Master's thesis

NTNU
Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences
Department of Education and Lifelong Learning

Jessica Verheijen

# Exploring children's sense of place, identity and belonging in a Dutch transforming neighbourhood.

Master's thesis in Childhood Studies
Supervisor: Linn Cathrin Lorgen
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# Abstract

This research aims to explore children's experiences in a transforming neighbourhood in a Dutch context. Within this aim, the research focused more specifically on children's sense of place, belonging and identity in relation to their neighbourhood experiences. In the Netherlands, many neighborhoods are undergoing gentrification with the aim of improving the safety, wellbeing, and social cohesion of residents. Despite the growing emphasis on community participation and inclusion, policy documents often do not incorporate children's voices within neighbourhood reports. This research aims to bridge the gap between the lack of children's participation within policy documents and their experiences within the transforming neighbourhood. By shedding light on children's experiences, a clearer picture can be sketched of experiences within a Dutch neighbourhood that can be taken into consideration for future policies. To explore the aim of this research, a qualitative research approach was utilized. This study is positioned within the field of childhood studies, which perceives children as social actors in their own lives and those around them. To facilitate the inclusion of children's voices in the study, participatory methods such as photography walks and drawings were used in addition to semi-structured interviews. Additionally, the perspectives of stakeholders were included as children's agency within the neighbourhood is dependent on the relations with those around them.

The analysis reveals that children attach value to places within the neighbourhood that offer safety and supervision and tend to stay away from areas where they don't feel comfortable due to interaction with certain groups of people. Children feel a sense of place in the neighbourhood that have been created by adults but also create their own places to attach meaning to. Even though the places and experiences that children describe differ from each other, the value they find within these places are similar to one another. The diverse experiences related towards places in the neighbourhood further revealed a gap in the feeling of belonging of older and younger children in the neighbourhood. Additionally, the study found that children's neighbourhood experiences are related to their own understanding of age-appropriate activities which are argued to be influenced by the cultural norms around them. The findings suggest that children's values within the neighbourhood align with the same values that the stakeholders shared to be the aims of neighbourhood organizations. Within these shared perspectives of stakeholders and children, the global north childhood seems to be reproduced within the gentrification processes in the neighbourhood.

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# 1. Introduction

Within childhood studies, the notion that childhood is purely a natural phenomenon, or a product of socialization has been rejected and has been urged to incorporate a view in which childhood is understood as a social construction. In this construction, children play active roles in determining and influencing their own lives and those around them (Prout & James, 2015). No longer are children seen as passive bystanders but rather as active beings who give meaning to their own and others' lives. The influence that children have on their surrounding is interdependent with other variables such as class, gender, ethnicity, and other factors (Prout & James, 2015). In other words, the role of the individual is shaped by and shapes the social world in which it takes place. This stance gained more momentum in the 1980's within the field of childhood studies as more scholars were urging for a more interdisciplinary perspective on childhood (Punch, 2020). This research continues with the interdisciplinary perspective and focusses on the social constructions that take place within a transforming neighbourhood. It explores experiences of childhood and related this to the urban geographical setting in which their childhood takes place. The significance of the study and problem context will be explained in the next section along with the research aim and questions.

## 1.1. Context of the topic

The Netherlands has a positive reputation of organizing state-led welfare housing for lower-income households (Hochstenbach, 2017). This means that neighbourhoods in the Netherlands were, and still are, occupied by residents who have resemblances in income, education, and often cultural backgrounds. In this case, the income and education background within welfare neighbourhoods are usually low (Van der Laan, 2009). However, in recent years national and local politicians have wanted to "de-segregate" neighbourhoods in urban areas and instead welcome gentrification as a solution to helping a low-income neighbourhood into a more diverse and inclusive neighbourhood (Hochstenbach, 2017). This means that national and regional policies are shifting away from focusing on state-led welfare housing and are instead focusing on transforming neighbourhoods into a more affluent environment. This process is a complex topic with different opinions, experiences, and outcomes for (low-income) residents in these neighbourhoods which will receive more attention in the coming chapters. Most of the current research that focusses on the experiences of residents in gentrified neighbourhoods focus on adult perspectives and tend to not include the perspectives and experiences of children. In many neighbourhoods the experiences of children are often voiced through those of adults or stakeholders and often concentrate on schooling or extracurricular activities or situated within the nuclear family context (Kinderombudsman, 2013). As a consequence, current policy reports that have been published and used to create new policies in certain neighbourhoods are mainly based on the experiences of adults and families. Children are often expected not to partake in the public sphere and are often protected in a private sphere such as in family or educational settings (Vanderbeck & Worth, 2015). However, as Rasmussen (2004) argues, children are social and cultural actors who partake in public places and give meaning to these places. Places, just as for adults, can hold a lot of significance for children and influences

their everyday lives (Rasmussen, 2004). Positioning children as social actors within the public sphere indicates that children have their own experiences and opinions on the neighbourhood in which they reside. Therefore, this research seeks to explore how children give meaning and participate in the neighbourhood. It is important to understand how children give meaning and participate in places that are currently transforming.

## 1.2. Significance of the study

The study takes place in a Dutch neighbourhood that is currently undergoing many transformations which is often regarded as gentrification. A typical characterization of the aim of gentrifying Dutch neighbourhoods is to change the demography and the livelihood of the neighbourhood which directly impacts the experiences and livelihood of the (new and old) residents within neighbourhoods (Hochstenbach, Musterd & Teernstra, 2014). As will be elaborated on in chapter two, gentrification is quite a loaded topic within Dutch literature and Anglo-Saxon contexts (Hochstenbach, Musterd & Teernstra, 2014). Therefore, I will use the term "transformations" to discuss the changes in the neighbourhood in order to share the perspectives from the participants in a neutral position. Over recent years, the local government has undergone many projects to bring changes into the researched neighbourhood regarding safety, wellbeing, and social cohesion (Hofstede & Vulperhorst, 2018). Within these projects, emphasis has also been placed on the experiences of children. However, these experiences are mostly confined to the quality of education and after school activities. In other words, most of the content of projects focusing on children's livelihood revolves around school activities and after school programs leaving little place for children's experiences within public places. In the next coming years, the local government has many plans for the neighbourhood, within and just on the outskirts of the area. When local governments undergo new projects, input from current residents can often be included which in turn shape new policies (Uyterlinde & Van der Velden, 2017). However, when reading through the reports and plans of the specific neighbourhood, little to no data was shared about children's own experiences within public places. Usually, children's voices are represented through those of adults or limited to their educational experiences. The neighbourhood is more than a place where one receives education however, and plays an important role in one's identity, social relations, and overall wellbeing (Hopkins, 2010).

The programs within the neighbourhood have been made possible by the neighbourhood enterprise which received a subsidy from the local government and a large housing corporation after being identified as a neighbourhood that needs attention (Municipality X, n.d.). The information about the programs in the neighbourhood has been shared by the stakeholders who participated in this research. Additional information has been found on the organization's website. I have chosen to not include the references as this would expose the names of the organizations within the neighbourhood and in turn decrease the anonymity of the participants. Within the neighbourhood organizations, schools and after school institutions are working together to create a safe and child centred environment for children of all ages in the neighbourhood. These schools and after school organizations are seen as highly successful programs that offer language lessons, homework supervision, holiday activities, music lessons etc. Within the community there is also an awareness for the importance of children's voices concerning the neighbourhood. One of the organizations within the neighbourhood is focusing on creating language classes for children in the neighbourhood to expand their linguistic

skills. This language program was set up by professionals and children. Collectively they regularly work with participatory models to improve the language proficiency of children in the neighbourhood who do not speak Dutch at home. Their aim with these participatory models is for children to develop a language program that they enjoy and that will allow them to use language in a creative way which differs from language classes they receive at school. After having several conversations with professionals working in this institution, they shared my interest in using participatory approaches to gain more understanding in children's experiences in the public sphere of the neighbourhood.

Within the coming years, the collaboration between different neighbourhood institutions and children will undergo transformations to work as effectively as possible for all children. However, the experiences of children within public places are still hard to come by in policy reports. If none of the reports touch on children's experiences outside of the institutional context and continue to happen through adult representation of children's voices, one should question if policy makers are aware of children's everyday lives in the neighbourhood. To ensure that stakeholders who work in schools, the local government, housing corporations, after school programs and so on, are creating the best long-term plans for children in the neighbourhood it is important to explore children's experiences in the neighbourhood outside of the institutional context and to further understand what perspectives stakeholders have on these experiences. If information about children's experiences is limited to one certain context, there is a risk that their needs will not be met within future policies and that stakeholders cannot support children in creating an environment that meets their needs. To explore the perspectives from stakeholders and children, participatory methods can be used to highlight different experiences and information. These participatory methods will allow children to share information that can be valuable for policy makers (Ennew et al., 2009). A question may arise why adding stakeholders to this research may be beneficial. A critique may be that this could be implied as a risk as the stakeholder's voices may overshadow those of the children. However, as I choose to do this research within a community, I relate to Ennew et al. (2009) who emphasizes that children-centred research does not mean that the researcher will exclusively work with children. This research will aim to put children into the picture and to do that, different perspectives are needed to gain a better understanding about the community picture. Punch (2020) argues that within childhood studies there is a lack of recognition towards the dependency that children's agency has in relation to people around them. This research takes place in a neighbourhood in which existing structures take shape alongside children's agency. These structures have to be acknowledged in order to gain a deeper understanding of how children practice their agency within these structure's. Therefore, I aim to explore the existing structures by including stakeholders' perspectives in the research.

## 1.3. Personal motivation

My personal motivation to conduct research within the social geography of the neighbourhood relates to my upbringing and to my academic interests. During my childhood I lived very close to the neighbourhood in which this research took place. It was about a 10-minute bike ride from my home however I never visited the area. When I attended secondary school, the neighbourhood had a very specific reputation at school; on the one hand, it was a neighbourhood that many did not visit as they heard from

adults that it was not a safe place to go to and that it was a high-crime area. On the other hand, it also had an image of being "grown up" if you lived there or new somebody in that area. Children who navigated the neighbourhood independently or had social contacts within the area who were older than they were, came across as being more mature compared to others who did not have the connections to the neighbourhood. About five years ago my perspective on the neighbourhood started to change. One of my good friends moved to the neighbourhood which resulted into me spending more time there. I noticed that a lot of young people had started living in certain areas of the neighbourhood and that there was a very pleasant atmosphere. Reflecting on this time, I realize that a lot of the older generations did not seem to use the spaces that my peers and I were using. This made me wonder how long-term residents in the neighbourhood were experiencing the transformations.

Moreover, I was interested in writing a thesis that allowed me to combine my interests within the field of childhood studies with other disciplinary fields. The ongoing critique of childhood studies being an isolated study is something that captured my interest during my first year of the study (Punch, 2020). It has been argued that childhood studies has been placing too much emphasis on the concept of agency within a child's life which does not show the interdependent characteristics connected to an individual's life (Punch, 2020). I was interested in connecting childhood to urban geography as the housing market and neighbourhood formation are very relevant topics in Dutch society and will continue to shape Dutch cities. Children are often excluded from political discussions but as Vanderbeck & Worth (2015) state, a lot of social, political, economic, and environmental concerns have different generational dimensions which are important to explore. I argue that without children's perspectives on the transformations within their neighbourhoods, a full community picture of the processes cannot be explored.

## 1.4. Aim and research questions

The aim of this research is to explore perspectives on children's experiences within a transforming neighbourhood. With this aim children's experiences will be situated within the social and geographical changes of the neighbourhood. This topic will allow me to address the classic binary within childhood studies between agency and social structures (Valentine, 2016). The concepts of identity, sense of place, and belonging will be reoccurring themes throughout this research. Out of this aim, three questions were formulated:

1) How do children give meaning to places in the transforming neighbourhood?

2) What role does age play in children's experiences of a transforming neighbourhood?

3) How do stakeholders view children's needs and experiences in a transforming neighbourhood?

## 1.5. Outline of thesis

Chapter two will focus on background information. Within this chapter I will describe relevant information concerning this project which focusses on the history of rental and neighbourhood policies in the Netherlands and how this directly and indirectly influenced demographics within Dutch neighbourhoods. This chapter will further focus on the concept of gentrification, which many scholars interpretate as the main reason for the demographic changes that have happened and are still happening in the Netherlands. Next to that, a description of society in the Netherlands will be described with extra focus on childhood in the Netherlands. Norms and values related to a Dutch upbringing will be shared as well. Chapter three includes the theoretical background in which important concepts will be discussed that will be used to analyse the data. Concepts such as identity, space, and place, belonging, social constructionism and generational order will be presented with relevant sub concepts. In chapter four I will present the methodology used in this research through the lens of childhood studies and the considerations needed to remain aligned with the values and expectations of childhood studies. Next to that, a description of the participants and the methods will be presented alongside my experiences with accessing the field and using the separate methods. After familiarizing the reader with the methods used for this research, I will present the reader to the stakeholders and children in chapter five by introducing each participant individually whilst describing the context in which our conversations took place. In chapter six I will analyse perspectives on children's experiences in the neighbourhood related to places. In chapter seven I will focus on children's age as an identity marker and relate this to their neighbourhood perspectives and expectations. Within this chapter, the relational aspect of children's age will be highlighted as well by analysing the generational relationships that the participants described. I will finalize this research with the conclusion in which I will discuss key findings along with the inevitable limitations that accompany research. This will be followed by recommendations for future research.

# 2. Background

This chapter will focus on how social, economic, and political processes have influenced the formation of Dutch neighbourhoods. These processes and discussions regarding the history and development of neighbourhood's impact children's experiences. Past governmental policies that accompany concepts such as social welfare housing and political discourses on neighbourhoods are important to discuss to understand how gentrification came to play in the Netherlands. Comprehending the demographics within these gentrified contexts and understanding the concept of gentrification is crucial to understanding the experiences of children within the neighbourhood and the perspectives from local stakeholders. Lastly a description will be shared of society in the Netherlands and how childhood is viewed and shaped within Dutch society. By including a description of what is typical in Dutch society, the context in which this research takes place is situated. Describing the average neighbourhood in the Netherlands and the expectations and interactions that come with in, may give a better understanding in which structures children are navigating their agency (Punch, 2020).

## 2.1. Netherlands

This research will take place in the Netherlands. To understand how a certain neighbourhood is affected by society, and affects society, it is important to take a closer look at Dutch society on a macro level. The Netherlands is a small country located in Western-Europe with 17.5 million residents (World Bank, 2021). It is a highly densely populated country with an average of 520 inhabitants per square km in 2021 (Statista, 2022). Though a small country, it has the 17$^{th}$ largest economy in the world (World bank, 2021).

The Netherlands is an ethnically diverse country resulting from migration processes that have been occurring since the 1960's (Leeman, 2008). After the Second World War a great number of Dutch citizens emigrated to countries such as Australia, Canada, and the USA to improve their prospects. However, this emigration trend resulted in a work shortage in the 1960's. As a response, the Dutch government organized recruitment agreements with countries such as Italy and Spain for temporary labourers to come work in the Netherlands. Most migrants during the 1960's came from Turkey, Southern-Europe, and countries in North-Africa such as Morocco (Jennissen, 2013). The varieties of languages, cultures and religions of labour migrants created multicultural settings within Dutch cities. As will be discussed later, the formations of neighbourhoods across the Netherlands are also influenced by these migrant flows that took shape in the 1960's.

### 2.1.1. A brief history of social housing in the Netherlands

During the time of the industrial revolution, many Dutch residents moved from the countryside to the city in search of employment. As a result, new neighbourhoods were emerging to accommodate families moving to cities. However, the living conditions were poor and the rough living situation for many Dutch labourers was brought to attention by Dutch political figures (Hermans, 1974). As a response, a new law was introduced that

allowed government interference to improve the housing situations. This law allowed the government to manage housing cooperation's and local councils in the improvement of current housing (Schouten, 2004). New, affordable housing was built for the labourers in Dutch cities. These houses were then known as "Labours housing = (volkswoning) (Hermans, 1974). Labour housing, and therefore labour neighbourhoods, typically consist out of rows of identical small houses. These neighbourhoods were mostly occupied by labourers and their families working for factories in the city. In the 20th century, the "labour" neighbourhood demographic disappeared, but the housing still was targeted as welfare housing meaning that the rent would remain affordable.

These labour neighbourhoods (= "volkshuisvesting") are nowadays known as social welfare housing. In the mid to late 20th century, the Dutch welfare housing system had a strong reputation in Europe and had the highest number of welfare housing in Western-European cities (Housing Europe, 2019). Social welfare housing was for citizens with a low income but also for the middle class. Not only were these rented homes occupied by Dutch low- and middle-income residents, but also by guest laborers from Mediterranean and North-African countries (Jansen, 2006). Because of the high demand for more social welfare housing, neighbourhoods outside of Dutch cities were built to accommodate towards these needs (Jansen, 2006). The combination of a high demand for social welfare housing from low and middle-income residents and migrants resulted into the Dutch government planning neighbourhoods around big cities that offered cheap rental accommodations. As a response several groups of migrants who were already established in the Netherlands moved to specific neighbourhoods as they felt a sense of community. Consequently, this attracted new migrants to move to these neighbourhoods as well (Plan Bureau voor de Leefomgeving, 2021). This pattern of people moving into areas with a high population of their community is still present to this day. A high concentration of cheap rental housing in one specific area and ethnic minorities preferring to live among family and friends, has led to housing segregation in the Netherlands. The former minister of living & integration, Eberhard Van der Laan, publicly problematized the segretation in an open letter addressed to the Dutch parliament stating that segregation the Dutch rental sector is prevalent. (Van der Laan, 2009). Migrants often move to neighbourhoods where they are surrounded by family and friends. A high concentration of cheap rental housing in one specific area and ethnic minorities preferring to live in the same neighbourhood has led to housing segregation in the Netherlands being very prevalent (Van der Laan, 2009). In the open letter to the Dutch parliament, van der Laan (2009) draws on the problem that the majority of Turkish and Moroccan migrants live in rental housing and often have a worse position when entering the housing market compared to Dutch natives. With this also comes the worry from migrants of not being accepted in typical Dutch neighbourhoods and therefore often opt for living on the outskirts of big cities.

In the 1980's almost 40% of Dutch households lived in good quality welfare housing. However, in the 1990's people were encouraged to buy a home instead of renting one. The encouragement for citizens to buy a house instead of renting resulted in a strict limit on who had a right to social welfare housing. It was argued that living corporations had to become independent and not rely on government subsidies any longer. Furthermore, it was argued that too many high-income households lived in social housing, however people were encouraged to live in houses that matched their income bracket (Schouten, 2004). The state secretary argued that 30% of new construction projects should be meant for social housing whilst 70% should be for owning a home and more expensive rental homes. Additionally, the rules for social welfare housing organizations changed,

making it more profitable for organizations to rent out houses at the full price instead of as welfare housing. However, lower-class residents were not in the position to follow this trend and stayed in neighbourhoods where social welfare housing now became characterized by areas of unemployment, low education, low income, and high crime rates (Musterd, 2009). In combination with a serious national housing shortage, all renters and buyers were faced with a steep rise in prices for living costs. The traditional labour housing neighbourhoods within cities that were once only meant for low-income welfare housing, became popular with young families and recent graduates who still had a relatively low-income but a higher education background. These houses were renovated, and the neighbourhoods were improved by adding shops and cafés that are attractive for young, high-income residents. A common critique is that Dutch cities are only becoming a place for the rich, leaving lower-income households in isolation in their own neighbourhoods outside of the city ring (Kolen, 2021).

Consequently, the Dutch government's encouragement for residents to become homeowners had major ramifications for renters who could not afford to buy a home. Citizens who were able to afford a home moved out of the neighbourhoods that largely consisted of welfare housing. This affected low-income households and migrants in these neighbourhoods (Hochstenbach, Musterd, & Teernstra, 2014). The Dutch media and government regarded this as a big issue for these neighbourhoods as they were characterized by low-income, high-crime areas (Musterd, 2009). A 21$^{st}$ century trend in European cities have been aimed towards diversifying neighbourhoods that are characterized by social issues. Similar to other European countries (Sweden, the UK), the Netherlands had implemented policies to "mix up" certain neighbourhoods in Dutch cities. The diversification entails that by desegregating the neighbourhood demographics and creating a more diverse group of people living within the same neighbourhood, a certain balance would be created that would bring a certain "order" to these area's (Musterd, 2009). This phenomena to "mix up" the neighbourhood happens within the concerned neighbourhood of this research. Young individuals, mainly with a higher education background, are offered discounts on rental housing in the concerning neighbourhood in exchange for volunteer work that involves frequent interaction with the children.

In 2007, the Dutch minister of housing, Ella Vogelaar, presented an action plan for 40 neighbourhoods within the Netherlands to the Dutch cabinet. Within this action plan, these neighbourhoods were targeted for improvements and desegregation as they were now seen as "areas of concern". The neighbourhood in which this research took place, was one of the 40 areas. As a result, an unwanted stigma for many of the neighbourhoods was created and are often referred to as the "Vogelaarwijken" (Vogelaar neighbourhoods). Much of the research that had been conducted in these problem areas, focused on the negative effects and influences of living in these "deprived" neighbourhoods (Bolt, Van Kempen, & Van Ham, 2008). The general idea that was portrayed within these problematized neighbourhoods was the lack of social mobility and prospects for these residents. The emphasis that was placed on these marginalized positions, held negative consequences for people who lived in these neighbourhoods and did not have the means to move away (Rechtbank Amsterdam, 2008). One of the issues with this form of stigmatization is that this may result into the worth of property decreasing. Moreover, the willingnes of external and internal stakeholders to improve areas of concern within these neighbourhoods may decrease because of the negative reputation (Rechtbank Amsterdam, 2008). Musterd (2009) raises the question what politics and media should focus on within these neighbourhoods: Is the neighbourhood itself and the living conditions in it a concern or are the people in the neighbourhood

causing the concern? In other words, is it a neighbourhood concern or concerns in the neighbourhood?

Musterd's (2009) question has remained ambiguous. Within the 40 concern neighbourhoods there is not a clear statement regarding what the actual concern in the area is: is it the residents within the neighbourhood or the living conditions within? Musterd (2009) argues that within the list of 40 area's some neighbourhoods have poor living conditions, whilst others have actual social issues. The difference here is that living conditions would focus more on the physical aspect of the neighbourhood (e.g.: the quality of housing, infrastructure, stores in the neighbourhood) whilst social issues relate more to challenges which residents may be having (e.g.: low education, not enough job opportunities, economic challenges). The critique rises, that if an action plan for a neighbourhood consists of renewing homes or constructing new homes, it may not actually help the main issue in the neighbourhood. These are individual cases that should be researched and if not, a common argument is that large-scale improvement of these neighbourhoods will be ineffective. For instance, if issues within a neighbourhood primarily stem from social issues, and as a response residents move to other neighbourhoods or new people move into the area, the question rises if the social issue will remain but merely shift to a different location (Musterd, 2009).

### 2.1.2. Gentrification

Gentrification is often discussed in an Anglo-Saxon context. In this Anglo-Saxon context, gentrification is defined as citizens with a higher income moving to neighbourhoods where residents with a lower income reside, resulting into their displacement (Hochstenbach, Musterd, & Teernstra, 2014). However, gentrification in the Netherlands happens on a different level with a different outcome and therefore scholars argue an alternate definition for a Dutch context is needed. Due to reliable housing protections in the Netherlands, renters will not easily be evicted out of their homes because of the lack of options of affordable housing they stay in one place for a long period of time (Hochstenbach, Musterd & Teernstra, 2014).

Gentrification in the Anglo-Saxon context is a loaded term, often related to negative keywords such as displacement, inequality, and injustices (Davidson, 2008). Gentrification in the Netherlands, however, can be regarded in the sense of policymakers initiating "social mixing" to address urban social problems (Davidson, 2008). This perspective on gentrification has led to the argument that gentrification does not necessarily have displacement as an outcome but rather presents the opportunity to improve the quality of life of deteriorated neighbourhoods and mix residents from differing socioeconomic strata with benefits for both the indigenous residents and the larger society (Freeman, 2006, p. 169 in Davidson, 2008, p. 2386). This state-led gentrification is often referred to as "urban-restructuring" in the Netherlands which aims to improve the economic appeal and create a liveable neighbourhood of a designated urban environment (Uitermark & Duyvendak, 2007). A liveable neighbourhood, in this context, refers to an area with a low-crime rate and a large presence of middle-class households.

Moreover, the term gentrification and the process itself has positive and negative responses from Dutch policy makers and residents of neighbourhoods where the urban restructuring is or has taken place. One of the main arguments that have been used in favour of gentrification is that it is a process that invites social order to improve the

social composition of problematized neighbourhoods (Uitermark & Duyvendak, 2007). Social order in this sense is the idea that neighbourhoods are "orderly" when there is a low level of crime, vandalism, and other disruptions.

However, recent literature from Dutch scholars on the topic of gentrification and urban restructuring are critical (see Uitermark & Duyvendak, 2007, Hochstenbach, Musterd & Teernstra, 2014). A prevalent critique is that the policy that aims to re-establish social order and make disadvantaged neighbourhoods more liveable happens at the cost of long-term residents (Hochstenbach, Musterd & Teernstra, 2014). Policies are aiming to make certain neighbourhoods more liveable for middle-class newcomers which will increase rent levels. This may cause long-term residents to feel displacement pressures due to economic or social factors (Hochstenbach, Musterd & Teernstra, 2014). Residents may choose to leave their housing due to an increase in rent or perhaps do not feel like they belong within the new demographic that is appearing in the neighbourhood. Scholars argue that governmental institutions do not intentionally cater to the middle class, and that this is not the goal of state-led gentrification. However, gentrification is seen as a means that helps gain social control within disadvantaged neighbourhoods by offering new-build houses or lower rent to middle-classes (Uitermark & Duyvendak, 2007). This trend of new houses being built is occurring within the researched neighbourhood as well. New areas in the neighbourhood have emerged after the demolishment of old welfare housing.

The critical stance that many Dutch scholars have towards gentrification can be summarized by the perspective of Hochstenbach (2017) who views state-led gentrification in the Netherlands as the process of more expensive homes being built and rented or sold to affluent residents in order to improve the neighbourhood's livelihood. However, this process often affects the cost of affordable rental housing for lower income tenants (Hochstenbach, 2017, p. 400). With this perspective, scholars are dismissing the main aims from the Dutch government who brand this restructuring as an improvement of livelihoods within neighbourhoods. This critique on urban restructuring and mainly the trend of new houses being built, and welfare housing being cut down, has become a sensitive subject in Dutch society. Welfare (social) housing, which in simple terms, are rental homes targeted for residents with a low-income within Dutch society, are decreasing rapidly in numbers. Welfare housing is being replaced by private corporation's offering homes for a much higher price which long-term residents in social housing cannot afford (Hochstenbach, 2017). Corporation-owned houses are often rented out towards young families or young individuals with a higher-educational background who are first time buyers or not financially stable enough to move to higher-income areas. This is known as marginal gentrification as newcomers usually have a relatively low-income as well but a high-education background (Rose 1996 in Hochstenbach, 2017). The aim that comes with marginal gentrification is for newcomers with a higher income and educational background, to improve the socio-economic mobility of the neighbourhood. This idea of social mixing by exposing the long-term residents to a new demographic is critiqued by Hochstenbach, Mustard and Teernstra (2014) who argue that the interactions between gentrifiers and non-gentrifiers remain limited.

### 2.1.3. Social cohesion through gentrification

The main goal of gentrification in a Dutch context is to improve participation and social cohesion in neighbourhoods (Hochstenbach, 2017). One of the main terms that is often used to reach this goal is "participatie samenleving" which literally translates into "participation society" (Vermeij & Kullberg, 2015). The goal of this term is for residents within neighbourhoods to work together on social issues and take on more responsibility within their neighbourhood (Vermeij & Kullberg, 2015). One of the main critiques on the concept of a participatory society is that too much responsibility is given to the neighbourhood, which results into less intervention from the local government. This process impacts the lives of the residents who often rely on governmental aid not having their needs met and do not "grow" with the rest of the neighbourhood. However, in large-scale research done by Veldacademie (2017) in neighbourhoods in Rotterdam, long-term residents also see the benefits of gentrification happening in their neighbourhoods. Namely, residents notice a positive impact that newcomers with a high-educational background have on their neighbourhood and have seen improvement in the community when it comes to safety and prospects (Kleinhans, Veldboer, Doff, Jansen, & Van Ham, 2014).

## 2.2. Society in the Netherlands

The Netherlands is considered to have a highly individualistic culture, meaning that everyone is expected to look after themself (Scroope, 2017). The norms and values of the average Dutch person have egalitarian characteristics which are higher than in Anglo-Saxon countries but lower than in Nordic countries (Beugelsdijk, 2019). The Dutch municipality of social and cultural relations describes the position of Dutch norms and values as "the most southern Scandinavian country that likes to mirror it's behaviour with Anglo-Saxon countries" (Beugelsdijk, 2019, p. 1).

Besides placing emphasis on individualistic tendencies, Dutch society is also characterized by informal interaction with other individuals where equality is important. Dutch people often have a negative view on hierarchy and tend to place more importance on compromising with one and other and viewing each other as equals. A common Dutch saying when somebody acts as if they are "above" somebody else or are being flamboyant with their belongings one would comment with a common phrase "just act normal, that is crazy enough". This attitude, where the power relations with one and other are not prevalent in day-to-day life, result into Dutch people communicating very directly with one and other. Within Dutch society it is appreciated to be clear when communicating and people are open to talk about issues that may seem as a "taboo" in other countries (such as gender roles, sexuality etc) (Beugelsdijk, 2019).

Dutch society is culturally and ethnically diverse with the largest migrant groups coming from Turkey and Morocco (Leeman, 2008). Even though Dutch society is culturally diverse, the way citizens experience this diversity is problematic according to the Social Cultural Planning Board (Beugelsdijk, 2019). More than 60% of the Dutch population sees friction between different groups within society and find that different socio-cultural groups live parallel to each other and not with each other. Migrants and "native" Dutch residents frequently attend different work environments, recreational activities and schools. This is highlighted by the fact that most migrant groups live with relatively more

non-western migrants than the average Dutch neighbourhoods. These characteristics of segregation have direct effect on the identity that migrants feel when living in the Netherlands. For example, a large survey showed that youths who have Moroccan or Turkish parents but were born and raised in the Netherlands themselves, often identify with their parents' cultural background (Huijnk, Dagevos, Gijsberts, & Andriessen, 2015). More than half of Dutch Turkish and Dutch Moroccan adults identify more with their parents' culture than that of Dutch culture. Simultaneously, many Moroccan and Turkish youths who participated in the survey also shared that they view themselves as Dutch as they have most of their social network there and received a Dutch education. However, the large quantitative survey also highlights how Turkish and Moroccan youths experience that Dutch people view them as "not Dutch" and therefore feel that they are not allowed to see themselves as Dutch (Huijnk, Dagevos, Gijsberts & Andriessen, 2015). Furthermore, in the survey most youths say that the feeling of belonging to their Moroccan/Turkish background has become more prevalent as they do not feel that Dutch society is welcoming to all migrant groups. This highlights how even though Dutch society has a very diverse cultural demographic, the interactions between different cultural and ethical groups is not interactive and rather quite separated from one and other.

