Living Together in Neighbourhood De Kooi: Social Cohesion, Place-Belongingness and Social Space in a Local Town in The Netherlands

Heijden, Maria van der

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Social Cohesion, Place-Belongingness and Social Space in a Local Town in The Netherlands

Marieke van der Heijden
Student Number: s2964341
Master Thesis Cultural Anthropology and Development
Sociology – Sociology of Policy in Practice
Leiden University
Supervisor: Dr. Tessa Minter
Second Reader: Annemarije Rus
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The picture on the cover was taken on March 21st, 2023 to accompany an article about this research on the website of Leiden University. The picture shows the weekly walking group which was one of the activities I participated in to conduct this research. The picture was taken at cemetery Groenesteeg which is located in the city centre of Leiden. The man with the broom was an employee of the cemetery who volunteered to give us a tour.

The picture was taken by Marc de Haan.

Dutch version of the article: https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/nieuws/2023/04/leren-met-de-stad-met-senioren-de-publieke-ruimte-in

English version of the article: https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/news/2023/04/playing-bingo-and-walking-with-senior-citizens-for-research-into-social-cohesion

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Glossary

BuZz: Organisation that focusses on teaching basic skills such as language (BuZz Leiden N.d.). Many people who participate in their activities had a migration background.

Incluzio: Organisation based in multiple cities, including Leiden. It aims at supporting: "residents in districts and neighbourhoods, together with municipalities and partners"[1] (Incluzio N.d.). An important part of their organisation is that they manage the community centres (Interview 15-3-2023).

Leren met de Stad: (meaning: Learning with the City). Collaboration between the University of Applied Sciences Leiden, Leiden University, the municipality of Leiden and civil society organisations. *Leren met de Stad* aims at using the knowledge available in the city to find solutions to problems in the city (Leren met de Stad n.d.). In practice, this means that the organisation hosts students from various educational backgrounds (such as physiotherapy, social legal services or anthropology) and guides them to research a topic relevant to the city and their study program. *Leren met de Stad* is located in community centre *Het Gebouw* in neighbourhood *De Kooi*.

SOL (*Samen Ondernemend Leren*): (meaning: Peer Entrepreneurial Learning). This social organisation focusses on children, young people and their parents (Onderwijs in de Leidse Regio N.d.). SOL offers many sports, games and other activities as well as parental support (SOL N.d.). The organisation has seven locations within Leiden, of which one is located in community centre *Het Gebouw* in neighbourhood *De Kooi* (ibid.).

Stichting Narcis: This is an organisation that focusses on women with an Arabic background (Stichting Narcis N.d.)

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[1] Original statement in Dutch: "ondersteunt inwoners in wijken en buurten, samen met gemeenten en partners". (Incluzio. N.d.).

1 Introduction

"So I hope they are nice to each other. And that something of that social,

kind thing returns in this neighbourhood[2]" (Interview 15-3-2023).

"It is a distinct group of people. If you don't live in *De Kooi,* they are always

friendly and nice, but you don't really belong[3]" (Interview 29-3-2023).

These are two statements participants shared about neighbourhood *De Kooi* and its residents during my research on social cohesion and place-belongingness in the two community centres of the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood has residents of various social groups and two community centres in which these social groups can meet each other, namely community centre *De Kooi* and community centre *Het Gebouw*. These two community centres have been the focus of this research. Both community centres are located in neighbourhood *De Kooi* in Leiden, The Netherlands. This neighbourhood comprises of a relatively high percentages of rental properties, social welfare recipients and migrants (Leiden in Cijfers N.d. 3-6). Different social organisations are present within the community. In this research, the most important one has been *Incluzio.* This organisation aims at supporting: "residents in districts and neighbourhoods, together with municipalities and partners"[4] (Incluzio N.d.). An important part of their organisation is that they manage the different community centres in Leiden and neighbourhood *De Kooi* (Interview 15-3-2023). For them, it was of importance to know more about which people visited which community centre and how this related to the social spaces of their community centres.

As part of this research, I was an intern at *Leren met de Stad*. This is a collaboration between the University of Applied Sciences Leiden, Leiden University, the municipality of Leiden and civil society organisations. *Leren met de Stad* aims at using the knowledge available in the city to find solutions to problems in the city (Leren met de Stad n.d.) (see glossary). *Leren met de Stad* informed me about the two existing community centres in the neighbourhood. This sparked my interest in how these two centres were used, who they were

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[2] Original statement in Dutch: "Dus ik hoop dat ze aardig zijn voor elkaar. En dat er ergens iets van dat sociaal, aardige in deze wijk terugkomt" (Interview 15-3-2023)

[3] Original statement in Dutch: "Het is een apart volk. Als je niet in de kooi woont, ze zijn altijd vriendelijk hoor en aardig, maar je hoort er toch niet echt bij" (Interview 29-3-2023).

[4] Original statement in Dutch: "ondersteunt inwoners in wijken en buurten, samen met gemeenten en partners". (Incluzio. N.d.).

intended for, and which residents went to which community centre. Therefore, in this thesis I will answer the question of how the places of the community centres influence the social cohesion and sense of belonging in neighbourhood *De Kooi*.

As I will describe in Chapter 4, neighbourhood policies have a long history in The Netherlands. During the 1970s, these policies focussed on the physical state of the neighbourhood, whereas during the 1980s, more focus was put on reducing spatial segregation based on socio-economic factors (Bolt and Van Kempen 2023). Since, the early 2000s, the emphasis on socio-economic factors changed to a focus on countering spatial concentrations of ethnic minorities (ibid.). Currently, a solution to the perceived failure of the multicultural society is seen in local neighbourhoods. Policies focus on increasing involvement in the neighbourhood and creating a sense of belonging to the local neighbourhood in order to increase the integration of minority groups (De Wilde and Duyvendak 2016). This is also the case for the most recent policy agreement of the municipality of Leiden. In this policy, they highlight the importance of residents feeling a sense of belonging in Leiden. Therefore, it is of importance to research how the community centres relate to this sense of belonging as well as to the social cohesion within the neighbourhood.

Interestingly, research conducted by the municipality in 2021 shows that residents of *De Kooi* usually experience the neighbourhood as a working-class neighbourhood with a strong social cohesion (Gemeente Leiden 2021a, 27; Gemeente Leiden 2021b, 29). This is contradictory to a research conducted by *Leefbarometer* issued by The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Kingdom Relations. This research shows that in neighbourhood *De Kooi* social cohesion negatively influences the overall score of the neighbourhood (see map 2) (Leefbarometer N.d.).

Additionally to these contradictory research outcomes, I have not been able to find qualitative academic research which has used the concepts of space, social cohesion and belonging simultaneously in the context of a local neighbourhood. However, these three concepts were essential for this research on neighbourhood *De Kooi*. This is because using these concepts allowed an understanding of neighbourhood dynamics on multiple levels that have not yet been used simultaneously in academic research.

1.1 Research question
In this thesis, I will answer the following research question:

How do different resident groups use the public spaces of the community centres in neighbourhood De Kooi (Leiden), and how does this relate to the social cohesion and the sense of belonging in the neighbourhood?

In order to answer this question, I have formulated four sub-questions:

1. How do people identify themselves in relation to other perceived resident groups?
2. How do different resident groups in neighbourhood *De Kooi* make use of the two community centres?
3. How do the two community centres facilitate encounters between different groups, and why?
4. How do policy makers and other expert members of the community assess social cohesion in the neighbourhood?

2 Theoretical background

As described in the introduction, I have used the theoretical concepts social cohesion, place and belonging in this research. I have not been able to find qualitative research that used these three concepts simultaneously. However, I believe that using these three concepts together was crucial for understanding the role of the community centres within neighbourhood *De Kooi*. In this chapter, I will outline these three theoretical concepts, describe how I have used them in this research and relate them to each other.

2.1 Social cohesion

In a very broad definition, social cohesion can be described as "the internal bonding of a social system" (Van Bergeijk et al. 2008, 2). However, due to the interdisciplinary use of the concept, such as in urban studies (Van Kempen and Bolt 2009), anthropology, sociology, psychology (Taylor and Davis 2018, 1), policy, politics (Van Bergeijk et al. 2008, 2) and mental and public health (Fonseca et al. 2019, 233), social cohesion is difficult to define and it means different things in different disciplines. Further, this broad definition does not specify what constitutes internal bonding or the size of a social system. Therefore, this definition is not useful in this research. So, I will focus on the anthropological and sociological perceptions of social cohesion as well as the influence of social cohesion on Western European policies. I have outlined these three perspectives in table 1.

2.1.1 Social cohesion in social sciences

Social cohesion is an often used concept within the social sciences. Within cultural anthropological research, prominent anthropologists have used the term social cohesion and therefore it has a long history. Malinowski described the importance of cultural institutions for social cohesion (Taylor and Davis 2018, 2). He argued that during big life events (such as birth, marriage and death), cultural and religious performances were essential to create social cohesion within a community. In contrast to Malinowski's perspective on social cohesion, Mauss and Radcliff-Brown focussed on reciprocity as the result of shared cultural practices, which they saw as a cause of social cohesion (ibid.).

In recent anthropological research, social cohesion is also of importance. According to Taylor and Davis (2018), social cohesion involves "proximity, coordination, and stability of relationships between members of a group which serves some benefit to the group as a whole

(ibid., 1). Furthermore, it is seen as "the extent to which a geographical place achieves 'community' in the sense of shared values, cooperation and interaction" (Peters et al. 2010, 94). This shows that social cohesion relates to social relations, geographical places and values.

Another academic context in the social sciences in which social cohesion is often used is sociological research. In this discipline, social cohesion is often seen as something that exists (or does not exist) between different citizens and groups. Émile Durkheim is an important thinker in this debate. He believed that without solidarity, society could not exist (Appelrouth and Edles 2021, 99). According to him, two kinds of solidarity existed: mechanical and organic solidarity. Mechanic solidarity referred to "the capacity of members of small-scale egalitarian societies to cooperate based on an internalized system of shared values and beliefs" (Taylor and Davis 2018, 1; Appelrouth and Adles 2021, 103). He saw this as opposed to organic solidarity which he described as "an independent cooperation of separate groups of individual, regulated by laws and contracts" (Taylor and Davis 2018, 1-2; Appelrouth and Adles 2021, 104). Additionally, he believed that division of labour led to greater interdependency between people because they had to rely on each other to be able to get everything they needed (Appelrouth and Adles 2021, 100). This solidarity between people creates cohesion according to Durkheim. In 1897, Durkheim defined social cohesion as " (1) the absence of latent social conflict (any conflict based on for e.g. wealth, ethnicity, race, and gender) and (2) the presence of strong social bonds (e.g. civic society, responsive democracy, and impartial law enforcement)" (Fonseca et al. 2019, 233). However, this definition focusses on the principle of a nation state in which strong bonds such as law enforcement and democracy are present. By focussing on these overarching national social bonds, it does not take local social bonds into account which is necessary in this research on a local neighbourhood.

Currently, sociological research is often conducted on either the level of the municipality or the neighbourhood (Huijts et al. 2014., 43-44) and based on quantitative data (see, for example, Gijsberts et al. 2012; Huijts et al. 2014; Martinović 2013). In such research, social cohesion is measured based on variables and scales. Variables mentioned in the literature are personal contact with neighbours from various ethnic groups, ethnic diversity, income, gender, age, educational level, religiosity and language proficiency (Huijts et al. 2014, 45-46). As can be seen in table 1, these variables are not the same for an anthropological research on social cohesion. This difference possibly relates to the different research methods used in the different contexts. The most important difference is that most sociological research is based on quantitative data, whereas anthropological research is based on qualitative data.

2.1.2 Social cohesion in Western European policies

Social cohesion also plays an important role in Western European national policies. According to political sociologist Jan Dobbernack, social cohesion is seen as a societal problem because often it is seen as lacking. Furthermore, policies are aimed at "fixing" social cohesion , and it is seen as a goal and a normative understanding of what societies should look like (Dobbernack 2014, 1-7; Novy et al 2012, 1874). In this perspective, social cohesion exists at all levels, such as local neighbourhoods, national states and international levels such as the European Commission and the OECD (Dobbernack 2014, 5; Novy et al. 2012, 235). Social cohesion is seen to be challenged by migration, segregation of communities and welfare recipients (Dobbernack 2014, 1). Moreover, policy makers view social cohesion as a problematic issue among certain groups, mainly among groups with a migration background. They are considered the target group of policies to encourage behavioural change (ibid., 2).

Huijts et al. argue that as a result of the influx of non-western immigrants in Western Europe at the end of the twentieth century, the political debate on social cohesion is strongly related to ethnic diversity (2014, 41-42). An influential, but controversial scholar in this debate is Robert Putnam. He argued that ethnic diversity is detrimental to social cohesion. Further, he stated that ethnic diversity causes people to 'hunker down' (Putnam 2007). His hypothesis has been questioned and proven incorrect by various scholars such as Finney and Jivraj (2013) and Huijts et al. (2014). Finney and Jivraj (2013) have investigated the relation between population change and belonging. They conclude that population change might be a factor to neighborhood belonging, but ethnic identity does not affect this negatively. Huijts et al (2014) researched the relation between inter-ethnic contact in neighbourhoods. They concluded that there is little evidence that in neighbourhoods with a high ethnic diversity people have less interpersonal contact with neighbors from their own ethnic group as well as neighbors from other ethnic groups (ibid., 53). Further, they state that "[i]nstead of inducing people to hunker down, ethnic diversity actually seems to change the ethnicity of the neighbours people interact with" (ibid.).

Interestingly, in policies, as well as a problem, social cohesion is often seen as the solution to these problems . It is described as a "regenerative tonic" (Dobbernack 2014, 2). This suggests that social cohesion can be infused into society to improve social relations between individuals and groups and improve the quality of society (ibid.). Practically, this infusion means introducing social activities that are believed to increase responsibility, mobility and activity (ibid., 8-9).

	Context		
	Anthropology	*Sociology*	*Western European policies*
Definition	[T]the extent to which a geographical place achieves 'community' in the sense of shared values, cooperation and interaction" (Peters et al. 2010, 94).	Something that exists (or does not exist) between different citizens and groups.	Both a problem in society and a solution to this problem.
Variables or aspects	Proximity, coordination, and stability of relationships between members of a group, shared values, cooperation and interaction.	Personal contact with neighbours from various ethnic groups, ethnic diversity, income, gender, age, educational level, religiosity and language proficiency.	Joint social activities, sense of responsibility towards society, mobility and activity.
Methods	Qualitative research methods such as observation and interviews.	Statistical analysis based on quantitative data.	Not mentioned.

Table 1: Social cohesion in different contexts.

2.1.3 Social cohesion in this study

As has been seen in the previous paragraphs, social cohesion means different things in different disciplinary and political contexts. In this research, I have used a definition of social cohesion that is not focused on a specific discipline but on the locality of the neighbourhood:

> "social cohesion at the neighbourhood level is the degree in which residents share values and norms, there is a certain degree of social control, the availability and interdependency of social networks (informally in the form of friendships or formally in the form of participation in organisations, associations and neighbourhood activities), the existence of trust between residents and the willingness to collectively find solutions to collective problems" (De Hart 2002, 12 in Van Bergeijk et al. 2008, 2).

This definition has aspects of all three contexts that are described in table 1. It includes anthropological perspectives because it focusses on norms and values and interactions through various networks. It also includes the sociological perspective by including personal contact between residents. Lastly, it includes the importance of shared activities that is also of importance in the use of social cohesion within policies. Besides the influence of these three contexts, it also includes different actors who play a role in the construction of social cohesion in a neighbourhood. Lastly, it highlights the role of individual people and their informal social networks, but also includes the formal organizations present in the neighbourhood.

An interesting question following this definition is about how these social networks are formed. There are two key hypotheses that can be identified in this regard: the 'similarity hypothesis' and the 'status hypothesis'. The 'similarity hypothesis' suggests that individuals tend to prefer to engage with people who are similar to themselves. On the other hand, the 'status hypothesis' proposes that individuals prefer to engage with people with a slightly higher social status than their own. Despite these different approaches, both hypotheses lead to the same outcome: people tend to form connections with individuals from their own social group. In the context of neighbourhood relations, this implies that people prefer to reside and interact with others who share some similarities. Thus, those belonging to higher socio-economic groups are less likely to engage with individuals from lower social classes (Van Bergeijk et al. 2008, 3).

The previously mentioned definition of social cohesion on the neighbourhood level was a useful definition in research on neighbourhood *De Kooi* since the neighbourhood had two community centres and many organizations were involved in strengthening social cohesion. I included the different characteristics that are mentioned in this definition (which are 1. shared values and norms; 2. a certain degree of social control; 3. availability and interdependency of formal and informal social networks; 4. trust between residents and 5. willingness to collectively find solutions) as a starting point for the data collection (see table 2).

2.2 Place

Place is another relevant concept in my research in neighbourhood *De Kooi*. Before the research started, *Leren met de Stad* informed me about friction between different resident groups in public spaces. In academia, in the 1970s and again in the 1990s, space became an important concept in the social sciences (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 1). Before this time, space in anthropology was viewed as part of everyday life (ibid.). According to Lawrence-

Zuniga, "Space is often defined by an abstract scientific, mathematical, or measurable conception while place refers to the elaborated cultural meanings people invest in or attach to a specific site or locale" (2017). In this anthropological definition, a place is a space with cultural meaning attached to it.

2.2.1 Place as a social product

Henri Lefebvre, a renowned scholar on space, asserted that "(social) place is a (social) product" (1991, 26), implying a relationship between people and the environment where they live. According to Lefebvre, people have a role in shaping places, but places also play a role in shaping people. This viewpoint is supported by James Fernandez, who argues that people and the environment have a mutually constituting relationship (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 14). Ultimately, the connection between people and the social place is complex and multifaceted, with each influencing and shaping the other. Additionally, place is social because individuals attach meaning to these spaces due to personal experiences (ibid. 2003 19). Edward Hall adds that people influence places differently and experience them differently (ibid. 2003, 4). This means that "[p]lace can have a unique reality for each inhabitant, and while the meanings may be shared with others, the views of place are often likely to be competing, and contested in practice" (ibid. 2003, 15). Social norms are important in these spaces since every space has its own codes of behaviour based on societal ideas (Spain 2014). Because of such codes of behaviour, spaces can be exclusive if people do not know the codes of that space (Low 2014).

2.2.2 Contested spaces

A related concept in this debate is "contested spaces". Contested spaces are defined as "geographical locations where conflicts in the form of opposition, confrontation, subversion, and/or resistance engage actors whose social positions are defined by differential control of resources and access to power" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 18). This conflict takes place on specific sites, but exposes "broader social struggles over deeply held collective myths" (McDonogh 1992 in Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 18). This is especially frequent in urban spaces because these places inhabit different social entities and thus complex structures in which people compete over material and symbolic resources (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 19). An interesting example of a contested space is given by Steven Gregory (2003) in the context of a local neighbourhood Queens in New York, The United States. This neighbourhood

was designed in the 1970s for the middle-class which resulted in a predominantly white population. However, from 1972 to 1976, the black population increased from 25% to almost 80% (ibid., 286-287). During community meetings with the main housing development organisation committee (which consisted only of white people), problems in the neighbourhood such as youth crime were discussed. However, in these discussions, perspectives of the black residents were excluded whereas the white committee members, albeit implicitly, referred to the problems in relation to race. One black female resident believed that the perceptions of the black youth was lacking and set up an organisation to define problems and needs of the youth. This organisation became a place in which "the needs, interests, and identities of Lefrak City residents could be collectively contested, negotiated, and recast in empowering ways" (Gregory 2003, 296). This example shows how the meaning of a place and its residents are contested and how people oppose the existing power structures. This example has multiple similarities to neighbourhood *De Kooi*. Just like Lefrak City, *De Kooi* was built for a white middle-class population. However, other social groups such as migrants moved into the neighbourhood which resulted in a different social composition. Further, albeit not in an official powerful organisation such as the housing development organisation committee, community centre *De Kooi* is predominantly used by the white residents of the neighbourhood.

2.2.3 Third places

Another related concept is third places. This is a term coined by sociologist Ray Oldenburg in his book *The Great Good Place* (1989). In this book, he argues that daily life is shaped by three places. The first is the home, the second is the workplace, and the third he named the 'third place'. The third place he sees as "the core settings of informal public life" (Oldenburg 1991, 16). Thus, this is a sociable place in which communities are formed. These are for example bars or community centres.

These third places share eight similar characteristics. Firstly, it is a neutral place in which people can decide when to come and go without obligations. Secondly, the third place is a leveler. This means that it is an inclusive place where everyone can go without formal criteria such as (social and economic) status. Thirdly, the main activity in these places is conversation. In these places games can be played, but even then, there is usually conversation about the game and its players. These conversations about the game allow it to be a social event. Oldenburg states that: "The game is conversation and the third place is its home court" (Oldenburg 1991, 31). Fourthly, a third place is accessible and accommodating. This means

that these places should accommodate people's daily life in a sense that it should be accessible after people have finished their work and are released from domestic responsibilities. As a result of this, third places often have relatively long opening hours. Fifthly, a third place has regulars who feel at home in a place which is infectious to newcomers. Sixthly, the place should be low profile, meaning that it should be plain and homely. This ensures that it does not attract one-time visitors and protects the regulars from numerous intrusions. Seventhly, the mood in these places is playful. This means that conversations are not of a serious tone, but rather playful and joyful. Lastly, third places are a home away from home. They are congenial in nature and gives people a sense of 'homeness' (ibid. 31-41).

The concept of third places is relevant in this research because most of the research activities took place within third places, specifically in the community centres of the neighbourhood.

2.2.4 Space in this research

As can be seen in 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, spaces are not neutral. People shape places, and places shape people (Lefebvre 1991). Because of this, people experience places differently and some people are excluded because they do not know the codes of behaviour of a specific place (Low 2014). Additionally, Low argues that in anthropology:

> "spatializing culture—that is, studying culture and political economy through the lens of space and place—provides a powerful tool for uncovering material and representational injustice and forms of social exclusion. At the same time, it facilitates an important form of engagement because such spatial analyses offer people and their communities a way to understand the everyday places where they live, work, shop, and socialize" (2011, 390-391).

I agree with this view on the importance of including space and place in anthropological research. In this research, place was the starting point. This was because *Leren met de Stad* (see glossary) informed me before the research started that people in the neighbourhood had different ideas about which places belonged to whom and whom was not welcome in specific places. Thus, "contested spaces" were of importance in this research. As described before, contested spaces are geographical spaces where conflicts such as opposition, confrontation,

subversion, and/or resistance take place. In addition, there are individuals whose social positions are defined by disparate control of resources and control of power" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 18). Thus, aspects I will use in this research are: conflict, social position and codes of behaviour. This approach to space is important because in meetings with *Leren met de Stad*, friction between the different resident groups has been mentioned repeatedly.

However, it must also be acknowledged that the definition of contested spaces is geared towards conflict. I do not believe that places only cause conflict. Places could possibly also cause positive connections between people. An example from neighbourhood *De Kooi* were the attempts to bring people together through various activities in the community centres. Therefore, I will also include "social construction" as described by Low (2000, 128). By this, she means that people shape places based on their personal experiences in these places. She sees these personal experiences through the variables: daily use of the physical space, memories, social exchanges and images. Because these variables are more neutral than the variables of contested spaces, I included those in this research as well. This allowed me to not only focus on the conflict in the public spaces, but also on the positive connections.

