Diversity and Belonging at the Neighborhood Square

A qualitative study on the effects of diversity on the process of making home in public spaces

Master thesis

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Abstract

‘Feeling at home’ has gained increased attention. Although it’s meaning differs for everyone, what we have in common is that everyone wants to feel at home, especially where one lives. But where many different groups live together, the question arises whether this is possible. As squares are seen as the public living room of the neighborhood, which enable different categories of people to meet, this research tried to answer the following research question: How do users of the Bospolderplein feel at home and experience the presence of different categories of people at the square as affecting this? Observations on the square were held and interviews were conducted with eleven individuals who use the Bospolderplein. It appears that most participants feel at home in the neighborhood, but not so much on the square itself. In many cases, feeling at home is improved by contact with neighbors, something that often lacks at the square. Whereas a few participants believed that the square is being claimed by Turkish and Moroccan residents, making them avoid the square, others were not bothered by their presence. For most of them, it was not the presence of others which restricted them from feeling at home, it is rather the lack of things to do on the square in combination with its uninviting design, as the square is mostly gray concrete.

Keywords: Claiming, diversity, feeling at home, public space, social interaction

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Introduction

‘Feeling at home’ is receiving a lot of attention. It is addressed in the media, commercials remind us how there is no place like ‘home’, and political parties claim in their program how everyone needs to feel at home. In addition, several studies considering the topic have been published. However, ‘home’ or ‘feeling at home’ is multi-faceted and multi-scalar, and it’s meaning can be different for everyone (Duyvendak, 2011). According to van der Graaf and Duyvendak (2009), it could be the house we live in, our neighborhood, the country we come from (or emigrate to), but also the bench in the park where we always sit or the coffee machine in the Albert Heijn where we chat with strangers. Nevertheless, what we have in common is that everyone wants to feel at home in some way, especially in the place where one lives (Duyvendak & Wekker, 2015). But when many different groups live together in a neighborhood, the question arises if this is possible. When neighborhoods are thought to lack community, the government tries to fix this with policy interventions and welfare projects. Their aim is to help citizens to integrate, meet each other, form networks, and identify with their neighborhood, city, and country (Blokland & Nast, 2014; Duyvendak & Wekker, 2015). Policy makers assume that, when neighbors feel a sense of belonging in the neighborhood, and as a result feel more engaged, the neighborhood will be improved (Blokland and Nast, 2014).

However, there is accumulating evidence that individuals with diverse backgrounds do not form these expected networks (Blokland, 2008; Blokland & Nast, 2014; Putnam, 2007). Ethnic and class segregation in European cities has resulted in somewhat class-homogeneous neighborhoods with multiple ethnic groups, areas which are often labeled as disadvantaged (Blokland and Nast, 2014). In these so-called disadvantaged neighborhoods, social problems often accumulate and feeling at home is a struggle for both minorities as well as for the native Dutch (Kleinhans & Bolt, 2010). In the process of making a place a ‘home’, residents often appropriate the nearby environment, claim certain places as ‘theirs’, and sometimes turn against others who try to do the same (Duyvendak & Wekker, 2015). For example, Dines and Cattell (2006) found that in neighborhood parks there were occasions where public space became a site of conflict or racial tension between different categories of people. Likewise, Peters, Elands and Buijs (2010) emphasize that, while it is believed that diversity is negotiated in the city's public spaces, the reality is that they are often territorialized by certain groups.

An example of a ‘disadvantaged’ neighborhood where policy makers are trying to improve the connections and networks between the different groups is Bospolder-Tussendijken, located in the West of Rotterdam (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.). This neighborhood is characterized by great diversity, as approximately 80 percent of the population has a migration

background (Veerkrachtig Botu, 2019). Many different ethnic backgrounds are present here, but the three largest groups are the native Dutch, Turks, and Moroccans (Burgers & Zuijderwijk, 2016). Nevertheless, people living in mixed neighborhoods can still develop forms of belonging (Blokland & Nast, 2014). In their report, the Council for Social Development (RMO) speaks about the importance of spontaneous meeting places to increase the quality of the social infrastructure of neighborhoods (Boonstra et al., 2010). It is about creating places and facilities where residents can meet by chance, as fleeting contacts strengthen mutual trust and increase feeling of safety. In this perspective, an alderman from Rotterdam stresses the importance of public squares, as they can be seen as the public living room of the neighborhood, enabling different categories of people meet (Desmet & Sour, 2008).

The purpose of this research is to gain more insight into (a) how public space, in this case the Bospolderplein in Bospolder-Tussendijken, contributes to feelings of belonging in the neighborhood, and (b) how this process is influenced by the presence of different categories of people. Therefore, this research aims to answer the following question: *How do users of the Bospolderplein feel at home and experience the presence of different categories of people at the square as affecting this?* Although several studies have been conducted considering this subject, more research is needed for this specific case. As Bospolder-Tussendijken is one of the socio-economically weakest neighborhoods in Rotterdam, the ambition of the municipality is to make Bospolder-Tussendijken the first resilient neighborhood of the city (Veerkrachtig BoTu, 2019). According to the program called *Veerkrachtig BoTu 28*, this means that the neighborhood (and its residents) is resilient to events that can put people at a disadvantage. Informal networks and communities are, among other things, seen as the basis to achieve this goal (Veerkrachtig BoTu, 2019). In addition, the program stresses the importance of the local public squares, as they are the meeting spaces of the neighborhood. It is therefore important to understand how the residents experience the presence of different categories of people on the public squares, if this leads to contact between groups, and how one creates a feeling of home under these conditions.

Previous research often addresses feeling at home in combination with either social interaction (Dines & Cattell, 2006; Peters et al., 2010) or claiming public space (Duyvendak & Wekker, 2015), failing to address the interplay between all three concepts. The existing research that does address this interplay has a focus on (specific) ethnic groups, excluding other forms of diversity, or is based only on observations and informal conversations (Burgers and Zuijderwijk, 2016; Britton, 2008). As this research addresses the interplay between the relevant concepts, focusses on diversity in a broader sense, and combines both in-depth interviews with

observations, it is a valuable addition to the already existing literature. What follows is a theoretical framework to gain a better understanding of feeling at home, social interaction, and claiming public space. Next, the methods used to answer the proposed research question are presented, followed by the results, the conclusion, and the discussion of the research.

Theoretical framework

1. Feeling at home

Duyvendak (2011) confirms that 'home' or 'feeling at home' can mean different things to different people. Likewise, in the academic literature, the concept of home has been understood in a multitude of different ways: as spatial, social, psychological, and emotive (Easthope, 2004, p. 135). Often a person's home is understood to be situated in space, yet it is not necessarily a house or the built environment of a neighborhood what makes a home. Instead, such spaces become a home after they are inscribed with meaning, which makes a home: a place that holds considerable social, psychological, and emotive meaning (Easthope, 2004). Another key defining aspect of feeling at home is familiarity (Kuurne & Gomez, 2019; Blokland and Nast, 2014), which arises over time from extensive and routine interactions with an environment and those who inhabit it (Boccagni & Duyvendak, 2020). Therefore, it is related to the feeling of knowing your way around the neighborhood and the people inhabiting it (Ouwehand & Bosch, 2016). In addition to familiarity, Boccagni and Duyvendak (2020) propose two other emplaced emotions which are important for feeling at home: (1) security, which refers to a feeling of material and personal protection and the experience of order, and (2) control of one's daily life circumstances.