### 2.2.1. Childhood in the Netherlands

The emphasis on individuality and equality is prevalent in children's upbringings in the Netherlands as well. Upbringing of children in the Netherlands is often characterized by a "guiding" role offered by parents with authoritative strategies to discipline children (Bucx, 2011). In the Netherlands, childhood is often researched and discussed from a nuclear family perspective. The nuclear family is seen as the most important foundation block within a Dutch context and fits in to the Northern European perspective on child upbringing falling on the responsibility of the direct family (Bucx, 2011). This emphasis is typical for the expectancy that individuals should be able to take care of themselves and not rely on communities. There is a common consensus that children from a young age need to be supervised but with the intent of guiding them towards independent skills towards the end of primary school (around the age of 12) (Bucx, 2011). It is typical for parents to create a transition period in which school children (ages 8-10) experience a "collective independence" in which parents slowly gravitate towards giving their child more independence. Examples are, bicycle routes that parents deem to be safe, or only biking outside when it is light out (and allowing children to estimate when it will get dark) or navigating area's close to the home independently. Another popular characteristic of this collective independence is children forming small groups to commute to school or other activities without adult supervision. Often, they will commute with their older siblings or other older school children that live in the area. This emphasis on children commuting through their daily schedule without adult supervision, is often linked to the emphasis that is on the individualistic nature of Dutch society. A sense of depending on one's community to help with the daily routines of a nuclear family is often not popular within Dutch households (Bucx, 2011).

In this particular research, the participants are between the ages of 10-12 years old. Within the Dutch education system this is an age where a lot of transitions and paths for educational prospects unfold. When children are in group 7 of primary school (ages 10-11), standardized testing is carried out to estimate the level of secondary school children will follow two years later. In group 8 (ages 11-12) children will take the final

standardized test to determine which level of secondary school they will attend during their teenage years. When children have finished their 8th year of primary school (group 8) they will go to a new school after the summer holiday. Typically, children's primary school will be within their neighbourhood which children navigate independently in upper primary years. However, many children will have to go out of the neighbourhood to attend their secondary school depending on their preference and the level of education that they will attend. The shift from upper primary school into the first year of high school is characterized as a very important time in children's lives as it sets up a path for their future education. Moreover, children are also expected to show more independency during this period (Deen & Laan, 2012).

At the same time, society in the Netherlands places a lot of value on the individual upbringing of children. However, it has also been critiqued that the individualistic nature of Dutch upbringing is limited to the private sphere as children's voices do not often reach larger structural institutions. Even though the importance of children's participation within structural institutions (e.g., educational, political, scientific institutions) are acknowledged, it does not always become prioritized in new policies. Main critiques revolve around not enough adults taking children's voices seriously in an institution and only including their input towards the end of new processes once they have already been designed (De Jong & Hopman, 2022).

Furthermore, in 1989 the UNCRC was established in which the rights of the child are guaranteed. In 1995, the Netherlands ratified the UNCRC (United Nations, 2009). All 54 articles are reviewed for each country every 5 years, with the most recent Dutch report being published on the 9th of March 2022. The report shares concerns that highlight how recent events such as COVID, budget cuts, child participation and climate change affect childhood in the Netherlands (De Jong & Hopman, 2022). In particular, the report highlighted the pandemic in which the committee found that the government COVID regulations had acted in the best interest of the child. However, the COVID regulations had a direct impact on children's physical and mental health (Kinderrechtencollectief, 2021).

Additionally, many children and youths felt socially isolated as primary and secondary schools closed down on two seperate occasions in response to COVID (Kinderrechtencollectief, 2021). A plan of action has been constructed by the Dutch government to give a budget to all schools in the Netherlands that should be used to improve the emotional, cognitive, and social wellbeing of children in the region. Schools are encouraged to work within an interdisciplinary field with, for example, local libraries, youth institutions, and community centres. The budget that is sent out to all schools is meant to help them create a long-term and integral plan for children and youths in the region (Kinderrechtencollectief, 2021). As will be discussed in the analysis, children's participation plays an important role in creating new activities for children. This vision of local governments encouraging children's participation has been a policy aim of 95% of Dutch local governments. However, children often find that their participation is limited when it comes to making real decisions that happen outside of the (school) buildings.

## 2.3. Chapter summary

This chapter gave a brief history of the Dutch economy and population with a specific focus on the housing market. The historical processes that shaped welfare housing in the

Netherlands, are important for understanding the context in which the fieldwork takes place. The stigma that is attached to the concerning neighbourhood is partially due to the "40 problem neighbourhoods" that were presented by minister Vogelaar in 2007. The gentrification process that takes place within these neighbourhoods in the Netherlands are aimed at mixing up the demographics with an aim to reinforce social cohesion between the new and long-term residents. This trend is occurring within the concerning neighbourhood as well, with young individuals living in the neighbourhood with a discount in exchange for volunteer work with local children in the neighbourhood.

When placing the neighbourhood in which this research takes place on a larger scale, I presented Dutch society as a whole. The emphasis within Dutch society relates towards the independency and individuality that children should learn and discover, especially when switching from primary to secondary school. Lastly, I offered the positionality of the UNCRC in the Netherlands and how COVID has affected childhood in the Netherlands. The described context will provide for a deeper understanding of the conversations that were held with the participants along with the outcome of the analysis chapters.

# 3. Theoretical framework

In the following section, theoretical perspectives and concepts will be introduced. Childhood studies will be presented as a theoretical perspective that focusses on the social structures around children's lives. This will be followed by discussing several concepts that will help to explore how children experience their neighbourhood. These concepts, identity, place and belonging will be introduced as separate definitions. However, the interdependency of the concepts should be emphasized as well. Antonsich (2010) discourages to view the concepts in isolated terms as it does not show the interdependency that they have on one and other. This interconnectedness will be prevalent in the theoretical framework as certain concepts will overlap with one and other throughout the sections.

## 3.1. The new paradigm of childhood studies

For the majority of the 20th century, developmental theories related to childhood were dominant when researching child(hood). The psychological perspective had been the main framework to explain the children's nature in which the central argument revolved around the naturality of childhood (Prout & James, 2015). One of the pioneers in developmental psychology was Jean Piaget. His work focussed on developmental stages that all children will go through until they become the competent adult (Woodhead, 2013). In Piaget's work alongside other developmental approaches, an emphasises rests on the naturalness and universality of childhood. Within this perspective, children are being put into a position of waiting until they are adults and can participate in the social world of adults (Boyden, 1997). The scientific approach of the understanding of "naturalness" and "universality" were later questioned as the social and cultural constructs in which children were developing were left out (Woodhead, 2013). Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist and contemporary of Piaget challenged the positivist stance on childhood, denying the one single experience towards child development. Within his work, he proposed to study the "historical child" in which children's development (sense of self, ways of thinking, their relationships) are dependent on the social and cultural contexts in a particular point in history (Woodhead, 2013). Whereas developmental psychologist emphasised the naturality of childhood in which the developmental stages of children was a universal experience, socialization theories rather viewed the construct of childhood as a structure dependent on the setting and community within a certain time period. Jenks (1982) argues that viewing childhood as a stage of life in which children are learning from the context around them, portrays children as being unsocialized and as potential to become instead of human beings. With this view children are argued to be regarded as human becoming's in which they are awaiting their time to become fully formed adults to human beings (Thomson, 2007). By placing children in the process of becoming, Thomson (2007) argues that this allows the supremacy of adulthood to be justified in a hierarchical model. Here children are devalued and viewed as "future adults" rather than as individuals whose current interests, competencies and skills are important.

Although the new paradigm of childhood studies distances itself from developmental and socialization theories, the new paradigm has been influenced by these popular approaches. With the dynamic movements in the political landscape of the 1970's, new directions in the studies of childhood were offered through a post-structuralist approach. Within this approach that builds on Foucault's theory, childhood was viewed through a social constructionist lens (Prout & James, 2015). The social constructionist perspective was not necessarily a new phenomenon and had been previously presented in the work of Philip Ariès (Prout & James, 2015). Ariès argued that childhood was discovered in the 17th century. His work has been heavily critiqued for oversimplifying what childhood can look like across space and time and denying the fact that childhood did simply not exist before the 17th century. Nevertheless, with his argument, Ariès did introduce the temporality and contextual aspects of childhood into the discussion (Prout & James, 2015). With his argument that childhood was not acknowledged until the 17th century, he placed the foundation in which the image of childhood can be influenced and constructed by social structures. Therefore, he addressed the temporality that is linked to how a given society views childhood within a certain time and place.

The critiques towards the naturalness and passiveness of the perspective towards childhood throughout the 20th century, resulted into the emergent paradigm arguing for childhood as a social construction. In this sense, childhood is constructed and reconstructed both for children and by children (Prout & James, 2015, p. 1). An important ontology within childhood studies is that childhood is not a natural phenomenon. Ontology relates to the occupation of questioning what reality is. Within different paradigms, ontological beliefs will differ from one and other (Patel, 2015). With this ontology of childhood not being a natural phenomenon but rather socially constructed, the belief is that the social transformation each child goes through within their life is not solemnly placed on physical attributes but is heavily linked to their social status within a social structure in a certain period and culture (Jenks, 1982). In this context, each child will experience their childhood for a different period, with different meaning, experiences, and expectations. This makes childhood a unique experience (Prout & James, 2015). This autonomous experience that each child will have relates to one of the central ideas of the new paradigm, recognizing children's social agency. Agency is defined by Prout & James as the "active construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live (Prout & James, 2015, p. 8). In other words, children's agency recognises children as social actors who taken an active part in shaping the form that their own childhoods take (James, 2011).

The core beliefs of childhood studies can be found in the six key features offered by Prout & James (2015), which amongst other points highlights that childhood is a social construction that varies amongst different structures and cultures. With this recognition of social construct, there is an acknowledgement that childhood is interrelated with other variables such as class, gender, and ethnicity. In these constructions, children and parents are surrounded by representations of what childhood should look like and how it should be treated (Woodhead, 2013). For instance, the concept of immaturity that is often linked towards childhood, is not an issue of the naturalness of childhood but rather how this notion of immaturity is understood and made meaningful within a culture (Prout & James, 2015). The understanding and representations of concepts of childhood are a social and cultural process and will vary over time and place. Children's position within a given society at a time and place are then a consequence of historically embedded values that have a dynamic interplay with one and other, rather than one factor cumulating on

top of the next factor (Zelizer, 1985). With this understanding of childhood being embedded in historical and cultural factors that are reinforced by social processes, the so called "taken-for-granted-knowledge" is critiqued (Burr, 2015). Therefore, the epistemological belief of a positivist approach is denied. Here the positivist claim that that one can find the objective truth by evaluating competing beliefs, theories and claims is rejected (Woodhead, 2013). Within a social constructionist approach, one cannot simply reveal the truth by observing. Rather, social constructionism finds itself in an epistemology in which it is argued that as a culture or society we construct our own versions of reality between us (Burr, 2015, p. 9).

Statements related to the agency of children and being studied "in their own right" have ambiguous meanings within the field of childhood studies and common consensus has not been reached within the new paradigm. Childhood studies has been critiqued for creating binaries and isolating certain beliefs without acknowledging the interdependency between certain factors (Prout , 2011 ). The new paradigm tends to focus on binaries between concepts such as children as agents versus childhood as a social structure (Prout, 2011). Within these binaries, concepts become isolated, and do not leave much room for a dialogue as common ground is hard to find. For instance, to research a phenomenon such as *how children are affected by gentrification*, a binary such as described above would make this research impossible. In this regard, one has the children navigating their neighbourhoods as agents in which they make their own decisions on who to interact with and where to go and therefore giving their own meaning to people and things. However, at the same time their agency is taking place in a neighbourhood which has certain values within a certain social structure. As Prout (2011) argues, one could view childhood studies as an interdisciplinary field where concepts can overlap and be argued from different perspectives. Next to exploring key concepts through an interdisciplinary lens, new meanings can also be created when linking the contradictions between key concepts within the new paradigm (Prout, 2011). For instance, the emphasis that is often placed on children's agency and that their experiences must be studied in their own right, can be seen as a paradox as their experiences are heavily linked to the interactions they have with adults (and other children) within certain social constructs (Hammersley, 2017). This often leads to a discussion if children's experiences are shaped through their own opinions as agents or if their experiences and how they give meaning to them are influenced by their parents who view them as passive subjects. This contradiction can be adapted to this research project with children within the gentrified neighbourhood. The agency that children have within their neighbourhood, concerning where they spend most time, who they spend that time with and how they give meaning to the areas is heavily influenced by the conversations they have with adults, the political and economic circumstances within the neighbourhood and the resources they inherit from previous generations (Hammersley, 2017). As Prout (2011) argues, an interdependency must be acknowledged between social structures and agency as one cannot exist without the other.

### 3.1.1. Structural aspect of childhood

By studying childhood through a structural aspect, Qvortrup (2009) argues that this allows one to become more informed about the social context in which childhood is taking place. For example, in the global north, childhood is positioned in a certain social

structure which can be seen as a particular social status (Qvortrup, 2009). With the acknowledgement of the interdependency between child(hood) and social structures one could question how this interdependency between structures and children's agency shape one and other. The dynamic aspect of agency and structure has gained more attention within childhood studies urging to highlight the generational aspect that present themselves as a condition for children's agency (Esser, Baader, Betz, & Hungerland, 2016). In other words, scholars are urging for a necessity of conceptualizing children's agency as a relational concept. Punch (2020) questions how childhood studies has neglected the relational aspect of childhood and argues that the relational aspects between generations are crucial and by not acknowledging the interdependency of childhood on other generations, childhood studies is becoming an isolated study. However, to discuss the relational aspect with children and other generations one should consider what a generation could be defined as. Within the field of childhood studies, the definition of generation conceptualizes the structured nature of childhood and the presence that this has within their own generation and across generations (Alanen, 2009). Alanen (2009) argues that Mannheims generation theory can be applied to childhood studies. Here generations are defined and categorized by the members of the same group living through the same social and historical events and experience them as significant to themselves. A prevalent critique towards Alanen's use of the generation theory is that generation here is a vast group: from birth to the age of 17. However, this argument disregards the fact that a 9-year-old child has different experiences and perspectives in the neighbourhood compared to somebody who is 16 (Närvänen & Näsman, 2004). Referring to generations distinctly to their age has the consequence of overgeneralizing children's experiences, as these experiences will also depend on other identity markers (James & James, 2012). Qvortrup (2009) advocates for viewing generations as a structural form meaning that just like gender or class, it is a permanent structure within society. Within these structures, an individual child will change into adulthood but the presence of childhood as a whole, will remain a permanent structure. Within these permanent structures, childhood is seen as a collective phenomenon rather than individual. Within Qvortrups structural approach, three phases are being included: childhood, adulthood, and old age. Närvänen & Näsman (2004) argue that this division overlooks life phases such as adolescence or any stage between adulthood and old age. Regardless of the exact definition of generation, the relations between different age groups of people are socially constructed. Here, children represent a younger generation. With this representation, children often find themselves in a marginalized position in relation to adults (James & James, 2012).

### 3.1.2. Intergenerational relations

The relations between different generations can be defined as intergenerational relations (Alanen, 2009). These relations amongst generations are shaped by and in turn shape the structure within. Alanen (2009) describes this as a system that exists in modern societies in which social ordering portrays children as a social category and limits children to particular social locations in which they can participate in society. This system of portraying and placing children in a certain social location can be defined as generational ordering (Alanen, 2009). Children becoming part of a certain social category are assigned towards particular social locations in which they can participate. Within this participation they are constructing their own lives but also those of others making it interdependent. The relations that children have to adults can be defined as intergenerational relations

(Alanen, 2009). When situating the intergenerational order into the context of the researched neighbourhood, one can link to the children's generational status in a geographical phenomenon, or in other words an intergenerational space (Vanderbeck & Worth, 2015). For instance, in a non-typical global north construct, children may be less situated in educational institutions whereas in a typical global north construct children's general statuses and identities are often linked to being placed in a school setting away from other generations. Within this example, Vanderbeck & Worth (2015) argue that age segregation is panning out. The term here refers to the sorting of generations into certain places. For instance, children being sorted into educational institutions or older people into nursing homes. These patterns of segregation contribute to the risk of age-based stereotypes which limits the interactions between generations. Here it seems as if the majority of the global north have found themselves in an ongoing loop in which childhood is becoming increasingly divided from public places (Valentine & McKendrck, 1997). One could question, if the age segregation amongst generations were a product of existing intergenerational orders, or if intergenerational orders urged for age segregation and therefore a tendency towards the segregation of childhood (Valentine & McKendrck, 1997). With this segregation geographical locations are used to categorize generations as being "in place" or "out of place".

By including an intergenerational perspective to researching children's identity and sense of place within the transforming neighbourhood, I can move beyond the children's individual lives and rather relate their experiences across generations that take place within a certain structure. Values, beliefs, and ideas are circulated amongst generations and therefore shape people's identity (Punch 2020 & Vanderbeck & Worth, 2015). Vanderbeck & Worth (2015) argue that the "promotion" of age segregation is often reinforced within urban and regional planning. Within the researched neighbourhood, organizations have been subsidized towards specific places and activities for children that do not primarily take place in public places. Within these neighbourhood transformations, different generational views can emerge on issues within the neighbourhood. For example, one generational group may benefit more from a program than others (Vanderbeck & Worth, 2015).

### 3.1.3. Intragenerational relations

When discussing the relational aspect of childhood there is a tendency to focus on adult-child relations (Punch, 2020). However, when viewing children's agency there should be a focus on the relations between children as well. Next to children being placed within a certain category in relation to adults, children can also be placed in a certain order for example in relation to siblings. Punch (2020) describes age as an overlooked aspect of intragenerational relations with a tendency to more frequently focus on ethnicity, or gender and not necessarily the birth order.
Furthermore, with new approaches to childhood studies, peer cultures amongst children are seen as worth studying. Peer culture is defined as a stable set of activities or routines, artifacts, values and concerns that children produce and share in interaction with peers (Corsaro and Eder, 1990; Corsaro, 2015, in Corsaro, 2009, p. 301). Within peer culture, children are members of particular groups and in turn produce their peer cultures. Corsaro (2009) argues, that these reproductions affect arrangements within social settings such as schools, neighbourhoods, city streets. For example, certain peers may belong to a neighbourhood in the group that practice certain behaviours, interactions and therefore produce expectations that people may have towards them.

## 3.2. Identity

Identity can be perceived in different ways with a set definition being hard to come by (Hopkins, 2010). The question of identity has been a concept worthy of discussion throughout the centuries and dates all the way back to the concepts offered by Greek philosophers (Van 't Klooster, Van Asselt, & Koenis, 2002). Even though a complete overview of the historical paradigm of identity is too large to present, it can be argued that within a historical lens, three paradigms have been described for the conceptions of identity. The conceptualization of identity during the enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe for instance, advocated for a radical reform against religion (Van 't Klooster, Van Asselt, & Koenis, 2002). Enlightenment philosophers, such as Voltaire, Kant & Rousseau, had an essentialist view towards identity in which it was regarded as a natural and continuous aspect from birth to death. Within these identity aspects, individuals have essential characteristics that are present in their everyday lives. For instance, an essentialist view on gender and how males and females behave are natural and not changing according to an essentialist perspective on identity. However, contemporary essentialists acknowledge that identity cannot be isolated from the social context in which the individual resides. This contemporary essentialist view sees identity as something entwined with authentic "core" properties that cannot be changed. However, identity changes, that do not relate to the core can occur when it encounters opposition (Hegel, 1989 in Van 't Klooster, Van Asselt & Koenis, 2002). The essentialist perspective on identity is critiqued by constructionist scholars who disregard the positivist claims made about identity (Van 't Klooster, Van Asselt, & Koenis, 2002). Constructionist views on identity distance themselves from an objective reality, and rather focus on individuals constructing and deconstructing their personal and cultural assumptions. Within this constructionist approach to identity, two variants can be found: imposed identity and imagined identity (Van 't Klooster, Van Asselt, & Koenis, 2002). Imposed identity relates to Giddens structuration theory in which identity is viewed as primarily a product of social power structures. For example, from a constructional imposed identity perspective children in the neighbourhood may construct their identity through exposure to the schools and neighbourhood institutions on a local level. Within the second variant of a constructionist approach to identity, individuals play a more active role. This is also referred to as imagined identity (Van 't Klooster, Van Asselt, & Koenis, 2002). Within this view, individuals show loyalty to certain perceptions and pick and choose norms and values that correspond with their values. As a consequence of individuals choosing and disposing certain norms and values, social structures are maintained, constructed, and deconstructed.

If one looks at the word identity in a semantic manner, the word derives from the Latin root of the word "identitas", which comes from "idem" and translates into "the same" (Hague & Jenkins, 2005). By using the concept of imagined identity and the semantic meaning of identity, one can view identity as a similarity but also as a difference (Hopkins, 2010). For example, this research takes place where children share certain similarities: they are from the same generation, they live in the same neighbourhood, and some may be the same gender. However, within these similar identities, differences can be found as well, such as class, ethnicity, and religion. Therefore, identity may be seen as relational: identity stems from the differences and similarities between people. Identity therefore does not necessarily mean who a person "*is*" but is also formed by who a person "*is not*". Identity in this sense, also becomes a social binary. For example, if you

identify as a woman, you are automatically not a man. Therefore, identity is not only relational towards the similarities but also towards the differences which can be defined as disidentification (Hopkins, 2010).

However, regarding identity as a binary, may also risk "othering" people into set categories that they do not necessarily see as their primary identity (Thomson, 2007). This research, for example, may be "othering" children by separating their experiences on gentrification from those of (adult) residents even though children might share the same experiences as they may feel like their identity is mostly influenced by their religion, culture, or class and not their age. This may also be a binary, where one is attaching children's identity as what the adult is not. By "othering" the youth into their identity only being dependent on their age, one is disregarding the much larger story of their identity (Hopkins, 2010).

By focusing primarily on age as children's most important marker of identity, there is a risk of forgetting that they may have more identities or perhaps that their identity may shift when they are with a certain group or in a certain place. Certain experiences that youths may have in their neighbourhood may be linked to their sexuality, gender, class, culture, or religion and not primarily to their age. Rodó-de-Zárate (2017) states that it is difficult to identify situations in which being young is the specific cause of access to the public space being restricted and that this restriction was usually related to other identity markers. In this sense, when viewing the children's identity within the neighbourhood that the research will take place in, the question should also be asked "who else" are they? (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2017). This interaction between multiple identities is often defined as intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to define the experiences and struggles of women of colour as their experiences often fell between the lines of anti-racist and feminist discourse (Davis, 2008). This term emphasizes the multiple layers that Black women may experience due to gender and race and how these two identity markers interact and shape their experiences. Within neighbourhood policy aims in Dutch settings, children's role in the neighbourhood often relates to their age and less to other identity markers. When researching within a gentrified neighbourhood with children, it is important to acknowledge that their identity goes beyond the being a child, and that certain experiences they have in the neighbourhood are due to other or accompanied by other identity factors.

Acknowledging that identity is therefore linked to many factors and overlaps with one and other, identity does not only become *relational* but also *intersectional* (Hopkins, 2010). However, these two aspects of identity are further related to the processes of identification that people interact with to identify and dis-identify others in varying ways (Hopkins, 2010). One may place children in the identity category related to their age. As a consequence, children may be disidentified in relation to other components. However, the identity category that society may give a person can change over time, for instance when a child becomes an adult, they will receive another identity that society primarily views them as. Therefore, identity is also created, maintained, and rejected and therefore identities are also socially produced (Van 't Klooster, Van Asselt, & Koenis, 2002). In other words, one can argue that identity is interlinked between the terms of relationality, intersectionality, and processes. This will be a key factor to be aware of in the analysis. For example, a participant that will be interviewed may primarily be seen as a child due to the social processes within the neighbourhood. These processes may identify the child in relation to them not being an adult. However, this process of relating a child to what it is not, one may overlook the intersectionality of a child's identity.

One can view a child's identity within a social process as something that has temporality and is subjected to change over time (Sampson, Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowley, 2002). However, even if age is not considered as the key reason why identity changes over time, social process can be taken into the equation. If the social processes in a neighbourhood change which can be due to several factors such as, social ties, change in behaviours or perhaps a shift in boundary making, the identity of an individual can be affected as well.

### 3.2.1. Place identity, collective identity and social identity theory

Hauge (2007) argues that the relational aspect of identity is not only limited to the relations between people but also between places. The physical environment one places oneself in, affects a person's identity. When a person's attachment towards a place grows, one can start to identify with these places on a larger and smaller scale. For example, a Dutch person would call themselves *Nederlands(e)*(=Dutchman) but if asked more specifically where they are from, a person from their neighbourhood might introduce themselves as being from the specific neighbourhood instead of from the city in which they reside. This is often defined as place identity (Gieryn, 2000). Place is regarded as a component of personal identity, and through interaction with places, people describe themselves in terms of belonging to a specific (Hernández, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, & Hess, 2007). However, the identification of being part of the neighbourhood may change due to social processes.

The idea of identity being part of a place is not only linked to place-identity but may also be analysed through the lens of collective identity. Escalera-Reyes (2020) defines collective identity as a process through which the individuals who make up a group are recognized as members of this group and are differentiated from other groups through the development of shared feelings of belonging and attachment (Escalera-Reyes, 2020, p. 3). If one reflects on the concept of "othering" people into a certain category (see Thomson, 2007) then one is most likely placing an individual into a larger collective. Collective identity originates from the social movements of the 1970's and is seen as something that emerges through struggle (Whooley, 2007). Individuals identify by sharing a common struggle and mobilizing together for a collective good. For example, the process of gentrification may provoke negative and hostile feelings from long-term residents towards newcomers who have moved during or after the process of gentrification in the neighbourhood (Hochstenbach, 2017). A collective identity of being a "victim" of the gentrification process that is going on may result in residents experiencing a collective struggle in relation to the neighbourhood changes.

By acknowledging that identity is a social process that may change over time and linking it to concepts such as intersectionality and relationality, one can assume that an individual's identity is not consistent in each social setting. For example, an individual will show different parts of their identity when interacting with older peers who they share the same ethnic background with opposed to peers who they do not share the same ethnic background with. A child will most likely show different parts of their identity to their parents than to their friends at school. Social identity theory offers explanations for why this occurs. Within this theory, a person is not one "personal self" but rather several selves that shift when interacting with different groups (Buonfino, 2007). Therefore, a person will have different "social identities" which become prevalent depending on the surrounding an individual finds oneself in. Within this theory, individuals are argued to

create a certain self-concept of who they are when being a member of a certain social group (Hogg & Vaughan, 2002). For example, if an individual is a member of a certain class, one will link their identity to being part of this class. This will then result into the process of "othering" individuals who are not part of this group as described by Thomson (2007).

By combining these different concepts relating to identity, the social process of identity may even be seen as an ongoing cycle in which an individual shapes, becomes a part of, or denies a certain identity that automatically "others" other identities. However, due to the ongoing social processes that take place, how one views one's identity and how they express this in certain groups will change over time. Within the neighbourhood that this research took place in, residents may feel that part of their identity is related towards the neighbourhood as a place. Within this place identity however, different meanings may be given to their identity and focus on different aspects of who one is in relation to the place. For instance, a child may feel a sense of collective identity within a school and perhaps show their identity of "being a child" within this setting. However, if a child is playing on the street within the neighbourhood, they may be showing a different side of their identity and relate their own identity to a different people/collective.

## 3.3. Space and place

The concept of place seems to be self-explanatory but has been widely used across different disciplines and context. This has left variations or subthemes of the concept of place being related or overlapped with one and other (Gunnerud-Berg, 2020). The word place is used in everyday speech by inviting somebody over to one's place, describing the city one lives in as a nice place and can be used to describe different geographical locations let this be a building or a landscape (Cresswell, 1996). As this next section will highlight, place, in this research context, is more than a geographical location. However, not all geographical locations have this meaning or value to people or groups and can be merely seen as a space. Scholars make a clear distinction between space and place in which space is more abstract and not related to cultural interpretation (Gieryn, 2000). Place, however, is the emotional value that a person has towards a location (Cresswell, 2004, p. 7).

Whilst the concept of place was popular in geographical disciplines it remained ill researched within social theory (Agnew & Duncan, 1989). The concept of place had been reincorporated into social theories in the late 1980's in which place was presented as a multidisciplinary concept. Within social studies, place was incorporated as a way to understand social and political processes (Agnew & Duncan, 1989). Arguments that were shared earlier concerning the advocacy for a multidisciplinary approach to the new paradigm of childhood studies can be complemented by acknowledging place as a relational aspect between a person/people and their identity (Rose, 1995). Within a place, different social and cultural relations meet resulting into people constituting a place. This relational aspect becomes interdependent as the place can also shape identity markers of people. In this definition of place, the key concept focusses on places holding a certain meaning and feeling to an individual or a group (Cresswell, 2004). Within a neighbourhood, many locations could be experienced as a place for certain residents. A home, a supermarket where one meets other residents, a park where a resident walks the dog all create a relationship between an individual and a certain location, creating a place. For example, a school building can be seen as place if a child has a lot of

memories or value towards that building. A place can also be linked to somebody's identity in the sense of language, memory, and cultural practices (Green & Turner, 2017). A place helps an individual create their own identity, but also, one's identity can influence a place. If schools have a high population of migrants, the school will most likely carry the identity of being a multicultural school within the area. As shown in the example of asking a Dutch person where they are from, and identifying themselves of being part of a neighbourhood, there is an example of a place helping an individual to create an identity. In this sense, a person holds a certain meaning and feeling to a certain geographical location (Hague & Jenkins, 2005).

With this conceptual description of place in mind, the temporality related to place becomes clear as well. Researchers have used post-structural perspectives to acknowledge the historical, economic, cultural, and political structures influencing or altering a place. The appearance of a place does not necessarily have to change and could be changed by how people use the place or a different group of people using the place. However, it could also change per individual: one's identity markers such as age, culture, beliefs, values will change over time resulting into a different perspective on a place (Ujang & Zakariya, 2015).

### 3.3.1. Sense of place

The understanding of individuals and groups giving meaning to places and vice versa can be seen as a component in social and political processes. Rather than viewing the use of the term "place" across different disciplines as competing, Agnew (2015) urges for the varied definition of this concept to complement one and other. The multidisciplinary approach to place allows for place to be a multi-layered concept that Agnew (1987/2015) describes to include location, locale, and sense of place. The location refers to the actual geographical location of the place whilst the locale refers to the physical shape of place. This could be a school, a playground, or a house within the neighbourhood. The location is often referred to as an "objective" description and relates to the field of positivist geography (Agnew, 1987/2015). However, within social studies, individuals create and recreate places. With this, it is meant that the material aspect of the locale is the material setting for social relations. It is the place in which individual and groups relate and give meaning to a physical material (Cresswell, 1996). The locale relates to intersubjectivity in which two people, a group or perhaps all residents of a neighbourhood share the same perception related to a place as a setting. With this perspective offered by Agnew, the concept of place is linked to Gidden's structuration theory which describes how individuals create and re-create institutions by making constant (sub)conscious choices (Valentine, 2016). The third component, sense of place, however, becomes more subjective and rather focuses on the relational aspect between people and places in a non-physical manner (Cresswell, 2004). However, sense of place is used as a concept across multiple disciplines and therefore finding a common consensus on the definition is hard to come by (Sebastian, 2020). Gieryn (2000) conceptualizes a sense of place as the attribution of meaning individuals and groups give to a physical location. Residents of a neighbourhood for example, assign certain qualities to materials and social stuff gathered in a certain location and give a certain meaning towards the assigned qualities a place has to offer (e.g., a beautiful street, an old bench in a park). However, a sense of place does not only address positive annotations towards a place but can also have meaning relating to negative associations: new homes in the neighbourhood that are being built are ugly, or that street is for them, and this street is for me. Even the very fact of

acknowledging a place as a neighbourhood does not necessarily relate to any arrangement of streets, but rather to the narratives and production of people within a certain area (Gieryn, 2000). Sense of place can then be tied to positive and negative emotions in a place and therefore can relate to belonging and disbelonging (May 2000 in Cresswell, 2004). Therefore, sense of place is an emotional attachment that people have to a place (Cresswell, 2004, p. 7).

