclusion of the child in different ways. The child with a physical disability of the second school, Sofie, acquired a disability during her fourth year at this school. This happened in the year before I was present at the school. This means that it was not possible to observe in the class right after the child had acquired the disability. However, I was able to interview her teacher in the year it happened. This

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[34] See theory chapter 3.2.1.

interview was stimulated by the mother of the child because of her opinion that this teacher has done a lot for her child to make her feel safe and accepted in the class. During this interview, different factors were highlighted that positively influenced the social inclusion of the child. An example of the way the teacher was dealing with the moment after the acquiring of the disability, can be found in the following part of the interview:

> *Fenna: What did you do when you heard that the child acquired a disability?*
> *Teacher Ellen: Before she returned to our class after she acquired the disability, I prepared the rest of the class for this. I explained what happened to the child and how she acquired her disability. All children were allowed to ask questions. The children had to cry when I talked with them about it because they were in shock.*

This example above shows that teacher Ellen tried to create an open conversation with the children about what happened with the child. The teacher created the possibility for the children to ask any questions about what happened and about the child`s return to the class. This preparation helped the children in a later stage, when the child returned to the class, to also be able to ask questions and to talk about it in the group or with the child itself. This openness is according to Flem and Keller (2000) an important condition to create feelings of safety and acceptance for children with disabilities. It prevents the disability and what happened is turning into a taboo, where nobody wants to talk about it. Communication is only possible when there are possibilities created where children can talk about it with each other and with the teacher. This means that both the children and the teacher aim for having an open dialogue. Besides that, the children are only communicating about sensitive topics when they feel safe in the class, this means that communication is only possible when these conditions are met. Additionally, as discussed later in this chapter, communication is also seen as an important factor when it comes to both exclusion and bullying.

When the child returned in the class, the teacher made use of a question box to create openness and communication between the child with a disability and the rest of the class.

> *Fenna: Which ways did you use to let children ask questions?*
> *Teacher Ellen: One of the ways I used, was using a question box. In this question box, the children could put all their possible questions to the child. We took out one question every day. The questions were really practical. They asked questions like: "Can you still dress yourself?" "Can you still take a shower?" "And what about swimming?" This caused an open atmosphere in the class because all the children were able to ask their questions indirectly.*

This is another example of the use of openness and opportunities for communication by letting the children indirectly ask questions. Indirectly asking questions is sometimes easier for the children than asking questions directly. It may help to decrease the chance that children feel scared to ask these questions to the child with a physical disability. This example shows that children are curious about different practical factors like the ability to swim or to shower. These questions are maybe not discussed if they did not have the chance to ask them by using this question box. Getting the opportunity to ask these questions, might have helped the children to get more understanding of the situation where the child with a disability from their class is in. It might have helped to remove the stigmas that can exist around the disability of the child. These stigmas will be discussed later *in subchapter 6.6*. If the understanding gets better, this also could imply that children are not scared of the child or rejecting the child because the child looks different

now. The children learned that the child is still capable of doing many things the same as they do, and this helps them to put the child first instead of the acquired disability.

Teacher Ellen also focused on the acceptance of the children of the situation. When children get used to the situation, they can accept the changes easily. As she said during the interview that "*children can just accept and move on".* This is in line with Flem and Keller (2000), who stress that inclusive education can be good for ordinary pupils because they learn to be respectful and to take the perspective of other children. They can accept the children that are different. However, it is worthy to note, that even though children accept their peers with disabilities and were nice to them, it does not have to directly imply that pupils with disabilities have friends or people who they can identify with (Flem & Keller, 2000). Having friends or people who they can identify with, is also seen as a condition for social inclusion (Cullinan et al., 1992). This acceptance that children have towards children with a disability might be created because of the use of normalizing concepts. This concept of normalizing and how they are used for children with acquired and congenital disabilities will be discussed *in subchapter 6.5.* To conclude, this subchapter showed that the attitude of a teacher towards children with disabilities can influence the way the peers are treating children with disabilities (Flem & Keller, 2000; Lindsay & McPherson, 2012).

6.2 Accommodations in a school context

As written in article 23 of the UNCRC, every child with a disability has the right for special care when necessary to ensure that these children can enjoy a full and decent life (United Nations, 1989). This to make sure that the child with a disability has effective access to and receives an education, that is adapted to the child when necessary. Additionally in the CRPD, it is stated that children with disabilities should receive support to "facilitate their effective education within the general education system" and this can be achieved by "the use of effective individualized support that maximizes academic and social development" (United Nations, 2006, p. 15). This means that the environment around children with disabilities should be designed in such a way that they can develop themselves as much as possible. There is a wide variation in how schools organize the special services provided in their schools (Pijl & Meijer, 1997). Therefore, this subchapter will describe the special accommodations as performed by the staff of the two different schools.

6.2.1 Special accommodations

Different disabilities can ask for different adaptions in the classroom. The child Maurits at the first school has a visual disability and the child Sofie at the second school has acquired burns that affect her physically. In this subchapter I will explore shortly the different adjustments that have been made in the two classes, both mentioned in the interviews and noticed during the observations.

For the child Maurits with a visual disability from the first class, different adaptions have been made in the classroom to make it possible for him to join everything that happens in the classroom. The teacher of the first school (Teacher Mark) told me about it in our conversation:

> *Fenna: Do you also do something special for Maurits or do you think it goes automatically fine? (…)*
> *Teacher Mark: Hmm, also if you look at the learning content but with Maurits, there are way more rules that he, for example, gets everything at A3 size and that he has at least a central place in front of the class so that he can see the digital*

board and the blackboard where I write during the explanation that he can see that well, he has a laptop where he works often at, so that is also and this is also already in the direction of the secondary school because he will work there also with his laptop and he has a bigger iPad then the rest of the children so that he has the freedom to zoom in even if it is already made bigger for him, that he can always zoom in at specific stuff. Therefore, he also has a special table, so there are more rules and appointments (..) But for the rest, he can easily follow the lessons.

This shows that to make it possible to include Maurits in a regular class, different adaptions were necessary to be made. These adaptions have been established in agreement with external specialists that have specific knowledge about his disability and the possible consequences during lessons. Having support from these external services that have specific knowledge can promote inclusion (Flem & Keller, 2000) because they know what is needed to make inclusion possible. An example of what they suggested for Maurits is that his table was not only placed in the middle of the classroom but is also placed at a certain angle towards the school board. This means that this child has always the same position in the classroom. Besides that, the teacher must write everything with a black marker on the white schoolboard in a certain size to let the child be able to read everything. During the observations, I also noticed that the child was reading books with bigger font size. Besides that, the child was wearing specially adapted glasses that helped him to be able to have the ability to see as much as possible. Lastly, he was using both a bigger laptop and an iPad.

These measures were established when he entered the school and are adapted and expanded throughout the years. However, during the observations, the teacher was not always taking these measures into account. There were certain moments in which the teacher did not take into consideration that the screen or the blackboard was possibly not readable for Maurits. Maurits did not mention this to his teacher either, even when it happened again. An interpretation of this situation might be that Maurits does not want to get special attention because of his disability. If all the other children are capable of reading it, he wants to also be able to read it and he prefers not to stand out. The special needs coordinator also told me from earlier experiences, that he does not mention it if he does not understand or cannot read an assignment or an explanation. This can be connected to the argument of Lindsay and McPherson (2012), who state that having special accommodations for disability within a school can have two sides. It helps the children to be able to keep up with their schoolwork, but it also makes the pupils different from the other peers in their class. This can even lead to isolation and exclusion.

Concerning the child Sofie at the second school, no accommodations have been made for her inclusion besides the different measures and methods teacher Ellen used for her inclusion after she returned in the classroom after she had an accident. These are discussed *in 6.1.2 and 6.5*. These accommodations were important in the first period after her return to school but are not used in the current situation. The special needs coordinator told me that there were possibilities for changing the chair she was sitting on to make it more comfortable. However, the mom did not want to make these adaptions to make the school life of Sofie as normal as possible.

During the interview with the special needs coordinator Simone, she stated that children can be even jealous of the adapted materials. An example that occurred during the observations is that when the children had to work on an assignment, one of the pupils

asked the teacher if he could work together with Maurits. He wanted to work together with him because he had a bigger iPad, and this means a bigger screen. When they were working together, they were not only working but also playing games on the bigger screen together. This does not show any jealously in particular, but it shows interest from the other children in the accommodations that have been made for the child with a visual disability Maurits.

Nevertheless, the staff of the rural school did not pay any further attention to the social inclusion of children with disabilities. According to the special needs coordinator from the rural school, these pupils are getting included in the class during the "golden and silver weeks", just like all the other children. In these weeks the school focusses on group formation at the beginning of a new school year and in the first weeks after the Christmas holiday. This method is used in all classes starting from the lowest grade. The focus is on energizers to get to know each other, the teacher uses cooperative working methods and is complementing good behaviour and possibly ignoring the "bad" behaviour. During these weeks positive group rules are established and there are conversations with the parents. These weeks are including everyone and there is no special attention paid to children with a disability. It can lead to more exclusion if teachers pay special attention to them and this can cause more feelings of segregation (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012). According to the special needs coordinator from the first school, there will only be attention paid to the fact that everybody is different from each other and that we all should respect each other in our ways. This focus on social inclusion from a younger age already is likely to have long-term and short-term benefits of the living conditions of children with disabilities (Finnvold, 2018).

