SPACES OF ENCOUNTER WITHIN LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC NEIGHBOURHOODS

A qualitative case study on social encounters and loneliness in Bospolder-Tussendijken, Rotterdam

uitgezonderd

Master thesis
Teun van der Geld
August 6, 2022

SPACES OF ENCOUNTER WITHIN LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC NEIGHBOURHOODS

A qualitative case study on social encounters and loneliness in Bospolder-Tussendijken, Rotterdam

AUTHOR: **Teun van der Geld**
2424223
c.t.m.vandergeld@students.uu.nl

STUDY: **Urban Geography** (MSc)
Faculty of Geoscience
Utrecht University

SUPERVISORS: **Ilse van Liempt** (Utrecht University)

Lotte de Jong (Sweco, Rotterdam)

SECOND READER: **Simon Scheider** (Utrecht University)

SWECO | Universiteit Utrecht

PREFACE

Thank you for taking the time to read my master thesis on spaces of encounter, types of encounter and feelings of loneliness among adult residents of low socio-economic neighbourhoods, this is my last product for the Master's programme in Human Geography at Utrecht University. I have combined this thesis with an internship at Sweco NL, where I have worked with great pleasure within the team Gebiedsadvies Rotterdam. In this way, I was able to develop myself both academically and professionally, something I can recommend to everyone! I must say that especially team Gebiedsadvies Rotterdam and all other colleagues and fellow interns whom I had the privilege to meet within Sweco have contributed in many great ways. Hence I look back on this period with great joy.

I would also like to thank my participants (residents and experts) immensely for their participation and openness. Everyone I have spoken to has impressed me in some way. Getting to hear these different life stories happened with great pleasure and at times with amazement. As I visited the neighbourhood more and more often and spoke to more people, I realised that Bospolder-Tussendijken is a neighbourhood inhabited by people from a variety of backgrounds, many of whom have gone through a lot. I perceived the neighbourhood as a neighbourhood where people live, but (too) often survive, a neighbourhood that is so much more than the figures and data I investigated before my research. It is a neighbourhood with a strong soul, much creativity and opportunities. Thank you Bospolder-Tussendijken!

In addition, I would like to personally thank several people who made my thesis period less difficult and more enjoyable. Many thanks to my roommates, friends, parents and sister for the necessary distraction and motivating words and for enduring my many complaints about how hard it all was. Also thank you to my fellow master's students for the great time we had in Stockholm in between our thesis period: 'systembolaget!' Additionally, I want to thank fellow interns Spyke, Rijk and Ramon for the many and grateful breaks. In general, many thanks to the whole team of Gebiedsadvies Rotterdam for their helpfulness and the lovely (many) drinks we had. In particular here, I want to thank my buddy Sara van Duijn from Sweco who regularly checked in with me during the process to see if I was still doing good/okay, and to have some good brainstorm sessions. Also, thanks to my supervisor Lotte de Jong for the fine guidance at Sweco. Lastly, to my supervisor from Utrecht University; Ilse van Liempt, thank you so much for taking the time to look at my thesis even during the holiday break, and especially a big thanks for the very useful feedback and friendly guidance.

You have all enthused, inspired and motivated me, a thousand thanks!

Teun van der Geld, Tilburg, 2022

CONTENT

SUMMARY

Preliminary research shows that the physical environment plays an important role in how people feel. For example, it appears that feelings of loneliness are stronger among residents of low socio-economic neighbourhoods than in neighbourhoods where the socio-economic status is higher. This master thesis, therefore, looked at the degree to which spaces of encounter and the type of encounters that might take place within these spaces influence feelings of loneliness among adult residents. A qualitative case study by means of walkalong and face-to-face semi-structured interviews was carried out in combination with a mapping assignment within the Rotterdam neighbourhood of Bospolder-Tussendijken.

This study has shown that the type of encounters that take place within the different spaces of encounter influence the feelings of loneliness among adult residents of low socio-economic neighbourhoods. However, the social environment of low socio-economic neighbourhoods also has a strong influence on the type of encounters. This is because certain social habits, power relations and the degree of social cohesion are present, which cause social exclusion within various spaces of encounter. Moreover, this has an impact on feelings of loneliness among residents because people cannot meet each other in the desired places and manners. However, personal characteristics seem to have more influence on feelings of loneliness than the spaces and types of encounters within low socio-economic neighbourhoods. And finally, it appears that micro-publics are often the places where people who feel lonely go to tackle these feelings. These micro-publics also turn out to play an important role in breaking the social habits that are rooted in the neighbourhood.

[1] INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

A large part of the places where people come together and meet new people are public spaces (Mehta, 2007; Valentine, 2008). Public space is more than just an experience of space, it is where people have the opportunity to express themselves and where there is room for difference, where new opportunities exist, where thoughts and information are exchanged and where strangers come together and people mingle with the experiences and interests of others (Valentine, 2008; Rad & Ngah, 2013). Public spaces have the role of meeting places and places for social movement, in this way they can contribute to facilitating and increasing people's social activities (Zhang, Wei & Lawson, 2009).

Currently, there is a growing demand for the investment in, and use of, new pedestrian-oriented public spaces including squares, plazas and streets and other traditional forms of public space, because these public spaces have the ability to support, facilitate and promote public life (Mehta, 2007). In addition, public spaces can take on different forms such as parks, squares, markets, mobility hubs and streets (Von Schönfeld & Bertolini, 2017). The streets, for example, which form a large part of public spaces, are much more than just a connecting network that links one destination to another, it is here where social encounters take place between both acquaintances and strangers (Al Odat & Al Kurdi, 2021). Besides, these public spaces often accommodate different functions such as markets, greenery, sitting and eating areas or, for example, food stalls to make it as pleasant as possible for the passer-by (Von Schönfeld & Bertolini, 2017). Moreover, literature on urban design indicates the importance of attractive public spaces in supporting pleasant experiences, feelings of safety and in facilitating everyday social encounters between strangers (Anderson, Ruggeri, Steemers, & Huppert, 2017). It also emphasises the importance of attractive public spaces for the purpose of enjoying and sharing experiences with strangers or acquaintances (ibid). Besides, the design features contribute to how public spaces are experienced and perceived, and the feelings one has about a particular place (Witten & Ivory, 2018).

It is therefore that the built environment in which people live affect their subjective well-being (Galea, Freudenberg, & Vlahov, 2005). Besides, the quantity and quality of the physical environment to which a person is exposed is also related to physical health (Pawlowski, et al., 2017; Anderson, Ruggeri, Steemers, & Huppert, 2017). Furthermore, the entire world faced the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and in order to prevent the further spread of the COVID-19 virus, social measures such as social distancing and social isolation have been massively applied, also in The Netherlands (Sepulveda-Loyola, et al., 2020). This resulted in the increase of many psychological issues among the population, which in turn did not help the already growing feelings of loneliness among the population, on the contrary (Miller, 2020). 10% of Europeans feel excluded from society, with loneliness being an ever-growing health problem (Meisters, et al., 2021). This is also the case in

The Netherlands. In addition to ageing, socio-economic health disparities and obesity, the Dutch government sees an increase in feelings of loneliness among people, especially within the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague (RIVM, 2015; RIVM, 2022). Despite living ever closer together, society's emphasis on individualism is increasing and so are feelings of loneliness, which is no longer an issue for the elderly alone; young adults and adults are increasingly dealing with it as well (Matthews, et al., 2019; Kearns, Whitley, Tannahill, & Ellaway, 2015). Moreover, the pandemic has reminded people of the importance of social relations for humans (Lim, Allen, Furlong, Craig, & Smith, 2021). But relationships and the way people interact with each other have changed in this period (Lim et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased concern among mental health experts, with a greater focus now being placed on the issue of loneliness. (Maastricht University, 2021). In general, more than one million people in the Netherlands feel strongly lonely and another one in three feels moderately lonely, with it being most common among the low-educated, those struggling to make ends meet and those without work (Meisters, et al., 2021; De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016; Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport, sd).

However, the design and functionality of public space can improve physical and mental health (Witten & Ivory, 2018; Pain & Thompson, 2017). As has already been briefly emphasised, people on low incomes are more likely to feel lonely, but they are also generally more likely to have an unhealthy lifestyle and suffer relatively often from lifestyle-related health conditions, precisely these people would benefit the most from pleasant public spaces where social encounters can take place such as public green spaces (Astell-Burt, et al., 2022; Ribeiro-Palacios, Morales Gómez, & Soria Yañez, 2021; Rad & Ngah, 2013). But this does not seem to be the case at the moment; people with relatively low incomes generally have less access to, for instance, public green spaces (Ribeiro-Palacios, Morales Gómez, & Soria Yañez, 2021; Rad & Ngah, 2013).

In addition to various studies, data from the RIVM, GGD and CBS also reveal that feelings of loneliness are the highest in neighbourhoods where incomes are the lowest, unemployment is the highest and where there is a high degree of ethnic minorities (RIVM, 2020; Rad & Ngah, 2013; Astell-Burt, et al., 2022; Meisters, et al., 2021; De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016; Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport, sd). But, within Western society it seems to be difficult to talk about feelings of loneliness, people appear to be ashamed of it; people are oriented towards successful careers and also in the social domain everything must go well and talking about negative feelings often seems to be a taboo (De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016; Kearns, Whitley, Tannahill, & Ellaway, 2015). This while it is becoming a growing health problem, with both a negative effect on physical and psychological health, and where it is also related to mortality at a relatively earlier age (Maes, Vanhalst, Van den Noortgate, & Goossens, 2017; Wolfers, Stam, & Machielse, 2022).

However, promoting a better social environment, which can come from creating opportunities for residents to bump into each other in public spaces, say 'hello' out of politeness and become familiar with each other to a certain extent, can ultimately lead to lower mortality rates (Yarker, 2021). Whereby, creating good public, but also semi-public places, can lead to an improvement in the social activities within a neighbourhood (Zhang & Lawson, 2009). But looking at the loneliness rates and the

quality of the public spaces within neighbourhoods with low socio-economic characteristics, there seems to be a greater need to understand the spaces of encounter within these neighbourhoods and how this influences feelings of loneliness among residents.

1.2   Objective

People-friendly design and public space that has been carefully considered is needed to stimulate social encounters, interactions, well-being and health; which is especially important in neighbourhoods with low socio-economic characteristics where there is a lower status of emotional well-being among residents and where people often have an unhealthy lifestyle, but also to maintain and enhance community participation (Witten & Ivory, 2018; Astell-Burt, et al., 2022; Ribeiro-Palacios, Morales Gómez, & Soria Yañez, 2021; Räuchle & Berding, 2020). Public space, as mentioned earlier, is a place where social encounters between strangers and acquaintances happen, where information is distributed, where new impressions take place and where new memories are made (Valentine, 2008; Witten & Ivory, 2018; Van den Berg, Kemperman, De Kleijn, & Borgers, 2016). The importance to people's well-being of social encounters and networks is well established and includes the short and small interactions such as everyday neighbourhood exchanges (Witten & Ivory, 2018). Yet access and a sense of welcome to promote these social encounters within a given space is not a given (Witten & Ivory, 2018). To create cities that are inclusive for everybody, it is necessary to understand the different characteristics of the social and the physical environment of a neighbourhood in order to ultimately provide the right spaces where opportunities for social encounters are created to tackle various social problems, including the problem of feelings of loneliness among adults (Carrera, 2022).

Therefore, this research attempts to gain insight into how spaces of encounter and the possible social encounters within these spaces in low socio-economic neighbourhoods have an influence on feelings of loneliness among adult residents. Ultimately, an attempt is made to understand how adult residents of these neighbourhoods experience the spaces of encounter within the neighbourhood, what types of encounters they have in which spaces and if they experience feelings of loneliness. In this study, the Rotterdam neighbourhood of Bospolder-Tussendijken will serve as the case study area. This is due to the figures from the Municipality of Rotterdam (2018) and the RIVM (2022) which show that feelings of loneliness are high here, the socio-economic status is relatively low and there is a high level of ethnic diversity, which also seems to be a predictor of feelings of loneliness among the residents (De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016). Hence, an attempt will be made to gain a better understanding of the experience of residents with the spaces of encounter within the neighbourhood and feelings of loneliness. Findings from the final conclusion that will emerge from this research can be used during various projects involving, for example, the upgrading of the physical environment or the redevelopment of other Dutch or even European neighbourhoods with a low socio-economic status, in order to not only improve the physical environment of the neighbourhood, but to simultaneously strengthen the social environment of a neighbourhood and make maximum use of opportunities for social encounters within these neighbourhoods.

1.3   Research question

This master thesis will pay attention to spaces of encounter and the possible social encounters within these spaces in low socio-economic neighbourhoods and how this influences feelings of loneliness among adult residents. As already briefly mentioned, this research is done to gain a better understanding of the experience of residents with the spaces of encounter in the neighbourhood and feelings of loneliness. Based on this line of reasoning, the following research question was formulated:

How do spaces of encounter and the types of encounters that take place within them influence feelings of loneliness among residents of low socio-economic neighbourhoods?

However, in order to answer this research question, this study will first look at the social environment of the neighbourhood, the quality and characteristics of the spaces of encounter, the value people attach to these spaces as a whole and as a spaces for encounter and feelings of loneliness among residents. This will be done by looking for answers to the following sub-questions:

1. *What is characteristic of the social environment of Bospolder-Tussendijken and how is this reflected in the physical environment of the neighbourhood?*

2. *What values and meanings do adult residents attach to place for encounter and to Bospolder-Tussendijken as a whole?*

3. *What is characteristic of the spaces of encounter in Bospolder-Tussendijken and how does this influence feelings of loneliness among adult residents?*

4. *Is there a need for more space of encounter among residents within Bospolder-Tussendijken and how should this be given shape according to them and why?*

1.4   Relevance

Research by the RIVM (2020) has shown that the percentage of adults aged 18 and over who experience severe feelings of loneliness is the highest in the three GGD regions Amsterdam, Rotterdam-Rijnmond and Haaglanden. For example, in 2017, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, it was already in the news that loneliness among vulnerable groups in the Netherlands is on the rise. In addition, both the AD (2022) and De Volkskrant (2017) refer to the fact that people often think that loneliness is only a problem among the elderly, however, feelings of loneliness also occurs among younger people (Matthews, et al., 2019). Furthermore, the importance of encouraging social encounters to combat loneliness is highlighted in the AD article, which refers to both social encounters during the day and

in the evening. Additionally, in De Volkskrant (2017), loneliness was labelled as the biggest disease of our contemporary cities, whereby 70 percent of the Dutch population would consider loneliness as a major problem. But the introduction of supermarket initiatives such as a so-called 'kletskassa', 'kletspakketten' and 'kletshoeken' (translated as chat counter, chat packages and chat corners) which are all intended to compensate for the lack of social encounters in the supermarket, but also in general, clearly show that there is still a need for places where these social encounters can take place and that loneliness is still a major problem in Dutch society (Trouw, 2021).

Furthermore, the scientific literature indicates that in general, there has been little or no research into the relationship between the social and physical environment of public space in Europe, while the combination of social and physical characteristics can determine the attractiveness of a public space according to Van Hecke and others (2016). Also missing are studies on emotional well-being involving ethnically diverse communities (Mouraditis, 2020), while belonging to a ethnic minority can increase the risk of feeling lonely and is therefore a predictor for experiencing feelings of loneliness (de Jong Gierveld & van Tilburg, 2016). In Bospolder-Tussendijken, there is also a great diversity of different ethnicities and will therefore also be an addition to these research topics (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018). In addition, Mayblin, Valentine, Kossak and Schneider (2015) indicate that research on how characteristics of public spaces, or other types of spaces, can be used to promote the chances of social encounter among people from different backgrounds is largely neglected. Too often, the focus is only on making it easier to encounter people by generating proximity (Mayblin, Valentine, Kossak, & Schneider, 2015). This research will look beyond the proximity of people, by trying to understand the social environment of the neighbourhood.

Finally, to date, there are no studies in either the European or Dutch context that investigate the relation between feelings of loneliness and public space and, in addition, offer solutions for public space against feelings of loneliness with a focus on neighbourhoods with low socio-economic characteristics (Van Hecke, et al., 2016; Pawlowski, et al., 2017). However, this study will look at the influence of public space and other spaces of encounter and the social encounters that may take place here on feelings of loneliness and how the different types of encounters influences these feelings. Therefore, it will contribute to the scientific field of the built environment and mental health by also focussing on the aspect of feelings of loneliness and spaces of encounter in low socio-economic neighbourhoods. In addition, Matthews and colleagues (2019, p. 766) point out what is also important in this research: 'Understanding how the structural and social characteristics of the neighbourhoods in which communities operate are related to feelings of loneliness can have important implications for policy and interventions'. The subject of spaces of encounter, but also the subject of loneliness still requires attention, whereby the potential of improving the chance for social encounters in, among others, public spaces, understanding the social environment of a neighbourhood and our living environment as a whole in this social challenge should also be considered and be used.

[2] THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Feelings of loneliness

2.1.1 Defining feelings of loneliness

In different phases of life, humans create different psychological bonds with different people, this stems from the humans' need for social connection with others (Maes, Vanhalst, Van den Noortgate, & Goossens, 2017; Wang, Fink, & Cai, 2008). The type of social ties, or relationships, may vary from person to person and may provide different social views or meet different personal needs (Lasgaard, Goossens, Bramsen, Trillingsgraad, & Elklit, 2011). For example, a person may be in a romantic relationship which may provide a sense of trust and attachment, relationships with peers or friends are often associated with a sense of social integration, or a relationship with family members may bring out a sense of companionship (ibid). This whole network of relationships identifies, to a large extent, who a person is and their personality (Mellor, Stokes, Firth, Hayashi, & Cummins, 2008). However, these relations are not always permanent and can fade, decline and be lost due to various changes in expectations, social role and relationships (De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016; Maes, Vanhalst, Van den Noortgate, & Goossens, 2017). When the current number of social contacts does not match the desired number of social contacts, one can experience a form of social pain which is accompanied by feelings of emptiness and rejection, this form of social pain are feeling of loneliness (De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016; Maes, Vanhalst, Van den Noortgate, & Goossens, 2017). It is therefore the various (types of) relationships that are the potential sources of feelings of loneliness (Lasgaard, Goossens, Bramsen, Trillingsgraad, & Elklit, 2011), because here negative developments can take place that can lead to dissatisfaction.

Feelings of loneliness are described in many studies as the subjective interpretation of an individual's daily interactions and the feeling of mismatch between the preferred and actual level and quality of one's social relationships (Wolfers, Stam, & Machielse, 2022; Macdonald, Nixon, & Deacon, 2018; Maes, Vanhalst, Van den Noortgate, & Goossens, 2017; Wang, Fink, & Cai, 2008). Thus, whether someone is feeling lonely or not is one of the possible outcome of an evaluation, not a description of a personal situation which is characterised by a small number of relationships, that someone may be in (De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016). The feeling of loneliness can therefore be defined as: the unpleasant feeling a person experiences when his/her network of social relations is perceived as insufficient in quantitative or qualitative respect (Maes, Vanhalst, Van den Noortgate, & Goossens, 2017).

Besides the fact that feelings of loneliness are subjective, there is also a difference in the kind of loneliness one can experience. Previous research states that feelings of loneliness can be distinguished into two dimensions: social loneliness and emotional loneliness (Salo, Junttila, & Vauras, 2020; Macdonald, Nixon, & Deacon, 2018). Emotional loneliness refers to feelings of loneliness that arises from a lack or loss of one or more intimate/involved relationships, which involves the quality of the relationships rather than the quantity and is characterised by feelings of abandonment, fear and insecurity (Wang, Fink, & Cai, 2008; Wolfers, Stam, & Machielse, 2022). Whereas social loneliness refers to a perceived lack of broader social networks or a lack of social activities or general social relationships such as colleagues, neighbours, acquaintances or casual friends and is characterised by feelings of purposelessness, boredom and exclusion (Wang, Fink, & Cai, 2008; De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016; Wolfers, Stam, & Machielse, 2022).

Additionally, people who have few social contacts or live a withdrawn life are not necessarily experiencing feelings of loneliness, even though they may experience social isolation or exclusion, but not feelings of loneliness (Lyu & Forsyth, 2021; De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016). Conversely, a person with a large social network may experience feelings of loneliness if the quality of it does not meet the need; quality is therefore more strongly related to feelings of loneliness than the quantity of social relationships (Lyu & Forsyth, 2021; Wolfers, Stam, & Machielse, 2022). So being alone does not necessarily mean that someone feels lonely, sometimes being alone can also be experienced as pleasant - it just depends on how someone assesses his or her social situation and what their social needs are (De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016). For example, while some perceived the COVID-19 pandemic as a negative experience due to social isolation, others adapted easily and enjoyed life in isolation (Liu & Kim, 2021). It is therefore possible to observe whether someone is socially isolated, but to know whether someone is actually experiencing feelings of loneliness, one has to ask (Lyu & Forsyth, 2021).

2.1.2   Personal characteristics

Scientific research shows that there are various characteristics that can increase the risk of feeling lonely. Age appears to be a determining factor, for example; from adolescence onwards, social expectations, roles and relationships change (Maes, Vanhalst, Van den Noortgate, & Goossens, 2017). Nevertheless, feelings of loneliness are relatively more common among older people due to the death of friends and family and also among migrants who move to another country because of ineffective social support and companionship and language barriers (Lyu & Forsyth, 2021; van den Berg, Kemperman, de Kleijn, & Borgers, 2016). De Jong Gierveld and Van Tilburg (2016) have outlined these risk factors on the individual level, showing that personal characteristics such as gender, age, education level, income, social economic status, health, marriage and partner status, the relationship with children and other relatives and relationships with friends and acquaintances are all factors which influence the risk that a person feels lonely. They state that women, despite often having a relatively larger social network than men, are relatively more likely to feel lonely and that this is because women are more likely to experience the death of their partner, which would refer to emotional loneliness (De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016; Beal, 2006). However, men are more likely to experience social loneliness according to Wolfers, Stam and Machielse (2022), which seems to correspond with the assertion that women tend to have a larger social network than men (De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016).

Besides, the older one gets, the greater the chance of feeling lonely: 20-30% of middle-aged and young adults are said to be moderately to seriously lonely, this is in contrast to the 40-50% of adults over 80 (De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016; Wang, Fink, & Cai, 2008). Despite the fact that today's elderly are often better educated, more mobile and have a better physical health, Van den Berg, Kemperman, De Kleijn and Borgers (2016) point out that the social support network shrinks due to changes in the lives of the elderly, such as retirement, age-related losses or major (often negative) life events such as losing one's partner, increasing the risk of social isolation and experiencing feelings of loneliness. Nevertheless, feelings of loneliness occurs within every age group and these feelings even seems to be increasing among relatively younger age groups nowadays, possibly due to changes in expectations and roles of relationships during this phase of life (Meisters, et al., 2021; Van den Berg, Kemperman, De Kleijn, & Borgers, 2016; Maes, Vanhalst, Van den Noortgate, & Goossens, 2017). Besides, people who have moved to a place that is new to them, who have international migrated or who otherwise experience a lack of social support may also

have relatively stronger feelings of loneliness (Lyu & Forsyth, 2021).

Furthermore, a person's level of education and income are also related to loneliness, for example, Hawkley and others (2008) indicate that level of education is a protective factor against loneliness, which is explained by a larger network, more quality social relationships and less chronic stress. In addition, studies show that not having a job and feelings of loneliness are related (Morrish & Medina-Lara, 2021). A person's access to communities and activities requires certain individual effort in the form of, among other things, financial capacity; when this financial capacity is reduced or low, this can lead to stronger feelings of loneliness as one can feel excluded from society by not being able to do certain (social) activities (Hajek & König, 2020; Schirmer & Michailakis, 2018). In general, having a low socio-economic status is a factor that increases the risk of feeling lonely (Wolfers, Stam, & Machielse, 2022; McQuaid, Cox, Ogunlana, & Jaworska, 2021; Solmi, et al., 2020; Macdonald, Nixon, & Deacon, 2018; Morrish & Medina-Lara, 2021).