2.3 Belonging

In anthropological research, belonging is a concept that has gained importance (Antonsich 2010, 652). Belonging is related to the relationship between political communities in local contexts and national discourses, institutions and practices (Sturtevant 2017, 4). It is a concept that is often associated with sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis. In her work on belonging, she defines it as a dynamic process in which individuals view themselves and others as members of specific "objects of attachment" (Yuval-Davis 2006, 199). These 'objects of atachment' can be class, gender, race, profession, nationality, age group, kinship group, neighbourhood, and many others. Therefore, people can experience multiple belongings simultaneously (ibid.).

Additionally, Yuval-Davis (2006) highlights the concept 'politics of belonging'. With this, she means the contestation of boundaries that separate people in 'us' and 'them'. Dutch policies previously used the terms *allochtoon* (allochthon) and *autochtoon* (autochthon). Originally, these are geological terms which mean originating (or not) from the soil. *Allochtoon* refers to a (non-western) immigrant of whom at least one parent was born abroad, whereas *autochtoon* refers to Dutch natives with both parents born in The Netherlands (Slootman and Duyvendak 2015, 151; De Ree 2016). On March 17th, 2016, a motion was passed in the House

of Representatives to no longer use the terms (*westerse en niet-westerse) allochtoon* and *autochtoon* (meaning: Western and non-western allochthon and autochthon) in official government policies (Tweede Kamer 2016). Currently, terms often used are 'person with a migration background' and 'child of migrants' (Van Buuren 2022).

Further, the terms *allochtoon* and *autochtoon* relate to the 'culturalization of citizenship' (De Koning and Ruijtenberg 2019). 'Culturalization of citizenship' means that people need to adapt to what is seen as "Dutch cultural values" in order to be perceived as Dutch (ibid., 338). Dutch policies focused on creating 'active' citizens to prevent and combat the perceived problem of the integration of minority groups within society. The national government feared that immigration would lead to spatial segregation and a decrease of social networks within neighbourhoods. Yanow and Van der Haar (2013, 228-230) argue that Dutch policy focused on integrating the non-Dutch into Dutch society (ibid., 229). This is similar to the focus on *allochtoon* residents when discussing social cohesion.

In line with Benedict Anderson's influential book *Imagined Communities* (1983), Yuval-Davis (2006) argues that communities are imagined, and boundaries are constructed by people's values, social locations and definitions of 'us'. These boundaries are continuously challenged (ibid., 204-205). An interesting example of politics of belonging is given by Buitelaar and Stock (2010). They describe how in today's Amsterdam, people living in specific neighbourhoods longest, are not necessarily perceived as 'natives' of that place. These are especially people of Dutch-Moroccan descent, and due to their marginalisation, their claim to be 'native' and thus to belong to a place is a contested issue (Duyvendak 2011). Claiming belonging to a place is linked to power relations that exist at that place during that specific time.

In response to Yuval-Davis's theorisation of belonging (2006), Antonsich critiques Yuval-Davis's focus on politics of belonging for neglecting the relationship between belonging and social space (ibid., 647). Belonging is not unrelated to social space. Sturtevant describes this as follows: "the practices through which people make claims that they belong in a social space simultaneously produce an idea of that social space" (2017, 6). With this, he means that claiming to belong to a specific place constructs the social meaning of that place. He continues by stating that inclusion and exclusion are not clear-cut opposites, but are constantly changing. Thus, "[i]t is not only an individual's position that is unstable or subject to contestation, but also the community as a social space" (2017, 6). This shows that claiming belonging is simultaneously an inclusive and exclusive practice in an ever-changing context. This process produces a social space in which the community is not fixed.

Therefore, Antonsich argues for a distinction between place-belongingness and politics of belonging (2010, 645). With place-belongingness, he means the emotional feeling of feeling at 'home' that a person attaches to a place. Home, in this case, is a "symbolic space of familiarity" (ibid., 646). Place-belongingness exists on multiple levels, such as a personal house, a neighbourhood or the nation-state (ibid.). Contrastingly, he sees 'politics of belonging' as a "discursive resource which constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion" (ibid., 645). Thus, politics of belonging is a social practice in which people make distinctions between 'us' and 'them' (ibid., 649). This is a similar argument to Sturtevant's (2017). He argues that claiming belonging is not neutral. People unable to claim to belong have less access to resources connected to the community. Thus, belonging serves "as a proxy in a conflict over the allocation of resources, rights and responsibilities to members of a community, and they do so by making claims about the very constitution of that community" (2017, 22).

2.3.1 Belonging in this research

I will use belonging in this research to analyse to which "object of attachment" residents of neighbourhood 'De Kooi' feel attached. Additionally, I will use it to analyse how residents of this neighbourhood perceive each other. This relates to Yuval-Davis's use of politics of belonging in which people are categorized in 'us' and 'them' (2006). This will be useful for understanding how people perceive themselves and each other and understanding what this means for social cohesion in public spaces. Additionally, I will use Antonsich's place-belongingness to study how the public spaces of the community centres are related to people's sense of belonging.

2.4 Relation between social cohesion, space and belonging

I have not been able to find qualitative academic research which has used the concepts of space, social cohesion and belonging simultaneously. However, using all three concepts is essential for my research on neighbourhood *De Kooi*. This is because using these concepts allows for understanding neighbourhood dynamics on multiple levels that have not yet been used simultaneously in academic research.

Additionally, these three concepts influence each other in neighbourhood *De Kooi*. I have schematically outlined this relationship in figure 1. Firstly, the (public) space is where different resident groups can come in contact with each other, whether this contact is positive or not. Secondly, due to the different values and perceptions on how to behave in these spaces, these spaces can be a place of misunderstanding and friction among the residents of *De Kooi*, possibly influencing the neighbourhood's social cohesion. This is interesting because space attachment is often seen as positive to the social cohesion of a neighbourhood instead of a source of conflict (Bailey et al. 2012). Thirdly, belonging is an essential factor in this research because social interaction and friction between the different groups possibly leads to emphasising "objects of attachment" based on differences between the groups instead of viewing each other as fellow-resident of *De Kooi* (conversation with *Leren met de Stad*). However, Van der Meer and Tolsma (2014) argue that there is little academic consensus about the effect of ethnic diversity on social cohesion. This is an interesting difference. Additionally, the use of belonging is important because people categorize themselves and others into multiple groups and have multiple senses of belonging, which will influence their position in public spaces.
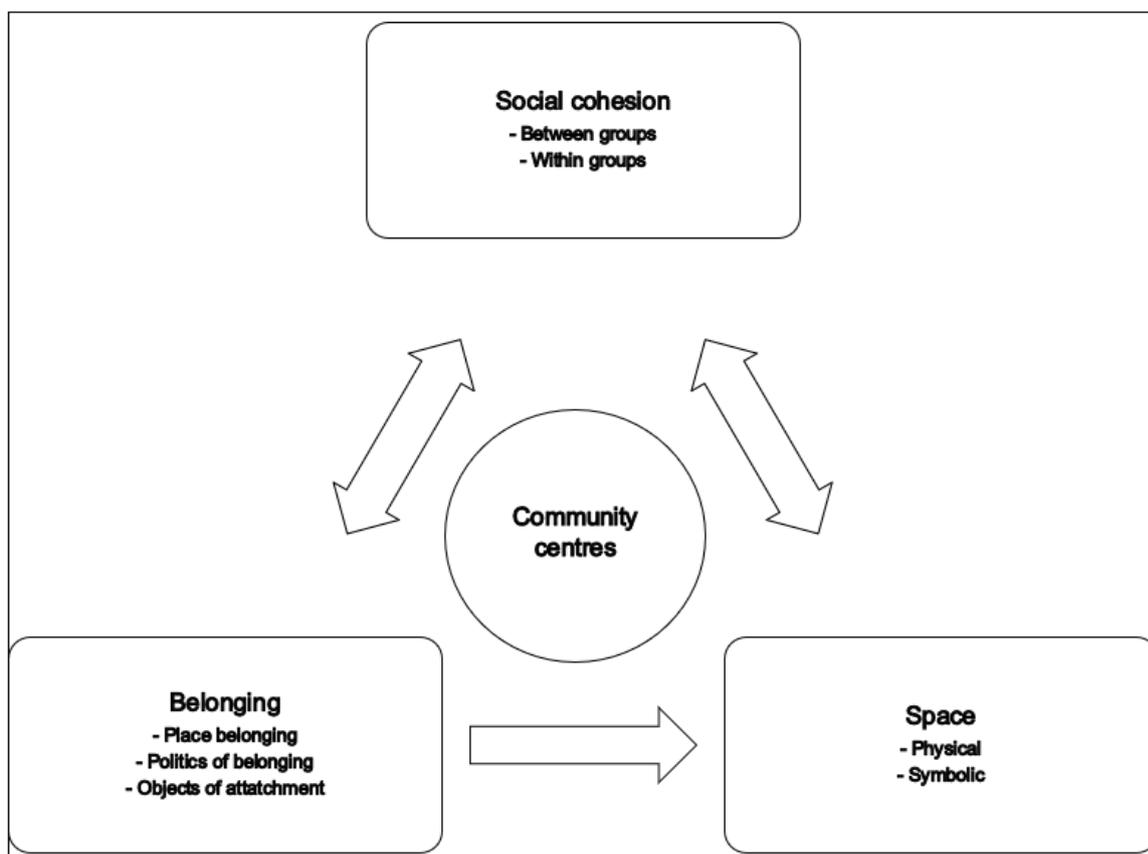

Figure 1: Relation between social cohesion, space and belonging in the community centres of the neighbourhood.

There is also a clear relation between place and belonging. Antonsich (2010) argues that six factors contribute to place-belongingness. Firstly, he mentions auto-biographical factors. This relates to personal experiences and memories in a space (ibid., 647). Secondly, relational factors such as social ties tie someone to a place. He distinguishes between dense relations with family members and friends and 'weak' ties in this factor. These are, for example, short interactions between strangers who share a public space (ibid.). Thirdly, cultural factors such as language and religion are essential for place-belongingness. Especially language can create a space where people understand what you mean through similar language nuances (ibid., 648). Fourthly, economic factors are essential to feeling safe in a space and feeling attached to that place (ibid.). This is because being part of an economic system creates a feeling of place-belongingness. Further, Antonsich argues that economic factors are important for place-belongingness "not only from a material perspective, but also in relation to make a person feel that s/he had a stake in the future of the place where s/he lives" (ibid.). Fifthly, legal factors are vital to place-belongingness. Being an official citizen reduces risk and threat and increases the resources available to deal with these risks and threats (ibid.). Additionally, Antonsich points out that the length of residence in a place is also vital in generating place-belongingness (ibid., 648-649). Length of residence is also strongly related to auto-biographical factors. The aspects mentioned by Antonsich (2010) are thus of importance to research how people belong to a specific place (in this research the specific place is the neighbourhood). Therefore, I have included these dimensions in (in)formal conversations.

In table 2, I have schematically outlined the concepts and aspects relevant to this research.

Concepts	Aspects
Social cohesion	- Shared values and norms - A certain degree of social control - Availability and interdependency of (formal and informal) social networks - Trust between residents - Willingness to find solutions collectively
Place	- Social construction (daily use of space, memories, social exchange and images) - Codes of behaviour - Conflicts (opposition, confrontation, subversion and resistance) - Social position (control over resources and access to power)
Place-belongingness	- Auto-biographical factors - Relational factors - Cultural factors - Economic factors - Legal factors - Length of residence

Table 2: Concepts and aspects in this research to explore social cohesion and place-belongingness.

3 Methodology and Ethics

3.1 Research methods

I conducted this research in the months January, February and March of 2023. In this research, I have used four research methods. These are small talk, (participant) observation, participatory mapping and semi-structured interviews (Van Meijl et al. 2016; Driessen and Jansen 2013; Kumar 2019; Yoo and Kim 2017; Bernard 2011; Magnusson and Marecek 2015).

3.1.1 Participant observation

To conduct participant observation, *Leren met de Stad* has matched me with two activities in community centre *Het Gebouw*. The first is a walking group consisting of primarily senior residents. The size of the group varied due to the weather, but at the max, ten people participated. This group walked together through the neighbourhood and city weekly. After every walking group, volunteers organised a lunch for participants of the walking group and others who wanted to join. I also went to this lunch if possible. Beside participant observation, I made audio recordings while walking. In order to do this, I have asked for informed consent through a consent form (see Appendix 3). The second activity *Leren met de Stad* matched me with was a neighbourhood clean-up group. This clean-up group was organised by SOL (*Samen Ondernemend Leren*[5]). This social organisation focuses on children and young people (Onderwijs in de Leidse Regio N.d.). SOL aims at improving four pillars: personal success, health, safety and opportunities. This clean-up group is hoping to contribute to personal success (Pers. Comm. Youth worker SOL. June 2023). During this research, the clean-up group consisted of teenage girls between the age of eleven and fourteen. However, the fact that the children were all girls was a coincidence. Boys were also allowed to participate. The size of this group varied greatly. Some weeks, none of the girls showed up, and other weeks there were seven girls.

Because I also wanted to participate in activities at community centre *De Kooi*, I approached the staff of this community centre. I introduced myself as a student from *Leren met de Stad*, and explained my research. I then asked if there were activities in the community centre in which I could partake. This has allowed me to partake in a weekly shuffleboard game. Attendees of this game were all senior residents, and most of them were female. At first, I was there to join in the activity. However, during my research, a volunteer who usually served the

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[5] Translation: Peer Entrepreneurial Learning.

drinks could not be there. Therefore, I was asked to serve the drinks. Secondly, I was allowed to partake in a bi-weekly bingo game. During this game, there were not many things I could help with. However, when I noticed that help was needed, I offered to help. This group also consisted of primarily, but not exclusively, senior residents. Usually, around 35 people came to play bingo, of which most were women. Some younger attendees usually went with a senior resident. I sat next to the two women organising the bingo. During the breaks, I could speak with them or go to attendees to speak with them. After I had been present a few times, I was asked to help with handing out snacks during one of the breaks. In table 3, I have outlined the number of times I have conducted participant observation at each of the previously mentioned activities.

Activity	Number of times
Walking group	11
Clean-up group	9
Shuffleboard	9
Bingo	5
Other one-time events	4

Table 3: Number of participant observation activities

3.1.2 Passive participation

Additionally, I conducted passive participation as described by Spradley (1980, 59-60). This means I was present on the "scene of action" (ibid., 59), but observed the event without participating. I conducted this type of observation, for example, in the hall and cafeteria of *Het Gebouw*. The only interaction I would have with other people was when I went to the counter to buy a drink. During this passive participation, I sat at a table with my notebook and made notes about what was happening. This allowed me to focus on which people were present in the physical space, what they were doing, whom they were interacting with and what they were talking about. This gave me insight into how neighbourhood residents used the community centre.

3.1.3 Small talk/informal interviews

To be able to answer my research questions, however, it was essential to talk with people about the neighbourhood and its residents. In order to do this, small talk/informal interviews were

crucial (Van Meijl et al. 2016, 253; Driessen and Jansen 2013). Mainly during the previously described weekly activities of the walking group, clean-up group, shuffleboard and bingo, I used this method. According to Driessen and Jansen (2013), there is a thin boundary between small talk and informal interviews. Bernard states that "unstructured interviewing goes on all the time, just about anywhere" (2011, 156). Similarly, small talk is often regarded as light, irrelevant conversation, but this is not the case. "[I]t is increasingly being seen as functionally multifaceted; central to social interaction, both ritualised and informal; and having direct relevance to transactional and institutional goals" (ibid., 250). However, these conversations helped me to start understanding how people talked about themselves and others in the neighbourhood and, therefore, how they categorised the residents as different "object[s] of attachment", as described by Yuval-Davis (2006, 199) and in Chapter 2.3.

Furthermore, small talk or informal interviews helped me learn more about the community's conflicts, hierarchies and tensions (Driessen and Jansen 2013, 253). This happened when people included me in neighbourhood gossip and when they shared whom they liked and disliked and why. This gave me interesting information about how people in the community perceived each other and their status. Gossip is a big part of daily conversations. It can be defined as "evaluative talk by at least two people about absent third parties in confidential or cordial settings" (Driel and Verkuyten 2022, 593). Gossip serves multiple purposes within a community. Firstly, it plays a normative role by upholding community norms and values, which are crucial for defining and preserving the community itself. Secondly, gossip can be informative, as it involves sharing information that fosters trust and strengthens relationships. Thirdly, gossip can be employed strategically to justify privileges, maintain inequalities, and exclude outsiders. Individuals can strategically utilize gossip to safeguard their personal interests or enhance their social status by tarnishing the reputation of others (ibid., 594). Gossip is often regarded as negative, even though it also has positive implications such as strengthening social bonds and "sustaining social norms and community cohesion" (ibid., 593). In this research, an important type of gossip I have witnessed is "supportive gossip". This kind of gossip is "not negative in tone but rather aimed at generating support from community members" (ibid.). I will return to this kind of gossip in Chapter 6.2.

Additionally to using small talk as a way to learn how people talked about themselves and each other, small talk was also helpful in building trust between the participants and myself. This helped me to approach people for semi-structured interviews, and it helped people to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and opinions with me.

I have used convenience sampling as a way to choose which people to talk to. Convenience sampling is "primarily guided by the convenience to the researcher in terms of selecting potential respondents whatever this might be: easy accessibility, geographical proximity, known contacts, ready approval for undertaking the study or being part of the group" (Kumar 2019, 307). I had relatively easy access to the people of the walking group, clean-up group, shuffleboard and bingo. Further, while doing participant observation during these activities, I became part of the group and people were very willing to talk to me.

3.1.4 Semi-structured interviews

Thus, the walking group, clean-up group, shuffleboard game and bingo were my (bi-)weekly activities where I conducted participant observation. However, these activities were also vital for my semi-structured interviews. During these activities, I met many people who lived in the neighbourhood. I have conducted a total of 19 interviews with neighbourhood residents and expert members of the community (see table 4). I have conducted two kinds of interviews. The first were participatory mapping interviews and the second were semi-structured interviews with expert members of the community. Table 4 shows the number of every kind of interview I have conducted and the gender composition of the participants.

As can be seen in table 4, more women than men participated in my research. This is because more women participated in the activities and the volunteers and employees of the community centre were also mostly women. This is not uncommon in neighbourhood community centres. Stevenson argues that: "traditionally women have been at the centre of suburban life and are influential in establishing and maintaining everyday neighbourhood communities" (1999, 213). Some participants brought their partners with them to the interview. Even though they also participated in the interview, albeit less than the original participant, I count this as one interview and use the gender of the original participant in table 4. Additionally, during two participatory mapping interviews, participants refused to draw a map. The question to draw a map made them visibly feel awkward. If I noticed that, even after I had explained that the drawing was not meant as an assessment of their artistic qualities, the participant remained uncomfortable drawing the map, I offered to simply continue with the interview without the map. However, because I still followed the interview guide of the participatory mapping interview, I categorise these interviews as participatory mapping interviews.

Interviews	Number of times	Gender
Semi-structured participatory mapping interviews with residents	8	1 male 7 female
Semi-structured interviews with professionals and volunteers	11	5 male 6 female

Table 4: Composition of the interviews

For all these interviews, I have asked for informed consent. I explained my research to the participant and asked if they had any questions for me. Additionally, I asked for verbal consent to record the interviews (see Chapter 3.2.1). I explained to the participants that I would use the recordings to transcribe the interviews and not use it in other ways. All participants agreed to this. A few professionals asked for an additional consent process. They wanted to approve the use of their quotes when they were linked to them as a person. I agreed to this. While writing this thesis, I contacted these professionals and showed them the quotes I wanted to use. Sometimes they had little remarks and I changed the quotes accordingly.

As mentioned before, I conducted participatory mapping interviews. Participatory mapping allows participants to share their "mental maps" (Theis and Grady 1991, 82). Additionally, drawings "evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words" (Harper 2002, 13). Kearney and Hyle state that "participant produced drawings appear to create a path toward participant feelings and emotions, making them viable tools for researchers who seek access to this type of data" (2004, 376). This method has a long history in rural conditions where local residents are asked to map their land (Chambers 1994). However, I also believe this method can be helpful in non-rural settings such as an urban neighbourhood. This has been done by, for example, Yoo and Kim (2017). In my research, I used this method primarily to allow participants to show me how they perceived the neighbourhood.

There are many ways to incorporate participatory mapping in research, but I used "spatial assessment" mapping as described by Yoo and Kim (2017). They asked interviewees to draw a community map. To do this, they gave the participants a blank piece of paper to draw meaningful destinations, spaces, roads, and buildings they use in the neighbourhood. After the participants completed drawing the map, the researchers asked the participants if they wanted to show them the places on the map. This allowed them to ask more questions about the meaning of these places for the participants (ibid., S91). During my research, I learned that interviewing while walking was not the most suitable for this research. Many participants were senior residents and thus less mobile. This meant they were not as willing to do this kind of

interview. Additionally, while walking, I noticed that my questioning was not as precise and structured as it would be during a sit-down interview which hindered the natural flow of the interview. Therefore, I decided to still incorporate the participatory mapping in the interview as it was a good starting point for conversation, but not to go to these places physically. I asked the participant to draw a map of the neighbourhood and the places where they felt comfortable and uncomfortable. Often, while they were drawing, the participants started to explain what they were drawing and why. This helped to discuss the topics that were important to them and thus take their experience of the neighbourhood as a starting point of the interview.

To select possible participants, I have used judgemental sampling. In this kind of sampling "[t]he primary consideration … is your judgement as to who can provide the best information …. You … only go to those people who … are likely to have the required information and are willing to share it with you" (Kumar 2019, 307). People I have approached for the mapping interview were almost all participants in one of the weekly activities. I have based the decisions on who to approach on the willingness of participants to engage with me in informal interviews.

The second kind of interview I conducted were semi-structured interviews with policymakers and other expert members of the community. In social sciences there is a debate about what characteristics a person needs to be considered an expert. Schwegler and Powell argue that the term experts is used to describe individuals who have specific qualifications or credentials that validate their deep understanding of a particular area of knowledge. Experts often possess expertise that allows them to evaluate anthropological knowledge (2008, 4). This view on experts focusses on the qualifications and credentials individuals possess. Another definition of experts is: "Experts are considered knowledgeable of a particular subject and are identified by virtue of their specific knowledge, their community position, or their status" (Döringer 2021, 265). In this research, I did not necessarily consider experts to be highly educated or within a high social position. I have also included volunteers and social organizers in this category. This is because their perspective on the neighbourhood's social cohesion was based on many years of being active within the neighbourhood and its community centres. However, I also interviewed people of a "higher" social position such as neighbourhood police officers and the w*ijkregisseur*[6].

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[6] A *wijkregisseur* is someone who is the link between the residents of the community, professional organizations and the municipal administration (Interview with Marjolein Pijnacker, Wijkregisseur Leiden North).

Using expert interviews was a useful way to learn about the perspective of previously described experts on social cohesion in *De Kooi*. This method is suited to interview bureaucrats because they appreciate the efficient use of their time (Bernard 2011, 158). Further, because it is usually only possible to meet these people once, it was essential to have a clear interview guide to make sure that all questions are asked (ibid.). This was the case with for example the neighbourhood police officers and the previously mentioned w*ijkregisseur*. These interviews allowed me to ask more specific open-ended questions, inviting participants to share their perspectives and experiences (Magnusson and Marecek 2015, 47). People I have interviewed include staff members and volunteers of the community centres, community police officers and the *wijkregisseur*. Because these people are often asked for interviews by students from *Leren met de Stad*, I jointly conducted six interviews with Rosa Vroom, a fellow anthropology student focussing on social cohesion in neighbourhood *De Kooi*. After the interviews, Rosa Vroom and I divided the transcriptions of those joint interviews so that we did not both have to transcribe the interviews.

