The effects of the aesthetic environment on feelings of inclusion/exclusion

Urban art in de Afrikaanderwijk

Master Thesis Proposal

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Introduction

In the eighties and nineties, the city of Rotterdam was portrayed as a degenerated place, with restlessness and poverty under the residents, inconvenience of drugs misuse and dealing and polluted street scenes with graffiti (Mandias & Liukku, 2016). This sounds a bit absurd, if you are primarily familiar with the present image of Rotterdam. At the turn of the century, the city of Rotterdam began to transform from the *ugly duckling* to a *beautiful swan*. The urban policy shaped Rotterdam into a city with a rich offer of cultural and social activities, with renovation projects of historical buildings and the renewal of city districts (Doucet, 2016). The result of this urban policy for Rotterdam, is a city internationally acknowledged for its architectural highlights, interesting art, good food and 'rawness'. This attracts new residents, businesses and tourist (Ceaser, 2017; Rotterdam Partners, 2019).

The changing perspective on street-art evolved alongside the development of Rotterdam. The transition to a global and modern city meant that there was no more place left for graffiti in the public space. According to policymakers the city centre needed to be 'polished' and underwent a big clean up. For the youth of Rotterdam this ban resulted in the emergence of the underground street culture of hip-hop oriented art (Thissen, 2007). In the last years, the city of Rotterdam changed perspective on street culture, and they embraced it as being part of the 'rawness' of Rotterdam and even incorporated it in their urban policy of the campaign 'Make it happen', as part of the gentrification of certain districts in Rotterdam. Which is different for being a top-down approach, rather than the bottom-up underground street culture is was (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.).

On the one hand these changes sound like something which is preferred, though there is a seamy side in all of this. In the case of Rotterdam, the city is aesthetically shaped to benefit the preferences and needs of the more well-provided individuals, which results in suppressing the less fortunate to the edges of the city. I am interested in this issue of inclusion and exclusion certain groups of individuals in the urban environment and in what way street-art can or cannot contribute to the feeling of inclusion or exclusion and if there is a distinction in feelings between individuals with a difference in cultural capital and ethnical background. For this research I will focus on the district Afrikaanderwijk in the south of Rotterdam, for the fact that gentrification process is set in motion by the municipality, but until now the policy-driven injections show some progress, though not the successes in comparison with the districts Katendrecht or Crooswijk. In the neighbourhood there is still, among others, a tension between the original residents and the future plans for the district, which results that Afrikaanderwijk in still in transition (Doucet & Koenders, 2018). The latter is interesting fact and a superior chance to research this neighbourhood and therefore this research aims to answer the following research question: *To what extent are changes in the urban environment in Rotterdam, more specific those related to urban art, conducive to feelings of inclusion/exclusion?*

The goal of this research is further work on the research of Doucet and Koenders (2018), and use street-art as a case-study to research the process of gentrification in the context of Rotterdam. This research will be built on interviews with residents of the Afrikaanderwijk, with different cultural capital and ethnical background.

Theory

<u>Urban art</u>

graffiti vs. street-art vs. urban art The terms graffiti, street art and urban art are often used interchangeably, where sometimes people mean the same thing, though often refer to something different. For this research, I aim on making a clear distinction between these notions, which results in a clear definition of street art in this research. According to Blanché (2015), urban art covers graffiti and street art. Even though, urban art is often used as a synonym for street art, it is seen as something different. This kind of art is mostly under commission, legal and a way of making a living for the street artists. These art works can also be seen in a museum or a gallery. Graffiti art is approached as style writing, where the focus is on name writing in the form of tags or bigger pieces on public surfaces or public transport. According to Riggle (2010) graffiti can be described 'as an artistic style that makes use of the streets as an artistic resource that contributes essentially to its meaning'. How to define street art differs, Lewinsohn (2008) approaches it very broad as the art style that is not style written, Bengtsen (2014) even states that it cannot be defined, for the fact that it is in constant flux. Though Blanché (2015) argues that

> "street art consists of self-authorized pictures, characters, and forms created in or applied to surfaces in the urban space, that intentionally seek communication with a larger circle of people. Street art is done in a performative and often site-specific, ephemeral, and participatory way." (p. 33)

For this research, I will focus on the umbrella term Urban Art, where graffiti, style writing, street art and urban art are grouped together. I choose this broader approach for the reason that I am curious what the effect is of different sorts of urban art on the feeling of inclusion or exclusion in the Afrikaanderwijk and I think that this diverse approach of urban art catches the essence of this research in the best way.