To conclude this subchapter, accommodations might be necessary sometimes to include children with different disabilities in regular classrooms. However, this must be done with caution, to prevent that children with special needs are marked out as "different" and that it stands the social inclusion in the way (Holt, 2004).

6.3 Characteristics of the class
Different characteristics in a class might influence social inclusion. In this chapter, I would like to address two of these possibly influencing factors in classrooms.

6.3.1 How long the class has been together
The first factor that I discussed with teacher Mark is the time the same group already is together and the influence this has on the group dynamics in a class. There is a difference between the two classes and the formation of their class. The class from the first school is a group that is put together with children from two other former groups. The teacher is teaching these children for the first time.

> Teacher Mark: Often you have that a group is changing to the next year as a group that stays together and then they know each other already and then it is only teacher-focused. A new face and a new acquaintance, the children know each other already and here most of the children also already know each other...
> Fenna: Yes
> Teacher Mark: Because of the parallel classes and because you put now again half of that group together, arises there a whole new dynamic so then it is really good to do such stuff.

Later in the interview, teacher Mark refers to the new combined group when I ask about social inclusion.

Teacher Mark: and what is really important that if you also have a new combined group and then you look at how the children fit in a group and also if there are children that really fall out of the group and there you also see some examples of.

This suggests that this teacher emphasizes that if there is a new combined group, that it is important to work on the group dynamics to create a group where all the children of the class are included in. The teacher influences this process to keep an eye on the children that are (potentially) being left out. In this example, he stresses the importance of creating a group where children are not falling out. This can be connected to the theory that is the basis of the earlier mentioned "golden weeks" method, *(cf.6.2.1)*. This method is used in the first school and focuses on a good foundation to start the group with and if this foundation is stable, then the group can take further steps to develop

The second class has already been together for three years. The social hierarchy in the class is already established throughout the years. The groups' process as described above is already implemented in earlier years and changes throughout the years because of new children and children that leave the class. When the key informant with the acquired disability returned to her class, the social order was already established in the past years. This did not change when she returned to the class with a disability, according to both the teacher and the special needs coordinator of the second school.

6.3.2 Classroom seating location

Another factor that I would like to shortly address is the seating arrangement of the children in a classroom. According to Holt (2004), the classroom seating location is a practice that can (dis)able children in classroom micro-spaces in schools. In both classes, the child was in the middle of the classroom. Maurits was located in the front group together with three other children. Sofie was located back in the middle of a group with two other children. Both schools arranged the location of the children in the class in different ways. In the rural school, the children got the freedom to arrange the classroom themselves at the beginning of the year. After that, the teacher used a program called Ginzi that moved the children around randomly in the classroom every four weeks. In the urban school, the teacher also first let them sit where they wanted to sit at the beginning of the school year. After every holiday the classroom plan changed with the use of forms that the children had to fill in with their two choices of next to who they want to sit and then the teacher made the plan based on that. This means in both classes; the children got some agency in choosing next to who they want to sit. However, for Maurits, it was not possible to change the location in the classroom. Because of his problems with sight, he must be located at a certain distance and a certain corner from the blackboard.

My impression during the observations was, that both the children are in the middle of the class means that they have contact with a lot of different classmates. They are not necessarily sitting next to their friend, but that does not need to be negative. The children where you can work well together does not need to be necessarily your friends. It also showed that the children with disabilities were not located in the classroom based on their (dis)ability. This prevented the children in the classrooms to be segregated based on special needs and on extra support they need. This does not only imply for the children with disabilities but also the other children with other special needs like learning difficulties. It prevented social exclusion and negatively reinforcing the difference between these children, from happening (Holt, 2004).

6.4 Social exclusion

Bullying and exclusion are the opposites of social inclusion. In this chapter, I will use bullying and exclusion as two processes that are linked together. I will not use bullying and exclusion as synonyms but will describe them as two processes that can occur simultaneously. Social exclusion is often seen as a form of bullying (Bourke & Burgman, 2010). A difference is made between two types of exclusion. There is both implicit and explicit exclusion (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012). There are also different types of bullying (Bourke & Burgman, 2010).

It is important to explore the different perspectives the teachers have on these processes and what they do to prevent it from happening in their classes. In this subchapter, I will first focus on the perspectives and attitudes the staff has towards bullying and exclusion. After that, I will explore the way the teachers in this research handle the situation when children experience bullying or exclusion. Hereby it is important to keep the broader context in mind. Even though it is not discussed in this research, the school context tends to influence the attitudes of the teachers and should also be taken into consideration (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012).

6.4.1 Social exclusion from the teachers' perspective

The teacher of the urban school talked about exclusion as something that is caused by the behavior of the child and addresses that all children have responsibilities to think about what makes them excluded. "*When a child is always excluded, it is important that the child thinks: "Why am I excluded?"*". She gives also an example of this in the interview when she talks about a girl from an earlier year that got excluded by other peers. When the mother of this child was complaining to the teacher that her daughter got excluded, the teacher started to look at the behavior of this child and how the other children reacted to that. When the teacher observed the child, she saw that the child was sometimes mean to other children. However, the child and the mom both did not want to acknowledge that, thus the teacher had problems with changing the behavior of the child to prevent her from being excluded. This addresses that the teacher thinks that changing the behavior of this girl will stop her from being excluded from the group. What is interesting is that the teacher of the rural school (Teacher Mark) is giving a similar example in the interview:

> *Teacher Mark: Then I have to say that I think in this class it is not so bad, not that children are excluded because that children do not like them or think they are irritating but they are excluded because of their behavior. That their behavior causes that they are often, at a sudden point that children get sick of them…Like stop, I am not really in the mood for this. Often, in the beginning, they think it is funny or we laugh about it, but I notice that after a while it [silence] is working against this child and then they are only in their way. You also just notice that in principle, that here everybody kind of fitting well with each other in a group.*

And later in the interview when I asked the teacher if there are any children in his class now excluded, he talked about behavior that can cause exclusion.

> *Fenna: Do you have the idea that there are children in the class now that are excluded?*

Teacher Mark: Hmmm [silence] no, no. There are some islands[35] that you have and some also have this feeling, for example, Tobias has for example really that feeling but this is more because of his own limitations and his own thinking more or less and that is also what you just saw that if it does not work after filling in one time he is saying "do you see it, it does not work". And then I think yes, and that is often because they think he is really nice and they really want to help him but more because of his own behavior he causes that children think something like "I can better stay away from him for a while or I leave you alone for now.

These examples from teacher Mark and teacher Alicia focus on the individual behavioral component that is causing exclusion. This can be interpreted in two different ways. At first, the teachers take the perspective of the medical model. They put the reason why the children are getting excluded inside the child. It is not because of other children, other staff, or other classroom factors but because of the behavior of the child. This corresponds to the medical model of disability. According to this perspective, society does not need to change but persons with disabilities do (Berger, 2013). Implemented to the school this means, that if a child gets excluded this means that the child must change, and the environment does not need to make any adaptions. The exclusion can according to this view, not be explained due to the class culture or social dynamics that does not fit him but because the child is behaving differently and therefore the child is excluded. Using the words of teacher Mark implies that their own behavior causes that others are "getting sick of them".

Secondly, this perspective is in contrast with the social model. This model looks at the contextual factors that are causing social exclusion and bullying. The social model of disability puts the location of the cause of the disability from the individual to society (Holt, 2004). The barriers or hindrances to full social participation that are imposed for the children with disabilities come from society and can cause exclusion (Susinos, 2007). Implemented this view at the schools, barriers can be implemented for example because of classroom characteristics, policies, teachers, and peers. he teachers that I interviewed, did not mention any of these possible context factors but only focused on the behavior of individuals.

However the teachers are not suggesting a form of social exclusion based on certain characteristics like gender, race, or disability (Koller et al., 2018), but the exclusion is based on the behavior of the children. This is more in line with Nowicki et al. (2014), who state a possible reason why children are socially excluded is their behavior. Both teachers are giving examples of children without special needs during the interview.

The interviews with the teachers are important because their attitudes often influence the way social exclusion is experienced by children (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012). If teachers do not have the right knowledge about the (dis)abilities and the needs of children with disabilities, this can lead to different implicit forms of exclusion from the teachers' side (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012).

6.4.2 Communication
When it comes to bullying and exclusion, some children value to talk to other people as a way of coping with the bullying (Bourke & Burgman, 2010). The teacher often acts by

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[35] Islands in this context is coming from a Dutch expression meaning that there are some people alone on their "island" and not belonging to the main land, so some children are sometimes alone and do not belong to the rest of the class.

trying to create a conversation with the children about the situation. This corresponds with *chapter 5.4.2*, where the children answered that they go to the teacher if a situation of bullying or exclusion occurs. There are two examples given by both the teachers, how they react to a situation of exclusion or bullying. Additionally, during the observations, a situation of group conversation was observed. These examples are not specifically for children with disabilities but are about bullying and exclusion in their classes in general. This is an example of the teacher at the first school.