3.2 Ethics

Ethical considerations were crucial during this research, just as in any research. The AAA code of ethics states that anthropologists bear "[r]esponsibility to people and animals with whom anthropological researchers work and whose lives and cultures they study" (AAA 2009, 2). In this statement, not doing harm is of central concern, and the code states that anthropologists should "avoid harm" (ibid.). However, the Dutch Code of Ethics for the Social and Behavioural Sciences has formulated it less strictly by stating that anthropologists should "strive towards a minimisation of harm" (Nationaal Ethiek Overleg Sociale en Gedragswetenschappen 2018, 3). Even though this is a nuanced difference, I believe I should not strive to minimise harm but should avoid harm to participants altogether. I can do this in my research by anonymising participants, using pseudonyms and eliminating traceable details about individuals. However, this is not easy since the community centres are tight-knit communities. Writing about experiences, encounters, and conversations with individuals within these communities comes with the ever-present possibility that people recognise themselves or each other. Therefore, I had to decide in each case if it would be harmful to the participant if they were to be recognised. I did this with as much care as possible.

Further, I had to be aware of possible emotional consequences for participants, and I had to formulate interview questions sensitively whenever I noticed harmful emotions in the

participants. This happened in interviews where participants told me about their lives and how they ended up living in *De Kooi*. Sometimes, this included abusive situations. While participants were explaining these situations, I sometimes noticed strong emotions. If this happened, I was careful not to ask questions about the details. Because I did not ask this, the participants could choose whether they wanted to share details or not. Additionally, I ensured them that I would not use the details of their situation in this research. This was especially important when the abuser should not learn where the participant lives now.

3.2.1 Informed consent

Informed consent was another essential ethical concern. Informed consent comes back in both previously mentioned ethical guidelines. According to the Dutch Code of Ethics for the Social and Behavioural Sciences, informed consent consists, among others, of voluntary participation, an explanation of the study's purpose and the possible risks and the right to withdraw consent (Nationaal Ethiek Overleg Sociale en Gedragswetenschappen 2018, 6). I have obtained informed consent in various ways. For the walking group, I had a written consent form (see Appendix 2). I explained the form to the participants and asked them if they would sign it. I believe that, in this case, verbal consent was not enough because the recordings were taking place over various weeks. To remind the participants they were being recorded, I wore a phone strap around my upper arm to record hands-free. This phone strap was visible at all times and reminded the participants they were being recorded.

For the participatory mapping interviews and the interviews with expert members of the community, I asked for verbal consent. Before the interview started, I explained the goal and topic of the research. Additionally, I explained that I would use the recordings only to transcribe the interview. I then asked the participant if they had questions about the research and when the participant asked a question I answered it. Lastly, I asked if they agreed to participate in this research. If they agreed, I turned on the recording device and asked for their consent again so that their consent was also recorded (see appendix 4 and 5).

3.2.2 Minors

To conduct this research, I have also talked with underage teenagers. Mainly through my participation in the clean-up group, I was able to speak with them. Because they were underaged, this is an important ethical consideration. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR n.d.) states that "[c]hildren under 13 can only give consent with permission from their

parent". This means that to abide by the GDPR, it would be unnecessary to ask parents of teenagers who are 13 years or older. However, according to the Dutch Code of Ethics for the Social and Behavioural Sciences, consent from a parent is necessary until a child is 16 years old (2018, 7). Therefore, I did not collect this type of data. However, I did participant observation in this context and talked to the teenagers. I collected this data without writing personal details to ensure no one would be traceable. The participation of these teenagers has been discussed with my supervisors from the university, *Leren met de Stad* and the youth worker who supervised this group.

However, I conducted one interview with an underaged girl who was not part of this clean-up group. She was primary school age and thus unable to consent herself. Therefore, I asked the mother for her consent first. I explained the research and the content of the interview to her. However, I also believed it was essential to obtain consent from the child as well. Therefore, after the mother gave her consent, I explained the research and the interview in more simple words to the girl. She also agreed to do the interview. Then, I asked the mother and the girl what they believed a good pseudonym would be. Together they agreed that she should be called Sophia in this research.

3.2.3 Data storage

Data storage was an important ethical consideration as well. In order to ensure that data was not accessible to other people, I needed to be careful with storing my data. While in the field, I used notebooks to write down jottings and field notes. I took these notebooks with me at all times. This ensured no one else was able to access my notebooks. I scanned my notes every week and stored them on my password-protected laptop. Additionally, I stored the documents on an external hard-drive protected by a password. This ensured no one but me had access to the data. Moreover, this ensured the data could not get lost because I had my original notebook and scanned files on my laptop and on two separate locations. Recordings of interviews and transcripts were stored in the same way. These recordings were taken on my password-protected phone and were thus not accessible to others. I deleted the recordings from my phon as soon as possible to minimise the risk of losing my recording device with the recordings still on it.

3.2.4 Giving back

An additional ethical consideration mentioned in the AAA code of ethics is that anthropologists "should recognise their debt to the societies in which they work and their obligation to reciprocate with people studied in appropriate ways" (2009, 3). Thus, giving back to participants and the community you study is essential. I did this during my research by helping out with activities when necessary. I, for example, served drinks during the shuffleboard game if the usual volunteer could not be there. Additionally, together with Rosa Vroom, a fellow anthropology student researching social cohesion in the neighbourhood, I have presented my findings to *Incluzio* and other partnering organisations. During the presentation, we explained the theoretical use of the concept of social cohesion, explained how each of us conducted our research and explained our findings. Further, we shared our joint policy recommendations. This ensured that they are aware of the research findings and are able to use them to improve their policies if they want. Additionally, I shared my thesis with my internship organisation *Leren met de Stad* to allow future students to use my research and build their research with existing knowledge about the neighbourhood.

In this thesis, I will use the word participant for a person who has taken part in this research. I believe that this is the most accurate term in this research since the people involved in this research participated in activities in the community centres. Therefore, the word participant seems to be a more accurate representation of the active participation of the participant than respondent would be.

3.3 Positionality

The most important identity I had during the research was that of an intern of *Leren met de Stad.* This is because many residents and organisations in the neighbourhood were familiar with this. Being able to introduce myself as a student of *Leren met de Stad* was an enormous advantage and doors literally opened for me. As an intern, I was welcomed to join activities in both community centres. *Leren met de Stad* even organised activities for me to participate in. Furthermore, as an intern, I was occasionally invited to participate in other activities. A good example of this is the Lady's Night that was organized in *Het Gebouw.* As a female intern, I received an invitation to attend this evening.

Furthermore, I am a white, young woman from a upper middle class background who is studying at a university. This was not the case for most people who live in neighbourhood *De Kooi.* As I have described before, many residents have lower incomes or rely on social

welfare, are low-skilled and/or have a migration background. Therefore, I had to be aware that my own position was different from the position of the people I interacted with, but also of how people perceived me. I tried to do this by, for example, explaining my research in a more accessible way. Further, I used the word 'school' instead of 'university' to make people relate more to what I was doing and why I was there.

Additionally, another important factor in my positionality was the fact that I only recently moved to Leiden and therefore I was not familiar with neighbourhood *De Kooi.* This was an interesting position since it allowed me to ask the participants 'stupid questions' about the neighbourhood and the city (Chavan and Ajmera 2007, 36). 'Stupid questions' are questions that are considered obvious, awkward or personal to the research participants (ibid.). I used these 'stupid questions' for example to ask residents about the reputation of the neighbourhood and its residents. This allowed me to ask how people perceived their neighbourhood and other residents.

3.4 Limitations of the study

This research took place within the months January, February and March of 2023. Because of this, I believe this research has a seasonal bias. This is because during these months, the weather was harsh. This included strong winds and heavy rain. This has influenced my research without question. During these circumstances, observing outside public places was extremely difficult. Firstly, it influenced me as a researcher since I got wet and cold due to the rain and wind. Because of this, I was not able to observe more consecutive hours. Secondly, writing down notes in a notebook was impossible because the paper got soaked quickly. Additionally, writing down notes in my phone was also difficult because the screen got wet.

The weather also influenced the willingness of people to talk to me. People wanted to go inside as quickly as possible and were often not willing to talk to me. I expect that this would have been different if the research was conducted during the summer months. Further, many people explained to me that when the weather is better in the summer, people would sit outside in front of their houses and chat with neighbours and people who passed by. During my research, this was not the case and I could thus not include this in my research.

Besides this seasonal bias, there were also residents of the neighbourhood who could not be included in the research. This were people who did not visit activities of the community centres. This were for example YUPs (Young Urban Professionals), older people who were unable to physically go to the community centres, or people who simply did not want to

participate. This was not only a problem for my research, but was also a problem for *Incluzio*. During an interview, an employee of *Incluzio* shared: "But there may also be people somewhere behind closed doors that I can't reach. I don't see that. They may become lonely and not dare to say it"[7] (Interview 15-3-2023). I planned to overcome this problem by talking to people on the streets. However, due to the bad weather this did not work and these people were not part of the scope of this research.

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[7] Original statement in Dutch: "Maar er zitten misschien ook mensen ergens achter een voordeur die ik niet kan bereiken. Ik zie dat niet. Die misschien vereenzamen en het niet durven te zeggen" (Interview 15-3-2023).

4 National and local neighbourhood policies in The Netherlands

4.1 National context of The Netherlands

According to Bolt and Van Kempen (2013), The Netherlands has had policies focussing on urban neighbourhoods since the 1970s. From the 1970s to the 1980s, these policies focussed on physically improving the neighbourhoods. This was for example done by demolishing houses that had been abandoned (ibid., 176).

However, these policies changed during the second half of the 1980s. Policy-makers realized that only improving neighbourhoods physically, was not enough to solve other existing economic and social problems within (Bolt and Van Kempen 2013, 196-197). As a result, the policies of the late 1980s and 1990s, focussed on reducing spatial segregation based on socio-economic factors such as income. The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (hereafter VROM) focussed on reducing spatial concentrations of low-income, ethnic minority households by "achieving a mixed population" (ibid., 197).

Since 2001, the policies further changed its focus from income diversity to spatial concentrations of minority ethnic groups. Additionally, the policies promoted assimilation of these ethnic minorities (Bolt and Van Kempen 2013, 198). This became clear in the annual report on integration policy of 2005. Here, the Minister of VROM stated that "concentration [of low-income ethnic minorities] is especially detrimental to integration because it results in an accumulation of social problems that can be so great that situations can no longer be handled well"[8] (Jaarnota Integratiebeleid 2005, 19, own translation).

In 2007, after the installation of a new government, policies became more area-based, which meant that policies focussed more on specific 'priority neighbourhoods' (Bolt and Van Kempen 2013, 198). In 2010, a new government was installed with the support of the *PVV* (*Partij Voor de Vrijheid*, meaning: Party for Freedom), a right-wing, populist party. Focus on specific neighbourhoods declined, investments in local neighbourhoods were greatly reduced and The Ministry of VROM was abolished. The tasks of this Ministry has been divided between The Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment and The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Kingdom Relations (Parlement.com N.d.). However, the national government expected local municipalities and citizens to take initiative to improve the neighbourhoods (Bolt and Van Kempen 2013, 199).

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[8] Original statement in Dutch: "Concentratie is vooral nadelig voor integratie omdat het resulteert in een cumulatie van sociaal-maatschappelijke problemen die zo groot kan zijn dat er niet goed meer te hanteren situaties uit voortvloeien" (Jaarnota Integratiebeleid 2005, 19).

According to De Wilde and Duyvendak (2016), at the same time, Dutch neighbourhood policies started putting emphasis on creating 'active citizens'. This ongoing ideal is to promote being an 'active citizen', thus being a person who is involved in one's neighbourhood. According to Vollebergh et al. (2021), it is no coincidence that policies focussing on 'active citizens' are often about ethnically diverse and relatively poor urban neighbourhoods. They argue that: "It is there that the limits of traditional welfare structures and the ills plaguing an increasingly diverse nation are thought to accumulate most acutely" (744).

In order for citizens to be considered 'active', the community is of crucial importance. In this community, the 'active' citizen should participate in organising neighbourhood activities such as coffee mornings for lonely senior residents (De Wilde en Duyvendak 2016, 974). However, even though Dutch policies emphasise the importance of community, this community is not something that simply exists. It must be "carefully designed, shaped and made" (De Wilde and Duyvendak 2016, 974). Thus, policies aim at creating local communities so that residents of neighbourhoods can become 'active' citizens and belong to this community (ibid., 974-975).

Further, this focus on 'active' citizens within Dutch policies relates to the perceived problem of the integration of minority groups within society. The national government fears that immigration will lead to spatial segregation and a decrease of social networks within neighbourhoods:

> "The perceived failure of national models of integration (multiculturalism) has inaugurated a search for alternative frameworks around social cohesion that prioritize the integration of poor minority groups through their incorporation in neighbourhoods. It is feared that tensions within these neighbourhoods – especially multicultural tensions – may dislocate society as a whole" (Uitermark 2014, 8 in De Wilde en Duyvendak 2016, 976).

As can be seen in this statement, a solution to a perceived failure of integration is seen in local neighbourhoods. Because of this, Dutch policies have been informed by ideals about how a feeling of belonging to a neighbourhood leads to better social cohesion and integration within neighbourhoods (De Wilde and Duyvendak 2016, 976-977). Thus, the solution to this possible problem of multicultural tensions is to enhance community and social cohesion on the local level (ibid., 977).

In Dutch neighbourhood policies such as the *Actieplan Krachtwijken* announced by The Ministry of VROM in 2007, a critical point is that citizens should be communitarian and community-minded (VROM 2007). *Actieplan Krachtwijken* followed a coalition agreement. In this agreement, the plan was called *Van Probleemwijk naar Prachtwijk* (meaning: From problem neighbourhood to a beautiful neighbourhood). However, residents of these neighbourhoods argued that this name did not do justice to the positive aspects of the neighbourhoods. Therefore, the plan was renamed to *Actieplan Krachtwijk: Van Aandachtswijk naar Krachtwijk* (meaning: From attention neighbourhood to a strong neighbourhood) (ibid., 6). In this plan, instead of focussing on individuals, it focussed on the community and its culture (Van Houdt, Suvarierol and Schinkel 2011, 411). In *Actieplan Krachtwijken* this was explained as follows: "It is essential for the success of the neighbourhood approach, that residents and local organizations jointly use their inventiveness and strengths to turn the neighbourhood approach into a success"[9] (VROM 2007, 14, own translation). Thus, key issues in this approach of neighbourhood policies were "the community, common values and the commitment of individuals to endorse and defend these values" (Van Houdt, Suvarierol and Schinkel 2011, 411). Policymakers put more emphasis on how residents should feel at home in their neighbourhood (Duyvendak and Wekker 2016). This represented a shift in thinking about what it means to be a citizen. Previously, the government regarded citizens as rational, calculating individuals, whereas now and in this policy, citizens are perceived as relational subjects that want to be attached to "a greater good" (De Wilde and Duyvendak 2016, 974).

4.2 Local context of Leiden and De Kooi

Neighbourhood *De Kooi* (meaning duck decoy, literal meaning 'The Cage') is located in the north of Leiden (see map 1). It originated in 1896 because of urban expansion. The name *De Kooi* was derived from a duck decoy that used to be located on the grounds of the neighbourhood[10]. Close to the neighbourhood, various factories were located, and in 1919 a socialist housing association started building houses around the *Kooipark* (meaning Cage Park), which were of better quality than prescribed by the law at that time. This resulted in the

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[9] Original statement in Dutch: "Essentieel voor het slagen van de wijkaanpak is dat bewoners en lokale organisaties gezamenlijk al hun inventiviteit en kracht inzetten om van de wijkaanpak een geslaagd proces te maken".

[10] On January 1st, 1974, the Dutch 'Polygoonjournaal' paid attention to the working of a Duck Decoy in the Dutch context. This fragment can be watched on https://www.openbeelden.nl/media/32292/.
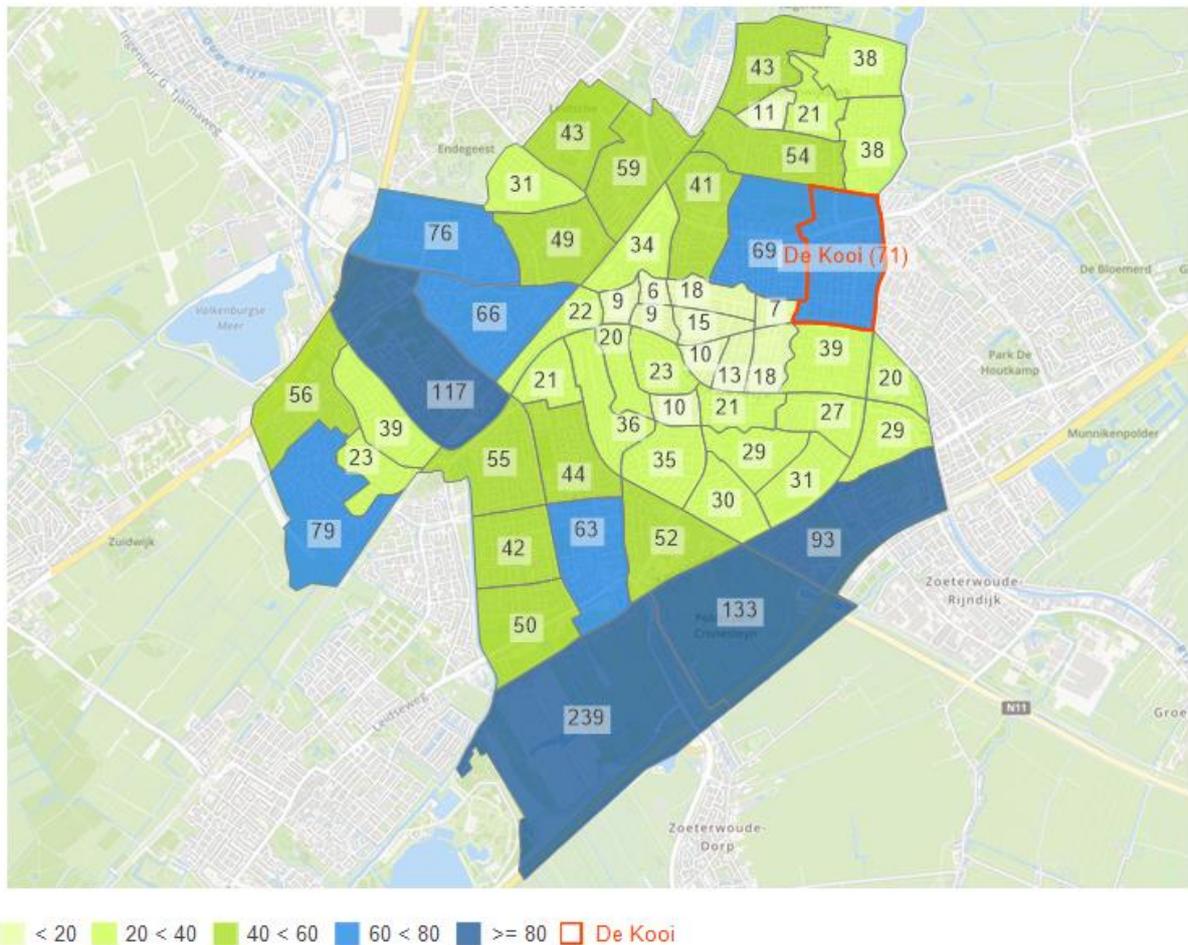
Map 1: The city of Leiden with neighbourhood De Kooi in red. The numbers represent the surface area of the neighbourhoods in hectares (Leiden in Cijfers N.d,2).

population mainly consisting of the upper working class that was educated and better paid (Erfgoed Leiden, n.d.).

During this research, the neighbourhood had a young population compared to the city of Leiden as a whole (Leiden in Cijfers N.d, 3). Additionally, the most recent numbers (January 1, 2021) of the neighbourhood showed that it had a relatively high percentage of (as the municipality called it in their statistical document) 'non-western' residents (ibid.). The term 'non-western' has been disused in official government policies after a motion was passed in the House of Representatives because it was regarded as stigmatizing (Tweede Kamer 2016; NOS 2016). Currently in official government policies, migrants are categorized based on the continent they are originally from. Additionally, there is special attention to 'classical migration countries' such as Turkey, Morocco, Surinam, Indonesia and the Dutch Caribbean (Frijters 2022). Despite this official agreement, the municipality of Leiden still used the term 'non-western'. In this thesis I will use the term 'residents with a migration background'.

Further, I will be as specific as possible by adding the country of origin. This is currently the most inclusive term (Van Buuren 2022).

Additionally, the average *WOZ-waarde* (property value in accordance with the Dutch Real Estate Appraisal Act) was almost €80.000 lower than the average in Leiden (Leiden in Cijfers N.d., 4). Further, the neighbourhood comprised 78% rental properties compared to 57% in Leiden (ibid., 5). Additionally, 7,7% of the residents in the neighbourhood received social welfare. This was more than double the average of Leiden (3.8%). As a result, households had a lower spendable income than the average residents in the city (ibid., 6).

As part of a district analysis of Leiden north conducted in 2021, the municipality has had 200 conversations with residents of Leiden North. Based on these conversations, the municipality of Leiden argues that residents of neighbourhood *De Kooi* usually feel more connected to their neighbourhood than to the larger district (Gemeente Leiden 2021a, 27; Gemeente Leiden 2021b, 29). Most of the residents experience the neighbourhood as a working-class neighbourhood with a strong social cohesion. The neighbourhood's social cohesion was rated with a 5,8, which was the same for Leiden as a whole. (ibid.). However, as can be seen in map 2, there are considerable differences within the neighbourhood. On the map, neighbourhood *De Kooi* is outlined in red. It shows that the quality of the neighbourhood ranges between highly insufficient (*zeer onvoldoende*) in the north, and very good (*zeer goed*) in the south. Further, there is a large area that is classified as weak (*zwak*). Interestingly, the area that has been rated as highly insufficient scored badly on the social measuring variables, which were nuisance and insecurity and social cohesion. Even in the most highly rated area in the neighbourhood, the variable of social cohesion has a negative effect on the overall score (Leefbarometer N.d.). This is of importance in this research because it contrast the municipality's district analysis of Leiden north. Further, the neighbourhood also has problems around its quality such as trash and social insecurity, and some residents experience the social control negatively (Gemeente Leiden 2021a, 27; Gemeente Leiden 2021b, 29).
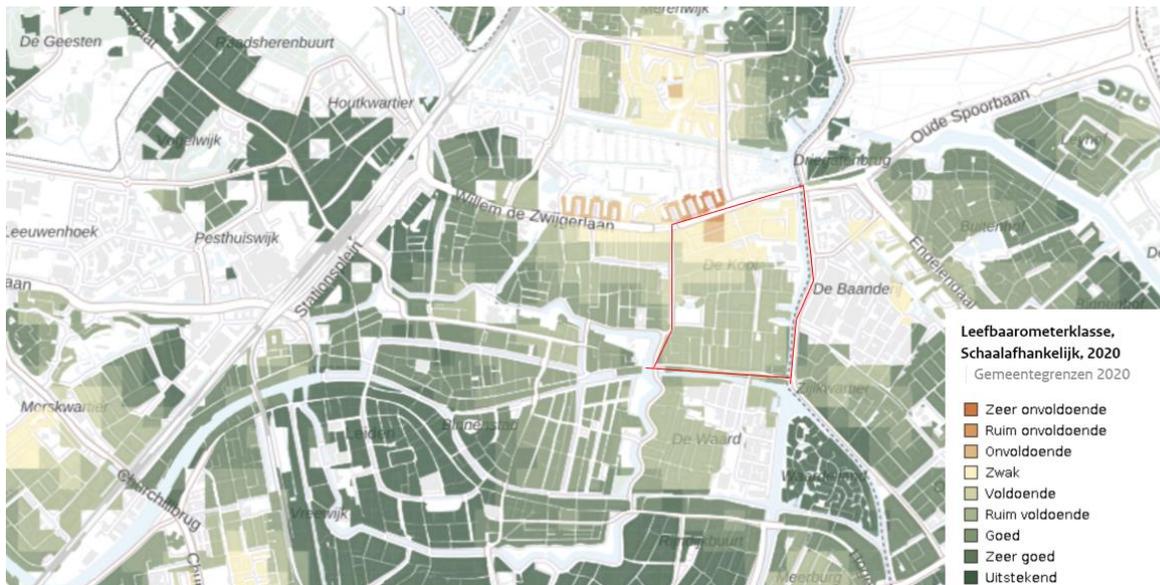
Map 2: Leefbarometer, outlined in red neighbourhood De Kooi (Leefbarometer N.d.).