How an individual makes sense of a place links to their own experiences and views. Meanings involve personal emotions and are formed through diverse experiences and values and therefore a sense of place may hold positive meanings for one person and negative meanings for somebody else (Arefi, 1999). Sense of place, therefore, is fundamentally important when an individual is defining a certain connection to geographical areas (Anderson, 2010). Even though it has been established that a "place" holds a specific meaning and feeling to a location, one cannot assume that this is always a positive experience (Antonsich, 2010). One can also regard a place with negative feelings in which they might feel fear, resentment, or hostility. This can be due to identification markers such as age, gender and race and can impact people's sense of place.

### 3.3.2. Place attachment

Like many conceptualizations of place, the definition of place is used in different ways amongst different scholars. For instance, a definition for place attachment can be seen as a concept that is used interchangeably with the notion of sense of place whilst others regard place attachment as a dimension within sense of place (Gunnerud-Berg, 2020). Anderson (2010) states that within sense of place, one can focus on the attachments one gives to their environment. Here it seems as if place attachment and sense of place can be used interchangeably, and that sense of place automatically holds an emotional attachment to locations. However, sense of place can be viewed as being multidimensional and can be used as an umbrella term for different dimensions (Gunnerud-Berg, 2020). Here it is argued that place identity, place attachment and place belongingness are dimensions within a sense of place.

Place attachment is defined by scholars as the emotional meaning individuals give to a place (Ujang & Zakariya, 2015). This phenomenon of one having an emotional value towards a place, can be defined as place attachment (Escalera-Reyes, 2020). Place attachment is not automatically a process that an individual is aware of and may perhaps realize that one gives meaning to a place when the place disappears/changes or if the individual is displaced/moves (Green & Turner, 2017). When a neighbourhood is undergoing transformation, such as when gentrification is taking place, long-term residents may feel an increasing sensation of disconnection from the physical environment in their neighbourhood (Davidson, 2008). However, a neighbourhood going through a transformation and in turn changing the attachment to a place that an individual feels to their neighbourhood does not necessarily have to be categorized as a positive or negative experience and can be analysed in a non-binary way. For instance, through the lens of gentrification, an old playground may hold certain emotional value to long-term residents of the neighbourhood, but may merely be seen as a space, with no emotional value and merely an abstract location, to newcomers. If this old playground were to be transformed into an area with a new coffee shop, newcomers might create an attachment to this place as this place may be often visited when moving to the

neighbourhood. For long-term residents however, an individual might now regard this coffee house as a space as there may be no emotional value to the new construction (see Davidson, 2008). This example highlights the dynamics of a place and how it is dependent on the social processes that it is embedded in. If the values, identity, and people within a neighbourhood change, the way residents regard spaces and places and their (dis)attachment to it, will change as well.

## 3.4. Belonging

Belonging and sense of place are often described as being synonymous to each other, with concepts such as place-attachment, place-belongingness, sense of place, sense of belonging being used interchangeably (Antonsich, 2010). As has been highlighted, place-attachment highlights the emotional value an individual has to a certain place (Gunnerud-Berg, 2020). One can argue that within place attachment, a sense of belonging is an indicator of place attachment. A sense of belonging is described as the emotional need to be an accepted member of a group and to have a close relationship and sense of security within this group (Escalera-Reyes, 2020). Individuals have a strong need to belong in order to create their identity. A place can encourage an individual to create this sense of belonging: places can encourage social interaction and can make people feel at home. Antonsich (2010) defines this description as "place-belongingness". Children can be part of a soccer team, or frequently visit a certain park or a friend's home. In this sense the place is being used to belong to a certain group which in turn affects their identity.

Within several disciplines, belonging is a term that is often taken for granted and categorized as self-explanatory (Antonsich, 2010). Much of the literature of social psychology focusses on belonging in terms of individual's need to adapt to a group out of fear of not belonging and therefore being excluded and lacking a membership within a particular group (Yuval Davis, 2006). Antonsich (2010) emphasizes that when using the concept of belonging, one must stay away from the binary of seeing belonging either as an individual phenomenon or a collective one. Instead, it should be seen as a constant overlap between individual factors such as personal experiences, relations and memories which are attached to a particular person, group, or place. And on the other hand, belonging must be linked to relational factors to refer to the personal and social ties that enhance the life of an individual in a certain place. These relational factors could be friends and family who an individual may have deep emotional attachment too, to loser ties such as strangers that share the same public spaces as a certain individual. In this research, belonging will be analysed through the individual factors in which a child has personal memories and experiences related to a certain place (such as a home, park, school etc.) which is emphasized by the relational factors that a child brings into these personal experiences and memories.

Belonging can be seen as a precondition to one's identity (or a collective identity). Through this lens, belonging is hard to analyse as a stand-alone concept (Escalera-Reyes, 2020). If one analyses popular terms such as place-identity and place attachment, they are often defined by "belonging" to a certain place or group, reconfirming Escalera-Reyes' (2020) perspective that belonging is indeed a precondition.

What makes the separation of identity and belonging difficult is the fact that the open question remains whether the feeling of belonging is the foundation for identity or if

one's identity act as the foundation for the feeling of belonging to a place (Antonsich, 2010). However, belonging can perhaps be viewed as a part of identity (Yuval-Davis, 2006). When one shares their own identity by stating they belong to a particular gender, race, class, or age group among others, one is often automatically implying they belong to a certain group or people often categorize them as belonging to a group. A child indicating that they are 10 years old, may be viewed as belonging to a group of a school child for instance. Belonging in this regard, is a way to self-identify oneself or to identify others (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

If one envisions a multicultural neighbourhood, one may see a variety and interconnectedness of social and economic status, traditions, historical legacies, and culture. In this diverse environment, certain groups may feel more at home and may feel the recognition from others that they belong more than others. Belonging goes beyond the scope of identity and place, and some argue may even be referred to as a human need. A definition that gives a general foundation of what "belonging" is, can be found in the work of Antonsich (2010) who describes belonging as a personal, intimate, feeling of being "at home" in a place which then directly relates to place belongingness (Antonsich, 2010, p. 1). Home in this sense, is a symbolic place that stands for familiarity, comfort, security, and emotional attachment (Hooks 2009 in Antonsich 2010).

Belonging can therefore be linked to the social identity theory which was described earlier in the chapter. In this sense, individuals want to be in or part of a certain group (the in-group) in which they categorize themselves within that group and specifically not in another (the out-group). After being viewed as group members, individuals will differentiate themselves by viewing themselves as belonging to one group and not belonging to another group. Here identity is not seen as an "I" but more as a "we" where people's sense of identity is part of belonging to a certain group (Buonfino, 2007)

## 3.5. Children in public places

The way society views the role and place of the child in the public sphere, has become more privatized in the global north. Within the 19$^{th}$ century, great concern was expressed for children that were living on the street and there was a common assumption that children who spent most of their time on the street would become bad adults (Boyden, 1997). Living on the street was believed to be physically and morally damaging to children. This belief has its roots in Christianity in which the child is seen as vulnerable and innocent and therefore must be separated from potential dangers in social settings. This worry that was enrooted in the global north, resulted into the child's life becoming privatized (Boyden, 1997). Children were to be shielded from the public life to remain innocent citizens. Children were designated to stay within the family and school sphere: the home, schools and assigned play area's such as parks. With family and school being the largest contributors to a child's socialization, a designated play time became the norm as well (Boyden, 1997). This belief is still widespread in contemporary society within the global north. Children are confined to play within area's that have been designed by adults for children (Rasmussen, 2004). Discourses over time have constructed spaces deemed appropriate for children, while other spaces are seen as an inappropriate space for children to spend time in and do not fit with the ideology of the modern childhood (Vanderbeck & Worth, 2015). However, when residents are assigned a certain place, the geographical location is inherently linked to their identity. By assigning children to (a limited amount) of appropriate geographical spaces, one is constructing an

identity for these children based on the children having the same age (see Vanderbeck & Worth, 2015). These social processes that categorize children's identity into primarily being children, may often lead to ageism (Hopkins, 2010). Ageism is a term used to describe the assumptions that are made about people having other things in common next to being the same age. It is important to note that ageism is not the same as sexism or racism as childhood is only a phase of life (Hopkins, 2010). However, ageism influences how children construct their identities in different places. Over time, by assigning different identities to a specific place (in this case children to the private sphere), children will be accustomed to the status that their generation is "in place" in a certain context but is "out of place" in another context (Vanderbeck & Worth, 2015).

### 3.5.1. Children's places vs. places for children

With the modern notion of childhood, children are assigned places by adults that have also been designed by adults for children (Rasmussen, 2004). Rasmussen defines these assigned places which have been initiated by adults as "places for children". However, children often find places to gather and play in areas that were not assigned or designed by adults to which they attach their own meaning and values (Kjørholt, 2003). The latter description is described as children's places (Rasmussen, 2004). For instance, children may find locations or materials in the neighbourhood that they attach meaning to and like spending time in/at without it being a designated play area for them. As will be explored in the analysis, children may find places in the neighbourhood that they have created as an area to play or spend time in.

## 3.6. Summary of theoretical framework

This chapter has shared background information on the framework of childhood studies, highlighting the fact that a child's agency and the social structure in which their childhood are seen as interlinked. This conversation about the new paradigm of childhood studies lays the foundation for how the key concepts of identity, place and belonging should be viewed: by viewing children as active agents who influence and are influenced by the social structures surrounding them (Prout & James, 2015).

The three concepts of identity, place and belonging, can be seen as an ongoing process that are heavily interdependent with one and other: an individual may grow attached to a certain place (due to the relational ties but also the geographical place itself) which over time turns into a feeling of belonging to that certain place. This feeling of belonging may then result into it being (a part of) somebody's identity (see Escalera-Reyes, 2020). Therefore, one could suggest that if a place changes, one's sense of belonging to that place will change overtime as well which in turn may affect somebody's sense of self. To bring it in to the context of the research, children who have lived in the neighbourhood for most of their life, may have a strong place attachment to areas in the neighbourhood that are accompanied by the feeling of belonging. This could be a soccer field, a school, a community centre, a church, or the people within the neighbourhood etc. This could become part of their identity. However, due to the processes that have taken place or are currently taking place within the neighbourhood, children's identities sense of place and belonging may be changing.

# 4. Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodological choices made for this research. I will start by placing the research within a research approach followed by a detailed description of my sampling strategy. This section will discuss the process and tactics used to access the field, followed by a detailed description of the participatory methods used for this research. Lastly, I will present how I positioned myself as a researcher within the field and discuss ethical considerations.

## 4.1. Methodological approach

The new paradigm of childhood studies perceives children as social actors of which their social relationships and cultures should be studied in their own right (Prout & James, 2015). The emphasis on children not being objects of research, rather subjects of human rights, is further emphasized with the implementation of the United Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Ennew et al., 2009). Children's ability to express their views and have those views considered in matters that affect them are recognised. In the CRC, all children below 18 years are recognized as individual right claimers with competence, agency, and rights as citizens, independent of their status as members of a family (Kjørholt, 2019, p. 18).

As a result of this right, researchers have recognized children's "right to be properly researched" (Ennew et al., 2009). The right to be properly researched is not a specific article, but rather an interpretation of four articles within the UNCRC that recognize children are entitled to be treated with respect for their dignity (Ennew et al., 2009, p. 1.17). The right to be properly researched promotes and practices ethical research with children and establishes criteria that the researcher must follow in order to respect the rights of the child (Abebe & Bessell, 2014). With the right for children to be properly researched, a key requirement is to use research tools that allow children's participation (Kjørholt, 2019). Participatory research methods have emerged as a tool to ensure children's participation during the fieldwork. To ensure the rights of the child within research, the researcher must have a well thought out research design, appropriate methodology and a rich analysis of the collected data. I will discuss these concepts further on in the methodology section.

This research positions itself within the perspectives of childhood studies and acknowledges children's rights to be properly researched. To ensure that children's perspectives were used adequately in this research a qualitative methodology was chosen. The qualitative approach used in this project aims to explore the subjective experiences and perspectives of people, while also acknowledging how aspects such as discourses, ideologies and power relations affect these experiences and the ways they are articulated in research encounters (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Qualitative research often uses methods such as in-depth interviews and observations. With the aim of exploring children's experiences in the transforming neighborhood, it is valuable to understand children's own perspectives and their descriptions of the world around them. I chose to conduct qualitative research as I wanted to explore personal experiences in an in-depth way. Furthermore, as Brinkmann & Kvale (2015) argue, qualitative research can

result in important data for social policies which can be valuable for the institutions in the neighbourhood this study explores.

## 4.2. Sampling strategy

The process of choosing a certain age group to work with for this research was a complex undertaking. All participants were chosen by purposive sampling of informants to ensure as much variation within the data as possible (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Purposive sampling does not require a set number of participants to partake in the research, but rather focusses on finding participants willing to provide their relevant knowledge and experiences (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). According to Brinkmann & Kvale (2015), the number of participants within qualitative research should not be too large as this will create difficulties for the analyses of the interviews. Conversely, it should not be too small as the research may then be at risk of generalization. Therefore, they recommend having at least five participants within the research. The sampling strategy of this research prioritized finding children with diverse experiences within the neighbourhood. As will be explained in the following section, children's perspectives were accompanied by a selection of stakeholders in the neighbourhood to allow a deeper exploration of the subjective experiences of the neighbourhood transformations.

## 4.3. Accessing the field

Accessing the field was a complicated process that was marked by having to reflect on many grey areas for a number of reasons. I will first explain the participants that I contacted and how the recruitment of participants went. This will be followed by difficulties I encountered when accessing the field as an outsider.

I chose to work with participants within the age group of 10-12 for two reasons. Firstly, this age group is participating in upper primary school or the first year of high school and is characterized by an increase in independence. Children are allowed to and are expected to navigate the neighbourhood (and often other parts of the town/city) with friends or by themselves. Therefore, this age group fit my research as I wanted to interview children who use their neighbourhood without constant adult supervision. Within childhood studies, there has been a discussion about the prevalence of 10–12-year-olds participating in research and how this phenomenon is frequently under justified (Mcnamee & Seymour, 2012). However, I find that within a Dutch context this age is marked by gaining more independence and the critique is that this age group is often chosen because researchers feel like the participants would be "old enough" without giving sufficient explanation on the value that research with this age group will bring to the study. I aimed to invite older children (up to 16) to participate in the research as well. When talking to the stakeholders they informed me that this is a very hard group to get into contact with. The organizations that are established in the neighbourhood are often aimed towards children between the ages of 4-12. And even though there are activity centres where older children are welcome, there is a hesitancy to join these organizations due to the hesitancy of interacting with younger children. This means that teenagers tend to meet up together after school in public areas like the park or by a shopping area. When I asked stakeholders if they knew any teenagers who may be willing to join the research, they further responded with a strong certainty that teenagers would not be interested in participating in research. During one of my interviews with the

stakeholders she mentioned that older children in the neighbourhood often have a negative view towards the volunteers in the neighbourhood who work with children and rarely want to participate. In hindsight, an effort could have been made to contact teenagers with more independence, but this felt inappropriate. I was aware of my role as an outsider and found it inconsiderate to dismiss the advice given to me by the stakeholders after receiving their help recruiting 10–12-year-olds. Nevertheless, older children who attend high school (13 and up) are a valuable age group to explore but perhaps different methods and recruiting strategies would be necessary.

Thus, the children that participated in this research are between the ages of 10-12 years old. I contacted two children named Liam and Sara through stakeholders in the neighbourhood. The stakeholders asked the children if they were willing to receive more information about my project and the children could decide whether they wanted to participate or not. I reached the third child, David, through a Facebook post that I had written on the neighbourhood page to which his mother responded. Whilst I was in the Netherlands, I arranged separate meetings with all three children and their parents in which I explained the project and had an introductory conversation. Afterwards, the children could decide on their own if they wanted to join. Sara had just started her first year of high school which she shared was a big, but positive, adjustment for her. Liam and David attended primary schools which were located outside of the neighbourhood. Liam lives biweekly in the neighbourhood with his mother. During the other week he lives with his father in a suburb outside of the city. David lives with his mother just outside of the neighbourhood but is still characterized as one of the "problem neighbourhoods" in the city.

Moreover, stakeholders were included in the research as well. I found it relevant to include the perspectives of adults who play a key role in the neighbourhood experiences of children and found that stakeholder's perspective on the transformations in the neighbourhood would be useful to allow me to compare children's and adults' perception on the same issues. When I was in the process of contacting participants ages 10-16, I spoke to many stakeholders in the neighbourhoods who I had a lot of preliminary conversations with. Within this period, we agreed we would stay in touch if I would have any questions during or after the fieldwork. When my first phase of fieldwork with the children was completed, I therefore found it easy to get in touch with stakeholders who were still willing to partake in the research. The stakeholders will be further introduced in chapter five.

### 4.3.1. Difficulties in access to the field

The topic of my project is close to heart for many people living in the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood itself is characterized by many local initiatives and activities. As an outsider, it felt invasive to ask if I could set up interviews/activities with stakeholders and participants who were also in the process of partaking in their own projects as well.

Before reaching out to participants and asking for consent, an approval by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) is necessary. To be able to access the field, a detailed overview of one's research plan must be sent to the Norwegian centre for research Data (NSD). Essentially, this centre is the first gatekeeper within the research as one cannot commence fieldwork and contact participants before getting their research approved by the NSD. For this research, two applications were sent to the NSD as the recruitment of stakeholders happened at a later date. After the NSD approved my research (see

appendix 1) proposal in July, I started contacting schools and community centres within the neighbourhood at the end of August after the summer holiday ended. Many schools and organizations responded with the fact that the schoolyear had just started back up again and that therefore arranging meetings with me was understandably not a priority at the beginning of the school year. One of the organizations, however, was interested in my research questions and the accompanying methods as it aligned with the activities they conducted in their project. This organization is an established activity centre in the neighbourhood that provides a space and different after school activities for children between the ages 8-14. The issue in this case was that they had not formally started with their after-school activities yet as the school year had only just started and children were still settling in at school. However, one of the staff members exchanged my contact information with parents of children they thought might be interested. Through this contact, two children were recruited in my research. This had been established whilst I was in Norway. Once I was in the Netherlands, I was able to physically go to activities to present my project to potential participants. I noticed that children were quite reluctant in joining and that it was also dependent on the reaction of their peers. For example, at one of the activities I was explaining my research to two girls and when asked if they were interested one of the girls responded with "I only want to join if my friend will also join". In hindsight, I wonder if it would have helped if I asked the children in a more private setting if they would like to participate instead of one where they were with their peers. I noticed that the three children who did participate in the research were all asked during private, individual, moments. However, as an outsider these moments are hard to come by.

## 4.4. Participatory methods

As discussed earlier in this chapter, this research positions itself within the new paradigm of childhood studies and aims to use participatory tools within the qualitative research. Therefore, I incorporated such participatory methods by using drawing and photography walks in addition to the semi-structured interviews. During the research with each child participant, I started off with the drawing activity. This allowed the children to experience the first method in their own home. During this activity I experienced the children becoming more comfortable talking to me which I valued in order to go on the photography walk. During the drawing and photography walks I asked questions included in the interview guide, but I incorporated follow-up conversations after the two activities as well.

Conducting research with children is a well conversed topic as the way one views the role of children within the research has changed over time (Woodhead, 2013). Within childhood studies, researchers are expected to accentuate children's voices which results into children being expected to have greater participation within the research. An ongoing aim is to portray children's authentic voices and to view and treat them as agents within their own lives (Prout & James, 2015). However, these ideologies are often critiqued for being taken for granted in which one tends to miss the nuance and implications that come with such statements (Hammersley, 2017). When working together with children during a project, ethical considerations are necessary, and elaboration is needed to avoid potential tokenism that may come with using grand statements of participation.

As participatory research has become more popular with the emergence of childhood studies, researchers have still pointed out there is a risk for this participatory research becoming unethical even though it stepped away from development and socialization ideologies. A large part of the rationale for participatory research is to promise empowerment of research participants, however one could question if this means that children can only be empowered when offered to partake in research organized by adults (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). The conflict here is that within the new paradigm of childhood studies we are arguing children shape and organize the world around them, but at the same time adult researchers are still offering adult-designed tools for children to participate.

### 4.4.1. Drawing

Initially I wanted to ask the children to draw a map of their neighbourhood to explore how they would portray areas in the neighbourhood and to see what they would include and exclude during the mapping process. However, the week before I was going to conduct fieldwork I wondered if mapping was a fitting introductory method and a way to build rapport. I would have still found it a useful tool as mapping contributes to exploring how children use and perceive space in their own perspective (Grant, 2017). However, I did wonder if it was a difficult method to start with as asking children to draw a map of their neighbourhood may be quite abstract and expectations may be unclear. Therefore, I chose to make the first method more general by asking them to draw how they viewed the neighbourhood through their eyes (see appendix 11). Here I gave the children the option to draw whatever they wanted, including a map. Drawing is typically used to establish rapport and to gain trust with children's participants which I found important especially before going on the photography walk (Smørholm & Simonsen, 2017). Drawing methods allow children to narrate their own experiences and is argued to give the children a higher degree of control of sharing their own expressions (Punch, 2002). Because of the abstract nature of my research questions, I found it valuable to include a visual tool. Asking children direct questions may be unhelpful as they may find it difficult to answer questions about their identity and feeling of belonging. By offering the participants visual research methods, abstract concepts became more accessible (Ennew et al., 2009). For example, I noticed that during this activity one of the participants initially had a difficult time explaining what areas they liked to spend time in. After making their drawing however, they were able to look at their own overview of the neighbourhood and draw additional features that were hard to explain. This also resulted in very specific details being mentioned such as a small staircase that was used to spend time on. These were locations the participant only thought of when sketching places that made them happy in the neighbourhood.

The method was introduced by asking the participant to draw the neighbourhood through their eyes. After a while I would ask if the participant was ready to explain a few things that they had drawn. I would start by asking very general questions. First, I would ask what they drew and depending on their answer I would ask general follow-up questions. I noticed that none of the participants had drawn a place that they did not regard as positive. Therefore, I would follow-up the questions by asking why they liked the places they drew in the neighbourhood more than the places they did not draw. The drawing activity showed that I could still discuss concepts such as sense of belonging and space versus place, without having to ask abstract questions to the children.

### 4.4.2. Photography walk

Photography walks are an informative tool for participants to express their relationship to their neighbourhood and to capture places that are important to them (Grant, 2017). With this method, the participants and I took a neighbourhood walk where I asked the participants to show me places that they often visit. The participants received a digital camera on which they could take the pictures. Originally, I planned to give each child a disposable camera, but I realized that children might prefer to immediately see the pictures they had taken (see appendix 10). I also felt like this would give us the opportunity to talk about the pictures whilst they were still fresh in their memory. One of the risks of using photography as a method is that it often becomes an illustration for a report rather than a useful source of information (Ennew et al., 2009). To avoid this risk, I chose to bring the tape recorder with me as this allowed me to record the questions that I asked when children were taking pictures. Another consideration I made, was whether I should join the children on the walk or not. On the one hand, I felt like this may stand in the way of the child's privacy as neighbourhood peers might see them walking around with a camera and a researcher. On the other hand, I found it to feel irresponsible to let a child walk around with a camera in the neighbourhood without supervision. I questioned here if children would receive unwanted attention by walking around the neighbourhood with a camera or use the camera to take pictures of people in a recognizable way.

As stated in the NSD application, during the photography walk precautions were taken that no people were photographed. Within ethical research, photo-anonymisation is required to maintain the privacy of the participants but also of bystanders who may be visible in the pictures (Allen, 2015). This meant that during the photography walk, the participants would only take pictures of certain objects or places and not include any people in a recognizable way. I did notice that this would sometimes cause a selective version of reality (Ennew et al., 2009). For instance, at one point one of the participants wanted to take a picture of a walking path where a lot of children were playing with their bikes. At that point it looked like an inviting place for children to play and I understood why they wanted to spend time there. However, the participant waited with taking a picture until the children had left. This resulted into the picture looking quite sober and not as inviting as it did with the neighbourhood children playing there. This made me realize that if I had not attended the neighbourhood walk, I would have experienced this picture very differently. In other words, it made me understand better why they liked this place. This dilemma is discussed by Allen (2015) in which they question how authentic visual research is when using anonymisation guidelines. By my decision to ask the child to wait with taking the picture until people had left the area, the agency of the child to decide to take a picture that portray their ideas is undermined. I had a conversation with the participant on why this "waiting" was necessary to emphasize that their pictures were still valued but that I as the researcher had to stick to privacy rules.

The photography walks could be an interesting tool for participants to relate their identity to a certain location. As stated in the theoretical framework, one's identity relates to somebody's age, class, sex, gender and how these factors that create an identity may change in relation to somebody or somewhere else (see Hague & Jenkins, 2005). With the photography walks, children for example may take pictures of places where they feel like a certain generation spends a lot of time, or where people with a similar cultural background gather for informal meetups. In this sense, children can show "who they are" in relation to a place and "who they are not" (see Hopkins, 2010).

### 4.4.3. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted after the mapping and photography walks had taken place. This allowed me to ask any follow-up questions that had not been asked or needed more elaboration. This also created an opportunity for the children to use their maps or photos to elaborate on certain subjects and could be used as support tools if they found it difficult or uncomfortable to just use their words. Lastly, having the interview at the end allowed me to verify interpretations that I may have developed during the research (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Semi-structured interviews are known for not having a set of fixed questions but rather have an informal approach to a list of questions or themes (Ennew et al., 2009). I found this approach suitable as a method, as I wanted the conversations between me and the participants to remain natural and to give the participants the feeling that they have the freedom to give their answer in whatever way they seem fit without steering them in a certain direction. When using interview as a method, there is a risk that the questions the researchers use can be "leading questions" (Ennew et al., 2009). This means that questions that are asked steer the participant towards a particular answer or show the assumptions that the researcher has prior to the interview. Another limitation that could appear whilst designing an interview, is the risk of asking closed questions as opposed to open questions. Closed questions such as "Do you like playing at this playground?" will usually not be followed by useful information from a participant as it does not give them the opportunity to share an elaborate answer (Ennew et al., 2009). To make sure that I formulated useful and well thought questions for the interviews, I worked with an interview guide (appendix 8). This allows the researcher to design pre-determined questions and topics to improve the structure of the interview (Ennew et al., 2009). In the interview guide I included themes that were aimed to be discussed such as identity, space and place and belonging. Using an interview guide does not imply that during the interview, the researcher is required to follow the guide precisely, but rather use it as a guiding tool that allows the researcher to remain structured during the interview. This allowed me to create space for spontaneous follow-up questions with no specific order that emerged during the conversation (Ennew et al., 2009). Per theme, identity, place, and belonging, several detailed questions were designed followed by the aim that I had in mind by using these questions.

During my conversations with the children, I would use the visual tools as a starting point to ask questions. For example, I would use a question from the interview guide by relating that to a picture that they took or a drawing that they drew. I felt that by continually using the visual tools, the questions that I asked remained clear and I was under the impression that the children did not find it difficult to ask me questions. At one point, one of the children did not understand my question and asked what I meant. I was happy to realize that they felt comfortable asking me to reformulate my question.

Moreover, the semi-structured interviews were held with stakeholders. I found it relevant to include the perspectives of adults who play a key role in the neighbourhood experiences of children and found that stakeholder's perspective on the transformations in the neighbourhood would be useful to allow me to compare children's and adults' perception on the same issues. Ennew et al. (2009) states that if adults and children can answer the same detailed research question it is useful to use the same or comparable research method. This will allow the researcher to analyse and compare children's perception with those of stakeholders. Therefore, I decided to ask the stakeholders and children the same questions from the interview guide as I wanted to explore perspectives

on the same topics. I felt that if I were to ask stakeholders different questions, they would be able to share opinions that I did not offer the children to explore and therefore decrease the importance of their voices in the research. Before I started asking questions from the interview guide, I asked the stakeholders to describe the neighbourhood to me. From that point on I would ask questions that revolved around their answer and tried to incorporate questions from the interview guide. At times I felt as if we would drift away from the topic, and I would use a direct question from the interview guide to incorporate the structure back into the interview.

The interviews with the stakeholders were not planned during the early stages of the research. However, after considering my role as an outsider, I found it would be valuable to explore what local stakeholders perceived of the changes in the neighbourhood and how this related to children. To ensure that I would still be exploring the same topics (identity, sense of belonging and place), I did not change the questions in the interview guide, but instead formulated them in a way that would allow me to explore the stakeholder's perspective on the same matter. A critical difference between the interviews, however, is that I did not ask the stakeholders about their own identities and sense of belonging but rather focussed on how they viewed children's relations to the neighbourhood.

The interviews with the stakeholders were conducted digitally as I had already returned to Norway at the time. Digital interviews can be an advantage for researchers who are restricted to time and distance but must be aware of certain limitations that could occur during digital interviews (Thunberg & Arnell, 2022). For instance, the researcher will have difficulties seeing visual cues that the stakeholders may be giving during the interview as only the face and upper body will be on camera. This physical distance did not allow me to see a participant's full body language which during sensitive issues could have ethical implications. The questions that I asked the stakeholders were not sensitive questions and were also within their area of expertise. Therefore, it is unlikely that the quality of the data has decreased as there were also no technical difficulties. If, however, stakeholders did feel uncomfortable during the conversation, the digital aspect of the interview did not limit their freedom. Participants can still "walk away" if they do not feel comfortable by logging off or disabling their camera. In addition, the stakeholders that I had digitally interviewed were people that I had previously spoken to. I had regular phone contact with the project coordinator and had visited the stakeholder who organized the after-school homework supervision. Therefore, I feel like I had a certain rapport built with the stakeholders before the digital interviews took place. I noticed that the report I built with Hanna who works at the homework supervision, continued on during our digital conversations. Because I had met her in person several times, I felt as if it was easier to break the ice digitally as I could ask to follow up questions on conversations we held earlier when we met in person. This brings me to the point that it is interesting to note how the overall atmosphere of the interviews felt different with each of the three stakeholders. For instance, I felt a certain level of professionality was expected when talking to the project coordinator. I knew from our previous conversations that she had a very tight schedule and therefore I felt a certain need to be efficient and goal oriented when asking my questions. I reflected afterwards that I used my interview guide in a more systematic way compared to the interview I had with Lisa, one of the volunteers in the neighbourhood. Lisa was my age and was very flexible with the time and day of the interview and I felt as if our conversation flowed more into a friendly chat in which we became more side-tracked from the interview guide.  Regarding the

stakeholders' anonymity, I made sure to not video record our digital conversations that happened through Zoom but rather chose to record our conversations through audio only after receiving their consent. To tape our conversations, I recorded the interviews using the same voice recorder device I used with the children's participants.

## 4.5. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are an ongoing process within the research and should be incorporated in every aspect of the research (James, 2007). In this next section, ethical considerations must be considered when thinking about the positionality of the researcher, accessing the field, negotiating with stakeholders, the location of the research, privacy, and analysis.