Duyvendak (2011) also points to familiarity, and, additionally, proposes both haven and heaven as 'elements of home'. Home as haven relates to feelings of safety, security, and privacy; it is about being in control of who has the right to enter and often relates to the micro level of the house (Duyvendak, 2011; Ouwehand & Bosch, 2016). Home as heaven is more outward-oriented and symbolic. It is about the space in which one can express himself, where one develops their personal identity, and where one connects with others, often through the creation of communities (Duyvendak, 2011; Ouwehand & Bosch, 2016). In both cases, either home as haven or home as heaven, feeling at home is very selective: we don't feel at home with everybody or anywhere (Duyvendak, 2011).

Another aspect of feeling at home is place attachment, which is, in general, defined as an affective bond or link between people and specific places (Low & Altman, 1992; Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). For example, Hummon (1992) defines place attachment as an emotional involvement with places, and Shumaker and Taylor (1983) consider it as 'a positive affective bond or association between individuals and their residential environment' (p. 233). One's home, then, can be understood as: "a particularly significant kind of place with which, and within which, we experience strong social, psychological, and emotive attachments" (Easthope,

2004, p. 163). In her book, Lofland (1998) addresses how almost everyone feels such a connection to a place, for example where they were born, where they currently live, or where they had touching experiences. Research by Dines and Cattell (2016) identified two key factors that influence attachment to a place. The first factor, social networks, demonstrates that a principal source of attachment to a place are local networks. These include both intense social ties as well as weaker, less intimate ties. Another factor, continuity, shows that emotional attachment to a place can become stronger over time (Dines & Cattell, 2016).

2. Social interaction

In her book, Lofland (1998) describes what is unique to cities: their generation of an area of social life, which she calls the public realm. In the public realm, individuals live together in co-presence, but tend to be personally unknown to each other. In other words, it encompasses those spaces where individuals are strangers to each other, or where they know others only by their occupational or other nonpersonal identity categories (Lofland, 1998). On the streets, or elsewhere in the neighborhood, people meet such strangers. These brief incidental encounters are, however, not based on sharing common values or cooperation for a common purpose. Instead, they are formal and empty of content.

But precisely these kinds of interactions appeared to be meaningful in the study by Dines and Cattell (2016). Rather than focusing simply on the place itself, public space was often described in terms of interactions with other people. From such social interactions, casual encounters, such as chance meetings with neighbors on the street, were seen as a high valued aspect of public open space (Dines & Cattell, 2016). Such encounters are seen as convivial experiences which satisfy curiosity, create surprise, and provide feelings of security and comfort, and stimulating feelings of happiness among residents (Lobo, 2008). When such encounters happened on a regular basis, this often helped to maintain ties between neighbors and could also provide the first step towards friendships and a sense of community. In addition, social encounters in public open spaces were often key to people's attachments to their local area. In other words: 'while commitment to the local area and its people often influenced the use and experience of public open spaces, so too the opportunities afforded by public spaces could lead to greater allegiance to place and communities' (Dines & Cattell, 2016, p. ix).

2.1 (Absent) Ties

During encounters, interaction is not always necessary for one to create a sense of belonging in the neighborhood. In their research, Blokland and Nast (2014) demonstrate how people that live in mixed neighborhoods develop forms of belonging which are instead based on absent ties. The idea of absent ties originates from Granovetter (1973), who's theory about ties states that the strength of a tie is a combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie (p. 1361). Based on these characteristics, one can determine whether a tie is either strong, weak, or absent. Whereas strong ties are those we see as our close friends, weak ties refer to acquaintances. Absent ties include both the lack of any relationship and ties without substation significance, for example those living on the same street we nod to (Granovetter 1973; Granovetter 1983).

Blokland and Nast (2014) demonstrate how absent ties also contribute to a sense of belonging by using the notion of public familiarity. Public familiarity, being recognized or recognizing others in local spaces and acknowledging each other (Fischer, 1982), allows people to feel like they belong because it enables the creation of a comfort zone (Treffers & Surenbroek, 2018; Blokland & Nast, 2014). In this comfort zone, those who are strangers to each other, but who meet regularly in public space, nevertheless become 'acquaintances' for each other (Duyvendak & Wekker, 2015; Treffers & Surenbroek, 2018). This stimulates people's feelings of belonging and the feeling that others would be there for them if something would happen (Blokland & Nast, 2014). On the one hand, the comfort social space is believed to be not limited to one's 'own group'. Those who live in mixed neighborhoods have daily encounters with others who might be different from them. Despite that these people have their own cultural baggage, the inevitability of passing each other produces codes of conduct in the street, which repeat themselves and make the next encounter predictable (Blokland & Nast, 2014). On the other hand, diversity could be seen as a challenge, because when residents are not familiar with each other's 'social location', have no mutual personal or emotional recognition, or experience a gap between their values, this feeling of comfort and belonging could disappear (Wekker, 2020; Foner, Duyvendak & Kasinitz, 2019).

2.2 Intergroup contact

There are different ideas about the conditions that promote inter-group contact in diverse urban neighborhoods. On the one hand, there is a growing consensus that a crucial factor is the daily negotiation of difference in (public) places which lead to acceptance (Amin, 2002). Likewise,

what is usually labeled as the contact hypothesis argues that experience with diversity fosters interethnic tolerance, social solidarity, and promotes interaction (Putnam, 2007). As a result, possible prejudiced images of others could be replaced with more favorable attitudes as it becomes clear that the negative outgroup stereotypes are inconsistent with reality (Allport, 1954; Britton, 2008). This allows members of different ethnic groups to interact as individuals rather than as a representative of their ethnic group (Brewer & Miller, 1988). On the other hand, the so-called 'conflict theory' suggests that diversity, in contrast, fosters out-group distrust and in-group solidarity (Putnam, 2007). In this case, proximity to a large and visible outgroup will increase the salience of cleavages and, in addition, also triggers associated prejudices (Britton, 2008). To put it simply, the more we are brought into contact with people with another ethnic background, the more we stick to 'our own' and the less we trust the 'other' (Putnam, 2007).