Moreover, feelings of loneliness are linked to people's health, however, this link is complex and there is a difference in the effect of loneliness on physical health, whereby especially at an older age the impact of feelings of loneliness on health issues is negative (Jessen, Pallesen, Kriegbaum, & Kristiansen, 2018). Additionally, according to Dahlberg, McKee, Lennartsson and Rehnberg (2022) health and well-being are unequally distributed in society, which means that there is a difference in access to and possession of resources for each individual, and that feelings of loneliness are consequently an outcome of limited access to resources that allow a person to participate in various social activities that can then counteract feelings of loneliness. According to Pengpid and Peltzer (2021) there is also a relationship between feelings of loneliness and health risk behaviours such as smoking, alcohol abuse and poor eating habits. Kearns, Whitley, Tannahill and Ellaway (2015) also point this out, indicating that unhealthy behaviour such as overeating and excessive alcohol consumption can both be results of feelings of loneliness and that this can lead to stress and sleep deprivation as well as affecting the immune system, blood vessels and the heart. However, it can also work the other way around, whereby people who have poor health are at greater risk of experiencing feelings of loneliness because, for example, they are physically limited and therefore cannot participate in different types of activities or less often, or someone can lose his/her job due to health and in this way miss out on daily social contact with people, which also increases the risk of experiencing feelings of loneliness (Jessen, Pallesen, Kriegbaum, & Kristiansen, 2018).

Figure 1: *Individual risk factors for feelings of loneliness among adults*
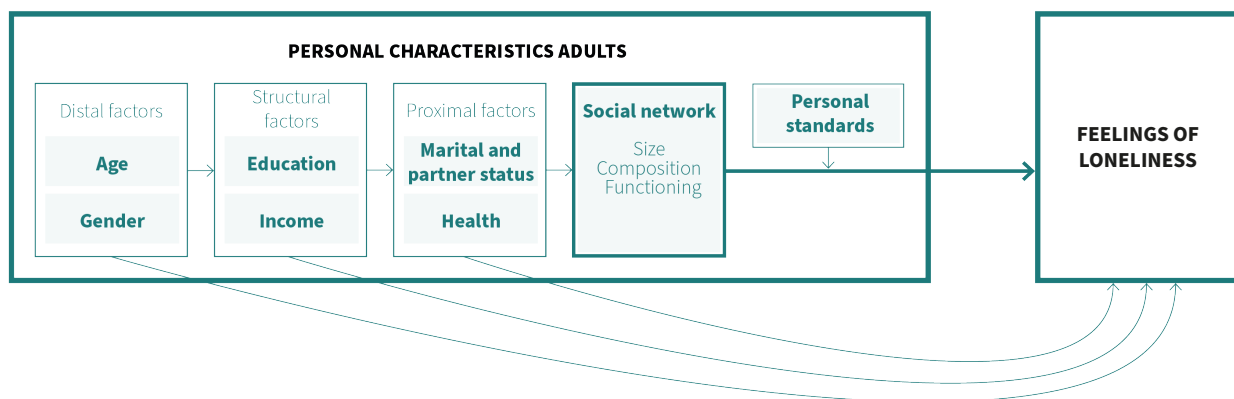
Source: De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016. Edited by author

In order to clarify the functioning and the relations between different personal characteristics in relation to feelings of loneliness Hawkley and others (2008) divide these characteristics into several risk factors, consisting of distal factors (age, gender, ethnicity), structural factors (education and income) and proximal factors (health, social roles), see figure 1. De Jong Gierveld and Van Tilburg (2016) also use this theoretical model:

> In discussing risk factors for the onset and continuation of loneliness the theoretical model of Hawkley et al. (2008) is followed, differentiating between distal (age and gender) and structural factors (income and education) that operate through proximal factors (health) to affect social isolation (encompassing the size, composition, and functioning of the social network) and consequently the subjective evaluation of the size and functioning of the network, i.e., social and emotional loneliness … (p. 176)

2.2   Spaces of encounter

2.2.1   *Social encounters and public spaces*

The social environment is influenced by the physical environment. We interact with certain people in certain places where we feel comfortable because of previous experiences or because of certain circumstances (Wilson, 2017). Moreover, cities are characterized by the gathering of strangers, where everyday social encounters in a variety of places such as the market, bus shelters and cafes can foster positive social relationships between people who are different and thus also create new experiences that we carry with us into the future. (Mayblin, Valentine, Kossak, & Schneider, 2015). Besides, modern dwellings provide people with a self-sufficient home, which makes them more likely to isolate themselves from society, while public spaces in neighbourhoods have the potential to draw residents out of their homes (Zhang & Lawson, 2009). Therefore, places where social encounters between strangers or acquaintances happen and where there are different routines are interesting to understand because these encounters between strangers can change attitudes and perceptions and build relationships (Wilson, 2017). In addition, public spaces have the potential to reveal differences and to allow these differences to come together in the form of social encounters, which can increase the acceptance of social diversity (Räuchle & Berding, 2020; Watson, 2009).

In the public space, there are different kinds of social encounters. For example, Peterson (2017) indicates that there is a distinction to be made between fleeting social encounters, which are usually short and with strangers and often arise out of politeness, and light social encounters that take place between individuals who know each other well enough categorically, which in turn would stimulate a sense of familiarity. Besides, there are also meaningful social encounters, which are social encounters with a certain degree of depth and commitment and which often last longer than fleeting and light social encounters (Amin, 2002; Valentine, Piekut, & Harris, 2015; Peterson, 2017). Moreover, social encounters, fleeting or not, between people who are different (in various ways) or between strangers can reduce prejudice, improve tolerance and contribute to the overall cohesion within the community (Yarker, 2021). So, social encounters are important for the everyday

experience of a particular place (ibid). Therefore, also the design of the physical space is a necessity to encourage these encounters, taking into account spaces that are large enough, open for use and diverse enough for the most diverse groups of users to use them, allowing them to mix with each other and not exclude each other according to Räuchle and Berding (2020).

However, according to Valentine (2008), it is the meaningful contacts that have the power to change people's values and create respect for others. Additionally, Wilson (2017) and Räuchle and Berding (2020) point out that the real picture is less romantic than it is often portrayed: social encounters are not always positive and they can also lead to conflicts among individuals because of inequality, aggression or power relations. Besides, Wilson (2017) points out the paradox in organising social encounters; social encounters are spontaneous, unexpected and happen mostly with different people (known or unknown, different individual characteristics), so how do you organise something that is characterised by spontaneity? Moreover, Rauchle and Berding (2020) point out the doubt whether public spaces, even if well designed, are places of equal participation, because many social encounters in public spaces are merely superficial and fleeting.

Yet, Trillo's (2017) research into the relationship between public space and social integration concludes that the lack of quality in public space has contributed to a worsening of social conflicts and disengagement. In addition, according to Zhang and Lawson (2009) public spaces have indeed the role of spaces of encounter and places for social movement, where they can contribute to people's social activities. Also Gehl (1978), in his book Life Between Buildings, describes several of the passive contacts that, as he says, occur lowest on the scale, noting the potential of these social encounters, which at first glance seem modest and insubstantial, yet also have the potential to develop deeper contacts. He identifies different types of contacts with different values: 'a rather superficial form of contact', 'a possible beginning of more profound contact', 'the possibility of 'keeping up' with already existing contacts', 'a source of information about the social environment' and 'a source of inspiration' (Gehl, 1978, p. 9)). These have much in common with the three different types of encounters, whereby the first corresponds most to fleeting encounters (no further meaning, just being polite), the second two to light encounters (there is something that brings them together and could possibly lead to a longer contact or even maintaining contacts) and the last two to meaningful encounters (generating information or value and inspiration through the contacts) (Amin, 2002; Valentine, Piekut, & Harris, 2015; Peterson, 2017). However, Gehl (1978, p. 9) also adds to this the different types of ties one has with a person, which he distinguishes on the basis of intensity ranging from passive contacts (lowest intensity), casual contacts, acquaintances, friends and close friendship (highest intensity). Additionally, Yarker (2021) points out that fleeting social encounters can also form the basis of informal social networks and that they are also used to circulate information between people from different networks. Moreover, she indicates that removing these fleeting social encounters can do more damage to the transfer of knowledge within communities than removing meaningful encounters (ibid). But, according to Mayblin, Valentine, Kossak and Schneider (2015) there seems to be no consensus yet as to whether quick and short encounters produce contacts that are meaningful, meaning that prejudices are dropped and there is general respect for each other.

2.2.2 Social encounters and the quality of public spaces

According to Piekut and Valentine (2017), public space does increase the chances of social encounters between a diversity of people and groups because of the openness it offers; such social encounters with people other than ourselves take place, for instance, in neighbourhood streets, parks, facilities and public transport. For example, Rad and Nagh (2013) emphasise the importance of public access to public space where public greenery is present. Besides, the quality of a public space and the degree of satisfaction among its residents is an important predictor of the feeling of community, whereby public spaces with greenery can stimulate the development of social bonds (Karacor & Parlar, 2017). But not only the development of social bonds, subjective well-being and health in general can be improved if the quality of public spaces is relatively high (Galea, Freudenberg, & Vlahov, 2005). They therefore emphasise that if one wants to build a healthy built environment for everyone, one should also invest in (green) initiatives for public spaces, large or small, in neighbourhoods where incomes are relatively lower (Rad & Ngah, 2013). This is because neighbourhoods with low socio-economic status, where often a relatively large part of the working population and ethnic minorities live, have little or no access to pleasant public spaces with, for example, a good ratio of greenery while these are often the groups that could use the benefits of a nice public space (Rad & Ngah, 2013; Ribeiro-Palacios, Morales Gómez, & Soria Yañez, 2021).

Additionally, Rauchle and Berding (2020) indicate in their conclusion that continued immigration and a tightening housing market are causing neighbourhoods to change, and that there are nevertheless many indications that the importance of public space as a space of encounter will increase for local social life. Also, Yarker (2021) highlights the potential of public space in times of government cutbacks in investment in functions that strengthen the community, where green and open spaces with well-maintained paths and benches should be used more creatively. However, this does not mean that access to certain public spaces is equally easy or pleasant for every group or individual, because within public spaces there are often complex social (power) relations (Piekut & Valentine, 2017). This while public space can actually contribute to improving people's well-being and overall health, which is why it is important for everyone to be able to use it and, among other things, create new social bonds here (Galea, Freudenberg, & Vlahov, 2005; Karacor & Parlar, 2017).

2.2.3 Beyond public space

People do not only encounter each other in public spaces, the social contacts go beyond that. Amin (2002), in his research into the possibilities for intercultural understanding and dialogue in Great Britain, indicates that places where everyday activities and social encounters take place have a high value when it comes to encountering differences. Here he refers to so-called 'micro-publics', by which he means places such as the workplace, schools, sports clubs, colleges, youth centres and other places of gathering and where common activities take place, often in the form of associations (ibid). Valentine, Piekut and Harris (2015) also indicate that social encounters should be looked at more broadly and that it concerns both public and semi-public spaces that contribute greatly to increasing the chances of social encounters. In addition, Mayblin, Valentine, Kossak and Schneider

(2015) indicates that these micro-publics can promote the creation of meaningful relations, bringing together diversity and individuals from different backgrounds, thus breaking through fixed groups and fixed ways of interacting. Again, reference is made to clubs and associations such as sports or music clubs, community gardens and participation activities (Mayblin, Valentine, Kossak, & Schneider, 2015). Amin (2002) himself describes micro-publics as follows:

> (…) interaction is of a prosaic nature, but these sites work as spaces of cultural displacement. Their effectiveness lies in placing people from different backgrounds in new settings where engagement with strangers in a common activity disrupts easy labelling of the stranger as enemy and initiates new attachments. They are moments of cultural destabilisation, offering individuals the chance to break out of fixed relations and fixed notions, and through this, to learn to become different through new patterns of social interaction. (p. 970)

The places where these social encounters with others take place can thus range from the public spaces of entire neighbourhoods or rather micro-publics that are mostly semi-public spaces; spaces of socialisation, for example hobby and sport clubs (Valentine, Piekut, & Harris, 2015; Amin, 2002; Mayblin, Valentine, Kossak, & Schneider, 2015; Piekut & Valentine, 2017).

2.3   Feelings of loneliness and the social environment in low socio-economic neighbourhoods

Residents in low socio-economic neighbourhoods are more likely to behave in an anti-social manner, experience poorer safety, have a lower collective willingness to be involved in the neighbourhood and residents tend to rate the quality of the neighbourhood relatively low according to Matthews and others (2019). Van Eijk (2012, p. 3009) also states: 'a recurrent idea in debates on 'problem' neighbourhoods is that people living in such neighbourhoods fail to establish and engage in relationships with their fellow-residents'. He also refers to the ethnic diversity within the neighbourhoods that brings out feelings of discomfort or conflict and the feeling of distrust, which is also partly due to higher rates of disorder and/or crime among the residents, but also the avoidance of the stigma attached to the neighbourhood by residents distancing themselves from others, which therefore also has an effect on relationships with fellow residents (ibid).

Besides, when there is no or minimal trust and familiarity among residents, the chances of loneliness are high, Kearns, Whitley, Tannahill and Ellaway (2015) even indicate that this is at the root of loneliness in 'deprived' neighbourhoods. Research by Van der Houwen and Kloosterman (2011) into trust and contact with neighbours within The Netherlands has also shown that trust is high, particularly among people with a relatively high income, of indigenous heritage and who have lived in the neighbourhood for a long time. This is in contrast to neighbourhoods with a large proportion of non-Western immigrants, low incomes, high degree of urbanisation and where there is a relatively

high number of people moving in and out of the neighbourhood (ibid). However, the interactions between neighbours are mostly fleeting or light encounters, revolving around affinity rather than affectivity, which means that it is rational involvement which is also based on something shared such as an imagined community (Van Eijk, 2012). Relationships between neighbours are also linked to a shared space such as a street, block or roof, and the social exchanges between neighbours often go no further than greetings, short talks, lending or borrowing things to each other and helping out in case of need (ibid).

Liu and Kim (2021) also mention the importance of 'multicultural public spaces', stating that public spaces are important for the process of social development and the construction of urban civilisation, where the speed of internationalisation keeps increasing the number of multi-ethnic and multicultural communities in the city, and that in this process, the diversified elements of public spaces have become more and more important to ensure and strengthen social stability. To this Yarker (2021) also adds:

> The importance of bridging capital at a community level is emphasised within the well-established area of literature from social and cultural geography concerned with encounter and spaces of encounter in the context of ethnic and cultural diversity. Scholars in this area emphasise the need for proximity but also stress the need for the regularity of encounter, even if fleeting, as part of the everyday experience of living in a place. In the context of diversity, or even super-diversity such encounters have been found to help break down prejudice, build tolerance, and contribute to community cohesion. (p. 266)

Moreover, relatively many scientific studies on social encounters, loneliness and spatial contexts refer to the importance of the social environment of the neighbourhood and often use the term social cohesion (Weijs-Perrée, Van den Berg, Arentze, & Kemperman, 2015; Jennings & Bamkole, 2019; Wan, Shen, & Choi, 2021; Brown, Altman, & Werner, 2012). Wan, Shen, and Choi (2021, p. 1) conceptualize social cohesion as follows: '(…) shared norms and values (…), positive interactions and relationships among individuals (…), and feelings of being accepted and belonging (…) in neighborhood settings'. They also name terms such as social contact, social connection, social support and social bonding which refer to the extent of one's relationship with others in the context of the neighbourhood (ibid). Additionally, Jennings and Bamkole (2019) emphasize the feelings of safety, belonging, acceptance and connectedness when it comes to social cohesion, where these feelings are mostly related to positive social encounters but can also contribute to the stimulation of health benefits. Also, Morata, López, Marzo and Palasí (2021) indicate that literature mostly refers to the factors of sense of belonging, group membership and willingness to participate and share, emphasising that social cohesion is not an outcome but a constant process aimed at forming and achieving harmony among residents. Besides, in this same paper by Morata and others (2021), it is indicated that leisure activities based on community activities can also promote the creation of social bonds, promote the development of self-esteem, participation in educational activities and

building the sense of belonging to the community.

But, at the same time, social activities such as, for example, community gardening can also create processes of exclusion by making a distinction between being a member or not or by putting fences around the gardens which can create feelings of (non-)ownership (Spierings, Van Liempt, & Maliepaard, 2018). Here, the process of exclusion can lead to feelings of exclusion among people who are not involved in these social activities, which in turn can be a risk factor for feelings of loneliness (Wang, Fink, & Cai, 2008; De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016; Wolfers, Stam, & Machielse, 2022). However, according to Weijs-Perée and colleagues (2015), a higher degree of social cohesion contributes to having relatively more social contacts and a lower degree of feelings of loneliness compared to neighbourhoods with a low level of social cohesion. Besides, Amin (2002) points out that the constant repetition of gender, class and ethnic practices can lead to the entrenchment of identities and in this way create group animosities. Following on from this, Hanhörster and Weck (2020) indicate that living at a close proximity to each other within a neighbourhood does not necessarily mean that there is a shared social space between people from different social backgrounds, for example, 'old' residents of low socio-economic neighbourhoods, many of whom have low incomes, may be afraid of changes within their neighbourhood or even experience physical or symbolic displacement once higher-income households move in. Therefore, Amin (2002) indicates that it is precisely the 'placing' of strangers with different backgrounds in a new environment, such as micro-publics, where people are encouraged through an common activity to get along with each other that creates new bonds and reduces hostility towards each other.

2.4 Spaces of encounter, type of social encounter and loneliness: the conceptual model

Based on the preliminary research into the various subjects, an overarching conceptual model has been developed. The preliminary literary research shows that the place where the social encounter takes place (spaces of encounter) influences the type of social encounter. For instance, in micro-publics other types of social encounters (often meaningful) take place than in public spaces (often fleeting or light) (Amin, 2002; Peterson, 2017). In this regard, aspects such as the quality of the public space (sufficient greenery, nice places to sit, good walkability, etc.) also influence the extent to which people go out and, therefore, the likelihood that they will meet or bump into each other (Piekut & Valentine, 2017; Karacor & Parlar, 2017; Rad & Ngah, 2013). However, the social environment also plays a role in this, for example, the degree of social cohesion, whether neighbours know and trust each other and the entire composition of the neighbourhood influence what kind of encounters take place in which places (Van Eijk, 2012). The type of social encounter and being able to participate in certain social activities then influences to what extent a person experiences feelings of loneliness; if one has few meaningful, light or even fleeting encounters the risk of experiencing feelings of loneliness is bigger (Matthews, et al., 2019; Hajek & König, 2020; Schirmer & Michailakis, 2018). However, the feeling of loneliness is a subjective response to the evaluation of a person's quality of social network

(De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016). The assessment of this evaluation is therefore personal and is influenced by personal characteristics (ibid). Below, figure 2, is the conceptual model:

Figure 2: *The conceptual model of space of encounter, the type of encounter and loneliness*