### 4.5.1. The role of the researcher

Imbalances between adults and children's relationships are always present and cannot be erased simply by using child-friendly research methods (Spyrou, 2011). The issue of power-imbalance is constantly present and may appear during different stages of the research. Children may not be informed correctly, or certain tools may not be in line with their competency or culture. Furthermore, children may not feel comfortable speaking to an adult but may feel pressured to continue with the research regardless (Christensen, 2004). To reduce the power imbalance, it is a common practice to adjust the positionality of the researcher when conducting research with children (James, 2011). In this sense, researchers should take on a certain position within the research to try to minimize the power-imbalance between the researcher and child by taking on a "equal role" (Abebe, 2009). Especially within ethnographic research where research is conducted for a longer period of time, it is common to take on a certain role. However, I did not partake in ethnographic research. Rather, participatory methods were used. Prior to starting my fieldwork, I questioned if it would be an issue to adapt a certain role even though I would not be working together with the children for an extended period. As Christensen (2004) highlights, one-off interviews are at risk of limiting an environment in which children can express their views accordingly as a shorter time-limit creates less interaction with the research question and the researcher. This however does not imply that what children say is not true, but it could result into researchers not exploring a clear perspective of children's voices (Spyrou, 2011). Because of the shorter time limit, children may feel shyness or a lack of understanding which in turn may influence their answer. Furthermore, by not allowing enough time for the researcher and participant to build rapport, the researcher may stand in the way of interpretating information the participant shares incorrectly. Therefore, it was important to adapt to a certain role within the research that allowed me to build rapport whilst remaining reflexive while interpreting and responding to children's voices. With reflexivity, the researcher should have ongoing internal dialogues and critical self-evaluation of their positionality and be aware of the fact that their position as a researcher may influence the dialogues they have with participants (Berger, 2015).

I took on the role of the "friendly" adult to contribute to a more equal environment for the children to share their perspectives. With this role, the positionality of the researcher is to try to minimize the power of the researcher by not exerting authority over the children and by establishing a trusting relationship modelled on a bond of friendship

(Mandall 1991 in Abebe 2009, p. 458). During all methods with the children, I was aware of this role and found that this positioning worked effectively. For instance, when one of the participants was complaining about one of their teachers at school or using curse words to describe how a situation at school made them feel, I would not use my position as an adult to "correct" their behaviour but simply empathize with their feeling of frustration or ask follow-up questions on how they reacted in that situation without judging their behaviour. As I was working within a certain time frame but still wanted to build report through the role of the friendly researcher, I also answered personal questions that the participants asked me. Before we started with each method, we would eat a snack or go for a walk and talk about our day or any other subjects they would come up with. Therefore, even though I had to work within a certain time frame, taking on the role of the "friendly" researcher, allowed me to create mutual trust between me and the participants. On a few occasions I found it difficult to maintain this position as I would sometimes feel the need to intervene with what children were saying. For instance, one of the children shared with me how he did not feel the need to have other friends in the neighbourhood and I was under the impression that this was due to his perception of people in the neighbourhood having a bad reputation. I wanted to correct him on his generalizing statement but thought that by doing so he might feel like he is giving wrong answers or that his opinion is not something that should be shared.

### 4.5.2. Privacy and confidentiality

To ensure that the privacy of the participants was protected, all participants were informed that their identity would remain anonymous. As Ennew et al. (2009) state, researchers have a duty to anticipate and maintain the confidentially of the participants and several steps were taken during the research to assure and maintain this aim. The full names of the children (and anybody else who was mentioned) was not used in transcripts or any other notes during the process of writing this thesis. Other sensitive information that makes it possible to trace back to individual participants was not shared in the research. This information was included in the consent forms for the parents, children, and stakeholders (see appendix 2, 4 and 6). I showed the children that the issue of privacy and confidentiality was written on the paper which we both had to sign but explained this to them verbally as well. It was important to ensure confidentiality to the participants as the truthfulness of participants' answers may be limited if they feel like their identity may be at risk (Ennew, et al., 2009). Therefore, before each method, I reminded the children that any information that could identify them would be anonymised and kept confidential. At the start of each activity, I asked permission to use the voice recorder during our conversations and explained why it is useful for me to use as a researcher. I continued to explain what I would do with the recordings. During one of the activities with a participant, we started off our meeting with an informal chat about their day at school. When we started with the planned activity, I asked the participant if I could start recording our conversation. I showed the voice recorder to the participant and asked them if they knew what the device was. The participant knew it was a voice recorder and proceeded to ask if I was aware of the fact that my phone also has a voice recorder which is way easier to use. This resulted in a conversation in which I asked them why using a separate voice recorder may be safer and how this could be linked to their privacy and that our conversations would remain confidential. I think that dialogues such as described, were very effective in demonstrating to participants how privacy and confidentiality works and what it is, as it may remain quite abstract when talking about it through the consent forms. I decided to continue doing this with all participants when we

had conversations about the equipment that I was using (voice recorder and camera) and why I would not use my phone. In one instance, when I asked a participant if I could start recording during the drawing activity, they told me that they did not want to be recorded. Instead of recording, I asked if I could take notes instead and explained to the participant why I wanted to take notes and what would happen to these notes. As Alderson & Morrow (2011) state, it is the researcher's responsibility to make sure that the participants feel like their privacy and confidentiality is being safeguarded.

The practice of privacy and confidentiality extends further than devices however, and initially I was worried that as an outsider coming into family's homes, parents may be hesitant to leaving me alone with their children (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). Information that participants would share, would in this case not remain private between the participant and the researcher. This did not become an issue as most of the research took place outside of the house. However, I did encounter issues of privacy when going on the photography walks with children. During one of the walks for example, one of the participants encountered three of their siblings' friends biking towards us. They greeted each other and did not start an additional conversation; however, I was worried that this put the participant in an uncomfortable position in which they might have to explain later who the woman walking with them was and why they were holding a camera. When I asked the participant if they minded this encounter, they simply stated that they don't care because they did not hear our conversation or see the pictures that were being taken. I realized during this session, that the issue of confidentiality is a very subjective concept. For instance, if I carried out this interview within the participant's home there would be less privacy and confidentiality as their parents and siblings were home and could have overheard our conversation as is often the case in home-based interviews (Abebe, 2009). Therefore, the interview conducted outside was in this sense more confidential, as nobody else had access to the information that was being shared. This occurrence remains as a dilemma to me. On the one hand, one could argue that the privacy of this child was not confidential as they ran into acquaintances during the research and therefore revealing that they are taking part in something. On the other hand, this encounter does not mean that outsiders will know what the child was participating in and what was being shared which would have been the case if we held the conversation at home.

Issues of privacy and confidentiality remain relevant after the fieldwork has taken place. The data that has been collected should be stored within a place that does not allow outsiders to access the data (Ennew et al., 2009). Therefore, I used NICE 1 which is a storage area that ensures better protection of the collected data. This allowed me to upload my data from the voice recorder and pictures on to a secure network that only me and whoever I gave consent could access, which in this case was my supervisor (NTNU, 2022). This had also been communicated with the participants and their guardians.

### 4.5.3. Consent and gatekeepers

Asking consent can be a sensitive process as one is at risk of placing the children in a vulnerable position (James, 2011). When approaching the parents for consent, the researcher is automatically at risk of putting a child into position where it is more difficult for them to opt out of the research as they might be expected to oblige to authoritative figures. I noticed that this ethical issue with gatekeepers became prevalent in my research as well. The first obstacle I met was during the process of contacting potential

participants whilst I was in Norway whilst potential participants were in the Netherlands. Due to a tight time schedule, this was necessary as I would not have enough time to recruit participants and conduct fieldwork in the time frame that I had. When I had contact with gatekeepers, I experienced two occasions where they gave me the contact details of parents to ask if their children would be interested in the research. Abebe (2009) views this as a common issue in which adults tend to present the most "competent" or "well versed" children for the research. This experience created a dilemma as I needed the help of gatekeepers to get into contact with participants and it was hard to do this by myself whilst not physically being in the Netherlands. Therefore, I arranged an introductory meeting with the parents and children whose contact information I had received. I made sure to not start any research or commit to any agreements until conversations between me and the participants had taken place. When I met all participants and their parents, the parents would be there during the signing of the consent forms, but I would still make sure to keep the conversation about consent going during the fieldwork itself (Ennew et al., 2009). During each research activity, I explained to all participants that they still had the right to withdraw from their participation if they did not wish to join and that this would have no consequences.

The participants are between the ages 10-12 and their reading comprehension varied. Therefore, two consent forms were created: a consent form for the parents and a consent form for the children. Because of children's vulnerability within not only research but society in general, children need to give their own consent to participate in the research and this should be done in such a way that they are able to give informed refusal (Ennew et al., 2009). The consent form for the children used more basic terms to explain the scope of the research and what their role would be. A fine line had to be created between making it accessible and easy to read, and to avoid being "patronizing". Gallacher & Gallagher (2008) describe a commonly used phrase within participatory research to offer "informed consent" in which researchers tell participants about the research with a willingness to receive feedback. Children must understand their role within the research process and may withdraw from this process at any stage they wish to do so. To ensure that the participants understood the research and the significance of their participation, they were asked if they could explain the research in their own words and why their expertise was needed to ensure informed consent (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). During the fieldwork, all children were able to explain in their own words what the research was about. Beyond the act of giving written and verbal consent concerning children's role during the fieldwork, this research also placed emphasis on gatekeepers and children understanding the reach of this research. When consent is given, participants and gatekeepers might not be fully aware what data will be shared and where the research will be published and who can read it (Hughes & Cooper, 2017). Therefore, conversations were held to discuss the contents of this paper in which there was space for participants and gatekeepers to ask more questions.

### 4.5.4. Power-imbalance and reflexivity

As Christensen (2004) states, power-imbalance is inherent during any research conducted with children between researcher and participant. Children may not be informed correctly, or certain tools may not be in line with their competency or culture. Furthermore, children may not feel comfortable speaking to an adult but may feel pressure to continue with the research anyway (James, 2011). As discussed, an important aspect of reducing the power-imbalance is the role that the researcher may or

may not take on. However, if measures such as the positionality of the researcher, and informed consent are not met with an ongoing reflexivity, the methods used within this research may become tokenistic (Punch, 2020).

The power-imbalance that remains prevalent throughout the research, requires an ongoing reflexivity from the researcher during all stages of the research (James, 2007). Reflexivity whilst generating knowledge is a crucial strategy within qualitative research. Reflexivity can be defined as a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher's positionality as well as the active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome (Berger, 2015, p. 220). Throughout this research there were many different aspects in which I thought a different kind of reflexivity would be needed. Therefore, I used Roni Berger as an inspiration to illustrate the reflexivity illustrations (Berger, 2015, p. 219): (1) reflexivity when researcher shares the experience of study participants, and (2) reflexivity when researcher moves from the position of an outsider to the position of an insider during the study.

### 4.5.5. Children's voices in different contexts

Within the new paradigm of childhood studies, an awareness concerning children's authentic voices is central to conducting participatory research with children (James, 2007). Even though one can never be sure that the children are sharing their authentic voices, nor is there a consensus on what a true "authentic voice" entails, several ethical considerations will be implemented to create a research space in which children feel comfortable to share their authentic voices. When researchers are listening to children's voices, there must be an awareness from the researcher that what a child is saying is also the product of certain discourses that children hear within their context (Alldred & Burman, 2005). For example, when I spoke to one of the stakeholders about her perspective on how children view the presence of volunteers within the neighbourhood, she often hears them repeat their parents who have a negative outlook on the volunteers. In this sense, a dominant discourse within the neighbourhoods, affects the voice of the children within. Therefore, as a researcher one is not presenting the truth but rather "a truth" from a specific perspective and context.

Not only is a child's voice dependent on the context in which it takes place but also under what circumstances the conversations are being held (Spyrou, 2011). For example, children may feel pressured to give answers that are expected of them within an institutional context due to adult authority. In this sense, the power-imbalance between the adult and child will never disappear but factors such as taking the location of the research into account can lessen the power dynamics between the researcher and participants (Spyrou, 2011). Another risk concerning authenticity is that the adult may be listening to a child, but not fully understanding what the child is saying, or perhaps even trying to search for answers that the researcher is looking for (see James, 2007). As will be discussed in the following section, an ongoing reflexivity is needed from the researcher during interaction with the participants. However, during the designing of the research process, collecting the data and analysing the data, reflexivity will be needed as well. Even though my positionality within the research changed, I established strategies to remain reflexive by having reoccurring meetings with the participants, using different methods, and have an ongoing dialogue with participants to ensure that I understood their statement/opinion correctly.

### 4.5.6. Outsider vs Insider

The positioning that I take on as a researcher can be impacted by characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, personal experiences, beliefs, political stances and more (Berger, 2015). For example, the neighbourhood in which this research took place has received a lot of media attention over the years and processes that are happening within the area, have also been topics within political debates. As somebody who does not live in the researched neighbourhood but has heard much about it from an outsider perspective, I had to keep in mind that my opinions about the neighbourhood I may have unconsciously developed, could be biased. Therefore, the stories that I heard about the neighbourhood in my personal life, or the (political) attention that has been given towards the area, had to be viewed from a critical perspective. My role as an outsider left me with a lot of questions about certain topics my participants shared, or their interaction with other people in the neighbourhood. For example, one of the participants shared that they did not like going to one of the parks because of older children that frequently visited the area. I noticed that my mind immediately skipped to media headlines discussing the many issues neighbourhoods face of youths being intimidating/violating etc. I asked the participant why they do not like coming to the park when the older kids were there, and their reasoning was because they leave bags of chips on the ground. On the other hand, my aim with being reflective of my outsider perspective is not to create a duality between my experiences versus those of the people in the neighbourhood. The outsider vs. insider differences is not absolute and viewing this as a dichotomy can be limiting for the research (Dwyer & Bucke, 2009). For instance, the community within the neighbourhoods is not automatically characterized by a complete sameness in the group just like I am not completely different from people within the group. Therefore, my aim with the outsider reflexivity is not to create a binary between me and the participants but to remain reflexive that I will never fully understand the experiences and opinions of the participants that I worked with, but at the same time the "insiders" may have varying experiences and opinions from each other as well.

## 4.6. Analysis

Within qualitative research, thematic analysis is a popular analytical approach yet is at risk of being poorly practiced (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis requires the researcher to immerse and engage with the data repeatedly in order to create meaningful analysis. This research applies Braun & Clarke's definition of thematic analysis which is defined as "searching across a data set to find repeated patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 15).

During the thematic analysis of interviews, I simultaneously made use of the photography's and drawings from the participants. The practice of analysing photos in isolation without a wider frame reference is not recommended as pictures without text are too much at risk of being interpreted in a misleading way (Jorgenson & Sullivan, 2009). During the photography walks I talked to the children about the pictures that they were taking and asked questions that would increase my understanding of how they viewed their photographs. Therefore, the drawings and photography's were used as an accompanying method to the interviews that took place (Fritz & Lysack, 2014). During the open coding phase of the interviews, each participant's transcription was read whilst

viewing the photographs and drawings alongside it. This allowed me to use visual data to support themes that I generated through my interpretation of the collected data.

To ensure that I would work through each phase systematically I chose to work with NVIVO to categorize each thematic analysis phase offered by Braun & Clarke (2006). It is important to point out that I did not work through the phases in a constant linear manner. Rather, I moved back and forth between the different phases if I felt like I was missing a certain aspect of the data or felt like I misinterpreted a certain conversation with a participant. For phase 1, which is familiarizing oneself with the data, I brought my initial notes and thoughts that I had during the fieldwork into the transcriptions. Transcribing interviews can be seen as a translation from one narrative mode, into another narrative mode (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, P. 204). Within this mode, the interpretation and familiarization of the data becomes the central role for the researcher. I chose to transcribe the data myself as this allowed me to familiarize myself with the collected data and to associate verbal data with body language that the participants had during the interviews. I transcribed the interviews during my fieldwork as I found this helpful to accompany certain verbal statements with non-verbal ques. Additionally, transcribing my data directly after the interviews allowed me to reflect on my role as the interviewer. For instance, after I held my first interview and transcribed it, I realized I could have asked for more elaboration or asked more specific questions during certain moments. I made a note to ask these questions the next time I would meet with the participant. I further noticed that I would sometimes talk too much to fill up moments of silence. However, during my next interviews I was aware that these silent moments could also be very useful. By transcribing the interviews during fieldwork, I was able to analyse and reflect on the quality and style of my interview (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

During the transcription process I therefore became familiar with initial thoughts and potential themes that I interpreted from the data. After transcribing the interviews, I imported the transcriptions into NVIVO and started working on phase two from Braun & Clarke (2006) which involves the generation of initial codes. This phase allowed me to observe potential data that repeated across the multiple dialogues I had with participants. Per recommendation from Braun & Clarke (2006), I explored as many codes as possible. The process was accompanied by semantic as well as latent coding as I did not prioritize one style of coding over the other. Instead, I produced semantic coding when I was interpreting semantic information and used latent codes when interpretating meaningful latent information (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Many of the texts therefore fell into multiple codes and some codes had overlapping similarities. For phase three, searching for themes, I started the sorting of my codes and sorting them into potential themes. I made mind maps within NVIVO to explore the relationships between the created codes. At the end of this phase I had placed most codes into subthemes and some codes I had merged together. For Phase four, reviewing themes, the aim is to refine the existing themes. In order to do this, I worked with the coding stripes function in NVIVO that gave me an overview of which sections of text were coded into different themes and gave me a clear overview of where the themes could perhaps merge into each other. In phase five, defining and naming themes, I worked with the new temporary themes that came out of the merging and filtering aspects of phase four. Here I started to created subthemes for my main themes. Within this phase, I named my themes and subthemes and created an outline for how I wanted my analysis chapters to take form. The outline of phase five was used for phase six which is writing the actual analysis.

## 4.7. Chapter summary

This chapter introduced this qualitative research project by positioning itself within the field of childhood studies. The sampling strategy has been highlighted alongside the process of accessing the research field. This was followed by an overview of the methods used in this research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with children and stakeholders. In addition, photography walks and drawings were used with the children. I have described my role as a researcher and described the ethical considerations that accompany this research. Lastly, I shared my process of conducting a thematic analysis to highlight my engagement with interpretating the collected data.

# 5. An introduction to the neighbourhood

In the following analysis chapters I aim to elaborate the findings through an explorative lens. Exploratory research can relate to investigating something new or interesting which can result into findings that may present a foundation for new perspectives (Swedberg, 2020). I want to explore what potential starting points can be found in the neighbourhood and where additional research could be of interest. To do this, I will break down my findings into three chapters. Chapter five will introduce the children participants and stakeholders who participated in this research. A particular focus will be aimed towards the descriptions stakeholders gave of the neighbourhood in order to explore the following research question: *How do stakeholders view children's needs and experiences in a transforming neighbourhood?* However, this question will play a red line throughout chapter six and seven as well when discussing children's narratives. Chapter six analyses children's sense of place within the neighbourhood and chapter seven focusses on children's age in relation to their neighbourhood experiences. Throughout the analysis chapters, the narratives of the child participants, Sara, Liam, and David will be at the foreground. The stories of the children will portray their relationship to the places in the neighbourhood and how this affects their feeling of (dis)belonging. In the second part of the analysis, the concept of age will be related to the children's identity to explore how their status of being a child affects their use and perception of the neighbourhood. This section will further highlight cultural expectations that can be related to age.

## 5.1. Meeting the participants

In the next section the children who participated in this research will be introduced as residents of the neighbourhood. This analysis will not have the aim to compare or group the stories of the children as this may invite seeing children's experiences as homogeneous. The aim is rather to show how their locality and familiarity to the neighbourhood is directly linked to their own microcultures within the neighbourhood (De Visscher & Bouverne-De Bie, 2008).

What I aim to explore through analysing the stories of the children is that the way in which they give meaning to places, experiences and belonging is not shaped through categorizing the neighbourhood into "good" or "bad" areas but rather how narratives around them, experiences, and their own exploration contributes to how they view their neighbourhood. As stated, this has been explored through the following three research questions: 1) How do children give meaning to places in the transforming neighbourhood? 2) What role does age play in children's experiences of a transforming neighbourhood? 3) How do stakeholders view children's needs and experiences in a transforming neighbourhood?

With these questions, I hope to explore how the children are giving meaning to their identity, places and feeling of belonging within the larger structures of the transforming neighbourhood. To give the reader a clearer understanding of the location of the research

and to gain a sense of the context and participants, I will introduce the three children and three stakeholders individually.

*Liam* comes from a Dutch family and is an only child. His parents are divorced. He moved to the neighbourhood a few years ago with his mother but also lives with his father in the suburbs of the city. He lives right in the "heart" of the neighbourhood as many long-term residents would describe it. Many cafes and shops are located here, and the area is often frequented by the older generations of the neighbourhood. Liam, who is 11.5 years old, striked me as a very direct person who is not afraid to share his opinions of people or events in the neighbourhood but also has a great skill of supporting his arguments with a justified reason. When speaking to Liam he appeared to be very confident and sure of what his boundaries are when it comes to interactions and movement within the neighbourhood.

*Sara* is 12 years old and is in her first year of high school. She is the third oldest out of her 9 siblings and moved with her family from Syria to the Netherlands 7 years ago. What became apparent during our conversations is that Sara has found the shift from primary school to high school a big change when relating it to her experiences in the neighbourhood. What has not changed however, is how she values her neighbourhood due to the presence of her family. Throughout our time together it became clear that Sara takes her responsible role within her family very seriously and knows that many people rely on her. When speaking to Sara she seemed very calm, social and a very thoughtful listener. As she later pointed out, she does sometimes feel like she can become quite angry but describes she is good at hiding her emotions.

*David* is 10 years old and lives just outside of the neighbourhood. He lives there together with his mom who works as a teacher at a local primary school. David is half Surinamese and was born and raised in the Netherlands. David is very observant of his surroundings especially when he is interacting with people he does not know in public places. David gave me the impression when we first met that he is very quiet and shy. Even though this calmness remained he quickly showed me his humorous side and was very eloquent about expressing his thoughts about the neighbourhood regardless of if these were negative or positive.

Next to the narratives of Liam, David and Sara, perspectives from stakeholders will be shared as well. The dialogues that were held with the stakeholders often touched upon the same subjects I discussed with the children, but the stakeholders often gave different reasons for certain behaviours or perspectives. With the perspectives of the stakeholders, I aim to explore how children's perspectives may align or divert from the perspectives of stakeholders working alongside children in the neighbourhood. In addition to introducing them I also paint a picture of how they view the neighbourhood, to provide a backdrop for when we focus on the children's perspectives.

*Sophie* is one of the three stakeholders who works as a project coordinator for a local company that deals with social issues in the neighbourhood through social innovation. This company became the overseer of the main organization that was implemented in the neighbourhood by the local government and housing corporation. The name of this program, which will remain anonymous, is an umbrella for all the activities that it has to offer with a focus on language development classes, homework supervision and regular after school activities. Sophie, who does not live in the neighbourhood, has recently started creating a vocabulary course in which young children work with vocabulary in a creative manner rather than related to the exposure they receive at school. Sophie gave

me the impression that she has a deep understanding of the small and big events that happen within the neighbourhood and the perspectives that come along with these events[1]:

> Sophie: We have to start somewhere, so let's start with the children, because if it is good for the children then it's good for the rest you know. (…) So, we have a child perspective as a starting point (…). It sort of comes from the idea that children learn a lot at school but they [the initiators of the program] felt like it was a bummer if the "after school" only happens at home. So, if there are no activities offered, you know to stimulate equality, it is important that there are afterschool activities for development. Because else you're just hanging at home.

Even though her main interaction is with young children, she shared a lot about the perspectives that long-term residents have shared with her as well. Sophie regards the neighbourhood as a place where "a lot is going on". Her perspective on the neighbourhood improvements gave me the impression that she perceives wellbeing of the children synonymous with neighbourhood improvement.

*Hanna* is the main coordinator of the homework supervision that happens on Mondays and Tuesdays for children in primary and secondary school. She works a lot with the volunteers in the neighbourhood who help with the tutoring lessons and interacts with many children of all ages. She no longer lives in the neighbourhood but had previously lived in the neighbourhood where she raised her two sons as a single mother. At the time her parents were worried for her family because of the reputation of the neighbourhood. However, Hanna expresses that she has always felt very safe in the neighbourhood and still feels very connected to the neighbourhood as well. At the beginning of our conversation, I asked her to describe the neighbourhood:

> A colourful neighbourhood. Which has gone through a lot of improvements (…) I've been living there myself for 11 years now and I know it from before, right, my parents never allowed me to go to that neighbourhood because that was well... it was too dangerous. So, when I also went to live there with 2 children as a single mother, my parents were like, well you know maybe it is not the best idea. Well, I did it anyway and I never felt unsafe for 1 moment so yes, I do see a lot of progress in the 11 years that I have lived there you know? In the beginning there was still some unrest, well a lot of unrest, and I notice that less now.

Hanna's feeling towards the neighbourhood shows the common perspective that outsiders have on the neighbourhood, marking it as dangerous or not suitable for a young family. Her perspective gave me the initial considerations I took for my role as an outsider conducting research in the neighbourhood.

*Lisa* is one of the volunteers who lived in the neighbourhood with a discount in rent in exchange for her help. She has previously offered dance lessons but now plays an active role in organizing the "children's vacation week". This event happens every summer for one week in which children ages 4-12 can participate. Lisa's work as a volunteer is a consequence of local policies aiming to encourage young people to move into the neighbourhood and to "mix" with the residents that live there. I asked Lisa how she views the neighbourhood:

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[1] Transcription codes:
… = pause
(…) = omitted segment
[ ] = referring to a non-verbal action

> It is becoming more fun and pretty, and I really think that with the volunteer work and activities and with them trying to make it a whole, that it is really working. It is becoming prettier, and you notice many people saying that they would like to live there. Even though 10 years ago nobody wanted to live here so I think that is very valuable. Each year you meet people who have lived in the neighbourhood for 100 years figuratively speaking. And then I think that it is a very special and tight knit place, and that people are really putting a lot of work into it, and people like to do so. Just for the bigger meaning, and what I see at [name of holiday activity week], what type of children live there and how important and special it is that we are organizing something like this, I could have never thought of that from the start. But yes, I think it is a special place and I am happy I still volunteer here.

Lisa's perspective of the neighbourhood being a special place because of the initiatives that happen from residents in the neighbourhood, is a common factor that the residents take pride in. The view that residents in the neighbourhood are participating in improving their area, is something that has been promoted within neighbourhood reports as well.

Within the shared neighbourhood perspectives of the stakeholders, I argue that the stakeholders associate the neighbourhood changes have been partly due to the programs established in the neighbourhood. Within the opinions of the stakeholders, there is an emphasis on the neighbourhood programs being a place for children in which they can develop, feel a sense of safety, and receive attention that differs from their schooling or home base. This general perspective that the stakeholders have shared will now be used as a backdrop to explore how the children participants gave meaning towards places in the neighbourhood and how they create a sense of place.

# 6. Giving meaning to places

Throughout the following analysis chapter, children's narratives will be linked to their sense of place and how this is connected to their feeling of (dis)belonging in the neighbourhood. Within literature, concepts linked to the meaning one attaches to places are usually used to explore individual feelings and experiences and are often not placed within the socio-political context in which they take place (Perkins & Manzo, 2006). Therefore, I have chosen to include perspectives of stakeholders, who are all involved within the neighbourhood's sociocultural context. I will use the stakeholders' perspectives to explore children's individual experiences within the neighbourhood. The value of this relation is to understand if the stakeholder's general perspective on children's experiences in the neighbourhood coincide with the narratives of children. This analysis chapter will focus on answering the research question: *How do children give meaning to places in the transforming neighbourhood?*

## 6.1. The layers of place

The abstract concept of place and belonging and the relationality between these concepts forms a red line throughout this research. To increase the approachability of these concepts, I started by letting the children draw how they view the neighbourhood. I asked them to draw their response to my question: what is the neighbourhood through your eyes? (In Dutch: Wat is de buurt door jouw ogen?). This way the children would be drawing what they found to characterize the neighbourhood. I used the drawing method as a starting point to explore if the children's sense of place in the neighbourhood, coincided with what they chose to draw for their perspectives and representations of the neighbourhood. Liam started by creating a word web with drawings, words and occasions that represented the neighbourhood through his eyes. In one of the words clouds he wrote "people of the street" = (mensen van de straat in Dutch). Liam and I were discussing his drawing when I asked him what he meant by that sentence.


**Figure 1 Liam's drawing of his neighbourhood description**

Jessica: And then the last "people from the street" [points at drawing]
Liam: "People from the street" because this neighbourhood, is more of like yes, the people who do naughty things and when I see people from the street in front of me, then I think of Adam who is yeah, he is very bad. I call him the thief, yes, the criminal of the neighbourhood, because he does a lot of naughty things which are not really allowed.
Jessica: Mhm and with people from the street, are you talking about adults or?
Liam: All the people
Jessica: All ages?

> Liam: All ages. Yes, can also just be adults who do something naughty, but that's this neighbourhood a bit?

During our conversation Liam seemed to accept the fact that people in the neighbourhood were naughty and that this naughtiness characterized what the neighbourhood looked like through his eyes. He did not express that he regarded this aspect as something positive or negative but simply stated that that is how the neighbourhood is. Liam shared that he does not interact with the naughty people because of the negative stories that he has heard about them. However, he did make a distinction between the level of "naughty" that one could be in the neighbourhood:

> Liam: Because yes just all kinds of people who live here in the row houses and stuff, there are also all different people, but most of them are children who still want to do something naughty but something funny. For example, taking a brick out of the road or something or ringing the doorbells like we often do.
> Jessica: And do you have friends in the neighbourhood who might be more likely to hang out with those people or do you have a separate-
> Liam: No. my friends are closer to school
> Jessica: Yes
> Liam: And yes Myra is also here in this neighbourhood, that's my only friend in the neighbourhood here and otherwise I don't need friends here, because they are quite naughty people.

Within Liam's description of people being naughty, he makes a distinction of some activities being funny and some not. During our conversation he was very clear in communicating what he thought was just "naughty playing" and what he viewed as actual criminal behaviour in which he described a man as a "thief". What is interesting here, is that during our conversation we had about his drawing, he classified this "funny" behaviour and "criminal" behaviour in the same category: people of the street. Both of these levels of naughtiness were included in his description of what represents the neighbourhood. In his description of the neighbourhood, he seems to have created his own borders in defining what naughty means to him. He associates the people of the street with being thieves and committing crimes, which he chooses to distance himself from. At the same time, he has made a separate category for naughty activities that are funny. During my time with Liam, he shared clear descriptions of what the neighbourhood represents through his eyes but simultaneously shared that he does not identify or participate in the descriptions that he shared with me. Liam's sense of place in this regard seems to lean in the direction towards a feeling of (dis)belonging rather than belonging. The identity of the neighbourhood that he is describing is not something that he expresses he wants to be associated with:

> Liam: Well because the naughty people all live here. And do those naughty things. And I don't have to experience that so yes.

When reflecting on Liam's descriptions of belonging to the neighbourhood, it can be related to the scales of sense of place offered by Gunnerud-Berg (2020). Liam's descriptions can be interpreted as not reaching as far as place identity, but that does not indicate that he has no attachment to places. Rather, one could argue that Liam's sense of place relies on the emphasis that he does not belong or identify with the description that he gave of residents who are in particular places in the neighbourhood. The start of our conversation mainly emphasized people being naughty and having a bad reputation. However, next to drawing the people on the street he also drew a game called "belletje lellen" (ringing doorbells). With this game, children ring the doorbell of random houses

and run away as fast as they can without being caught. What I found interesting here is that on the one hand he enjoys playing a game in which he interacts with strangers by ringing their doorbells, but he still classifies the neighbourhood as being naughty. During this conversation I wondered how safe he felt in the neighbourhood since he was still playing his game within a neighbourhood that he finds has a certain reputation. I asked Liam how he feels when playing in the neighbourhood regarding his safety:

> Jessica: So, you just said that you think the neighbourhood stands for that [naughtiness]. How do you look at the neighbourhood because, for example, you still like to ring the bells of random houses in neighbourhood [referring to a game], so could I say that you still feel safe in the neighbourhood?
> Liam: Yeah, I just feel safe;
> Jessica: So, you think this [crime] then can it stand apart from you then?
> Liam: Yes, but it is also still connected.
> Jessica: In what ways do you notice that it is still connected to you?
> Liam: Because yes just all kinds of people who live here in the row houses and stuff, there are also all different people, but most of them are children who still want to do something naughty but something funny.