> *Fenna: Yes and if you have the idea that somebody is excluded, what would you do?*
> *Teacher Mark: I often go with them in conversation. I always talk first with the person who feels excluded to ask; "what do you want"? "What do you like"? I try to have a conversation with everybody because sometimes they just do not see it.*
> *Teacher Mark: (…) But from earlier experience, I experienced that eventually, it can be nice because you notice that children are often not aware that something is going on…That they are saying "oh", "How is that possible because we ask often enough if you want to help or to play and that kind of stuff?" and sometimes children do also not notice their own behavior "did I say that to you or do you feel because of that left out"*
> *Fenna: Yes…*
> *Teacher Mark: so because of such a conversation do you try to come to a solution and in that way that works really well from what I experienced at least for the last couple of years.*

This example shows the strength of the use of communication. Like the teacher says, the children are often not aware that they are excluding anyone. When the children talk about it with the teacher, the children get awareness about the possible effects their behavior can have on others. This part of the interview shows again the individual behavioral focus that the teachers have, like *discussed in 6.4.1*. The child should according to this teacher think about what he or she did to make others feel left out and this puts the attention again to the behavior of the child itself instead of on possible factors in the context.

Teacher Mark creates a group conversation when exclusion happens, based on the idea that this behavior is changeable if the child gets aware of it. The teacher takes the chance to talk about what happened in the whole group and not only with the person who bullied the other person and the victim. This can be connected to the idea that bullying is not a solo experience, but that it is an experience that is embedded in context. Bullying happens in a social context for example in a school in a classroom, in a family, in a community, and other contexts (Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, & Wiener, 2005). This means that different factors influence bullying and conversations about bullying might be held with all those involved in certain contexts. This seems more in line with the social model than just having the focus only on the individual behaviour of the child.

Also, at the urban school communication is used in a way to overcome bullying:

> *Fenna: Yes and what if you would notice, maybe you had it in a class you had before that there are children that do not belong completely to the class or children that are excluded or bullied or… what will you do.. or what will happen?*
> *Teacher Alicia: Hmm, well I experienced it indeed, then you need a lot of conversations with everybody in the class (…) but when the whole class is playing football, you cannot say that there is one child that can't join. Like if I bring my*

jumping rope and I ask you to join is it also not the case that everybody has to participate or wants to participate and to let the children understand that, you have to talk a lot and a lot of situations or do small role-playing or …
Fenna: Give examples…
Teacher Alicia: Yes, and that is what children need (..)
Teacher Alicia: Then I make it something to talk about because that is actually not possible and then somebody will feel left out. With this kind of choice, you are making, you have to think: what kind of consequences will this have for the other?

This example shows like the other example, that this teacher also uses group conversations to deal with bullying and exclusion in the class. These group conversations are also used to create group feeling and group responsibility in the class. That this teacher is actively using this method, is what I observed after there were two fights on the playground: After the break, all the children returned to the class and the teacher started a conversation about the fights. During this conversation, she used an example of her own time at school. She told a story about a fight she had when she was younger and in the same class as the children are in now, with a girl with red hair. She was bullying the child with red hair because of her hair color. Now she is best friends with her. After the teacher explained this story to the children, she made clear that: *"You do not have to be best friends with everybody, but together we are one class".* The teacher put the focus on the togetherness in the class and that no one should be excluded. Having group conversations about bullying, exclusion, and fights look like they promote the group feeling and group responsibility, and is often mentioned by the children from the rural school in *subchapter 5.4.2.*

This subchapter shows that communication is a key factor in the way the teachers address bullying and exclusion as shown from both interviews and observations. However, the children do not always want to have support only from their teachers but from somebody else that they trust for example their friends (Bourke & Burgman, 2010). This is further discussed in *subchapter 5.4.3 in chapter 1 of the analysis.*

6.5 Normalizing and Othering

This subchapter will go into detail about the processes of normalizing and Othering that can influence the process of social inclusion.

6.5.1 Normalizing with an acquired disability

In the interview with the teacher from the year that the child got disability a lot of different examples of normalizing were expressed. When a child acquires a disability, it is intended that this disability gets normalized. Normalizing in this context means that the other children in the class do not consider the disability as something abnormal or strange, but that they accept it as a characteristic that belongs to the specific child and consider it as "normal". The children learn that everybody is different. A good example of a process of normalizing happens already before the child enters the class again after she acquired the disability.

> *Fenna: How did you prepare the children for the return of the child Sofie with a disability in the class?*
> *Teacher Ellen: I got a picture of the parents of the child of how the child looked. The child had a bandage around the child´s face. When I saw this picture, I immediately associated this with a mummy. Then I prepared my class to how the child will look when the child would return to the class, by watching the movie*

> *"Dummie the mummy". I also explained to them why the child needs to have a bandage around the child´s head. On the day the child returned, the children were even a little bit disappointed that the child did not look exactly like the mummy in the movie but that the child had fewer bandages around her heard…. They reacted with: "Oh is this it, then never mind". This helped with getting the attention away from the child."*

This way of normalizing shows that the teacher Ellen let the children get used to how Sofie might be looking. By showing them the movie, the children get used to the idea that the child will look like that when the child returns and that this is seen as "normal". In this way, the children are not shocked when the child enters the class with bandages around her head. Because they were prepared, the children were not paying attention anymore to it and this made it easier for the child to get back to "normal". This way of dealing with the situation is directed by the social model of disability. This child acquired an impairment, but that does not mean that this child also has a disability in terms of social barriers. The teacher tried to prevent that the acquired impairment of the child, would turn into a disability. Disability is used in the way that it would imply social barriers for this child in her life and specifically at her school (Holt, 2004). With the normalization of the impairment, the teacher wanted to try to prevent this exclusion from social activities from happening.

This quote can also be used as an example of the teacher trying to prevent "Othering" from happening. Othering is a concept that is used when we see a person as somebody else and as somebody, we fear and reject (Barron, 2015), *as discussed in the theory chapter 3.4.1*. These negative attitudes towards children that are different can be seen as an example of one of the social context factors that can cause social exclusion (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012).

If the children were not prepared for the child with having a lot of bandages around Sofie´s head, this could cause that the children would be a bit scared to talk to the child. The child suddenly looked different and unfamiliar in comparison to how the child looked before. To make the children familiar with this change before the child returned, prevented the process of Othering from happening. This prevented that the child would be excluded only based on looking somewhat different from her peers (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012). Moreover, this same teacher used other ways of normalizing, and one of the moments when she stimulated normalization was when the child took off the child´s hairpiece.

> *Fenna: What was a challenging moment for both you and Sofie?*
> *Teacher Ellen: When there was a period in the class when it was really hot, I suggested that the child could take off the hairpiece because it was sweaty. The child came to me and told me that Sofie felt really scared to take the hairpiece off. Together we talked about it for a long time and then the child decided to take the hairpiece off. Then it was visible that Sofie did not have an ear anymore, but just a hole. I let all the children look at it and let them even touch it if they wanted to do that. After all the children saw and touched it, they did not pay any attention to it anymore.*

This example shows that at first, Sofie was afraid to show more of her impairment. Because she was stimulated by teacher Ellen, the child was able to show it to the other children. The child showed that she was trusting the teacher in making this decision and this also showed that the teacher and the child had a good relationship where she can

express her fears and doubts. This is important so that the child feels safe enough to take off the hairpiece. When the hairpiece was taken off, all the children could ask questions, look at the changes at the child`s head and let them be able to touch the hole. This was done in a fixed timeframe where the children got the chance to ask everything, look at everything, and touch everything. After this moment, the children were not paying attention anymore to this "abnormality" on the head of the child. This meant that the children did not perceive it anymore as abnormal but as normal. They got more knowledge about it and got to experience it by touching it. It was not interesting anymore to pay more attention to it. This teacher used the same technique with the children from other classes. They were also stimulated to look at the head of the child under supervision, for a fixed period. After that, the children lost their attention because it was not new or weird anymore. The children "normalized" the way Sofie looked and continued with their daily activities. This suggests the notion that attitudes towards children with disabilities are not fixed but changeable (Holt, 2004). When the children get familiar with the disability and the child, it is easier for them to accept the child with a disability and the disability becomes "normal" without the need to pay more attention to the disability. This is line with research done by Campbell, Gilmore, and Cuskelly (2003) and with Gresham and MacMillan (1997) that show that getting more knowledge about disabilities can change the attitudes towards disabilities and this also counts for the attitudes of teachers (Flem & Keller, 2000).

Also, the current teacher of the urban school (teacher Alicia) tried to normalize the impairment, by inviting a woman who is in the same situation as Sofie and to watch a small movie about the impairment. However, all these examples show is that this period of putting attention to the impairment should be fixed. Like teacher Alicia told me "*I leave it like that, you also should not put too much the attention to it*".