Similar studies emphasize that, if diversity even promotes contact between groups at all, such interaction tends to be aggressive and hostile, aimed at maintaining both social and territorial boundaries (Britton, 2008). Such behavior could also lead to what Elias and Scotson (1965) describe as the established-outsider balance. This balance indicates how there exists a sharp division between an old-established group and a group of newcomers, who are treated as outsiders by the already established. The established attribute to themselves superior human characteristics, excluding everyone else from non-occupational social contact with its own members and stigmatizing the outsiders generally as people of lesser human worth (Elias & Scotson, 1965).

3. Claiming public space

According to Iveson (2007), 'public' space does not exist as such because there is not just one public. Rather, there are different groups competing for access to such spaces (Dijkema, 2019). Questions arise such as to whom public space (or meaningful parts of it) belongs; who is entitled to participate in it, for what purposes, and under what conditions; and when public space can be occupied and appropriated, literally or symbolically (Boccagni & Duyvendak, 2020, p. 3). This often involve majority-minority relationships based on different salient features, for example native versus immigrant background, length of stay, legal status, age, religion, and sexual orientation (Boccagni & Duyvendak, 2020). Previous research by Burgers and Zuijderwijk (2016) found that on the Bospolderplein, especially among children, there was a division between groups based on ethnic background and spoken language, which determined which children claimed the square and selected others to play with. According to this research,

the children consciously exclude other children who they don't see as 'established'. Because of this, the square becomes privatized: just by being there, it is claimed by a specific group which scares off others (Burgers & Zuijderwijk, 2016). This is what Lofland (1998) calls the parochial realm, which refers to places that are public, but because a specific group claimed this space, others often do not feel welcome anymore (see also Boutelier, Boonstra & Ham, 2009).

Which groups are present, and therefore able to claim a public square, seems to depend on the time of the day. Research conducted in Rotterdam by Boonstra et al. (2010) demonstrates how the character of a public square changes during the day. In the morning, mostly older residents and those who pass by coincidentally use the square. In the afternoon, when the schools are out, many squares turn into a playground where children play, sport, and chat with friends. At the same time, professionals are often present on the squares who supervise the sports and play activities. Later in the afternoon, the square is taken over by young people between the ages of twelve and sixteen, and in the evenings, especially young people aged sixteen and older use the squares (Boonstra et al., 2010).

The process of claiming a public space could be a strategy to deal with what Lofland (1973) calls the world of strangers. Because of its size, those living in the city know nothing personal about most others who also live there. One thing that city residents could do to reduce the complexities of living in such a world is to minimize their encounters with the personally unknown and maximize those with who they do know. One method to achieve this is the creation of *home territories*, which are small pieces of public space taken over by individuals or a group, turned into a 'home away from home' (Lofland, 1973). The creation of a home territory is based on knowledge about the public space, which increases with the amount of time spend in the setting. When knowledge increases, what were initially strangers will transform into personally known others, making the place seem more like home. In addition, the ability to use the setting for own private purposes also increases (Lofland, 1973). And when knowledge is maximized and complete, the setting, for this individual, is no longer an urban public place. Instead, it becomes semiprivate, it becomes a home territory. Strangers who visit the place might be (physically) locked out or might feel unwelcome and therefore decide to leave (Britton, 2008).

Methods

Research design

For this study, a deductive qualitative research design was used. A grounded theory with sensitizing concepts does not match this study because there are already several theories available concerning this topic. These have provided the key concepts and expectations about the outcome, but they cannot give a comprehensive answer to the proposed research question. Therefore, more research into this topic is needed. By using a deductive qualitative research design, this research can support and/or extend the existing literature.

Data collection and procedure

The square itself was visited multiple times for observations and recruiting participants. The researcher observed the people present on and around the square, their behavior, and their interactions with each other. By observing, the researcher obtained a better idea about the daily practices on the square and who the frequent visitors are, data which served as support for the results. During these visits, notes were made about information gathered and the steps which were taken, making the research more replicable, and thereby also more reliable (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In addition, to better understand the experiences of the users of the Bospolderplein, semi-structured interviews were conducted. By combining methods, the reliability and validity of the research is enhanced (Golafshani, 2003). The questions asked addressed the participants experiences and opinions. This method fits this study well because through conversation, the participants' personal experiences can be thoroughly discussed (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

On the square, several individuals were approached, from which two agreed to an interview. Other participants were found either through an online post on a neighborhood app called NextDoor or were proposed by other participants, which created a snowball effect. All interviews were scheduled to do either at the participants home, their office, or at the square, depending on the participants preference. Beforehand, the participants were informed on what the study was about, were told that participation was completely voluntary and anonymous, and were asked if they agreed with the interview being recorded. After giving consent, they were asked to repeat this on record as a substitute for the official informed consent form (see appendix 3). The interviews itself were guided by a topic list (see appendix 1), with no restriction to fixed questions. This allowed the researcher to ask spontaneous questions when they seem relevant and it provided the researcher with room for discussion, which leads to more in-depth research (Hay & Cope, 2021).

For this study, 11 participants were interviewed (see appendix 2 for participant demographics). As the research question suggests, all these participants were considered users of the Bospolderplein. Yet, their reasons for visiting the square or how frequently varied strongly among them. In addition, as this research looks at different categories of people, the aim was therefore to select a diverse group of people. However, individuals were not explicitly selected based on categories such as age or ethnic background because it is difficult to judge these characteristics based on how one looks. The only characteristic explicitly checked was age, because, due to ethical aspects, the participants needed to be at least 18 years old. Eventually the group of participants were aged between 25 and 74 years old, contained 3 men and 8 women, and covered 4 different ethnicities (Dutch, Surinamese, Turkish, and Moroccan).

Operationalization of the instrument

The topic list was based on the concepts which were found during the literature study. These key concepts are: 1) feeling at home, 2) social interaction, and 3) claiming public space. By using a topic list, the interviewer is certain that all relevant topics were addressed. Also, it helped to give structure to the interviews. This made it easier to highlight relevant aspects and create consistencies between different interviews, which will make the analysis easier. A disadvantage of the topic list is that it could create a focus on the concepts, which could lead to accidently missing other relevant information. Therefore, the researcher stayed open to all information during the interviews. In addition, during observations, the researcher consistently looked at how many people were present, what they were doing, as far as possible, which categories of people were present, and whether people interacted with each other. Other additional information which seemed relevant was also noted, such as what happened when the schools were out or when an organized event was going on.

Analyze method

After the interviews, the recordings were transcribed and anonymized to the extent that it is not possible to trace them back to a certain individual. The transcripts were analyzed with the coding program Atlas.ti. which helped to organize the data through codes (see appendix 5). The process of coding started with ‘open coding’. During this phase, all interviews were read, and important text fragments were given codes. In the second phase, ‘axial coding’, different codes were compared and merged into a new umbrella code. During the last phase, ‘selective coding’, a new theory was developed by finding connections in the data. Data obtained during

observations, which were either notes or voice recordings, were also elaborated or transcribed when thought necessary.