The previously described ideal of the 'active citizen' is also of importance in Leiden. A good example is the *Subsidie Maatschappelijke Initiatieven* (Subsidy Social Initiatives). Citizens who want to organize an activity in their neighbourhood can apply for this subsidy under the condition that the activity "aims at emancipation, participation, social cohesion, integration, youth participation and/or quality of life[11]" (Subsidie Maatschappelijke Initiatieven n.d. own translation). These conditions are in line with the ideal of the 'active citizen'.

The most recent policy agreement of the municipality of Leiden is for the years 2022 to 2026. The policy agreement was developed after the municipal election of March 2022 by the coalition of the city council of Leiden. The coalition consisted of the political parties GroenLinks (GreenLeft), D66 (Democrats 66), PvdA (Labour Party) and CDA (Christian Democratic Appeal). This agreement highlights the importance of belonging in Leiden. It states that:

> "A liveable city is a city of people. A place where you feel at home.
> Where your business can flourish. Where you know your neighbours.
> Where you participate and count. A place for young and old. Where we
> look after each other. Where there is no place for discrimination and
> racism. Where you feel good. With space for greenery, living, business
> and leisure. We want to encourage everyone to feel like a citizen of
> Leiden, whether you live here for a shorter period of time, because you

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[11] Original statement in Dutch: "is gericht op emancipatie, participatie, sociale samenhang, integratie, jeugdparticipatie en/of leefbaarheid" (Subsidie Maatschappelijke Initiatieven n.d.).

study or work here as an expat, or whether you have lived here all your life"[12] (Gemeente Leiden N.d., 6, own translation).

As can be seen in this quote, the municipality highlights that people should feel at home in the city. Everybody should feel like a citizen of Leiden, and behave accordingly. Thus, the policy agreement of the council of Leiden aims at creating a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood.

4.3 Huizen van de Wijk

A relatively new phenomenon in the Dutch context are *Huizen van de Wijk (*meaning: Houses of the District). The idea behind these community centres is to integrate different social work organisations into one community centre (Ter Avest 2015). The policy aims at bottom-up participation of the residents of a neighbourhood in these *Huizen van de Wijk*. Paradoxically, the *Huizen van de Wijk* are often commissioned by top-down organisations such as municipalities, housing corporations and social welfare organisations (ibid.) This is also the case in neighbourhood *De Kooi*. The community centres in Leiden and this neighbourhood are called *Huizen van de Buurt* (meaning: Houses of the Neighbourhood), and are managed by social welfare organisation *Incluzio*. Further, the building of community centre *Het Gebouw* was commissioned by the municipality and a local housing corporation (Rijnlands Architectuur Platform, N.d.).

Community centres and social work has various functions. It aims at connecting people to organisations, but also at connecting people with other people (Hoijtink et al. 2020). The previously mentioned and often critiqued scholar Robert Putnam, argues that community centres are the place where bridging between different resident groups can take place (ibid., 8). This is what Amin (2002) calls spaces of micropublics. In these micropublics, people can get familiar with different social groups within spaces where these groups come together such as a community centre. However, if these spaces of micropublics are segregated, contact between the different social groups is impossible (ibid., 969). However, albeit the view of the British government, in order for there to be a strong social cohesion in the community, there needs to be a sense of connectedness between the two groups:

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[12] Original statement in Dutch: "Een leefbare stad is een stad van mensen. Een plek waar je je thuis voelt. Waar je bedrijf kan floreren. Waar je je buren kent. Waar je meedoet en meetelt. Een plek voor jong en oud. Waar we naar elkaar omkijken. Waar geen plek is voor discriminatie en racisme. Waar je je fijn voelt. Met ruimte voor groen, wonen, ondernemen en vrije tijd. We willen stimuleren dat iedereen zich Leidenaar voelt, of je hier nu kortere tijd woont, omdat je hier studeert of werkt als expat, of dat je hier je hele leven woont" (Beleidsakkoord Gemeente Leiden 2022-2026, 6).

"Community cohesion … is about helping micro-communities to gel or mesh into an integrated whole. These divided communities would need to develop common goals and a shared vision. This would seem to imply that such groups should occupy a common sense of place as well" (Home Office, 2001, in Amin 2002, 971).

This however, is something that is difficult, if not impossible to achieve. According to Amin (2002), mixed neighbourhoods should be recognized and embraced for their spatial openness, cultural diversity, and social variety, rather than being seen as future unified or cohesive communities. It is important to acknowledge that there are limitations to how much community cohesion, which relies on shared values, a sense of belonging, and trust networks, can serve as the foundation for coexisting with diversity in these neighbourhoods.

Additionally, even if there is contact between the different social groups, this is not enough for multicultural understanding. In order for this multicultural understanding, people need to step out of their daily routines and meet people from other social groups in a neutral space while doing an activity. This allows residents to "break out of fixed relations and fixed notions, and through this, to learn to become different through new patterns of social interaction" (ibid., 970). However, a neutral space is almost impossible to create. In neighbourhood *De Kooi*, different social groups used different community centres and thus, some residents attached meaning to community centre *De Kooi*, while others attached meaning to community centre *Het Gebouw*.

Further, researchers argue that within community centres, people tend to gravitate to people of their own social group (Hoijtink et al. 2020). This is often also facilitated by the community centre. Professionals argue that they want people to "feel welcome and safe" within the community centre and that organizing activities based on social groups helps to achieve this (ibid., 9). Because of this division in community centres, support between visitors happens within their own social group and not between different groups (ibid.).

Duyvendak and Wekker (2016) question whether this ideal of everyone feeling at home in a neighbourhood is possible. They ask: "is the (ultimate) aim to make everyone in the public space feel at home and feel connected with everybody not an overambitious ideal" (ibid., 24). This is also mentioned by Van de Kamp and Welschen (2019). They argue that activities in communities aimed at connecting different residents groups are often too ambitious (379). Further, Duyvendak and Wekker (2016) argue that people can only feel at home under certain

conditions, and that the presence of certain people can lead to not feeling at home in that place. Therefore, they argue that friendship between everybody in a neighbourhood should not be strived for, but instead, amicability should be the goal. With this they mean that people should be kind to each other, without the depth of a friendship. This amicability is not based on having the same values or lifestyle which is often the case in a friendship. However, it is based on smaller similarities between people, often in relation to an activity such as both liking to swim or both walking your dog in the same place (ibid., 27). Because of this focus on having an activity in common, Duyvendak and Wekker argue that amicability can be achieved by having interventions in which activities are focussed on residents doing something together (ibid.). Duyvendak and Wekker see this as a possible task for community centres and welfare organizations within a community.

4.4 History of community centres in De Kooi

Community centres in neighbourhood *De Kooi* have a long history. Franciscan Reverend de Ponti (see image 1) first organised the social work and the community centres in the north of Leiden. He valued the wellbeing of individuals and worked to improve the conditions of people living in the north of Leiden. In the local newspaper *Leidsch Dagblad* of October 3rd, 1975, he stated: "Let the well-being prevail over the political, human or social vision"[13]. For all his social work for the "*kansarmen*" (meaning: underprivileged, literal meaning: poor of choices) of Leiden north and *De Kooi,* he received the medal of honour in silver from the municipality of Leiden (Leidsch Dagblad 3 oktober 1975). In 1981, he left Leiden and moved back to his
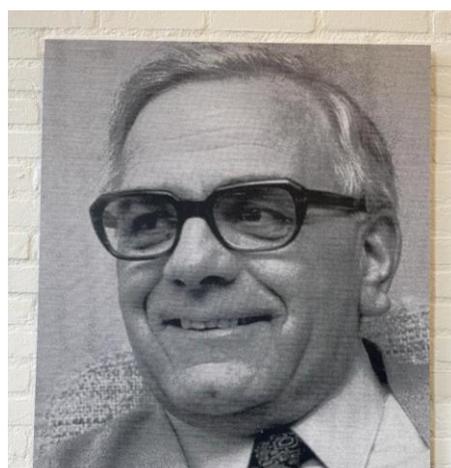
Image 1: A picture of Reverend De Ponti, hanging on the wall in community centre De Kooi (Picture taken on 17-5-2023).

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[13] Original statement in Dutch: "Laat het welzijn prevaleren boven de politieke, de mens of de maatschappijvisie" (Leisch Dagblad October 3rd, 1975).

hometown of Didam in the east of The Netherlands (Minderbroeders Fransicanen N.d.). After Reverend De Ponti left, the community centres have been managed by various organizations.

An important place were communities are created and people can feel a sense of belonging are community centre *De Kooi* and community centre *Het Gebouw*. Reverend de Ponti opened community centre *De Kooi* on February 2nd, 1980 (Interview 17-5-2023). During this time, the community centre had many activities for all ages, which included a children's disco and crafts (ibid.). Contrary to community centre *De Kooi, Het Gebouw* is a relatively new community centre in the neighbourhood. *Het Gebouw* is a multifunctional building, which means that it houses many organisations such as schools, child care, *Leren met de Stad* and *Incluzio* (see glossary), but it also has rental apartments (Rijnlands Architectuur Platform, N.d.). It was commissioned by the municipality and a housing corporation and the building was finished in 2013.

5 Place (belonging) in the community centres of neighbourhood *De Kooi*

"It is big, but the people inside are small[14]" (Interview 28-2-2023).

"It feels like a living room[15]" (Interview 10-3-2023).

These two quotes participants shared with me during interviews. The first one is a description of community centre *Het Gebouw*. The second is about community centre *De Kooi*. The seemingly opposite descriptions of 'big' and a 'living room' were central in how people perceived the physical space of the community centres. As described in the previous Chapters, the majority of my research took place in these two community centres. Within these centres, residents of neighbourhood *De Kooi* and adjacent neighbourhoods came together for various activities such as games, creative activities or just a cup of coffee. In this Chapter, I will start by describing the physical space of the community centres, followed by the different aspects of place-belongingness. Then, I will describe the construction of social space within these physical spaces.

5.1 Physical space

As described in Chapter 2.2, place is not only a physical space, but it is also influenced by people. However, in this research people expressed various sentiments concerning the physical aspects of the community centre. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to these physical spaces as well. In this paragraph I will describe the physical spaces of the community centres. Additionally, I will describe how people spoke about these spaces. This will attribute to an understanding of how people feel in these spaces.

5.1.1 Het Gebouw

The two community centres have very different physical spaces. Community centre *Het Gebouw* is a large, multifunctional building which houses not only community centre activities, but also three primary schools, childcare, a general practice, a library, youth work, *Leren met de Stad* and more. Because of this, many people in the neighbourhood visit this community

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[14] Original statement in Dutch: "Het is groot, maar de mensen binnen zijn klein" (Interview 28-2-2023).
[15] Original statement in Dutch: "Het voelt aan als een huiskamer" (Interview 10-3-2023).

centre. Children go to school and parents come to pick them up. Other people come to *Het Gebouw* to see a doctor or for a conversation with a cup of coffee. When people enter the building from the main entrance, they walk into a big hall (see image 2). In this hall, there are signs to point people to their destination. Additionally, there is an information desk were people can ask for directions. In the hall are multiple tables with chairs as well.
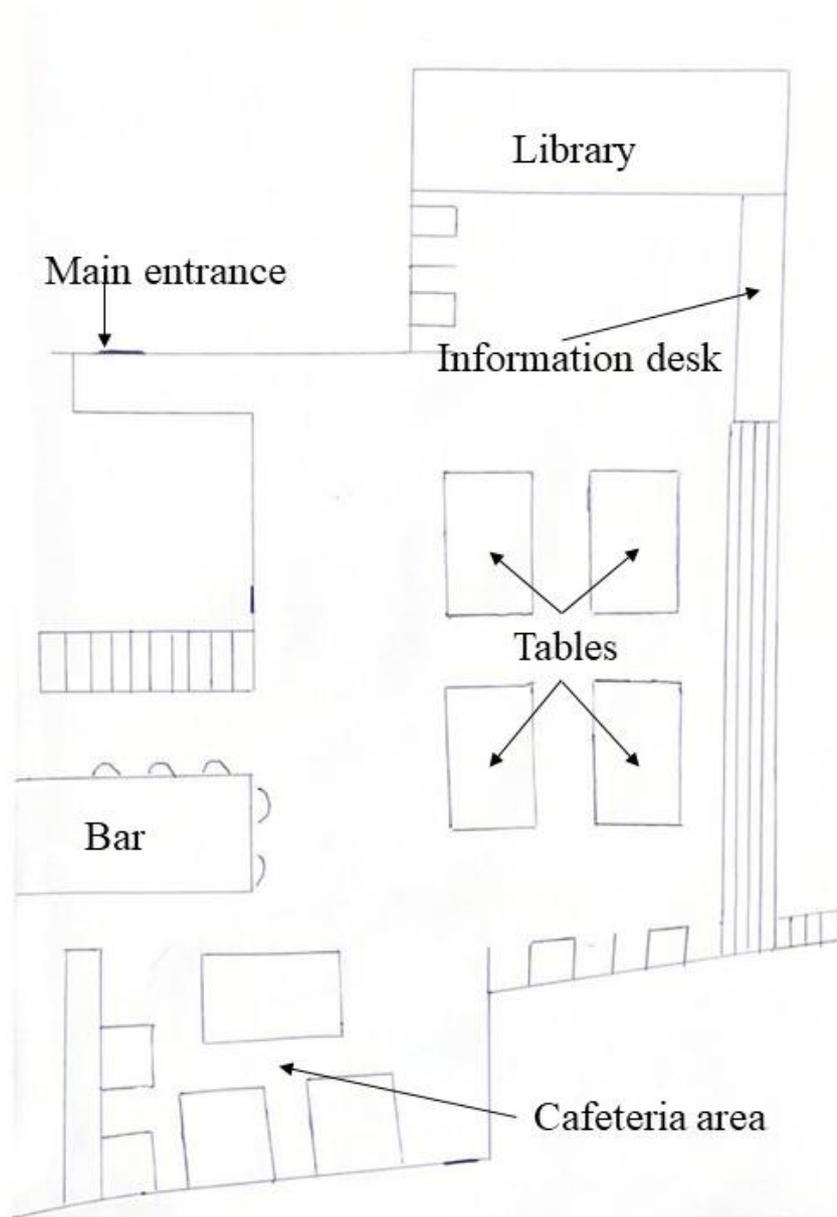
Image 2: My drawing of the physical space of central hall on the
ground floor of community centre Het Gebouw (9-1-2023).

However, most of the residents visiting for community centre activities did not like the physical space. They complained that the building was too big, too high and not cosy. This was also mentioned to me in an interview with an employee who works in *Het Gebouw*. He stated that: "Here, you enter in a kind of station hall. It echoes, it is busy and everything is mixed

up"[16] (Interview 28-02-2023). This feeling was also debated during the lunch after the walking group. Usually, this lunch took place in the central hall of *Het Gebouw*. However, sometimes other activities were taking place in that space. Therefore, the lunch was moved to another, smaller room adjacent to the hall. During the lunch, people were discussing that they preferred to have the lunch in this smaller room. When I asked why they preferred that, they explained that the space was not as draughty and big as the central hall. The next week, the lunch was again in the central hall, and people were expressing disappointment to me. They had hoped that from then on, the lunch would be held in the smaller room instead of in the central hall.

Image 3: Picture of the main entrance of Het Gebouw (In de Buurt Leiden. N.d.).

The perception that *Het Gebouw* is a high building also came back in a participatory mapping interview I had with Sophia, a young girl. While sitting in the central hall of *Het Gebouw,* I asked her to draw the neighbourhood she would create if she was the boss. When she was drawing a playground, she explained that she wanted a big slide. She said: "Yes. That high. It looks small [on paper] but when it is real it is very high. So about there. That ceiling"[17]

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[16] Original statement in Dutch: "Je komt hier in een soort stationshal binnen. Het galmt, het is druk en alles loopt door elkaar heen".

[17] Original statement in Dutch: "Ja. Zo hoog. Het lijkt klein maar als het in echt is, is het heel hoog. Dus ongeveer tot daar. Die plafond".

(Interview 24-3-2023). While saying this, she pointed at the ceiling to show me how high the slide would be.

Image 4: A picture of the central hall of Het Gebouw (Team VenhoevenCS. N.d.).

5.1.2 De Kooi

Community centre *De Kooi* has a different atmosphere. This building was built in 1980 and it is smaller than community centre *Het Gebouw* (Kadaster N.d.)*.* It houses (mostly) community centre activities. As can be seen in image 5, the central hall of this centre has one long table on the left side of the hall. Four smaller tables are on the right side. The kitchen and bar are placed at the end of the central hall, but have a prominent place within the space. Adjacent to this hall are several rooms in which activities take place.
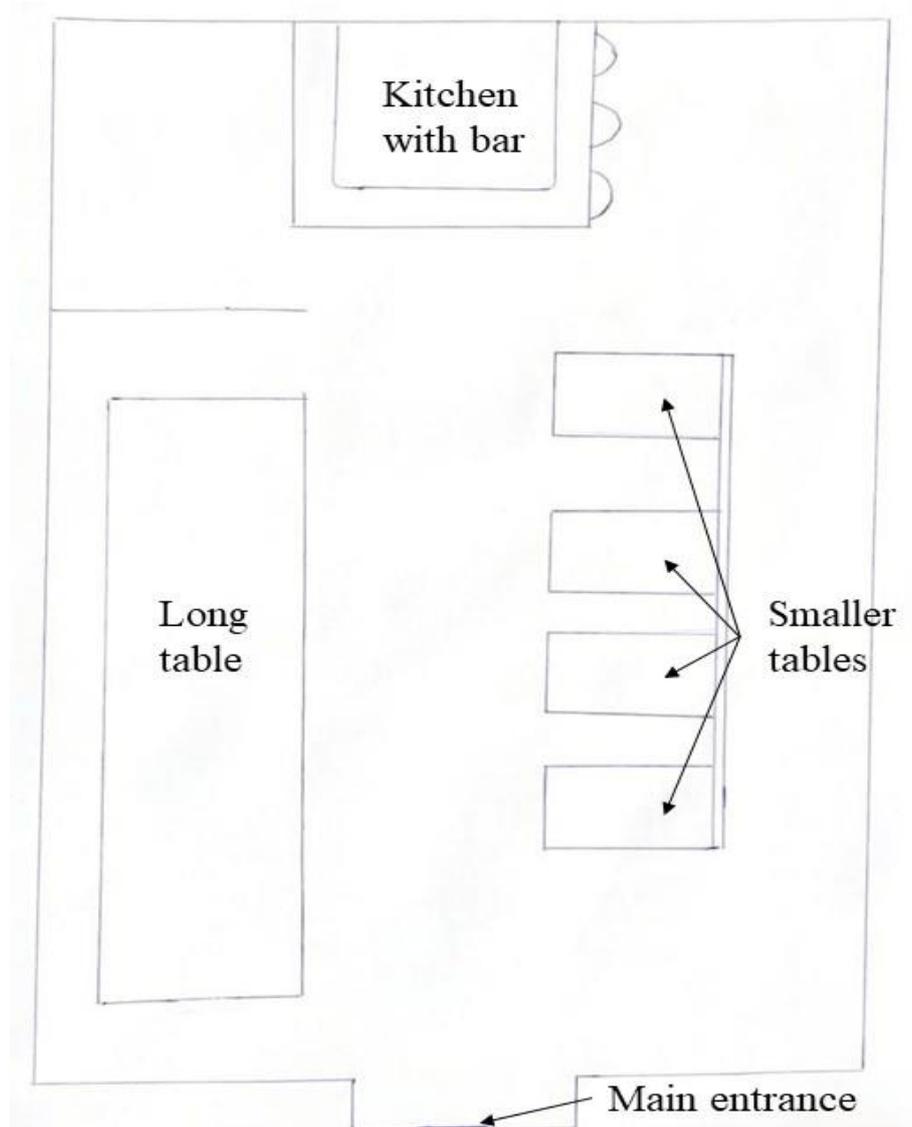
Image 5: My drawing of the physical space of community centre De Kooi (1-2-2023)

Many people I have spoken with, appreciated the physical space of community centre *De Kooi.* During an interview I asked if the participant saw a difference between the two community centres:

> "Yes, I see big differences. Especially the homeliness. When you enter there [community centre *De Kooi*], you really enter a community center. You enter a living room, a kitchen. It is warm. You should actually compare it with an old brown café in the past. That people had their own table. With a cup of coffee or a beer and a cigarette. I also

have that feeling when I step into that community centre"[18] (Interview 28-2-2023).

This statement shows that this person viewed the community centres differently. Even though he was more involved in community centre *Het Gebouw,* he saw the space of community centre *De Kooi* more as an actual community centre. This was because the space of this community centre resembled a house to him. This can be seen since he used the words living room and kitchen to describe the space. These are spaces that can usually be found in a house.

Image 6: Picture of the entrance of community centre De Kooi (Incluzio Leiden. N.d.)

In an interview with an employee of *De Kooi,* the difference between the two community centres was striking. She explained:

"This [community centre *De Kooi*] feels like a living room, people also say that. When they come in they also say 'yes, this is a community centre. This is how we envision a community centre'. And not *Het Gebouw*. When you enter there, you get lost. … And that was indeed

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[18] Original statement in Dutch: "Ja daar zie ik hele grote verschillen. En met name eigenlijk ook de huiselijkheid. Als je daar binnenkomt, kom je echt een buurthuis binnen. Je komt binnen in een huiskamer, een keuken. Het is warm. Je moet het eigenlijk vergelijken met een oud bruin café vroeger. Dat mensen hun eigen stamtafel hadden. Met een kopje koffie of een biertje en een sigaretje erbij. Dat gevoel heb ik ook als ik dat buurthuis binnen stap".

that impersonal thing. Not actually seeing someone right away, a point of contact"[19] (Interview 10-3-2023).

Image 7: Picture of community centre De Kooi (Picture taken on 17-5-2023).