6.5.2 Normalizing with a congenital disability
Normalizing a disability is also of importance when the child has a congenital disability. A way of normalizing is letting the child, despite the disability, participating in all activities as the physical activity lessons. An example is given by the teacher of the first school when asking about the social inclusion in his class:

> *Fenna: How is the social inclusion in the class?*
> *Teacher Mark: Then I have to say that I think in this class it is not so bad, not that children are excluded because of [silence] that children do not like them or think they are irritating but they are excluded because of their own behavior. That their own behavior causes that they are often, at a sudden point by children be pitted out …Like stop, I am not really in the mood for this. Often, in the beginning, they think it is funny or we laugh about it, but I really notice that after a while it [silence] is working against this child and then they are only in their own way. You also just notice that in principle, that here everybody kind of fitting well with each other in a group...and then it does not matter what [silence] the background is of somebody and we see that for example with Matthijs but also with Thomas[36] for example and this was today also in the physical exercise lesson where we did this game called Apenkooi[37]. He has an impairment on his arm, where he is missing*

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[36] Thomas is, a child with an impairment on his hand but not included as keyinformant in this research
[37] Apenkooi is a game in the Netherlands where children run around in the physical activity room and somebody is trying to tag you but you cannot touch the ground and there is a whole trail that the children can follow so it is a really physical activity with a lot of different movements.

the lower part. But he participates in everything, he jumps up and down and nobody that looks strange or think that is weird, everybody just accepts that. And I think that it is kind of beautiful to see how they are interacting with each other in that way. I think that this is kind of beautiful.

Teacher Mark shows here that a way that is promoting the normalizing process is by letting the child Thomas, participate in everything. This inclusion process is promoting the normalization of the child Thomas. If the child would not be included in physical activity lessons or other activities at for example the playground, the child would be perceived more differently than the others. Again, this can be perceived to prevent Othering from happening. The discourse around a "normal" childhood is that of a time of play and learning, both at school and at home. If the child is not capable of joining the playing, this in contradiction with the discourse around a "normal" childhood. When the children with disabilities are participating in all the activities that are "normal", the chance is lower than the children are seen as "others". This can be connected to Lewis (1995), who showed that what typifies the majority, is seen as "normal". If most of the kids can participate in the physical activity lessons, then this is seen as "normal" behavior and as "normal" development. If there are children who are unable to participate in these activities this will be considered as "abnormality". This implies that normalizing in this context means that children with disabilities have to adjust to the society to be seen as "normal" (Susman, 1994).

However, an important note needs to be made connected to normalization and Othering. What is considered as "normal" behavior and as "normal" activities for "normal" development is depended on the context, like time and place. What is considered "normal" for children is connected to the different discourses that are existing around childhood (Montgomery, 2003). To analyze the examples given above from this viewpoint, it can be stated that normalization processes done at these schools at this certain point in time, can differ from other normalization processes in other places in the world or other contexts. An example that can be given is that the need of normalizing the hairpiece or normalizing the hole that the child has instead of the ear, it not necessary in countries where all the girls are wearing a hijab and in these cases that this part of the body is not visible.

Another example that can be given is that the western idea of childhood is childhood as "a time of dependency, play, and learning, carried out mainly at home and school" (Woodhead, 2013). This means that if a child is not able to participate in play and learning due to disabilities, the child can be considered as "abnormal". However, this is not the ideal of childhood in all parts of the world. When going back to the last given example by the teacher of the first school, by letting the child with an impairment on his hand in the physical activity game participate, this participation is seen as inclusion because these physical activities are seen as "normal" activities for children at this school.

These examples show that normalization is a context-related concept where it is necessary to be careful when claiming what is seen as normal. These examples question the definition of normalization as a concept that is just about adjusting to what is seen as "normal" in a society. Normalization is more about achieving social interactions and communication without denying having a disability (Susman, 1994). This entails that letting the children participate in most of the activities is a way of normalizing, but if a child with a physical disability is not capable of participation this might not be denied or

seen as a barrier for the normalization. Having social success can still be achieved if the child will not be excluded beforehand because of a stigma around the disability. This concept of stigmas will be discussed in the following subchapter.

6.6 Stigmatization

During the observations, I experienced stigmatization towards Sofie. According to Goffman as mentioned in Winance (2007), there are two scenarios when it comes to stigmatization and the second scenario is relevant for this example. This scenario is about a visible stigma and the person tries to cover this stigma to reduce the effects on the interactions and try to be "as normal as possible" (Winance, 2007). The communication between stigmatized and non-stigmatized is as mentioned in Winance (2007), based on "as if", because of the stigmatized person does everything to be seen "as if" he or she is normal or the non-stigmatized person does everything to see the stigmatized person "as if" he or she is considered as "normal" (Winance, 2007). According to Goffman as mentioned in Winance (2007), this interaction creates a distance between these people because the stigmatized person can never be seen as "completely normal". The person can accept his- or herself with a disability and the person will be integrated into the society as a "person with a disability".

Persons with physical disabilities are often in need of different accommodations to function the same as persons without disabilities (Dijker & Koomen, 2007). To be able to receive this help and adapted materials in the schools, there is a necessity to confirm the disability. In the case of the child of the first school, the adapted iPad, laptop and table are only offered because of his proven need for these adaptations. Also, the child received help from specialized professionals who are supporting the schools with their expertise. This means that if this child would be seen as "completely" normal, these adaptions and funding will not be given.

During my observations, I experienced a situation of what I suspect can be seen as stigmatization: During the physical activity lesson, I observed a situation in which Sofie got pushed away when standing in the line for climbing up a climbing frame. Sofie got angry. This situation happened in the corner of the gym and this made it hard for me to listen to what they were saying to each other. However, I heard Sofie screaming to the other child "but I can do it". The child Sofie stepped in front of her classmate and pushed him away. The other child did not expect this reaction and stayed behind Sofie until it was her turn. When it was her turn to climb up at the climbing frame. The child climbed up really fast and jumped down afterwards like the teacher gave the instructions. The other children did not react to this situation.

My interpretation of this situation is, that Sofie got faced with a stigma towards her. This might explain the strong reaction that Sofie had when her classmate was skipping her in the line. The child who was standing behind Sofie, skipped her to be earlier at the climbing frame because the classmate expected her not to be capable of participating in the activity because of the impairment. However, the child is capable of climbing up the climbing rack. Sofie got angry at the other child, for assuming that the child would not be capable of doing this activity. Sofie wanted to prove that she is good at it by climbing up the frame at high speed. A possible reason why Sofie could be angry is that the other child had certain assumptions about the capabilities of the child. These assumptions were incorrect. Also, this could give Sofie the feeling that the child got "Othered" and perceived as not as good as the other children. Sofie has a visible impairment and the child tries to cover this impairment by being "as normal as possible" by participating in all the activities (Winance, 2007). When another child assumes that she is not capable of

doing the activity, this does not help in the "normalization" process. Sofie just wanted to be "as if" she is normal (Winance, 2007), and wanted to join any activity that the other children from the class are doing. In addition to this, the teacher in the year when the child acquired the disability shared with me in an interview that this happened more often in other situations. In the beginning, it was the teacher that intervened in these situations.

> *Fenna: How did you deal with situations where children were holding negative attitudes towards the child with a disability?*
> *Teacher Ellen: I was really consistent in punishing the children that made bad comments about Sofie or if they wanted to ask certain insulting questions. Sometimes they would just not let her participate in certain activities or games. Then I asked them why they did not let her join. Often children responded with: "Yes, but……" I would respond with: "Nothing like yes but, the child can just join". Also when they jumped the queue, I asked them: "Why are you just jumping the queue, it is Sofie´s turn". Then the children replied: "But I think Sofie cannot do it". Then I would reply with: "Of course she can do it, Sofie just has burns but that does not mean this child is not capable of doing this". By reacting like this all the time, the children learned that they cannot react like this her again. Now Sofie with the does not need me to do say something about it anymore. She became more assertive and will tell the other children what they need to hear.*

This example shows that this stigmatization that I observed during the physical activity lesson was not a one-time event. Also, it shows that teacher Ellen helped Sofie with getting prepared on how to react to these events when other children are confronting her and they have negative attitudes towards this impairment. This implemented that Sofie is capable of tackling these situations in the future without the need of having a teacher around, as I have observed during the physical education lessons. Additionally, the way teacher Ellen reacted here to the stigmatizations of the other children towards Sofie helped the children to rethink the stigmatizations they have about her. This shows that with communication the stigmas around the child are questioned.