Ethics

The participants were asked about their experiences with feeling at home in the neighborhood, which is possibly a sensitive subject. In addition, previous research has been conducted in the neighborhood, which could have led to the residents being 'research tired'. Therefore, as described in the procedure, several steps were taken to make sure the research was conducted ethically responsible. Among others, the researcher was aware of the sensitivity of the subjects discussed during the interview, the participants had the option to not answer a question and pause or stop the interview at any time, and the data is anonymized. The researcher handled the information with care and confidentiality and the safety of the participants always came first. Additionally, the researcher was sensitive about her role as a researcher and was aware that some residents might not be interested in participating. Therefore, the residents were approached with respect and were not treated as a sample of passive respondents but rather as local experts.

Results

1. Feeling at home

What does it mean?

Like the findings in the literature, feeling at home means different things to the participants of this study. When asked to describe what feeling at home is, varying answers are given. Although their house is for most participants a place where they feel at home, the feeling is not necessarily related to a specific location. For example, feeling at home can be achieved when one has access to its own things. In the words of participants 1: "And I always say, it doesn't really matter where I am, as soon as I unpack my things, for example, my bookcase, yes then I'm home" (Female, 48, Dutch). In addition, participant 5 describes how she also feels at home with specific individuals: "For example, with my boyfriend I also feel at home and then it doesn't matter where we are. When I am with him, I also feel a certain kind of relaxation" (Female, 27, Dutch).

Feeling at home for the participants is also related to what has been previously described as familiarity, described in multiple ways. For example, being familiar with your surroundings, being able to find your way, and knowing others in the neighborhood all contribute to feeling at home. Also, feeling at home has been described as a place where one is able to retreat and relax. This refers to a place where one does not have to be alert, but where one can do what they want and just be one's true self. Another element which affects one's feeling of home is the surrounding area. Several participants for example describe feeling more at home in nature, and, in contrast, not feeling at home when the environment is littered, and buildings start to deteriorate.

Feeling at home in the neighborhood

Although the degree to which varies, most participants feel at home in the neighborhood in some way. Only three participants indicate how they do not feel at home in the neighborhood. One of them described how, if he had known what the neighborhood was like, he would not have moved there. In this case, which was also the problem for another participant, this was specifically due to safety issues in his street: "And I feel okay here, the only thing I don't feel at home in is, yes, there is a lot of crime here in the street, and visible too, especially in the evening and at night. It happens every evening and every night, right here on my street, dealing, trading" (Participant 4, male 48, Dutch). The other participant describes how she does not feel at home because she, as a native Dutch woman, does not feel surround by 'her people' anymore.

She calls the neighborhood the ‘ghetto’ and because her neighbors cause a lot of nuisances, it is impossible for her to relax: “Look in your house you should feel safe, but here you only live with nerves and stress” (Participant 7, female, 55, Dutch).

Two native Dutch participants, that have lived in the neighborhood for a long time, describe that, since the arrival of ‘the foreigners’, things changed a lot. For example, the *Schiedamseweg*, a shopping street close by which used to have several Dutch shops, now mainly has ‘foreign shops’, like Turkish bakeries or Moroccan butcher shops. However, although they do not like this change, they still feel at home: “I must say this is a kind of working-class neighborhood, and that does make a difference, doesn't it? There are always people on the street, you always run into someone who says hello, yes, I do feel at home there actually” (Participant 3, female, 74, Dutch). In contrast, some of the participants with a migration background describe a similar change but the other way around. In the neighborhood, which they appreciate for its diversity, since renovations are happening close by, they recently start seeing more people which they describe as ‘yuppies’, ‘hipsters’, or ‘cargo bike people’, which refer to somewhat wealthier native Dutch families with small children. However, this does not change whether they feel at home or not. In addition, like those with a migration background, other native Dutch participants explicitly mentioned how the diversity in the neighborhood is what made them feel at home: “I think it's rather scary if it's not [diverse]. For example, if you go somewhere in the province and everyone is white, you know, I rather think that’s weird” (Participant 1, female, 48, Dutch).

Some participants also address the time they have lived in the neighborhood as what makes them feel at home. Participant 5 for example has lived in the neighborhood for three years. She describes how, although she does feel somewhat at home, she does not feel ‘rooted’ in the neighborhood yet. Most others have lived in the neighborhood for a long time or even grew up there and are therefore very familiar with everything. Participants 8 and 9 for example live in the neighborhood for over 40 years and now refer to it as ‘their’ neighborhood. Likewise, when asked why he feels at home in the neighborhood, participant 11 answers: “Because I grew up here” (male, 25, Moroccan/Dutch).

Contact with neighbors

Several participants indicated that contact with their neighbors was an important factor for feeling at home in the neighborhood. For example, when asked what was needed to feel at home in the neighborhood, participant 8 answered: “I also think a bit of genuine involvement. Suppose I have a flat tire, that people still ask if you need help, that people just look after each

other a bit, especially that" (female, 33, Moroccan/Dutch). Some participants describe how they appreciated the superficial contact at for example a store where the salesman greets them with 'hi neighbor', what has in the literature been described as absent ties. In addition, all participants know who their neighbors are and where they live, however, contact often stays limited to greeting each other or small talk. But for them, being recognized or being able to ask help when needed is enough to feel at home:

> I do have contact with my neighbors. Not that I go to their house or anything, I don't invite them over to my house either, it is always on the street. But the neighbors are all nice, I can always go to someone if there's something wrong. (Participant 6, female, 55, Surinamese/Dutch)

> We always greet our neighbors, always have a chat, but if you ask me what's his name? I don't know, I always call him neighbor. But when he comes back from a vacation, he gives me a bottle of wine or chocolate, or when he waters his plants, he also does ours. (Participant 9, male, 46, Turkish/Dutch)

A few participants describe that they also meet up with their neighbors, often in front of their doors, where they sit and hang out together:

> The people who live here are all have different nationalities, and we all get along with each other. I've also had parties here with my neighbor, our front doors open, barbecue in front of the door, and the Antillean people from across the street come with meat, the other people from over there and the Surinamese from above also joined, that's nice. (Participant 4, male, 48, Dutch)

Only one participant explained how such contact does not relate to feeling at home, as she does not greet her neighbors anymore. According to her, after being ignored by them when she initiated contact, she stopped trying. She describes how, as a native Dutch woman, she feels like her neighbors with a migration background won't let het come close, as if she 'has a disease':

> I once asked for help from someone across the street and there was no response, even though I knew he could help me. I find that very pathetic. Then my skin color is not

> good enough at that moment, I believe. Then I feel discriminated against. (Participant 2, female, 64, Dutch)

Feeling at home at the Bospolderplein

There are several reasons presented for using the Bospolderplein. Some participants come to the square because they watch their children who play there, some like to sit in the sun or have a break there while walking their dogs, and others mainly come there only to pass through to somewhere else. When answering the question if one feels at home at the Bospolderplein, compared to feeling at home in the neighborhood, the answers become less convincing. Although most participants do not feel unwelcome, they do not feel at home at the square. In some cases, this feeling can be attributed to the design and lack of activities on the square. Words used to describe the square are unattractive, not convivial, and functionless. In the words of participant 4: "There is nothing to do there, it is a bare gray plain, and it is not really inviting to sit there or something" (male, 48, Dutch). Those who previously mentioned how they felt more at home in nature confirm this statement: "[Surrounded by] grass and trees, a bit greener, you know, then I feel at ease, and the Bospolderplein is a bit more asphalt. So, feeling at home on the Bospolderplein, not really" (Participant 5, female, 27, Dutch).