historical overview The rise of graffiti art has its origin in the 1960's in New York and Philadelphia in the United States and has a direct link with the rise of youth cultures and the popularity of hip hop. This art form is not only seen in the hip hop scene, though also plays a part in political activism. Since the beginning there is a present tension and debate between the artists and media and politics, a discussion on the question if this expression is a form of vandalism which has a negative correlation with crime (Rowe & Hutton, 2012). According to Halsey & Young (2002) urban art is often seen as both illegal and an artform, though in most cases it is placed in the frame of being a problem, for creating disorder and negatively affect the urban area. This negative approach is something that Halsey and Young refute and counter this by showing the contribution of the liveability in the urban environment and it can even be seen as an alternative way of reading the city (Ferrell, 1993).

changing perception on street-art According to Blanché (2015) most street-art is not for everyone, even though it looks like that, for the fact that it is mostly portrayed in public space. Most street artists choose locations as gentrified neighbourhoods instead of the more poor or affluent areas, as seen in New York, Berlin and London. Furthermore, he argues that street-art is less attractive to the trained art-eye, as they do not regard

to see that the streets can be approached as outdoor galleries too. On the other hand, municipalities make clear distinctions between the terms graffiti and street-art, where the latter is seen as an aesthetic value for the city, and the first is the form that strongly regulated (Ferrell, 1993).

street art and the urban environment Although the negative narrative on street art, increasingly more the notion of street art as a cultural meaningful activity and having a positive effect on the urban environment is heard more frequently. Halsey and Young (2006) mention that these works of art are ways of communicating with the city and a form of 'alternative visual reading of the city'.

street-art in Rotterdam The changing perspective on street-art evolved alongside the development of Rotterdam. In 1982, the Rotterdam Art Foundation[1] argued that graffiti was a contemporary variant of the artistic murals, though they did not perceive it as artistic interesting. This view did not reflect the whole art world, in 1982 and 1983 a handful of galleries composed expositions of graffiti masters (Thissen, 2007, p. 30). Even the established Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen designed a major survey of maker from New York and the curators assigned validity and value to this art form being present in a museum: "We believe we perceive a huge vitality, even in the tiny details. It results in overwhelmingly engrossing, beautiful paintings of fascinating directness and passion" (Beeren & Haks, 1983)

Urban identity
In the academic world the concept urban identity is often described in different ways, expressions such as 'place identity', 'sense of place', 'ethos' (Bell & de-Shalit, 2011), 'city personality' (Landry & Murray, 2017), and place character (Berger, 2016) are expression used. This changing urban identity is related to the fact the world is getting smaller, due to globalisation. A greater part of the population is more mobile, which reflects in the growth of a cosmopolitan attitude. In this expansion of one's living environment, the need to be unique is relevant (Sandholz, 2017). Uniqueness is expressed in a sense of having a particular and distinctive identity. According to Lalli (1992) and Sandholz (2017), there is a difference in the objective and subjective identity of a place. Nientied (2018) argues that interpreting the urban identity in this manner, it can be seen as "a feature of the city based on a collective attribution; each city holds its own urban identity based on its main features and constructed by a collective attribution" (p. 153). And that an urban identity is not fixed and firm, though must be seen as a process continuous and dynamic. The urban identity is not something physical (like the Markthal), a building has no identity on its own, individuals give meaning to a certain place, resulting in a feeling of identity. In addition, Harrisons (2012, p.4) argues that the urban identity and heritage are connected through the relationship with the past, present and future and the dialogue between people, practices, objects and places.

      The urban identity of Rotterdam is of importance for this research, for the fact that their feeling of belonging is nursed by the interpretation of this urban identity.

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[1] Rotterdam Art Foundation (Rotterdam Kunststichting, RKS) is the predecessor of the Rotterdam Council for Art and Culture.

Gentrification

gentrification in urban areas In 1964, the English sociologist Glass introduced the term gentrification, which presented the movement of middle-class residents to low-income neighbourhoods. This introduced a new approach to residential living. Where before residents moved out of the city to more children-centred suburbia, they were now attracted to city life with social diversity and individual freedom. This first group of gentrifiers were seen as different than other middle-class groups, for the fact that their collectiveness in values and needs and their higher educational background and occupation made them a distinctive group (Zukin, 1987).