Just as with normalization and Othering, it is important to acknowledge that stigmas are related to cultural norms and expectations (Green, 2007). This means that the stigmas are not fixed but changeable and differ in place and time. Different perceptions of disabilities explain the different experiences that people with disabilities have. This theoretical conception of stigma can be connected to what the teacher tried to achieve by stopping the children from judging. The teacher tried to change the stigma that the children had in their mind that a child with a disability cannot do it, to the idea that the child is capable to participate in all activities despite the impairment. These perceptions of disabilities explain the different experiences that people with disabilities have. Changing these perceptions can lead to a change in stigmas. Examples of changing this were given *in subchapter 6.5*, where children gained more knowledge about the disability by for example touching the ear and asking questions with the use of a question box. These examples all contribute to gaining knowledge about the disability and this can change both the attitudes as the stigmas around the disabilities (Campbell et al., 2003).

7 Conclusions and future work

This work has aimed to explore the social inclusion of children with a physical disability in regular classrooms. The aim of the analysis chapters was not to conclude on how children with physical disabilities generally experience social inclusion in regular schools, because the experiences can be different for every child. The aim was to gain knowledge about the experiences of both the physically disabled children and the non-disabled children. These understandings are described in the analysis chapters and based on these understandings different conclusions will be made in this chapter.

The last chapters focused on the context of this thesis, elaborated on theoretical key concepts, mentioned methodological perspectives and reflections, and described the analysis of the results. The main research question of this research was "How do children experience social inclusion in a regular classroom with children with a physical disability and which factors are influencing social inclusion and exclusion"? The first part of this chapter will sum up the analysis and point out some main conclusions connected to the research question. After that, recommendations for further research and policies regarding the social inclusion of children with a physical disability will be given.

7.1. Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from both analysis chapters about the experiences of children with social inclusion in a regular class where children with a physical disability were present. Moreover, conclusions are given regarding factors that possibly influence social inclusion in the school context.

To start with, children appeared not to be agreeing on one reason that keeps a group together. There were different examples given by different children. Coherent on this is the disagreement between the children if their class was a group or not. This indicates that what defines a group according to the children in this work, is dependent on many different factors. Additionally, when talking with the children about when a child is socially included, varying answers were given. This suggests that children had an awareness of different ways to express their feelings for being included or excluded. These different ways might make it difficult for the children to be able to recognize children that are socially excluded. This is significant since it may influence the children to support each other, for example, when a child is bullied. The given answers to this topic are mostly in line with the definition of social inclusion drawn by Cullinan et al. (1992, p. 340), which focusses on "being accepted members in the class, taking part in group activities, and having at least one mutual friend". Only the latter factor was not mentioned by the children in this study. This might be since no new member was included in the interviewed groups, and friendships were already established.

When looking at the social wellbeing in both classes, it looked like that all the children were content in their class. They mentioned three factors with a significant influence on social wellbeing, which are: friendships, bullying, and teacher influence. This might imply that if a child in a class does not have friends, experiences bullying, and the teacher has a bad influence, then the social wellbeing of this child is most likely not good in this class. The absence of bullying and peer acceptance and support are corresponding with the definition of social inclusion by Koller et al. (2018). When comparing social wellbeing in both schools, there is a clear difference between both classes. More children appeared to be excluded in the class of the second school, than the class of the first school. Besides that, the group hierarchy and social cohesion differed in both classes. The group that has been together in this composition for a longer time, seemed to have lower social

wellbeing and social cohesion. This suggests that this might be not a factor that influences social wellbeing, but that it might be influenced by different factors like mentioned above.

To determine if a classroom is inclusive, it is necessary to make use of an elaborated methodology. A classroom cannot be labelled as "inclusive" if there is no confirmation from the experiences of children in the classroom (Nilholm & Alm, 2010). Based on the characteristics of the class of the first school, this class seemed to socially include all children in the class. Children could be socially excluded when it comes to making groups or to other implicit situations, but in general, social exclusion did not seem to happen regularly. This class started this year in this composition. This suggests that this class was an inclusive environment for children with any type of disability from the start. Maurits, the child with a physical disability in this class, spent most of his time in a small subgroup. He seemed socially well included based on the observations, interviews with the teachers, and focus group interviews with the other children.

The other class at the urban school had a lot of different small groups and did not seem to have strong social cohesion. Different children got socially excluded in the class because some children stood out and adapted less to the rest of the class. This implies that this class was a less inclusive environment for children with any type of disability or special need. Even though the class seemed less inclusive than the class of the rural school, Sofie (the child with physical disability in this class) appeared to be socially well included. This might imply that other factors played a role in including Sofie in the class. The main factor that stimulated the social inclusion of Sofie, is the teacher that was present after the acquiring of her disability. This suggests that the teacher can have a considerable impact on the social inclusion of children with special needs and can influence the attitudes of peers towards children with physical disabilities (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012).

However, what is important to consider is that both children with physical disabilities in this research (Maurits and Sofie), have completely different characters and they both had a different starting point at their school. While Maurits was born with his disability, Sofie acquired it during her primary school years. The visibility of the disability also varies between them: visible burns and a visual disability that is less notable. These factors can be taken into consideration. Another theme that has been discussed is bullying in connection to social exclusion. The interviews indicated that children associate bullying with feelings of being popular. A possible reason to start bullying can be the wish to be seen by others as popular, as corresponding with work from Houndoumadi and Pateraki (2010). Bullying the children that are already less popular in the class because of physical disabilities (Pijl et al., 2008), might increase the popularity of the bullies. However, this finding should be interpreted carefully.

In this sample, children experienced both social exclusion and bullying but the children and teachers addressed a clear difference between implicit exclusion and explicit exclusion that repetitively happened. The children with a physical disability (Sofie and Maurits in this sample), did not experience implicit or explicit bullying. This is in contrast with the earlier mentioned findings from Lindsay and McPherson (2012), that children with physical disabilities are bullied to a larger extent both in implicit and explicit forms.

In this study, the availability of peers seemed to be important in tackling bullying. The peer group can support the child when something negative happens or when he or she is treated in a bad way. Having the support of peers can also increase self-confidence (Flem & Keller, 2000), which might help to stand up against the bullies. This vital role does not

only apply to children with disabilities (Flem & Keller, 2000). Besides that, the teachers seemed to have a vital role in tackling bullies and dealing with social exclusion in both schools. They were often the first ones to be informed and who undertook action. However, this happened less in the first school than in the second school. A possible explanation is that children from the first school considered tackling bullying as something that should be the responsibility of the whole class and not only for the teacher.

This study suggests that both teachers from the first and second schools took the perspective of the medical model to define social exclusion. The teachers mentioned that children were getting excluded because of their own behaviour and that the children need to change if they want to stop social exclusion from happening. In line with the medical model, the teachers focussed on that the surroundings do not have to change, but the person itself (Berger, 2013). This perspective influences the way teachers handle situations of social exclusion. The teachers from this sample, would probably not focus on the barriers that might be around the child. The way that they did this was with the use of communication. Communication seemed to be the key factor in the way the teachers addressed bullying and exclusion.

Teachers seemed to be the key persons in making the inclusion a successful process, as suggested by Flem and Keller (2000); Lewis (1995). Their perception of social inclusion can influence the way they try to stimulate social exclusion as shown by Pijl, Meijer, and Hegarty (1997). An important example of this has been given in *6.1.2*, about teacher Ellen who influenced the attitudes of the peers towards Sofie after she acquired the disability. The reason was that she believed that she needed to be treated in the same way as other children.

Connected to this there are different accommodations in the first school made to include Maurits in his class. This implied that he could participate in normal lessons. In the case of Sofie, there were no accommodations made for the stimulation of her social inclusion in the class. Moreover, when it came to characteristics in the classes both children were located in the middle of the classroom and this gave them chances to have contact with a lot of different children in the class. This could be seen as an implicit accommodation. The reason why both schools were careful with the use of accommodations, is due to the idea that children needed to be treated "the same" whether they have disabilities or not, in line with Holt (2003). This is strongly in agreement with the social model on disability. It is important to make the surroundings in a way that it is accessible to and includes persons with these impairments in different situations (Barnes, 2003).

Finally, when it comes to normalizing, Othering, and stigmatization there is an indication in this work that the experiences defined by these concepts, might influence the social inclusion process. Although people with physical disabilities often get stigmatized and that this can stand in the way of social inclusion (Green, 2007), there was only one situation in which Sofie experienced stigmatization during the time I was present at the school. However, both the teachers tried to normalize the physical disabilities of both children in this sample in different ways to prevent Othering from happening.

Even though children with disabilities experience difficulties with building relationships with regular peers (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012) and "pupils with special needs are less popular, have fewer friendships and participate less often as members of a subgroup" (Pijl et al., 2008, p. 401), the interviews with the teachers and children, and the observations, suggest that in both these classes the children with a physical disability were not excluded.

The factors that are analyzed and mentioned above show possible factors that might play an important role in their inclusion. This suggests that there might are external structural, physical, and institutional factors that can be regarded as possible barriers for the social interaction between children.

7.2 Recommendations for future work and policy

This work included two children with different physical disabilities. Future research is needed to explore more about the perspectives of physically disabled children on their social inclusion. Therefore, it can be suggested to include more informants with a physical disability to gather more diverse experiences. This would give the possibility to listen to more voices of different children.