Similar to the previous participant, this employee described the community centre as a house. In conversations with visitors it became clear that they viewed the physical space similarly to how these employees saw it. Interestingly, regular visitors of *Het Gebouw* expressed that they preferred the physical space of community centre *De Kooi* since it felt more cosy to them. These statements show that people valued a sense of homeliness in the community centre.

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[19] Original statement in Dutch: "Het voelt aan als een huiskamer, dat zeggen mensen ook. Als ze hier binnenkomen zeggen ze ook van 'ja, maar dit is een buurthuis. Zo zien wij inderdaad een buurtcentrum voor ons'. En niet wat in dat gebouw is natuurlijk. Als je daar binnenkomt, je verdwaalt er. … En dat was inderdaad toch dat onpersoonlijke. Eigenlijk niet gelijk iemand zien, een aanspreekpunt".

5.2 Place-belongingness

As described in Chapter 2.3 and 2.4, Antonsich (2010) uses the term place-belongingness to combine the two concepts of belonging and place. In his definition of place-belongingness, six aspects are central. These are (1) autobiographical factors, (2) relational factors, (3) cultural factors, (4) economic factors, (5) legal factors and (6) length of residence. In this paragraph, I will describe how these factors were similar between the two community centres, but also how they differ. The aspect 'autobiographical factors' is intertwined with the other five factors and will therefore not be described separately.

5.2.1 Het Gebouw

Visitors of community centre *Het Gebouw* vary in the length of residence in the neighbourhood since some people have been living in the neighbourhood their whole life, while others have recently moved there. Further, some people have recently moved to Leiden from other cities in The Netherlands and even from other countries.

Since the length of residency in the neighbourhood varied greatly between visitors of this community centre, the relational factor also varied. Some people knew each other for many years, while others just moved to the neighbourhood and had started visiting the community centre recently. However, friendship relations were formed within *Het Gebouw*. An example is of an employee of *Het Gebouw* who celebrated his birthday during my research. Other employees and volunteers of *Incluzio* decorated his working area with pictures of him. He threw a birthday party the weekend after his birthday, and many of the employees, volunteers and regular visitors were invited. This shows that the community centre is a place where people can connect with other people and were friendships can start.

Culturally, a variety of people was present within the community centre. Some of the visitors were native white Dutch people, while others had migrated from other countries. The community centre housed three primary schools which all had their own identity: public, Protestant Christian and Roman Catholic (De Singel. N.d.; De Springplank. N.d.; De Viersprong. N.d.). Because of this, people from all sorts of backgrounds were present in this community centre.

An example of the inclusion of multiple cultures in the community centre was the Lady's Night. This activity was organized by an employee of *Incluzio*, together with other social welfare organisations in the neighbourhood, including foundation *Narcis*. This is an organisation that focusses on women with an Arabic background (Stichting Narcis N.d.) (see glossary). The Lady's Night was a party aimed at women with an Arabic background, but other

women were welcome as well. For this party, the windows of the community centre were covered so that no one could look inside. This was done to create a safe space for the women. Further, only one man was present since he was responsible for the security. The women were mostly wearing long, colourful Arabic dresses, the female DJ was playing Arabic songs and a local shop sponsored Arabic dishes. In an interview with the employee of *Incluzio* who organised this party, I asked her about her motives to organize this. She answered that there were various reasons. Firstly, women approached her that they would like to organise a party for women only. Secondly, people had been isolated by the Covid-19 pandemic and due to this, these women had lost contact with other women. Thirdly, many of these women were very busy. She explained that "There are a lot of women who live an incredibly busy life. Either as a housewife or as a working housewife or mother. And meeting, doing something very nice on an evening that happens quite rarely"[20] (Interview 8-3-2023). The party was such a success that there was a waiting list and not everyone could be allowed in. I asked the organizer how she looked back on that night and she replied: "Yes amazing. Yes, very successful. I had an expectation, but didn't expect it to be this awesome. And that so many women showed up. And even more women were on the waiting list that we unfortunately couldn't admit"[21] (Interview 8-3-2023).

Organizing an activity like this, shows that the community centre was open to organizing activities that appealed to people from various backgrounds. Further, the fact that the windows were blinded and men were not allowed at the party (except the one man responsible for the security), shows that while organising this activity, cultural sensitivities were taken into account.

With regards to the legal factor, as far as I was aware, all the participants in this research were legal residents in The Netherlands. However, due to the many organisations located in *Het Gebouw* focussing on people who have migrated to The Netherlands, I can imagine that there were also visitors who were not (yet) legal residents in The Netherlands.

Most visitors of community centre *Het Gebouw* had limited financial resources. This however, was taken into account for the costs of the activities in the community centre. The weekly lunch after the walking group only costed €2,50 per person. For this price, people

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[20] Original statement in Dutch: "Er zijn heel veel vrouwen die een onwijs druk bestaan hebben. Ofwel als huisvrouw ofwel als werkende huisvrouw of moeder. En de ontmoeting, iets heel erg leuks doen op een avondje die vrij weinig voorkomt" (Interview 8-3-2023).
[21] Original statement in Dutch: "Ja, super. Ja, heel erg succesvol. Ik had een verwachting, maar niet verwacht dat het zo gaaf zou zijn. En dat er zoveel vrouwen op afkwamen. En nog meer vrouwen op de wachtlijst stonden die we helaas niet konden toelaten" (Interview 8-3-2023).

received a good lunch, which often included soup, a bread roll with various sandwich fillings, tomato slices, cucumber slices, an egg, juice and often an extra treat such as a meatball, a croquette or an egg roll. Additionally, the prices in the café area were low compared to restaurant prices. For example, a cappuccino costed €1,50. These prices allowed for more people to participate.

Further, sometimes special arrangements would be made when people did not have enough money to participate in an activity. A participant who regularly participated in activities was not able to afford it. However, he was allowed to participate for free.

5.2.2 De Kooi

Most of the visitors of community centre *De Kooi* had a long history in Leiden. Some visitors of community centre *De Kooi* had been living in Leiden their whole lives, while others have lived in *De Kooi* their entire life. In an interview with a professional in the neighbourhood, he described them as 'oldschool' *Leidenaren* (meaning: inhabitants of Leiden): "But the white *Leidenaren*, the original old-school *Leidenaren*, you mainly have them living in *De Kooi*. They are mainly old people"[22] (Interview 20-3-2023). As a result of their long history in Leiden and *De Kooi,* the participants discussed with each other were they used to live when they were children, what kind of activities they did and why they moved to another house.

Interestingly, many volunteers and employees of this community centre did not have a similar history. Part of the employees and volunteers currently did not live in the neighbourhood. Some had grown up there, but have moved to other parts of Leiden or to neighbouring villages. They experienced this as positive. One of them told me:

> "So I don't live, and that's fine, even close to the neighbourhood. Because you notice, if you lived in the neighbourhood, you would be constantly approached. If I get a sandwich at the supermarket, people approach me, you know. Not that everyone knows you. But it's good to live elsewhere than where you work, I guess. Otherwise you are constantly busy with your work. And they address you very quickly about things"[23] (Interview 15-3-2023).

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[22] Original statement in Dutch: "Maar de witte Leidenaren, de originele oldschool Leidenaren, die heb je vooral in de kooi wonen. Het zijn vooral oude mensen" (Interview 20-3-2023).
[23] Original statement in Dutch: "Dus ik woon niet, en dat is ook wel goed, ook niet hier dichtbij in de wijk. Want je merkt wel, als je in de wijk zou wonen, je wordt continu aangesproken. Als ik wel eens een broodje haal bij Hoogvliet, dan is het van [naam], weet je wel. Niet dat iedereen je nou maar kent. Maar het is goed om elders te

As a result of the long length of residence in the neighbourhood, many visitors had long relational ties with other residents. Many of the visitors of the community centre had known each other for many years. This became very visible on election day on March 15th, 2023. On this day, there were elections for the provincial governments and regional water authorities. I was present in the community centre for the bi-weekly bingo. However, the community centre also housed a polling station. Because of this, many people walked in and out of the community centre, including people who not regularly visited the centre. Frequently, someone walking in recognized one of the older women and started a conversation with her. It was clear that they had known each other in the past, but had not spoken in a while. Sometimes, the person who walked in referred to the woman as aunt. This shows that they had known each other before. However, this did not mean that they were actually family. Someone explained to me: "so I would like to know if it is really his aunt. Or because that is also a thing about Leiden of course. Everyone is your aunt and uncle[24]" (Interview 15-3-2023). Additionally, many of the visitors of the community centre knew each other's children. Some of the visitors used to be active volunteers of neighbourhood activities where they got to know many children and adults. For others, their children used to play together when they were younger.

The visitors did not only express long relational ties with other visitors, but also with the community centre itself. During an interview a woman explained: ""Yes, we have been here [community centre *De Kooi*] for years. Certainly for 20, 23 years… It has simply become our own house[25]". The way this woman talked about the community centre shows that she really saw it as 'their' place. When she talked about 'we' and 'our' she referred not to all residents of the neighbourhood, but only to the other visitors who were categorized as 'oldschool' *Leidenaren*. This was not an uncommon feeling among the visitors. They often referred to the community centre as *ons buurthuis* (meaning: our community centre).

With regard to the legal factors, by my knowledge, the regular visitors of this community centre were all Dutch citizens. Most visitors of this community centre were white, working class people who had retired. I have not witnessed conversations that discussed having

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wonen dan waar je werkt, denk ik. Anders ben je continu met je werk bezig. En ze spreken je heel gauw aan, op dingetjes" (Interview 15-3-2023).

[24] Original statement in Dutch: "Dan zou ik dus wel eens willen weten of het echt zijn tante is. Of, want dat is ook een beetje een Leids natuurlijk. Iedereen is een tante en een oom van je" (Interview 15-3-2023).

[25] Original statement in Dutch: ""Ja, we zijn jaren al hier. Zeker al 20, 23 jaar… Het is gewoon ons eigen huisje geworden" (Interview 17-5-2023).

another nationality or cultural background than Dutch. However, people may have not discussed this topic with each other.

Most of the visitors of the community centre had a similar cultural background. They were all white, Dutch, working class people with a similar background and similar expectations of what a community centre should be. This was mentioned by the *wijkregisseur* in an interview. She explained that: "You can't send those people to *Het Gebouw*. Because the Dutch people of *De Kooi*… they just want [an interieur more in line with Dutch culture like] a Persian tablecloth, a flower on the table. They want a Dutch croquette. And in *Het Gebouw* it is more clinical. Too cold. Too windy. Too noisy. You are seen too much. It doesn't have a Dutch touch"[26]" (Interview 13-3-2023).

During this research, *BuZz* was organizing some of their activities in community centre De Kooi (see glossary). Most people who participated in their activities had a migration background and many originated from for example Turkey and Morocco. Because the usual space of *BuZz* was unavailable to them, they asked to use the spaces of community centre *De Kooi*. However, the presence of different cultural groups in the community centre due to the presence of *BuZz* did not mean that these groups interacted with each other. Participants of *BuZz* did not participate in activities of *Incluzio*, and participants of *Incluzio* did not participate in activities of *BuZz*. Moreover, while the regular visitors of the community centre were sitting at a table and visitors of an activity of *BuZz* walked by, there was little interaction between the two social groups. At most, a quick "hello" was exchanged, but more often than not this was not the case. In an interview with one of the employees of community centre *De Kooi* we discussed the issue why non-white residents were not engaging in community centre activities. She explained: "Because it has such a white appearance. …. They may [be] here. They are very welcome. But I don't think they like it. Because you see that there is actually only a large white community walking around here[27]" (Interview 15-3-2023).

Beside this similar length of residency in the neighbourhood, longstanding relational connections, the same nationality and a shared sense of culture, most of the visitors of the community centre had limited financial. Many people lived on a small old-age pension and sometimes a small additional retirement pay. Because of the increasing prices, this caused

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[26] Original statement in Dutch: "Maar je kan niet die witte mensen naar Het Gebouw sturen. Want de witte mensen van de Driftstraat, die willen gewoon een Perzisch tafelkleedje. Een bloemetje op tafel. Die willen een kroketje. En in Het Gebouw is het te klinisch. Te koud. Te winderig. Te gehorig. Je wordt te veel gezien." (Interview 13-3-2023).

[27] Original statement in Dutch: "Omdat het zo'n witte uitstraling heeft. …Ze mogen hier [zijn]. Ze zijn van harte welkom. Maar ik denk niet dat ze het fijn vinden. Omdat je ziet dat hier eigenlijk alleen maar een grote witte gemeenschap rond loopt (Interview 15-3-2023).

problems for some of the visitors. The increasing financial problems were a result of an energy crisis caused by a combination of lower energy production during the Covid-19 pandemic and decreased import of Russian gas due to European sanctions against Russia in response to their invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. This increased the energy prices for households which mostly affected those living in poorly insulated homes and having a lower income. Due to this crisis, in 2022 more than 600,000 households were living in energy poverty (Lampis Temmink 2023). This was also a factor for the community centre. Because of the increasing financial problems of the visitors, they organized *De Warme Kamer* (meaning: The Warm Room). An employee of *De Kooi* explained it like this: "So people who come here, the heating is always on here … Then you can leave the heating off at home. Then you can sit here comfortably"[28] (Interview 17-2-2023). Additionally, the prices for the activities and the food were relatively cheap, so that it was more accessible for people with a lower spendable income.

5.3 Place

As discussed in Chapter 2, place does not only consist of physical space. It is also influenced by people. People shape places, but places also shape people (Lefebvre 1991). Hence, it becomes crucial to examine community centres from this perspective. In what ways do individuals influence the social environment of these two community centres? The social construction of spaces are based on people's experiences in these spaces, such as the use of the physical space, memories, social exchanges and images (Low 2000, 128). Spaces, however, are rarely free of conflict, but are often contested. This is also the case in the community centres of neighbourhood *De Kooi*. Contested spaces are defined as "geographical locations where conflicts in the form of opposition, confrontation, subversion, and/or resistance engage actors whose social positions are defined by differential control of resources and access to power" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 18). In this paragraph, I will discuss how the previously defined aspects of place (see table 2) influence the social spaces of the community centres. The most prominent aspects in this research were the aspects of social construction (which consists of the daily use of space, memories, social exchange and images) and conflict.

However, the communities within these community centres are very tight. Writing about conflict is therefore a sensitive issue. In order to protect the people in these communities, I will describe the conflict I encountered in a way to ensure the anonymity of the participants

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[28] Original statement in Dutch: "Dus mensen die dan komen, hier is altijd de kachel aan. … Dan kan je ze thuis bij wijze van de kachel uitlaten. Dan kan je hier lekker zitten" (Interview 17-2-2023).

in this research, but also of people who were simply present in the community centres. To do this, I have left out details or changed them slightly.

5.3.1 Het Gebouw

As described before, *Het Gebouw* is a multifunctional building that houses more organisations than just the community centre. Because of this, the building was used daily by many people. Thus, many people made use of the physical space of this building. People from different social groups within the neighbourhood were almost all using this space. Not everyone liked going to that space due to its physical atmosphere, but because of the many facilities they all have to go there at least occasionally.

In this place, people often discussed relatively recent memories with other people in the community centre. This could for example be a movie they saw in the cinema a week ago, an activity they did with their family last summer or a sports game they watched on tv. These conversations about recent memories were probably the case because not all visitors of this community centre had a long history in Leiden and therefore were not able to discuss things that happened years ago. Further, discussing relatively recent things made it possible that various people with various backgrounds could engage in the conversation. An interesting example of this was an ongoing conversation about an employee who worked at one of the organisations present in the community centre. During this research, she announced that she had found a new job and would therefore leave her job in *Het Gebouw*. Volunteers and visitors of the community centre were taken aback by this news and were sad that she would leave. They discussed their past interactions with this employee, discussed what gift they would bring to her farewell party and expressed worries about if they would have the same connection with the person who would replace her.

Conversations about memories and social exchanges usually took place in the cafeteria of *Het Gebouw*. The cafeteria served as a place where people could meet. On weekdays, the cafeteria served lunches for a small price[29]. During lunch time, the cafeteria was usually full with residents of the neighbourhood as well as employees working in *Het Gebouw*. People could sit down at a table and engage in conversation with other people, even if they had not known each other before. It happened to me multiple times that I was sitting at a table, and people, whom I had not met before, started engaging with me. In an interview with a regular visitor of the cafeteria, this came up in relation to community centre *De Kooi* where, according

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[29] This is a different lunch than the lunch after the walking-group.

to her, this was not the case: "Then I couldn't sit anywhere. Because 'no, there is a neighbour sitting here. You are not allowed to sit there. You are not allowed to sit there'. And with us…it just is. You can just join[30]" (Interview 17-3-2023). This shows that community centre *Het Gebouw* was a place where people were able to get to know new people and engage in social exchanges with them.

In this community centre, I have witnessed small occasions of conflict. This were often bickers about relatively small things. Volunteers sometimes complained about other volunteers not doing their tasks right, spending too much time chatting with costumers or spending too much time on their phone. Usually when this happened, the annoyed person complained about the situation to another person, and then continued with their work.

5.3.2 De Kooi

Other than community centre *Het Gebouw,* community centre *De Kooi* had only the function of a community centre. On a daily basis, a group of elderly visitors, of which most were women, came to the community centre to drink a cup of coffee or tea and talk with each other. Some of these visitors were there daily, while others were there multiple times each week. Additionally, there were people visiting the community centre only for activities such as shuffleboard, bingo or sports. The community centre also had activities for patients of the GGZ (mental healthcare organisation), and recently BuZz (see glossary) started to organize activities in *De Kooi* as well.

Whilst sitting at the table in the hall, I talked with the visitors. Often, they were discussing memories of things that happened in Leiden when they were younger. They discussed where they were born, what the streets and daily life looked like when they were young, and what kind of activities they did. The women also talked about when their children were young. Many of them shared that they remember the young children of the other women, indicating that they have known each other for a long time. Sometimes, one of the women often present in the community centre played songs on her phone. Many of the songs were sang by *Zangeres Zonder Naam* (Singer Without Name). She is a singer born in Leiden who was popular during the 1960-1980s and is known nationally as the *Koningin van het Levenslied* (Queen of life songs). The visitors of the community centre sang her songs together whilst sitting at that table. While they were doing this, they were telling stories about the songs they sang, where they have heard them and when they saw the *Zangeres Zonder Naam* perform.

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[30] Original statement in Dutch: "dan kon ik nergens zitten. Want 'nee, daar zit een buurman. Daar mag je niet zitten. Daar mag je niet zitten'. En bij ons … is het gewoon zo. Je schuift gewoon aan (Interview 17-3-2023).

Interestingly, social exchanges took place almost exclusively within visitor's own social group. As has been described before, *BuZz* also organized activities in this community centre, but there was little contact between their participants and other visitors of the community centre. Further, as has been described before in this paragraph, the community centre also had activities for patients of the GGZ (mental healthcare organisation). Similar to the visitors of *BuZz,* there was little interaction between the visitors of GGZ activities, and the 'oldschool' *Leidenaren.*

This separation between the different social organisations was also visible in the central hall. The 'oldschool' *Leidenaren* sat at the long table, whereas staff members and participants of *BuZz* were sitting at one of the smaller tables (see image 5). This physical separation did not encourage interaction between the different social groups and social organisations present within the community centre.

In community centre *De Kooi,* there were clear conflicts between regulars who volunteered or visited the community centre. This is partially contradicting Oldenburg's theory of third places (1991). As described in chapter 2.2.2, third places have regulars who feel at home in a place. This was true for the regulars of community centre *De Kooi*, who referred to the community centre as '*ons buurthuis'* (meaning: our community centre). Oldenburg argues that the regulars play a crucial role in the acceptance of newcomers. He sees this acceptance as not automatic, but not difficult either (1991, 34). This is due to the fact that newcomers are essential to the vitality of the specific third place (ibid.). However, in community centre *De Kooi,* it is extremely difficult for newcomers and outsiders to be accepted into the community. A good example of this was a conversation I witnessed between three women. Two of the women were regulars of the community centre, while the other only visited occasionally. The two regulars were discussing a situation about a grandson. The grandson had just turned 18 and had various diagnoses that made it difficult for him to partake in society as was expected of a person his age. The two women were discussing options for this grandson to be able to live on his own. At this point in the conversation, the other, occasional visitor was trying to join the conversation. She started explaining that she also had a grandson with similar diagnoses and how this process of living on his own had been for him. However, one of the women told her that she was not allowed to join the conversation. She said: "I am talking to her so you need to stay out of it[31]" (Fieldnotes 6-3-2023). The woman objected a little bit, but stayed quiet after she was told the same thing again.

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[31] Original statement in Dutch: "Ik zit met haar te praten, dus je moet je mond houden" (Fieldnotes 6-3-2023).

This was not an unusual thing to happening in the community centre. Individual persons who were regulars of the community centre were very influential on which people were 'included' and 'excluded'. In interviews with staff I discussed the influence of these dominant personalities. I asked the staff member if she believed that people did not feel welcome in the community centre because of these dominant personalities. She replied:

> "Yes, of course. If you are not up to such a person and you come in here and such a person immediately says to you, 'what are you doing here'? Well, then I think you'll think twice about going back to the community centre"[32] (Interview 10-3-2023).

This shows that the presence of dominant personalities made it so that other residents of the neighbourhood did not go to this community centre. When talking with people I met during activities of *Het Gebouw*, it became clear that these dominant personalities were an issue for many of them. People expressed that they liked activities in community centre *De Kooi*, but did not want to go there because of this hostile atmosphere.

Moreover, people who were going to community centre *De Kooi*, expressed that they experience conflict and exclusion within the community centre. A person I interviewed said: "[person] was snapping at me. And well, treated me horribly. Even a dog would turn up its nose at that. And I wasn't the only one [person] did that with. People [person] didn't like had to move"[33] (Interview 29-3-2023). A similar incident occurred during my presence. I asked an individual for help and they kindly helped me. However, when one of the more dominant individuals noticed their assistance, anger arose within them. They reprimanded the person, expressing disapproval of their decision to aid me and suggesting they should have directed me to someone else. The person defended themselves, stating their intention was merely to be helpful. Despite their explanation, the dominant individual continued to reprimand them. Later in my research, I engaged in a conversation with the individual who had helped me. They explained that they did not like how they were being treated in this community centre and therefore preferred to go to *Het Gebouw* instead.

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[32] Original statement in Dutch: "Ja, natuurlijk is dat zo. Ja. Als jij er niet tegen opgewassen bent. Tegen zo iemand en jij komt hier binnen en zo'n iemand zegt al gelijk tegen jou bijvoorbeeld van 'eh wat kom je hier doen'? Nou, dan bedenken je je eigen denk ik nog een tweede keer om nog eens ooit terug te gaan naar het buurtcentrum".

[33] Original statement in Dutch: "Ze ging me afkatten. En nou, verschrikkelijk slecht behandelen. Daar lusten de honden geen brood van. En ik was niet de enige waarmee ze dat deed. Mensen die ze niet mochten, die moesten moven".