Zukin (2016) mentions three paradoxes of gentrification, which she encountered in her decades of observing this phenomenon. The first discusses the opposition between the individual choices of gentrifiers to live in a neighbourhood with few amenities, low rents and hardly no social or ethnic relation with existing residents. And the influence of developers who see a rather cheap chance to invest in a neighbourhood and make it attractive to ensure profit. The second emphasises on the fact that even though, there is a lot of attention on the extent and impact of gentrification, the number of individuals and neighbourhoods is less significant than the issue of urban poverty[2]. The last paradox focuses on the debate of displacement in gentrified areas. When housing prices rise, original residents are pressured to move, often under pressure and by neglect of their tenants, and in their place come high-income residents. On the one hand original residents feel overwhelmed with these changes in their neighbourhood, though on the other side the residents who, can afford to, stay see the positive results of this process, as less crime, cleaner streets and more art and culture in their neighbourhood. This latter contrast corresponds with the feeling of estrangement (Atkinson, 2015, p. 377) and the appreciation and satisfaction of the changed neighbourhood (Florida, Mellander and Stolarick, 2009).

gentrification and creativity Zukin (2016) argues that expressions of arts and culture are mainly embraced by high educated – gentrifiers – and less by the lower educated residents. Furthermore, Pratt (2018) discusses the employment of creative entrepreneurs in gentrification process, for the reason that this group searches for affordable living and attract – unintentionally – other groups, which are often the higher educated, for the fact that they are attracted to the creativity of a certain are (Doucet & Koenders, 2018; Pratt, 2018).

gentrification in urban policy Gentrification is not something that emerges at once, though should be seen as concept employed to reform cities. According to Slater (2014), is can be approached as a state-led strategy, who collaborate with private developers and housing corporations. This process is seen as positive, for contributing to the improvement of the houses, the social and ethnic diversity of the residents and the mixed offer of amenities (Pratt, 2018).

gentrification in Rotterdam

art washing

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[2] It is important to note that her research is primarily focused on the United States and is no direct reflection of the situation in The Netherlands.

Inclusion/exclusion

feeling of inclusion/exclusion in the urban environment The concept of social inclusion/exclusion emerged in the seventies, as a response to the welfare crisis in Europe. The societal differences between groups and their impact became more relevant for analysis, and the debate around the term poverty changed to social inclusion/exclusion. France was the first country in Europe to employ this new approach, where later on other European countries incorporated it in their policy, all with their own focus and interpretation. In 1995, the First Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen can be seen as a starting point in embracing this concept worldwide and being part of the development discourse (Rawal, 2008).

Gaffkin and Morrissey (2010), try to unravel the complex relationship between community cohesion and social inclusion. In their research, they focused on Great Britain, where in cities as London the discussion on multicultural, inclusion/exclusion and their relation to cohesion is more relevant than in other parts in Britain. The debate about the changing urban identity increased the last decade, which can also be seen in The Netherlands and France, where disputes appeared, for example about the burqas, which is exemplifying for the increasing diversity and the importance of protecting and sustaining cohesion. They conclude three important strands; legislation, economic opportunity and a cultural dimension. For this research the latter is interesting, for the fact that they argue that mutual ideas of a shared future, understanding for the difference in cultural background and equal opportunities should play a large role in feeling included and building community cohesion. For this research it is interesting to unravel the role of urban art and its (un)existing influence in building and preserving community cohesion.

Inclusion/exclusion and gentrification According to Doucet (2009) working class neighbourhoods and communities show a strong social cohesion and the feeling of a local identity is stable, though the gentrification process affects this, for the fact that it can result in alienation and displacement for the original residents of a neighbourhood. The reason for this can be found in the aim of cultural policies to employ urban regeneration, and therefore also enhancing the visibility of the differences between the original residents, mostly lower-educated, and the new gentrifiers, mostly higher-educated, which can result in exclusion and polarisation for the less fortunate residents (Zukin, 2016). The role of arts and culture is key in gaining this sense of social inclusion and can be seen as a way to bridge the gap between the new and original residents. Though the social inclusion and exclusion of the original residents and the attracted creatives can result in problematic due to the gentrification process, certainly when the creative expressions are mainly welcomed by the gentrifiers and are rejected by the lower-income community (Glow, Johanson & Kershaw, 2014). This friction is a result of opposing values and needs between these two groups (Doucet, 2009).