In the previous excerpts of my conversation with Liam, his descriptions gave me the impression that he does not relate his own identity to that of residents in the neighbourhood. However, as shown in the excerpt above, when Liam speaks about the neighbourhood being still connected to him, he refers to some residents just being children who want to do something naughty but still funny. As previously discussed, Liam makes a distinction of naughty behaviour in the neighbourhood related to criminal activity and naughty behaviour related to funny activities that primarily children tend to partake in. Liam himself plays his game of "belletje lellen" (ringing the doorbells) which is a naughty game itself. Therefore, Liam could be implying that he is still connected to aspects of the neighbourhood because of his shared interest in doing "naughty yet funny things" whilst being a child. In this description, Liam is describing how he is still a part of the neighbourhood as he shares a common identity marker with other residents in the neighbourhood: his age. Therefore, one could argue that Liam is showing a certain *temporary* attachment to the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood may be more connected to him now because of the "funny" activities children in the neighbourhood do. Within this description, Liam is not attaching meaning to the physical aspects of place attachment but rather to his age and how this relates to his use of place (Degnen, 2005). The temporality of Liam relating his attachment to his age is therefore subject to change as he may choose to distance himself from his age group once his interests start to change.

## 6.2. Places changing in the neighbourhood

The temporality that Liam associates with his individual attachment to places in the neighbourhood was further reflected when we were discussing changes in the neighbourhood. Rather than focussing on his own identity markers, he talked about the residents and places on a larger scale which are accompanied by larger structural markers that can alter a place (Massey, 1991). Liam started off by describing how he is content with the neighbourhood remaining as it is. Then our conversation proceeded to focus on how a neighbourhood can change:

> Jessica: Do you like that the neighbourhood won't change?
> Liam: Yes, I like that. Because the neighbourhood has its own things, how it is and how it

remains, I think. Because a neighbourhood is a neighbourhood and that can't change.
Jessica: Mhm
Liam: For example, new houses are built and then houses are demolished again, but then the children who live in them and the adults who live in them remain the same.
(…)
Jessica: So, when you think about a neighbourhood, do you think about the people rather than the actual places in the neighbourhood?
Liam: 50 / 50
Jessica: Because what if, just an example, if all the people were to stay in the neighbourhood, but in the meantime all new houses, new shops would be built, would the neighbourhood still be the same because the same people are still there?
Liam: Half.
Jessica: Why?
Liam: Because the people, well they are a part of the neighbourhood.
Jessica: Mhm.
Liam: Because the people are people and they don't go. Yes, if the people stay and so they don't leave, then it stays the same and then the other things that are being renovated and so on, so that part doesn't stay the same.
Jessica: Mhm and do you feel that this is happening in the neighbourhood, that new buildings are being added or that things are going away?
Liam: Yes, because a whole new building is being built further on that will change something in the neighbourhood, because then you have to get used to it again and cycle past it again and you think "oh a new building"
Jessica: Do you like that there is such a change?
Liam: Sometimes yes, sometimes no.
Jessica: Do you have any examples? Again, those examples, but how would you like it if something changes in the neighbourhood?
Liam: Well nice if there is a new candy shop or a new toy shop [laughs] and not nice if there is an office building for example.

Before analysing my conversation with Liam, I will include the perspective of Sophie who touched upon the same topic. Sophie is the coordinator for the new language course and has had multiple conversations with teenagers in the neighbourhood about the demolishing and construction of buildings in the neighbourhood. She told me that teenagers, and long-term residents talk about "losing the neighbourhood identity":

> "And I do hear a lot about the changes. Because there is a lot of new residential construction which yes, on the one hand is good, but on the other hand the identity of the neighbourhood can go lost (…) I went on a walk with three older kids and it was really like a tour of them showing me places that meant something to them and one of the girls pointed out that this was where her house used to be but then it was demolished for new housing and that she had really nice memories attached to her old house."

Liam and Sophie are both describing the construction and demolishment of buildings in the neighbourhood. Before delving into the analysis, it is important to acknowledge that Sophie is describing an encounter she had with a resident and therefore sharing this encounter with me through her perspective. However, analysing Sophie's descriptions that she has had with residents allows me to gain a deeper understanding of how stakeholders perceive neighbourhood perceptions amongst children in the neighbourhood.

Sophie and Liam are both discussing the dynamic changes of places within the neighbourhood. Here, they are discussing the historical, political, and economic structures related to this temporality. At the same time, they are both discussing how these changes relate to the sense of place for individuals in the neighbourhood. What

stands out here is that Liam and Sophie are both describing the physical transformations in the neighbourhood which Liam does not show an emotional value towards, compared to the accounts that Sophie has shared of older children. Rose (1995) argues that along with a sense of place having positive and negative associations, an individual can also feel indifference to a place. Liam does not seem to share the same sentimental value of the changes in the neighbourhood compared to the girl that Sophie spoke to. Rather, Liam seems to focus on the practical aspects of a place changing, like having to get used to a new view whilst biking through the neighbourhood. The girl that Sophie spoke to, shared that she found the neighbourhood identity was disappearing and related that feeling to the demolishment of her previous home. For Sophie as a stakeholder in the neighbourhood, it seems to be as if she is under the impression that older children's sense of belonging to a place is changing because of the physical transformations. Through Liam's description it does not appear that he relates the changes in the neighbourhood to anything that affects his own identity. I do not imply that Liam's sense of place is therefore non-existent, but rather does not go as deep as a feeling of place belonging or place identity that it seems to do for long-term residents. As Cresswell (2004) argues, the sense of place that an individual has can be present in a neighbourhood but could also relate to a more regional or national scale. For Liam I argue that his sense of place is reflected in the neighbourhood, but he does not relate it to his entire identity or sense of place in contradiction with descriptions of long-term residents.

This theme of Liam describing what the neighbourhood stands for, but not participating in what he describes as characteristics of the neighbourhood, did not only relate to how he views the people but also the organizations within the neighbourhood and his participating role in it. On Liam's drawing, he drew the name of the organization that organizes many activities in the neighbourhood for children (see figure 1). He also drew the basketball field where a lot of the activities for children in the neighbourhood are organized during summertime. When I asked him to explain the "kids centre" in his word bubble during the drawing activity, he said the following:

> Liam: [Name of organization] that's just around the corner. that's a day-care centre where a lot of children from the street, if mothers have to work, a lot of people come.

Here Liam is referring again to "people of the street" and it being a place for children if their mothers are not home. This location and the people of the street were, in his eyes, part of the neighbourhood identity, but were not activities that he participated in. Liam therefore may see the locale of a place, in relation to what other people are or do and what he is not (Cresswell, 1996).

When I spoke to Hanna, who is the coordinator of the homework supervision on Mondays and Tuesdays she stated, "*We do not have that many Dutch children with us, so they are usually children of immigrants who participate in neighbourhood activities*." Liam, as a Dutch child seems to resonate with what Hanna states, as he describes the neighbourhood initiatives as a meeting place for residents in the neighbourhood rather than something he attends himself. When reflecting on the examples of our dialogues given in the analysis, he seems descriptive when discussing the people on the street or the neighbourhood institutions but does not share how this makes him *feel*. The reason for me interpreting his descriptions as indifferent may also relate to the trust in discussing these matters with me and perhaps he would have shared more about his feelings if we had known each other longer. However, even though Liam does not attend the places as described, it appears that Liam has given certain meanings to these

neighbourhood institutions: by stating that certain institutions are for the children from the street, he is distancing himself from being one of the neighbourhood children. In turn, he is relating places to what other people are in the neighbourhood and to what he is not (Rose, 1995).

The dialogue with Liam leaves certain questions as to why his views towards the neighbourhood have taken the shape they have. When combining all of Liam's descriptions of his perspective on crime, his participation in the neighbourhood, and what he sees as pillars of the neighbourhood it could be argued that Liam bases his perspectives on views that he has heard around him. During our conversations he shared that he had never been to the activities nor interacted with the "naughty people". Perhaps Liam's perspectives of the neighbourhood are not only linked to his experiences but also to narratives that have been formed around him. With this argument, I do not aim to downplay Liam's perspectives as his experiences are valid descriptions of his sense of place and belonging in the neighbourhood. However, just as all people of all ages, Liam's perceptions could be influenced by broader social attitudes towards the neighbourhood. Jackson (2004) argues that perceptions of risks or vulnerability can be directly linked to individuals' understandings of the social and physical sphere of one's neighbourhood. Jackson continues to elaborate that the link between the perceptions of risk is formed by an individual's understandings of the social and physical make-up of their neighbourhood, as well as vulnerability and broader social attitudes and values (Jackson, 2004). It could be argued for Liam, that his living situation of living part-time in the neighbourhood with his mom and part-time with his father in a suburb, has led to Liam picking up stories that he has heard around him. Conversations he has had with adults and attending school outside of the neighbourhood have "exposed" him to outsiders' perspectives on the neighbourhood that he resides in biweekly. For instance, when discussing if he ever goes to the "unsafe" places, he describes how he follows his mother's advice. Jackson's (2004) description of perceptions being linked to broader social attitudes are relevant within this research. As discussed in the background chapter, the presentation of minister Vogelaar including this neighbourhood as one of the 40 "problem neighbourhoods" in 2007, has given the neighbourhood a difficult time to distance itself from the reputation of being a high-crime area. Simultaneously, this neighbourhood has also received a lot of media attention for the many initiatives that are improving the neighbourhood. In this sense, he is bringing an outsider perspective into his own experiences within the neighbourhood. As discussed, Liam states that he does not attend the activities nor associates himself with children in the neighbourhood as discussed in excerpts above. Therefore, Liam may form his sense of belonging by combining his own experiences with the narratives he hears from people outside of the neighbourhood.

During my conversations with Liam, it appeared that he does not relate his sense of place and feeling of belonging to certain stagnant places in the neighbourhood, but rather to relating his own sense of place in relation to what he does not identify with. His clear descriptions and opinions of what institutions and places are for certain people in the neighbourhood and stating that he does not associate himself with the residents he describes, seem to constitute that he relates a place to what he is not. It could be argued that Liam, who lives part-time in the neighbourhood, uses outsiders' narratives of the neighbourhood to give meaning to his own experiences in the neighbourhood. At the same time, he indicates that he is still connected to the neighbourhood as his descriptions of "people from the street" also focus on children doing funny naughty things which he feels connected to.

## 6.3. Places to be oneself

Hernández, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, & Hess (2007) argue that people who were not born or have lived for a longer period within a neighbourhood, tend to not develop a feeling of place identity. The argument that the longer a person has lived in the neighbourhood, the stronger a place identity and place attachment is, coincides with what the stakeholders describe about long-term residents.

> Sophie: There was a woman who was I think about 70 years old, and she has lived for her entire life in the neighbourhood. And then I asked her what it is like to grow up in the neighbourhood and what I really got out of it is that she has so much pride. […] She really was like "this is my neighbourhood". And I think that new residents in the neighbourhood, but also long-term residents have a very strong connection with the neighbourhood but maybe not of course everybody. But long-term residents are very proud of where they live. I often hear people say that yes, they do live in this city, but the neighbourhood is a village within the city and that is where they are from.
> […]
> Jessica: But if you were to relate this perspective to how you think children view their self-image, what role do you think the neighbourhood plays in that?
> Sophie: I think that on the one hand some children who grew up in the neighbourhood, have like you said, a sense of believing they are "name of the neighbourhood" instead of "a name of the city".

Sophie is under the impression that people who have lived in the neighbourhood for a longer period of time develop a stronger attachment to the neighbourhood. However, if we look at Sara who is also not a native of the neighbourhood, her relationship to the neighbourhood differs from that of Liam. In the next section, the analysis will focus on Sara's perspectives which seems to have a deeper sense of place compared to Liam. She describes a strong connection to residents in the neighbourhood similar to the description Sophie gave for long-term residents.

During my multiple conversations with Sara, it became apparent that she participated in many activities within the neighbourhood whilst she was in primary school (however, this changed, which will be discussed later).

> Sara: (…) I also took music lessons; I played the cello.
> Jessica: Oh cool! Are you still doing that now?
> Sara: No because of school and that's how I really stopped.
> Jessica: Because it got too busy or something?
> Sara: Yes.
> Jessica: I get that. So that's how you ended up at the community centre for music lessons and other activities?
> Sara: Yes.
> Jessica: Okay. Is that still a place you like to visit or are you not going there anymore?
> Sara: I used to go there very often, every Monday I went there. Then I really liked it I still really like it. But really yes, I feel really safe with that and yes I really like to still go there.
> Jessica: That's nice, why do you feel safe there?
> Sara: Because there I can be who I am, but some people just say their opinion and then I think it's just… well then I think just stop. But there [the cello lessons] I can really be who I am and say what I want.
> Jessica: Oh yes, I get that, so you don't have to think too much about what you say

without thinking that people will judge you?
Sara: Yes.

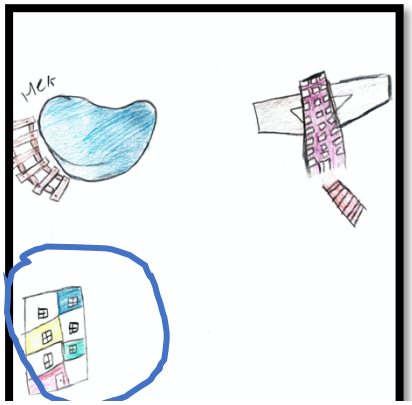

**Figure 2 Sara's drawing of her neighbourhood description**

For Sara the neighbourhood and the participation within the neighbourhood allows her to feel a sense of safety and, as expressed above, within this setting, she can be who she is within this setting. Sara's sense of place seems to be directly linked to her participation in the neighbourhood organizations and the sense of self she has when spending time there. While she was drawing the building where she plays cello, I asked her why she feels safe within the neighbourhood organizations. The excerpt above shows her answer stating that there she can be who she is. For Sara, her participation within neighbourhood institutions play an important role for her feeling of safety and being herself in the neighbourhood. Within these institutional places, she is giving emotional value which relates to having a certain attachment to these places (Escalera-Reyes, 2020). She describes a feeling of safety towards the people within the places and felt emotional bonds with them. This feeling of belonging and being able to be oneself does not happen for Sara outside of the neighbourhood in which her school is located. Here she said, she feels like she has to be different with her friends at high school and maybe do things that she does not like to do.

> Sara: (…) Because at school I do other things that don't really show the real me.
> Jessica: How so?
> Sara: Well at school I have other friends and I am afraid they'll have a different opinion about me. So, I just follow them around and do what they do.

Place attachment is not a concept that an individual is automatically aware of. Green & Turner (2017) describe how individuals perhaps do not realize the value one attaches to a certain place until that place is no longer there/changes, or the individual is no longer there/changes. Sara's experience of entering secondary school and experiencing the feeling of not being able to be herself has perhaps contributed to her awareness of how places in the neighbourhood give her a sense of safety and the space to be herself. Sara's relationship with the organizations mainly focusses on her feeling of safety and sense of self which she does not feel as much when she is at school with friends. What became clear during my conversations with Sara and the stakeholders, is that the neighbourhood organizations place a lot of value on creating an environment in which children can feel safe and be themselves:

> Sophie: (…) Oh yes! An example of a boy. This is by [name of organization], the Livingroom where children can go to. There was a boy who was always angry at everybody and everything. And then at the [organization] he slowly came out of his shell. He met new people and seemed less angry.

Jessica: Mhm
Sophie: And I spoke to his mother who said, yes, he actually is very sweet and caring. And I think we are seeing that now because in this setting all ages are interacting with one and other and he can show a different side of himself than at school or home.

In the dialogues with Sophie and Sara it becomes clear that the stakeholder's intention of what the neighbourhood organizations should mean to children, resonates with how Sara feels and describes these places. Within communities for children there is often a prioritised focus on facilitating engagement in education and in fostering child safety (Bessell, 2016). This strongly relates to the intentions of the neighbourhood organizations in which the stakeholders make clear they aim to not only be an educational resource but also a place of safety in order to create and maintain equal opportunities in the neighbourhood. All three of the stakeholders value the feeling that Sara is describing and emphasize this as one of the main aims for the neighbourhood organizations. The sense of place that Sara is describing and, as I argue, the place attachment that she feels towards neighbourhood institutions could perhaps be a new sense of place in the neighbourhood that previous residents have not experienced. The neighbourhood organizations are relatively new to the neighbourhood and older teenagers and other residents have not experienced childhood in the neighbourhood alongside these local institutions. However, as Sophie explained when sharing her perspective, long-term residents do feel a strong feeling of place identity and place attachment to the neighbourhood. What Sara values in the neighbourhood seems to be more attached to the services that it provides rather than places and people that stand apart from these services. It could be argued that Sara does have a certain place identity towards her neighbourhood as her values and sense of self align with that of neighbourhood institutions. Perhaps with the neighbourhood undergoing transformations, a new sense of place is being created: one that is not necessarily attached to the community in the literal sense, but more to the services within the neighbourhood.

Within this argument, the temporality and relationality between place and people becomes apparent (Rose, 1995). The function of certain places within the neighbourhood are changing and therefore, the people that are attending the places are changing as well. On the other hand, people like Sara who are using the places in a different way compared to long-term residents are changing the place itself.

## 6.4. Replacing places

It could be argued that Sara's place attachment is closely linked to neighbourhood institutions unlike Liam who did not choose specific places in the neighbourhood. As discussed, he does not go to any organized neighbourhood activities and rather goes to play soccer at a field or walk around certain places in the neighbourhood with his friend Myra to play "belletje lellen". So far, an argument can be made that Liam and Sara experience and perceive the neighbourhood in very different ways and use the places differently. Sara's sense of place seems to resonate with the feeling of attachment she has to neighbourhood organizations. Liam's sense of place gives me the impression of being less attached to places that have been designed for children. He chooses his own places to play in and at the same time chooses places to stay away from.

However, Sara also mentioned a place which she often spends time in that is not part of the neighbourhood institutions. In the following dialogue, she was describing a staircase by her house. She included this on her drawing as well. In this dialogue I asked her if she

finds the sense of safety that she described in the neighbourhood institutions in other places. Here she mentioned the staircase:

> Jessica: (…) you also have another place where you now have it. Because you stopped playing the cello, so do you notice that there is a new place where you can also have that safe feeling?
> Sara: I come here quite often, then I sit here on that little staircase.
> Jessica: Over there by that gate?
> Sara: No here [points towards staircase].
> Jessica: Ah yes.
> Sara: I sit there quite often and then I write all kinds of things that I see.
> Jessica: And you do that on your own?
> Sara: Yes just enjoying my time.
> Jessica: So relaxing a bit and getting your thoughts straight?
> Sara: Yes.
> Jessica: I get that.
> Sara: Sometimes I would just make a song or whatever comes to mind.
> Jessica: That is cool!
> (…)
> Jessica: Why is it here (the stairs) that you do that and not, for example, go into the park or another place, why do you like to enjoy your alone time here?
> Sara: It's close here, near our house too, but here I can really see how the people I know well how they really are when I'm outside.
> Jessica: Are you observing them then?
> Sara: Yes
> Jessica: And by people do you mean the children you observe or also the adults?
> Sara: Children but sometimes I also see adults I know who are very nice but also sometimes very strict towards children and then I see that too and then I really see how they are.

Within this dialogue, Sara is describing how the staircase is a place for her to observe people and to spend time by herself. When reflecting on previous excerpts in which Sara described how the neighbourhood institutions gave her a sense of safety, it is interesting how she now places value on the staircase. Here she made a shift from spending time in places for children and switched to the staircase in which she created her own place. However, the staircase here is a child's place, something that she created herself and was not intended for the way she uses it.

The staircase was most likely placed there for practical reasons: to get from a to b. However, for Sara the staircase has a more abstract meaning, what Williams (1995 in Green & Turner, 2017) would define as symbolic. In Sara's story, the staircase represents a place of comfort, familiarity, and relaxation. Symbolic meanings can be found in places as the meanings are given by a culture, social group or in this case, an individual. She describes how she uses the staircase as a place where she writes down her thoughts and observes residents in the neighbourhood. Therefore, she is using this place that she created herself in very different ways: one to relax and have alone time, and additionally, observing the adults and children in the neighbourhood to understand how they really are. As seen in the last part of the excerpt above, Sara mentions how she sees adults being very strict towards children and then feels like she sees them how they really are.

Chawla (1992) writes that children's personalities and perspectives are shaped by the experiences they are able to have in the places available to them (Green & Turner, 2017, p. 31). For Sara, she had previously shared that since she went from primary school to

high school, her schedule became very busy and therefore prevented her from using the neighbourhood resources. Eyles (1989) describes the importance of rules, resources, routines, and available relationships in daily life for people to use a place. If we were to look at Sara's resources and routines within her current life where she feels that she is very busy with school, in her eyes the staircase is an available resource that fits in her routine as it is close to home and still surrounded by other people which she also finds important. The place that she has created here for herself, in this sense, might be a replacement of what the neighbourhood institutions used to be as it is what currently fits into her everyday life. The direct consequence of her life changing is Sara finding a way to use a space in a different way. In other words, a change in Sara's daily life has had a direct consequence on how she uses a space, which becomes a place.

Lastly, the use of Sara's staircase can also act as a place in which she can spend time alone. Sara, who lives in a row house with her seven siblings and parents, does not have a room of her own and she described that one of her baby brothers often sleeps with her because he gets scared in the night. It has been argued that for pre-teens, having a private place of their own is an important way for children to create a sense of self (Steele & Brown, 1995). For Sara, the staircase may be a space for privacy as you can still see her house whilst sitting on the stairs. The staircase is situated right across from her home, and she explained that her younger brothers would often bike by and come "annoy" her when she was sitting there.

My conversations with Sara showed the meaning and parts of her identity that she attaches to certain places in the neighbourhood. It became apparent that most places she attaches meaning to are places that have been created for children and play an organizational role within the neighbourhood. I argue that her place attachment is dependent on the people that are found within the places she described. Before further exploring these relational aspects, I will first focus on the conversations I had with David.

## 6.5. Places for safety

David and I had our first conversation during the drawing activities. During this conversation he was apprehensive about the voice recorder, so we recorded our conversation for some parts of the drawing. He did give me permission to write down notes about the information he gave me. Here he shared that he did not participate in neighbourhood institutions but would go to paid after school activities like hockey and piano lessons. Both places were outside of the neighbourhood. David lives with his mom who works as a primary school teacher. Since she is usually still working when David has finished school, he stays at his neighbour's house who has two younger children. His mother picks him up around 5 o'clock. I got the impression that David gives a lot of meaning towards places in which he feels a sense of safety in his physical environment. Unlike Sara, who attaches meaning to places that have been created as a place for children in which interaction with others is something she attaches meaning to, David seems to search for places that he feels are quiet.

During our photography walk together, we decided to walk to a park where he often plays. I noticed David seemed a bit unsure of how to get to the park which stood out to me as it is very close to his house. There was construction on one of the streets by his house which we spoke about.

Jessica: Do you normally walk to the park like this or is that because the road is closed?
David: I usually don't walk. I cycle more.
Jessica: Oh, you cycle here more often?
David: Not that often. Because well, when that [construction] started I don't go there that often anymore.
Jessica: So before the work [construction] started, did you come here?
David: Yes.
Jessica: And is it now because it's just harder to get to or?
David: No because it's more dangerous!
Jessica: Why is it more dangerous?
David: Well the road they closed it completely there [points at construction] and if you go that way, there are the nettles again. So usually I just walk like this, but yeah.
(…)
Jessica: Okay, so what does a place need for you to feel at ease?
David: Quietness, very few cars.
Jessica: Quietness. And by quietness do you mean that there should be less people or really only traffic?
David: Well not necessarily people, because well mostly traffic

Unlike Sara and Liam who related their sense of place to the people within certain places, David placed an emphasis on the spatial characteristics of places. His descriptions give the impression that he attaches value to places with a lack of vehicles in the areas in which he plays. He appreciates the quietness and safety that the place gives in turn. This value that David creates of places offering a quiet and safe environment for him to play aligns with certain views that Lisa shared. As a volunteer in the neighbourhood, Lisa, elaborated on what she meant with the word safety as this came up a few times during our conversation when she was describing areas:

Lisa: But I do think that really the young children who play in the neighbourhood have such a great time and they are all friends and really involve each other. I think it really is becoming a very fun area where everybody is welcome.
Jessica: Yes, that is nice. And when you talk about places that are safe to play, what do you see as safe? Are you talking about traffic or people like how do you see that?
Lisa: Well, if I have the image of a safe playground in my head then I always see a place that they can go to without having to cross busy roads and if I look in my own neighbourhood you often have to cross [busy street] or another big road before you are at a playground. And in the neighbourhood that is not really the case. If you really live in the neighbourhood, unless you live on [street] then that is a real road, but there are some crossing paths so you could cross there. And in the middle of the neighbourhood, you have a big circle with a square and a playground which gives a good overview and where everybody can always be safe when crossing and arriving there. So that is what I see in my head when I think about a safe place to play and there are always residents in the area from what I saw. And they are very nice and enthusiastic when they see children play or if they need help with something. It is really nice to observe.
Jessica: Yes.
Lisa: So that is a bit of the image in my head when I think of safety.

When comparing David and Lisa's description of safety they both relate it towards opportunities for children to access areas in a quite environment. Whereas David uses his description to explain places in which he feels safe in, Lisa describes what she views as appropriate places for children to access to play in. Lisa continues to state how the square in the neighbourhood is safe to access and is a safe place to play as there are always residents in the area. David also reflected on the value that he attaches to having adults in the park he plays in:

Jessica: Are there many other children coming to that lawn?
David: No.
Jessica: No? Are adults there?
David: Yes

David's descriptions give me the impression that the sense of place he feels in certain areas relates to how he can access them in a safe way and who is there when he arrives at the location. What is interesting here, is that he does not seem to place emphasis on having other children to play in the park with, but rather, places more importance on having adults there for supervision. Lisa seems to attach the same value of safety to the access and supervision in a certain place. In here, we have a stakeholder of the neighbourhood describing what she values for children to have and what she sees as appropriate for children to play in, whereas David describes this something that he "needs". The similar view that Lisa and David share of the safe accessibility and component of a place is a pattern that has occurred in children's play over the last three decades according to Valentine & Mckendrck (1997). Here they argue that rather than focussing on provisions for play, the focus is shifting towards accessibility close to home. For example, during the drawing activity, David drew areas in which he felt safe and often played, and most of the area's portrayed were alley ways or quiet streets around his house (see figure 3). He expressed that he likes the idea of the places he goes to being close to home and not having a lot of traffic so he can play soccer. David seems to be exploring different places and finding along trial and error what does and what does suit his needs. If a place changes permanently or temporarily, he goes and finds another place that aligns with what he finds important: safety, quietness, and supervision from adults. For instance, during our photography walk he described a park that he does not go to anymore due to construction on the road:

Jessica: Mmm so before the work [construction] started, did you come here?
David: Yes.
Jessica: And is it now because it's just harder to get to or?
David: No because it's more dangerous!
Jessica: Why is it more dangerous?
David: Well the road they closed it completely there [points at construction] and if you go that way, there are the nettles again.

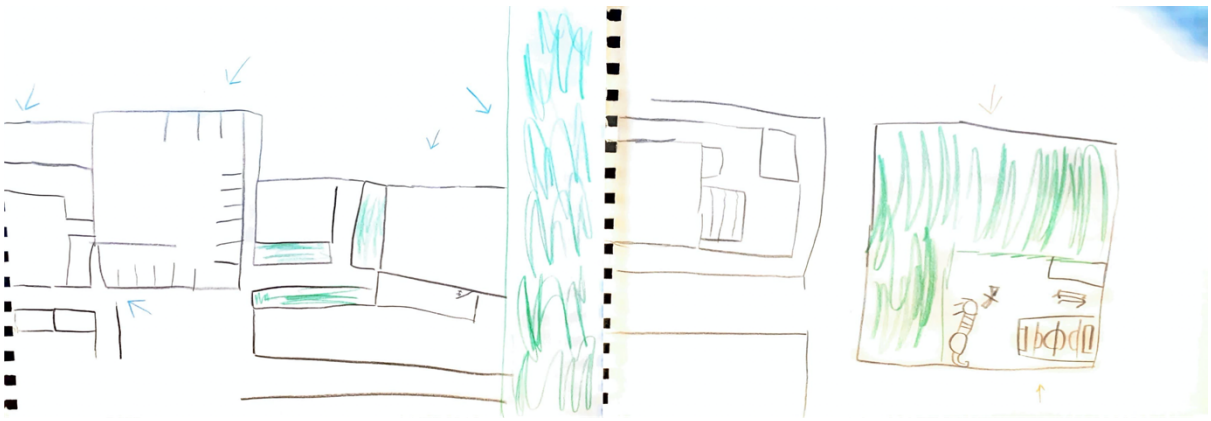

**Figure 3 David's drawing of his neighbourhood description**

Within this process of finding safe places to play in, he does not make a distinction between children's places and places for children. As mentioned, in David's drawing and photographs, he indicated quiet roads and alley ways as places where he enjoys playing

(see figure 4). David seems to attach a sense of belonging to physical places that were not designed for children to play in, but rather has created his own place which are known as "children's places (Rasmussen, 2004).

**Figure 4 An alleyway where David plays**

If we reflect back on Lisa's description of playgrounds and safety and David's descriptions of safety, I argue that the emphasis that Lisa and David both share could be a consequence of the gentrification in the neighbourhood. Oscilowicz, Honey-Rosés, Anguelovski, Triguero-Mas & Cole (2020) , argue that in early-stage of gentrification, in which the process is still occurring, new place relations and attachment around green play spaces are frequently used by children. In their study that was conducted in a neighbourhood undergoing gentrification in Barcelona, residents described how adults were pleased with playgrounds offering a "quiet, peaceful, outdoor family and community space that was an extension of their home". In addition, other residents expressed their positive attitudes towards the re-design of streets which reduced automobile traffic, air pollution and noise.

David's sense of place reached further than accessibility and supervision and also related to the spatial qualities of places. For instance, he finds it important for places to have more trees. Whilst David was drawing, he expressed he did not like how much brick there was in the neighbourhood. I asked him what he would like to have instead:

> Jessica: How would you like to see it then?
> David: That's right here in this street [points] there would be more than one tree.
> Jessica: Okay, why?
> David: So that more oxygen comes.
> Jessica: More oxygen. So just for your health or also because you find it prettier?
> David: Also, that it's more beautiful, but it's also better for cooling the earth.

In this perspective, he feels a sense of place towards locations that have greenery around him. Rather than relating this to the aesthetic aspects of greenery or the type of play that he can have in these areas, he relates it to the importance of trees being needed to "cool down the earth and oxygen". In a study in the neighbourhood Parc Central de poble Nou in Barcelona, this space production is often one of the main aims of gentrification policies in which an intersection of greening and child's play is seen as a means of increasing the liveability of a neighbourhood (Pérez del Pulgar, Anguelovski, &

Connolly, 2020). Rather than Sara, who places her sense of place primarily to the relation towards others, David relates his sense of place towards the relation between him and his environment. This connection between a human and environmental composition within an urban setting is described by Swyngedouw (1996) as "socio-nature". This concept explains that the way children's socio-natures are shaped, are a direct consequence of historical structures that shaped the urban life of children in a certain place and time. For example, on a historical level, Western cities did not prioritize children's play in urban planning and rather focussed on adult-centred environments. Within western cities that are gentrifying neighbourhoods the aim is to improve the social and environmental conditions that make up children's socio-natures.