Some also address the presence or absence of others as a factor for feeling at home. For example, participant 1 feels like the square is not used a lot and is often empty: "Well, I think I'd feel more at home if there were just a few more people. Parents with children, for example, or young people who lie down on a blanket, which gives it more of a park idea" (female, 47, Dutch). Others, in contrast, think the square is often very crowded, especially with children and their mothers. For some participants, this is nice, as they like to watch the children play. For others, however, this could also be a reason to go somewhere else. Participant 5 for example explains:

> I think when you get to a place, and that's just in general, I think everyone has that, that's kind of a leftover instinct. When you're somewhere where people resemble you, be it age or gender or background, you automatically feel more at home because you feel a certain connection with those people, you have something in common. (Female, 27, Dutch)

She goes on to describe that, as she does not have much in common with small children and their mothers, often with a migration background, she does not really feel at home at the square.

In addition, the square's cleanliness also played a role in feeling at home for some of the participants. It has been mentioned during several interviews how there is often a lot of junk on the square, which really bothers some people. During the observations, several trashcans were seen surrounding the square, but like the participants describe, there was also a lot of rubbish seen on the ground, such as food packages and soda cans, especially next to the benches. One thing that has been explicitly mentioned several times are the sunflower seeds which are eaten and spat out on the ground. One participant explains how cleanliness is important for her to feel at home. She describes how one neighbor cleans the square every morning, who she used to help but now doesn't anymore, as she feels it's like 'mopping with the tap open': "To me it's important that its safe and clean, that not only a few people in the neighborhood help, but that everyone feels responsible, but you don't have that here" (Participant 6, female, 55, Surinamese/Dutch).

2. Social interaction

Having a chat on the Bospolderplein

Although the degree of social interaction on the Bospolderplein differs among the participants, the majority indicated to have little to no contact with others. Only a few participants have frequent interactions on the Bospolderplein, for example participant 8, a female with a Turkish migration background. In contrast to the other participants, she experiences the Bospolderplein as a place where it is easy to have contact with others. Because the square is next to her home, she often walks by and stops to have a chat whenever she sees someone she knows. Her husband, participant 9, explains how most of the women, who often already live there for 30 to 40 years, are also women who know each other and who also meet up at other places or visit each other at home. Participants 10 and 11 confirm this relationship between some of the square's visitors and add that they, after talking with many of the children while working as social workers, found out that many of them are also family. They do believe that both the children and their parents are very approachable and easy to have a chat with.

Another example of the Bospolderplein as facilitating contact is participant 2 and 3 who became friends after meeting at the Bospolderplein. In their interview they explained how they did not know each other before, but because they both have a dog, one of them approached the other while she was sitting on a bench at the Bospolderplein. Now they meet up daily on that same bench to have a chat before they walk their dogs together. With others, however, contact is more difficult. Although these women claim to be open for contact with anyone, they feel like it's others who are not:

> And especially in the afternoon when the schools close and we are still there, then of course the mothers come and sit there. And it's not that they come to you, that they come and sit with you. Even if there is still so much space next to you, they will just sit somewhere else. While their children are playing here, they sit on the other side, and I think that's a bit of a shame (Participant 2, female, 64, Dutch).

All other participants explain how they have no contact with others, or when they do, it only happens by chance. According to participant 1, who had a quick chat with someone else once, such contact does make a visit to the square more fun. However, she also notes that because of the design of the square, it being stretched out and elongated, it does not have a connecting effect. Some participants indicated that they would like to see some events organized on the square which could facilitate contact, as they would like to be more involved with their neighbors.

Language as a barrier

What has been mentioned by some participants is how they try to seek contact with the mothers on the square by greeting them. However, this rarely turns into a real conversation: "You can walk by, and you say good morning ladies or good afternoon ladies and then it's 'hello', and then they just continue in their own language, that doesn't work" (Participant 6, female, 55, Surinamese/Dutch). Some participants suggested this feels as disinterest towards them or even experience this as rude. However, participants 8 and 9 who have a Turkish background explain that it is very common to speak Turkish among each other out of convenience: "We can speak Dutch, but there are also a lot of women who can't do that yet. There are many Turkish women who did not go to school to learn the language at the time, which is a shame" (Participant 8, female, 43, Turkish/Dutch). This also became apparent after the observations, as many of the women approached for an interview indicated how this was not possible because they did not speak Dutch.

3. Claiming the Bospolderplein

Who is present?

During the observations at the square, it became clear that the square, during the day, is mostly used by mothers and their children, often with a migration background. This is also confirmed by several other participants who noted that mostly Turkish and Moroccan mothers and children

use the square, which are believed to be residents of the houses which surround the square. It has been observed that especially around three o' clock, after the schools are out, it becomes busy at the square. In addition, some participants also mention how groups of older men and women gather at the square in the evening where they drink tea together, and during the same time or at night, groups of youths also use the square. However, the opinions of the participants on whether one of the mentioned groups is claiming the square are very contrasting. On the one hand, there is a group who does not believe the Bospolderplein is being claimed by others. On the other hand, some believe the square is being claimed, but whether this is a bad thing is also up for discussion.

A place for everyone

For some it's clear the square is not being claimed at all. Participant 8 and 9, members of one household who live directly next to the square, frequently use the square while their children play or to chat with others present at the square. Participants 10 and 11, both social workers that work with youth, frequently visit the square to catch up with the children and their parents. While they all confirm that those present often have a migration background, just like they do themselves, they believe that everyone is welcome on the square. In the words of participant 10: "That white people are less represented there, that might also be a choice they make themselves, because that square is for everyone" (Female, 33, Moroccan/Dutch). This idea might be true in some cases, as some of the native Dutch participants confirm they choose not to use the square frequently. However, their reason to not use the square often is not because of others present but rather because they believe the square is unattractive. To them it does not matter who else uses the square, as participant 4 describes:

> As long as groups of whatever origin do not manipulate, threaten, or harass people, it does no harm. We don't know what they're doing either, maybe they're just chatting, you don't know. But some people are quick to find something intimidating when it may not be the case at all. (Male, 48, Dutch)

Two other native Dutch participants also confirm the idea of everyone being welcome at the square. Although they expressed their ideas about the 'foreigners' in the neighborhood and on the square, they still felt unrestricted to use the square and even called one of the benches 'theirs'.