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ social environment of│
                    │   the neighbourhood   │
                    └──────────┬──────────┘
                               │
                               ▼
┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
│ space of encounter│◄──►│type of social    │──►│feelings of        │
│                  │   │encounter         │   │loneliness         │
└──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘   └────────▲─────────┘
                                                        │
                                              ┌─────────┴─────────┐
                                              │personal characteristics│
                                              │  adult residents   │
                                              └───────────────────┘
```
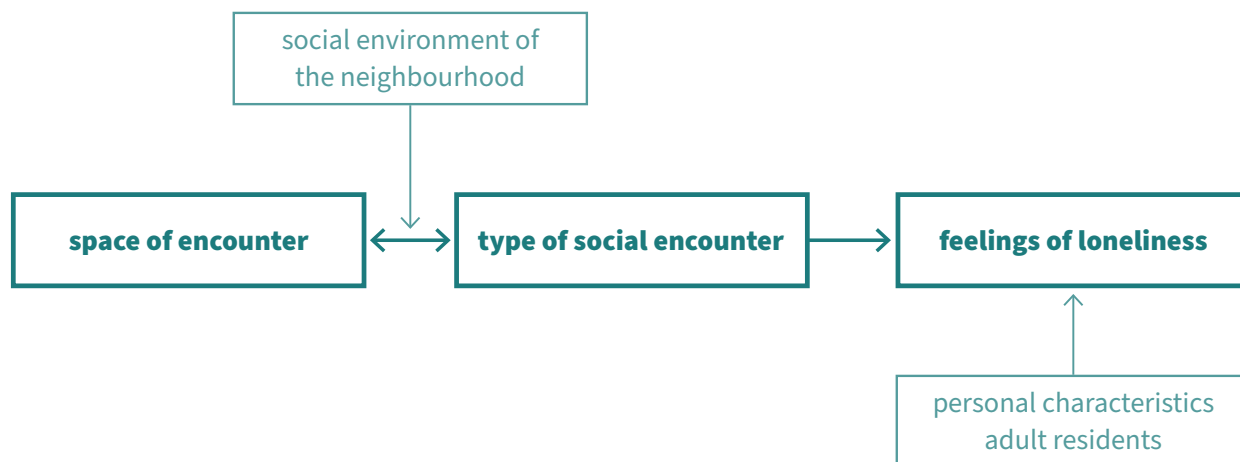
Source: Edited by author, 2022.

[3] THE CASE OF BOSPOLDER-TUSSENDIJKEN

The neighbourhood Bospolder-Tussendijken is situated in the West of the Municipality of Rotterdam, part of the district Delfshaven, and consists of the two parts Bospolder and Tussendijken (see figure 3). It is a neighbourhood where relatively many residents have a low income (70% and 74% of households belonging to the low-income group compared to the 51% of the municipality of Rotterdam), are dependent on welfare (22% and 21% compared to the 12% of the municipality of Rotterdam), are unemployed or have extreme debts and where there is a relatively high level of loneliness (see table 1) (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018; RIVM, 2022).

The Health Monitor 2020 of the CBS in which 540,000 anonymous participants took part was used during this research, see table 1. It contains a series of background characteristics such as age, gender, origin, household composition, level of education, income and type of housing (RIVM, sd). Through the use of another model, the background characteristics are related to health and lifestyle and the results are then averaged across the relevant district or neighbourhood (ibid). Therefore, people who are highly socially isolated may not be well represented in this model. The figures therefore remain an estimate, which means that they are not as unambiguous as they seem, but they do give a picture of the health figures per district and neighbourhood (ibid).

Figure 3: The location of Bospolder-Tussendijken in relation to the city of Rotterdam (without the harbour area)

Source: Google Earth and Street Scape, 2022. Edited by author.

Furthermore, the neighbourhood consists of the two postcode areas Bospolder and Tussendijken, which are at numbers 2 and 5 of the 20 poorest postcode areas in the Netherlands (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018). Besides, there is also a lot of ethnic diversity among residents, with a large percentage of residents with a non-Western background (ibid). Also, it scores above average on 'having no or no proper diploma', 'feeling lonely and unhealthy' and 'being dependent on welfare/ extremely high debts' (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018; RIVM, 2022). As highlighted earlier, individual characteristics such as having a lower level of education, struggling economically and belonging to an ethnic minority group are all factors that increase the risk of loneliness (Meisters, et al., 2021; De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2016; Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport, sd; Wolfers, Stam, &

Machielse, 2022; McQuaid, Cox, Ogunlana, & Jaworska, 2021; Morrish & Medina-Lara, 2021). These are also characteristics of Bospolder-Tussendijken (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018). Compared to Rotterdam, Bospolder-Tussendijken also scores poorly on the Social Index 2018 (scores of 94 and 84 compared to the 105 score of the municipality of Rotterdam) (ibid). However, the high score in the area of 'feeling connected' among residents to the neighbourhood is notable and besides that, the neighbourhood consists of relatively young households (ibid). Therefore, one can wonder how this fits in with the high percentages of adults with feelings of loneliness. But as previously emphasised, the living environment and its public spaces have an influence on the health of their inhabitants; there seems to be a strong influence between the degree of health of the inhabitants, both physical and mental, and the quality of the public space (Li, et al., 2021; Witten & Ivory, 2018).

Table 1: Loneliness rates in Bospolder-Tussendijken compared to municipality of Rotterdam

Health by district and neighbourhood; 2012/2016/2020 (classification 2020) Age: 18 till 65 year Margins: Value Period: 2020						
	Subject					
	Region designation|Municipality name	Region designation|Sort of region	Loneliness|Lonely	Loneliness|Seriously/very seriously lonely	Loneliness|Emotional Loneliness	Loneliness|Social Loneliness
Districts and neighbourhoods			%	%	%	%
Rotterdam	Rotterdam	District	**55,5**	16,5	37,8	35,9
Bospolder	Rotterdam	Neighbourhood	**61,1**	20,6	43,5	41,4
Tussendijken	Rotterdam	Neighbourhood	**60,3**	20,5	43,9	41,1

Source: Health Monitor Adults 2020, GGD's/CBS/RIVM (SMAP methodology adapted, RIVM) (2020)

Moreover, Bospolder-Tussendijken is a relatively stone-built neighbourhood, the public space consists mostly of paving (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018), so one can wonder whether this might have an effect on the number of everyday encounters and the level of loneliness within the neighbourhood or not. There are four squares/parks in the area (see figure 4), however these are relatively monofunctional and also stony with the exception of Park 1943 (number 2), which also has several functions such as recreation, sports and exercise, culture/theatre. The Bospolderplein (number 4) mainly consists of two asphalt football fields, the Driehoeksplein (number 1) consists of asphalt as well and mainly has the function of recreation for children, in addition, the market takes place twice a week on the Visserijplein (number 3) and adjacent to the neighbourhood is the Dakpark (number 5) which is a relatively green place. These are the major public spaces within (and next to) the neighbourhood, but the research will also focus on the streets and other kinds of public and semi-public spaces in the neighbourhood.

Figure 4: *The various squares and parks in Bospolder-Tussendijken, Rotterdam.*
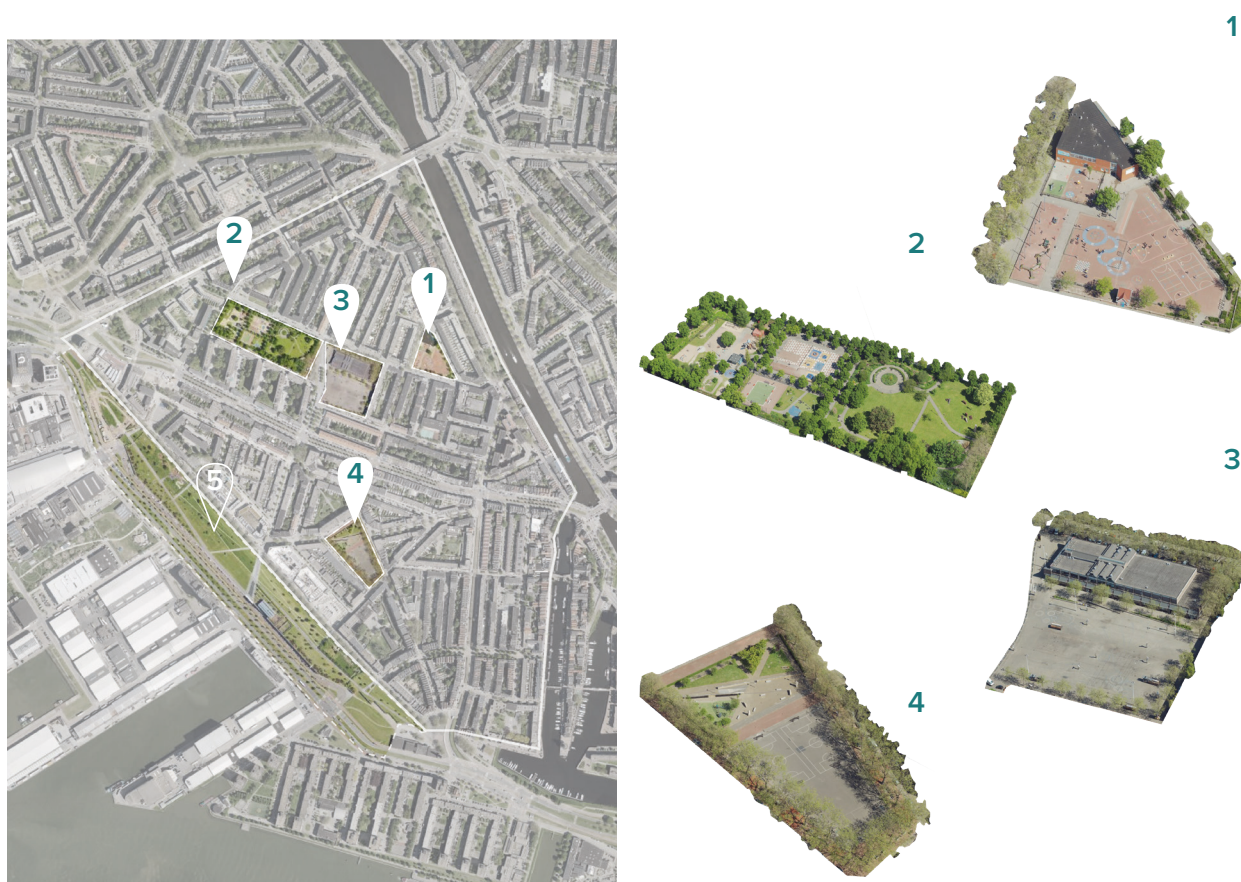
Source: Street Scape, 2022. Edited by author, 2022.

Furthermore, figure 5 shows the neighbourhood profiles of Bospolder and Tussendijken drawn up by the Municipality of Rotterdam (2022) based on neighbourhood surveys. What is striking here is that there is a clear difference between objectivity and subjectivity. This indicates that people experience the neighbourhood more negatively than it should be according to figures and quantitative data. For example, according to objective data, the public space has a relatively high index, while the subjective data shows that the public space has a low score, the lowest score possible. This seems to indicate a mismatch between the objective figures of the neighbourhood and how the neighbourhood is experienced.

Figure 5: *Neighbourhood profiles of Bospolder and Tussendijken, 2022 compared to 2014, divided into physical, social and safety with distinction in objectivity, subjectivity and overall.*
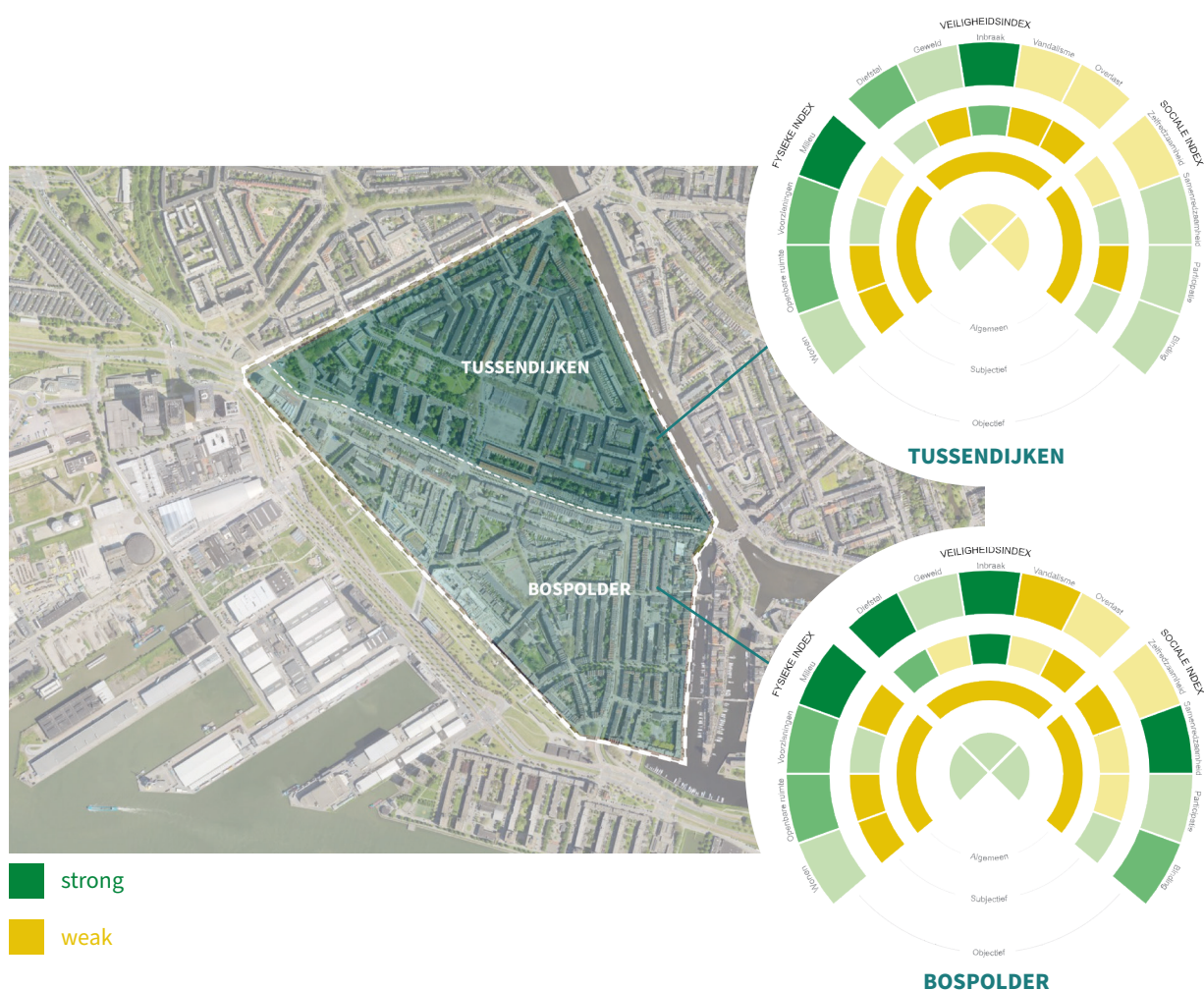
Source: Municipality of Rotterdam, 2022.

[4] METHODOLOGY

4.1   Research approach

The research question that this thesis aims to answer is suitable for qualitative research because it focuses on the experiences of adult residents of low socio-economic neighbourhoods. This qualitative research focusses on the resident in order to gain an in-depth understanding of how they experience the spaces of encounter in the neighbourhood, the types of social encounters that take place within them and if and why they experience feelings of loneliness. Below is the main research question shown, followed by the sub-questions:

How do spaces of encounter and the types of encounters that take place within them influence feelings of loneliness among residents of low socio-economic neighbourhoods?

1. *What is characteristic of the social environment of Bospolder-Tussendijken and how is this reflected in the physical environment of the neighbourhood?*

2. *What values and meanings do adult residents attach to place for encounter and to Bospolder-Tussendijken as a whole?*

3. *What is characteristic of the spaces of encounter in Bospolder-Tussendijken and how does this influence feelings of loneliness among adult residents?*

4. *Is there a need for more space of encounter among residents within Bospolder-Tussendijken and how should this be given shape according to them and why?*

In addition, this is a case study and will be conducted within the Rotterdam neighbourhood of Bospolder-Tussendijken. Because, as the previous chapter showed, Bospolder-Tussendijken is a low socio-economic neighbourhood (one of the poorest neighbourhoods of The Netherlands) with various social problems, including a high level of feelings of loneliness among residents(Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018; RIVM, 2022; RIVM, 2020). Furthermore, the case study attempts to gain a contextual insight in which as many aspects as possible are taken into account in order to establish the experiences, meanings and perceptions of adult residents and experts in as much detail as possible.

So, in order to obtain the depth that is sought, walk along and face-to-face interviews were conducted, both in a semi-structured way. The walk-along interviews were conducted with 3 experts who are active in Bospolder-Tussendijken. They have a professional view of the neighbourhood and because they all work for different organisations which are involved in Bospolder-Tussendijken in different ways, the experiences, meanings and perceptions of the residents can be supported (or not) by the knowledge and experiences of the experts in order to sketch the most complete possible picture of the neighbourhood, taking multiple perspectives into account when seeking for answers on the research question. The three experts that were interviewed consist of a neighbourhood manager from the municipality of Rotterdam (EXP_01), who has been active in the neighbourhood for eight years. The second expert is an independent social entrepreneur (EXP_02) who calls herself a connecter and has been active in the neighbourhood for four and a half years. Finally, the third expert (EXP_03) is

a neighbourhood networker within Team Toekomst. Team Toekomst is mainly focused on children. Because there is close contact with parents and EXP_03 lives in the neighbourhood herself, she has the advantage of being able to contribute to the research from the perspective of both experts and residents. On the next page is a visual overview of the experts, see figure 7.

The face-to-face interviews were conducted with 12 residents of which the minimum age was 26 and the maximum age 63. The group consists of 6 men and 6 women, of which there are 5 respondents with Dutch origin, 2 with Surinamese origin, 2 with Moroccan origin, 1 with Iranian origin, 1 with Nigerian origin and 1 with Turkish origin. 10 of them are single, of which 3 indicated that they are divorced and 2 are in a relationship. In addition, 5 respondents have children and the other 7 do not. All of the respondents, except 2, are able to walk reasonably well. These personal characteristics were formulated on the basis of the theory of De Jong Gierveld and Van Tilburg (2016). On the next page is an overview of the respondents with their personal characteristics and aliases, see figure 8.

After each interview, the 12 residents were asked to indicate on a map, using pluses and minuses, which places they liked (pluses) and which places they did not like to be (minuses). This method reinforces the face-to-face interviews by providing a visual and geographical representation of the places people like and dislike. It ultimately shows which places are the most pleasant and likely to be most visited and hence the most likely to have social encounters in the neighbourhood, see figure 6 for the map that is used during the mapping assignment. Moreover, apart from the age of the respondents (18 – 64 years old), there are no other characteristics that the respondents have to meet in order to participate in the research, only that they have to live in Bospolder-Tussendijken. The aim of the research is to say something about the adult age group of residents of Bospolder-Tussendijken, as there is a high level of loneliness and the composition of the population is relatively low in age (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018; RIVM, 2020). Therefore, purposive sampling was used during the recruitment of respondents.

Figure 6: The map for the mapping assignment with the neighbourhood boundaries.

Figure 7: *The experts*

EXP_01
Neighbourhood manager
Municipality of Rotterdam

EXP_02
Connector
De Verbindingskamer

EXP_03
Neighbourhood networker
Team Toekomst

Figure 8: *The residents*

RESP_01_M63
Male
63 years old
Iranian
Single
No children
Good mobility

RESP_02_F33
Female
33 years old
Nigerian
Single
No children
Good mobility

RESP_03_F49
Female
49 years old
Surinamese
Single
4 children
Good mobility

RESP_04_F56
Female
56 years old
Maroccan
Single (divorced)
4 children
Not walking well

RESP_05_M39
Male
39 years old
Maroccan
Single (divorced)
2 children
Good mobility

RESP_06_F46
Female
46 years old
Dutch
Single
1 child
Good mobility

RESP_07_F58
Female
58 years old
Turkish
Single
No children
Not walking well

RESP_08_M26
Male
26 years old
Dutch
In a relationship
No children
Good mobility

RESP_09_M53
Male
53 years old
Surinamese
Single
No children
Good mobility

RESP_10_F33
Female
33 years old
Dutch
Single
No children
Good mobility

RESP_11_M32
Male
32 years old
Dutch
Single (divorced)
1 child
Good mobility

RESP_12_M27
Male
27 years old
Dutch
In a relationship
No children
Good mobility

Moreover, this research was done through an internship at Sweco Rotterdam. Sweco is a consultancy firm in the field of urban planning; real estate; water, energy and industry and transport infrastructure. During the research, in addition to the use of the various facilities within the company, use was made of the network within the company in order to reach experts that are active in Bospolder-Tussendijken. Respondents with the required characteristics were, among others, reached through the help of the experts who are operating in the neighbourhood. They are close to the residents and they are therefore often a familiar face to the residents. The researcher on the other hand was a stranger to the residents, so the help of experts in recruiting respondents was very helpful. In addition, posters and flyers (see appendix 7) were hung up in everyday amentities within the neighbourhood, such as the supermarket and the community centres. Additionaly, advertisements on Facebook were used. To make it even more attractive for respondents to participate, a reward was promised when recruiting respondents. Among the 12 respondents 4 gift vouchers of € 10 from the web shop Bol.com were given away. In addition, respondents were also recruited by going to the 'Huizen van de Wijk' (the community centres), for example 'Pier80' and other social buildings, such as the 'Bollenpandje', and simply walking up to them and having a chat to then ask for participation in the research. However, during the recruitment of respondents it appeared that people were not very willing to participate in the research, mostly because they already had too much on their mind, the threshold was too high for them or because they saw the researcher as a stranger and therefore looked at him with some suspicion.

4.2   Ethics and credibility

Throughout the research, one was consciously concerned with ethics and was constantly aware of various factors that are important for the credibility of the research. This is further explained in this section.

The topic list included a short introduction so that it was clear to the respondents what was expected of them, what the research was about and whether they felt it was okay that their voice was being recorded. An agreement for participation was also requested before each interview. In addition, almost all interviews were transcribed immediately after taking place. In this way, an attempt was made to interpret the answers correctly. Furthermore, professional vocabulary was tried to be avoided as much as possible and replaced by simpler words because one is aware of the relatively high level of low literacy among residents within Bospolder-Tussendijken (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018). The overarching term 'green' had been replaced by concrete components, such as trees, flowers and grass (see question 11 of the residents' topic-list). In addition, the term 'public space' was replaced by outside, because one can make a clear distinction between outside and inside, not that this is always the public space, but the researcher can check this himself after an answer has been given to a question in which this term was mentioned. In addition, a number of questions have been clarified by placing them in context and giving an example of a situation. For example question 18 of the topic-list for the residents (translated to English): 'Do you ever ask neighbours for help? Why not? What is your experience with this? Suppose you are ill, and you need something from the supermarket.' The last part of this question includes an example to help the interviewee better

understand what is being asked. In this way, it was made as clear as possible to the respondent what was meant by the question. However, this was mainly the case with the topic-list of the residents and less so with the topic-list of the experts. The two different interviews, both for residents and experts, were first conducted with an acquaintance to test whether it was clear what was being asked and how long the interviews were approximately, in order to be as well prepared as possible for the interviews. These were also reviewed by the supervisor from the university and briefly discussed together, for example, whether the terminology that was used was clear enough and whether the interviews had to be translated into English or not.

During qualitative research, one is concerned about the credibility of explanations of phenomena as they manifest themselves in the case (Hay, 2016). By interviewing twelve respondents including six different ethnicities, a broad age range (minimum 26 years, maximum 64 years) and an equal gender distribution (see figure 7 for a more detailed look of the characteristics) it can be said that there is a relatively diverse respondent group. By recruiting people who are relatively diverse from each other based on personal characteristics, an attempt was made to test this credibility of different phenomena. This was done by asking as many open-ended questions as possible that were not too directive. Looking at the answers given, it can be seen that there is a difference per age group in what people think of the public space, but also per ethnicity in how they experience the social environment. This will be discussed in more detail in the results chapter. However, it must be said that people who experience strong feelings of loneliness or are socially isolated were not reached because they have little or no social contact for some reason and were therefore less willing or unwilling to participate in the study. So the people with strong feelings of loneliness were therefore not able to be represented in the study.

Furthermore, while conducting the interviews, the researcher constantly was aware of his own attitude and was careful not to put any prejudices in the questions or words in the respondent's mouth. In this way, an attempt was made to get the most personal and honest answer possible to the question asked. To reinforce this, the choice of where to conduct the interview was up to the respondent, to make it as pleasant and comfortable as possible for them. A single person wanted it at home, but most wanted it at 'Pier80', the local library or at the 'Dakpark'. For one respondent, the interview became very emotional. In order to help her calm down, a break was inserted. This break lasted as long as she thought she needed in order to make her feel completely comfortable. After she had calmed down, the interview continued with a different, less emotional subject. Later on the subject was touched upon in a cautious manner by asking whether she would like to say anything more about it or not. In this way an attempt was made to make it as pleasant as possible for the respondent, but simultaneously to make sure that enough was done to get all the data.

In addition, consideration was also given to transferability, meaning the extent to which findings can be applied to other cases investigating the same phenomena (Hay, 2016). However, this research serves as an initial exploratory step for further research into spaces of encounter, types of encounter and feelings of loneliness among adult residents of low socio-economic neighbourhoods. Therefore, it will not be generalisable, given the different contexts of other low socio-economic

neighbourhoods in The Netherlands and in the rest of the world. The study merely explores the different subjects. However, the results can be considered in other research on these subjects. So, in short, this study is a qualitative case study research, which is intended to describe and explore by means of both field and desk research.

4.3   Operationalisation

4.3.1. In-depth interviews with residents

The topic-list of the face-to-face interview for the residents, which can be found in the appendix, was constructed based on the concepts that followed from the theoretical framework, see figure 2. This subsection explains in further detail how the methods were constructed, starting with the face-to-face interview of the residents. Based on the theory of De Jong Gierveld and Van Tilburg (2016) on personal risk factors for feelings of loneliness among adults, respondents were first asked about their personal characteristics, such as age, job, origin, partner or marriage status, having children and health. They were then asked about the amenities they use in their neighbourhood, including community centres and other social centres, in order to gain an insight into the places they frequently or not visit. The respondents were asked whether they have social encounters in these places and what is characteristic of these social encounters. The following is also done for the social activities within the neighbourhood; so what kind of activities are these and what is characteristic of the social encounters that take place here. Then, the question was asked about the changes in the public spaces of the neighbourhood, whether people feel welcome in the public spaces and whether the neighbourhood feels like home to them. Previous literary research has shown that the quality of the public space and the quality of the social environment, which also takes place in the public space, contributes to the likelihood of social encounter in the public space (Piekut & Valentine, 2017; Rad & Ngah, 2013; Karacor & Parlar, 2017). In this way, an insight is gained into the spaces of encounter and what is characteristic of the possible social encounters (fleeting, light or meaningful) that take place there.

The interview then continues with the public space and asks whether people like to be outside or not and what they think about the quality of and facilities in the public space. To gain more insight into what people like about public space, they were asked in what places they like to be at and why. Based on this, data is collected about the necessities that give a place a positive boost without asking for them directly. Experience has shown that people often do not know what to say, whereas if you let them reflect on why they like these places, a clear answer is quickly formulated. This applies to places they do not like to go as well. Subsequently, the opportunity is given to the respondent to think about which aspects they miss and would like to see in the public space to make it more pleasant or so that they come out more often. Finally, the question is asked whether people think there is enough green space in the neighbourhood, in order to test the quantitative data of RIVM (2020) and the Municipality of Rotterdam (2022; 2018) in a qualitative way.

The next part of the interview focuses on the type of encounters (fleeting, light or

meaningful) in public spaces and the experience of these social encounters in the street. People are asked whether they often meet people in the street, whether they greet each other (strangers or not) and what their experiences are. This section collects data on social cohesion in the neighbourhood; how well does the respondent know his or her neighbours, how is the social interaction with the neighbours and was this always the case or has it changed? Next, the respondent is asked about the need to meet more people in the public space and why this is or is not the case, and whether or not someone consciously prefers to be alone in the outdoor space. Finally, the respondents were asked whether they felt there were enough opportunities in the neighbourhood to have social encounters in the public space, what the quality of these opportunities were and what their needs were in terms of facilitating social encounters in the public space. All of this can provide insight into the social environment of the neighbourhood (Weijs-Perrée, Van den Berg, Arentze, & Kemperman, 2015; Jennings & Bamkole, 2019; Wan, Shen, & Choi, 2021; Matthews, et al., 2019; Van Eijk, 2012). Additionally, an attempt is made to gain insight into what is characteristic of the type of encounters in the public space, if they take place in these public spaces.

The next part questions residents how they feel about social encounters and whether they have a greater need to talk to (new) people. In this section, they are also asked about feelings of loneliness. Because there is not a more subtle way to do it, this is done quite directly by simply asking whether people ever experience feelings of loneliness. In order to delve deeper, the respondent is then asked how he or she deals with this and whether he or she goes out at times. In this way, it is tried to find out whether spaces of encounter are seen as places where feelings of loneliness can be counteracted.