Additionally, based on the importance of the meanings of the key informants, these key informants could be interviewed more thoroughly than other informants in the research. These children can be taken separately in the interviews to get asked more specific questions related to their experiences, instead of only interviewing them in the group. It is important to acknowledge that not all children will be feeling safe enough to share if they are not feeling well in their class or at their school. The key informants could also be included in other research methods, specified on getting to know more their understandings. This would lead most likely to more specified information. An example could be to make use of photovoice or recall sheets to gain more knowledge about the social inclusion of these children in other situations outside school. However, the risk of stigmatization should be considered. Taken children out of the class and leaving the other children in the class can cause these children to feel different from the others and that they are chosen because of their disability. The researcher should try not contribute to the process of Othering.

This work showed that both Maurits and Sofie seemed to be socially included. Different factors might influence this and could be used in creating policies and future research. This work suggests that the characteristics of the disability of the children might also influence the social inclusion of the children. Maurits was born with his disability, while Sofie did acquire it during her primary school years. The visibility of the disability also varies between them both. There is a difference between burns that cannot be covered and a visual disability that is not noticeable at first. The difference in disability and the possible reaction of other children towards this should be taken into consideration and explored further in future work.

Another interesting factor that could be explored further is the difference between schools in general, to gather more information about different contexts and policies that might influence the social inclusion process. This was not the main aim of this work; however, this could be an interesting possibility for a new research project.

A possible recommendation based on this work is to create policies for the social inclusion of children with physical disabilities in which the teacher is given an important role, as suggested by Lindsay and McPherson (2012). As shown in the example of Sofie, teacher Ellen had a big impact on social inclusion in the class as well as the whole school after her accident. Therefore, a possible recommendation is using different methods focusing on communication by the teacher. The components that seem to be successful based on the case of Sofie are focusing on the acceptance of the disability, creating opportunities to ask questions by all children and intervene immediately when other children are commenting on or offending the child. Besides that, the teacher also influences the way children experience social exclusion. This is also the case for children

without disabilities. Communication seems to be a key factor to address bullying and exclusion in different situations. Future research is necessary to develop methods that teachers can use to establish communication between them and the children but also between the children.

Additionally, based on the experience of the children in the classes in this work and in research done by for example Bourke and Burgman (2010), the availability of supportive friends seems important. Therefore, social exclusion might be prevented by creating a subgroup. It also suggests that including friends and peers in anti-bullying methods or programs, might be a factor that could be successful in preventing bullying from happening.

Finally, based on the conclusion of this research that there might be external structural, physical, and institutional factors that can be regarded as possible barriers for the social interaction between children, is it recommended that policies focus on defining disability as more than a physical impairment, according to the social model of disability. The experiences of the children in this study are defined by the barriers they might face. It is important to look further than the impairment of the children and focus on the disadvantages or restriction of activities that is caused by the society, that is taking little or no account of people with physical impairments (Holt, 2004). This will make it possible for them, and children with physical disabilities in schools, to fully participate in society (Barnes, 2003; Holt, 2004; Shakespeare & Watson, 1998).

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Appendices

Appendix A: NSD Approval
Appendix B: Information letter send to the head of the schools
Appendix C: Informed consent children
Appendix D: Informed consent parents
Appendix E: Informed consent teachers/special needs coordinators
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Appendix G: Examples of drawings made by children
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Appendix J: Example of a standard observation sheet

Appendix A: NSD approval

Det innsendte meldeskjemaet med referansekode 228122 er nå vurdert av NSD.

Følgende vurdering er gitt:
Our assessment is that the processing of personal data in this project will comply with data protection legislation, presupposing that it is carried out in accordance with the information given in the Notification Form and attachments dated 06.08.2019, as well as dialogue with NSD. Everything is in place for the processing to begin.

NOTIFY CHANGES
If you intend to make changes to the processing of personal data in this project it may be necessary to notify NSD. This is done by updating the Notification Form. On our website we explain which changes must be notified. Wait until you receive an answer from us before you carry out the changes.

TYPE OF DATA AND DURATION
The project will be processing special categories of personal data about health data, and general categories of personal data, until 31.10.2019.

LEGAL BASIS
The project will gain consent from data subjects to process their personal data. We find that consent will meet the necessary requirements under art. 4 (11) and 7, in that it will be a freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous statement or action, which will be documented and can be withdrawn. The legal basis for processing special categories of personal data is therefore explicit consent given by the data subject, cf. the General Data Protection Regulation art. 6.1 a), cf. art. 9.2 a), cf. the Personal Data Act § 10, cf. § 9 (2).

PRINCIPLES RELATING TO PROCESSING PERSONAL DATA
NSD finds that the planned processing of personal data will be in accordance with the principles under the General Data Protection Regulation regarding:

- lawfulness, fairness and transparency (art. 5.1 a), in that data subjects will receive sufficient information about the processing and will give their consent
- purpose limitation (art. 5.1 b), in that personal data will be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes, and will not be processed for new, incompatible purposes
- data minimisation (art. 5.1 c), in that only personal data which are adequate, relevant and necessary for the purpose of the project will be processed
- storage limitation (art. 5.1 e), in that personal data will not be stored for longer than is necessary to fulfil the project's purpose

THE RIGHTS OF DATA SUBJECTS
Data subjects will have the following rights in this project: transparency (art. 12), information (art. 13), access (art. 15), rectification (art. 16), erasure (art. 17), restriction of processing (art. 18), notification (art. 19), data portability (art. 20). These rights apply so long as the data subject can be identified in the collected data.

NSD finds that the information that will be given to data subjects about the processing of their personal data will meet the legal requirements for form and content, cf. art. 12.1 and art. 13.

We remind you that if a data subject contacts you about their rights, the data controller has a duty to reply within a month.

FOLLOW YOUR INSTITUTION'S GUIDELINES
NSD presupposes that the project will meet the requirements of accuracy (art. 5.1 d), integrity and confidentiality (art. 5.1 f) and security (art. 32) when processing personal data.
To ensure that these requirements are met you must follow your institution's internal guidelines and/or consult with your institution (i.e. the institution responsible for the project).

FOLLOW-UP OF THE PROJECT
NSD will follow up the progress of the project at the planned end date in order to determine whether the processing of personal data has been concluded.

Good luck with the project!

Contact person at NSD: Karin Lillevold
Data Protection Services for Research: +47 55 58 21 17 (press 1)

Appendix B: Information letter to schools

The information letter that I send to the head of the schools can be found below:

Date of when I send the letter

Dear……

I would like to contact you regarding a request for my master's research. I am studying Childhood Studies at the NTNU (Norwegian University for Science and Technology). As part of my master's thesis, I would like to conduct research in the Netherlands about the social inclusion of children with physical disabilities in regular education. My question for you is if there is a possibility to carry this research out at your school.

The research is scheduled to take place in the months September or October. This research needs a period of about 3 to 4 weeks in which the researcher will make daily observations in one selected class. In addition, the researcher would like to have short group conversations with the children, an interview with the teacher, and the special needs coordinator. Before participation, permission is requested from the children, the teacher, and the parents. The conditions for participation in the study are a class that has been together for longer than just the start of the school year so that the social dynamics in the class are visible. I am also looking for a class in which there is at least one child with a physical disability.

If you can help me with this research, would that be amazing. Not only does it mean that you contribute to completing a master's degree, but you will also receive the thesis with all the results from this research which might help you to improve the social inclusion in the class.

I would like to explain this email in a telephone conversation or during a visit to your school. If there are any questions or ambiguities, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Fenna Verkerk

Including my mobile number and email address

Appendix C: Informed consent forms for the children

These forms are translated into English to put them in this thesis:

Would you like to help me with my research?

(You can tick the boxes or color the boxes if you agree with it. If you do not agree with something, you do not have to choose it. You do not have to tell me why you do not want to participate!)
- ☐ Do you think it is fine that I will record our conversation?
- ☐ Do you think it is fine I will ask you questions?
- ☐ Do you think it is fine if I ask you to make a drawing?
- ☐ Do you think it is fine that I use information about you without your name and without people knowing it is you, for in my report?

If you all agree with it, then you can write your name here and a beautiful signature or drawing. ☺

(Name and signature)

Appendix D: Informed consent parents
These forms are translated into English to put them in this thesis:

Permission research project: The social dynamics in the class

With this letter, I ask for your permission for the participation of your child in the research about social dynamics in the class of your child. Your child is selected for this research because your child is going to class *(class number is put here)* of the *(school name is put here).* This research is conducted by Fenna Verkerk, in the interest of her master's research at NTNU (Norwegian University of Science and Technology).

The goal of this research
The goal of the research is to gain knowledge about the social dynamics in a regular school setting. The focus hereby is on the social interactions between the children with physical impairment and the children without impairment in a classroom setting, during breaks, and during other informal settings at schools. An important goal of this research to let the children speak and the perspective of the child is the focus.

What is expected from your child
If you give permission for participation in the research, this will mean that your child will be observed during regular schooldays by the undersigned. Besides that, your child will get asked different questions in small conversations with the researcher. These conversations will be in small groups and will be about the social interactions the child has at school and in other contexts. It is also possible that the researcher asks the child to draw a situation. At all times, the child has the possibility to decide to not participate anymore to (a part of the) research. This also counts for you as a parent.