street-art and inclusion/exclusion

Research question and expectations
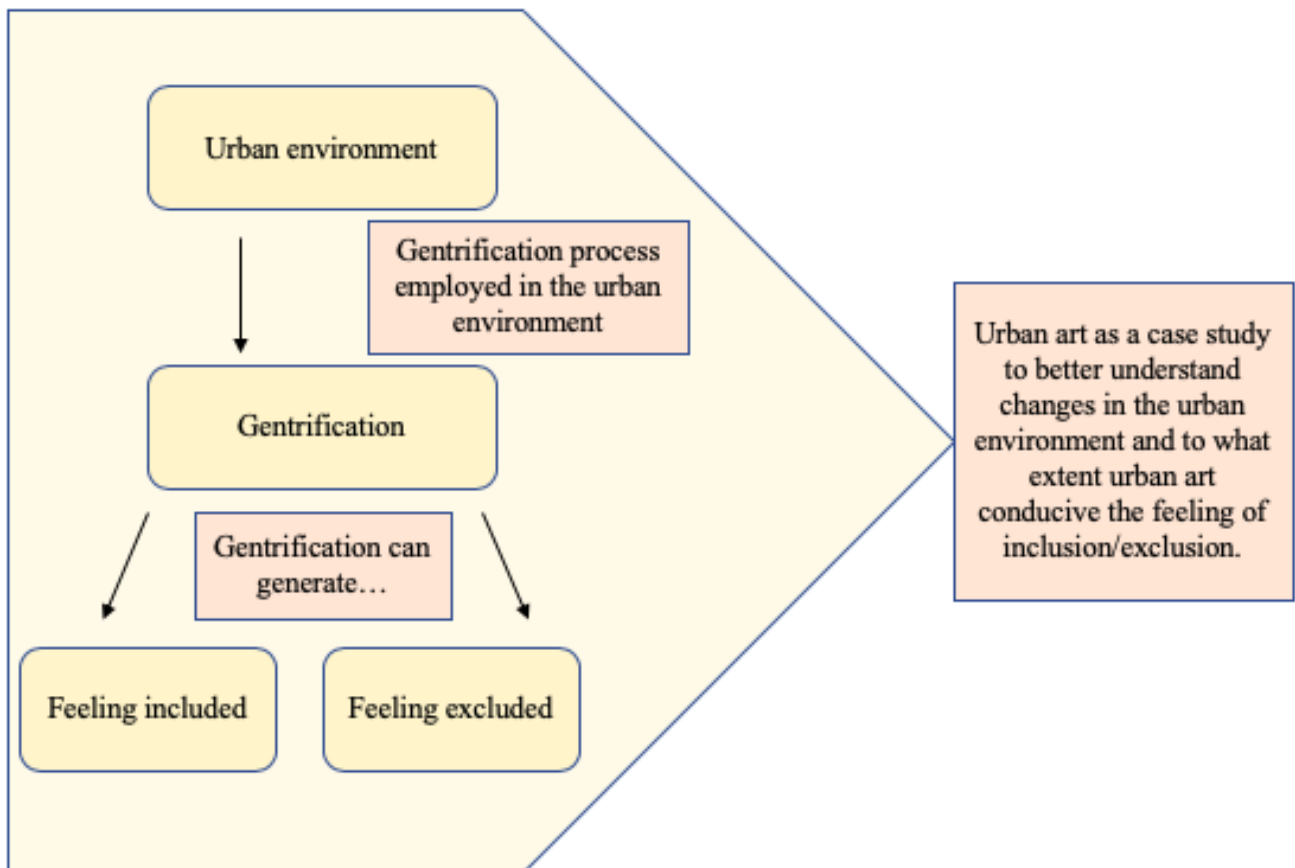
This visual shows how the theoretical concepts are interrelated with one another and how the research is shaped. The (changing) urban environment (of a neighbourhood) is the context wherein the process of gentrification takes place and this process influences the feeling of inclusion or exclusion for the original and new residents (in the neighbourhood). The aesthetic environment is of influence in this feeling, and in this research urban art is employed as a case study to indicate how residents experience their liveability in a neighbourhood in transition.

The general expectation for this research is to get insights in the gentrification process in the urban environment. Furthermore, on a social level, getting a deep understanding of the effect of gentrification on the feeling of inclusiveness/exclusiveness for a diverse group of residents of the Afrikaanderwijk. By using urban art as a case study to gain results, the knowledge of the importance and preferences of urban art can give information relevant for policy makers, when attributing this art form in their policy.