The last part focuses on the characteristics of the various social encounters within the neighbourhood and whether the respondent feels that enough is being done by various stakeholders to facilitate spaces of encounter. This is done by asking where people meet in the neighbourhood, whether people like to be alone or not and whether they think the public space is really a place for encounters or not and what should be done to stimulate more encounters within the neighbourhood. The last question is an open question and gives the respondents the opportunity to provide their own input to the interview, such as aspects that did not appear in the interview. In this way, tunnel vision within the research is avoided as much as possible.

Finally, all sections of the conceptual model were questioned by means of this topic-list and data was collected which can be used to answer the research questions. As mentioned before, after each interview the respondent was asked if they wanted to do the mapping assignment so that the interviews are supported by visual and geographical data. Based on this, a spatial analysis can be made which corresponds with the semi-structured interviews. This data can then make it clear where people like to go and where they don't, so that it is clear where social encounters are more likely to take place or not. The map shows the neighbourhood boundaries so that it is clear to each resident where the neighbourhood ends and which spaces fall within the neighbourhood and which do not, see figure 11.

4.3.2. Walk-along interviews with experts

During the walk-along interviews with the three experts, subjects such as the socio-economic and the social demographic image, the quality, quantity and potential of the public space as spaces of encounter, the social environment of the neighbourhood and signs of feelings of loneliness among residents were discussed. Because the walk-along interviews are done with three experts who are active in the neighbourhood, each subject will be answered from a different angle because the experts all work within different institutions or are freelancers. In this way, a wide view of the Bospolder-Tussendijken case is created.

The topic-list of the expert interviews, which can be found in the appendix, was formed on the basis of the theoretical framework. The first part of the interview begins with the question of how the neighbourhood would be described, what the characteristics are and in what way the person is involved in the neighbourhood, in this way an attempt is made to get a first general impression. Next, the socio-economic structure of the neighbourhood is examined in more detail. Questions concerning the services in the neighbourhood and how they are coordinated with the neighbourhood's residents are also raised, in order to get a picture of the neighbourhood's amenities.

Previous literary research has shown that the social environment is important for the residents' sense of community and involvement (Van Eijk, 2012). This will be done by asking how the public space is used, what is typical for social encounters (homogeneous or intercultural, fleeting, light or meaningful), where encounters take place, whether social activities are organised on a regular basis and what the attendance is like. After gaining an insight into how the social environment of the neighbourhood is characterised, an attempt is made to gain an insight into the quality, opportunities, strengths and weaknesses with regard to public spaces and social encounters. This is done by asking in a direct way where they think the qualities, problems, potentials and challenges lie in the public space as well as the reasons behind this. By asking for the reasons, it is expected that a more in-depth exploration will take place into the reasons behind the phenomena that are present in the neighbourhood.

In the last part of the interview, they are asked about the degree of social cohesion and feelings of loneliness among the residents of the neighbourhood and how this is visible to them, but also how, and if, they notice that there are feelings of loneliness and where they think the cause lies. This section asks how they believe the neighbourhood, the municipality and other institutions can contribute, if they think this is necessary, to increase the quality and quantity of spaces of encounter and social encounters and to reduce feelings of loneliness. They are also asked what they think the role of public space is in this. Because these are walk-along interviews, they can substantiate their answer with physical examples and in order to get the most out of it, they can decide for themselves which route they want to take, so that the researcher has as little guidance as possible and they can choose their own examples.

4.4   Limitations

Throughout this research, semi-structured interviews with both experts and residents were used, with the aim of conducting the interviews without prejudice and with as little guidance as possible. However, when critically looking at this, it can be seen that this did happen sometimes and unconsciously it was not possible to have the open attitude that was strived for every time. Furthermore, during the supportive mapping assignment, a strong difference could be seen between respondents who gave a lot of response and respondents who gave little response. A maximum number of pluses or minuses would have been better so that every respondent could give the same amount of feedback.

Moreover, the walk-along interview at EXP_03 could not be fully exploited due to heavy rain and wind, which is why it was largely conducted in Pier80. In addition, at the very beginning, a tour through the neighbourhood took place with another expert who was a district networker, but because there was no topic list at that time, no specific questions could be asked with regard to the research topics (only some broad questions). This expert, however, did provide useful information, which is why notes were made, see appendix 5. The information was used to form the topic lists for the interviews but also to get a first picture of the neighbourhood. However, it would have been more useful if the interaction with this expert had also been recorded.

Another obstacle was sometimes the language barrier, even though easier terms were used on purpose; relatively many respondents had a strong accent or used slang. This made it difficult to interpret what was meant exactly with an answer and some answers might have been misinterpreted. It also made the researcher tend to finish off the sentences of respondents too often, because they could not think of a word or because they had trouble forming sentences. This may have led to misinterpreted data.

The use of a focus group as a research method would also have been valuable because it would have provided a more complete picture of the neighbourhood and of the experiences and needs of the residents regarding the space of encounter in the neighbourhood. Why this was not used was mainly due to time constraints, lack of network and social capital in the neighbourhood itself. During the research, it was underestimated how difficult it is to find respondents who are willing to take 30 to 40 minutes to conduct an in-depth face-to-face interview. This was often because the researcher was unknown to the residents, there was distrust among the residents or they simply had too much on their minds. However, the contact with EXP_02 and EXP_03 helped during the recruitment of respondents because residents knew en trusted them.

[5] SPACES OF ENCOUNTER, TYPE OF ENCOUNTER AND FEELINGS OF LONELINESS IN BOSPOLDER-TUSSENDIJKEN

This chapter presents the results that emerged from the various interviews with the respondents. A comprehensive result of the mapping assignment has also been incorporated into this part. Furthermore, the chapter is built on the same structure as the research question. First the results around the topic of the spaces of encounter are discussed, then the type of encounters that take place within these spaces and finally the results of the feelings of loneliness among the residents are discussed. In this section, the results are linked back to the sub questions in order to eventually be able to formulate an answer for the overarching main question in section 6.1.

5.1   Spaces of encounter within Bospolder-Tussendijken

Different socially important places appeared during the research, by previous literary research and during the interviews. In order to make it as clear as possible to the reader what is referred to in the quotations, but also which places are important to the residents, a brief overview is given here:

Socially important places:

- **Pier80** (Huis van de Wijk): Various community activities take place here, in addition a large part of WMO Rader is based at the location and various services are offered by them.
- **Jong Delfshaven**: A place where residents can meet and where various neighbourhood networkers work.
- **Het Bollenpandje**: A community centre (by volunteers) where several social activities take place such as community building processes and cooking together with the overall aim of connecting people.
- **Leger des Heils**: A place where people can drink coffee in an accessible way, but where also different services are offered to help people.
- **Huis van de Toekomst** (House of the Future): a community centre where much knowledge is transferred to the residents by professionals and where residents can actively participate in the development of their neighbourhood.
- **The Nightshop**: A creative and cultural hotspot where one can also buy all kinds of things (very varied) with a deeper and often cultural meaning.

5.1.1 The perceived quality of the public space

First of all, attention will be paid to the perceived quality of the public space, as well as to shortcomings and the residents' needs and wishes concerning the public space of the neighbourhood. As mentioned earlier, after each interview the residents were asked to indicate on a map, by means of pluses (positive) and minuses (negative), which places they consider pleasant or unpleasant, based on their experiences with each place but also on other factors (safety, type of social encounters, enough facilities to promote social encounters etc.). By doing this, the theoretical answers of the residents were supported geographically and visually. In addition, an insight is gained into where people like to go and, therefore, into where there are greater chances of of social encounters in the neighbourhood. Based on this, three inventory maps were developed and an overarching analytical map was created that shows which places have the most and least qualities according to the residents and where they are located in the neighbourhood.

Places of low quality

Figure 9: *Locations of the low quality places*

As can be seen in figure 9, people mainly assess the Bospolderplein, the Driehoeksplein and the area around the Schiedamseweg as low or unpleasant. The Bospolderplein and the Driehoeksplein are often described as empty (see photo 1), a lot of asphalt and little control, which causes nuisance from loitering youth. A quote from EXP_01 explains clearly what the problem of the Bospolderplein is:

EXP_01: *"En ik heb een foto ergens vanaf boven en dan is het heel mooi en ik zeg... dat is de enige plek... Ooit is er een keer natuurlijk een architect, die heeft een heel mooi plein ontworpen... Maar ja, als jij op het plein staat, dat is echt heel goed om te voelen hoe.... Het biedt niks... (…) Ja, het is het gewoon allemaal net niet. (…) Snap je, de banken staan allemaal zo aan de rand. Ja, het is... Ik vind... Met de ogen van nu kijk je echt er naar van... (…) En dan ja, eigenlijk veelste veel ruimte, want ook voor... Kijk die kleintjes die hier nu zitten te voetballen [wijst naar spelende kinderen]."*
Teun van der Geld: *"Ja, is het totaal niet opgemaakt..."*
EXP_01: *"Nee. Nee."*

EXP_01: *"And I have a photo somewhere from above and then it's very beautiful and I say... that's the only place... Once, of course, there was an architect who designed a very nice square... But yes, if you stand on the square, it's actually very good to feel how.... It offers nothing... (...) Yes, it's just not quite there. (...) You know, the benches are all on the edge like that. Yes, it's... I think... With today's eyes you really look at it like... (...) And then yes, actually far too much space, because also for... Look at those little ones playing football here now [points to children playing]."*
Teun van der Geld: *"Yes, it's not made for them at all..."*
EXP_01: *"No. No."*

She indicates that the square is relatively empty and offers nothing for residents. She also explains that the chance of social encounters is low here because the benches are far apart, so people can not interact with each other easily. But besides the social encounter, the size of the square does not correspond with the users of the square: children, because it is much too large.

Photo 1: *Bospolderplein*

Source: Teun van der Geld, 2022.

Moreover, the respondents think there should be more greenery throughout the whole neighbourhood, that the overall quality of the pavement could be better and that there is a lot of trash on the streets as shown in photo 2. In addition, RESP_11_M32, a single dad of one child, indicates that he is dissatisfied with the options for playing with his child and to meet other parents to such an extent that he is more inclined to look for these facilities in the surrounding neighbourhoods:

> **RESP_11_M32:** *"Maar als dat plein kaal en leeg is, dan ga ik daar niet komen. Dus dan ga ik liever met mijn kleine liever ergens anders naartoe waar ik weet dat ik kan spelen en waar ik andere ouders ontmoet in plaats van hier in de wijk en dat is zonde. Waarom bouw je dat zelf niet hier in de wijk?"*
>
> **RESP_11_M32:** *"But if that square is bare and empty, I won't go there. So then I'd rather take my little one somewhere else where I know I can play and where I can encounter other parents instead of here in the neighbourhood and that's a shame. Why don't you build that yourself here in the neighbourhood?"*

It is noteworthy that the respondent included encountering other parents in his choice for a place for his child to play. According to him, meeting other parents was not enough facilitated by the lack of play facilities on the squares and in the neighbourhood as a whole. This shows that facilities do not only have the function for which they are intended, but that they can also have a social function, a space for encounter, as is the case with the play areas RESP_11_M32 refers to.

Photo 2: *Trash in the public space*

Source: Teun van der Geld, 2022.

Moreover, people experience certain places in the public space or even places in their own flat as unsafe because of loitering youths or other figures who hang out on the streets at night in combination with too little light and surveillance. This often leads to youth hanging around (often with weapons such as knifes) and nuisance, but this happens not only in the large public areas but also in the porticoes and the shared basements of the flats. Additionally, several respondents pointed to the decline in social cohesion. They felt they were no longer able to call the youths to account for their behaviour, which was also partly due to the fact that they were afraid of the youths because there was a high chance they (often a small group, as de respondent indicates) might be carrying weapons, as RESP_01_M61 explained:

> **RESP_01_M61:** *"Ja, de brutaliteit van sommige jongeren zeg maar. Ik zeg niet allemaal, het is altijd een kern, een hele kleine groep... Rappers bijvoorbeeld, het waren gewoon rapper zeggen ze. Ja, goed dan twee groepen rappers die te lijf gingen met ook... Ja... Met messen en dergelijke. Acht, negen van die mensen zijn gewoon gearresteerd door onze meldingen zeg maar met, twee hadden gewoon zulke grote messen, dus dan een halve meter groot..."*
>
> **RESP_01_M61:** *"Yes, the brutality of some young people. I'm not saying all of them, it's always a core, very small group... Rappers, for example, they were just rappers. Yes, well then two groups of rappers who went at it with... Yes... With knives and stuff. Eight, nine of those people were just arrested by our reports say with, two just had such big knives, half a meter big..."*

Because these groups claim certain spaces and are violent, people no longer dare to enter these spaces, as RESP_01_M61 shows. Despite the fact that he does indicate that because of the reports from him and other neighbours the youths have been arrested, a quote from RESP_11_M32 makes it clear that respondents at the same time feel that the level of social cohesion has decreased and that young people do not listen to older people as they used to:

> **RESP_11_M32:** *"Ja ik mis dus dat er bepaalde soort mensen andere kinderen kunnen corrigeren… (…) Die shit gebeurt niet meer. (…) Ja iedereen woont op zichzelf, 'ik ken de buurman niet eens, ik ken de buurvrouw niet eens, het boeit mij niet' en je merkt ook hoe kinderen reageren naar ouderen toe of steekpartijen of vechten."*
>
> **RESP_11_M32:** *"So I miss that there are certain kinds of people who can correct other children... (…) That shit doesn't happen anymore. (…) Yes everyone lives on their own, 'I don't even know the neighbour, I don't even know the neighbour, I don't care' and you also notice how children react towards older people or stabbings or fighting."*

In this he also shows that people care less about their fellow residents because they are very much on their own. This will be further discussed in section 5.3.

Moreover, the Schiedamseweg is experienced as busy and hectic and for some is not a pleasant place to be as RESP_08_M26 explains:

> **RESP_08_M26:** *"Maar waar zou ik niet graag willen komen... Ik weet niet, ik heb een beetje mixed feelings over de Schiedamseweg. Niet zo zeer over wat betreft een stukje veiligheid of zo. Maar meer met de drukte of zo, hetzelfde ervaar ik met de Nieuwe Binnenweg… Ja hectisch, veel mensen die dubbel parkeren, het is… Ja weet niet, het trekt mij niet zo heel erg of zo."*
>
> **RESP_08_M26:** *"But where would I not like to come... I don't know, I have mixed feelings about the Schiedamseweg. Not so much in terms of safety or anything like that. But more about the hustle and bustle or so, I experience the same with the Nieuwe Binnenweg... Yes hectic, many people parking twice, it's... Yes, I don't know, it doesn't attract me that much or so."*

The heavy traffic and double parking both play a major role in this for RESP_08_M26, as other respondents also indicated. In addition, the number of seating areas throughout the whole neighbourhood also fails to meet residents' needs, RESP_04_F56 also states that tables at the benches are also very much needed:

> **RESP_04_F56:** *"Ik vind, er zouden ook best wel bepaalde plekken mogen komen waar… ja is moeilijk om te zeggen voor de vrouw… ja gewoon plekken waar zeg maar, Dakpark bijvoorbeeld, nee waar je ook kunt zitten. (…) Niet alleen maar zitten, maar ook bijvoorbeeld tafels, weet je, met tafels, stoelen en bankjes en dat soort dingen. (…) Ja kan rustig zitten, hoeft niet per se allemaal in één plek. (…) Want dan komen natuurlijk, allemaal, iedereen, dan lopen ze weer weg. Maar verspreid."*
>
> **RESP_04_F56:** *"I think that there should also be certain places where… yes, it is difficult to say this for the woman… yes, just places where, for example, you can sit, the Dakpark, no, where you can also sit. (…) Not just sitting down, but also tables, you know, with tables, chairs and benches and things like that. (…) You can sit quietly, not necessarily all in one place. (…) Because then, of course, everyone will come and walk away. But spread out."*

Here, she emphasises the importance of spreading these facilities in order to counteract the dominance of one group in a certain space and to make it more inclusive for the residents so that more people have the space to encounter each other.

Places of mixed quality

Figure 10: *Locations of the mixed quality places*

During the mapping exercise, people also used the plus and minus together, this happened mainly at the Visserijplein. Which is because people associate this square with the market, but when the market is gone, it is usually an empty square with a lot of asphalt where little is happening (see photo 3). In addition, after the market, there is a lot of trash which is then spread over a large part of the

neighbourhood and leads to nuisance and filth as RESP_07_F58 indicates :

RESP_07_F58: *"Je moet echt een keer zien he, na markt. Je moet maar kijken, overal is rommel. Vijf uur/ zes uur. Na vier uur. Moet je maar kijken wat een puinhoop ze achterlaten, hoe dat die ratten en dat die vogels en stank."*

RESP_07_F58: *"You really should see it, after market. You just have to look, there is rubbish everywhere. Five o'clock/six o'clock. After four o'clock. Look at the mess they leave behind, the rats and the birds and the stench."*

But at the same time, it is an great space for encounter and has an important function for the neighbourhoods beyond Bospolder-Tussendijken. It is here where fruit and vegetables can be bought for relatively low prices. Besides it takes place twice a week. During the interviews, it was mentioned several times that many people bought groceries here because of these low prices. But for many, the market is also a social occasion and a chance to socialise, because many people come out of their homes and there are also a lot of people from outside the neighbourhood who come to the market. However, RESP_07_F58 indicates that here too, there are still too few places to meet each other in a low-threshold manner while enjoying a drink, such as a cup of coffee:

RESP_07_F58: *"En het enigste wat wij leuk vinden is echt om uit te gaan, is markt. (…) Het is twee dagen, dan gaan we even rondwandelen."*
Teun van der Geld: *"Ja, en wie is we dan?"*
RESP_07_F58: *"Ja de bewoners."*

RESP_07_F58: *"And the only thing we really like is to go out, is market. (...) It is two days, then we go for a walk."*
Teun van der Geld: *"Yes, and who is we?"*
RESP_07_F58: *"Yes the residents."*

In addition, in the quote she indicates that the only thing they (the residents) like is the market, so therefore the market can have a great potential to counteract any feelings of loneliness among residents by combining this with any low-threshold places for meetings. However, it appears that this potential is not being fully exploited at the moment.

Photo 3 & 4: *The Visserijplein without (right, photo 3) and with (left, photo 4) the market*

Source: Teun van der Geld, 2022.

Furthermore, according to some there seems to be some positive changes in the public spaces of the neighbourhood. Despite the fact that many respondents indicated that the quality of the public space has mainly worsened in recent years, there is also a large group who indicate that they see that enough is being done to improve the public spaces, both through physical interventions and through the efforts of volunteers who, for example, keep Park 1943 clean:

RESP_09_M53: *"Dat zie je nu terug. En je denkt het te vervangen met vrijwilligers die nu en dan… je weet toch… het parkje onderhouden. (…) Maar als je ziet wat voor troep deze mensen in dit parkje in de weekend opruimen… Ja? Is heel veel. (…) Voor Havensteder en dergelijken hoef ik niet te weten wat hun vergoeding is of dergelijken, maar je weet toch… (…) Ze verdienen van mij wel een medaille."*

RESP_09_M53: *"You see that now. And you think you can replace it with volunteers who now and then… you know… maintain the park. (…) But if you see what kind of rubbish these people clean up in this park at the weekend… Yes? (…) For Havensteder and the like I don't need to know what their compensation is or anything like that, but you know… (…) They deserve a medal as far as I'm concerned."*

The fact that there is a group of volunteers who clean Park 1943 can, in addition to the social encounters, also generate admiration among residents, as RESP_09_M53 indicates in the last sentence. This could perhaps create a feeling of solidarity or respect and ultimately help to keep the park clean, because people are aware that the trash is cleaned up at the weekend by volunteers they respect. In addition, the voluntary cleaning of the park is also an example of micro-public, because one does a common activity in the form of a volunteer group, so also within here take social encounters place.

Places of high quality

Figure 11: Locations of the high quality places

Next, the places that people experience as pleasant or of high quality are discussed. It can be seen that this is mainly at the boundaries of the neighbourhood, so the Dakpark and Historisch Delfshaven, but also in the middle of the neighbourhood near Park 1943 and the Visserijplein where the market takes place twice a week. Besides, the Dakpark is the biggest public green space for the neighbourhood. This is adjacent to the neighbourhood and was completed five years ago. Residents find it a nice place because it is quiet and green, as RESP_05_M39 also indicates, this makes him go there with his children as well because of the greenery:

> **Teun van der Geld:** "Ja, want je hebt bijvoorbeeld het Dakpark…"
> **RESP_05_M39:** "Ja kijk die is mooi. (…) Ja als je daar bent zie je wel veel groen. Dat is mooi. (…) Ja ik ben daar ook wel eens vaak met kinderen."
>
> **Teun van der Geld:** "Yes, because you have the Dakpark, for instance…".
> **RESP_05_M39:** "Yes, it's beautiful. (…) Yes, when you're there you see a lot of green. (…) Yes, I'm often there with the children.

As Rad and Ngah (2013) indicated, people are more inclined to go to public spaces with a relatively large amount of greenery, this also seems the case for this study as can be seen in the quote of RESP_05_M39 above. In addition to the Dakpark, people also like Historisch Delfshaven. However, here the buildings in combination with the water are the prominent reasons that people experience it as pleasant, RESP_12_M27 cleary indicates this:

> **RESP_12_M27:** "Ja Dakpark dan sowieso en Oud Delfshaven… Dat is trouwens wel echt een chille.."
> **Teun van der Geld:** "Ja met dat water en die bootjes…?"
> **RESP_12_M27:** "Ja dat is dan wel echt pittoresk, al is het dan ook niet per se heel groen of zo maar dat hoeft ook niet per se…"
>
> **RESP_12_M27:** "Yes, the Dakpark certainly is, and Oud Delfshaven… That is a really cool…
> **Teun van der Geld:** "Yes, with the water and the boats…?"
> **RESP_12_M27:** "Yes, that is really picturesque, although it is not necessarily very green or anything like that, but that is not necessarily…"