Participation in the research is voluntarily
When you choose to let your child participate, is there every moment a choice to withdraw this permission and you do not have to give a valid reason for that. All the information about your child will be **anonymously and confidentially** processed. This means that there are no names, ages, specifications, or other characteristics of your child mentioned. The final date at which all anonymous information will be deleted is the 1 July 2020, after the report of the results.

For questions, you can always contact Fenna Verkerk by her email address: fennaverkerk@gmail.com

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Permission form

I read and understood the information above about the project "social dynamics in the class" and hereby I am giving my permission that my child:

☐ Can take part in the interviews
☐ Can take part in the observations
☐ Can take part in making drawings
☐ The information of my child will be processed anonymously

NTNU
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

(Signed by, date)

Appendix E: Informed consent teacher and special needs teachers
Permission research project: The social dynamics in the class

With this letter, I ask for the permission of your participation in the research about social dynamics in your class. You are selected for this research because you are teaching and/or are the special needs coordinator for the class *(class number is put here)* of the *(school name is put here).* This research is conducted by Fenna Verkerk, in the interest of her master's research at NTNU (Norwegian University of Science and Technology).

The goal of this research
The goal of the research is to gain knowledge about the social dynamics in a regular school setting. The focus hereby is on the social interactions between the children with physical impairment and the children without impairment in a classroom setting, during breaks, and during other informal settings at schools. An important goal of this research to let the children speak and the perspective of the child is the focus. To get also an idea of the context factors that could have an influence on the social interactions in the class, the teacher and the special needs coordinator should be involved in the research as well.

What is expected?
It is expected that if you give permission for the research, different questions will be asked about the social interactions in your class. Besides that, observations will take place in your classroom.

Participation in the research is voluntarily
When you choose to participate, is there every moment a choice to withdraw this permission and you do not have to give a valid reason for that. All the information about the children in your class and you will be **anonymously and confidentially** processed. This means that there are no names, ages, specifications, or other characteristics of you or the children mentioned. The recordings of the interviews will be deleted after transcribing. The final date at which all anonymous information will be deleted is the 1 July 2020, after the report of the results.

For questions, you can always contact Fenna Verkerk by her email address: fennaverkerk@gmail.com

---

Permission form

I read and understood the information above about the project "social dynamics in the class" and hereby I am giving my permission for:

- ☐ Participation in the interviews
- ☐ Participation in the observations
- ☐ That the information given during the interviews will be processed anonymously

NTNU
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

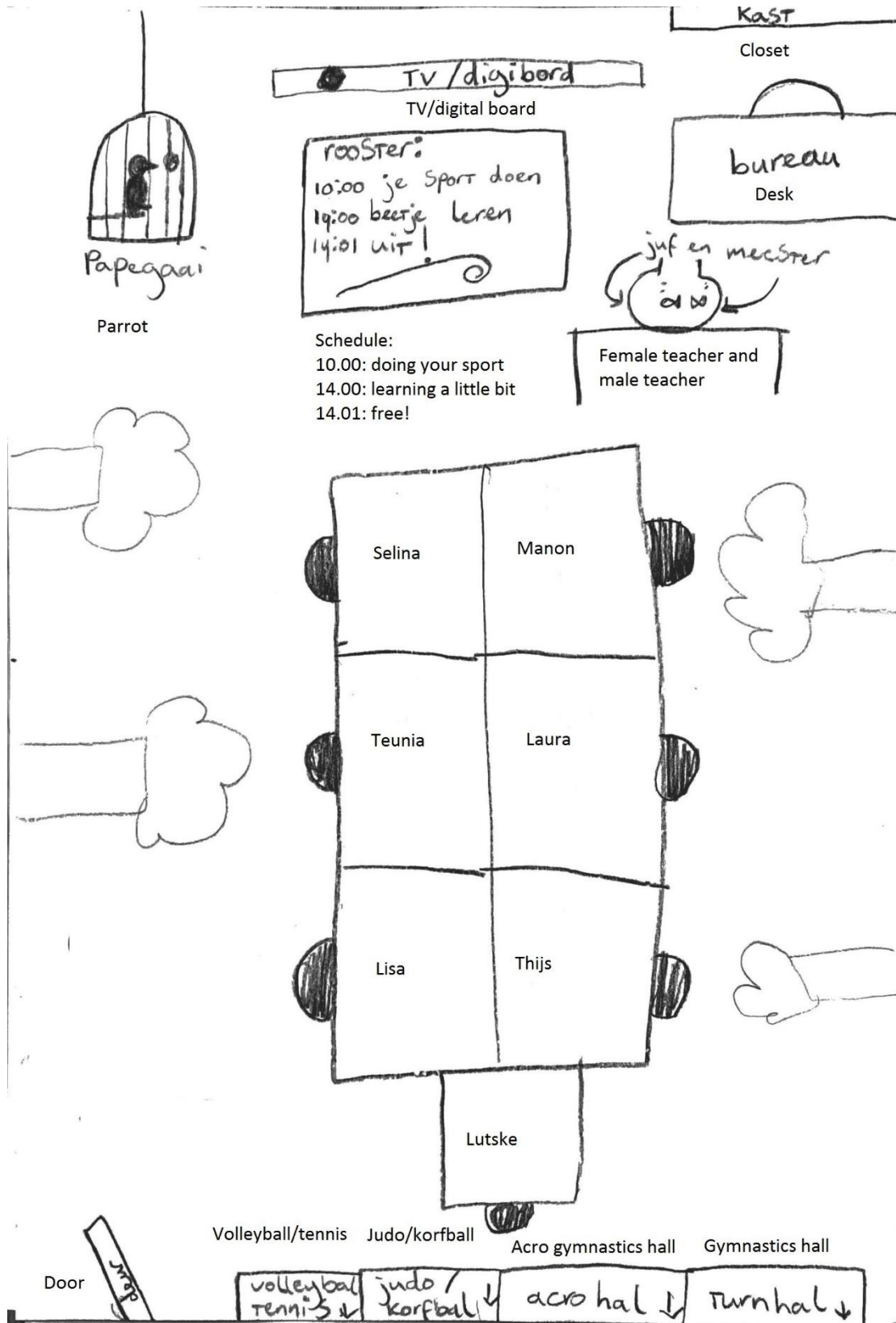(Signed by, date)

Appendix F: Visual stimuli used in the focus group interviews

Appendix G: Example of drawings

Example of a drawing from the first school made by Teunia

Kast
Closet

TV /digibord
TV/digital board

rooSter:
10:00 je Sport doen
14:00 beetje leren
14:01 uit!

Schedule:
10.00: doing your sport
14.00: learning a little bit
14.01: free!

bureau
Desk

juf en meeSter
Female teacher and male teacher

Papegaai
Parrot

Selina	Manon
Teunia	Laura
Lisa	Thijs

Lutske

Volleyball/tennis   Judo/korfball
Acro gymnastics hall   Gymnastics hall

Door

volleybal tennis↓   judo/ korfbal↓   acro hal ↓   Turnhal↓

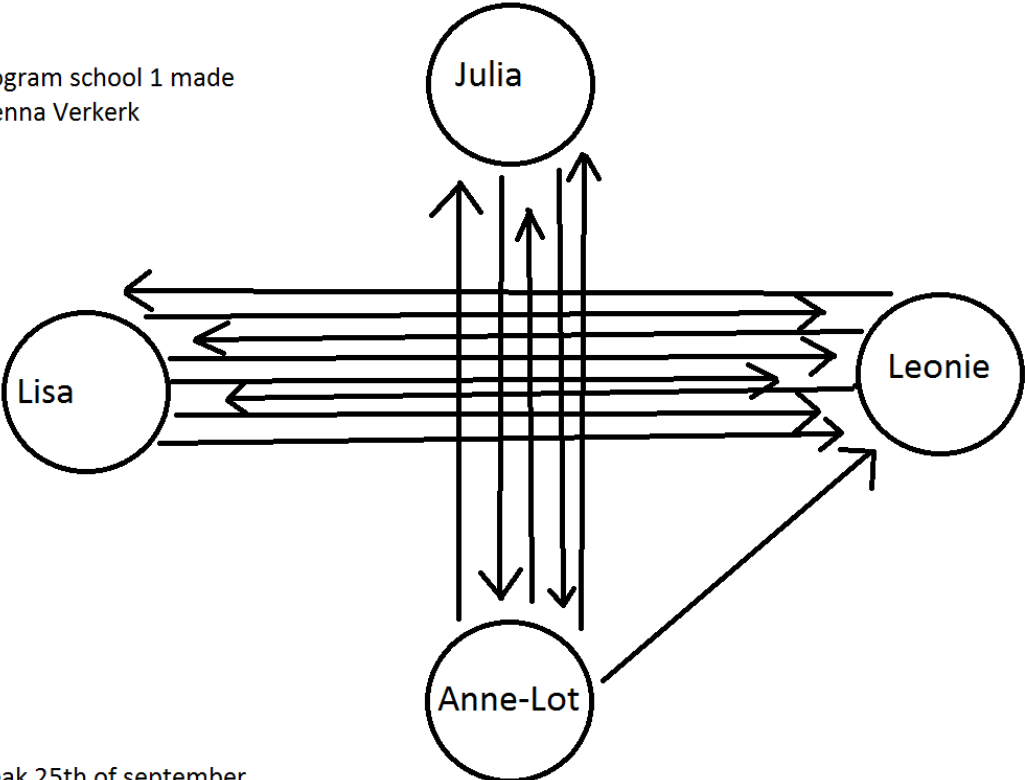Example of a drawing from the second school made by Maud

Example of a drawing from the second school made by Harm

Appendix H: Example of a social interaction observation

Sociogram school 1 made
by Fenna Verkerk

Break 25th of september
10.00-10.05

Appendix I: Interview guidelines

Interview guideline 1: Teachers and special needs coordinators

This interview guideline is used with the teachers and the special needs coordinators. However, the guideline is adapted to different questions when interviewing teacher Ellen, because she was not teaching Sofie at that moment and I wanted to talk with her about the period after Sofie acquired her disability.