While I was witnessing this dynamic within the community centre, I wondered why people were not standing up more to these dominant personalities and why they continued to go to there. When I tried to talk to visitors about this, they often did not want to talk about it. However, there is literature about this "agency-in-subordination". These studies explore how individuals shape their identities by "intimate engagements with the norms, conventions, moral codes, political discourses, and disciplinary authorities that structure the institutions and societies they inhabit" (Gammeltoft 2018, 77). Gammeltoft (2018) describes belonging to a group as something that is ambivalent, uncertain and includes dominance and exclusion. Furthermore, it is part of a "human effort to be part of something larger" such as a social community (ibid., 77). However, belonging to a community sometimes comes with sacrifices. Being part of a community sometimes entails humiliation and hierarchy between members of that community. Not speaking up for oneself can in these cases be an act of agency to ensure to maintain belonging to the social community (ibid., 89-90). Contradictory to this anthropological 'agency-in-subordination' perspective is seeing thing kind of behaviour as a result of an evolutionary process. According to social psychologist Kipling Williams, in the human evolutionary history, being part of a social group offered protection, while being excluded was a death sentence. Therefore, "our survival would have depended on our ability to detect imminent rejection and thereby act – cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally – to regain our membership in the group" (Williams et al. 2005, 2). In order to guarantee this survival, people can self-regulate. This means that people can "sacrifice their selfish inclinations for the sake of securing and maintaining acceptance in their group" (Baumeister and Dewall 2005, 54). Self-regulation plays a critical role in allowing individuals to modify themselves in order to adhere to ideals, expectations, values, norms, and other standards. Social exclusion often occurs when others disapprove of one's behaviour, and in order to be accepted (whether into a new group or back into the same group from which one was recently rejected), it would appear to be a sensible and adaptive choice to make changes to oneself (ibid., 55).

This is a very relevant consideration to include in research on community centre *De Kooi.* Visitors of this community centre may have been submissive to the dominant personalities to ensure their membership of this local community. As these visitors were often spending many hours a week in the community centre, speaking up more about these humiliating situations might pose a risk to being excluded in an important part of their daily life and consequently being excluded from the social community as a whole. This threat makes people self-regulate and consequently, not speak up if they are excluded from a conversation or their help is dismissed.

6 Social cohesion

In this Chapter, I will describe ethnographic data related to the concept of social cohesion. I will do this by using the in Chapter 2.1 defined aspects of social cohesion. These are (1) shared values and norms, (2) a certain degree of social control, (3) availability and interdependency of (formal and informal) social networks and (4) trust between residents. The fifth aspect described in Chapter 2.1, which is the willingness to find solutions collectively was not present in my research. Therefore, I will not include it in this chapter.

6.1 Shared values and norms

The neighbourhood has various social groups. These are for example young people, senior people, people with a migration background, people without a migration background who have been living in the neighbourhood for generations and YUPs (Young Urban Professionals). These groups have different views on how the neighbourhood should be. An employee of *Incluzio* explained it as follows:

> "Well, I don't think everything [values and norms] matches, of course not. Everyone has their own values… That sometimes clashes. But I myself have the feeling … that it is calmer now than before. And that there are small groups that are still offended by this and have an opinion about values and norms. But you can of course not let values be the same. But the norm, if we maintain it together and also spread that we were all brought up differently, but this is how we treat each other, like manners[34]" (Interview 8-3-2023).

In an interview with the neighbourhood police officers, they shared a different perspective. They discussed the difference of norms between different social and ethnic groups within the neighbourhood. One of the officers stated that: "In power relationships, norms and values, how do you treat each other? There is a real difference there[35]" (Interview 17-3-2023).

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[34] Original statement in Dutch: "Tja, ik denk dat niet alles overeen komt, natuurlijk niet. Iedereen heeft zijn eigen waarden … Dat botst soms. Maar ik heb zelf het gevoel … dat het nu rustiger is dan voorheen. En dat er wel een aantal kleine groeperingen zijn die daar wel nog steeds aanstoot aan geven. En ja, wat vinden van waarden en normen. Maar ja, je kan waarden natuurlijk niet hetzelfde laten zijn. Maar de norm, als we die wel met elkaar handhaven en ook dat steeds uitdragen van he weet je, we zijn allemaal anders opgevoed. Maar dit zijn wel een beetje hoe we met elkaar omgangsnormen dan (interview 8-3-2023).

[35] Original statement in Dutch: "In gezagsverhoudingen, normen en waarden, hoe ga je met elkaar om? Daar zit ook echt wel verschil in" (Interview 17-3-2023).

This was also discussed in the interview with the *Wijkregisseur*. She agreed with the police officer and explained that:

> "But the way [person] talks about Moroccan people and Moroccan people about Turkish people, well, all the different backgrounds talk about each other. They all have prejudices about the 'other' culture. This doesn't make me happy. I'm surprised! And I don't want to hear it again either... You don't talk about each other that way. … it's just so ingrained, that [person] actually finds it normal to say. It's quite shocking I think. … So it's all so deep. Well and Turks think they are hardworking people and Moroccans are lazy and do not keep to agreements. In general, you don't hear a Moroccan talking so badly about Turks, but the other way around. I'm shocked by that[36]" (Interview 13-3-2023).

However, there is not only friction between different immigrant groups within the neighbourhood. Also between the white Dutch natives and immigrant groups there is friction. The community police officer described it as follows:

> "But you also see … for example among the Dutch population [meaning white people without a migration background], when they see children misbehaving … [they say] act normal [to the child]. But when you see a group of Moroccan women and one of their friends children misbehaves, they just don't say anything about it. Because that's not my child, you know[37]" (Interview 17-3-2023).

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[36] Original statement in Dutch: "Maar de manier waarop [persoon] over Marokkaanse mensen praat en Marokkaanse mensen over Turkse mensen, nou ik word daar niet blij van. Het verbaast mij! En ik wil het ook niet meer horen … Zo praat je niet over elkaar. … het is er gewoon zo ingesleten dat [persoon] het eigenlijk ook gewoon vindt om te zeggen. Het is best wel schokkend vind ik dat. … Dus het zit allemaal zó diep. Nou en Turken vinden dat ze hardwerkende mensen zijn en Marokkanen lui zijn en zich niet aan afspraken houden. Over het algemeen hoor je trouwens een Marokkaan niet zo slecht praten over Turken, maar wel andersom. Ik schrik daarvan" (Interview 13-3-2023).

[37] Original statement in Dutch: "Maar onderling zie je ook, er zijn gewoon, bijvoorbeeld onder de Nederlandse bevolking, zie je als kinderen zich misdragen dat ze ook andere Nederlandse kinderen, van joh, doe even normaal, maar je ziet dus als er een groep Marokkaanse vrouwen zit en een van hun kinderen, van hun vriendin of wat nou ook misdraagt zich, daar wordt gewoon niks van gezegd. Want dat is niet mijn kind, is het dan, weet je wel" (Interview 17-3-2023).

This example shows that there are different perceived norms about raising children. According to this police officer, for the white Dutch residents without a migration background it is a normal action to call out a child if it misbehaved. For the residents of Moroccan descent, on the other hand, the responsibility of disciplining children is only the parent's in the view of the police officers.

Additionally, the police officers saw a growing polarisation in the neighbourhood between different social groups:

> "And they really stick to their own norms and values. And of course, if you have very few foreigners, then it will melt together. But now, because of all the social housing, a lot of eh foreigners come here, and stick together and they fall back into their own culture and behaviour. And that in turn irritates the white population. So yes, those are all things that cause processes of polarization to arise. That people really distance themselves from each other[38]" (Interview 17-3-2023).

Interestingly, the statements above are all about social groups based on ethnic background. This relates to 'culturalization of citizenship' as described in Chapter 2 (De Koning and Ruijtenberg 2019). As described there, 'culturalization of citizenship' means that people need to adapt to what is seen as "Dutch cultural values" in order to be perceived as Dutch (ibid., 338). When discussing values and norms during expert interviews, participants often immediately started talking about the difference between "Dutch native" residents and "residents with a migration background" which showed that they perceived these groups differently, even if they were both Dutch citizens. Specifically, often, they made a distinction between Turkish and Moroccan residents.

One exception to this focus on ethnicity was with an employee of *Incluzio*. When I asked her if people in the neighbourhood share similar norms and values, she spoke about a generational difference: "If we talk about the generation, no. The older generation does. They are also pretty much in line, of course, with each other. But the younger generation, there we

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[38] Original statement in Dutch: "En ze houden ook echt wel vast aan hun eigen normen en waarden. En als je natuurlijk heel weinig buitenlanders hebt, dan smelt dat wel in elkaar. Maar er komen nu door de huisvesting, dat je allemaal die sociale woningen hebt, komen er heel veel eh buitenlanders hier bij mekaar zitten en die vervallen weer in hun eigen cultuur en gedrag. En dat irriteert dan de blanke bevolking weer. En eh, dus ja, dat zijn allemaal dingetjes waardoor dus processen van polarisatie gaan ontstaan. Dat mensen echt van mekaar af" (Interview 17-3-2023).

notice that it [norms and values] is sometimes hard to find[39]" (Interview 10-3-2023). I asked her if she had an example, and she explained: "Yes, that in terms of language, how they talk to you, what they call you. And also little to no respect for the neighbourhood police officer[40]" (Interview 10-3-2023).

During my participation in the clean-up group, I noticed that the young girls were not very interested in the physical aspect of the neighbourhood. This is also not the aim of this group. In an interview with the youth worker hosting this clean-up group, he explained the goals of the activity:

> "The idea behind it is that they can make some money. That's the basics, of course. Picking up trash. But also to teach things. Such as respect, self-confidence, taking responsibilities, being on time, norms and values. Things like that. That is the main goal. That they take it with them to their next job or to their next school. That they know the basics a bit. That is it[41]" (Interview youth worker SOL 8-6-2023).

This shows that the goal of the clean-up group is not simply to improve the quality of the neighbourhood, but moreover, to teach the children important capacities that are important for their future. The girls, on the other hand, participated in this group for two reasons. The first is that they earned some pocket money. Additionally, the youth worker explained that the girls also saw it as an opportunity to boost their résumé: "When they apply for a job at a supermarket, they can always say, I worked there. If they can say at a very young age, ... they can slide in more easily with their first job[42]" (Interview youth worker SOL 8-6-2023).

While we were walking through the neighbourhood, they were often complaining about the time spent cleaning and asking the youth worker how much more they needed to clean. During the interview, we also discussed this. The youth worker explained: "What makes it even

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[39] Original statement in Dutch: "Als we over de generatie praten, niet. De oudere generatie wel. Dat staat ook best wel aardig op één lijn natuurlijk, met elkaar. Nu de jongere generatie, dan merken wij wel dat dat soms ver te zoeken is" (Interview 10-3-2023).
[40] Original statement in Dutch: "Ja, dat ze toch qua taal, hoe ze tegen je praten, waar ze je voor uitmaken. Ook weinig tot geen respect voor de wijkagent" (Interview 10-3-2023).
[41] Original statement in Dutch: "Het idee erachter dat ze wat kunnen verdienen. Dat is de basis natuurlijk. Prikken. Maar ook dingen leren en meegeven. Zoals respect, zelfvertrouwen, verantwoordelijkheden nemen, kom op tijd, normen en waarden. Zulke dingen. Dat is vooral het doel. Dat ze dat meenemen naar hun volgende werk of naar hun volgende school. Dat ze de basis een beetje kennen. Dat is het" (Interview youth worker SOL 8-6-2023).
[42] Original statement in Dutch: "Als ze gaan solliciteren bij de Albert Heijn kunnen ze altijd zeggen, ik heb daar gewerkt. Als ze op een hele jonge leeftijd kunnen zeggen, ... dan kunnen ze mooier inglijden bij hun eerste werkje" (Interview youth worker SOL 8-6-2023).

more difficult is that they see a new person. … When … a student comes along ... they really start to behave differently …. Lots of tension, incentives. Really chaotic at times[43]" (ibid.).

The behaviour he was referring to were disinterest and complaining. Some Friday afternoons, we had only spend 30 minutes outside to clean, and of that time, they spend a lot of time on their phone, scrolling through TikTok and asking how much longer they had to clean-up. A clear example shows how the girls did not show interest in the surroundings of their neighbourhood. During the cleaning of the neighbourhood we came across a shopping cart in the middle of a housing bloc. The youth worker instructed three girls to bring the shopping cart back to the store. Reluctantly they agreed and separated from the group. The group and I continued with walking through the neighbourhood. While returning back to the community centre, we came across the same shopping cart again. It was in the middle of a road and the three girls were nowhere around. Apparently, they had left the shopping cart in the street and left to do something more interesting to them. The youth worker got angry and asked one of the girls in the group to call the girls who were supposed to bring the shopping cart back to the store. On the phone, the youth worker argued that they would not get paid if they would not take care of the shopping cart. The girls came back and brought the shopping cart to the store. During the interview with the youth worker, we discussed this incident. I asked him how he looked back on this incident and how he tried to handle situations like these:

> "Yes, especially giving warnings. And letting them know, hey, you got this job because you chose it. I didn't force you. ... I can also make some threats [sending the girls away or not writing down their hours]. I happened to do that too, but I don't want to ... I don't want to keep doing that. You can warn once or twice. But if I keep warning, I'm not making it fun for myself[44]".

Senior residents also complained about how new residents have different norms and values then they have. Something that came up in both of the community centres was that they

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[43] Original statement in Dutch: "Wat het nog lastiger maakt is dat zij een nieuwe persoon zien. … Wanneer … een student meekomt lopen .. dat ze echt anders gaan gedragen … Heel veel spanning, prikkels. Echt chaotisch soms" (Interview youth worker SOL 8-6-2023).

[44] Original statement in Dutch: "Ja vooral waarschuwen. En laten weten van hé, je hebt dit baantje gekregen omdat je daarvoor koos. Ik heb je niets verplicht. ... Ik kan ook wat dreigen [de kinderen wegsturen of hun uren niet schrijven]. Dat heb ik toevallig ook gedaan, maar dat wil ik ook niet. ... Om dat blijven te doen, daar heb ik geen zin in. Waarschuwen kan één keer, twee keer. Maar als ik blijf waarschuwen, dan maak ik het niet leuk voor mezelf" (Interview youth worker SOL 8-6-2023).

experienced a lack of attention from younger residents, including the YUPs (Young Urban Professionals). During an afternoon of playing shuffleboard in community centre *De Kooi,* people expressed feeling like their neighbours did not pay attention to them. They explained that previously, neighbours would all sit in front of their houses and talk with each other. Since other people had moved into the neighbourhood, they felt like fewer people did this. This example shows that residents have different views on how neighbours should interact with each other. This is not exceptional in a changing neighbourhood. Research by Versey (2018) has shown that in changing neighbourhoods, a lack of intergenerational social cohesion can occur. In her research about a gentrifying neighbourhood in Harlem, New York, The United States, Versey shows that the previously predominantly black neighbourhood experienced an influx of white, younger residents which resulted in various changes. An important change was that the original residents experienced a lack of intergenerational social cohesion. One of the participants stated that: "There's a general lack of respect with the young people these days...they don't respect their elders, or anyone else. It would be great if there was a place to meet with some of these young people" (6). The circumstances in neighbourhood *De Kooi,* however, are different. The older white residents experience a change in the neighbourhood due to an increasing migrant population while simultaneously more YUPs move into the neighbourhood. Interestingly, a similar sentiment as in Harlem, New York is present among the older generation of *De Kooi*.

6.2 A certain degree of social control

In both community centres, there is a high degree of social control and support. This is in line with Oldenburg's theory about third places. As described in Chapter 2.2.3, third places are a home away from home in which people check in on each other. He used an example of a regular of a third place who stated that: "[i]f one of the group missed a day, that was all right. If we didn't see someone for two days, someone went to check to make sure the person was all right" (1991, 40). In this paragraph, I will outline three examples I have encountered during my research of social control in the community centres. The first example is about an elderly couple, Marie and Bobbie, who regularly visited the community centre *De Kooi*. They had been very active volunteers when they were younger but had slowly transitioned into becoming visitors to the activities while still doing some smaller volunteer tasks. During the first weeks of my research, other visitors to the community centre expressed their concerns about the health of Marie. They told me that she was losing weight quickly and she expressed that she was not

feeling well. However, she was not able to get a doctor's appointment, because according to her, the doctor had no opening. When enquiring more about the situation of Marie and Bobbie, other visitors told me that their family was not in a position to advocate for them and take care of their needs. Halfway through my research, Marie's health started to deteriorate quickly, and the staff of the community centre stepped up to help Marie and Bobbie find the help they needed. The staff arranged a quicker appointment with the doctor and went with them to the hospital. Unfortunately, Marie passed away very quickly after the doctor's appointment. People in the community centre were shocked by this. During activities, Marie's death was the primary topic of conversation. People expressed anger towards the doctor for not allowing Marie to come in earlier, but also gratitude towards the community centre's staff for stepping up. However, after Marie's death, it became clear to the community centre staff that the family was not in the financial position to organize a condolence in the way they wanted. Therefore, the staff of the community centre offered to host the condolence in the community centre so that they were able to have a condolence. On this condolence, many volunteers, staff and visitors of the community centre came together to pay their respects. In this example, people gossiped about Marie and her health. This kind of gossip can be described as "supportive gossip" as described in Chapter 3 (Driel and Verkuyten 2022). The gossip was not malicious in tone, but aimed at sharing worries about Marie's health. As a result of this gossip, the staff of the community centre also learned about the situation and was able to step in and support Marie and Bobby as best as they could.

As said before, many people in the community centre expressed gratitude towards a particular staff member. Someone said: "If she bites, it's like a lioness. She was like, I'll take care of that. I'm going to take care of those people"[45] (Interview 15-3-2023). This example shows that in a case like Marie and Bobby's, there was still someone in the community centre who looked after them and provided them with the help they needed. If not for the staff member, the situation might have been worse.

Another example is about an elderly woman named Netty. Due to a medical scare, Netty had had home care previously to my research. She was feeling much better again and was often at community centre *De Kooi.* On one morning, when I was participating in a game of shuffleboard, she was called to speak to the staff of the community centre. Netty stood up and left the room. When she came back, she was in tears. She explained that her previous home

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[45] Original statement in Dutch: "Als die bijt zich vast, het is net een leeuwin. Ik ga daarvoor zorgen. Ik ga voor die mensen zorgen" (Interview 15-3-2023).

care nurse had called the community centre and asked for money. Netty believed that she was being scammed. She continued by explaining that the home care nurse called her the day before and started to demand a large sum of money. However, Netty was not going to give her that because she believed that her insurance would take care of it. However, she told the nurse that she would figure out what had happened with the nurse's payment with the help of the community centre's staff. During the shuffleboard game, the nurse had called the community centre and wanted to speak to Netty. That is why the community centre's staff had called her in. After the shuffleboard game, I was talking with a group of women, including Netty. However, the home care nurse walked into the community centre. Netty took her to the desk of the staff of the community centre to clear up what had happened. A week later, I asked Netty how the situation was going, and she told me that the issue was resolved and that the employees of the community centre had helped her to figure out how to handle the situation.

This situation shows an elderly woman in a vulnerable position. She knew, however, that she should not give in to the nurse immediately. She did not know how to look into the matter herself, but she knew that she could go to the community centre and would get the help she needed. In an interview with another participant, this example came up. I asked if she thought people in the neighbourhood could find help if they needed it. Her reply was: "There are many people who can get help here. Just take Netty for example"[46] (Interview 29-3-2023).

A third example came from community centre *Het Gebouw*. As mentioned before, volunteers organized a weekly lunch after the walking group. One of the participants was an older woman named Gerda who walked with a walker. Because of this, she did not participate in the walking group when the weather was bad since she was not able to hold an umbrella while using the walker. The bad weather thus hindered her from participating in the walking group, but also from coming to the community centre to join the lunch. Other participants of the walking group wanted to make sure that Gerda was able to come. Therefore, on multiple occasions in which Gerda had cancelled due to weather, these participants went to the volunteers and explained the situation. The volunteers then offered to go and pick up Gerda so that she did not have to walk alone through the weather. They also offered to bring her back home. Gerda agreed to this and was able to attend the lunch. During the lunch she expressed that she was really happy that the participants and the volunteers looked after her and were willing to pick her up and bring her home. Occasionally, I was asked to walk her back home.

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[46] Original statement in Dutch: "Daar zijn verschillende mensen die hier heel goed terecht kunnen. Kijk naar Netty" (Interview 29-3-2023).

During our conversations then, she expressed that she was thankful that other people wanted her to be present at the lunch and put effort in getting her there. Further, she expressed that she did not want to feel as a burden to the group and therefore, would never ask others to come pick her up.

This example shows that participants of this walking group looked after each other. The participants wanted Gerda to be present at the lunch, and Gerda also wanted to be present. However, if the group would not take action to ensure that Gerda could come as well, she would not be able to go. Especially because she would not advocate for herself and ask volunteers to come to pick her up.

Despite these positive experiences in the community centres, multiple senior residents expressed a fear of not being noticed if they had died in their house. This also came up with a frequent visitor of community centre *Het Gebouw*. She explained that: "That neighbour of mine, he also turned out to be dead for two or three days. Lying in the hallway. And then the neighbour says, yes, I thought it was strange that the light had been on for so many days. Then I think, yes, why don't you ring the bell?"[47] (Interview 16-03-2023). This is not an untypical fear in gentrifying neighbourhoods in The Netherlands. Research by Van de Kamp and Welschen (2019) in Amsterdam shows a similar sentiment. In their research in the north of Amsterdam, a participant shared: "with the new residents [with a higher income], you can lie dead in your bed for three weeks and even then they won't come to check on you"[48] (own translation, Van de Kamp and Welschen 2019, 372). During an interview with an employee of *Incluzio,* this change was discussed:

> "[It's] a real working-class neighbourhood too. People cared a lot about each other. Everyone knew each other. That is of course very generalizing, but roughly speaking. People also always had chairs at the front of the house. Because if you sat outside, you sat outside in front of the house. Because then you saw that [person], and then you saw that [person]. ... That mentality was there. And people helped each other a lot. I still hear that. You know, if you had something. You didn't have to keep the curtains closed for a day. Because there would be a knock

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[47] Original statement in Dutch: "Die buurman van mij, die blijkt ook twee of drie dagen al dood. In de gang te liggen. En dan zegt de buurvrouw, ja, ik vond het al raar dat er al zoveel dagen het licht brandde. Dan denk ik, ja, waarom bel je dan niet aan?" (Interview 16-03-2023).
[48] Original statement in Dutch: "Met de nieuwe bewoners kan je drie weken dood in je bed liggen en dan komen ze nog niet kijken" (Van de Kamp and Welschen 2019, 372).

like, hey, is there something wrong with you? Are you ill? Are you still

alive? Those kind of things. What you see now is that a lot of seniors

are of course no longer with us. New people come in. People of a

different nationality enter. But also a lot of working people come in .

And they leave at eight in the morning. They come home, I don't know,

at half past five. So that whole social happening in the neighbourhood

is decreasing[49]" (Interview 15-3-2023).

Further, this fear is not an unrealistic fear since occasionally media articles are written about situations like this. In 2014, a man was found dead in his house in Leiden. He had been dead for three months (RTL Nieuws 2014). More recently, a similar situation was described on the national news. In this case, a man had been dead for five months before he was found in his house in Den Bosch (NOS 2023). This example shows that residents have different views on how neighbours should interact with each other. According to the original residents, neighbours should watch over each other, whereas they were of the opinion that this was less important to the new residents.