Methods and data

In this research I will focus on the residents of the Afrikaanderwijk and in what way urban art contributes to the feeling of inclusion or exclusion. This neighbourhood in undergoing drastic changes in comparison with a decade ago and is one of the areas in Rotterdam which is focus point in city policy where their aim is to regenerate the Afrikaanderwijk, the so-called gentrification process. A way to revitalise the neighbourhood is through positive attention through art, in this case primarily urban art. For this research, I am curious if these injections contribute to the quality of living for the current residents. Therefore, the emphasis in this research is on the role of urban art and how it does or does not contribute to the feeling of inclusion or exclusion for the residents in the Afrikaanderwijk. To answer the research question a qualitative approach is best suited for the fact that I am interested in understanding the social world of the district and if the residents experience the presence as something positive or negative (Bryman, 2016, p. 380). This research is based on the epistemological orientation of interpretivism, for the fact that it focuses on getting a deeper understanding of the liveability of the residents of the Afrikaanderwijk (p. 28).

The research design is based on the Q methodology, for the fact that I am interested in the perspectives, opinions and meanings of the residents of the Afrikaanderwijk (p. 2). This methodology opens the possibility to portray a "noticeably more macroscopic" (Watts & Stenner, 2005, p.71) view on a group's shared or favoured viewpoints (Previte, Pini, & Haslam-McKenzie, 2007). In this methodology the intention is to 'attribute posteriori through interpretation' (Brown, 1980, p. 54), rather than attributing meaning a priori and testing participants (Stainton Rogers, 1995). In the explanation of Previte, Pini & Haslam-McKenzie (2007) they emphasize five stages within this method, which I will follow in designing this particular research. Furthermore, these stages cover the different sections of this chapter.

Operationalization The first step in Q methodology is to identify the discourse of interest, which relates to shared opinions, shared beliefs, meanings and understanding and is directly linked to the research question and the main concepts. In this research, I focus on the concepts urban environment, gentrification, inclusion/exclusion, where I employ street-art as a case study and indicator. The discourse in this research the relation between the aesthetic environment and the feeling of (un)easiness (Previte, Pini, & Haslam-McKenzie, 2007, p. 137).

Data collection The second step in Q methodology is linked to the 'concourse', which reflects a certain discourse (Previte, Pini, & Haslam-McKenzie, 2007, p. 137). To get a deeper understanding in how street-art is of relevance in the living experience in the Afrikaanderwijk, I will combine the use of photographs of urban art with in-depth semi-structured interviews. The insights gained from the residents is valuable data and there needs to be room in the interview to be flexible when an interviewee takes a different way than expected beforehand. Talking about feelings is something you need to handle with care, and therefore the semi-structured interview is most appropriate (Bryman, 2016 p. 471). In these interviews I will use different sorts of photographs of street-art and graffiti, which give a broad image of the discourse about the aesthetic value of street-art and graffiti (Watts & Stenner, 2005, p. 75).

Unit of analysis The third step within this methodology is developing the Q sample and the used images (Previte, Pini, & Haslam-McKenzie, 2007, p. 137). In this qualitative research the process of sampling participants is linked to purposive sampling (Stenner & Marshall, 1995). Thus, in this research I select participants on specific characteristics which are relevant for the study. Selection criteria is based on a broad reflection of the neighbourhood and the sample will portray a variety in age, gender, occupation, cultural and ethnic background. The number of participants in this research will be around the 10-12, where the emphasis is on strategically sample participants who are valuable for the topic, rather than on the size of the sample (Watts & Stenner, 2005, p. 75). Furthermore, the feasibility and timeframe of the research further affects the size of the sample, where I am aware to ensure to cover the range of opinions in the discourse, though avoiding under- or oversampling. The images presented to the participants must reflect the complexity of the discourse, though should enable the participants to respond from their own experience and opinion. In these images there will be a range from tags to big murals, from images which are presented on the walls of their neighbourhood to more unknown works. This third step flows in the fourth step, where the respondents are asked in the beginning of the interview to sort and rank the images presented. The aim of this step is to get the participants make a choice in images which are irrelevant for them and which contribute to their opinion and experience towards their feeling of inclusion/exclusion (Previte, Pini, & Haslam-McKenzie, 2007).

In getting access to possible respondents, I decided to approach different actors/gatekeepers in the neighbourhood, to inform them of my research and ask their help in approaching possible respondents, who would be open to be included in the research. In this way I can target more specific and ensure a broad range of participants and who could be valuable in answering the research question. Actors like Humanitas Foundation[3], collective complex 't Klooster[4], Gemaal op Zuid[5], the district director and the culture scout of the district Feijenoord.

research period and location Due to the feasibility and timeframe of this research, the interviews will be performed in the month March. By contacting Humanitas Foundation and the district director, I aim on the possibility to use their location for the interviews, for the fact that this location is public and open and ensures the safety for both the respondent and the interviewer (Bryman, 2016, p. 93).