A place that has been claimed

In other cases, participants did agree on the idea that the Bospolderplein is being claimed. For one of them, however, this was not something that bothered her:

> I do feel like this is 'their' square, and by 'their' I mean from the children playing and their parents. But for me there's no value judgment in that, it's okay. I'm like, this is their place and I have my other places that I use. I'm happy for them that they have this place, a place where they can play, a place where parents get together (Participant 5, female, 27, Dutch).

The other participants who felt that the square was being claimed did experience this as something negative, which has resulted in them avoiding the square. One participant describes how she feels that the women on the square form a group from which she's not a member, which withholds her from also using the square. In addition, it is mostly the litter they leave behind that really bothers her: "It does stop me from coming. Because if I come and see them all sitting like that, eating, making a mess, and they go away and leave their shit behind, I get really annoyed" (Participant 6, female, 55, Surinamese/Dutch). Besides these women she speaks about, children are also pointed at as those who claim the square. According to her, the children on the square often misbehave, which might be a result of their parents' mentality: "Outside the children are the municipality's problem, only inside that of their parents".

Another participant agrees that the children are the problem. When asked why she does not use the square anymore, she answers: "Because it's just not my thing. I always fought for my children there in the past, Dutch children were never allowed on the square. There's been a lot of fighting on the square, so I don't really like it there" (Participant 7, female, 55, Dutch). This participant emphasizes how she also forbids her children and grandchildren to use the square as she believes it is not safe for native Dutch children. When presented with this finding, participant 10, who visits the square for her job as a social worker, mentions how she is not familiar with this happening but does explain how there is a specific street culture on the square which she describes as 'survival of the fittest': "If you're not verbally strong or dare to stand up for yourself, you get walked over, because it are cheeky boys walking around here" (Female, 33, Moroccan/Dutch).

Conclusion

'Feeling at home' has become more important, and although it means different things to different people, what we have in common is that everyone wants to feel at home in some way. However, when many different groups live together in a neighborhood, the question arises if this is possible. This research tried to clarify the relationship between feeling at home, the use of public space, and whether this is influenced by the presence of different categories of people. Observations were held on the square and interviews were conducted with eleven participants who use the Bospolderplein to answer the following research question: *How do users of the Bospolderplein feel at home and experience the presence of different categories of people at the square as affecting this?*

Like the findings in the literature, whether one feels at home is different for everyone, even for those living directly next to each other in a very similar house. Although a few participants indicated that the Bospolderplein was claimed by some specific groups, only for one participant the presence of different categories of people had a direct effect on her being able to feel at home. According to this participant, as was also previously found in research by Burgers and Zuijderwijk (2016), it was clear that on the Bospolderplein, especially among children, there is an established-outsider balance (Elias and Scotson, 1965). She describes how Moroccan and Turkish children claim the square, consciously excluding other (Dutch) children from using the square, sometimes even by using violence. In the neighborhood itself, as one of the few Dutch residents, she feels like an outsider as well, which directly leads to her not feeling at home. Others that agreed that the square was being claimed often pointed to the parents of the children instead, and even though they might not feel welcome on the square or commented on the presence of 'foreigners' in the neighborhood in general, this did not seem to affect their feeling at home.

For those who did not completely feel at home in the in the neighborhood, this was mostly due to criminality nearby their house. For them, due to for example experience with a burglary, it is impossible to experience what Duyvendak (2011) calls home as haven, which relates to feelings of safety, security, and privacy. Nevertheless, like the others, they did describe other aspects of feeling at home. Mentioned several times is what is referred to in the literature as familiarity (Kuurne & Gomez, 2019; Blokland and Nast, 2014), which the participants likewise describe as knowing your way around the neighborhood and the people inhabiting it. Some explicitly address the time they have lived in the neighborhood as a factor which enables them to feel at home, in the literature described as continuity, which believes that emotional attachment to a place can become stronger over time (Dines & Cattell, 2016). In

addition, some participants referred to feeling at home as a place where one can be his or her true self, which is what Duyvendak (2011) refers to as home as heaven and which is more symbolic.

When asked to describe why one feels at home, most participants also referred to social interaction with their neighbors. Most participants really appreciated contact with neighbors, also when this stayed limited to what has in the literature been described as absent ties (Granovetter, 1973; Blokland & Nast, 2014). For many, contact with neighbors only means a simple nod or saying hello when seeing each other in front of the door by chance. Only for some it was possible to call their neighbors weak ties, as they would deliberately meet up to hang out occasionally. In contrast, many participants indicated that creating such ties at the Bospolderplein was often hard to achieve, as most conversations often stayed limited to a simple hello. To facilitate more contact, some participants suggest organizing events on the square, such as a pop-up bar, a flea market, or evenings dedicated to the different cultures present in the neighborhood. Although more contact could contribute to feeling at home at the Bospolderplein, some think improving the design of the square could also be beneficial for feeling at home. Whereas pots with plants are not believed to be helpful, since they most likely will end up as trashcans, colorful art painted on the concrete or picnic benches are seen as a step in the right direction.

Discussion

Although it has been mentioned often that mostly individuals with a Moroccan and Turkish background use the square, which for some is interpreted as claiming, it can be questioned whether this is what is objectively happening. When looking at the demographics of Bospolder, it becomes clear that, compared to the native Dutch, there are a lot more residents with a migration background. In 2021, Bospolder counted 1.510 native Dutch residents and 5.530 residents with a migration background (AlleCijfers, 2022). The overrepresentation of those with a migration background on the square might thus also be a logical consequence of the neighborhood's demographics. It also makes sense that only those who live close to the Bospolderplein use the square, as it has not a lot to offer and those who live further away might look for an alternative, such as the nearby Dakpark. In addition, the presence of several members of an ethnic group does not necessarily mean they are actively claiming the place, this might also be an interpretation of those who are not members of that group, who might feel unwelcome while in fact they were never actually rejected. Most of the participants of this study who emphasized the square was for everyone had a migration background themselves. On the contrary, the majority of those who felt unwelcome on the square were individuals who were not members of the groups mostly present on the square. Only one of them claimed that her children have been rejected from using the square, whereas others did not speak about such clear experiences. It could therefore be that some might judge a situation as actively claiming, whereas what is *really* happening is others just being present.

During multiple interviews it also became apparent that in some cases language is barrier for actual conversations, and therefore also possibly leads to misinterpretations on what is going on. Several participants noted that if they try to start a conversation, the most they get is 'hello', after which those they greeted continue to speak in their own language. Most participants interpreted this as disinterest, only one participant considered that they might not speak the Dutch language. A participant with a Turkish background mentioned that for many Turkish women, speaking Dutch is very hard. Thus, it might not be disinterest from their side, what could be going on is that they unable to have a conversation as they do not understand what is being said. Without actual communication people might start to make assumptions, which could lead to false ideas about reality. As a result, people might start to avoid a conversation the next time, or might feel unwelcome and restricted from coming somewhere, whereas this was maybe not the intention of the other at all.