The first three examples show that social control was present in the communities of the community centres. The first two examples show that visitors of the community centres could rely on help if needed. The situation of Marie and Bobbie concerned many other visitors and the staff of the centre. Netty was in a tough situation but trusted the community centre's staff to help her, which they did. The third situation of Gerda showed that she was looked after by other participants of the walking group. They tried to include her in the activities even if she was not able to come herself. This is in line with the *participatiesamenleving* (meaning: participation society). The *participatiesamenleving* is a term coined in 2013 by King Willem-Alexander during his speech from the throne (*troonrede*) (NOS 2013). In this new way of viewing the relation between citizens and the state, the role of the welfare state declined while the role of "active citizens" increased. The in Chapter 4 described "active citizen" is expected to take responsibility for their own lives if they are able to do so. In addition, these citizens are

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[49] Original statement in Dutch: "Een echte volkswijk ook. Mensen eh, hadden veel voor elkaar over. Iedereen kende elkaar. Dat is natuurlijk heel generaliserend, maar grof gezegd. Mensen hadden ook altijd stoeltjes aan de voorkant van de woning. Want als je buiten zat, zat je voor buiten. Want dan zag je die, en dan zag je die. En dan ben je zo'n buurvrouw langs lopen. Die mentaliteit hing er. En eh, er werd veel geholpen. Dat hoor ik nog steeds terug. Weet je, je had iets. Je hoefde niet een dagje gordijnen dicht te houden. Want er werd geklopt van, joh, is er wat met je aan de hand? Ben je ziek? Leef je nog? Dat soort dingen. Wat je nu ziet, is dat heel veel senioren er natuurlijk niet meer zijn. Nieuwe mensen binnen komen. Mensen van een andere nationaliteit binnen komen. Maar ook gewoon heel veel werkenden binnen komen. En die gaan ochtends om acht uur weg. Die komen weet ik veel half zes thuis. Dus dat hele sociale gebeuren in de wijk, dat neemt af" (Interview 15-3-2023).

expected to actively contribute to their immediate living environment and to Dutch society as a whole (Newman and Tonkens 2011). As a result of this new responsibility of individuals, many people need help, and according to Ter Avest (2016,25): "Now that people increasingly have to organize care, help and support themselves, for many people this starts in a neighbourhood-oriented meeting place"[50]. Thus, since people are expected to take care of each other and themselves in line with the *participatiesamenleving*, people go to familiar places when they need help. This thus also happened in the community centres of neighbourhood *De Kooi*. People who visited the community centre regularly went there if they had a problem they could not take care of themselves. However, the fourth example about a fear of not being looked after shows that for the older generation living in the neighbourhood the social control is not what it used to be as a result of other people moving into the neighbourhood

6.3 Availability and interdependency of (formal and informal) social networks

6.3.1 Formal social networks

Both the community centres were managed by social welfare organisation *Incluzio*. However, the community centres housed two separate teams within *Incluzio*. Community centre *De Kooi* housed team *Noord en Boerhaven* (meaning North and Boerhaven) while community centre *Het Gebouw* housed team *Binnenstad* (meaning city centre). This is because, according to an employee of team *Noord en Boerhaven*: "*Het Gebouw*, that was really the assignment of the municipality, had to be brought to life. So then the management came up with the idea to place the city centre team there[51]". Because of this presence of two community centres in the neighbourhood, the two teams are highly connected. The same staff member continued by explaining that:

> "Because I'm there with [an activity] and actually that is an [activity]
> of Noord and Boerhaven, … but yes, [colleague] is also walking around
> there. So to [the colleague] I asked, do you want to run the activity those

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[50] Original statement in Dutch: "Nu mensen zorg, hulp en steun steeds meer zelf moeten organiseren, begint dit voor velen in een wijk- en buurtgerichte ontmoetingsplek" (Ter Avest 2016, 25)

[51] Original statement in Dutch: "Het Gebouw moest, dat was echt de opdracht van de gemeente, daar moest leven in gebracht worden. Dus toen heeft eh de directie bedacht, dan gaan we team binnenstad daar plaatsen",

[other days]? Because yes, you know, we're doing it together now"[52] (Interview 15-3-2023).

This statement shows that the staff of the two community centres depend on each other and work together. Some of the staff members also move between the two community centres and thus are connected with both.

6.3.2 Informal social networks

The community centres served as a means by which people could enlarge their social networks. This happened at both community centres. An example from community centre *Het Gebouw* were two women I met during an activity. Both women were retired, single and participated in a weekly activity. During this activity they met each other. One of the women had been living in the neighbourhood her whole life, while the other had moved there in the 1980s. After a period of getting to know each other during the activity, they started to meet each other outside of community centre activities. They visited each other's houses and took day trips together to museums and other cities in The Netherlands. During an interview with one of the women, I asked where she felt comfortable. After mentioning her own house she continued: "of course at *Het Gebouw*. I also feel comfortable there. I notice that when I am at [the other woman's house], I also feel comfortable there[53]" (Interview 22-3-2023). They also helped each other. Because they were both single and only had to buy groceries for one person, they were not able to profit from bulk sales because that would leave them with too much produce. However, when doing groceries together, they were able to profit from the sale. During an interview one of the women explained: "at one point... when I suggested to her, if there is a 1 plus 1 free, and we do our shopping together, we only have to pay half[54]" (Interview 22-3-2023). This example shows that residents could built friendships with people they met at the community centre but also could find support from each other.

During the first weeks of my research, it became very clear to me that I met different people at the two community centres. People I met in *Het Gebouw* did not visit *De Kooi*, and people I met in *De Kooi* did not go to *Het Gebouw*. As mentioned in Chapter 5 some residents

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[52] Original statement in Dutch: "want ik zit daar met [een activiteit] en eigenlijk is dat een [activiteit] van Noord en Boerhaven … maar ja, [collega] loopt daar ook rond. Dus aan [de collega], heb ik gevraagd, wil jij dan die [andere dagen] daar draaien? Want ja, weet je, we doen het dan nu met elkaar

[53] Original statement in Dutch: "natuurlijk het gebouw. Hier voelt het me ook wel prettig. Ik merk dat ik bij [haar] thuis ben, dat ik me daar ook prettig voel" (Interview 22-3-2023).

[54] Original statement in Dutch: "En op een gegeven moment… dat ik haar voorstelde van, joh, met 1 plus 1 gratis, als je dan samen boodschappen doet, betaal je maar de helft" (Interview 22-3-2023).

did not want to go to community centre *Het Gebouw* because of the physical atmosphere of the building. Additionally, other residents did not want to go to community centre *De Kooi* due to the presence of dominant personalities. As a result of this division in the community centres, the two existing networks did not overlap.

However, there were two exceptions to this separation between the community centres. These two residents visited both community centres. This were a man and a woman. Interestingly, both denied an interview with me. However, I was able to discuss their presence in both community centres during informal conversations. The woman shared that she is more often in *De Kooi* than in *Het Gebouw*. She only recently started going there because she wanted to participate in a specific activity of *Het Gebouw*. When I asked her which community centre she preferred, she said that it was community centre *De Kooi* because she knew more people there. Additionally, I had a similar conversation with the man who visited both centres. He, however, preferred *Het Gebouw* because he felt that the people there were nicer to him. These two individuals are outliers in this research. It was hard to elucidate their motives of visiting both community centres because they both denied an interview. As a result, I was not able to ask them more in-depth questions about why they visited both community centres. Further, there were no clear similarities between these two individuals. One was married, while the other was single. One had lived in the neighbourhood their whole live, while the other had been living there for many years but was not originally from Leiden.

6.4 Trust between residents

Visitors of both the community centres discussed many different topics with each other. This includes very personal issues people usually only share with people they trust and feel comfortable with. An example of this happened during the shuffleboard game. While we were playing, the women at my table started discussing losing loved ones. They shared with each other how they felt after losing their partner. For some women this had happened already decades ago, but they shared that if they saw a bargain in the supermarket of the meat their husbands loved, they for a moment, thought of buying it for the already deceased husband. This conversation brought also a conversation about losing children or losing contact with them. This is a complicated personal issue that people would not share with people they do not trust. This shows that the people who regularly visited the activity, trusted each other with their personal histories. This trust was built over a longer time since many of the visitors of community centre *De Kooi* have known each other for many years.

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However, distrust also was a big topic in a community centre. Visitors of the community centre *De Kooi* often expressed a concern of stealing. When I would leave the central hall to, people would inform me that I should take my things with me. When I asked why I had to do this, they explained that people could steal my things. Another example of distrust and stealing in the community centre is that during activities, the conversation of the volunteers often went to missing things. When asking about this, people shared that many things went missing from the community centre. Personally, I did not see this happening so I do not know if it is true. However, it is a topic of conversation among the volunteers.

In an interview with an employee of *Incluzio,* she explained that: "Well, there's some trust there, but that's more with people who see each other more often [and] interact with each other. But there is also some distrust. And for that bit of distrust, you need contact to remove that[55]" (Interview 8-3-2023).

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[55] Original statement in Dutch: "Nou, er zit wel wat vertrouwen, maar dat is meer bij mensen die elkaar vaker zien [en] met elkaar te maken hebben. Maar er is ook wel enige wantrouwen. En dat stukje wantrouwen, om dat weg te nemen heb je contacten voor nodig" (Interview 8-3-2023).

7 Conclusion

This thesis started with two quotes from my fieldwork in neighbourhood *De Kooi*, which were central to this research. The first quote: "So I hope they are nice to each other. And that something of that social, kind thing returns in this neighbourhood[56]" (Interview 15-3-2023), reflects a sentiment *among* the 'oldschool' *Leidenaren* that the neighbourhood has undergone negative social changes. Specifically, they long for the neighbourhood they remembered from their youth. As a result of other people moving into the neighbourhood (including people with a migration background and YUPs (Young Urban Professionals)), they experience a change in contact between neighbours and a decline of social control. The second quote, which refers *to* the 'oldschool' *Leidenaren*: "It is a distinct group of people. If you don't live in *De Kooi*, they are always friendly and nice, but you don't really belong"[57] (Interview 29-3-2023), shows the exclusion people experience in community centre *De Kooi*.

In this thesis, I have aimed to answer the question: "How do different resident groups use the public spaces of the community centres in neighbourhood *De Kooi*, and how does this relate to the social cohesion and the sense of belonging in the neighbourhood?" As described in the Introduction, I have not been able to find qualitative research that used the theoretical concepts of place, belonging and social cohesion simultaneously. However, I believe that the combination of these three theoretical concepts was particularly useful to study the community centres. I have therefore used these three concepts to study the local perceptions of the community centres in neighbourhood *De Kooi*. This combination allowed for an in-depth understanding of the social position the community centres have within the neighbourhood. I have used participant and non-participant observation, participatory mapping interviews and interviews with professionals and volunteers and to research the question.

As described in Chapter 2.2, place was one of the theoretical concepts used in this research. Firstly, I have looked at how visitors of the two community centres experience their physical space. For community centre *Het Gebouw,* this is strongly negative since visitors see the space as too big to be cosy. On the other hand, the physical space of community centre *De Kooi* is viewed as positively. Words like 'warm' and 'living room' are used to describe the physical space.

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[56] Original statement in Dutch: "Dus ik hoop dat ze aardig zijn voor elkaar. En dat er ergens iets van dat sociaal, aardige in deze wijk terugkomt" (Interview 15-3-2023).

[57] Original statement in Dutch: "Het is een apart volk. Als je niet in de Kooi woont, ze zijn altijd vriendelijk hoor en aardig, maar je hoort er toch niet echt bij" (Interview 29-3-2023).

As shown in table 2, I have used several aspects to study the places of these community centres. While doing this research, the aspects of social construction and social position turned out to be the most important. The aspect of social construction was very useful to learn more about how these places are used, by who and how people interact within these places. Further, the aspect of social position was mostly interesting in community centre *De Kooi* since dominant behaviour of some visitors and the response of other visitors showed the social hierarchy within this community centre. The aspects of codes of behaviour and conflict were mostly visible through the aspects of social construction and social position.

However, as described in Chapter 2.2.4, the concept of contested spaces is mostly geared towards conflict. This is not what I have observed in the community centres of the neighbourhood. There is definitely friction between the two community centres and within community centre *De Kooi* specifically, but there are also very positive aspects in these places. The community centres are places were communities can form and come together, which is very positive to the place-belongingness of the neighbourhood.

This research has shown that the two community centres have a strong influence on the place-belongingness in neighbourhood *De Kooi.* In the community centres, social ties between individuals are formed, people form friendships, check-in on each other and people express strong attachment to these places and describe the community centres as *ons buurthuis* (meaning: our community centre). Yet, these two community centres function within their own bubble. People who visit one community centre, rarely interact with people who visit the other.

As described in the theoretical chapter, I have used the following definition of social cohesion:

> "social cohesion at the neighbourhood level is the degree in which residents *share values and norms*, there is *a certain degree of social control*, the *availability and interdependency of social networks* (informally in the form of friendships or formally in the form of participation in organisations, associations and neighbourhood activities), the *existence of trust* between residents and the *willingness to collectively find solutions to collective problems*" (De Hart 2002, 12 in Van Bergeijk et al. 2008, 2, my emphasis).

I have used this definition because it focusses on the locality of the local neighbourhood. This was a useful definition in research on neighbourhood *De Kooi* since the community centres are

involved in strengthening social cohesion. I have used the different characteristics that are mentioned in this definition as a starting point for the data collection.

The aspect of interdependency between social networks has been the most critical in this research. The two community centres are both managed by *Incluzio,* but they are two separate entities with minimal overlap in their informal networks. Within each community centre, there are strong social networks present, but these networks do not intersect. This, however, is an important aspect of neighbourhood social cohesion since the intersection of networks allows for contact with people outside of a person's own social network.

The aspect of shared values and norms showed that there are differences between different cultural backgrounds. Expert members of the community talked about how there are different norms and values between different immigrant groups as well as between immigrant groups and white Dutch natives. Further, there is a perceived difference between different generations. The older generation experiences a lack of attention from the younger generation (especially YUPs) who they believe to be less involved in the community and more focussed on their careers.

Further, the social control within the community centres is very strong. Visitors can rely on help if they need it and visitors look after each other. However, people still experience a fear of not being looked after if something bad were to happen to them.

Additionally, there is a sense of trust between the visitors of the community centres. This shows because the visitors share highly personal stories with each other. However, there is also distrust and a fear of stealing.

Furthermore, in this research, the aspect of collectively finding solutions to collective problems has been absent. This is not because people did not want to find solutions, but because I have witnessed no collective problems between the different social groups. This was mostly due to the apparent separation between the two community centres. Further, it is possible that the lack of identified collective problems has a negative effect on the social cohesion in the neighbourhood. This is because, according to the conflict-cohesion hypothesis, conflict can lead to stronger in-group cohesion (Stein 1976). However, the extent to which conflict contributes to cohesion depends on several factors. These factors include the type of external conflict and the characteristics of the group itself. The external conflict should present a threat that affects all members of the group equally, while also offering a potential solution or purpose that benefits the group. Additionally, the group should already have some level of cohesion or agreement among its members. Further, there should be leadership capable of maintaining unity, especially if not all members perceive the threat. Moreover, the group needs to

effectively address the external conflict and provide its members with emotional support (ibid., 165). Especially the factor of already having a level of cohesion within the group prior to the conflict might prevent conflict to be beneficial to the social cohesion of neighbourhood *De Kooi.* This is because this research has shown that the social cohesion is highly fragmented and there is little overlap between the different social groups of neighbourhood *De Kooi.*

Interestingly, this fragmentation is not completely in line with Hoijtink et al. (2020) as described in Chapter 4.3. They argue that people tend to gravitate towards people of their own social group. This is true for community centre *De Kooi* where almost all visitors are white, senior, working class people. However, in community centre *Het Gebouw* there is more diversity among visitors who participate in activities, such as the walking-group. Even though many people share a similar economic status, there are participants from different cultural backgrounds, and there is a diversity in ages participating.

As mentioned in Chapter 2.1 and 4.1, social cohesion is not only seen as a way to bridge social ties between different social groups. Dobbernack argues that, in policies about social cohesion, there is special attention to problematic groups. There is a believe that "these ties should be worked upon by targeting problematic groups that are singled out for behavioural change" (2014, 2). These problematic groups are for example immigrants from countries such as Morocco and Turkey. Policies are therefore often aimed at increasing participation and intercultural interactions of these immigrants. This research, however, has shown that in community centre *De Kooi,* the 'oldschool' *Leidenaren* engage mostly with people of their own social group. Therefore, it is not it fair to place the responsibility and expectations of intercultural exchange solely on those with a migration background. Consequently, the national and local policies should not (only) focus on behavioural change among migrants, but should also include other social groups such as the 'oldschool' *Leidenaren*.

Interestingly, the strong place-belongingness experienced by especially the 'oldschool' *Leidenaren* decreases the social cohesion of the neighbourhood. This is contrary to how policies look at social cohesion. As described by De Wilde and Duyvendak (2016) and Bailey et al. (2012), a feeling of belonging to a neighbourhood is perceived as a positive attribute to social cohesion. However, in the case of community centre *De Kooi,* the strong place-belongingness hinders contact between different social groups within the neighbourhood. The 'oldschool' *Leidenaren* rarely go to community centre *Het Gebouw,* while other residents do not go to community centre *De Kooi* because they feel like the community centre belongs to a specific social group.

Despite these observations, I do not argue that the neighbourhood should not have these two community centres. As has been shown in research by Van de Kamp and Welschen, engagement in activities within one's own social group significantly contributes to the sense of belonging in the neighbourhood (2019, 367). Further, I share Duyvendak and Wekker's (2016) question whether the goal of making everyone feel connected with everyone is an overambitious ideal. In the case of neighbourhood *De Kooi,* I believe that this would decrease the sense of belonging among the 'oldschool' *Leidenaren* who enjoy reminiscing about the past. Thus, engaging in activities, such as bingo or shuffleboard, with only the 'oldschool' *Leidenaren* is in itself not unfavourable. However, it becomes unfavourable when people are completely excluded from social interactions and the place of the community centre is appropriated by one social group. As described by Duyvendak and Wekker, "[a] public home is a place to which one should never be too emotionally wedded, as it is a place that by definition also belongs to 'others'" (2016, 28). In the case of community centre *De Kooi,* there is a small group of visitors who are excluding other residents and claim the place as their own.

The main argument here is not so much focussed on bridging differences between residents of the neighbourhood, but on ensuring that different groups at least grant each other a place within the community centre. On the one hand, these places can facilitate informal exchange and interaction between neighbourhood residents who would otherwise not regularly interact with each other through the diversity of activities available. On the other hand, the same social and public spaces can provide opportunities for gatherings and activities among those who are considered by others and themselves as 'oldschool' *Leidenaren*, which particularly contribute to building trust and a sense of place in the neighbourhood (Van de Kamp and Welschen 2019, 383).

As part of this thesis and research, I have written an Executive Summary (see Appendix 1). In this summary, I have briefly outlined my research findings in Dutch. Further, I made several recommendations on how to increase the social cohesion between the two community centres. The first is to organize a neighbourhood barbecue in the *Kooipark* (meaning: Cage Park). This should not be done by one of the community centres since this will prevent visitors of the other community centre to participate. However, it should be communicated as a neighbourhood activity organized by *Incluzio* and other organisations present in the neighbourhood such as BuZz, SOL and S*tichting Narcis*. The collaboration between these organisation will help to include different social groups in the activity. During this barbecue, there should also be activities such as games for both children and adults. As described by Oldenburg (1991) and Duyvendak and Wekker (2016), an activity such as games could be a

tool to increase social cohesion since it is a conversation starter and it becomes an activity people have in common with each other which increases the amicability between residents.

Additionally, a second recommendation is for employees of *Incluzio* to be more attentive to countering dominant personalities in community centre *De Kooi*. This could be done, for example, by spending more time in the central hall so that dominant behaviour as mentioned in this research is more visible. Further, the employees could aim at having constructive conversations about the consequences of certain behaviour on group dynamics. This would allow dominant personalities to reflect on their role within the community centre, while also allowing other visitors to speak up when dominant behaviour has an negative effect on the group.

In this research, the focus was mainly on the older generation. This is due to the fact that most activities I participated in were visited by senior residents. As a result, the perspectives of younger residents on the social cohesion in the neighbourhood have become less prominent. This perspective is interesting to research in the future. Here, for example, one could look at how this younger group of residents experience the social cohesion in the neighbourhood and how this relates to the experiences of the senior residents.

To conclude, this research has answered the question: "How do different resident groups use the public spaces of the community centres in neighbourhood *De Kooi*, and how does this relate to the social cohesion and the sense of belonging in the neighbourhood?" Community centre *De Kooi* is mostly used by white, Dutch, senior working class people, whereas community centre *Het Gebouw* is used by a variety of people who are more diverse in age and cultural background. The community centres work as places where people can meet each other and have strong internal networks. Due to these strong social networks, visitors express strong place-belongingness to these places. However, this strong place-belongingness to one of the two community centres hinders the interconnectedness between the social networks. This is an obstacle for the social cohesion in the neighbourhood because it makes contact with people outside one's own network more challenging.

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Appendix 1: Executive summary

Afstudeer project MA Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology: Policy in Practice, Marieke van der Heijden

Samenwonen in De Kooi

Hoe komen verschillende sociale groepen samen in Leiden Noord?

Introductie en probleemstelling

De Kooi is een buurt in Leiden Noord. In deze buurt wonen relatief veel jonge mensen met een migratieachtergrond. Ook woont er een grote groep die door andere buurtbewoners en zichzelf gezien worden als 'oldschool' Leidenaren. Deze groep bestaat uit veelal witte senioren uit de arbeidersklasse die al generaties lang in De Kooi wonen. Daarbij zijn er in de buurt relatief veel sociale huurwoningen (78%) en heeft een relatief groot deel van de bewoners een bijstandsuitkering (7,7%) (Leiden in Cijfers N.d., 4-6).

De buurt heeft twee buurthuizen: Buurthuis De Kooi en buurthuis Het Gebouw. Deze twee buurthuizen worden beheerd door Incluzio en ieder buurthuis trekt een ander deel van de inwoners van De Kooi. Incluzio wil echter dat verschillende mensen elkaar kunnen ontmoeten: "In onze Huizen van de Buurt … ontmoeten buurtbewoners elkaar. … Álle bewoners zijn altijd welkom. Nieuwe en oude bewoners, van jong tot oud" (Incluzio N.d.). Doordat de verschillende sociale groepen naar verschillende buurthuizen gaan, is er weinig tot geen sociale interactie tussen de sociale groepen terwijl dit noodzakelijk is voor een sterke sociale cohesie binnen de buurt.

In mijn onderzoek heb ik gekeken naar hoe de fysieke en sociale ruimtes van de buurthuizen de sociale cohesie in de buurt beïnvloeden. In dit onderzoek heb ik een definitie van sociale cohesie gebruikt die specifiek focust op het buurtniveau (zie box 2).

> **Box 1: Samenvatting**
> - De sociale cohesie is sterk binnen ieder buurthuis, maar zwak tussen de twee buurthuizen.
> - Het fysieke gebouw van Het Gebouw wordt door veel bewoners als negatief ervaren. Ze vinden het te groot en ongezellig.
> - Veel bezoekers van Het Gebouw voelen zich niet welkom in De Kooi en komen er daardoor niet.
> - Activiteiten binnen de eigen groep moeten ook door blijven gaan.
> - Activiteiten waar wel meerdere sociale groepen bij elkaar komen moeten ook behouden worden.
> - Om sociale interactie tussen de twee groepen te bevorderen kan er een activiteit buiten georganiseerd worden. Dit is een neutralere plek dan de buurthuizen waardoor hopelijk beide groepen mee willen doen aan deze activiteit.