## 6.6. Summary

When analysing the meaning that Liam, David, and Sara attach to places in the neighbourhood, I see three different narratives. I argue that all three children share different perspectives of a sense of place related towards the neighbourhood. For Sara, I argue that her sense of place to the neighbourhood is related to the neighbourhood institutions that offer activities for children. For her, a place, is directly related to her relationship with others around her (Cresswell, 1996). The value she places in resources in the neighbourhood that influence her everyday life, enhance her attachment and therefore her belonging to the neighbourhood (see Green & Turner, 2017). Here I argue that she does not primarily experience a feeling of belonging because of what the physical locations have to offer but rather the people that she can find and interact within these places. For Liam and David on the other hand, I argue that they do not describe the same sense of place to the neighbourhood as Sara does. David creates a positive sense of place in relation to places that appear to be quiet and safe. For Liam, his sense of place seems to lean more towards viewing places in relation to what he is not. However, I do not argue that Liam therefore has a negative experience within the neighbourhood. A sense of place can be an individual feeling, but it can also be a shared opinion. For Liam, the narratives he hears around him can be the meaning he attaches to the places and chooses to distance himself from. However, on an individual level he still likes to play in the neighbourhood with his friend. The stakeholders seem to resonate with the perspective that Sara is sharing, in which the neighbourhood institutions offer a certain sense of safety and a routine. There seems to be an awareness among the stakeholders that their programs revolve a lot around children who do not speak Dutch at home. Liam's descriptions seem to agree with this fact as well and designates the neighbourhood institutions for "other children". Within these narratives, the aims that accompany the transformations in the neighbourhood are apparent in the experiences of children: the values that children attached to safety and being oneself within institutional settings are often policy aims within transforming neighbourhoods and are main aims described by the stakeholders as well (Van Ankeren, Tonkens, & Verhoeven, 2010). The next section will explore how age affects the navigation through places and interactions in the neighbourhood.

# 7. Age as a marker in the neighbourhood

The previous chapter focused on sense of place and the meaning that children gave to this concept. Children described their sense of place in relation to geographical locations in the neighbourhood. In the following chapter, the concept of age will be the red line throughout the discussion. Whilst talking to Liam, Sara, and David it became clear that they all perceived their age as large part of their identity and especially David and Liam noted their age as a marker that influences how they use the neighbourhood. In this chapter, age will be discussed as a marker related to cultural differences, as a marker that influences how one navigates the neighbourhood, and how age is linked to the feeling of being competent. Lastly, children's age will always be in relation to that of other generations and therefore intergenerational relationships will be explored as well. The following sub question will be the central focus within this chapter: *What role does age play in children's experiences of a transforming neighbourhood?*

## 7.1. Cultural expectations towards age

During the fieldwork, it became apparent that the concept of age and how the children related this to their sense of self was an aspect they used on a daily basis to navigate the neighbourhood. For Sara, her age played a big role in her feeling of belonging to the neighbourhood. As was discussed in the previous chapter, Sara enjoyed the neighbourhood participation and her attachment towards neighbourhood institutions. These local facilities played a big role in her sense of place within the neighbourhood. What became clear during our conversations, however, is her decrease in participation within the neighbourhood initiatives because of transitions within her schooling. Sara is currently in her first year of high school. All Dutch children go to high school after eight years of primary school. This often represents a big shift in children's lives as they will often have to bike longer distances to go to the new school, receive homework, tests and in general more independence and time management is expected from them. What is interesting to take into consideration before analysing Sara's descriptions of her own experiences, is to reflect on the previous analysis chapter in which stakeholders expressed that there is a decrease in participation once children become teenagers. In this next section, I will explore how Sara relates her age to her participation in the neighbourhood and how this shows resemblances and contrasts with what the stakeholders spoke about concerning age and participation.

> Jessica: Are there any other activities you do in the neighbourhood? Because you did tinkering (classes in which children learn how to make and repair products) classes, you did cello, do you like after-school activities?
> Sara: Well after school I don't do anything now. Now I've stopped doing all things for a while. Because I thought it was getting a little busy.
> Jessica: Yes, so you made that decision in your first year of high school, that you thought of this is getting a bit busy now
> Sara: Yes, because I get a lot of homework right away and I already got tests last week it already started.
> Jessica: Mmm that's a lot. And do you feel like a little different now or a little different in the neighbourhood now that you're doing less after-school activities?
> Sara: Yes, I think so. Because at first, I came to the neighbourhood very often you know. but now that has become much less.
> Jessica: And what do you think of that?

> Sara: I think that's stupid and annoying. Because I also think it's important that I just go outside and play like that. And now that has become much less because of school and stuff and homework. So, I think they should also give less homework at school.

On multiple occasions during our conversations, Sara expressed how her educational obligations stood in the way of her neighbourhood participation. The change from primary school to high school has been a big shift for Sara. She expressed that she needs time after school to do her homework and she likes to prepare ahead of time for upcoming test weeks. Her feelings towards this shift, seemed to be accompanied by disappointment. Sara shared she missed being involved in activities such as her cello lessons, the technical classes, and the interactions with volunteers in general and wished that the workload at school would decrease. It was clear from our conversations that Sara attributes her decrease in participation to her new school schedule. However, during our conversations I noticed that Sara often pointed out places as area's where she would take her younger siblings to play after school. The first time I met Sara, I was invited into her home where I met her mom and four of her younger siblings. Sara presented herself as a very caring and responsible sister and was very responsive to her sibling's requests and calls for attention. For instance, when I was explaining to Sara what the photography walk would entail, her younger sister was crying and started to throw pillows across the room. Sara immediately got up and calmed her sister down and let her sit on her lap. It was interesting to note how Sara kept the conversation going with me whilst she was giving attention to her sister as well. Furthermore, during these conversations she expressed that her two-year-old brother often sleeps in her room, because he gets scared at night and only wants to be with Sara. As an outsider who is more familiar to family life where children do not have many responsibilities, I found that this was a very responsible role Sara had in her household, but in all the conversations we had, Sara never described these as duties let alone factors that could interfere with her busy schedule. In other words, her descriptions of her relationships with her siblings were not described by Sara as factors that may influence her time and schedule after school. Before I continue to discuss Sara's perspective on her decrease in neighbourhood participation and how this could relate to her role within her family, I want to include a perspective from Lisa, one of the volunteers, into the analysis. As mentioned, stakeholders also notice that when children reach Sara's age, they become less active in the neighbourhood activities.

> Jessica: Are certain groups more involved with activities, then other groups of children?
> Lisa: Well for my feeling I do think that it [the projects] are for everybody. Just because it is very clear that in the neighbourhood there are families who really need these activities to show kids, well to keep them on the good path. For my feeling it is not a conscious decision that one group gets to participate and the other one does not. But yes, you do see a difference between young children and 13-year-olds. Because they are sort of obligated to become an adult and take care of their younger siblings. They are occupied with things completely different from somebody who is 13 and can still be young and enjoy that. So, then you see that one child will be very enthusiastic about the organized events and the other one thinks that they are too cool for that and are like yes, I'm not going to do that. But they are both equally welcome, so I don't have the idea that there is a difference made in that. But it just grows into that direction. But there is an active attempt to really involve the children who are saying that they are not interested and are like I am too tough and cool to do this, we want to involve them and sometimes it only works again when they're like 17/18 and they realize it was all kind of fun.

In this section of our dialogue, Lisa is sharing that she thinks that some older children are obligated to grow up quicker and take care of their younger siblings. She describes children who are 13 and still participating as children who "can still be young". She attributes children being uninterested to the fact that they have to mature quicker compared to children their age who do not have responsibilities and enjoy being young. Sara's and Lisa's narrative both describe how older children participate less in neighbourhood activities when they reach the age of 13. Lisa attributes this to older children being uninterested in the activities or having to take care of siblings and mature quicker than children who do not have these responsibilities. The reason for what is happening seems to be similar to one another, but the reason for why this decrease in participation is happening differs from one and other: on the one hand there is Sara who attributes her decrease in participation to her educational obligations. Sara does not describe the relationship between her and her siblings as responsibilities and I wonder if she even sees it as a duty. Even though Lisa and Sara live and participate within the same physical environment, their social expectations seem to differ from one and other. Lisa shares views that resonate with many aspects of the classic global north childhood in which children are meant to be children and must be taken care of rather than caring for others (Kjørholt, 2013). Sara, however, seems to have cultural norms that have shaped her views and ways on her role within the family. Her norms seem to align more with collectiveness of her family relations rather than viewing children's responsibilities in a western way.

This role that Sara takes on has been discussed by Ursin, Langfeldt and Lysså (2022) in which they present a case study concerning an ethnic minority girl named Amara. The case study revolves around the conflict between Amara's sense of responsibility and value towards family roles and how these clashes with the ideal childhood model in Norway. Amara describes how she took care of her younger sister and took on household chores whilst her father worked two jobs. Norwegian child services intervened as this did not align with the expectations that are given to childhood within the Norwegian context. However, similar to what Sara is describing, Amara also described that the family role she played gave her a feeling of being useful and that she placed a lot of value in this feeling of being useful for her family. In this article, it became very clear that Amara's values and pride did not correlate with the social construction in which her life took place and others around her found it necessary to intervene. This example correlates with Sara's feelings and how the stakeholder described the distance that children take from the neighbourhood activities the older they get. It shows that they both agree that children like Sara are participating less in the neighbourhood activities but their reasoning for why this happens is quite different. Lisa does consider that responsibilities older children may have to their family members play a factor in less participation but portrays this in a way that it might be potentially problematic and standing in the way of them "being young". Sara, however, does not even correlate her participation with her role within her family and on the one hand it comes off as if this is just natural for her and the way it should be. On the other hand, I wonder if she chooses to not share with me that she wants to emphasize on her responsibilities within her family as it may go against the dominant norms within her upbringing. Lisa's description fits in the narrative of the Dutch context in which parents are expected to take care of the children as a one-way transaction. Children in return, do not have to show care or family responsibilities (Kalthoff & Ince, 2020). Just like Lisa describes the overall view within the Dutch model of what a "normal" upbringing for a 12-year-old would be relates to gaining more independence, prioritizing education, and being involved in after school activities. The

role of the parent in this, is to give structure, guidance, and emotional support. However, Sara may find her norms and values towards her family from a Syrian perspective rather than a Dutch perspective. Syrian families tend to emphasize the collective wellbeing of the family and prioritize the loyalty to their family over anything else. This collective wellbeing translates into a responsibility not only for the parents but also for daily chores, taking care of younger siblings and to show family solidarity (Collelo, 1987). These contradictions in perspectives can often differ when a family's original culture differentiates from that of the dominant culture in which they find themselves in. Immigrant parents bring their own culture with them which has its own conceptual models of what it means to be a "good" parent and what a child needs to learn and do during their childhood. However, this image of what it means to be a good parent may then clash with the images and strategies that other adults such as teachers or in this case volunteers may have (Bornstein, Bohr, & Hamel, 2020).

This self-perspective that Sara has of changes within her life and the requirements that are liked to these changes are indirectly linked to age. Her role and participation within family and educational settings have shifted now that she is a teenager. These shifts differ from the Dutch social construct in which she finds herself in and influence more than her participation within educational and family contexts, but also influence how she moves around the neighbourhood:

> Jessica: Are we now walking somewhere where you come a lot?
> Sara: Yes, I come to this soccer field a lot.
> Jessica: Okay.
> Sara: I come here a lot with my sister and family. And then we bring games with us. And then we go play there. And then we go picknick.
> Jessica: That sounds nice! So, the places that we so far have visited, seem to be places you visit with your family. Like with your brother, mother, or sister?
> Sara: Yes, I don't really go to places by myself. Just the stairs [where she observes people]
> Jessica: Do you know why that is?
> Sara: I sometimes well, I just find it very comforting to have my family around me all the time. I don't like being by myself all the time.
> Jessica: That makes sense. Do you feel like your family is what makes you Sara?
> Sara: Yes absolutely.

What is interesting here is that the previous analysis chapter argued that Sara makes use of the places in her neighbourhood more frequently compared to Liam and David. However, the difference seems to be that Liam and David talked about navigating places individually whilst Sara is relating her use of the neighbourhood to doing this with her family. As described, the only place that she really visits alone is the stairs right outside of her house. It could be argued that Liam and David are viewing themselves through a global north perspective in which societies emphasize the importance of treating children as individuals who develop their own interests and become independent and productive individuals within the society (Ursin, Langfeldt and Lysså, 2022). These attitudes of individual expression are then also translated in how they navigate through places in the neighbourhood: they are expected, and perhaps expect from themselves that they explore places by themselves without the collective presence of family. As described, Sara's micro social construct is that of a Syrian household in which the socio-cultural expectations of her age may differ from the dominant "typical Dutch" social construct in the neighbourhood. Therefore, expressions of her age show a certain contrast between her relation to age and the expectations of those around her. This expectation for her to individually explore her own competence and interests is less of a priority compared to

the relationships and sense of collectivity within her family. Therefore, navigating and using the neighbourhood for Sara goes hand in hand with a sense of collectiveness within her family.

## 7.2. Age as a way to navigate places in the neighbourhood

To continue the conversation of David and Liam describing how they move through the neighbourhood as individuals, rather than Sara's description of doing this with her family, I will analyse a discussion I had with Liam about how he navigates the neighbourhood due to his age. He discussed how he does not go to certain places in the neighbourhood because with his current age, it did not seem necessary. Tasks like asking a neighbourly favour was, in his opinion, something that belonged to the interaction between adults in the neighbourhood.

> Liam: I walk through the neighbourhood and then I see things and then I ring the doorbell and then I ask, for example, can I have a cup of sugar.
> Jessica: Mhm.
> Liam: Because my sugar is gone, because you're not going to ask that as a child, I think?
> Jessica: Why not?
> Liam: Because well unless your mother tells you to, but I don't think you need sugar when you're a kid.
> Jessica: And if we use that as an example, would you not approach somebody in the neighbourhood now because you are 11 compared to when you are 34?
> Liam: Yes, because look I'm a child now and then I'm not going to ring someone's doorbell. I'm not going to ring someone's door and ask hey can I have a cup of sugar
> Jessica: No?
> Liam: Then I'm more likely to ring the children's doorbell or you know and then say you can play.

Liam's description relates to different roles and practices connected to his age. Liam indicates that he does not need to do something right now or go to a certain place because of his age. He does not link this limit in movement to his gender/culture/religion or any other identity marker except for his age. If one analyses this through the classic childhood studies narrative, we can place his temporal view on his age in the narrative of seeing children as "becoming" (Prout, 2011). During our conversation he continued to explain that he would go to somebody's house to ask if a child was home to go play outside, but that a child does not need sugar. Liam in this example, is not limited by the movement or interactions in the neighbourhood because of safety or other plausible reasons but links his limit to movement because of his status as a child. Liam goes on to say that this limitation he now has in what he does and does not deem appropriate for his age, will change once he becomes an adult. As shared in the excerpt above, he states that as a child he would not ring people's doorbells to ask for a cup of sugar.

What is interesting here, is that when he spoke about not going to certain places now because of his age, he seemed to make an exception for when he plays with his friend in the neighbourhood. The game Liam describes in the conversation is called "belletje lellen" which is a game that involves ringing strangers' doorbells and running away as fast as possible without being caught. It is a popular game for Dutch children to play, but understandably, not often encouraged by parents and other adults.

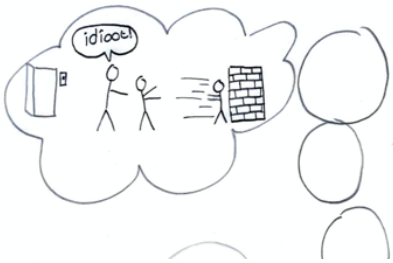


**Figure 5 Liam's drawing of belletje lellen**

> Jessica: I don't really have to ask what this is [points at drawing]
> Liam: [laughs] That's me and Myra, my friend, ringing doorbells and running away. And I got caught by my hoodie and she is yelling "idiot" [drawing]. That had really happened. She really shouted idiot and Myra was just running away from me. She did not help me.
> Jessica: And you just said that you do that [ringing doorbells and running away] at random houses, so how do you choose a house?
> Liam: We always pick houses at random.
> Jessica: So, you would do that anywhere in the neighbourhood?
> Liam: Yes.
> Jessica: So it is not like you're doing it close to home or closer to the school here.
> Liam: No everywhere.
> Jessica: Everywhere. Okay. And how did you start with that?
> Liam: I just did. I once came up with it, oh belletje lellen [name of game for ringing doorbells in Dutch], I know that game and then I thought shall we play that together and then Myra thought that was a good idea so then we did that then and then it got crazier.

For this game specifically, Liam does not make a distinction in what door to ring and what door not to ring. During his drawing, he drew an image of an event that happened a while back to him and his friend Myra in which one of the residents expected them to ring the bell and therefore was able to catch them. Liam was laughing when he recollected how the lady held him by his collar and called him an idiot whilst Myra ran off leaving Liam alone. When I asked him if he felt unsafe when this happened, he said he did not and rather focussed on the fact that Myra just ran off and found it rather amusing. Of course, with stories such as these, I do not want to jump to conclusions that Liam was not scared at all or possibly because some time has passed since that moment, he recollects that memory in a more amusing way now. However, it may also be that he does not want to present himself as vulnerable to me or his surroundings and therefore is downplaying the emotions he felt in that moment. What is interesting here is that Liam's previous careful descriptions of how it is unsafe to go to other places in the neighbourhood because of his age, or his descriptions of not feeling the need to interact with "people of the street" do not seem to count for this activity that he likes to play with Myra. Liam's description here can be linked to the concept of "play as place" (Nitecki & Chung, 2016). This concept usually relates to experiences within early childhood education in which play is constructed as a place that provides a safe space where children learn about the world around them. Even though Liam is not a young child I do question if he is using games such as ringing random doorbells to learn more about his surroundings. Liam's descriptions of the neighbourhood seem to heavily rely on narratives around him and therefore he may be using these types of games to learn about the neighbourhood around him. Liam and David both seem to share a perspective that their behaviour and perhaps sense of self will change the older they get. For Liam, this means using the places in different ways as he becomes older, but David expands on this view by describing how once he is older, he may use spaces differently, but also behave differently within these spaces. In the excerpt below, David and I were discussing how he finds he needs supervision in public places as he is still a child:

David: Well, your brain is not well developed. And then you don't know many things
Jessica: […] So are you saying that your brain is still developing? What about the children of 16 who do rude things in the park? Are you first super smart when you're 10 and then are you a little less smart and then become smart again as adults?
David: No, when you're 16 you act more tough than when you are 10.
Jessica: So it's not necessarily that you're less smart, but you just have to prove yourself a bit more to people or something?
David: Yes.
Jessica: Do you think you will have that too?
David: Yes, I think so.
Jessica: So, you're going to leave chip bags on a bench there? [referring to what he found annoying the teenagers did]
David: No not that.
Jessica: So, the older you get the tougher you try to be or something?
David: Yes.
Jessica: And do you think adults still do that? Or will it go away at some point?
David: At some point, yes. Then you think more.

David seems to see it as a fact that he will become a teenager and do things to seem tough towards others. Even though he finds it annoying now and actually limits his use of spaces in the neighbourhood, he seemed unphased by the idea of him behaving in a certain way in six years. What stands out here, is that David seems to be accepting the fact that he will one day also be a teenager and may partake in activities in the neighbourhood that at his current age he classifies as bad or dumb behaviour. The dialogues with Liam and David show that within the neighbourhood they both view themselves as becoming's, as not yet adults. At the same time, they also acknowledge themselves as being at their current ages. This link that they make with their age has direct results for not going to places in the neighbourhood or showing dissatisfaction on how they don't like a place because of the people there. At the same time, both Liam and David find that the way they will interact with their neighbours, or that their behaviour and therefore the usage of a place, will change alongside their age. If we relate this back to cultural expectations of children's age, we can relate Liam and David's narratives to that of "being vs becoming" (Prout, 2011). The way they navigate and use certain spaces now relates directly to their age: Liam stating that there is no reason for him to go to certain places, because he is a child, and David saying that the way he behaves and uses places will be different when he is a teenager and also when he is an adult. Therefore, they are both anticipating that they will "become" adults and therefore use spaces in a different way. Liam and David's descriptions reflect their anticipation to go from being a child to becoming a teen to becoming an adult and "doing age" differently in these stages. Here Liam and David are performing age in relation to the dominant cultural understandings of what is accepted behaviour or accepted activities in their age group (Sørenssen, 2014). Their use of spaces and places in the neighbourhood perhaps reflect on the generational order within the neighbourhood. Within this order, there seems to be an age segregation for the children as becoming's and the adults as beings. Certain ideas amongst generations are being practiced that translate into what areas are suitable for children and which areas are not. Within this order, Liam and David are still giving meaning towards their own and other people's lives but there are certain social locations that they attend and do not attend in relation to this use of intergenerational space (Alanen, 2009).

## 7.3. Age linked to being competent

Liam and David's descriptions of being and becoming further relates to conversations I had about children being less competent than adults. During the same conversation I had with Liam in which he mentioned that he would not ask his neighbour for sugar now, but perhaps when he was 34, I asked him more questions about his age linked to the movement around the neighbourhood.

> Jessica: […] But are there also places in the neighbourhood that you deliberately do not go to, perhaps because there is nothing to do, or because of people?
> Liam: Yes, when people are less nice. And my mother also sometimes says yes, those are not such nice people, you better stay away from them and go play with your friends.
> Jessica: Mhm.
> Liam: Yes, so that advice I follow.
> Jessica: Yes, that's good. And do you think that how you approach it now, to go to some places and some places not, do you think that will change as you get older?
> Liam: Yes, I think so, because then I would like to sometimes go there because then I have never been there when I was 11. And then I would like to see what those people, well, see what happens on that side of the road. So, I'm going to walk over there and then leave again.
> Jessica: And why will you do that when you are an adult?
> Liam: Then I am bigger and more sensible and then, well, because now as a child you can make decisions, but then you don't know exactly how it all works and stuff.
> Jessica: Mhm.
> Liam: So, when you grow up later, you can make better decisions.
> Jessica: Why can you make better decisions then? (…)
> Liam: Because then you grow more in terms of strength and length and so on, but also from your inner self, you learn more things about yourself, you learn to make choices, maths, spelling, language, because now you have, well you're learning everything as a child. But you don't know everything about the whole world yet.

Liam positions himself here in the narrative of "being a child" and uses keywords that describe how he is expecting he will change once he is an adult. Liam describes that as a child he can still make decisions but that his decision making will improve when he grows up: physically and mentally. In this dialogue he places physical attributes, learning how to make choices and learning more about yourself in the same category as educational developments. Liam's description of his status of being a child resonates with developmental views on childhood in which children "work their way up" through certain stages until they reach the stage of adulthood (Jenks, 1982).

David seems to place himself in a similar perspective and relates adulthood to a better sense of competence. The difference here is that Liam attributes the competence that he does not have yet, according to him, to a limit on his movement. Whilst this following dialogue for David shows that he relates it to needing supervision in certain places, and not necessarily a restriction to his movement:

> Jessica: What do you think of the people in the neighbourhood then?
> David: They are nice.
> Jessica: Yes? So, when you come here to play and people from the neighbourhood are there, nothing changes for you?
> David: No.
> Jessica: It can also be positively different; it doesn't have to be a bad type of different
> David: Oh! Then yes, I do like it.
> Jessica: Why?

David: Because then there is supervision.
Jessica: (…) Why is that necessary?
David: So that if someone falls and breaks their arm someone will know, well, that he doesn't have to get up right away and walk home.
Jessica: But if I hear you talk about this, you sound like you know what someone should do if they break their arm. You're saying we need someone who knows not to get up and walk home right away. But since you know that, would you still need an adult?
David: Yes. I don't know what you should actually do just that part.
Jessica: Just that. Well, it's handy
David: Oh yes! And if someone breaks his arm that he will not try to make it straight again.
Jessica: But if I break my arm, I think I'm in pretty good hands with you David! Then you can say: Jessica, don't move your arm, don't get up and especially don't walk home.
David: [laughs and shrugs]

We often speak of the new paradigm of childhood studies as a perspective that steps away from viewing children as vulnerable and dependent and rather views children as being competent beings (Kjørholt, 2013). However, it seems to be that Liam and David view their own childhood as something that is still dependent on adulthood. As Kjørholt (2013) argues, social constructs within the global north often still place childhood within a dependent and vulnerable phase of life. Therefore, when listening to Liam and David's narratives, there seems to be a duality: on the one hand Liam and David are still navigating the neighbourhood and have agency whilst doing so. When describing where they don't go, why they don't go there or why they need supervision, they share this information from an "I" perspective. They tend not to use words concerning their use of space of "not being allowed to do something" from a guardian. In this sense, their identity marker of being a child does not stand in the way of constructing their own social lives and make active decisions within the social processes of the neighbourhood (Prout & James, 2015). On the other hand, within this seemingly independent navigation, they still have a narrative of viewing themselves as the dependent child against the competent adult. If we were to question why, the answer could be found in analysing how childhood is structured for children (Hutchby & Moran-Ellis, 1998). Hutchby & Moran-Ellis (1998) argue that just like Piaget's theories of developmental stages in childhood, social theories have also become part of everyday life within certain social constructs and directly causes how that society views the development of a childhood in all spheres of their life. It is interesting to note how Liam and David still view themselves as participating in the social world around them, but still partake within the social institution of childhood. This in turn seems to shape their own views of their competence (Hutchby & Moran-Ellis, 1998). As Hammersley (2017) points out, when speaking to children there is often a chance it reflects what adults have told them. This does not mean that adults directly tell children they are not competent now, but rather that socialisation and development perspectives that many adults have, are brought into interactions with children without the people involved necessarily being aware that children are "being socialized (Hutchby & Moran-Ellis, 1998). Furthermore, David and Liam are not describing their own perspective of their competence as something negative. An argument can also be made for the fact that adults and children do not share the same level of competencies and experiences. However, this difference does not mean that they are not each other's equals (Sommer, Samuelsson, & Hundeide, 2010). Rather, David and Liam may recognise themselves as equal, but at the same time acknowledge the differences: they belong to a certain (age) group which in turn produce different activities and expectations (Kjørholt, 2005). In this way, I don't think that Liam and David don't relate

their status as a child to not being competent but rather not having reached or learned about certain experiences.

## 7.4. Generational relations

So far, children's age has been portrayed as an identity marker that influences children's reasoning for using or avoiding places within the neighbourhood. However, when arguing for children's age through a structural lens, children's age will always be placed within a certain a social order that influences their movement and interaction within the neighbourhood (Alanen, 2009). The following section will focus on the intergenerational and intragenerational relationships within children's lives which influence their sense of place, identity and feeling of belonging. Within neighbourhoods the relational dimensions play a big role in individual and collective experiences (Bessell, 2016).

### 7.4.1. Adults for supervision or for socializing?

What David and Sara both describe as important for their sense of place in the neighbourhood is the value they attach to adults being in the area. For David his primary reasons relate to adults being in the neighbourhood for supervision. This need for supervision seems to stem from an idea that supervision is needed for him as a child. The reason for why he needs this supervision will be explored with the focus on age as an identity marker.

When reflecting on the previous excerpt in chapter 7.3, where David discusses he likes having adults around for supervision, he seems to value a certain intergenerational order (Alanen, 2009). What becomes apparent here is that David talks about the need for an adult in the neighbourhood to make his experiences in public places safer. In this intergenerational order, he seems to value the relationship he has with adults which he uses for guidance and safety (Alanen, 2009). Unlike David who views intergenerational relations within the neighbourhood as a way of supervision in public spaces, Sara seems to view her intergenerational relations in the neighbourhood not only as supervision, but also as social interaction.

> Jessica: What does it mean for you to feel a part of the neighbourhood?
> Sara: Well, I really like it when I have a lot of people around me, people who understand me in the neighbourhood.
> Jessica: And is that family or other people around you?
> Sara: Mostly the neighbours, and the parents of a girl from my old class. Her mother really understands me. And just other people in the neighbourhood.
> Jessica: And what do they understand that you feel like others don't understand as quickly?
> Sara: Well, that in some places I just don't feel safe. And they can notice when I am feeling angry. Because I don't really let people know when I feel angry.

For Sara, the traditional global north perspective on intergenerational order seems to play a smaller part in how she approaches intergenerational relations. Within the global north, the tendency of age segregation within intergenerational relations does not characterize Sara's relations to others in the neighbourhood (Vanderbeck & Worth, 2015). This could be related to Sara's family's cultural background that stands further away from the Dutch culture in which adults and children are often age segregated. Rather, her description of interaction with others seems to relate to her Syrian upbringing in which interactions and responsibilities across generations is part of

everyday life (Collelo, 1987). Even though there are differences between Sara and David in how they describe their position within intergenerational relations in the neighbourhood, the meaning that they attach to those relations seems to be the same: to enhance their sense of place in the neighbourhood. David actively searches for places to play in the neighbourhood where he feels a certain sense of supervision, and Sara frequents places where she knows she will see familiar faces as she feels as if they understand her personality better.

### 7.4.2. Observing people for who they "truly" are

At the same time, Sara is careful in placing her trust in these familiar faces. This became clear during her drawing activity when she discussed why she likes using the staircase as a place where she can observe the neighbourhood. Sara did not just use the staircase as a personal place but also used it to observe people within the neighbourhood. In turn, this would allow her to create her own use of spaces and places in the neighbourhood and could negotiate where her own boundaries within the neighbourhood would be. Towards the end of our conversation, a mother and a child bicycled by, and we overheard some of their conversation.

> Sara: So, this is what I like to hear about how kids talk to their mothers and stuff.
> Jessica: Do you think that because you observe so much, you know the neighbourhood better?
> Sara: Yes. Yes, I think so.
> Jessica: Do you like that or do you sometimes have something that you would rather not have known?
> Sara: Yes, I like that better because then I know whether I have to do something yes or no.
> Jessica: What do you mean?
> Sara: So  if someone like my friend or something comes to me and says we are going there then I know that person but then I also know what that person is like.

**Figure 6 Sara's area to observe adults**

In this part of our conversation, Sara is describing how observing the people who live in her neighbourhood, and close to her home, gives her a better sense of who people really are. Sara has an idea that people behave differently when they have guests over and will

be different if they are just with their family or by themselves.

> Jessica: Yes and why is it here that you do that and not, for example, go into the park or another place, why do you like to do that here?
> Sara: It's close here, near our house too, but here I can really see how the people I know well how they really are when I'm outside
> Jessica: Oh so you were observing then?
> Sara: Yes.
> Jessica: And by people do you mean the children you observe or also the adults?
> Sara: Children but sometimes I also see adults I know who are very nice but also sometimes very strict towards children and then I see that too and then I really see how they are. So, if someone like my friend or something comes to me and says we are going there then I know that person but then i also know what that person is like.

Through her observations she seems to be making a distinction between the behaviour of people in public and private places. Within this public place, Sara is creating her own perception of social identities of people in the neighbourhood and creating and adjusting meaning she has to certain social relations within these spaces (Valentine, 2016). Sara is using places to constitute and reflect on certain social identities but at the same time is relating these social identities to the creation of places that she visits and not visits.

### 7.4.3. Intragenerational tensions

What stood out during the narratives with Liam, David and Sara was their negative stance on going to places where they knew other children were playing. The children that Liam, Sara, and David described usually had a reputation for showing disruptive behaviour or often were a few years older than they are. Sara expressed how she used to often play at a treehouse that was very close to her house but does not come there anymore because of a bad experience with older children.