For everyone to feel at home, it seems that a few things deserve more attention. As the lack of conversations could possibly lead to misinterpretations of the situation, contact between

residents should be promoted. Several steps could be taken to achieve this. For example, some participants describe how they would appreciate if events were organized on the square, as this would increase the chances have a conversation with other residents. In addition, as some of the residents do not speak Dutch, more investments should be made in learning the Dutch language, which could also be promoted and executed in the form of an event on the square. Next to promoting contact, the square itself could also use some more attention. For some participants it would help if agreements were made among residents about keeping the square clean. Increased contact could facilitate informal social control in which neighbors keep each other accountable and confront those who do not throw away their waste. For this, it would also be helpful to place more garbage bins on and around the square. What could also increase feeling at home and promote keeping the square clean would be a renovation of the square. In this case, more residents should be involved in making the plans. According to some participants, there currently are plans to place more plants on the square, however, no one believes this would be of any help. If the residents would be more involved, not only would the square meet their wishes, but they might also get to know each other better and create a greater feeling of responsibility.

Strengths, limitations & future research

During this study, a broad group of participants with different ages, cultural backgrounds, and motivations to visit the Bospolderplein was interviewed. Although it was therefore not possible to formulate an unambiguous answer to the research question, this is a strength of this research as it sheds light on the feelings and believes of a diverse group of people. Both those who live directly next to the Bospolderplein as others who do not but who do have a strong opinion on the square were reached in this research, just like those who look at the square from a more professional perspective. Another strength of this research is that it adds to the findings of a similar study on the same square by Burgers and Zuijderwijk (2016). Whereas their study concluded that it is difficult for both native Dutch as well as for ethnic minorities to feel at home in the neighborhood, this research demonstrated that they both can, simultaneously. In addition, their research suggest that the Bospolderplein is being claimed, however, this study demonstrates that not all residents agree with this. Future research could elaborate on this finding and sort out why this is the case for some, but not for others.

However, because this research also considered the opinions of participants who were not frequent visitors of the square or did not live directly next to it, the results could be different because they might have been too unfamiliar with what is *really* going on at the square. For

future research it is therefore advised to distinguish between those who are *familiar* with the square because they either live next to it or visit it frequently, and those who only visit the square occasionally, which could be determined through self-categorization. This distinction would enable the researcher to see whether this influences the results. Another limitation of this research is that a significant group of the square's visitors was not reached, as many of those present indicated that they did not speak Dutch. For future research it is therefore advised to include researchers who speak the language of those often present, which is both Turkish and Moroccan. A last advice would be to also visit the square during the evening, as this could help to reach youths, a group often present on the square, but which is not addressed during this research. As some of them might be underage, and because it, as a researcher, might be difficult to reach them, the social workers of *stichting JOZ* could be asked for help, as they proved to be familiar with both the square and its visitors.

Implications

According to previous research by Burgers and Zuijderwijk (2016), the policy aims of mixing ethnic groups in processes of urban renewal is difficult to attain. In their words: "[…] it is highly unlikely that different ethnic groups will form a stable local community in which all groups will feel at home" (Burgers & Zuijderwijk, 2016, p. 117). This research demonstrates that this might not be true, as several participants indicated how they had good contact with their neighbors, also those with a different background. Multiple participants spoke for example about a group chat with their neighbors, meeting up with their neighbors in front of their houses, greeting each other, and being able to ask each other for help. In their case, there was a stable local community, which raises the question if we should still focus on diversity supposedly withholding communities from being formed. Instead, policy makers should look beyond such neighborhoods demographics, and start looking for other aspects that promote community building. This research has demonstrated that high-quality and attractive public spaces with activities which promote contact would be a first step in the right direction.

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Appendix 1: Topic List

Introductie

- Doel van het onderzoek
- Duur van het interview
- Uitleg consent form
- Vragen?
- Ondertekenen/opnemen

Algemene informatie

- Wat is uw leeftijd?
- Waar woont u ten opzichte van het Bospolderplein?
- Hoelang woont u al in de wijk?

Bospolderplein

- Hoe vaak maakt u gebruik van het Bospolderplein?
- Met welke reden komt u op het Bospolderplein?
- Met wie komt u daar?
- Kunt u wat vertellen over thuis voelen met betrekking tot het Bospolderplein?
    - Wat verstaat u onder ‘thuis voelen’?
- Wat zorgt ervoor dat u zich wel/niet thuis voelt?

Sociale interactie op het Bospolderplein

- Welke mensen maken nog meer gebruik van het plein?
    - Kent u de mensen die aanwezig zijn?
- Hoe zou u samenleven op dit plein beschrijven?
- Wanneer u op het Bospolderplein bent, hoe ervaart u dan de aanwezigheid van andere buurtbewoners?
- Hoe vaak heeft u contact met de andere bezoekers van het plein?
    - Welke vorm van contact?
    - Met wie?
    - Om welke reden?
- Hoe ervaart u dit contact?

Thuis voelen in de wijk

- Kunt u wat vertellen over de mate waarin u zich thuis voelt in de wijk?
    - Waar voel je je wel/niet thuis? (Woning/straat/buurt etc)
    - Bij wie voel je je wel/niet thuis?
- Wat zorgt ervoor dat u zich wel/niet thuis voelt?
- Is dit altijd al zo geweest? (Veranderd over tijd?)

Afronding interview

Appendix 2: Participant information

Table 1

Participants' demographics

Participant	Gender	Age	Ethnicity
1	Female	47	Dutch
2	Female	64	Dutch
3	Female	74	Dutch
4	Male	48	Dutch
5	Female	27	Dutch
6	Female	55	Surinamese
7	Female	55	Dutch
8	Female	43	Turkish
9	Male	46	Turkish
10	Female	33	Moroccan
11	Male	25	Moroccan

Figure 2

Participants' place of residence

Note. The locations marked are not the actual addresses of the participants, rather it is an indication of the participants' place of residence. Participants 10 and 11 are not marked on the map as they do not live in the neighborhood. Participant 10 lives somewhere in the south of Rotterdam, participant 11 in the area Middeland.

Appendix 3: Informed Consent Form

Doel van het onderzoek

Het doel van dit onderzoek is om meer inzicht te krijgen in de manier waarop buurtbewoners zich thuis voelen in hun wijk, waarbij het gebruik van het Bospolder centraal staat. Daarbij wordt ook gekeken naar de rol die de aanwezigheid van andere buurtbewoners op het plein speelt. Jij bent gevraagd voor dit onderzoek omdat je binnen de doelgroep valt. Door middel van het interview worden jouw ervaringen in kaart gebracht.