Analysis Analysing the gained data is the last step, and the focus here is on the responses of the respondents to the images and identifying patterns between the respondents (Previte, Pini, & Haslam-McKenzie, 2007, p.139). This is typically done through factor-analysing, where divergent opinions are explored, which assists the interpretation of the researcher. This step entails the search for possible explanations until the best fitted explanation is created for answering the research question. When performing the data analysis, I will employ the PQMethod software which will support the interpretation of the data.

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[3] Humanitas Foundation performs welfare work for the municipality in the neighbourhood.
[4] 't Klooster is a location in the Afrikaanderwijk, where different activities for the neighbourhood take place, and which is a place where everybody can come in.
[5] Gemaal op Zuid is a collective place for meeting and production.

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https://books.google.nl/books?hl=en&lr=&id=9c34CgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=urban+design+inclusion+art&ots=qj1noeqfy_&sig=gLOBxEbCIpmsJiHW5MJUrMUws_w#v=onepage&q=urban%20design%20inclusion%20art&f=false

Urban art:

https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?collection=journals&handle=hein.journals/lal26&id=151&men_tab=srchresults → enchantement of street-art, vind ik een mooi woord!

- LEZEN: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1749-
8198.2011.00414.x?casa_token=xGDZzpOc35IAAAAA:VlcBqQAU9tUt7mgBm4btIAyXLi9Pp5TpkcUXSh
TxafokqM6kMjIEMuI8fMFYpeEWs1RO3Xkw-LyxYnsP → discourse in the subject of street-art
- LEZEN: Graffiti and street art as ornament – Rafael Schacter
- LEZEN:
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Appendix 1 Chapter overview
Outline Thesis

1. Title page

2. Contents

3. (Foreword)

4. Introduction (including a research question)

- introduction on the development of Rotterdam and the Afrikaanderwijk before and current times, what is already happening gentrification wise

- the development of street-art in general (in short) and how it became relevant in Rotterdam

- RSQ

- relevance of the research (Douchet, Koenders, policypapers, etc..)

5. Literature / Theoretical framework (including hypotheses/expectations/concrete goals)

- Elaborate on the following concepts: Urban environment, gentrification, displacement, urban art, urban policy.

- discuss empirical studies which are in line with my research; what to learn from them.

- expectations of the research and clearly defining/marking and reach.

6. Methods

- Defining and implementing the Q-methodology

- Sample: 8-15 interviews with individuals with different backgrounds from the Afrikaanderwijk

- Explaining how to reach the interviewees (living in this neighbourhood and (in-)direct knowing gatekeepers can help me in this.

- choosing a tool to process the results (classify the outcomes in groups?)

7. Results

- processing the results

- connect this to the theoretical framework

8. Conclusion

- Conclusion

- Discussion

- ideas for further research

9. References

10. (Appendices)

Appendix 2 Planning

Plan Master Thesis		
Week	**Day**	**Activity**
7		Get in contact with actors/gatekeepers in the Afrikaanderwijk
8		working on the theoretical framework
9		working on the methods part
		selecting the respondents
		compose the to be used photographs
		working on the theoretical framework
10		working on the methods part
		selecting the respondents
		compose the to be used photographs
		working on the theoretical framework
11		working on the theoretical framework
		working on the execution of the research
		start interviewing the respondents
12		interviewing the respondents
		transcribing the interviews
		working on the theoretical framework
13		interviewing the respondents
		transcribing the interviews
		working on the theoretical framework
14		interviewing the respondents
		transcribing the interviews
		proccessing the interviews in Pcmethods
		working on the theoretical framework
15		proccessing the interviews in Pcmethods
		start writing the analysis
16		proccessing the interviews in Pcmethods
		writing the analysis
17		writing the analysis
18		writing the analysis
		starting with connecting all the chapters
		start writing the conclusion
19		working on the introduction
		connecting all the chapters
		writing the conclusion
20		working on the introduction
		connecting all the chapters
		writing the conclusion
21		working on the introduction
		connecting all the chapters

		writing the conclusion
	22.5.20	Deadline concept version
22		working on gaps in concept version before feedback
	29.5.20	Feedback supervisor
23		working on gaps in concept version before feedback
		processing feedback
24	12.6.20	Deadline final version thesis