Here he indicates that it is not necessarily greenery that makes a place nice, he seems to be referring to the picturesque character of the place that makes it pleasant. Other respondents indicated that it is indeed mainly the water, but also the boats that make the place nice.

In addition, a part of them also like to come to the Visserijplein which is mainly because of the market as they see this as a social event where they can socially encounter others. But also Park 1943 is experienced as a nice place because of the greenery that is present here. But it does not necessarily seem to have a user or 'stay' function for the respondents, but rather an aesthetic function; it looks good. RESP_12_M27 indicates that he actually does experience the park as a great park, but that he himself never goes there:

RESP_12_M27: *"Ja, ik zat daar laatst over na te denken want het is best wel een chill park en je mag daar ook barbecueën en zo… maar omdat daar dan ook het Dakpark zit en ik ga ook vaak een stukje wandelen… maar voor wandelen is vaak het Dakpark wat leuker of zo, dat is de reden denk ik. (…) Maar het valt mij wel op dat ik dus in heel corona tijd niet naar Park 1943 ben gegaan terwijl het echt een super nice en zonnig park is, terwijl dan ga ik wel naar Het Park, terwijl vrienden van mij in de buurt wonen en dan gaan we niet naar… ik snap het echt niet eigenlijk, hoe.. (…) Ja het ziet er soms een beetje dood uit of zo. Mensen… (…) je ziet veel mensen er doorheen lopen en niet per se zitten, dus het is echt nog wel een beetje een soort van transitiepark…"*

RESP_12_M27: "Yes, I was thinking about it the other day because it is quite a chill park and you can also barbecue and so on… but because Dakpark is also situated there and I often go for a walk… but for walking Dakpark is often more fun or so, I think that's the reason. (…) But I have noticed that I haven't been to Park 1943 in a long time, even though it's a really nice and sunny park, and then I go to Het Park, while friends of mine live in the neighbourhood and then we don't go to… I don't really understand how… (…) Yes it sometimes looks a bit dead or something. People… (…) you see a lot of people walking through it and not necessarily sitting down, so it really is still a bit of a transition park…"

Besides, he indicates that he would rather go to Dakpark, because it is easier to walk there, or to another park outside the neighbourhood, because Park 1943 does not have a lively atmosphere. So, despite being labelled as pleasant, it does not have that inviting feeling that ultimately triggers people to stay there. Another factor may be that several respondents indicated that this park is often dominated by different ethnic groups, so for these groups it does have the function of space of encounter. However, there is a certain feeling of exclusion or not being welcome for other residents. This division between ethnic groups is further elaborated upon in section 5.2: 'the type of encounters within Bospolder-Tussendijken'. RESP_12_M27 has a Dutch nationality and consequently RESP_07_F58 indicates that she hears from the Dutch that they do not like to stay there but also from the elderly, which is clarified in the quote below about Park 1943:

RESP_07_F58: *"Bijvoorbeeld heb je dan die park als je hebt vierkant dan heb je één kant is echt veel gebruikt wordt, dan is er ook die groeperingen… geconstateerd. Bijvoorbeeld aan een kant heb je Marokkanen, andere kant heb je Turken…"*
Teun van der Geld: *"Ja, het is heel gescheiden?"*
RESP_07_F58: *"Inderdaad, en dan linker kant wordt best wel gebruik gemaakt, maar rechter kant is echt wel… wordt niet gebruikt en ook van twee kanten is er gewoon nog beetje te veel onkruid, te veel rommel dat je niet kan zien, dan wordt het niet gebruik gemaakt kan ik wel zeggen. Ook Nederlanders zeggen 'ik durf niet heen', en er is ook geen plek voor oudere mensen bijvoorbeeld."*

RESP_07_F58: "For example you then have this park if you have square then you have one side is really used a lot, then there is also this grouping… noted. For example on one side you have Moroccans, on the other side you have Turks…"
Teun van der Geld: "Yes, it is very separate?"
RESP_07_F58: "Indeed, and then the left side is used quite well, but the right side is… not used, and also from two sides there is just a bit too much weed, too much rubbish that you cannot see, so that it is not used, I can say. Dutch people also say 'I don't dare go there', and there is also no place for older people, for example."

So it can be seen that because of the presence of certain groups that are distinguished by ethnicity, other ethnicities do not feel welcome or are even afraid to go to these places. This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The overall picture

Figure 12: *Analytic map of the perceived quality of the public places in the neighbourhood*

By means of the three inventory maps and the different answers of the respondents, the following analytical map was made, see figure 12. It can be seen that the pleasant places that are labelled as being of high quality are often situated on the edges or outside of the district, examples of which are Dakpark and Historisch Delfshaven. The Merwe-Vierhavens area was considered a nice place to be, mainly because of the functions (mostly hip start-ups and creative hotspots) that were located there, the Spangekade because of the water. Only Park 1943 is actually situated in the district. All these places have in common that they either have a high degree of greenery or water. The places that are assessed as medium or low have in common that they do not have these characteristics. The squares have a relatively high amount of asphalt and the main street (the Schiedamseweg) feels too hectic, while the Dakpark and Historisch Delfshaven are seen as quiet places.

So, based on this map it can be seen where in the public spaces of the neighbourhood people like to be. But it also shows in which places there is a high chance of social encounters within the neighbourhood. These places include Park 1943, Visserijplein, Driehoeksplein and the public spaces adjacent to the district: Dakpark, Historisch Delfshaven and Spangensekade. These all have in common that they possess sufficient greenery or water or that they have a certain social function, such as the Visserijplein (the market), which makes up for the shortage of greenery/water. However, within the entire neighbourhood there is a shortage of facilities where people can meet each other in an accessible way and where there is no exclusion.

5.1.2. Spaces of encounter: beyond public spaces

As was shown in the theoretical framework and according to Amin (2002) and Valentine, Piekut and Harris (2015), people do not only meet in public spaces, but also in semi-public spaces or in the form of a common activity. In other words, micro-publics. In fact, it is precisely these micro-publics where the residents meet each other. So places like the Bollendpandje, Pier80 and The Nightshop. However, people do meet in public spaces, but these are more often fleeting and homogenous encounters, which is further explained in the next subsection on types of encounters. Within the neighbourhood, these social encounters in micro-publics can be so intense that this leads to the creation of communities, as EXP_01 indicates:

EXP_01: *"Nou dan zoek je een pandje en je ziet daar allerlei gemeenschappen omheen ontstaan, rondom ontstaan rondom zo'n pand. Dat is wel goed... Nou een pand. Nou ja, dit is dan een theehuisje, dat zijn toch van oudsher... Zijn dat echte plekken voor ontmoeting."*

EXP_01: *"Then you look for a building and you see all kinds of communities developing around it. That's good... Well, a building. Well, this is a teahouse, those are traditionally... They are real places for encounters."*

The tea houses also have a high value among male residents, mainly of Turkish or Moroccan background, as EXP_01 indicates they are also important places for social encounters. Social buildings such as Het Bollenpandje (see photo 4) and Pier80 (see photo 5) also appear to be a haven for respondents who indicate that they experience feelings of loneliness, as RESP_04_F56 also indicates:

Teun van der Geld: *"Maar hoe ga je daar dan mee om, als voelt van nou ik heb behoefte om mensen te ontmoeten?"*
RESP_04_F56: *"Ja naar buurthuizen."*

Teun van der Geld: *"But how do you deal with that, when you feel like, well, I need to meet people?"*
RESP_04_F56: *"Yes to community centres."*

This is probably due to the fact that within these social buildings (micro-publics) various activities take place and which have the potential to generate meaningful contact as Amin (2002) mentioned. Of course, people also meet at home, but since the new parking policy was recently introduced by the municipality the threshold for inviting friends or acquaintances from outside the neighbourhood into residents' homes has become higher. This can increase feelings of loneliness, for example EXP_03 indicates that she finds parking quite expensive:

EXP_03: *"Maar.. Als je bezoek hebt dan moet je echt tot 11 uur betalen dat is wel weer minder. (…) Op sociaal gebied is dat heel wat minder, oké dan hebben we bezoekersparkeren dat kan je openen… maar ja weet je ik kan het nog wel bekostigen, maar we hebben ook vijftigplus dingen maar ja… (…) Ja. Dat is wel prijzig."*

EXP_03: *"But... If you have visitors, you really have to pay until 11 o'clock, which is worse. (...) Socially it is a lot less, ok then we have visitor parking which you can open... but you know I can still afford it, but we also have fifty plus stuff but... (...) Yes. That is pricey though."*

Besides, she mentions that this is bad for the social sphere; despite the fact that there is an app that gives you a discount on visitor parking, she indicates that there are many residents over the age of 50 in the neighbourhood who are not good at using digital applications. As a result, the new parking rule leads to a reduction in the social activities of some residents and increases the risk of experiencing feelings of loneliness among residents. But also within different facilities people sometimes experience

social encounters. However, this does not happen very often and when it does it is short and quick. This is because people often have a clear reason for being in a particular facility and are therefore usually busy, but this will be discussed further in the next section.

5.2 The type of social encounters within Bospolder-Tussendijken

In order to gain a clear insight into the different types of social encounters that take place in the neighbourhood, to be distinguished into fleeting, light and meaningful, it is important to know how people treat each other and what the norms and values are within the neighbourhood: in other words, to look at the social environment of Bospolder-Tussendijken. In addition, it is also important to know what characterises these social encounters, i.e. where they take place and why they take place the way they do. This chapter will therefore first look at the social environment of the neighbourhood and is followed by the section that looks at how this influences the types of social encounters that take place in the various spaces of encounter.

5.2.1 The social environment of Bospolder-Tussendijken

This part will present the data on the social environment of Bospolder-Tussendijken. This will be done by looking at the degree of social activities within the neighbourhood, the degree of social cohesion, feelings of safety and the value and meaning people give to the spaces of encounter and the neighbourhood as a whole. Based on these factors, something can eventually be said about the overall social environment of the neighbourhood. First, a short overview is given of important actors within the neighbourhood, in order to make the quotes that are being used as clear as possible for the reader.

Important actors within the neighbourhood:

- **Havensteder**: A housing corporation active in Bospolder-Tussendijken as well as throughout the entire city of Rotterdam.
- **WMO Rader**: A foundation that is responsible for the entrepreneurial social management of the 'Huizen van de Wijk' in Feijenoord, Delfshaven, Overschie and the centre of Rotterdam. It also offers services for the support, activation and participation of residents.

The social activities

The data from the interviews show that there are regular social activities in the neighbourhood. Many of the respondents also indicated that they regularly participated or were involved in organising social activities. RESP_05_M39 clearly indicates that several times a week activities take place in Pier80 for residents, and that he himself regularly helps with the conduct of the activities:

> **_Teun van der Geld_**_: "(…) En doe je wel eens, worden er hier wel eens buurtactiviteiten georganiseerd hier?"_
> **_RESP_05_M39_**_: "Hier? Ja, heel vaak."_
> **_Teun van der Geld_**_: "Ja heel vaak. Hoe vaak ongeveer, als je iets in een getal moet zeggen?"_
> **_RESP_05_M39_**_: "Nou laat me zeggen, elke week zijn er een paar dagen zeg maar per week. (…) Kinderactiviteit, ouderen, die hebben ook activiteit hier elke vrijdag boven. En je hebt ook die andere ouderen die ook hier komen sporten, twee keer in de week woensdag en vrijdag. (…) Gewoon echt boven de vijftig of van boven de zestig. En ja wordt hier ook feestjes georganiseerd."_

> *Teun van der Geld: "(...) And do you ever, are there ever community activities organised here?"*
> *RESP_05_M39: "Here? Yes, very often."*
> *Teun van der Geld: "Yes very often. How often approximately, if you have to say something in a number?"*
> *RESP_05_M39: "Well let me say, every week there are a few days say per week. (...) Children's activity, elderly people, they also have activity here upstairs every Friday. And you also have those other elderly people who also come and do sports here, twice a week on Wednesdays and Fridays. (...) Just really over fifty or over sixty. And yes parties are also organised here."*

So, he indicates that a wide variety of social activities take place within the neighbourhood, from sports to parties and from children to the elderly. This results in different types of social encounters within Pier80. Sports, for example, are mainly light encounters because there is a certain similarity between and familiarity among the participants, although meaningful encounters may arise from this because of the common activity that they do. The parties are primarily meaningful encounters because they involve people who have a particular value for someone or are involved in something. So in terms of social activities, there should be enough to choose from.

However, it appears that communication about when and where the activities take place does not always reach all residents, as RESP_03_F49 but also other respondents indicates:

> *Teun van der Geld: "(…) Er worden ook wel eens buurtactiviteiten georganiseerd in de wijk, volgens mij?"*
> *RESP_03_F49: "Ja, dat weet ik eigenlijk niks van. Nee."*
> *Teun van der Geld: "Nee, daar heb je geen idee..."*
> *RESP_03_F49: "Nee, nu ik in de app zit, zie ik heel veel ja..."*
> *Teun van der Geld: "Dan pas valt het op eigenlijk?"*
> *RESP_03_F49: "Ja, en verder heb ik mij er nooit..."*
>
> *Teun van der Geld: "(...) There are also sometimes community activities organised in the neighbourhood, I think?".*
> *RESP_03_F49: "Yes, I do not know anything about that. No."*
> *Teun van der Geld: "No, you have no idea about that..."*
> *RESP_03_F49: "No, now I am in the app, I see a lot yes..."*
> *Teun van der Geld: "Only then does it stand out actually?"*
> *RESP_03_F49: "Yes, and apart from that I have never..."*

She says that because since she has been in the WhatsApp group of the Bollenpandje for some time, she has only now noticed how much is being organised. Before she joined, she had no idea that social activities were being organised to this extent. Another reason, made clear by EXP_03, is that there are different groups of residents (often based on ethnicity) who organise certain social activities and do not invite other residents. This seems to be related to the strong segregation that exists within the neighbourhood among the different groups of ethnicities. Among some residents, but also experts, this arouses pessimistic feelings about the community:

> *EXP_03: "Als ik voorbeeld moet geven, er werd met suikerfeest wat georganiseerd hier maar het was gewoon eigen kring. (…) Maar het was ook voor iedereen, maar wij wisten er niks van. (…) En dan krijg je zo'n visie van 'weet je wat, je doet het maar'…"*
>
> *EXP_03: "If I have to give an example, something was organised here at Eid al-Fitr, but it was just our own circle. (…) But it was also for everyone, but we knew nothing about it. (...) And then you get this vision of 'you know what, you just do it'..."*

The attitude of 'you know what, you just do it' will not help this separation between the different ethnicities and can only worsen it. It seems that this separation is strongly rooted in the neighbourhood

and will come up again in this chapter. Besides, this seems to correspond with the theory of Van Eijk (2012) in which he indicates that in low socio-economic neighbourhoods where there is a high level of ethnic diversity, there are often feelings of discomfort or conflict between the different groups, which has an effect on the way residents interact and relate to each other. However, several respondents indicated that they wanted to break through this social barrier and that they do not care what ethnicity someone has. EXP_03 (who has a Turkish background) goes on to say that she finds this annoying and is consciously working to counter it:

> **EXP_03:** "*Ik ben er echt flink tegen, dus is het zo van, bij mij is het echt heel afwisselend. Ik zeg, als de Turkse gemeenschap wat organiseert, ben ik er negentig procent niet bij. (…) Maar als het een gemengde bijeenkomst is dan ben ik er wel bij. (…) Want iedereen is gelijk bij mij, het maakt niet uit of je moslim bent of geen moslim bent, of dat je huidskleur wat andere kleuren is of je ogen wat anders… voor mij maakt niet uit dus daardoor vind ik belangrijk dat het gemengd is. Dan dat het echt een besloten groep is met eigen kring…*"
> **Teun van der Geld:** "*Dus gewoon wat opener misschien?*"
> **EXP_03:** "*Ja opener, ik zeg ook altijd tegen vrouwen: 'ey je moet je sociaal echt blijven ontwikkelen en niet alleen bij je eigen groepen.'*"
>
> **EXP_03**: "*I am really strongly against it, so it is like, with me it is really very varied. I say, if the Turkish community organises something, 90% of the time I will not be there. (…) But if it's a mixed gathering, I'm there. (…) Because everyone is equal with me, it doesn't matter if you're a Muslim or not, or if your skin colour is different or your eyes different… it doesn't matter to me, so that's why I think it's important that it's mixed. Then it's really a closed group with its own circle…*".
> **Teun van der Geld:** "*So just a bit more open maybe?*"
> **EXP_03**: "*Yes more open, I also always say to women: 'you have to really keep developing socially and not only with your own groups.'*"

It can be noted here that she is working on mixing the different ethnicities because she indicates that she prefers social activities where people with different personal characteristics, including ethnicity, are involved. This recurs several times among the respondents. In addition, she tries to pass this on to other women in the neighbourhood by pointing this out to them.

Moreover, just because there are many activities does not mean that everyone participates in them. There are also residents who simply do not feel the need for these activities for various reasons, including their work, because they already have enough social contact here, or because it does not necessarily attract them, or because of the image. For example, RESP_09_M53 states that the 16 hours he works per week within Pier80 is enough to meet his social needs and therefore has no further need to participate in social activities:

> **Teun van der Geld:** "*Nee juist dus je hebt niet meer behoefte aan sociale activiteiten?*"
> **RESP_09_M53:** "*Nee, ik steek al 16 uur hierin in de maatschappelijke ondersteuning, het is groot.*"
>
> **Teun van der Geld:** "*No exactly so you don't need any more social activities?*"
> **RESP_09_M53:** "*No, I already put 16 hours in this in social support, it's big.*"

Besides the fact that people have no time or need for them, there also seems to be a lack in the range of social activities being offered. There seems to be a relatively larger support offer for individuals who are struggling with different problems such as financial or health care issues, but there is also a need for activities for all ages, so from young to old. While RESP_05_M39 indicated earlier that there are enough of activities in the neighbourhood, other respondents, such as RESP_07_F58, have the feeling that this diversity is still lacking:

> *RESP_07_F58:* "En dan trainingen en dergelijk, maar echt voor leuke dingen, voor ouderen...? Zie ik niet. Voor kwetsbaren niet en voor mensen die werkloos zijn, dat je echt wel een dag kunnen regelen, één dagje of gewoon voor deze mensen dat je ook zegt met thema bijvoorbeeld zou wel leuker zijn. (...) Iets actief bezig zijn bijvoorbeeld."
>
> *RESP_07_F58:* "And then training and so on, but really for fun things, for the elderly...? I do not see that. Not for vulnerable people and for people who are unemployed, that you can arrange a day, one day or just for these people that you also say with theme for example would be more fun. (...) Something active, for example."

Here, she indicates that she mainly needs more social activities for the elderly and vulnerable, while RESP_08_M26 indicates that he has a greater need for activities for his own age group (young adults):

> *RESP_08_M26:* "Ja ik zou... ja... echt in de wijk Bospolder-Tussendijk weet ik niet of dat per se... ja... zou wel kunnen maar waar ga je dat dan doen denk ik dan al heel gauw. (...) Want gezien mijn leeftijd, ik zou het niet verkeerd vinden om een keer een foodtruck festival of iets van een dergelijk muziek festival or whatever... iets in de wijk te hebben of zo. Maar volgens mij zijn ze ook volop aan het investeren in het havenkwartier voorbij Marconi, tussen..."
>
> *RESP_08_M26:* "Yes, I would... yes... really in the Bospolder-Tussendijk neighbourhood, I don't know if that's necessarily... yes... it would be possible, but where are you going to do it, I immediately think... (...) Because considering my age, I wouldn't mind having a food truck festival or something like that, or a music festival or whatever... something in the neighbourhood. But I think they are also investing heavily in the harbour district beyond Marconi, between..."

So despite the fact that some respondents indicated that there is enough to choose from, others indicated that there are still some things missing. So it seems that the options for social encounters are enough, however, the quality and the type of activity could be better according to the respondents.

The social cohesion

In order to be able to say something about social cohesion, one looked at data on social encounters between neighbours, but also on the sense of involvement in the neighbourhood. In terms of social encounters between neighbours, it seems that most of the neighbours know each other, or else they know each other by sight. These encounters seem to be mainly light encounters because they have something in common and therefore there is a certain degree of familiarity among the neighbours. The relationships between neighbours often go up to a certain limit, which will be explained in more detail in this chapter. However, there is also a small group of respondents who have meaningful encounters with neighbours because they belong to the 'active residents group', which refers to a micro-public because they do common activities together, as RESP_01_M61 indicates:

> *RESP_01_M61:* "Ja, ze zijn gewoon natuurlijk... Als we elkaar tegenkomen dan gaan we een praatje maken met elkaar, vooral wij als actieve groep zeg maar, actieve bewoners. Dus dan... Aan de andere kant zijn mensen ook een beetje afwezig, afzijdig zeg maar. En als je eenmaal begint met die mensen dan kun je gewoon ook een heel normaal gesprek voeren... Dus dat, ja... Heel veel vriendelijke mensen ook. Ja. Maar ook veel buitenlanders wonen er gewoon in deze wijk."
>
> *RESP_01_M61:* Yes, they are obviously... When we meet, we have a chat with each other, especially we as an active group, active residents. So then... On the other hand, people are also a bit absent-minded, so to speak. And once you start talking to those people, you can have a very normal conversation... So that, yes... A lot of friendly people too. Yes. But there are also many foreigners living in this neighbourhood.

These residents therefore are more inclined to have a chat with each other in contrast to residents who are less involved or absent. The reason for this according to RESP_01_M61, being the fact that many people with different ethnic backgrounds live in the neighbourhood, but also because there are a lot of elderly people or people who are socially isolated or experiencing feelings of loneliness as he indicates further in his answer:

> RESP_01_M61: "Ja, ja, maar vooral, dat is een, maar aan de andere kant... Er zijn er ook een hoop ouderen en sommige ook hier en daar een voorbeeld, geïsoleerd en eenzaam. (…) Dus wij hebben ook geprobeerd om te signaleren, zeg maar richting instanties 'hey, deze mensen missen ook heel veel dingen.'"
>
> RESP_01_M61: "Yes, yes, but above all, that is one, but on the other hand…. There are also a lot of elderly people and some of them are also an example here and there, isolated and lonely. (…) So we also tried to signal, say towards agencies 'hey, these people also miss a lot of things.'"

The quote also shows that people pay attention to each other. He indicates that he speaks for the people who do not or cannot make themselves heard and communicate with various institutions so that they are not forgotten or left behind. This is a clear sign that there is a certain degree of social cohesion among the residents.

Furthermore, sometimes there were social encounters with the neighbours, but these were often fleeting. In addition, there seemed to be some kind of privacy barrier between the residents and, for example, it seems that it was not always easy to ask the neighbours for help, as RESP_03_F49 indicates:

> RESP_03_F49: "Hoe goed? Ja gewoon..."
> Teun van der Geld: "Stel je hebt iets nodig...."
> RESP_03_F49: "Dat zou kunnen. Dat zou kunnen. Zou kunnen. Maar ja, we zijn niet zo makkelijk daarin, nee."
> Teun van der Geld: "Nee?"