Procedure

Als je akkoord gaat met deelname aan dit onderzoek, dan wordt er een interview bij je afgenomen dat 45 tot 60 minuten zal duren. Deelname aan dit onderzoek is geheel vrijwillig, je hebt altijd de mogelijkheid om een vraag niet te beantwoorden, een pauze te nemen of het interview te stoppen. Als je hier toestemming voor geeft dan zal het interview worden opgenomen. Na het transcriberen van de geluidsfragmenten zullen deze opnames weer verwijderd worden. De gegevens die tijdens het interview worden verzameld worden zorgvuldig behandeld. Om je anonimiteit te waarborgen worden alle namen en alle persoonlijke gegevens die naar jou te herleiden zijn geanonimiseerd. Mocht je je na het interview nog bedenken en je deelname willen terugtrekken, dan is dit mogelijk. Je hoeft hiervoor geen verklaring te geven. Als je achteraf nog vragen hebt over het onderzoek of de verwerking van je antwoorden, dan mag je hier altijd contact over opnemen. Als je interesse hebt in de resultaten van het onderzoek, dan kan ik je deze naderhand toesturen.

Door dit document te ondertekenen bevestig je het volgende:

1. Je bent voldoende geïnformeerd over het doel van het onderzoek en de manier waarop deze wordt uitgevoerd;
2. Je deelname aan het onderzoek is geheel vrijwillig
3. Je geeft de onderzoeker toestemming om het interview op te nemen en de verkregen data op anonieme wijze te bewaren en te rapporteren;
4. Je bent ervan op de hoogte dat op elk moment kan stoppen met het interview

Ik geef toestemming voor deelname aan dit onderzoek,

Naam:
Plaats:
Datum:

Handtekening participant: **Handtekening onderzoeker:**

Appendix 4: Atlas.ti Codes

Figure 2

Code groups

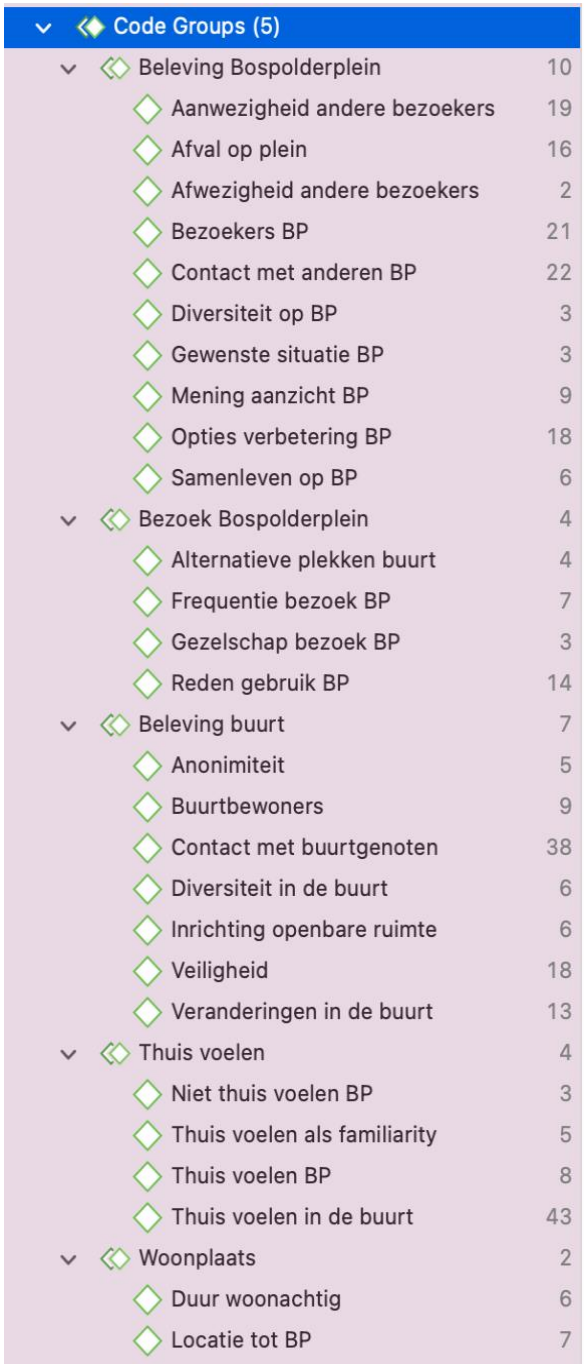


Figure 3

All codes

Appendix 5: Checklist ethical and privacy aspects of research

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Jennifer A. Holland, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Diversity and belonging at the Neighbourhood Square

Name, email of student: Simone van Dis, simonevandis97@gmail.com

Name, email of supervisor: Wenda Doff, doff@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: 7/2/2022 – 19/6/2022

Is the research study conducted within DPAS NO

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

Veldacademie

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. YES

   If 'NO': skip to part V.

   If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? NO

   Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act (WMO) must first be submitted to an accredited medical research ethics committee or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (CCMO).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. NO

   If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). NO

   If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1.	Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them?	NO
2.	Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study?	NO
3.	Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants?	NO
4.	Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? *Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).*	NO
5.	Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants?	NO
6.	Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)?	YES
7.	Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent?	YES
8.	Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study?	NO
9.	Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured?	NO
10.	Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study?	NO

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

This research aims to look at a diverse group of people, therefore participants will be asked to identify their ethnic background and other characteristics and children might also be spoken with. Those under 18 will not be interviewed, however, if an action research will be performed on the square, it is possible that children could participate if they want to. However, it is not sure yet if this type of research will be used.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

The voluntary nature of the research will be emphasized, and individuals do not have to participate if they don't want to. Participants will be made aware that they are free to not answer a question if they do not want to, or stop their participation in the interview/action research.

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

No

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

On and around the Bospolderplein in the neighborhood Bospolder-Tussendijken (Rotterdam)

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

For the interviews between 10 and 15 individuals. During observations there might also be conversations with those visiting the square, however, it is not possible yet to indicate how many this will be. In addition, if it is decided to also set up an action research/experiment on the square, more participants might be added to the sample. But again, it is not possible yet to give an indication of the amount.
Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

The neighbourhood has 14.000 residents, only those living around the square will be interviewed, the size of this population is unknown.
Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

If participants agree to record the interviews, these will be stored on my personal laptop and deleted after they are processed. If participants do not agree with recording, notes will be made on paper, which will be destroyed after being processed. Notes that are made during observations will also be written on paper and destroyed after being processed.

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

The researcher, Simone van Dis

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

Weekly

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

Information such as participants name and details about their living environment will not be published to avoid that the information could lead back to an individual.

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

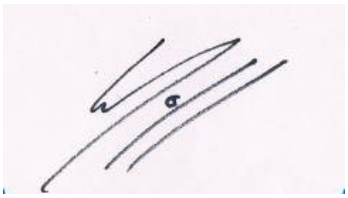
Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Simone van Dis

Date: 20/3/2022

Name (EUR) supervisor: Wenda Doff



Date: 20/3/2022