> **Box 2: Definitie sociale cohesie in een buurt**
> In dit onderzoek, heb ik de definitie van De Hart gebruikt (2002, 12 in Van Bergeijk et al. 2008, 2) gebruikt. Hij definieert de sociale cohesie op buurtniveau op basis van de volgende aspecten:
> - Bewoners die waarden en normen delen,
> - Er sociale controle is,
> - De beschikbaarheid en onderlinge afhankelijkheid van sociale netwerken,
> - Het bestaan van vertrouwen tussen bewoners,
> - De bereidheid om gezamenlijk oplossingen te vinden voor collectieve problemen.

Bewijs uit het onderzoek

Het Gebouw

Het Gebouw wordt door veel verschillende inwoners uit de buurt bezocht. Door de aanwezigheid van scholen zijn er veel kinderen, maar er zijn ook veel volwassenen. Sommigen wonen al heel lang in De Kooi, terwijl anderen er pas net wonen. Ook komen er inwoners van De Kooi met een migratieachtergrond. Dit zorgt ervoor dat er inwoners met verschillende culturele achtergronden bij elkaar komen. Dit buurthuis fungeert als een plek waar mensen nieuwe mensen kunnen leren kennen.

Het Gebouw heeft een fysiek locatie waarin veel (sociale) organisaties en diensten samenkomen. Dit zorgt er voor dat veel inwoners van De Kooi naar Het Gebouw gaan voor bijvoorbeeld de huisarts, school of buurthuisactiviteiten. Veel inwoners vinden het echter geen fijn gebouw. Ze vinden het te groot, te hoog en niet gezellig. Iemand vertelde hierover: "Je komt hier in een soort stationshal binnen. Het galmt, het is druk en alles loopt door elkaar heen".

Bij buurthuisactiviteiten worden vaak relatief recente ervaringen met elkaar gedeeld, zoals een sportwedstrijd of een activiteit die mensen met hun familie hebben gedaan. Deze gespreksonderwerpen maken dat veel mensen mee kunnen doen in het gesprek en is het voor nieuwe mensen relatief makkelijk om aansluiting te vinden bij andere bezoekers. Soms zijn er ook kleine conflicten tussen mensen, maar dit is vaak relatief klein. Een voorbeeld hiervan is een vrijwilliger die klaagt over een andere vrijwilliger die te weinig zou doen.

De Kooi

Bezoekers van buurthuis De Kooi zijn voornamelijk een homogene groep, bestaande uit voornamelijk witte senioren uit de arbeidersklasse die al lang, meestal zelfs hun hele leven, in De Kooi wonen. Hierdoor hebben ze een vergelijkbare culturele achtergrond. Door deze lange geschiedenis in de wijk kennen de meeste bezoekers elkaar al jaren.

Recentelijk zijn er ook activiteiten en bezoekers van BuZz in het buurthuis. Hierdoor komen er meer mensen met een migratieachtergrond naar buurthuis De Kooi. Dit leidt echter niet tot interactie tussen de verschillende sociale groepen, maar iedere groep blijft binnen hun eigen bubbel. Een medewerker van dit buurthuis zegt hierover: "Ze [bezoekers van BuZz] mogen hier [zijn]. Ze zijn van harte welkom. Maar ik denk niet dat ze het fijn vinden. Omdat je ziet dat hier eigenlijk alleen maar een grote witte gemeenschap rond loopt".

In tegenstelling tot Het Gebouw functioneert De Kooi uitsluitend als buurthuis. Inwoners van de buurt vinden de fysieke ruimte van De Kooi veelal fijn. Ze beschrijven het met termen als 'gezellig', 'huiskamer' en 'warm'. De bezoekers hebben vaak

> **Box 3: Methodologie**
>
> Dit onderzoek is uitgevoerd in de periode januari-maart 2023. In deze drie maanden is participerende observatie in de buurthuizen gebruikt als onderzoeksmethode. Ik heb bij buurthuis Het Gebouw en buurthuis De Kooi wekelijks meegedaan aan meerdere activiteiten. Hierdoor kon ik de sociale verhoudingen binnen en tussen de buurthuizen observeren. Daarnaast heeft het ervoor gezorgd dat bezoekers en 'expert members' van de gemeenschap later bereid waren een interview te doen. In dit onderzoek beschouw ik experts niet uitsluitend als hoogopgeleid of met een hoge maatschappelijke positie, maar ik heb ook vrijwilligers in deze categorie opgenomen aangezien zij de buurt goed kennen. Vanaf eind februari heb ik in totaal 18 interviews gehouden, waarvan 7 met bezoekers en 11 met 'expert members'. Tijdens deze interviews konden de participanten hun perspectief op de sociale cohesie binnen De Kooi delen, en kon ik mijn bevindingen van de participerende observatie valideren.

gesprekken over vroeger. Ze bespreken herinneringen van wat er vroeger gebeurde in Leiden, hoe het leven er toen uit zag, en ze spreken ook over elkaars kinderen die ze zich nog herinneren van vroeger.

In dit buurthuis zijn er duidelijke conflicten tussen bezoekers. Individuele bezoekers vertonen dominant, negatief gedrag en hebben een grote invloed op wie er bij hoort en wie niet. Door deze individuele bezoekers voelt niet iedereen zich welkom in het buurthuis. Bezoekers van Het Gebouw vertellen dat ze hierdoor niet naar buurthuis De Kooi gaan, maar ook bezoekers van De Kooi vertellen dat ze zich (soms) niet welkom voelen in het buurthuis.

Conclusie

Veel van de aspecten van sociale cohesie (zie box 2) zijn aanwezig binnen beide buurthuizen. Er is echter weinig interactie tussen de bezoekers van de twee buurthuizen. Mensen die naar Het Gebouw gaan, willen niet naar De Kooi, en mensen die naar De Kooi gaan, willen niet naar Het Gebouw. Hierdoor is de sociale cohesie binnen de buurthuizen sterk, maar tussen de buurthuizen zwak. Belangrijke redenen hiervoor zijn dat bezoekers de fysieke ruimte van Het Gebouw als onprettig ervaren en dat een deel van de bewoners van de buurt zich niet welkom voelt in De Kooi. Het is geen probleem dat mensen voornamelijk meedoen aan activiteiten waar andere mensen van hun sociale groep aan mee doen, maar het is wel een obstakel voor de sociale cohesie als mensen alleen contact hebben met mensen uit hun eigen sociale groep.

Aanbevelingen

- Blijf activiteiten organiseren ook al komt er slechts één groep op af. Om zich thuis te voelen in een buurt is het voor mensen belangrijk om activiteiten te doen met mensen die op hen lijken.
- Zorg er voor dat activiteiten waar wel verschillende sociale groepen samenkomen door blijven gaan. Denk bijvoorbeeld aan de wandelgroep met aansluitende lunch van Het Gebouw.
- Organiseer activiteiten in Het Gebouw die plaatsvinden in de kleinere zalen. Hierdoor hoeven mensen niet in de in hun ogen grote en ongezellige ruimte van de centrale hal te zitten.
- Besteed meer aandacht aan de invloed van individuele bezoekers op de sfeer van De Kooi. Dit kan bijvoorbeeld door meer tijd door te brengen in de centrale hal van het buurthuis zodat het dominante gedrag meer zichtbaar wordt. Verder kunnen de medewerkers streven naar constructieve gesprekken met bezoekers over de gevolgen van bepaald gedrag op de groepsdynamiek. Hierdoor kunnen dominante persoonlijkheden reflecteren op hun rol binnen het buurthuis, terwijl ook andere bezoekers zich kunnen uitspreken wanneer dominant gedrag een negatief effect heeft op de groep.
- Organiseer activiteiten voor de buurt buiten de buurthuizen, bijvoorbeeld in het Kooipark. De patronen binnen de buurthuizen doorbreken zal heel lastig zijn omdat de groepen verschillende ervaringen hebben in de fysieke ruimtes. Probeer het daarom op een zo neutraal mogelijke plek zoals het park. Hier komen allerlei sociale groepen. Organiseer dit niet als een activiteit van buurthuis De Kooi of buurthuis Het Gebouw, maar als een buurtactiviteit. Betrek bij de organisatie meerdere organisaties die aanwezig zijn in de buurt. Denk bijvoorbeeld aan Incluzio, BuZz, SOL en Stichting Narcis. Hierdoor worden verschillende sociale groepen binnen de buurt betrokken bij de activiteit. Een voorbeeld van zo'n activiteit is een buurtbarbecue waar ook andere activiteiten zijn voor zowel volwassenen als kinderen. Deze activiteiten helpen om mensen in gesprek met elkaar te krijgen omdat ze over de activiteiten kunnen praten.

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Appendix 2: Policy presentation

Sociale cohesie als concept

Sociale cohesie op buurtniveau kan worden bestudeerd door te kijken naar de volgende aspecten:

1. Het delen van waarden en normen,
2. Een zekere mate van sociale controle,
3. De beschikbaarheid en onderlinge afhankelijkheid van sociale netwerken,
   a. Formeel
   b. Informeel
4. Het bestaan van vertrouwen tussen bewoners,
5. De bereidheid om gezamenlijk oplossingen te vinden voor collectieve problemen
6. Afwezigheid van conflict.

Sociale groepen

Identiteitskenmerken

Netwerken vaak binnen groepen

Activiteiten die sociale cohesie verbeteren:

- Binnen groepen: identiteit
- Tussen groepen: 'neutraal'

Fysieke en sociale ruimte

- Fysieke ruimte: Hoe ziet de ruimte er uit

- Sociale ruimte: Betekenis die

  mensen aan een ruimte geven

Methode

Verschillende locaties:

- Rosa: Trefpunt, Buurthuis De Kooi en de Turkse Moskee
- Marieke: Buurthuis De Kooi, Buurthuis Het Gebouw, activiteit SOL

Participerende observatie: observeren én meedoen!

Interviews met professionals, vrijwilligers en bewoners

Uitkomst onderzoek Marieke

Fysieke ruimte

- Het Gebouw: groot en ongezellig
- De Kooi: gezellig en een 'huiskamer'

Sociale ruimte

- Het Gebouw: open sfeer
- De Kooi: gesloten groep

Conclusie: Beschikbaarheid en onderlinge afhankelijkheid van sociale netwerken afwezig.

Sociale cohesie binnen de buurthuizen is sterk, maar sociale cohesie tussen de buurthuizen is zwak.

Uitkomst onderzoek Rosa

Activiteit	Draagt bij aan	
	Sociale cohesie binnen groep(en)	Sociale cohesie tussen groepen
Lunch in Buurthuis De Kooi	Ja	Nee
Ontbijt en Koran lezen in de Turkse Moskee	Ja, heel erg	Nee
Soepmiddag bij het Trefpunt	Ja	Ja, heel erg

Conclusie: Activiteiten met eten op zichzelf zijn niet genoeg om de sociale cohesie te bevorderen, maar eten kan wel (verschillende) mensen trekken naar een activiteit

Aanbevelingen voor sociale cohesie binnen groepen

Mensen hebben behoefte aan contact met mensen die op hen lijken

Nu al veel activiteiten en hoge sociale cohesie, ga hiermee door!

Aanbevelingen voor sociale cohesie tussen groepen

Nu al activiteiten die verschillende groepen verbinden: ga hiermee door!

Neutrale plek en activiteit

Ruimtelijke inrichting of activiteit moet uitnodigen voor gesprek

Inclusiviteit: houd rekening met bepaalde groepen

Eten helpt om mensen te trekken

Aanbeveling: een buurtbarbecue

Samenwerking verschillende partners

Neutrale plek: Kooipark

Inclusief: Vegetarisch, halal, etc.

Eten subsidiëren

Zijn er nog vragen?

Referenties

Foto's van:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuY0PGjBCzM&t=64s
- Marc de Haan
- https://indebuurt.nl/utrecht/doen/7-x-utrechtse-parken-die-perfect-zijn-voor-een-picknick~198901/
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Appendix 3: Consent form
<u>Informatiebrochure en toestemmingsverklaring</u>

Onderzoek samenleven in de Kooi

Inleiding
Ik ben Marieke van der Heijden en ik doe onderzoek voor mijn eindonderzoek aan de universiteit Leiden en met Leren met de Stad. Ik doe onderzoek naar hoe mensen samenleven in de wijk de Kooi.

Hieronder leg ik dit onderzoek uit. Als u iets niet begrijpt, of vragen heeft, dan kunt u die aan mij stellen.

Als u wilt meedoen aan het onderzoek, kan u dit aan het einde van dit formulier aangeven.

Waar gaat het onderzoek over?
De Kooi heeft een diverse groep inwoners. In dit onderzoek, onderzoek ik hoe deze mensen met elkaar samenleven. Dit doe ik op straat, maar ook in de buurthuizen. Het doel van het onderzoek is het schrijven van mijn scriptie, maar ook het schrijven van een beleidsstuk waardoor beleidsmakers dit onderzoek kunnen gebruiken.

Waarom vragen ik u om deel te nemen?
Ik vraag u mee te doen omdat uw ervaring als bewoner van de Kooi, of deelname aan activiteiten binnen de Kooi mij helpt om te leren over hoe mensen samenleven in de buurt.

Wat kan u verwachten?
Het onderzoek duurt 3 maanden, van januari tot en met maart 2022.
Als u meedoet aan dit onderzoek, dan doet u mee aan:

<u>De wandelgroep</u>:
1 keer per week is op dinsdagochtend is de wandelgroep. Tijdens deze wandelgroep draag ik een geluid-opnemer die onze gesprekken opneemt.

Na het wandelen kan u eventueel aangeven dat het deel van de opname waarin u te horen bent verwijderd wordt.

U kiest zelf of u meedoet
Deelnemen aan dit onderzoek is geheel vrijwillig. U kunt op ieder moment en zonder uitleg stoppen.

Wie kan uw gegevens zien?
- Ik sla al uw gegevens veilig op. Niemand behalve ik heeft toegang tot uw gegevens.
- Enkel personen die betrokken zijn bij het onderzoek kunnen (een deel van) de gegevens inzien
- Gemaakte opnames worden omgezet in tekst. Namen worden vervangen met een verzonnen naam.
- Over de resultaten van het onderzoek schrijf ik een scriptie die openbaar toegankelijk is. Ook schrijf ik een beleidsstuk.
- Ik gebruik uw specifieke antwoorden mogelijk in de scriptie en/of beleidsstuk zonder dat het duidelijk is dat het uw antwoord is.

Hoe lang bewaar ik uw gegevens?
Uw gegevens worden maximaal tot 3 jaar na de afronding van het onderzoek bewaard. Na deze periode worden de opnames verwijderd.

Heeft u vragen over het onderzoek?
Heeft u **vragen** over het onderzoek of uw privacy rechten, zoals inzage, wijziging, verwijdering of aanpassing van uw gegevens, neem dan contact op met mij.

Naam: Marieke van der Heijden
Telefoonnummer: 06-47186319
e-mail: m.h.c.d.van.der.heijden@umail.leidenuniv.nl

Spijt van uw deelname?
Het kan zijn dat u spijt krijgt van uw deelname. Geef dit binnen 24 uur aan of neem hiervoor contact met mij op.

Toestemmingsverklaring
Ik heb de informatiebrief gelezen. Ik begrijp waar het onderzoek over gaat en dat er gegevens van mij worden verzameld. Ook kon ik vragen stellen. Mijn vragen zijn voldoende beantwoord.

Door dit formulier te ondertekenen
1.   geef ik toestemming voor deelname aan dit onderzoek
2.   bevestig ik dat ik ten minste 18 jaar oud ben;
3.   geef ik aan dat ik begrijp dat deelname aan dit onderzoek geheel vrijwillig is en ieder moment kan stoppen; en
4.   geef ik aan dat ik begrijp dat mijn gegevens zullen worden geanonimiseerd met het oog op publicatie.

Kruis hieronder de hokjes aan als u hier toestemming voor geeft.
Verplicht voor deelname aan het onderzoek,

Geluidsopname
Ik geef toestemming voor het opnemen van het gesprek tijdens de wandelgroep door een geluidsopname.

Mijn antwoorden in het artikel
Ik geef toestemming voor het gebruiken van mijn antwoorden in stukken, zoals een scriptie en beleidsstuk. Mijn naam staat er niet bij.

Naam van de deelnemer:

Handtekening van de deelnemer: **Datum:**

Appendix 4: Interview guide mapping interviews

Ik ben Marieke en ben student aan de universiteit. Ik doe een onderzoek naar hoe mensen in deze buurt met elkaar samenleven.

Zou ik met u een interview mogen doen? Ik zal mijn best doen om er voor zorgen dat niemand die mijn onderzoek leest weet wat u gezegd heeft. Dit doe ik door u bijvoorbeeld een andere naam te geven.

Als u tijdens het interview wil stoppen, is dat geen problem. Ook kan u het zeggen als u op een vraag geen antwoord wil geven.

Ik geef u zo een papiertje. Op dit papiertje mag u zo de wijk te tekenen. Denk bijvoorbeeld aan plekken, wegen en gebouwen die u gebruikt in de buurt. Dit mogen plekken zijn waar u zich fijn, of juist niet fijn voelt.

- Om uitleg vragen wat iemand getekend heft

- Nu wil ik graag met u door de wijk lopen. Dan kan u verder uitleggen wat u getekend heeft en waarom.

Onderwerp	Sub-onderwerp	Mogelijke vragen
(Place-)belonging	Duur van wonen in de buurt	- Hoe lang woont u al in deze buurt? - Woonden uw ouders hier vroeger ook? - Woonden uw opa en oma hier vroeger ook?
	Autobiografische factoren	- Wat is uw favoriete herinnering in deze buurt? - Heeft u ook slechte herinneringen?
	Relationele factoren	- Heeft u familie die in deze buurt woont? - Heeft u vrienden die hier wonen? - Praat u wel eens met mensen die je tegenkomt op straat?

		- Waar praat u dan over?
	Culturele factoren	- Kan u met de mensen in de buurt uw moedertaal/eerste taal spreken? - Welke taal is dat? - Welke taal zou u willen spreken?
	Economische factoren	- Werkt u ook? Is dat in deze buurt? - Heeft u genoeg geld om te kunnen doen wat uw vrienden doen?
	Juridische factoren	- Heeft u een Nederlands paspoort/verblijfsvergunning
Persoonlijke geschiedenis in de buurt		- Hoe lang woont u in deze buurt? - Waarom bent u naar deze buurt gekomen/verhuisd? - Woont uw familie ook in deze buurt? - Heeft u ooit weg gewild uit deze buurt? Waarom wel/niet?
Ervaring in de buurt	Algemeen	- Vindt u het leuk om in deze buurt te wonen? - Heeft u vrienden die ook in deze buurt wonen?
	Positief	- Wat vindt u leuk aan deze buurt?
	Negatief	- Zijn er dingen die u niet leuk vindt in deze buurt? - Wat zou u willen veranderen in de buurt?
Verandering in de buurt	Fysieke ruimte	- Is de fysieke ruimte in de buurt veranderd? - Wat is er veranderd?
	Bewoners	- Wonen er nu andere mensen in de buurt dan toen u hier kwam wonen? – Hoe zijn de bewoners veranderd door de jaren heen?

Activiteiten in de buurt	Buiten	- Gaat u graag naar buiten?
		- Wat doet u buiten?
		- Met wie gaat u naar buiten?
		- Hoe voelt u zich in de openbare ruimte buiten? Voelt u zich welkom?
		- Wat is uw favoriete plek buiten? En waarom?
		- Wat is uw minst favoriete plek buiten? En waarom?
	Binnen	- Waar brengt u uw tijd binnen door?
		- Wat doet u daar?
		- Hoe voelt u zich in de openbare ruimte binnen? Voelt u zich welkom?
		- Wat is uw favoriete plek binnen? En waarom?
		- Wat is uw minst favoriete plek binnen? En waarom?
Sociale cohesie	Gedeelde waarden en normen	- Vinden mensen in de buurt hetzelfde belangrijk als u?
		- Kunt u daar voorbeelden van geven?
		- Zorgen verschillen voor problemen?
	Een bepaalde mate van sociale controle	- Spreekt u mensen aan op gedrag waar u het niet mee eens bent?
		- Wat gebeurt er dan?
		- Wordt u wel eens aangesproken door iemand?
		- Wat doet u dan?
	Beschikbaarheid en onderlinge afhankelijkheid van sociale netwerken	- Als u een probleem heeft, kunt u dan naar iemand gaan die u helpt?
		- Denkt u dat hulporganisaties goed kunnen samenwerken?
	Vertrouwen tussen bewoners	- Vertrouwt u de andere mensen in de buurt?

		- Waarom wel/niet?
		- Denkt u dat andere mensen elkaar vertrouwen?
	Bereidheid om gezamenlijk tot oplossingen te komen	- Zijn er problemen in de buurt?
		- Lukt het om daar met andere bewoners over te praten?
		- Lukt het om samen een oplossing te vinden? Waarom wel/niet?

Appendix 5: Interview guide expert members

Ik ben Marieke en ben student aan de universiteit. Ik doe een onderzoek naar hoe mensen in deze buurt met elkaar samenleven.

Zou ik met u een interview mogen doen? Ik zal mijn best doen om er voor zorgen dat niemand die mijn onderzoek leest weet wat u gezegd heeft. Dit doe ik door u bijvoorbeeld een andere naam te geven.

Als u tijdens het interview wil stoppen, is dat geen problem. Ook kan u het zeggen als u op een vraag geen antwoord wil geven.

Onderwerp	Sub-onderwerp	Mogelijke vragen
Persoonlijke vragen		- Wat is uw functie? - Woont u zelf ook in deze buurt?/ Heeft u zelf in deze buurt gewoond - Waarom bent u hier vrijwilliger geworden?
De buurt	Samenstelling van de bewoners	- Kun je me iets vertellen over wie er in de buurt wonen? - Is dit veranderd? - Hoe beïnvloeden de bewoners de buurt?
Definitie sociale cohesie van De Hart	Gedeelde waarden en normen	- Hebben de mensen in de buurt dezelfde normen en waarden? - Kunt u daar voorbeelden van geven? - Zorgen verschillen voor problemen?
	Een bepaalde mate van sociale controle	- Spreekt u als vrijwilliger mensen aan op gedrag waar u het niet mee eens bent? - Wat gebeurt er dan? - Wordt u wel eens aangesproken door iemand? - Wat doet u dan?

	Beschikbaarheid en onderlinge afhankelijkheid van sociale netwerken	- Weten mensen hulp te vinden als ze dat nodig hebben? - Denkt u dat verschillende hulpverleners in de buurt goed kunnen samenwerken?
	Vertrouwen tussen bewoners	- Vertrouwen mensen in de buurt elkaar? - Waarom wel/niet?
	Bereidheid om gezamenlijk tot oplossingen te komen	- Zijn er problemen in de buurt? - Lukt het om daar met andere bewoners over te praten? - Lukt het om samen een oplossing te vinden? Waarom wel/niet?
(Publieke) ruimte	Definiëren van belangrijke ruimtes in de buurt	- Wat zijn belangrijke ontmoetingsplekken in de buurt? - Waarom zijn deze plaatsen belangrijk? - Wie gebruiken deze plaatsen? - wat doen mensen op deze plaatsen?
		- Komt u wel eens in Het Gebouw/De Kooi? Waarom niet? - Ziet u verschillen tussen buurthuis de Kooi en buurthuis Het Gebouw?
	Problemen in de publieke ruimtes	- Zijn er problemen in het buurthuis? - Kunt u een voorbeeld geven van problemen die u tegenkomt? - Wat kunt u doen om deze problemen op te lossen?