> RESP_03_F49: "Nee nee. Maar t zou wel kunnen. Ik kan wel zeggen dat het wel kan."
>
> RESP_03_F49: "How good? Yes just..."
> Teun van der Geld: "Suppose you need something...."
> RESP_03_F49: "That could be. You could. Could be. But yes, we are not so easy in that, no."
> Teun van der Geld: "No?"
> RESP_03_F49: "No, no. But it could be. I can say that it is possible."

She first indicates that people are not so easy about it, but she goes on to say that it could be done, which gives an indication that people would rather not do it but only if they have to because it is morally expected of them. However, these fleeting social encounters can also lead to a relatively stronger relation and it ensures some degree of social cohesion among residents because people do know each other to a certain extent. For instance, RESP_10_F33 tells us that when she goes to collect her parcel, which has been delivered to her neighbour's house, she also has a chat with her neighbour:

> Teun van der Geld: "Oké, even kijken… Je zegt dat je je buren opzich wel kent, maar vraag je die dan ook om hulp bijvoorbeeld of zo? Of hoe is dat contact, alleen van 'hey hoe is het'?"
> RESP_10_F33: "De buurvrouw naast mij neemt mijn pakketjes aan [gelach], en die haal ik ook op."
> Teun van der Geld: "En is het dan ook als je het pakketje ophaalt dat je even praat?"
> RESP_10_F33: "Oh ja meestal sta ik wel even met haar te kletsen of zo."

> *Teun van der Geld*: " *Okay, let's see... You say that you know your neighbours in general, but do you also ask them for help, for instance? Or how is that contact, just 'hey how are you'?*
> *RESP_10_F33*: *"The woman next door takes my parcels [laughter], and I also pick them up."*
> *Teun van der Geld*: *"And is it then also when you pick up the package that you talk for a while?"*
> *RESP_10_F33*: *"Oh yes usually I stand and chat with her or something."*

So it can be seen that fleeting encounters can eventually develop into light or even meaningful encounters because neighbours repeatedly meet and talk to each other.

However, the degree of social cohesion also seems to have a negative side; a number of respondents indicate that people keep an eye on each other to such an extent that this leads to gossiping, this is best expressed in a quote from RESP_04_F56:

> **RESP_04_F56:** *"Ja ik zei al, het taboe, er wordt geroddeld, die wordt gezien en dit en dit. Zelfs dames waarbij zeg maar… hier activiteiten doen, zie je niet. Dat vind ik wel jammer."*
>
> *RESP_04_F56: "Yes, I said, the taboo, people gossip, they see this and that. Even ladies who say... do activities here, you don't see. I think that is a pity."*

This is reinforced by a quote from EXP_03, in which she explains that despite the fact that people should receive certain help, for some it is still considered a high threshold because they are ashamed of what others think of them. Again, this is due to the habit of gossiping about each other among residents. Residents are often preoccupied with what other neighbours will think if they see him or her at a certain facility or with certain people:

> **EXP_03:** *"Ja is lastig, is heel erg lastig… Vooral bij mij omdat wij dan als stichting heel erg bekend zijn hier in Bospolder-Tussendijken… Is het van, je spreekt ook heel veel ouders aan en dan als een ouder mij aanspreekt en dan een bekenden of andere ouder komt toevallig er langs dan is het zovan 'oke… wat gaan ze over mij denken?', maar zo zit het niet in elkaar eigenlijk."*
> **Teun van der Geld:** *"Nee? Maar dat is gewoon een gedacht die bij mensen zit?"*
> **EXP_03:** *"Ja, ik zeg al kijk weet je wat het is, heb je er recht op? Maak er alsjeblieft gebruik van en laat je kind gewoon niet thuis… want qua sociale ontwikkeling is het gewoon heel erg belangrijk, het begint vanuit kleinsaf…"*
>
> *EXP_03: "Yes, it is difficult, it is very difficult… Especially for me, because we as a foundation are very well known here in Bospolder-Tussendijken… You speak to a lot of parents and then when a parent speaks to me and then an acquaintance or another parent happens to pass by, then it is like 'okay… what are they going to think of me?', but that is not how it actually is."*
> *Teun van der Geld: "No? But that's just a thought that's in people's minds?"*
> *EXP_03: "Yes, I say look you know what it is, are you entitled to it? Please make use of it and just don't leave your child at home… because in terms of social development it is just very important, it starts from a very young age…"*

It even appears that the gossip is so strongly present that it really is a reason for people not to participate in certain activities or to make use of the different tools that are offered within the neighbourhood. This is further reinforced by the fact that large families live together in the neighbourhood and keep an eye on each other even more:

> **RESP_04_F56**: *"Ja het zijn ook bepaalde soort mensen, uit bepaalde dorpen gekomen, allemaal hetzelfde dorp. (…) Families, echt aangetrouwd en blablabla. Weet je, dan wordt het groot en ja dan houden ze elkaar in de gaten."*

RESP_04_F56: "Yes, they are also certain kind of people, from certain villages, all the same village. (...) Families, actually in-laws and blah blah blah. You know, then it gets big and yes then they keep an eye on each other."

Moreover, there is also some form of distrust among residents. People seem to be fairly suspicious and cautious of new residents or individuals they do not know. RESP_02_F33 also indicates that she notices that people have certain social habits, which makes that the openness towards others is rather limited.

RESP_02_F33: "Als ik... De wijk itself is heel prachtig, maar de mensen die hier wonen... Voor mij heb ik last... I mean, niet last... Heb ik een beetje... De mensen moeten gewoon uit hun comfort zone komen. (…) Maar ik snap het ook, ze zijn een bepaalde manier gewend om zich te gedragen ofzo, maar ze moeten zich gewoon laten ontwikkelen, groeien... en ook... Ja dat is het gewoon, dat is het voor mij ja."

RESP_02_F33: "If I... The neighbourhood itself is very beautiful, but the people who live here ... For me I bother... I mean, not bother... I have a bit... People just need to get out of their comfort zone. (...) But I get it too, they're used to behaving a certain way or something, but they just have to let themselves develop, grow... and also... Yeah that's just it, that's it for me yeah."

Here, she indicates that people do not dare to come out of their comfort zone, which slows down the development of the neighbourhood. This is also emphasised by RESP_07_F58, in which she indicates that this shell, as she calls it, must be broken if anything wants to change:

RESP_07_F58: Er is een groep die echt niet, weinig veranderd. Die echt vast zit… constant [onverstaanbaar]… Lijken zo'n walnootje, dat je die schil moet kapot… kapot moet maken.

RESP_07_F58: There is a group that really does not change much. Who is really stuck… constantly [unintelligible]… Seem like such a walnut, that you have to break… break that shell.

Besides, this can also contribute to increasing the risk of feelings of loneliness, because people who are unknown are not or hardly included in the social environment of the neighbourhood and are more inclined to become socially isolated and eventually even experience feelings of loneliness. Furthermore, the degree of distrust and wait-and-see attitude among neighbours is strongly expressed in the quote from RESP_10_F33 in which she indicates that it took her quite a long time before the neighbour said 'hi' to her:

RESP_10_F33: "Een blok verder ken ik ook iemand en een ander blok verder, zeg maar Turkse man die ik altijd groet, dus het is wel… ja bepaalde mensen maar niet mijn hele straat, dat hoeft ook niet. (…) Maar moet zeggen dat heeft wel een tijd geduurd. (…) Denk dat dat echt pas na één jaar, anderhalf jaar of zo pas kwam, maar dat komt ook… zeg maar je hebt in mijn straat, of in mijn blok… toch wel mensen die gaat wel met die om en die dan weer niet en die heeft weer ruzie met die… (..) En ik houd me daar allemaal buiten, maar dus als je dan ééntje groet waarmee de ander ruzie mee heeft… dan weet je automatisch ook zeg maar van 'nee.'"

RESP_10_F33: "One block down I also know someone, and another block down, say a Turkish man who I always greet, so it is… yes certain people but not my whole street, that is not necessary either. (…) But I have to say it took a while. (…) I think it took a year, a year and a half or so, but that's also … say, in my street, or in my block … there are people who do hang out with these people, and then there are people who don't, and then there's people who have a fight with these people… (…) And I keep out of it all, but if you greet one person with whom the other person has a fight … then you automatically know 'no.'"

It should be noted here that once again the influence of the gossip culture within the neighbourhood has a strong impact on the interaction between neighbours.

Moreover, life on the street also seems to provide a certain degree of social cohesion. The people who hang out in the public spaces and the facilities and the customers and owners of these facilities often have their eyes on the street:

RESP_12_M27: "Als het een vreemde is, ja… die… maar je ziet wel veel mensen zeg maar heel erg hangen hier op straat, dus dat is wel grappig dus mensen kijken je al snel aan… vooral de winkeliers, die zitten vaak met hun peukje of zo gewoon buiten naar buiten te kijken dus er is best wel veel daarvan sociale controle denk ik…"

RESP_12_M27: "If it's a stranger, yes… they… but you do see a lot of people very much hanging around in the street here, so that's funny, so people look at you very quickly… especially the shopkeepers, they often sit outside with their cigarette or whatever just looking at the outside, so there is quite a lot of social control I think…"

As RESP_12_M27 indicates, this does not necessarily lead to social encounters, but rather to social control. Yet, as RESP_11 shows, it can create social encounters:

RESP_10_F33: *"Ja, ik woon boven een coffeeshop."*
Teun van der Geld: *"Oké en hoe is die ervaring?"*
RESP_10_F33: *"Ja, best wel chill. Heel veel sociale controle, dus… [gelach]"*
Teun van der Geld: *"[gelach] Ja dat kan ik me wel voorstellen."*
RESP_10_F33: *"Ja dus heel veel van de mannen die daar komen die zien mij dan heel vaak en dan denken ze eerst van 'huh?' en als ze me dan vaker zien dan zeggen ze van 'hey!' of ik groet hun. En de buren van tegenover, een paar daarvan groet ik, de buurvrouw van naast ken ik heel goed."*

RESP_10_F33: "Yes, I live above a coffee shop."
Teun van der Geld: "Okay and how is that experience?"
RESP_10_F33: "Yeah, pretty chill. A lot of social control, so… [laughter]"
Teun van der Geld: "[laughter] Yes I can imagine that."
RESP_10_F33: "Yes, so a lot of the men who come there see me very often and then they think 'huh?' and then when they see me more often they say 'hey!' or I greet them. And the neighbours opposite, a few of them I greet, the neighbour next door I know very well."

The quote shows that because she encounters the men in front of the coffee shop repeatedly, a certain form of familiarity develops which eventually leads to fleeting encounters such as greeting each other.

However, it turns out that even though people keep an eye on each other, this does not always mean that they also intervene when they see or hear that something is going wrong, because they are busy with their own lives after all:

RESP_09_M53: "Ja maar wat, je zit al met veel stress in je kop… denk je dat je met andere dingen ga bezig houden… het boeit jou niet. Ook al wordt buurvrouw verkracht, het boeit jou niet… (…) Ja inderdaad en ik kan het niet begrijpen, die huizen zijn zo gehoorbaar…"

RESP_09_M53: "Yes, but what, you already have a lot of stress in your head… do you think you are going to occupy yourself with other things… it doesn't interest you. Even if your neighbour is raped, you don't care… (…) Yes indeed and I can't understand, those houses are so noisy…"

He points out that people in the surrounding area must have noticed the incident because it is so noisy, but that despite this they did not intervene when it happened because they would rather not interfere in other people's business. This also seems to refer to what RESP_11_M32 indicated in section 5.1,

that people are so concerned with themselves that they do not really mind what happens to the other people.

Furthermore, EXP_01 points out the effect of the cutbacks that have taken place in the neighbourhood in recent years on the social cohesion in the neighbourhood. A number of play facilities managed by volunteers have been closed down, which has also had an indirect effect on the social control of young people by adults:

> **EXP_01:** "*Maar dat is natuurlijk vooral eigenlijk ook een vorm van toezicht. Even los... Kijk de gemeentes stelt dan zo van 'ja is een dure vorm van speelgoed uitleen', ja ho ho, dat is veel meer dan speelgoed uitleen. Die dame die daar werkzaam was, is echt een fantastische dame werkt hier al 25 jaar en kent alle kinderen bij naam.(…) En die kleintjes zijn nu volwassen.*"
> **Teun van der Geld:** "*Ja. Dus het zorgt ook een beetje voor sociaal contact, sociale controle?*"
> **EXP_01:** "*Ja, zeker. Toezicht, controleren.*"
>
> **EXP_01**: "*But that is, of course, primarily a form of supervision. Just for the record... Look, the municipalities then say 'yes, this is an expensive form of toy lending', but ho, ho, this is much more than just toy lending. The lady who used to work there is a really fantastic lady who has been working here for 25 years and who knows all the children by name... And the little ones are grown up now.*"
> **Teun van der Geld:** "*Yes. So it also provides a bit of social contact, social control?*"
> **EXP_01:** "*Yes, definitely. Supervision, controlling.*"

She points out that these play facilities were much more than just play attributes or play areas. This was because someone was responsible for them, which created social control and caused light social encounters to happen with the children and the volunteers. Besides, they knew who they were, who their parents were and they could correct them if necessary. However, due to the cutbacks and abolition of the play facilities, the supervision of the youth has decreased.

Feelings of safety

As already briefly mentioned in section 5.1, people do not feel particularly safe in the evenings because there is too little lighting in the neighbourhood and because there is a nuisance from loitering youths. In addition, there appears to be a difference between men and women; men generally always feel safe, with the exception of a few places. The women, on the other hand, indicate that they feel unsafe more often, for instance RESP_06_F49 indicated that she went to a fighting lesson partly because of a bad encounter she has experienced on the street. The 'he' in the quote is a passer-by who helped her, not the person who was aggressive.:

> **RESP_06_F46:** "*Maar ja, die was opzich nog redelijk vriendelijk. Maar hij zei 'volgende keer zeg je maar beter niks'. Ja… straks rijdt iemand… want het was zo'n figuur op een fiets weet je wel. Die gaan nog al hard en als je dan geen licht hebt, dat is echt eng. (..) Maar goed ik zit op boksles. (…) Ja mede daarom.*"
>
> **RESP_06_F46**: "*But yes, he was actually quite friendly. But he said 'next time you better say nothing'. Yes… soon someone will drive… because it was one of those people on a bicycle, you know. They go pretty fast and if you don't have any lights, that's really scary. (…) Yes, that's partly why.*

When she wanted to point out to someone that he did not have a light on his bicycle, she got into a negative social encounter because the man reacted relatively aggressively to this, which made the respondent feel unsafe and contributed to her starting boxing lessons to be able to defend herself. RESP_04_F56 also said that her daughter was shouted at in the street:

> **RESP_04_F56:** *"Ja dat was toen ze nog bij mij woonde. Toen kwam ze naar buiten, ja ze is modern. Dan krijgt ze wel van die jongens… Ja weet je, 'ey mag ik je telefoon nummer'; 'nee krijg je niet'; 'behbehbeh'. (…) Dus daarom meisjes lopen ook weg, daar heb je die gasten weer, 'mag ik je telefoonnummer', dan krijg je dat niet en dan ben je dit."*
> **Teun van der Geld:** *"Ja precies, gewoon straatintimidatie."*
> **RESP_04_F56:** *"Ja inderdaad, straat intimidatie. Dat heb je hier heel veel."*
>
> *RESP_04_F56: "Yes, that was when she still lived with me. Then she came outside, yes she is modern. Then the boys… Yes, you know, 'ey can I have your phone number'?, 'no you can't have it', 'behbehbeh'. (…) So that's why girls go away, there are those guys again, 'can I have your phone number', you can't have it and then you are this."*
> *Teun van der Geld: "Yes exactly, just street harassment."*
> *RESP_04_F56: "Yes indeed, street harassment. You have a lot of that here."*

What is notable here, is that she indicated that this form of street harassment is partly responsible for the fact that there are fewer women in the public spaces, because they are more inclined to engage in social activities outside the neighbourhood. Various respondents indicated that it was mainly men who encounter in the public space and almost no women.

In addition, two male respondents both said that their girlfriends felt unsafe more often. Besides, being in the company of a woman in the evening also had an impact on a male respondent's feeling of safety, with him indicating that he felt unsafe when he was with his girlfriend. So it seems that mainly women are more likely to have unpleasant experiences in the street, partly because of the many men that are hanging around in the public space. However, RESP_12_M27 points to the many closed plinths that are present east of the neighbourhood. He indicates that it feels less safe because of this, because there is a feeling of anonymity on the street and nobody can really see him if something goes wrong:

> **RESP_12_M27:** *"En die binnenstraat heb je hier… ja trouwens dat is die… hoe heet die weg daar, want die voelt echt super onveilig… Die zit hier [wijst in de lucht], maar ja het is gewoon een binnenstraat waar de huizen dicht op elkaar staan, alleen lantarenpalen staan. (…) Ja heel erg anoniem, dat voelt echt… ja is echt niet chill. Zeg maar als je thuis komt van een avond stappen of zo dan, dat is net na de Valentijnschool…"*
>
> *RESP_12_M27: "And you have this internal street here… by the way, this is the… what's the name of that road there, because it feels really unsafe… It's here [points to the sky], but yes, it's just an internal street where the houses are all close together and there are only lamp posts. (…) Yes, it's very anonymous, it feels really… yes, it's not cool. You know, when you come home from a night out or something, that's right after Valentine's school…"*

So in addition to the social environment of the neighbourhood, the physical environment also has an impact on feelings of safety.

The value and meaning of Bospolder-Tussendijken

To find out what value and meaning people attach to Bospolder-Tussendijken, one first looked at how people describe the neighbourhood. People often indicate that they experience the neighbourhood as a busy and chaotic one, where many cultures live together and there is a lot of solidarity. But at the same time, there is also poverty which is noticeable in the various institutions that are active in the neighbourhood and the food banks and nuisance because of all the trash in the streets as RESP_08_

M26 indicates:

RESP_08_M26: *"Dus dat zie je ook heel goed, omdat ik hier werk zie ik het ook goed. We hebben een voedselbank hier en er zit er nog eentje hier veder op en best wel veel gemeentelijke instanties zitten hier om te helpen, te ondersteunen voor mensen met laaggeletterdheid, voor brieven en dergelijken… dus je ziet wel heel veel en er zijn ook veel instanties die mensen helpen en ondersteunen en dergelijken… wat dat betreft is er veel werk aan de winkel."*

RESP_08_M26: *"So you can see that very well, and because I work here I can also see it very well. We have a food bank here and there's another one further on and quite a few municipal authorities are here to help, to support people with low literacy, for letters and so on… so you see a lot and there are also many authorities that help and support people and so on… in that respect there is a lot of work to be done."*

The relatively high degree of illiteracy in the neighbourhood also makes people dependent on various agencies. However, in addition to the social support function, these institutions can also have a social function and draw people out of their social isolation. But in addition to this, the respondents also indicate that it is a neighbourhood for opportunities and creativity as RESP_12_M27 says:

RESP_12_M27: *"Nou, wat ik sowieso over het algemeen van West denk is dat het behoorlijk innovatief is, dus er zijn heel veel mensen met goede ideeën, er wonen ook heel veel mensen met goede ideeën en vrij creatief. Veel creatieve mensen die werken in de creatieve sector, of kunstenaars, of… dat idee heb ik. En… nee je ziet toch ook wel dat er, ja ze zeggen misschien dat het in andere buurten misschien hoger is, maar… ik weet eigenlijk niet of ze dat zeggen, maar dat er best wel een hoge mate is van participatie is."*

RESP_12_M27: *"Well, what I think about West in general is that it's pretty innovative, so there are a lot of people with good ideas and quite creative. A lot of creative people who work in the creative sector, or artists, or… that's my idea. And… no, you also see that, yes, they may say that it's higher in other neighbourhoods, but… I don't know if they're saying that, but that there is quite a high level of participation."*

It is therefore a diverse neighbourhood with a high level of participation and creativity and where people generally feel at home. For a number of respondents this feeling of home is even stronger because they grew up in the neighbourhood, have been here all their lives, know the neighbourhood well and have certain positive memories of it. It is also notable that the two residents that grew up here, are both still committed to the neighbourhood because they both work at Pier80 and organise various social support activities on behalf of WMO Radar. So they remain involved.

Yet, two respondents indicate that the neighbourhood does not feel like home. However, it is remarkable here that they both have trouble walking. Besides, RESP_04 used to live in a different place, so her frame of reference is more positive as she mentions several times:

RESP_04_F56: *[Gelach] "Ja ik vind het heel armoedig… sorry. (..) Ja heel erg. Daarom zeg ik, ik kom uit Vlaardingen dat is heel anders."*

RESP_04_F56: *[Laughter] "Yes I think it is very poor… sorry. (…) Yes, very much so. That is why I say, I come from Vlaardingen that is very different."*

In addition, RESP_07_F58 indicates that it is only since she has become less mobile and unable to work that she has started to see things in a more negative light because she spent so much time at home. Before, she was less aware of this because she was working:

RESP_07_F58: *"Ofja ik kende wel vanaf politieke kant wel wijken, dus ik las gewoon en ik hoor en ik ging ook bezoekjes brengen. Maar nu, omdat je echt wel thuiszorg, door mijn ziekte ben ik gewoon thuis, dan zie je vanaf… vooral 's ochtends vanaf 's avonds dan zie je wie woont daar, welke groepering woont daar, wie doet wel wat, dan weet je wel meer eigenlijk dan zie ik ook eigenlijk daardoor kwetsbare groepering."*

> **RESP_07_F58**: *"Well, I did know neighbourhoods from the political side, so I just read and I hear and I also go and visit. But now, because you really do have home care, because of my illness I am just at home, then you see from … especially in the morning from in the evening when you see who lives there, which group lives there, who does what, then you know more actually then I see vulnerable group."*

Both also indicate that they experience feelings of loneliness (this will be discussed in more detail in section 5.3), which is likely to have an influence on why they do not feel at home. However, it seems that the personal characteristics of the respondents contribute to an increased risk of feelings of loneliness and not feeling at home in the neighbourhood. For one, this is because her frame of reference (her previous living place) is better in her opinion, and for another it is because her physical condition is strongly decreased. However, it seems that most respondents find it a pleasant neighbourhood with a rough edge, but many do not know any better because they have lived here for such a long time.

The value and meaning of spaces of encounter within Bospolder-Tussendijken

In terms of the value and meaning that people give to places for encounter, it can be seen that they find it valuable to meet people who can contribute in the way of information exchange, someone they recognise themselves in, that there is a common activity that brings them together or where they receive support or learn new things. This mainly concerns activities that are linked to certain places and places where common activities take place; micro-publics, like the Bollenpandje and Pier80. But also the market that takes place twice a week in the neighbourhood has an important function as a space of encounter. Because fruit and vegetables are sold here for relatively low prices, therefore residents are coming to this market in large numbers. This causes that there are many fleeting encounters at this location. But also meaningful encounters, as RESP_07_F58 indicates:

> **RESP_07_F58:** *"En het enigste wat wij leuk vinden is echt om uit te gaan, is markt. (…) Het is twee dagen, dan gaan we even rondwandelen."*
> **Teun van der Geld:** *"Ja, en wie is we dan?"*
> **RESP_07_F58:** *"Ja de bewoners."*
>
> **RESP_07_F58:** *"And the only thing we really like is to go out, is market. (…) It is two days, then we go for a walk."*
> **Teun van der Geld:** *"Yes, and who is we?"*
> **RESP_07_F58:** *"Yeah, the residents."*

So these places can have a lot of potential for people who experience feelings of loneliness and want to get more in touch with people, as RESP_03_F49 also did when she felt the need for this. It shows that also semi-public places can function as spaces of encounter and contribute to generating social encounters that can often be light or even meaningful.