> Sara: I also have an unsafe spot in the neighbourhood. That's where the treehouse was
> Jessica: Is that which you said was down there?
> Sara: Yes, here uhm yes you know at the [inaudible] houses, right? There left.
> Jessica: Which you said is where older kids play sometimes?
> Sara: Yes.
> Jessica: Okay and why?
> Sara: I was there about a year ago. I was there with my cousin and then we were there and then we went into the treehouse and then boys arrived a little older than me but some also younger than me and they pushed the stairs away.
> Jessica: From the treehouse?
> Sara: Yes, and then we couldn't get off and then they started throwing mud bricks at us
> Jessica: Out of nowhere?
> Sara: Yes, I didn't even know them! I know one now from when I was at sleutelen (technical class/tinkering)

**Figure 7 Sara's treehouse**

For Sara, her feeling of belonging to certain places is decreased by intragenerational tensions. Places that she enjoyed visiting has been put to a halt by a feeling of unsafety or annoyances towards children who are older but also younger than her. Reasons for her not to go to this treehouse anymore are not related to the physical place or intergenerational relations, but rather to the tensions within her generation itself. This negative association towards other children in the neighbourhood was apparent during my conversations with Liam, Sara, and David. Especially the tension of older children causing disturbances was a theme brought up in the descriptions of all three of the children participants. Within these discussions, the sight of older children or disruptive children in public places is regarded as a negative aspect. This discussion fits into the conversations around the privatization of childhood which Qvortrup (2009) defines as the idea that children belong either at home or in school. With this perspective, the public places which children can express themselves in are limited.  Stakeholders in the group, often describe that resident feel an annoyance towards older children hanging out in public places in the neighbourhood and often relate this to a certain sense of mischief. Lisa, the volunteer, explained how the projects that are organized for children in the neighbourhood have an underlying aim of helping children stay away from certain kinds of mischief:

> Lisa: Well for my feeling I do think that it [the projects] are for everybody. Just because it is very clear that in the neighbourhood there are families who really need these activities to show kids, well to keep them on the good path.

This perspective that Lisa is sharing, illustrates one of the aims of the neighbourhood organizations to keep children on the "good path" but phrases this in a way as if without the organized neighbourhood projects, children are at risk of getting into trouble. This association with older children spending time in public places and causing disruption is a reoccurring topic when discussing gentrification within Dutch neighbourhoods (Koster, 2011). Within "problem neighbourhoods", youths in public are often associated with crime and disruption. As a response, different organizations organize activities, schools, and institutions to increase youth's neighbourhood participation in a more private and collaborative setting. This occurrence is a common aim in Dutch neighbourhoods undergoing change. The intention is to increase youths' participation in neighbourhood organizations, with the hope that they will cause less public disruption (Van Ankeren, Tonkens, & Verhoeven, 2010). With Lisa's description of keeping older children on the "good path" in contrast to getting into trouble when spending time in public places

coincides with Liam's description of avoiding certain public places in the neighbourhood as he is "not looking for trouble":

> Liam: And yes, Myra is also here in this neighbourhood, that's my only friend in the neighbourhood here and otherwise I don't need friends here, because they are quite naughty people.

Liam and David both seem to have an idea of boundaries for the neighbourhood in which they can and cannot navigate in due to some places being a place of interaction for "naughty people".

> Jessica: And now you also don't go to the park as much because the children who are 16 are there?
> David: [nods]
> Jessica: What kind of things do they do?
> David: They drive their scooters on the soccer field.
> Jessica: And then you can't play football there?
> David: Yes.

David here seems to be finding himself in this perspective of viewing older children as a disruption towards a public place he usually liked to visit. Just like Lisa, David describes a certain view of children being disruptive in public places or that the children themselves are at risk. These perspectives show the social ordering that may be taking place in the neighbourhood (Alanen, 2009). Within the neighbourhood programs, children seem to be directed towards certain social locations in which they can participate in society (e.g., after school programs, organised holiday weeks, tutoring etc.). For older children in the neighbourhood who do not tend to participate in the neighbourhood organizations anymore but instead like to hang out with friends, this causes misunderstandings according to Sophie, the project coordinator in the neighbourhood:

> Jessica: So how do you think they [children ages 14 and up] experienced the changes in the neighbourhood regarding their sense of belonging?
> Sophie: Well two things of what they told me is what really stood out. One of the things they said was how the identity of the neighbourhood is disappearing. I went for a walk with three or four older children in the neighbourhood. And they basically gave me a tour around the neighbourhood to show me what the neighbourhood meant to them. And then we also went to the area where one of the girls used to live but her house along with others was taken down to build new houses. And she said she had really nice memories attached to that house. They also shared children used to play way more on the street and that life itself was just more on the street. And now because everything is being improved children are less on the street. But she says she does still go hang out at playgrounds with friends. And you know from the outside that looks like she is een "hangjongeren" [Dutch term for youths hanging/causing issues in public places]
> Jessica: Yes.
> Sophie: But for her it really is just a place for her and her friends to meet. And she said that different age groups used to meet up with one and other as well but that that does not really happen anymore. But you know also that she feels as if now there is less to do for children her age compared to a few years ago.

It is interesting to connect David and Liam's experiences of avoiding places where older children hang out in public places to the perspectives of the stakeholders. The teenage girl that shared her experiences with Sophie seems to look back at the neighbourhood before the organizations and construction with a sense of nostalgia: a neighbourhood in which children could hang out on the street and children of all ages would "mix". However, as Sophie describes older children who now hang out in public places are often

regarded as being a disruption to the peace of the neighbourhood which Liam and David seem to identify with. Lisa, the volunteer described the neighbourhood organizations as an institution that helps to keep children "on the right path" and hopes to attract more older children as well. This perspective relates back to the privatization of childhood in which child activities tend to focus on school or after school or home activities that happen within private spaces (Boyden, 1997). Within the dialogues of the stakeholders and the child participants, a cause and relation are appearing because of the bad reputation of the neighbourhood, the local government and housing corporation subsidizes the neighbourhood organizations to offer services to children in the form of after school and holiday activities in order to keep children off of the street, so they do not engage in risky situations. Children like Sara actively participate in these services and create a sense of place to areas that were created for children. In the meantime, older children seem to be uninterested, or the services are not yet catered towards these older children needs. At the same time, Sophie's description of older children in the neighbourhood portrays how older children feel unwelcome in public places and are viewed as a threat. For Liam and David, these children are indicators of places to stay away from as they do not want to be associated or confronted with "naughty behaviour".

David, Liam, and Sara seem to have found themselves in this narrative of viewing youth as connections to unsafety or chaos in the neighbourhood and tend to avoid those places. For Sara, this relates to her experience in the treehouse, but for David I wonder if just like Liam he has created these images because of the neighbourhood narratives. If one questions why and how this narrative could form, one could view the concept of "being a teenager" as a socially constructed phenomenon (Danic, 2012). Being a teenager is not biologically determined but rather is a socio-historically produced social age group that is distinct from childhood and adulthood (Danic, 2012, p. 659). In this context, teenagers are placed within a certain social category due to their age in which society seems to construct an "appropriate" social location for youths to spend time in (Alanen, 2009). If we question how the image of teenagers in the neighbourhood has been constructed it is necessary to view the public space and how it is structured by family, education, policies, national, regional, and local levels. For the neighbourhood, it seems as if there is a gap of participation opportunities (or interest) for teenagers which in turn results into teenagers occupying public places in their "free time". These teenagers, that Dutch society refers to as "hangjongeren" (youths hanging around), are contrasting with the image that seems proper within Dutch society: they are not in the private sphere, but rather in public, on the street without adult supervision as a symbol of disruption and vulnerability (Boyden, 1997). This view, which dates back to the 19$^{th}$ century has therefore become an idea in the neighbourhood of something that younger children should not strive towards. Danic (2012) points out that teenagers in public places often "stand out" and adults connect this to a feeling of disturbance and unpleasantness. This view that adults carry, will often be shared with younger children in lessons aiming for their children not to *become* "hanging youths".

## 7.5. Summary

In this analysis chapter, I focused on children using places related to their identity that mainly focussed on age. In addition, children's generational relations and how this influenced their sense of place within places were analysed as well. Stakeholders in the neighbourhood relate children's age towards a decrease in participation from

neighbourhood activities and associated "growing up" with family responsibilities and at risk of not staying "on the right track". Sara seems to fit in the narrative of the stakeholders' perspective in which participation decreases when children go to high school. However, I suggest that Sara did not relate her decrease in participation to age and cultural expectations but rather to the educational demands of her new school. I argue that the role she has within her family, is not something she sees as interfering with her school and participation but is just a matter of fact for her. Moreover, Liam and David position their age within a global north perspective on childhood in which they are still "becoming" teenagers and adults whilst they are "being" a child at their current age. Liam and David are choosing to not go to certain areas in the neighbourhood or to not interact with certain people because of their age. At the same time, they both express that they expect their navigation and interaction in the neighbourhood will change alongside their age. For Liam and David, the interaction with adults seem to relate to the need for supervision. Within their descriptions of age, Liam, and David value the "competent" adult within the neighbourhood. Therefore, it appears as if they are describing a certain social order which influences which places they go to and with who they do, or do not, interact (see Alanen, 2009). Sara on the other hand, did not describe the value of supervision she finds within adult relations, but rather places value in the social aspect of relations with adults. Lastly, the relationships with older children in the neighbourhood were often described by children with a sense of distrust: Liam, David and Sara all describe how they tend to avoid places in the neighbourhood where older children are spending time in public places.

# 8. Conclusion

The overall aim of this research was to explore how residents in a transforming neighbourhood perceive children's experiences. With this aim, I formulated three questions: 1) How do children give meaning to places in the transforming neighbourhood? 2) What role does age play in children's experiences of a transforming neighbourhood? 3) How do stakeholders view children's needs and experiences in a transforming neighbourhood? For this qualitative research I used semi-structured interviews and drawing, and photography walks as participatory methods. With these methods, I researched how children, and stakeholders who work with children, experience the transforming neighbourhood. As stated in the introduction, children's direct voices are often left out of policy documentation and a lack of participation has been expressed (De Jong & Hopman, 2022). If children's voices are included, the focus is often on institutional settings. This summary does not only aim to give a general conclusion on children's experiences in transforming neighbourhoods, but additionality an exploration on the different experiences that happen within these transformations. The three children that participated in this research show the unique and subjective experiences and meanings that one attaches to places. In the next section I will summarize my findings of the research questions. After the final summary, I will discuss the limitations of this research and present recommendations for further research.

## 8.1. Summarizing findings

The groundwork of this research rests in the new paradigm of childhood studies which highlights the agency that children practice within social structures. My research took place within a neighbourhood that is currently undergoing gentrification. Within these processes, neighbourhood organizations offer educational, afterschool and holiday activities for children mainly aged 4-12. I explored stakeholders' perspectives on these issues with the following research question: How do stakeholders view children's needs and experiences in a transforming neighbourhood? This question is intertwined with the other two research questions, and therefore was explored in chapter six and seven as well. The stakeholders shared a common perception that these organizations offered a safe place for children in which they could be themselves, receive different attention than they do at home, and to "stay out of trouble". The shared opinion amongst stakeholders seemed to be that the children benefitted from the transformations in the neighbourhood. At the same time, stakeholders shared older children were often not interested in the activities that were offered to them, or there simply were not enough activities available for this age group.

### 8.1.1. Places for creating and maintaing values

Chapter six aimed at exploring the following research question: *How do children give meaning to places in the transforming neighbourhood?* The analysis resulted from the data of semi-structured interviews, photography walks and drawings with three children and during the semi-structured interviews with stakeholders. The analysis in this chapter portrayed the diversity in different individuals' senses of place (Cresswell, 1996). Although Liam, Sara and David have factors in common such as their age, their schooling, and living environment, the way they use and portray places in the neighbourhood differ from one and other. The descriptions of places in the neighbourhood that the children gave were personal and highlighted the argument that places are subjective and can have different meanings for different people. Yet, I argue

that the meaning they attach to places in the neighbourhood coincide with a Dutch perspective of childhood. Within the experiences of the children, there seems to be a common value related towards the feeling of safety. However, the places where children experience this sense of safety varies. Sara related her feeling of safety towards neighbourhood organizations specifically created for children. On the other hand, David emphasized the need for a place to be quiet and offer adult supervision. Lastly, Liam tended to use or avoid places depending on the individuals that he associated with certain places.

The analysis reveals that children's sense of place is not limited to places specifically created for them (places for children) but also includes how they use other spaces in relation to their identity. Children give meaning to places by relating towards a certain place or person but can also give meaning by relating a place to "who they are not" (e.g., people on the street, older children hanging around in places). The stakeholders described the neighbourhood organizations as places in which they prioritize safety, attention, and the right to play which align with childhood values in the global north. While not all children make use of the neighbourhood organizations, they seem to share the same values as the stakeholders for why they choose specific places to spend time in (e.g., feeling of safety, quietness, supervision).

In addition to these values, the stakeholders express a certain gap for older children who have lived in the neighbourhood for a long time. Similarly, there is an awareness from stakeholders that older children in the neighbourhood may not value the organizations as younger children in the neighbourhood do and notice a feeling of discontent with the changes in the neighbourhood amongst older children. The children within the research described that they approached interactions with older children cautiously. They chose to avoid interactions with certain groups of children. Thus, they related a place to a certain group of people and in turn attached a meaning to the place that they do not want to be associated with. Stakeholders expressed how older children within the neighbourhood are often seen as disruptive by hanging out in public places and are regarded as a threat or an annoyance by residents in the neighbourhood. Additionally, the value attached to adults being in public places to offer supervision was expressed. Within this description, the stakeholders and children are associating social identities of "supervisors" and "disruptive teens" to places within the neighbourhood. The social identities of teens in public places are creating spaces that children hold negative associations towards (Valentine, 2016).

### 8.1.2. Children's expectations towards age

Chapter seven focussed on the second question: *What role does age play in children's experiences of a transforming neighbourhood?* During my conversations with the children, it became apparent that all participants had certain expectations towards their age when discussing their experiences in the neighbourhood. When focussing on participants aged 10-12, their expectations are related towards a time for play, protection, schooling, and becoming more independent in preparation for secondary schooling (Bucx, 2011). The stakeholders argue that during the transition from primary to secondary school a decrease in participation from these children occurs.

I argue that the way children in this research use places are influenced by their expectations they have to their own age. For Sara, her decrease in participation was indirectly linked to her age as she had to go to secondary school. She emphasized that

the decrease was primarily due to the workload she had at school. However, the analysis shows that Sara's Syrian family context encourages her to have a larger responsibility within her family. Liam and David portray themselves here as "becoming" and talk about generational relations within the neighbourhood in a different way than Sara does. They restrict themselves from going to certain places or do not partake in certain interactions as they do not feel the need, or perhaps, permission that is appropriate for their current phase of life. The analysis of my conversations with Liam and David showed how they expect they will not only navigate the neighbourhood differently, but also behave differently when they reach a certain age. Expectations of supervision and interactions with adults that they now have as children, are expected to change throughout their phases of life. Sara on the other hand, did not share information that seemed as if she was anticipating a change in behaviour and navigation alongside her age. These three stories reflect two children whose narratives fit into that of a classic global north childhood whilst Sara's duties within her childhood differentiate from that of a traditional Dutch upbringing.

The boundaries children create within their neighbourhood experiences are related to their own expectations of their age and of those around them. The conversations with the stakeholders imply that the organizations are reinforcing the Dutch contextual expectations towards these children's age by offering a place for children to play, learn and be safe. Within these values, stakeholders also appear to be using the activities as preventive measures to keep them on the right track and to offer them a safe space. Within this context, children's experiences within the neighbourhood are linked to their understanding of how they should be "doing" age (Sørenssen, 2014).

### 8.1.3. Gentrification through the global north perspectives

The findings reveal how traditional values from the global north are being reproduced within the neighbourhood transformations. The stakeholders within the neighbourhood perceived children's experiences through this global north lens in which key values such as safety, protection, and the practice of "being a child" were prioritized. These global views within the neighbourhood seem to be socially produced by the children within this research by relating their sense of place to neighbourhood institutions or disassociating themselves from "people of the street" or going to places where adult supervision is available. Therefore, I argue that within this transforming neighbourhood, the dominant model of childhood is being reproduced through neighbourhood organizations. This is not a critique, but rather a reflection of values that are aimed to be incorporated into neighbourhood policies during gentrification. Values such as keeping children off the street, letting children be children and not taking on family duties are all reflections of childhood in the minority world leaving other values or actions within the neighbourhood as something that needs to be addressed by neighbourhood intervention.

As stated in the background, the Netherlands utilizes the UNCRC to recognize rights of Dutch children. However, as Kjørholt (2013) argues, the UNCRC tends to have a focus on a global north perspective of childhood in which individualism and protection is often prioritized over collective values of family and community. Therefore, when observing the transformations in the neighbourhood through a rights-based perspective, the gentrification processes seem to evaluate the best interest of the child through a western perspective. The value of safety, protection and participation are values that the

stakeholders (and children) often mentioned and are also keywords that are important concepts within the UNCRC.

## 8.2. Strengths and Limitations

My reflections throughout the year whilst designing, carrying out, and analysing the research data has allowed me to gain a perspective on aspects of this research that worked well and aspects that could be regarded as weaknesses. Within this research, when reflecting on the past year, I realise that a lot of the strengths of my research are an indirect consequence of the limitations that I encountered during the process. Therefore, I will write about the limitations and strengths simultaneously as I experienced these characteristics alongside each other and did not regard them as isolated factors.

During the first month of the research when I was trying to access the field, I had a difficult time finding participants as the summer holidays had just ended. This meant that many schools and neighbourhood institutions were just starting up the year and understandably prioritized getting to know the children first and settling them into a new routine before including an outsider for research. Furthermore, because I was trying to contact organizations in the Netherlands whilst being in Norway, it was harder to arrange meetings through emails and phone calls. My original aim was to conduct research with 5-6 children between the ages of 10-16 years old, however I ended up conducting research with 3 children between the ages of 10-12 years old. After speaking to stakeholders in the neighbourhood, I realize that most children that participate in neighbourhood organizations are usually children that still attend primary school and I had a harder time reaching children in secondary school. In addition, I think in order for older children to gain interest in this research, I should have worked within the field for multiple months to gain more rapport before asking them to participate in research. As Christensen (2004) states, the vulnerability of any research is the reliance it has on people to want to take part in the research. An element of trust is needed which is established by building rapport over a period of time. In Dutch academic contexts, it is common to write your thesis based on an internship that you are participating in for six months. With this internship the researcher and people around them, gain more familiarity with one another. I think that my short visit without participating in the institutions, placed extra emphasis on my outsider role and made (older) children, hesitant to join the research. I noticed that when I was asking children, ages 11-13, to participate in my research, they would base their response off the reaction of their peers. In the contexts I found myself in, I experienced that one child saying no to my research, snowballed into other children saying no as well. I experienced this as a big limitation in my research as I wanted to follow Brinkmann & Kvale (2015) of having at least 5 participants within qualitative research.

With my limitation of having 3 child participants, I decided to work with stakeholders as well. I reformulated my research aim and questions and realized during the process that including the stakeholders gave me a new strength within the research for multiple reasons. Firstly, my aim to explore how children experience the changes in the neighbourhood would be enhanced by exploring how stakeholders viewed the same topic. By including stakeholders' perspectives in the research, a clearer understanding has been given between the relation of children's experiences in the neighbourhood and the perspectives of stakeholders. If stakeholders, and policy makers, are aware of children's

experiences in the neighbourhood, a clearer representation for children can be formulated in policy documents. As discussed in the methodology chapter, I was aware that including adults into children-centred research is at risk of overshadowing children's voices (Ennew et al., 2009). However, as I was conducting research as an outsider within a certain community, I found that exploring different perspectives on the same topic in the neighbourhood were necessary for gaining a deeper understanding of the community picture. By including the stakeholders, I was aware of the lack of recognition within the new paradigm of childhood studies between children's agency and the social relations around them and how these factors are interdependent to each other (Punch, 2020). Therefore, by including the stakeholders and the children's perspectives, I was including children's agency in sharing their experiences within the neighbourhood and was able to place their agency with how individuals within the neighbourhood structures viewed their experiences.

Additionally, when reviewing the collected data and the transcription process, more follow-up questions could have been asked. Especially during the first activities with the children I realize that I was occupied with creating a comfortable atmosphere in which children did not feel pressured to answer sensitive questions, but in hindsight I think this made me lose valuable data that could have given me a deeper insight into certain issues. For instance, I realized that I would become nervous if there were long pauses of silence even though I knew prior to conducting research that "silence" is not a negative aspect of interview dialogues. My first experience of conducting qualitative data and analysing this through NVIVO allowed me to learn a lot about my own weaknesses and potential pitfalls during the collection of data and I have a clearer idea of factors that I would adjust the next time I conduct research.

## 8.3. Further recommendations

The aim of this research focussed on children's experiences in a transforming neighbourhood. This is a very broad topic that could be narrowed down for further research. For instance, as was discussed in chapter three, I only touched upon a few aspects of children's identity related to their neighbourhood experiences: age and, briefly, culture. However, children's identities do not only relate to their age but also to their gender, race, class, religion and so on (Alanen, 2009). For further research I recommend additional research into the intersectional aspects of children's experiences in the neighbourhood as it acknowledges the multitude of children's experiences within social structures (Alanen, 2016). To do this, I recommend Alanen's (2016) call for placing children's intersectionality within multiple social constructs: not only within the neighbourhood, but also on larger scales within political, historical, and social structures. Furthermore, the argument made for the neighbourhood undergoing gentrification through a global north childhood model should be explored within other neighbourhoods within the Netherlands. It could be valuable to research children's experiences in gentrified neighbourhoods on a larger scale within a multitude of Dutch neighbourhoods to explore the underlying values towards children's experiences in gentrified neighbourhoods. Lastly, as I argue that the gentrification processes align with UNCRC articles, further research into children's participation within neighbourhood projects and policies to explore their right to participate should be conducted.

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# Appendices

**Appendix 1:** Confirmation from NSD

**Appendix 2:** Letter of information for children **(**English)

**Appendix 3:** Letter of information for children (Dutch)

**Appendix 4:** Letter of information for stakeholders (English)

**Appendix 5:** Letter of information for stakeholders (Dutch)

**Appendix 6:** Letter of information for parents (English)

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**Appendix 8:** Interview guide (Dutch)

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## **Appendix 1:** Confirmation from NSD



Sikt

Notification form / How do youths from low-income households experience the n... / Assessment

# Assessment of processing of personal data

| Reference number | Assessment type | Date |
|---|---|---|
| 980850 | Standard | 31.10.2022 |

**Project title**
How do youths from low-income households experience the neighbourhood within a gentrified urban area?

**Data controller (institution responsible for the project)**
Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet / Fakultet for samfunns- og utdanningsvitenskap (SU) / Institutt for pedagogikk og livslang læring

**Project leader**
Linn Lorgen

**Student**
Jessica Verheijen

**Project period**
01.07.2022 - 23.06.2023

**Categories of personal data**
General

**Legal basis**
Consent (General Data Protection Regulation art. 6 nr. 1 a)

The processing of personal data is lawful, so long as it is carried out as stated in the notification form. The legal basis is valid until 23.06.2023.

Notification Form

**Comment**
Data Protection Services has assessed the change registered on 30.11.22. A new sample has been added.

We find that the processing of personal data in this project is lawful and complies with data protection legislation, so long as it is carried out as described in the Notification Form with dialogue and attachments.

FOLLOW-UP OF THE PROJECT
We 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!

## **Appendix 2:** Letter of information for children (English)

### Information letter for children

I am doing my school project in Norway and would like to involve you. I want to know how you and other children experience the neighbourhood you live in. For example, I would like to know what places in the neighbourhood make you feel happy and welcome and what places you perhaps not go to because you find it boring or do not find it children friendly.

To do this project, we will do several activities together. You will be able to decide what to do in these activities and what to show me, because you know your neighbourhood best.

1. First, we will start with a drawing activity. I will ask you to draw something that comes to mind when you think of your neighbourhood. I will draw something about my neighbourhood too and we can ask each other questions.
2. Next, I will ask you to make a map of your neighbourhood. On the map I would like to see how you see different places in your neighbourhood. Where do you like to play? Where do adults and younger children hang out?
3. During the third activity I will give you a disposable camera on which you can take pictures of in the neighbourhood. I will ask you to take pictures of places that you feel happy and safe in, and places where you like to play.
4. Lastly, we will have an interview together. We did so many activities together that I will have questions about all the things that you showed me.

During these activities there are no right or wrong answers. Everything you say is important to me.

The answers that you gave me, I will use for my school project if you allow me too. You may tell me if you want to see, change, or delate answers you gave me after we did the activities.

All the answers you gave me will be anonymous. That means that nobody at my school or in your neighbourhood will know what answers you gave me.

When I have finished my school project, I will delete all the recordings I have on my computer.

And remember, you can change your mind about joining with the research at any time.

This project may help adults in the local government and the neighbourhood understand better how children experience living here. With your answers, adults may understand better how to help make your life in the neighbourhood more enjoyable for you and your friends.

Can i check you have understood what my project is about? and what you will be doing to help me if you say yes?

If you want to ask me anything about the project, you can contact me directly on 0611968240 or speak to me next time you see me.

I will give you a letter of agreement which explains the things we talked about today. I would like for you to take this letter home and you can discuss your decision with your

parents/caretakers. If you want to be a part of this research, and your parents allow it, can you ask them to sign the form and return it to me?

If you are happy to participate in my school project, could you sign this paper please?

Participant's name _____

Signature of participant _____

Signature of researcher _____

Date _____

**Appendix 3:** Letter of information for children (Dutch)

Beste participant,

Ik ben bezig met mijn schoolproject in Noorwegen en ik zou hiervoor graag met jou samenwerken! Ik wil graag weten hoe jij jouw buurt ervaart. Welke plaatsen in de wijk vind jij fijn en kom je graag? En zijn er misschien plekken in de buurt die je minder fijn vindt of niet “kindvriendelijk” vindt?

Om antwoorden op deze vragen te geven, zouden we samen activiteiten uitvoeren. Jij mag zelf bepalen hoe je de activiteiten uit wilt voeren en wat je mij wilt vertellen. Jij kent jouw buurt het beste.
Dit is wat we zouden doen:

1. Je gaat een kaart van jouw buurt maken. Je mag zelf beslissen hoe je de kaart wilt maken. Niks is dus goed of fout. Op je kaart kun je bijvoorbeeld tekenen waar jij graag komt, of waar je vrienden graag komen. Misschien wil je ook delen wat je juist superirritant vindt.
2. Tijdens de tweede activiteit nemen we een korte wandeling door de buurt. Tijdens de wandeling krijg je van mij een wegwerpcamera. Tijdens de wandeling vraag ik je om foto’s te maken van plekken in de buurt waar jij je veilig en blij voelt.
3. Als laatste zou ik je nog graag willen interviewen. Na de twee activiteiten heb ik waarschijnlijk veel vragen voor je door alles wat je me hebt laten zien.

Tijdens deze activiteiten zijn er geen goede of slechte antwoorden. Alles wat je mij vertelt vind ik belangrijk. Het is ook jouw keus om sommige dingen wel of niet met mij te delen.

De antwoorden die je me tijdens de activiteiten geeft, gebruik ik voor mijn schoolproject. Je mag me altijd vragen om je antwoorden te bekijken en deze te veranderen of verwijderen. Al je antwoorden blijven ook anoniem. Dat betekent dat niemand van mijn school, jouw buurt en familie de antwoorden mag bekijken.
Wanneer ik klaar ben met mijn schoolproject, zal ik alle opnames van jouw antwoorden verwijderen van mijn computer.

En belangrijk: tijdens het onderzoek mag je altijd aangeven wanneer je niet meer mee wilt doen. Dan stoppen we meteen.

Met dit project wil ik de stad Eindhoven en alle volwassenen die in Eindhoven wonen, laten zien hoe jij als kind de buurt ziet. Met jouw antwoorden, kunnen volwassenen beter begrijpen wat jij in de buurt nodig hebt.

Als je vragen voor me hebt, mag je me altijd bellen op: 0611968240
Je mag er ook voor kiezen om me te spreken wanneer je me weer ziet.

Als je interesse hebt, geef ik je een informatiebrief mee naar huis die je thuis laat zien. Daar kan je nog met een ouder/verzorger praten over jouw beslissing om wel of niet mee te doen aan het project. Als je graag mee wilt doen aan dit project, en je ouders/verzorgers het ook

goed vinden, moeten ze de informatiebrief ondertekenen. Kun je de ondertekende brief dan aan mij teruggeven?
Als je graag mee wilt doen aan mijn schoolproject, zou je de brief dan willen ondertekenen?

Naam _____

Handtekening _____

Handtekening onderzoekster _____

Datum _____

## **Appendix 4:** Letter of information for stakeholders (English)

This is an inquiry about your participation in a research project where the main purpose is to explore how children (10-12) experience living in a neighbourhood undergoing change in the Netherlands. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

**Purpose of the project**

The following information is about a research project for my master thesis at Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, Norway. For this research, I have conducted research for 3-4 weeks in the Netherlands about experiences from children in Neighbourhood X. Neighbourhood X has been undergoing many changes in recent years and will most likely continue to do so. More houses are being built, and the people moving in and out of the neighbourhood is changing as well. In several news articles, long-term residents of neighbourhood X express that they feel like their neighbourhood is changing. Some are happy with the changes and notice improvements, whilst others feel like they don't fit in to these new changes within. This research would like to explore perspectives on children's experiences and perceptions within the transforming neighbourhood. So far in previous reports, much of the focus has been related to the experiences and improvements within the school environment for children, however, there has been less focus on children's sense of belonging within the neighbourhood. Next to researching with children about their experiences, this research aims to explore how stakeholders views the experiences of children within the neighbourhood as well. Involving perspectives from stakeholders and children within the neighbourhood, allows for potential misinterpretations and gaps of knowledge and experiences between children and stakeholders to be identified. As the neighbourhood will continue to undergo change with different policies, housing and activities being implemented, it is important to understand if the child's perspective aligns with those of the stakeholders who they see on a daily basis.

**Who is responsible for the research project?**

*The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)* is the institution responsible for the project. This research will also be supervised by Linn C. Lorgen who is a researcher and professor at NTNU.

**Why are you being asked to participate**

For this research, I want to learn about your perspective on how you view children's experiences within the neighbourhood. Within the neighbourhood, you are a stakeholder who plays an important role within the daily lives of many children within the neighbourhood. As you see children on a regular basis, I am curious of what your perspectives on children's experiences in the neighbourhood may be.

**What does participation involve for you?**

For this research, semi-structured interview will be held: You will be asked questions about your perspective and opinion on children's feeling of belonging and identity in the neighbourhood. The information during this method will be collected with audio recording. The audio recordings will not be shared with anybody else. All recordings will be transcribed onto paper whilst keeping all personal information anonymous. After the research has ended, all audio recordings will be deleted.

**Participation is voluntary**
Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

**Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data**

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act). (Only I will have access to personal data and will be stored on NTNU server (password protected)

In the publication of my research, your name will not be used.

**What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?**

The project is scheduled to end 23/06/2023. All the personal data from the audio recordings will not be shared with anybody else. Only the researcher has access to the recordings. After the research has ended, the recordings will be deleted. The written info that will be based off the recordings, will remain anonymous as well.