This interview is used to get an idea of the context of the class and of the influence of you as a teacher. All the information you tell me will be processed anonymously. Are you agreeing that the interview is recorded so that I can use it for listening to it and writing all the information you give me down? I will make sure that the conversation is deleted after I listened to it.

1. How many years of experience do you have as a teacher?
2. How long is this group together?
3. How would you describe this class?
4. How would you describe the social relations in the class?
5. How is the social inclusion in the class?
6. Who decides the seating positions of the children in the classroom?
7. Does this change throughout the year?
8. Do you think that there is a difference between the social dynamics in the class and outside the class?
9. What do you consider as social inclusion?
10. What do you consider as social inclusion of children with an impairment?
11. How do you think you can achieve social inclusion in a class? How can you make sure that everybody in the class gets the feeling that he/she belongs?
12. What do you consider as a group?
13. How do you stimulate the group building in the class to create a safe environment?
14. Did you experience problems with bullying and exclusion in your class?
15. Do you have the idea that there are children in your class bullied or excluded?
16. What do you do when you notice that somebody gets excluded or bullied?
17. Do these measures stop it from happening?
18. Do you work with any anti-bullying method in this school?
19. How do you implement this method in your class?
20. Do you notice an effect of using this method?
21. How do you think (name of the child with a physical child) is included in the class?
22. How do you stimulate the social inclusion of (name of the child with a physical child)?

Oke I would like to thankyou for the interview.

23. Are there any more things you would like to add? You can also always contact me on the email if you want to include some more information.

Interview guideline 2: Focus group interview with children

This is the interview guideline I wrote for myself. This is the updated version and the version I used with the second school (after the inclusion of the visual stimuli).

Take the children to the separate space. The first questions that can be asked are there to make the children feel comfortable and can be about the experiences they had on the camp they just went etc. After that I will explain what we are going to do. First play a small game, after that some questions will be asked and after that they can make a drawing.

The start-up game is as following: all the children have to put their hands on the table. The right hand should cross the left hand of the person who is sitting right of you. Then a practice round of clapping will start. I will start and the direction is clockwise. Every child has to clap. After the practice round I will add an additional rule that clapping two times means to switch sides. You need to take one hand away if you clap wrong or too late.

After the game:
Did you guys like the game? Before I will ask you some questions, I would like to first have your permission for recording our conversation and using the answers for my research. I will use the recording only to listen to this conversation again and write it down on paper. I will not use it for anything else and I will delete it after I used it for writing your answers down. If you agree with having a conversation in this small group, then you can draw a smiley or a drawing or put your signature on this form, after you read it and you give permission for everything that is written on the form.

1. Do you think you are going to a nice school? Why do you think the school is nice or not?
2. Do you think that have a nice class? Why do you think that you have a nice class or not?
3. Do you think you have a nice teacher?
4. Did you go to a class before that was not that cosy or nice?

Questions corresponding picture 1:
- Who can tell me what happens on the pictures?
- Does everybody agree on that?
- How do you think the boy feels? (Pointing to the boy)
- How do you think the other children feel?
- Did you experience something like this before?
- What would you do when you see something like this happening?

Questions corresponding picture 2:
- What do you see at the picture?
- Do these children belong together?
- Why do you think these children belong together?
- Do you consider these children as a group?
- Why do you consider them (or not) as a group?
- Does this mean that you all together are also a group?

5. What kind of grade would you give your class? If 10 means for example that your class is really cozy, that everybody belongs and that nobody gets bullied and 1 means that your class is really antisocial, not cosy and children get bullied.
6. Why would you give that grade?
7. Do you think all the children belong to the class?
8. Why do you think all children belong to the class (or not?)
9. When somebody does not belong to the class, how do you notice this?
10. Are children bullied in your class?
11. Who can make sure that it stays a cozy class with a good atmosphere?

12. What do you have to do to keep the class cozy?
13. When you have to make a small group to work on an assignment, how do you choose the group?

Thankyou so much for your participation. I will now stop the recording. Now we can start drawing! The drawing is not for a grade and you can draw everything you see as an answer to the question.
Then the remaining question from me to you is, how would your class look like if you would be the one in charge? Next to who would you be seated, and which children would be in your perfect class?

Appendix J: Example of a standard observation sheet

This is an example of a filled in observation sheet I used with the second class when asking them questions.

Example of a filled in standard observation sheet:

Title: Interviewing children

Objective(s):

To explore children´s perceptions of bullying and social exclusion.
To explore children´s experiences with bullying and social exclusion.
To explore children´s experiences in their class
To explore how children, experience social inclusion in their classroom and to explore their vision on this social inclusion.
To explore possible topics, I can focus on the remaining of my observations.

How many children?

I asked the children to come in groups of 5 children. The groups were made randomly. In total there are 25 children of which 1 child has a physical disability.

How many researchers?

1 researcher.

How long will it take?

Every focus group interview will take around 35-40 minutes including the time that the children get to make a drawing and for me to ask questions about their drawings.

What equipment do I need?

-   Informed consent forms from all the children and their parents
-   This standard observation sheet
-   The interview guideline for the focus group interviews with the children
-   Pencils or pen to write observations down
-   The consent forms
-   Recording device
-   The two visual stimuli on paper
-   Coloring pencils for the children to work with
-   Empty white sheets
-   An envelope to put the drawings in when the children are done

What do I do?

1. Seek informed consent before the focus group interview.
2. Before the children arrive I fill in the general information on the observation sheet
3. I welcome all the children and I explain that before we start, we will do a small game to get relaxed and that the children get to know me a bit.
4. After the small game, I start to explain the aim of the tool and explain the method.
5. I explain that they can choose at every moment to stop if they do not want to continue. I give them the consent forms and explain to them that these forms are for getting permission for recording the conversations and for using the information they tell me in this group interview. I explain to them that if they permit this that they can make a drawing or write their signature on the forms.

6. I check if all the children give permission for asking questions, using the questions, and for the recording.
7. Before I start I ask them if they have any questions.
8. Then I start the recording
9. I start asking them the questions and the group discussion will start
10. When the group discussion is finished I stop the recording.
11. After the questions, I explain to them the aim of the drawing that they are going to make.
12. When the children are drawing I write down observations, for example with who they do the activity (if they are drawing together or talking together during drawing), what kind of drawings they are making, keep track of the time, write down the general impression of their emotions during this activity.
13. Ask the children during their activities, if they like the activities, what they are drawing, and if they can explain more about it.
14. When the drawings are done and/or the time is over, I thank the children for their participation.
15. I check the drawings and if they wrote down their names.
16. I collect all the drawings and put them in a closed envelope.

Researcher (s) name(s):

Fenna Verkerk

Date of session

10 october 2019

Time of session:

13.00-13.45

Research tool used:

Focus group interview and drawings

Number of children:

5 children in each group

Place of data collection:

In the staffroom in the school

Number sequence of data collection:

This is the first group that I interviewed.

What factors may have influenced the collection of data during this session?

For researcher (s):

The researcher was a bit nervous about this first group interview and the children might have noticed that.

For children/adults:

This group of children was calm and excited about what they were going to do with "teacher Fenna". During the group discussion, they were focused and participated actively. All children made a drawing and were enthusiastic about the topic. They all started immediately by making their drawing.

Characteristics of the place where data were collected:

The focus group interviews took place in the staffrooms and this place was a quiet place with a lot of space on a big table for the children to draw.

Weather:

Not relevant at this place.

Interruptions/distractions:

Even though it was in the staffroom, children were coming in to get coffee for their teacher. These children made contact with the children of the group and therefore they were distracted during the group discussion. When a teacher ended to bring a coffeecup back, the same happened.

Other: ----------

Fenna Verkerk

Social inclusion of children with physical disability in two schools in the Netherlands

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