Furthermore, when looking at the public space, certain groups appear to dominate different places. As a result, individuals sometimes feel as if they are not welcome or do not belong in these places. Another factor is that the various public spaces in the neighbourhood often do not facilitate enough places for different groups or individuals to share a space. RESP_12_M27 therefore clearly explains that sometimes also the design of public spaces can make them dominate a certain group, whether consciously or not:

> **RESP_12_M27:** *"Dus, en ik denk ook als zeg maar de sociale… de publieke ruimte daar anders op ingericht is dan heb je minder dat zij een spot claimen zeg maar, want nu staat er maar één bankje of zo ergens en dan kun jij daar niet zitten want je hebt misschien helemaal geen behoefte om dat je dan daarheen gaat*

dat je dan deel uitmaakt van dat contact. Niet dat ik het erg vind dat ze daar zitten, maar als er dan een parkje naast zou zijn dan misschien werkt dat beter of zo."

RESP_12_M27: "So, and I also think that if, say, the social… the public space is organised differently, then you won't have as many people claiming a spot, because now there's only one bench or so somewhere and then you can't sit there because you might not feel the need to go there and be part of that contact. Not that I mind them sitting there, but if there would be a park next to it, then maybe that would work better or something."

So the design can also play a role in facilitating social encounters, or at least inviting people to use a place, according to the quote. As it is now, residents prefer to avoid certain places rather than engage in social encounters with the groups or individuals who dominate a particular spot.

5.2.2. Type of encounters within Bospolder-Tussendijken

As already briefly mentioned, many encounters in the neighbourhood are organised on an ethnic basis, which means that people meet regularly on the basis of origin, but also on the basis of gender. Here, the men seem to be so strongly present that women sometimes feel uncomfortable and are inclined to meet each other or others outside the district:

RESP_04_F56: *"Ja allemaal mannen. Vrouwen die, zeg maar, helemaal hier niks te zoeken hebben die komen niet naar binnen want dan denken ze dat iemand gaat zeggen dat ze bij de mannen naar binnen gaat. Weet je, ze zit weer bij de mannen. Ik zeg je, dit is een mannenwereld, vrouwen passen hier niet tussen. (…) En meisjes ook, vind ik wel jammer. Die gaan naar Utrecht, Amsterdam, gaan ver. Ze blijven niet in de buurt. Iemand had mij ooit gesproken, we willen wat voor de meisjes doen. Maar ik zeg ze gaan niet komen."*

RESP_04_F56: "Yes, all men. Women who, so to speak, have no business being here do not come inside, because then they think someone is going to say that she is going in with the men. You know, she is with the men again. I'm telling you, this is a man's world, women don't fit in here. (…) And girls too, I think it's a shame. They go to Utrecht, Amsterdam, they go far. They don't stay in the neighbourhood. Someone once spoke to me, we want to do something for the girls. But I say they are not going to come."

As was shown earlier, this has to do with taboos and the gossip culture that is strongly active in the neighbourhood. However, that there is a need to encounter each other on the basis of gender seems to stem from the different cultures. Notable is that in the Gijsingflats this is much less the case:

EXP_02: *"En is het…, maar dat is ook gewoon de populatie van de wijk hier. (…) Weet je wel uh hier zijn heel veel Turkse, Marrokaanse. (…) Mensen uhm waarbij, de vrouwen heel duidelijke aangaven van wij willen een aparte groep. (…) Uh. Nou dat is in de Gijsingflats nou helemaal geen issue."*

EXP_02: "And it is…, but that is also just the population of the neighbourhood here. (…) You know, uh, there are a lot of Turks and Moroccans here. (…) People who, um, women very clearly indicated that they wanted a separate group. (…) Uh. This is not an issue in the Gijsingflats at all."

Why this is less here, however, is not clear. Moreover, it is remarkable that within the Bollenpandje, in which all kinds of micro-publics take place, there is no question of any form of expression or separation based on personal characteristics. The times that the researcher went to the Bollenpandje, it was noticeable that all kinds of different people are participating here, varying in age, ethnicity, gender, religion and culture. In addition, encounters in public space tend to be fleeting and light, while those that take place in the form of micro-publics are more meaningful (Amin, 2002). Besides to the fact that there are already a decent number of micro-publics in the neighbourhood, there still appears to be a need among residents for more micro-publics where common activities can be done:

RESP_08_M26: "Ik denk dat als het een soort van samen gaat met wat ik dan eerder aangaf dat er bijvoorbeeld… mis van… culturele of sportieve activiteiten of clubs of zo, want wanneer je bij zoiets aansluit dan join je een bepaalde community waardoor je dus al…"
Teun van der Geld: "Gewoon waarmee je jezelf kunt identificeren zeg maar?"
RESP_08_M26: "Ja en daardoor is het een toegankelijke weg om meer mensen te kunnen werven voor je netwerk, of sociaal netwerk in ieder geval… Ervaar ik het als een gemist?… Of dat ik het meer zou willen hebben?… Denk dat is leuk, ik vind de interactie met mensen vind ik leuk, nieuwe mensen leren kennen vind ik leuk…"

RESP_08_M26: "I think that if it sort of goes together with what I indicated earlier that there are, for example… cultural or sports activities or clubs or suchlike, because when you join something like that, you join a certain community, so that you already…"
Teun van der Geld: "Just with which you can identify yourself so to speak?"
RESP_08_M26: "Yes, and that makes it an accessible way to recruit more people to your network, or social network in any case… Do I experience it as something I missed?… Or that I would like it more?… I think that's nice, I like the interaction with people, I like getting to know new people…"

According to the respondents, the supply of cultural and sports activities in which people can identify themselves is still lacking. In this way, it can create the potential for meaningful encounters to arise.

Random social encounters on the street are often fleeting or light (if it is someone you know by sight or some other form of familiarity). However, some residents also indicate that they regularly call people to account for their behaviour, such as throwing trash on the street or not having lights on their bikes. However, these experiences are not always positive, but they do create new contacts :

Teun van der Geld: Oke, maar die interacties die leveren ook een soort contact op toch?
RESP_04_F56: Ja dat wel, ja. (…) Ja, dat wel, want nu iedere keer zegt ie… iedere keer lachen. (…) Ja dan veranderd hij wel… in principe heb ik hem ook geholpen met die meldapp.
Teun van der Geld: Ja precies. Dus er komen ook goede dingen uit zeg maar.
RESP_04_F56: Ja want eerst zegt hij, ben je van de gemeente? Ik zeg ik ben niemand, ik ben gewoon van de wijk [gelach].

Teun van der Geld: Okay, but those interactions also create a kind of contact, don't they?
RESP_04_F56: Yes, they do, yes. (…) Yes, they do, because now every time he says… every time he laughs. (…) Yes, then he changes… in principle I also helped him with the app.
Teun van der Geld: Yes, exactly. So good things also come out of it, so to speak.
RESP_04_F56: Yes, because first he said, are you from the municipality? I say I am nobody, I am just from the neighbourhood [laughter].

These can then lead to light or meaningful encounters when people meet in the street, as is shown in the quote of RESP_04_F56.

So, based on these results, an answer can already be given to the sub-question '*what values and meanings do residents attach to space of encounter and to Bospolder-Tussendijken as a whole?*'. As mentioned earlier, most respondents see the neighbourhood as a home where there are many cultures and where the places where activities take place, such as Pier80 and the Bollenpandje, one can learn from these different cultures and one also wants to learn from each other. This is why people see these places as important places for social encounter, where deeper social bonds can be formed. Whereas Bospolder-Tussendijken as a whole really feels like home to most respondents.

In addition, an answer can also be formulated for the question '*what is characteristic of the social environment of Bospolder-Tussendijken and how is this reflected in the physical environment of the neighbourhood?*'. The social environment of Bospolder-Tussendijken is characterised by various groups

who live relatively separate lives but who do tolerate each other. The groups are often formed on the basis of ethnicity and/or gender, something that is strongly reflected in the public space: the public space is mainly dominated by men of the same ethnicity. As a result, certain groups experience some degree of exclusion, such as women in general. Women and mixed groups who encounter each other in the outdoor space are rarely or not present. Women are more likely to come together in the form of micro-publics, where they do a common activity, or in private or semi-public places. It can be said that the gossip culture, which is strongly present, is partly the cause of this.

It turned out that the representation of women in the public space was so low that it sometimes made other women feel uncomfortable in the public space or within certain facilities. They therefore sometimes chose to meet or to make use of facilities where a taboo prevails, such as markets, second-hand shops and institutions that offer certain types of social assistance outside the neighbourhood, because fellow residents might label them in a negative way. It must be said, however, that this also seemed to differ per culture/ethnicity; these feelings were particularly strong among Turkish/Moroccan respondents.

5.3   Feelings of loneliness among the residents of Bospolder-Tussendijken

This section will focus on how and if the residents of Bospolder-Tussendijken experience feelings of loneliness. It will also look at why this is and how people deal with it when they experience these feelings. It was seen that most residents do not feel lonely. Four respondents indicated that they experienced feelings of loneliness at times or more often. However, the reason why respondents experienced these feelings differs, with the men indicating that they do not experience feelings of loneliness all the time, but at certain times. However, when this feeling comes up depends on the context. For example, RESP_11_M32, who is a single father of one child, indicates that he experiences feelings of loneliness when he is not doing anything while his friends are doing things or when he is going through a difficult period, in which he feels like he is the only one experiencing this:

> **RESP_11_M32:** "Ja gewoon je eigen ding doen. Natuurlijk je kan af en toe gaan wandelen, maar dat klinkt allemaal zo Titanic en zo weet je [gemompel onverstaanbaar]… maar er zijn momenten dat je denk van ja ik ben gewoon effe… Iedereen is wat aan het doen of zo en jij niet. (…) Of je gaat door een periode heen… (…) Ja dat ik denk, zo dat is kut maar je bent de enige die dat voelt."
>
> **RESP_11_M32:** "Yes, just do your own thing. Of course you can go for a walk once in a while, but that sounds so Titanic and so you know [mumbling unintelligibly]… but there are moments when you think, yes, I'm just a bit… Everyone is doing something and you're not. (…) Or you go through a period… (…) Yes, I think, that sucks, but you're the only one who feels it."

In addition, RESP_05_M39, who is also a single father of two children, indicates that the feelings of loneliness are similar to a kind of depression, but that he prefers to deal with this alone and withdraw into his home. Both men indicate that they like to deal with these feelings alone, whereas RESP_05_M39 indicates that he sometimes goes outside with the children when he experiences these feelings. Besides, he indicates that he thinks the feeling of loneliness is sometimes necessary. However, why he feels this way is not further explained in the interview when he talks about his feelings of loneliness:

> **RESP_05_M39**: "Soort van depressie maar dan… (…) Ik zeg je eerlijk, ik verwerk het alleen dan. (…) En dan ja… Of ik ben dan stil. Ga ik gewoon even met deken op de bank. (…) Of tv. Of dan ga ik even rondje naar buiten lopen met de kinderen. Laat ik ze spelen, dan zit ik daar ergens."

Teun van der Geld: "*Ja gewoon effe met jezelf, beetje rustig. Oké. En vindt je…. Oh, dat heb je ook al gezegd; dat je dan soms gewoon liever effe alleen bent.*"
RESP_05_M39: "*Ja, en soms heb jij ook…, maar soms heb je dat ook nodig; alleen zijn.*"

RESP_05_M39: "*Sort of depressed but then… (…) I tell you, honestly, I deal with it by myself. (…) And then yes… Or I am quiet. I just go on the couch with a blanket. (…) Or on TV. Or I go for a walk outside with the children. I let them play, then I sit there somewhere.*"
Teun van der Geld: "*Yes, just with yourself, a bit quiet. Okay. And do you find…. Oh, you said that too; that sometimes you'd just rather be alone.*"
RESP_05_M39: "*Yes, and sometimes you also…, but sometimes you need that too; to be alone.*"

In contrast to RESP_11_M32 he also does not clearly indicate when these feelings emerge.

Moreover, the two female respondents who indicated that they experienced feelings of loneliness both had in common that they had trouble walking. In addition, RESP_04_F56, a divorced woman with several children and grandchildren, indicates that she feels lonely because she cannot identify with the neighbourhood and does not find much connection with the residents. To express this she uses the comparison with the feeling of being in a foreign country:

Teun van der Geld: "*Oke, en heb je wel eens het gevoel… Voel je je zeg maar doordat je ook minder mensen spreek dat je daardoor soms wel eens denkt van nou ik voel mij wel eens een beetje alleen?*"
RESP_04_F56: "*Ja. Zeker weten. Ik voel mij alsof ik in het buitenland zit.*"

Teun van der Geld: "*Okay, and do you ever have the feeling… Do you feel, so to speak, that because you talk to fewer people you sometimes think, well, I feel a bit alone?*
RESP_04_F56: "*Yes, definitely. I feel as if I am in a foreign country.*"

She used to come from a neighbourhood where everyone got along and residents socialised with each other on a regular basis, but due to her physical condition she was forced to move to a more suitable home. Since the new situation in Bospolder-Tussendijken is very different for her in contrast with the place where she comes from, she finds it difficult to fit in. She feels as if different standards and values apply than in the place she comes from.

RESP_07_F58, a single woman without children, also experiences difficulties in connecting with the neighbours. In addition, the woman has a strong accent and therefore the quotes sometimes seem confusing. But, in the interview, she indicates that she has tried several times to make contact with her neighbours. She also tried to do this by finding reasons to make contact with neighbours, such as dropping off a folder, but she indicates that she often gets rejected:

RESP_07_F58: "*Ik probeer 's avonds een buur te vinden… Ik heb echt… 360 woningen he… Ik heb nagedacht, ik kwam alleen maar bij een vrouw, een oudere vrouw die tegenover mij zit de vorige keer… ik heb gezegd mag ik even bij jou komen om een folder te brengen? Er was een folder van een activiteit toevallig, en ik dacht dan kan ik ook even journaal kijken, heel even kijken. (..) En ze zeiden 'oh wat moet je? Wat wil je?' Zoiets. (…) En toen zei ze toen ik ging zitten, tien minuten… 'Ik moet naar bed, het is acht uur, zovan wegwezen', klaar… dus (…) Is moeilijk.*"

RESP_07_F58: "*I try to find a neighbour in the evening… I have really… 360 dwellings… I have been thinking, I only came to a woman, an older woman who lives across from me … I said may I come and bring you a flyer? There was a flyer about an activity, and I thought I could watch the news, just for a minute. (…) And they said, 'oh, what do you want? What do you want?' Something like that. (…) And then she said when I sat down, ten minutes… 'I have to go to bed, it's eight o'clock', so get out, done… so (…) it's difficult.*"

This and previous rejections of social ecnounters resulted in a pessimistic attitude. This becomes even more clear when she explains that she has been trying to get involved in the neighbourhood since 1995, but feels that she does not receive appreciation:

RESP_07_F58: *"En een pakket uitgedeeld wordt voor verjaardagen en voor allemaal mensen, heel het jaar door vanaf echt '95 ben ik al bezig. Niemand zegt 'Oh zij doet wat, of…' zie je dat helemaal niks. (…) Op dat moment denk je, waar ben jij bezig? Waar ben jij bezig, hier gaat niks veel verbeteren dus, laat maar."*

RESP_07_F58: *"And a package is handed out for birthdays and for all people, all year round from really '95 onwards. Nobody says 'Oh she is doing something, or…', you see that nothing at all. (…) At that moment you think, what are you doing? What are you doing, nothing is going to improve here so, never mind."*

Moreover, with this respondent it is not explicitly stated that she experiences feelings of loneliness, but she does indicate that her pessimistic attitude and depressive feelings, which has been partly formed by various negative experiences concerning social encounters within the neighbourhood, is so strong that she has had thoughts of suicide:

RESP_07_F58: *"Inderdaad. Weet je… het is misschien overdreven, maar ik zat gister echt aan zelfmoord plegen gedacht."*
Teun van der Geld: *"Nee joh…"*
RESP_07_F58: *"Meen ik echt, zo heftig… [huilt]"*

RESP_07_F58: *"Indeed. You know… maybe it's exaggerated, but yesterday I really thought about committing suicide."*
Teun van der Geld: *"No way…"*
RESP_07_F58: *"I really mean it, so intense… [cries]"*

Because it became very emotional after this, it was decided to take a break and give the respondent a chance to calm down. She was not asked any further questions about feelings of loneliness and instead the interview was focused on another sub-topic. However, it should be mentioned that this woman has various physical disabilities, and therefore has difficulty walking and forced to stay at home because she is unable to work. Besides, the renovation that Havensteder is carrying out on the Gijsingflats, where this respondents lives, should also be briefly mentioned. During the interviews, several respondents complained about the quality of the renovation and the way the contractor interacted with the residents. This is also the case with RESP_07_F58 and contributes to the pessimistic attitude en depressive feelings. The contractor damaged her floor to such an extent that she is forced to apply for a loan, which causes her stress. In addition, because of this renovation, she has had no TV or internet for a month and a half (and counting), which means she has no or minimal contact with the outside world. These factors therefore contribute to the negative feelings that the respondent is experiencing.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that all four respondents who indicated that they experience feelings of loneliness in some way seem to have certain individual characteristics, relationship status and physical health, which, according to the theory of De Jong Gierveld and Van Tilburg (2016) can increase the risk of experiencing feelings of loneliness. Moreover, as already briefly mentioned, the men mainly preferred to deal with feelings of loneliness themselves and tended to go indoors and occasionally to go for a walk. It is notable that the two women actively sought connections and social encounters, mainly in micro-publics because they do not have the feeling that they can knock on the door of the neighbours for a little chat:

Teun van der Geld: "Maar hoe ga je daar dan mee om, als voelt van nou ik heb behoefte om mensen te ontmoeten?"
RESP_04_F56: "Ja naar buurthuizen."
Teun van der Geld: "Naar buurthuizen, dat is toch een belangrijke dan?"
RESP_04_F56: "Ja bij mensen kun je niet aankloppen."

Teun van der Geld: "But how do you deal with that, when you feel like, well, I need to meet people?"
RESP_04_F56: "Yes, to community centres."
Teun van der Geld: "To community centres, that is an important one, isn't it?"
RESP_04_F56: "Yes, you cannot knock on people's doors."

But despite this, the women still do not seem satisfied with the social encounters that follow and they therefore still experience feelings of loneliness:

RESP_07_F58: "Ja hier heb je wel Pier80 inderdaad, dat is wel voor mijn cursus, computertraining. Als je ziek bent dan komt er wel heel veel bijkosten, zorgkosten en dergelijken dingen. En Pier80 kwam ik wel vroeger… Nou vroeger, dan gebruik ik ook wel best wel Pier80. Dan kom je wel, maar dan… er is niet echt zo'n dag dat je kan aanschuiven, dat je even gezamenlijk koffie drinken. Iedereen is wat bezig, dan blijf je ook. (…) Ja er is niet voldoende mogelijkheden van buurthuizen. (…) Dat je kan, wel kunnen aanschuiven, weinig vind ik zelf."

RESP_07_F58: "Yes, here you have Pier80 indeed, that is for my course, computer training. If you are ill, there are a lot of extra costs, care costs and things like that. And I used to… Well, I used to use Pier80. You do come, but then… there's not really a day that you can join in, have a cup of coffee together. Everyone is busy, so you stay. (…) Yes, there are not enough possibilities of community centres. (…) I don't think it's much that you can join in."

Apart from this small group, there were also respondents who indicated that they saw being alone at home (social isolation) or being alone in the public space as something pleasant, as time for themselves and to relax:

RESP_12_M27: (…) Maar soms is het ook wel chill om even solo te zijn zeg maar, effe niks te hoeven… maar ik moet wel vaker mijn rust nemen nu je het zegt ook. Gewoon effe naar buiten in mijn eentje… (…) Ja dat is ook omdat die slechte kwaliteit van de muren zeg maar hoor je ook de hele tijd de buren… Soms heb ik dan ook zeg maar van 'ah was ik maar even zeg maar compleet…'; en als ik dan soms bij mijn ouders ben in Heemstede, waar het facking rustig is dan denk ik vaak van 'ah, wat chill eigenlijk, er is hier helemaal niks', dus het gaat gewoon niet alleen maar door en door en door, dus…(…) Maar er is niet zoveel ruimte in de stad om alleen te zijn zeg maar…

RESP_12_M27: (…) But sometimes it's also cool to be solo for a while, to not have to do anything… But I do have to take my rest more often now that you mention it. Just to go outside on my own… (…) Yes, that's also because of the bad quality of the walls, you can hear the neighbours all the time… Sometimes I'm like 'oh I wish I was complete… And when I'm with my parents in Heemstede, where it's really quiet, I often think 'oh, that's cool, there's nothing here at all', so it just doesn't go on and on and on, so…(…) But there isn't much room in the city to be alone, so to speak…

However, these are usually people who consider their social environment and network to be sufficient and who do not experience (strong) feelings of loneliness. For example, RESP_12_M27 is a young adult and indicates that he has a girlfriend and a large number of friends, of whom he sometimes even has to take a rest. So being alone can then sometimes feel more pleasant than when someone is always alone.

Based on these results, different answers can be given to the other two sub-questions. First an answer can be formulated for the sub-question '*what is characteristic of the spaces of encounter in Bospolder-Tussendijken and how does this influence feelings of loneliness among adult residents?*'.

As indicated earlier, people are more inclined to go to community centres, social buildings, micro-publics or through small interactions with neighbours to counteract feelings of loneliness. In addition, the Bollenpandje in particular is a space where the social habits expressed in the public space (men of the same ethnic group, for example) are broken. Mixing people with different characteristics and backgrounds takes place here. Furthermore, respondents hardly ever go to public spaces to deliberately encounter new people or to make social contacts here and when they do go out, it is to be in a different environment and to clear their heads. In addition, it can be seen that various negative experiences with residents or rejections when trying to make contact can increase the feelings of loneliness, but this appeared to be the case for only a small part of the group of respondents.

Finally, the sub-question, '*is there a need for more social encounters in public space among residents within Bospolder-Tussendijken and how should this be given shape according to them and why?*' can also be answered on the basis of the data from the interviews. There is no strong desire among the residents of Bospolder-Tussendijken to have more social encounters in public space, but they do indicate that places that stimulate and facilitate encounters, fleeting, light or meaningful, are minimal in the public space. Needs and wishes they mentioned were mainly sufficient sitting areas combined with greenery. However, the adding of micro-publics that are relatively accessible is often seen as an enrichment of the social environment. But, good communication plays an important role. Furthermore, people do have a greater need to encounter with people through a common activity. However, this does not necessarily have to be a large-scale activity; people indicated that the possibility of drinking a cup of coffee somewhere in an accessible way was also enough for them. Moreover, for the residents it does not necessarily have to be in the public space, but encounters in private spaces such as cafés, semi-public spaces such as community centres or by means of micro-publics is also desirable.

[6] CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

6.1   Conclusion

This study focused on the influence that spaces of encounter and the types of encounters that take place within have on feelings of loneliness among adult residents of low socio-economic neighbourhoods. Previous research indicates that within low socio-economic neighbourhoods public spaces, which are important spaces of encounter, are often of low quality and that there are more residents who experience feelings of loneliness within these neighbourhoods (Ribeiro-Palacios, Morales Gómez, & Soria Yañez, 2021; Rad & Ngah, 2013; Matthews, et al., 2019). Therefore, during this qualitative case study, an attempt was made to gain an insight into if and how the spaces of encounter within low socio-economic neighbourhoods influence feelings of loneliness among residents. This is done through a combination of desk and field research. Throughout this research, sub-questions have been answered in order to answer the main research question '*how do spaces of encounter and the types of encounters that take place within them influence feelings of loneliness among residents of low socio-economic neighbourhoods?*'.