**Your rights**
So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:
- access the personal data that is being processed
- request that your data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

**What gives us the right to process your personal data?**
We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

**Where can I find out more?**
If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, you can contact me:

- By email: jessicve@stud.ntnu.no or by telephone: +31611968240
- My project leader at Norwegian University of Science and Technology: Linn C. Lorgen by email: linn.c.lorgen@ntnu.no
- Our Data Protection Officer: Thomas Helgesen, by email (Thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no) or by telephone: +4793079038
- Data Protection Services, by email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Jessica Verheijen

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## Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project: Exploring perspectives on children's experiences and perceptions within a transforming neighbourhood and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent to:

- ☐ to participate in *the semi-structured interview*

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. *23-06-2023*

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(Signed by participant, date)

## **Appendix 5:** Letter of information for stakeholders (Dutch)

**Informatie over deelname aan het onderzoeksproject: Verkenning van perspectieven op de ervaringen van kinderen in een transformerende buurt**

Dit is een informatiebrief waarin u informatie vindt over mijn afstudeerproject. Met mijn onderzoek wil ik graag onderzoeken hoe kinderen de wijk Woensel-West ervaren met betrekking tot hun gevoel van erbij horen. Hierin neem ik ook de perspectieven van bewoners en belanghebbende mee die regelmatig contact hebben met kinderen in de buurt.

**Doel van het project**

De volgende informatie betreft een onderzoeksproject voor mijn masterscriptie aan de Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, Noorwegen. Voor dit onderzoek heb ik 4 weken in Nederland onderzoek gedaan naar ervaringen van kinderen in Woensel-West. Woensel-West heeft de afgelopen jaren veel veranderingen ondergaan. De vele buurtinitiatieven en de veranderingen binnen en buiten de wijk krijgen veel aandacht en ik wil weten hoe kinderen deze veranderingen beleven. Dit onderzoek is gericht op het verkennen van perspectieven op de ervaringen van kinderen in de transformerende buurt. Tijdens dit onderzoek komen meerdere onderwerpen aanbod: Hoe ervaren kinderen verschillende plaatsen in de buurt? Wat is de relatie tussen de buurt en de identiteit van kinderen? Het uiteindelijke doel is om te onderzoeken hoe kinderen de buurt ervaren met betrekking tot hun eigen beleving en gevoel van erbij horen. Daarnaast wil ik ook onderzoeken welke betekenissen zijn aan bepaalde plaatsen in de wijk geven.

Naast het onderzoeken van de eigen ervaringen van kinderen, wil ik aan de hand van dit onderzoek ook onderzoeken hoe bewoners (en belanghebbende) de ervaringen van kinderen in de buurt interpreteren. Belanghebbenden in dit onderzoek zijn vrijwilligers die in de buurt werken of leraren die op scholen of naschoolse activiteiten werken. Door de perspectieven van belanghebbenden en kinderen in de buurt te betrekken, kunnen verschillende interpretaties, overeenkomsten en perspectieven tussen kinderen en belanghebbenden worden geïdentificeerd.

**Wie is verantwoordelijk voor het onderzoeksproject?**

De Noorse Universiteit voor Wetenschap en Technologie (NTNU) is de instelling die verantwoordelijk is voor het project. Dit onderzoek zal ook worden begeleid door Linn C. Lorgen, onderzoeker en hoogleraar bij NTNU.

**Waarom word u gevraagd om mee te doen?**

Voor dit onderzoek wil ik meer te weten komen over uw kijk op de ervaringen van kinderen in de buurt. Binnen de buurt ben je een bewoner die een belangrijke rol speelt in het dagelijks leven van veel kinderen in de buurt. Omdat je regelmatig kinderen ziet, ben ik benieuwd wat jouw kijk op de ervaringen van kinderen in de buurt is.

**Wat houdt deelname voor u in?**

Voor dit onderzoek zal een semigestructureerd interview worden gehouden: er worden vragen gesteld over uw perspectief en mening over het gevoel van verbondenheid en identiteit van kinderen in de buurt.

De informatie tijdens deze methode wordt verzameld met audio-opname. De audio-opnames worden met niemand anders gedeeld. Alle opnames worden getranscribeerd in tekstverwerkingssoftware. Alle persoonlijke informatie blijft anoniem. Na afloop van het onderzoek worden alle audio-opnames verwijderd.

**Deelname is vrijwillig**

Deelname aan het project is vrijwillig. Als u ervoor heeft gekozen om deel te nemen, kunt u uw toestemming op elk moment intrekken zonder het delen van een reden. Alle informatie over jou wordt dan geanonimiseerd.

**Uw persoonlijke privacy - hoe we uw persoonlijke gegevens opslaan en gebruiken**

Wij zullen uw persoonsgegevens alleen gebruiken voor de in deze informatiebrief genoemde doel(en). Wij verwerken uw persoonsgegevens vertrouwelijk en in overeenstemming met de AVG-wetgeving (de Algemene Verordening Gegevensbescherming en de Wet Persoonsgegevens). (Alleen ik heb toegang tot persoonlijke gegevens. De gegevens worden opgeslagen op de NTNU-server (beveiligd met een wachtwoord)

**Bij de publicatie van mijn onderzoek wordt uw naam niet gebruikt.**

Wat gebeurt er met uw persoonsgegevens aan het einde van het onderzoeksproject?

Het project loopt tot 23/06/2023. Alle persoonsgegevens van de audio-opnames worden met niemand anders gedeeld. Alleen de onderzoekster heeft toegang tot de opnames. Na afloop van het onderzoek worden de opnames verwijderd. De schriftelijke informatie die op de opnamen wordt gebaseerd, blijft ook anoniem.

**Jouw rechten**

Zolang u in de verzamelde gegevens kunt worden geïdentificeerd, heeft u het recht om:

- toegang te krijgen tot de persoonlijke gegevens die wordt verwerkt

- te verzoeken om uw gegevens te laten verwijderen

- te verzoeken om correctie/rectificatie van onjuiste persoonsgegevens

- een kopie van uw persoonlijke gegevens te ontvangen (dataportabiliteit), en

- een klacht in te dienen bij de functionaris voor gegevensbescherming of de Noorse gegevensbeschermingsautoriteit met betrekking tot de verwerking van uw persoonlijke gegevens

**Wat geeft ons het recht om uw persoonsgegevens te verwerken?**

Wij verwerken uw persoonsgegevens op basis van uw toestemming.Op basis van een overeenkomst met de Norwegian University of Science and Technology heeft Data Protection Services beoordeeld dat de verwerking van persoonsgegevens in dit project in overeenstemming is met de wetgeving inzake gegevensbescherming.

**Waar kan ik meer te weten komen?**

Als u vragen heeft over het project, of uw rechten wilt uitoefenen, kunt u contact met mij opnemen:

• Via e-mail: jessicve@stud.ntnu.no of telefonisch: +31611968240

• Mijn projectleider aan de Noorse Universiteit voor Wetenschap en Technologie: Linn C. Lorgen per e-mail: linn.c.lorgen@ntnu.no

• Onze functionaris voor gegevensbescherming: Thomas Helgesen, per e-mail (Thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no) of per telefoon: +4793079038

• Gegevensbeschermingsdiensten, per e-mail: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) of per telefoon: +47 53 21 15 00.

Met vriendelijke groeten,

Jessica Verheijen

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**Toestemmingsformulier**

Ik heb informatie ontvangen en begrepen over het project: perspectieven verkennen op de ervaringen en percepties van kinderen binnen een transformerende buurt en heb de mogelijkheid gekregen om vragen te stellen. Ik geef hierbij toestemming voor het volgende:

• Mijn deelname aan het semigestructureerde interview

Ik geef toestemming voor de verwerking van mijn persoonsgegevens tot de einddatum van het project, ca. 23-06-2023

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(Getekend door deelnemer, datum)

## **Appendix 6:** Letter of information for parents (English)

This is an inquiry about participation for your child in a research project where the main purpose is to explore how children experience living in a neighbourhood undergoing change in the Netherlands. In this letter I will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your child's participation will involve.

### Purpose of the project

The following information is about a research project for my master thesis in childhood studies at Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, Norway. For this research, I will conduct research for 3-4 weeks in the Netherlands about experiences from youths in Neighbourhood X. Neighbourhood X has been undergoing many changes in recent years and will most likely continue to do so. More houses are being built, and the people moving in and out of the neighbourhood is changing as well. In several news articles, long-term residents of neighbourhood X express that they feel like their neighbourhood is changing. Some are happy with the changes and notice improvements, whilst others feel like they don't fit in to these new changes within. This research would like to explore how youths view the changes in their neighbourhood and how this influences their feeling of belonging within.

Different topics will be explored such as: How do children experience space in their neighbourhood? What is the relation between neighbourhood and children's identity? These questions will aim to understand how youths view different areas in their neighbourhood and how they use or not use them.

### Who is responsible for the research project?

*The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)* is the institution responsible for the project. This research will also be supervised by Linn C. Lorgen who is an associate at NTNU.

### Why is your child being asked to participate?

For this research, I would like to work with youths between the ages of 11-16. I want to work with youths who live in this neighbourhood as they may navigate the neighbourhood independently and view the neighbourhood in certain ways. This research will include 8-10 youths who will be participants.

### What does participation involve for your child?

For this research several methods will be used to explore the research aim and questions. The methods will involve 4 different activities that your child will do independently: drawing, mapping, photography walk and a semi-structured interview.

- Drawing: This will be a warm-up activity where your child will be introduced to the topic. We will get to know each other, and your child will be asked to draw something that makes them think about their neighbourhood. This could be their home, a playground, a school etc.
- Mapping: Children will make a (not to scale) map of the neighbourhood. On this map they will categorize sections of the neighbourhood in the way they view the neighbourhood. For example, one area they may assign as a place "for children" whilst a café on a street may in their eyes be a place where they do not often go and find it more fitting for another group. This way, the research can explore how

children experience the feeling of belonging in different parts of the neighbourhood.
- Photography walk: Your child will be given a disposable camera and will go on a neighbourhood walk with the researcher. During this walk the child will take pictures of buildings and locations that have a certain meaning to them (or no meaning at all). Children will be instructed not to take pictures of themselves or any other individual to ensure anonymity.
- Semi-structured interview: Children will be asked questions about their feeling of belonging and identity in the neighbourhood. Parents will have the option to read the interview guide upon request.

The information during these methods will be collected with audio recording. The audio recordings will not be shared with anybody else. All recordings will be transcribed onto paper whilst keeping all personal information anonymous. After the research has ended, all audio recordings will be deleted.

**Participation is voluntary**
Participation in the project is voluntary. If you and your child choses to participate, you and your child can withdraw consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about your child will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for your child if they chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

**Your child's personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data**

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your child's personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act). (Only I will have access to personal data and will be stored on NTNU server (password protected)

In the publication of my research, your child's name will not be used. Any pictures that show personal information will not be used for the research. Any information about third parties, such as friends and family, that your child may discuss will not be revealed.

**What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?**

The project is scheduled to end 23/06/2023. All the personal data from the audio recordings will not be shared with anybody else. Only the researcher has access to the recordings. After the research has ended, the recordings will be deleted. The written info that will be based off the recordings, will remain anonymous as well.

**Your child's rights**
So long as your child can be identified in the collected data, you and your child have the right to:
- access the personal data that is being processed about your child
- request that your child's personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about your child is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your child's personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your child's personal data

**What gives us the right to process your child's personal data?**
We will process your child's personal data based on your and your child's consent.

Based on an agreement with Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

**Where can I find out more?**
If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, you can contact me:

- By email: jessicve@stud.ntnu.no or by telephone: +31611968240
- My project leader at Norwegian University of Science and Technology: Linn C. Lorgen by email: linn.c.lorgen@ntnu.no
- Our Data Protection Officer: Thomas Helgesen, by email (Thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no) or by telephone: +4793079038
- Data Protection Services, by email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Jessica Verheijen

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## Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project: How do children from low-income households experience the neighborhood within a gentrified urban area? and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent for my child:

- ☐ to participate in *the individual drawing activity*
- ☐ to participate in *the mapping activity*
- ☐ to participate in *the photography walk*
- ☐ to participate in *the semi-structured interview*

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. *23-06-2023*

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(Signed by participant, date)

## **Appendix 7:** Letter of information for parents (Dutch)

Beste ouders/verzorgers,

Dit is een informatiebrief waarin ik toestemming vraag om uw kind mee te laten werken aan mijn afstudeerproject voor mijn studie Kinderstudies. Met mijn onderzoek wil ik graag onderzoeken hoe kinderen de buurt ervaren met betrekking tot hun gevoel van erbij horen. In deze brief wil ik graag informatie delen over het doel van het project en hoe de samenwerking met uw kind eruit zou zien.

**Doel van het project**

De volgende informatie gaat over een onderzoeksproject voor mijn masterscriptie in kinderstudies aan de Noorse Universiteit voor Wetenschap en Technologie (NTNU) in Trondheim, Noorwegen. Voor dit onderzoek ga ik 3-4 weken onderzoek doen naar ervaringen van kinderen in Woensel-west. Woensel West heeft de afgelopen jaren veel veranderingen ondergaan.  De vele buurtinitiatieven en de veranderingen binnen en buiten de wijk krijgen veel aandacht en ik wil weten hoe kinderen deze veranderingen beleven.

Tijdens dit onderzoek komen meerdere onderwerpen aanbod: Hoe ervaren kinderen verschillende plaatsen in de buurt? Wat is de relatie tussen de buurt en de identiteit van kinderen? Het uiteindelijke doel is om te onderzoeken hoe kinderen de buurt ervaren met betrekking tot hun eigen beleving en gevoel van erbij horen. Daarnaast wil ik ook onderzoeken welke betekenissen zijn aan bepaalde plaatsen in de wijk geven.

**Wie is verantwoordelijk voor het onderzoek?**

De Noorse Universiteit voor Wetenschap en Technologie (NTNU) is de instelling die verantwoordelijk is voor het project. Dit onderzoek zal ook worden begeleid door Linn C. Lorgen, een medewerker van NTNU en mijn thesis begeleidster.

**Waarom wordt uw kind gevraagd om deel te nemen aan het onderzoek?**

Voor dit onderzoek, wil ik graag met kinderen werken tussen de leeftijden 8-12 jaar oud. Ik wil graag met kinderen werken die in Woensel-West wonen en steeds zelfstandiger de wijk navigeren.

**Wat betekent het voor uw kind om mee te doen aan dit onderzoek?**

Voor dit onderzoek zullen verschillende methodes worden gebruikt om het onderzoeksdoel en de onderzoeksvragen te verkennen. De methodes bestaan uit 3 verschillende activiteiten die uw kind zelfstandig zal uitvoeren: kaarten maken, een fotografiewandeling en een semigestructureerd interview.

**Kaarten maken**: Kinderen maken tijdens het eerste contact moment een kaart van de wijk. Hier kunnen ze aangeven hoe zij de wijk zien: Waar komen ze graag? Welke plaatsen vinden ze leuk? Welke plekken vinden ze minder toegankelijk? Vinden zij dat er bepaalde plekken voor verschillende leeftijden zijn?

**Fotografie**: Tijdens het tweede contact moment maken we een korte wandeling door de wijk. Tijdens de wandeling geef ik uw kind een wegwerpcamera. Tijdens de wandeling mogen de kinderen foto’s maken van plekken in de buurt waar zij een bepaalde betekenis aan hechten. Dit kan een plek zijn waar zij bijvoorbeeld graag spelen, of

vroeger regelmatig te vinden waren, maar nu juist niet. Hiervoor wordt wel afgesproken om geen mensen te fotograferen en alleen plaatsen

**Interview**: Uw kind en ik sluiten het onderzoek af met een interview. De vragen die ik stel, komen uit de kaart en fotografie opdrachten die uw kind gemaakt heeft.

De gesprekken die tijdens de methodes plaatsvinden, zullen via audio opnames opgeslagen worden. De audio opnames worden met niemand anders gedeeld. Alle opnames worden uitgeschreven waarna de opnames verwijdert zullen worden. Alle persoonlijke informatie zal anoniem blijven.

**Meedoen aan het onderzoek is vrijwillig**

Als uw kind graag meewerkt aan het onderzoek en u daar toestemming voor geeft, mogen u en uw kind ten alle tijden ervoor kiezen om met het onderzoek te stoppen. Hier hoeven u en uw kind geen rede voor te geven.

**De privacy van uw kind – Hoe wordt persoonlijke data opgeslagen?**

Wij zullen uw persoonsgegevens alleen gebruiken voor de in deze informatiebrief genoemde doel(en). Wij verwerken de persoonsgegevens van uw kind vertrouwelijk en in overeenstemming met de AVG-wetgeving (de Algemene Verordening Gegevensbescherming en de Wet Persoonsgegevens). (Alleen ik heb toegang tot persoonlijke gegevens. De gegevens worden opgeslagen op de NTNU-server (beveiligd met een wachtwoord)

Bij de publicatie van mijn onderzoek wordt de naam van uw kind niet gebruikt. Foto's die persoonlijke informatie tonen, worden niet gebruikt voor het onderzoek. Alle informatie over externe personen, zoals vrienden en familie, die uw kind misschien ter sprake brengt tijdens het onderzoek, wordt niet bekendgemaakt.

**Wat gebeurt er met uw persoonsgegevens aan het einde van het onderzoeksproject?**

Het project loopt tot 23/06/2023. Alle persoonsgegevens van de audio-opnames worden met niemand anders gedeeld. Alleen de onderzoeker heeft toegang tot de opnames. Na afloop van het onderzoek worden de opnames verwijderd. De schriftelijke informatie die gebaseerd is op de audio opnames blijft ook anoniem.

**De rechten van uw kind**

Zolang uw kind kan worden geïdentificeerd in de verzamelde gegevens, hebben u en uw kind het recht om:

- de persoonsgegevens die over uw kind worden verwerkt te bekijken

- verzoeken dat de persoonlijke gegevens van uw kind worden verwijderd

- verzoeken om onjuiste persoonsgegevens over uw kind te corrigeren.

- een kopie van de persoonsgegevens van uw kind ontvangen (gegevensoverdraagbaarheid), en

- een klacht indienen bij de functionaris voor gegevensbescherming of de Noorse gegevensbeschermingsautoriteit met betrekking tot de verwerking van de persoonsgegevens van uw kind

**Wat geeft ons het recht om de persoonsgegevens van uw kind te verwerken?**

We verwerken de persoonsgegevens van uw kind op basis van uw toestemming en die van uw kind.

Op basis van een overeenkomst met de Noorse Universiteit van Wetenschap en Technologie heeft de Data Bescherming Services beoordeeld dat de verwerking van persoonsgegevens in dit project in overeenstemming is met de AVG-wetgeving.

**Waar kan ik meer te weten komen?**

Als u vragen over het project heeft, of uw rechten wilt uitoefenen, kunt u contact met mij opnemen:

• Per e-mail: jessicve@stud.ntnu.no of telefonisch: +31611968240

• Mijn projectleider aan de Noorse Universiteit voor Wetenschap en Technologie: Linn C. Lorgen per e-mail: linn.c.lorgen@ntnu.no

• Onze functionaris voor gegevensbescherming: Thomas Helgesen, per e-mail (Thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no) of per telefoon: +4793079038

• Gegevensbeschermingsdiensten, per e-mail: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) of per telefoon: +47 53 21 15 00.

Met vriendelijke groeten,

Jessica Verheijen

**Toestemmingformulier**

Ik heb informatie ontvangen over het project en begrijp waar het onderzoek over gaat: Hoe ervaren kinderen de transformerende wijk met betrekking tot hun eigen beleving en gevoel van erbij horen? Ik heb ook de kans gekregen om eventuele vragen te stellen. Ik geef toestemming voor mijn kind:

• om deel te nemen aan de kaartactiviteit

• om deel te nemen aan de fotografiewandeling

• om deel te nemen aan het semigestructureerde interview

Ik geef toestemming voor de verwerking van mijn persoonsgegevens tot de einddatum van het project, ca. 23-06-2023

(Handtekening ouder/verzorger, datum)

**Appendix 8:** Interview guide (English)

| Structure | Question | Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| Space and place | | |
| | What area(s) in the neighbourhood do you enjoy spending time in alone or with your friends/family?<br><br>What does an area need to have (or not have) for you to like spending time there?<br><br>Why do you like spending time in this area?<br><br>Why do you like spending time in this area over (name other area where they do not spend time) | To explore what meanings children attach to a location for it to become meaningful.<br><br>To explore how stakeholders view spaces and places for children in the neighbourhood and to explore how stakeholders find that children use these places. |
| | What words would you use to describe the places you enjoy spending time at in the neighbourhood?<br><br>How do these places make you feel?<br><br>What memories do you have when you think of this place? | |
| Sense of belonging | | |
| | What does it mean to feel like you are part of a place for you?<br><br>When do you feel like you are part of a place?<br><br>When do you not feel like you are part of a place? | To explore if children express different meanings to a sense of belonging.<br><br>To explore what "requirements" are needed to belong to a place.<br><br>To explore how stakeholders find that the transformations in the neighbourhood have affected children's sense of belonging. |
| | What do you need from a place to feel like you belong there? | To explore if the places where children identify to belong to are like one and other. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | What do people in the neighbourhood do to make you feel part of a place?<br><br>What do people in in the neighbourhood do (or not do) to not make you feel like you are part of a place? | To explore how the community impacts children's sense of belonging (or not belonging). |
| Children and identity | | |
| | What is an identity according to you? Could you give an example?<br><br>How do you feel your identity changes when you are in different places in the neighbourhood where you feel a part of? (Or does it not change) | To explore if the locations that children attach meaning to, impacts their identity.<br><br>To explore if stakeholders find that the individuality of children is affected (or not) by the changes in the neighbourhood. |
| | How does a space in the neighbourhood where you do not feel a part of affect your identity? | To explore if the locations that children attach no meaning to, impacts their identity. |
| | Do you feel like you have changed because of people, events, or areas in the neighbourhood? In what way? | To explore if the demographic changes in the neighbourhood has influenced children's self-image/expression/identification |
| | How do you feel like the neighbourhood helps you express your identity? (Examples of sport groups, friends with mutual interests, block parties etc). | To explore if places in the neighbourhood help children express their identity, whilst other places may limit their expression. |

**Appendix 9:** Interview guide (Dutch)

| **Structuur** | **Vraag** | **Doel** |
|---|---|---|
| Ruimte en plekken | In welke wijk(en) in de buurt breng je graag tijd door, alleen of met je vrienden/familie?<br><br>Wat moet een plek hebben (of niet hebben) om er graag tijd door te brengen?<br><br>Waarom breng je graag tijd door in dit gebied?<br><br>Waarom breng je graag tijd door in dit gebied vergeleken met… (noem een ander gebied waar ze geen tijd doorbrengen) | Om te onderzoeken welke betekenissen kinderen aan een locatie toekennen zodat deze betekenis krijgt.<br><br>Om te onderzoeken hoe stakeholders kijken naar ruimtes en plekken voor kinderen in de buurt en onderzoeken hoe stakeholders vinden dat kinderen deze plekken gebruiken. |
| Gevoel van erbij horen | Wat betekent het voor jou om het gevoel te hebben dat je deel uitmaakt van een plek?<br><br>Wanneer heb je het gevoel dat je deel uitmaakt van een plek?<br><br>Wanneer heb je niet het gevoel dat je deel uitmaakt van een plek?<br><br>Wat heb je nodig van een plek om het gevoel te hebben dat je er thuishoort?<br><br>Wat doen mensen in de buurt om je het gevoel te geven dat je ergens bij hoort?<br><br>Wat doen mensen in de buurt (of laten ze niet) om je niet het gevoel te | Onderzoeken of kinderen verschillende betekenissen geven aan een gevoel van verbondenheid.<br><br>Om te onderzoeken welke "vereisten" nodig zijn om bij een plek te horen.<br><br>Onderzoeken hoe belanghebbenden vinden dat de transformaties in de buurt het gevoel van verbondenheid van kinderen hebben beïnvloed.<br><br>Om te onderzoeken of de plaatsen waar kinderen zich thuis voelen op elkaar lijken.<br><br>Onderzoeken hoe de gemeenschap het gevoel van verbondenheid (of niet-behoorlijkheid) van kinderen beïnvloedt. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | geven dat je deel uitmaakt van een plek? | |
| Kinderen en identiteit | Wat is een identiteit volgens jou? Kan je een voorbeeld geven?<br><br>Hoe voel je je identiteit veranderen als je op verschillende plekken in de buurt bent waar je je fijn voelt? (Of verandert het niet)<br><br>Hoe voel je je identiteit veranderen als je op verschillende plekken in de buurt bent waar je je niet fijn voelt? (Of verandert het niet)<br><br>Heb je het gevoel dat je bent veranderd door mensen, gebeurtenissen of buurten? Op welke manier?<br><br>Hoe heb je het gevoel dat de buurt je helpt je identiteit uit te drukken? (Voorbeelden van sportgroepen, vrienden met gemeenschappelijke interesses, blokfeesten enz.). | Onderzoeken of de locaties waar kinderen betekenis aan hechten, invloed hebben op hun identiteit.<br><br>Onderzoeken of belanghebbenden vinden dat de individualiteit van kinderen wordt beïnvloed (of niet) door de veranderingen in de buurt.<br><br>Onderzoeken of de locaties waar kinderen geen betekenis aan hechten, invloed hebben op hun identiteit.<br><br>Onderzoeken of de demografische veranderingen in de buurt het zelfbeeld/expressie/identificatie van kinderen hebben beïnvloed<br><br>Onderzoeken of plekken in de buurt kinderen helpen hun identiteit te uiten, terwijl andere plekken hun expressie kunnen beperken. |

**Appendix 10**: photography walk description

## **Name of research tool:** Photography walk

**Objective:** The aim for the photography walk is for children to show how they relate their identity to a certain location in the neighborhood. They may for example take pictures where they feel like a certain location does not represent “who they are” (due to class, sex, age etc.) or may capture places where they show different sides of their identity towards a certain place. In other words, children will show by taking pictures of locations “who they are” and “who they are not”

**How long will it take?** 30-60 min

**What equipment do I need?**

Digital camera

Voice recorder

**Explaining the method to the participant:**

1. You will get a disposable camera that allows you to take about 30 pictures. I ask you to not to take pictures of any people, because they did not give permission to do so.

2. We are going to go on a walk through the neighborhood together. You can take pictures of places (parks, schools, homes, offices, stores etc.) where you feel like you feel like you can be yourself. But I will also ask you to think of places where you might not feel like you can completely be yourself. An example could be, that you don’t feel like you can be yourself around the high school area because you may be too young. Only go to places that you feel comfortable doing so.

3. During the walk, you can take pictures of the places I just described. When you have taken a picture, you may tell me why you chose to take a picture. I will also ask you questions about the pictures you took, and you can answer those questions if you feel comfortable doing so.

4. I will print the pictures out. We will discuss more of the pictures during the interview. The photographs will be stored in a closed envelope so nobody else can access them or know who they are from.

**Appendix 11**: Drawing activity description

## **Name of research tool:** Children's individual drawings

| | |
|---|---|
| **Objective:** | Introductory activity where the child will get to know the researcher. The aim is for children to draw a place/people/an activity in their neighborhood that they would like to share with me. |
| **How long will it take?** | 15-30 min |

**What equipment do I need?**

Paper

Pencil

Envelopes

**Explanation for the participant**

1. Explain that the participant will draw something that they think of when they think about their neighborhood. They have the freedom to decide if this will be a person/place/activity/etc

2. The child will proceed to draw whilst I will ask questions about their drawing.

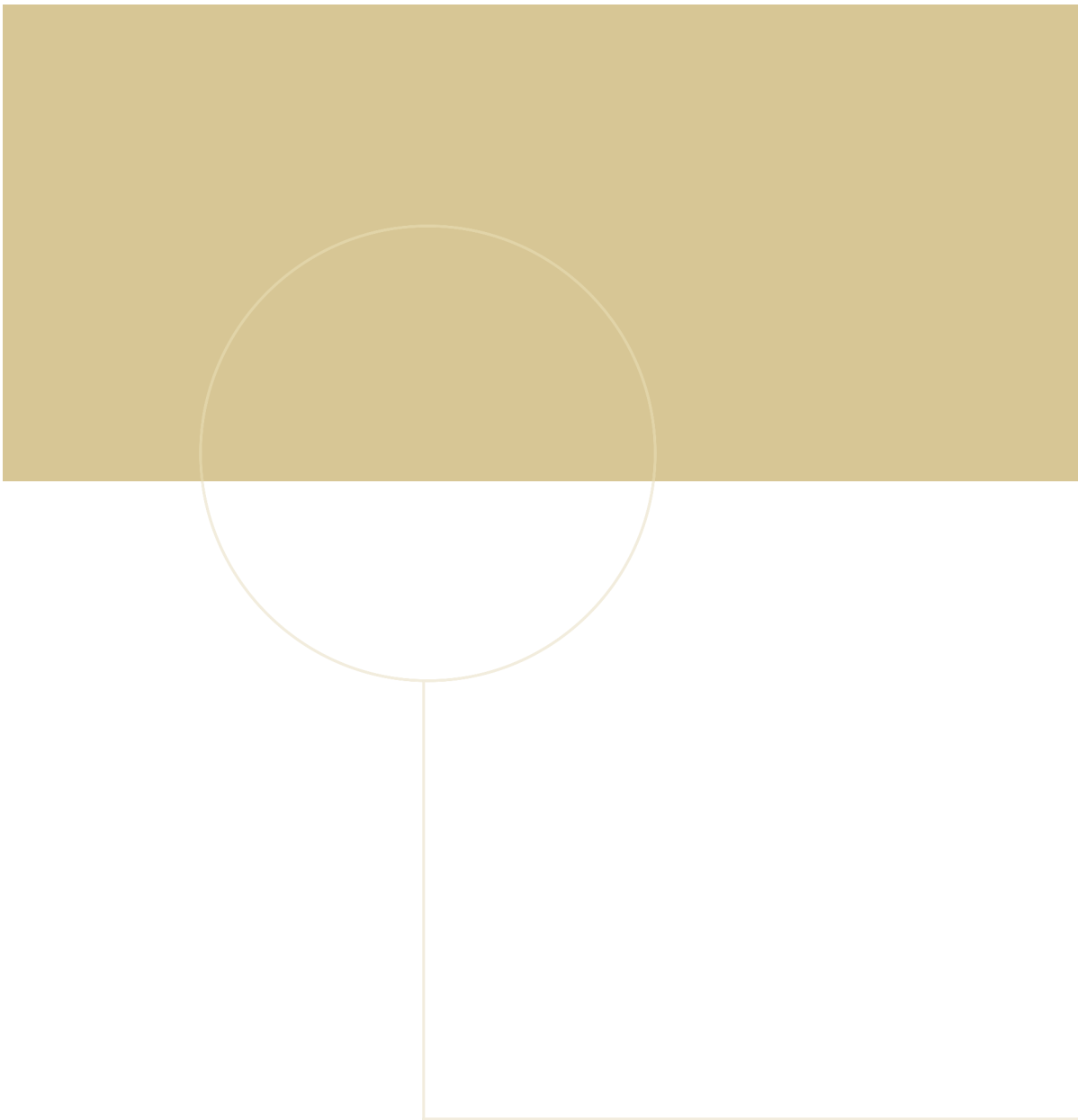
3. The children may elaborate on their drawing individually or else may be encouraged by additional questions from me.

4. Collect the forms from each child

5. When they are finished drawing, I will collect each form and ask the child to identify what he/she has drawn, and why and write this on the back of the form.

6. Check that information about year of birth, gender and 'who I live with' are completed.

7. The drawing will be placed in a sealed envelope and the name written on the envelope will be anonymized.



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