The division between ethnic groups and gender is strongly reflected in the public spaces. This is one core characteristic of the social environment of Bospolder-Tussendijken. As Van Eijk (2012) pointed out, different groups live alongside each other and tolerate each other, but social encounters between the different groups are rare. This is also the case in Bospolder-Tussendijken. However, respondents seem to want to get rid of this and are therefore often consciously looking for places where mixing does take place, such as micro-publics. Only within micro-publics there seems to be a strong mixture of individuals of different ethnicities and genders. In addition, the encounters that take place within these micro-publics are meaningful, such as the 'active residents' group' that is present within the neighbourhood. This finding corresponds to the theory of Amin (2002) and Mayblin and others (2015), in which they indicated that it is mainly the micro-publics where meaningful contact takes place through a common activity. But for some residents the threshold is still too high to participate in different social activities.

A part of the reason can be explained by another characteristic of the social environment. There seems to be a strong gossip culture in the neighbourhood in which people keep a close eye on each other. This social characteristic reinforces taboos and social barriers. In addition, it therefore seems that the social environment of the neighbourhood influences the types of encounters and the feelings of loneliness among residents. But also because of the suspicious attitude among certain residents which makes it more difficult to have social encounters. This corresponds with the study of Kearns and colleagues (2015) in which they stated that minimal trust and familiarity among residents can increase the chance of experiencing feelings of loneliness. To give an example, two respondents were unable to meet their need for certain types of social encounters because of the social environment of the neighbourhood. One woman indicated that she felt a greater need to meet women, as she was used to doing so in her previous place of residence. However, in Bospolder-Tussendijken women are poorly represented in the public space because they tended to carry out social activities outside the neighbourhood due to the gossip in the neighbourhood. This made it difficult for the respondent to find other women to have social encounters with, both in the public space and in semi-public spaces. Another woman indicated that the negative experiences of social encounters with neighbours or the rejection of neighbours when trying to connect with them contributed to the feelings of loneliness. However, it

should be emphasised that this was not the only reason that these two residents experience feelings of loneliness. Personal characteristics also played a large role in this, which is corresponding with the theory of De Jong Gierveld and Van Tilburg (2016). They both had problems with walking, which made participating in social activities much harder for them and they are unable to work which also causes a decrease in the daily social encounters one has. Furthermore, respondents who experienced feelings of loneliness indicated that they went to community centres or micro-publics for social contact, so these places seem to play an important role in counteracting feelings of loneliness.

Finally, the theory of Matthews and others (2019) indicates that residents from low socio-economic neighbourhoods have a lower collective willingness to participate in the neighbourhood. Despite the fact that respondents in this study indicated that they felt that other residents were busy with themselves, it appears that many respondents are actually very involved with the neighbourhood. Most respondents were involved in the neighbourhood in the form of 'active resident' or volunteer at one of the community centres or other social buildings. The involvement of neighbours is also reflected in the many social activities that are organised in the neighbourhood. Besides, this involvement also led to meaningful encounters between residents because they participate in a common activity, again referring to the theory of micro-publics of Amin (2002). All in all, it can be concluded that the type of encounters that take place within the spaces of encounter in a way influence feelings of loneliness among adult residents of low socio-economic neighbourhoods, but other factors such as individual characteristics have a strong influence too, maybe even stronger than the type of encounters and the spaces of encounter in which they take place.

6.2   Discussion

This study has been beneficial in the sense that it has used previous insights to gain new insights into how spaces of encounter and types of encounter influence feelings of loneliness in low socio-economic neighbourhoods. This research has therfore given an exploratory view on the subjects and has resulted in findings which can be useful for future research. It demonstrates that micro-publics are important places for social encounter and that there are certain social habits within the neighbourhood that provide both quality and boundaries. However, good spaces for encounter have the potential to break through these barriers, as can be seen at the Bollenpandje. These social buildings, where people can carry out common activities, have great potential to make a positive contribution to the social interaction between residents and to strengthen the overall social environment within a neighbourhood of low socio-economic status. Future research into the successes of these kinds of places may be very useful here.

Furthermore, this study is useful because the social environment of neighbourhoods is just as important as the physical environment during the redevelopment of neighbourhoods, especially if one wants to improve the health within the living environment. Therefore, as indicated in the last sentence of the conclusion, it is interesting to gain more insight into how far individual characteristics limit people from participating in certain social encounters in neighbourhoods and what influence this has on feelings of loneliness among residents who experience certain limitations but also on the social environment of the neighbourhood. This could lead to an even better understanding of spaces

for encounter and feelings of loneliness.

Important in research on these sensitive topics is the openness and personal information that people share with the researcher, something that was achieved during this research. For future qualitative research on these subjects, it is therefore recommended to first build up a relationship of trust within the neighbourhood. This can be done by participating in activities and visiting important social and community facilities on a regular basis and simply talking to the residents and actors that are active within the neighbourhood. Furthermore, future research can reinforce this research by focusing more deeply on the social interaction between neighbours and investigating what exactly are the reasons that people keep such close watch on each other and why certain people do not feel the need for a closer bond with their neighbours, while also looking at the potential of micro-publics in this. This is something that did not came out of this research. In addition, the use of a focus group can also be useful during the execution of these studies. This creates more dynamic conversations and allows respondents to interact with each other or engage in interesting discussions, which can lead to even better insights.

[7] BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aksel, E., & İmamoğlu, Ç. (2020). Neighborhood location and its association with place attachment and residential satisfaction. *Open House International, 45*(3), 327-340. Retrieved May 23, 2022, from https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1108/OHI-05-2020-0035

Al Odat, S., & Al Kurdi, N. (2021). Lively Streets: The role of streetscape elements in improving the experience of commercial street users in Amman, Jordan. *Journal of Settlements and Spatial Planning, 12*. Retrieved April 15, 2022, from https://geografie.ubbcluj.ro/ccau/jssp/arhiva_1_2021/01JSSP012021.pdf

Amin, A. (2002). Ethnicity and the multicultural city: living with diversity. *Environment and Planning A, 34*, 959-980. DOI:10.1068/a3537

Anderson, J., Ruggeri, K., Steemers, K., & Huppert, F. (2017). Liverly Social Space, Well-Being Activity, and Urban Design: Findings From a Low-Cost Community-Led Public Space Intervention. *Environment and Behavior, 49*(6), 685-716. Retrieved April 26, 2022, from http://doi.org/10.1177/0013916516659108

Astell-Burt, T., Hartig, T., Eckermann, S., Nieuwenhuijsen, M., McMunn, A., Frumkin, H., & Feng, X. (2022). More green, less lonely? A longitudinal cohort study. International *Journal of Epidemiology, 51*(1), 99-110. DOI:10.1093/ije/dyab089

Beal, C. (2006). Loneliness In Older Women: A Review Of The Literature. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 27*(7), 795-813. Retrieved June 4, 2022, from https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1080/01612840600781196

Brown, B., Altman, I., & Werner, C. (2012). Place Attachment. In S. Smith, *International Encyclopedia of Housing and Home* (pp. 183-188). Retrieved May 3, 2022, from https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-047163-1.00543-9

Carrera, L. (2022). Designing Inclusive Urban Places. *Italian Sociological Review, 12*(1), 141-158. DOI:10.13136/isr.v12i1.522

Dahlberg, L., McKee, K., Lennartsson, C., & Rehnberg, J. (2022). A social exclusion perspective on loneliness in older adults in the Nordic countries. *European Journal of Ageing*. DOI:10.1007/s10433-022-00692-4

De Jong Gierveld, J., & Van Tilburg, T. (2016). Social Isolation and Loneliness. *Encyclopedia of Mental Health, 4*, 175-178. DOI:10.1016/B978-0-12-397045-9.00118-X

Domènech-Abella, J., Switsers, L., Mundó, J., Dierckx, E., Dury, S., & De Donder, L. (2021). The association between perceived social and physical environment and mental health among older adults: mediating effects of loneliness. *Aging & Mental Health, 25*(5), 962-968. Retrieved April 20, 2022, from https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2020.1727853

Escalera-Reyes, J. (2020). Place Attachment, Feeling of Belonging and Collective Identity in Socio-Ecological Systems: Study Case of Pegalajar (Andalusia-Spain). *Sustainability, 12*(8). Retrieved May 22, 2022, from https://doi.org/10.3390/su12083388

Franklin, A., & Tranter, B. (2021). Loneliness and the cultural, spatial, temporal and generational bases of belonging. *Australian Journal of Psychology, 73*(1), 57-69. DOI:10.1080/00049530.2020.1837007

Galea, S., Freudenberg, N., & Vlahov, D. (2005). Cities and population health. *Social Science & Medicine, 60*, 1017-1033. DOI:10.1016/j.socscimed.2004.06.036

Gehl, J. (1978). *Leven tussen huizen*. (J. Van Beusekom, Trans.) Zutphen: De Walburg Pers.

Gemeente Rotterdam. (2018). *Veerkrachtig Bospolder-Tussendijken 2028*. Rotterdam: Gemeente Rotterdam.

Gemeente Rotterdam. (2022). *Wijkprofiel Rotterdam 2022*. Retrieved June 6, 2022, from wijkprofiel. rotterdam.nl: https://wijkprofiel.rotterdam.nl/nl/2022/rotterdam/delfshaven

Hajek, A., & König, H. (2020). Which factors contribute to loneliness among older Europeans? Findings from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe Determinants of loneliness. *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics, 89*. Retrieved May 3, 2022, from https://doi.org/10.1016/j. archger.2020.104080

Hanhörster, H., & Weck, S. (2020). Middle-class family encounters and the role of micro-publics for cross-social interaction. In S. Musterd, *Handbook of Urban Segregation* (pp. 254-269). Gheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited. DOI:10.4337/9781788115605

Hawkley, L., Hughes, M., Waite, L., Masi, C., Thisted, R., & Cacioppo, J. (2008). From Social Structural Factors to Perceptions of Relationship Quality and Loneliness: The Chicago Health, Aging, and Social Relations Study. *Social Sciences, 63B*(6), 375-384. Retrieved May 25, 2022, from https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1093/geronb/63.6.S375

Hay, I. (2016). *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

Jennings, V., & Bamkole, O. (2019). The Relationship between Social Cohesion and Urban Green Space: An Avenue for Health Promotion. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16*(3). Retrieved May 25, 2022, from https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16030452

Jessen, M., Pallesen, A., Kriegbaum, M., & Kristiansen, M. (2018). The association between loneliness and health - a survey-based study among middle-aged and older adults in Denmark. *Aging & Mental Health, 22*(10), 1338-1343. DOI:10.1080/13607863.2017.1348480

Karacor, E., & Parlar, G. (2017). Conceptual Model of the Relationship Between Neighbourhood Attachment, Collective Efficacy and Open Space Quality. *Open House International, 42*(2), 68-74. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/OHI-02-2017-B0010

Kearns, A., Whitley, E., Tannahill, C., & Ellaway, A. (2015). 'Lonesome Town'? is Loneliness Associated with the Residential Environment Including Housing and Neighborhood Factors? *Journal of Community Psychology, 43*(7), 849-867. DOI:10.1002/jcop.21711

Kemperman, A., Van den Berg, P., Weijs-Perrée, M., & Uijtdewillegen, K. (2019). Loneliness of Older Adults: Social Network and the Living Environment. *International Journal of Environment Research and Public Health, 16*(3). DOI:10.3390/ijerph16030406

Klok, J., Van Tilburg, T., Suanet, B., Fokkema, T., & Huisman, M. (2017). National and transnational belonging among Turkish and Moroccan older migrants in the Netherlands: protective against loneliness? *European Journal of Ageing, 14*, 341-351. DOI:10.1007/s10433-017-0420-9

Lasgaard, M., Goossens, L., Bramsen, R., Trillingsgraad, T., & Elklit, A. (2011). Different sources of loneliness are associated with different forms of psychopathology in adolescence. *Journal of Research in Personality, 45*(2), 233-237. Retrieved June 4, 2022, from https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1016/j.jrp.2010.12.005

Li, B., Guo, W., Liu, X., Zhang, Y., Russell, P., & Schnabel, M. (2021). Sustainable Passive Design for Building Performance of Sustainable Passive Design for Building Performance of. *Sustainability, 13*(16). Retrieved April 15, 2022, from https://doi.org/10.3390/su13169115

Lim, M., Allen, K., Furlong, M., Craig, H., & Smith, D. (2021). Introducing a dual continuum model of belonging and loneliness. *Australian Journal of Psychology, 73*(1), 81-86. DOI:10.1080/00049530.2021.1883411

Liu, J., & Kim, S. (2021). Space Design Guide for Public Areas in a Multicultural Environment: Based on the Theory of Social Atomism. *Archives of Design Research, 34*(2), 21-31. Retrieved June 15, 2022, from http://dx.doi.org/10.15187/adr.2021.05.34.2.21

Lyu, Y., & Forsyth, A. (2021). Planning, Aging, and Loneliness: Reviewing Evidence About Built Environment Effects. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 1-21. DOI:10.1177/08854122211035131

Maastricht University. (2021, februari 8). *Aanpakken eenzaamheid drukt ook zorgkosten*. Retrieved March 29, 2022, from maastrichtuniversity.nl: https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/nl/nieuws/aanpakken-eenzaamheid-drukt-ook-zorgkosten

Macdonald, S., Nixon, J., & Deacon, L. (2018). 'Loneliness in the city': examining socio-economics, loneliness and poor health in the North East of England. *Public Health, 165*, 88-94. Retrieved May 6, 2022, from https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2018.09.003

Maes, M., Vanhalst, J., Van den Noortgate, W., & Goossens, L. (2017). Intimate and Relational Loneliness in Adolescence. *Journal of Child and Familiy Studies, 26*, 2059-2069. DOI:10.1007/s10826-017-0722-8

Matthews, T., Odgers, C., Danese, A., Fisher, H., Newbury, J., Caspi, A., . . . Arseneault, L. (2019). Loneliness and Neighborhood Characteristics: A Multi-Informant, Nationally Representative Study of Young Adults. *Psychological Science, 30*(5), 765-775. Retrieved April 15, 2022, from https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1177/0956797619836102

Mayblin, L., Valentine, G., Kossak, F., & Schneider, T. (2015). Experimenting with spaces of encounter: Creative interventions to develop meaningful contact. *Geoforum, 63*, 67-80. Retrieved June 4, 2022, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.03.010

McQuaid, R., Cox, S., Ogunlana, A., & Jaworska, N. (2021). The burden of loneliness: Implications of the social determinants of health during COVID-19. *Psychiatry Research*(296). Retrieved April 8, 2022, from https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113648

Mehta, V. (2007). Lively Streets, Determining Environmental Characteristics to Support Social Behavior. *Journal of Planning Education and Research, 27*, 165-187. DOI:10.1177/0739456X07307947

Meisters, R., Westra, D., Putrik, P., Bosma, H., Ruwaard, D., & Jansen, M. (2021). Does Loneliness Have a Cost? A Population-Wide Study of the Association Between Loneliness and Healthcare Expenditure. *International Journal of Public Health, 66*. doi:10.3389/ijph.2021.581286

Mellor, D., Stokes, M., Firth, L., Hayashi, Y., & Cummins, R. (2008). Need for belonging, relationship, satisfaction, loneliness, and life satisfaction. *Personality and Individual Differences, 45*, 213-218. DOI:10.1016/j.paid.2008.03.020

Miller, E. (2020). Loneliness in the Era of COVID-19. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*. DOI:10.3389/fpsyg.2020.02219

Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport. (n.d.). *Feiten en cijfers rond eenzaamheid*. Retrieved March 29, 2022, from Eenzaam.nl: https://www.eenzaam.nl/over-eenzaamheid/feiten-en-cijfers-rond-eenzaamheid

Morata, T., López, P., Marzo, T., & Palasí, E. (2021). The influence of leisure-based community activities on neighbourhood support and the social cohesion of communities in Spain. *International Social Work*, 1-17. Retrieved April 15, 2022, from https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1177%2F00208728211021144

Morrish, N., & Medina-Lara, A. (2021). Does unempoloyment lead to greater levels of loneliness? A systematic review. *Social Science & Medicine, 287*. Retrieved May 6, 2022, from https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114339

Pain, G., & Thompson, S. (2017). What is a Healthy Sustainable Built Environment? Developing Evidence-Based Healthy Built Environment Indicators for Policy-Makers and Practitioners. *Planning Practice & Research, 32*(5), 537-555. Retrieved April 29, 2022, from https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459.2017.1378972

Pawlowski, C., Winge, L., Carrol, S., Schmidt, T., Wagner, A., Nørtoft, K., . . . Troelsen, J. (2017). Move the Neighbourhood: Study design of a community-based participatory public open space intervention in a Danish deprived neighbourhood to promote activ. *BMC Public Health, 17*. DOI:10.1186/s12889-017-4423-4

Pengpid, S., & Peltzer, K. (2021). Associations of loneliness with poor physical health, poor mental health and health risk behaviours among a nationally representative community-dwelling sample of middle aged and older adults in India. *Geriatric Psychiatry, 36*(11), 1722-1731. doi:10.1002/gps.5592

Peterson, M. (2017). Living with difference in hyper-diverse areas: how important are encounters in semi-public spaces? *Social & Cultural Geography, 18*(8), 1067-1085. Retrieved June 6, 2022, from https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2016.1210667

Piekut, A., & Valentine, G. (2017). Spaces of encounter and attitudes towards difference: A comparative study of two European cities. *Social Science Research, 62*, 175-188. Retrieved April 15, 2022, from https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2016.08.005

Rad, V., & Ngah, I. (2013). The Role of Public Spaces in Promoting Social Interactions. *International Journal of Current Engineering and Technology, 3*(1). Retrieved April 17, 2022, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344464409_The_Role_of_Public_Spaces_in_Promoting_Social_Interactions

Räuchle, C., & Berding, U. (2020). Public spaces as sites of encounter. *Standort, 44*, 86-92. Retrieved May 18, 2022, from https://doi.org/10.1007/s00548-020-00646-x

Ribeiro-Palacios, M., Morales Gómez, C., & Soria Yañez, K. (2021). Inequalities in the Quality and Governance Inequalities in the Quality and Governance from Deprived Neighborhoods in Queretaro, Mexico. *Environmental Justice, 14*(1), 49-55. doi:10.1089/env.2020.0031

RIVM. (2015, oktober 20). *Healthy Urban Living*. Retrieved February 12, 2022, from rivm.nl: https://www.rivm.nl/rivm/kennis-en-kunde/strategisch-programma-rivm/spr-2015-2018/themas/hul

RIVM. (2020). *Gezondheid per wijk en buurt; 2012/2016/2020*. Retrieved April 8, 2022, from statline.rivm.nl: https://statline.rivm.nl/portal.html?_la=nl&_catalog=RIVM&tableId=50090NED&_theme=85

RIVM. (2022). *Eenzaamheid Regionaal*. Retrieved February 12, 2022, from vzinfo.nl: https://www.vzinfo.nl/eenzaamheid/regionaal

RIVM. (2022, februari 22). *RIVM Open data StatLine*. Retrieved April 12, 2022, from statline.rivm.nl: https://statline.rivm.nl/portal.html?_la=nl&_catalog=RIVM&tableId=50090NED&_theme=85

RIVM. (n.d.). *Verantwoording*. Retrieved May 10, 2022, from rivm.nl: https://www.rivm.nl/media/smap/verantwoording.html#ggdspecifiek#ggdspecifiek

Salo, A., Junttila, N., & Vauras, M. (2020). Social and Emotional Loneliness: Longitudinal Stability, Interdependence, and Intergenerational Transmission Among Boys and Girls. *Family Relations, 69*, 151-165. DOI:10.1111/fare.12398

Scheepers, P., Tobi, H., & Boeije, H. (2016). *Onderzoeksmethoden*. Amsterdam: Boom.

Schirmer, W., & Michailakis, D. (2018). Inclusion/Exclusion as the Missing Link. A Luhmannian Analysis of Loneliness Among Older People. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 35*, 76-89. DOI:10.1002/sres.2441

Sepulveda-Loyola, W., Rodríguez-Sánchez, I., Pérez-Rodríguez, P., Ganz, F., Torralba, R., Oliveira, D., & Rodríguez-Mañas, L. (2020). Impact of Social Isolation Due To COVID-19 on Health in Older People: Mental and Physical Effects And Recommendations. *Journal of Nutrition, Health and Aging, 24*(9), 938-947. DOI:10.1007/s12603-020-1469-2

Solmi, M., Veronese, N., Galvano, D., Favaro, A., Ostinelli, E., Noventa, V., . . . Trabucchi, M. (2020). Factors Associated With Loneliness: An Umbrella Review Of Observational Studies. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 271*(15), 131-138. Retrieved April 17, 2022, from https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1016/j.jad.2020.03.075

Spierings, B., Van Liempt, I., & Maliepaard, E. (2018). Ownership and membership: practices and experiences of neighbourhood residents in the Wijsgeren community garden in Amsterdam. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie, 109*(5), 677-684. DOI:10.1111/tesg.12337

Trillo, C. (2017). Quality of public space and sustainable urban development: succes and failures in fighting social exclusion. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning, 12*(4), 829-838. DOI:10.2495/SDP-V12-N4-829-838

Valentine, G. (2008). *Living with difference: reflections on geographies of encounter*. Progress in Human Geography, 32, 323-337. Retrieved May 23, 2022, from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0309133308089372

Valentine, G., Piekut, A., & Harris, C. (2015). Intimate encounters: the negotiation of difference within the family and its implications for social relations in public space. *The Geographic Journal, 181*(3), 280-294. DOI:10.1111/geoj.12095

Van den Berg, M., Van Poppel, M., Van Kamp, I., Ruijsbroek, A., Triguero-Mas, M., Gidlow, C., . . . Maas, J. (2019). Do Physical Activity, Social Cohesion, And Loneliness Mediate the Association Between Time Spent Visiting Green Space and Mental Health? *Environment and Behavior, 51*(2), 144-166. DOI:10.1177/0013916517738563

Van den Berg, P., Kemperman, A., De Kleijn, B., & Borgers, A. (2016). Ageing and Loneliness: The Role of Mobility and the Built Environment. *Travel Behaviour and Society, 5*, 48-55. Retrieved April 26, 2022, from https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tbs.2015.03.001

Van der Houwen, K., & Kloosterman, R. (2011). *Vertrouwen in en contacten met buurtgenoten*. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. Retrieved May 24, 2022, from https://www.cbs.nl/-/media/imported/documents/2011/13/2011-k1-b15-p68-art.pdf?la=nl-nl

Van Eijk. (2012). Good Neighbours in Bad Neighbourhoods: Narratives of Dissociation and Practices of Neighbouring in a 'Problem' Place. *Urban Studies, 49*(14), 3009-3026. DOI:10.1177/0042098012439110

Van Liempt, I., & Staring, R. (2021). Homemaking and Places of Restoration: Belonging Within and Beyond Places Assigned to Syrian Refugees in the Netherlands. *Geographical Review, 111*(2), 308-326. DOI:10.1080/00167428.2020.1827935

Von Schönfeld, K., & Bertolini, L. (2017). Urban streets: Epitomes of planning challenges and opportunities at the interface of public space and mobility. *Cities, 68*, 48-55. DOI:10.1016/j.cities.2017.04.012

Wan, C., Shen, G., & Choi, S. (2021). Underlying relationships between public urban green spaces and social cohesion: A systematic literature review. *City, Culture and Society, 24*. Retrieved April 20, 2022, from https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1016/j.ccs.2021.100383

Wang, Q., Fink, E., & Cai, D. (2008). Loneliness, Gender, and Parasocial Interaction: A Uses and Gratifications Approach. *Communication Quarterly, 56*(1), 87-109. DOI:10.1080/01463370701839057

Watson, S. (2009). The Magic of the Marketplace: Sociality in a Neglected Public Space. *Urban Studies, 46*(8), 1577-1591. Retrieved May 2, 2022, from https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1177%2F0042098009105506

Weijs-Perrée, M., Van den Berg, P., Arentze, T., & Kemperman, A. (2015). Factors influencing social satisfaction and loneliness: a path analysis. *Journal of Transport Geography, 45*, 24-31. Retrieved May 17, 2022, from https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2015.04.004

Wilson, H. (2017). On the Paradox of 'Organised' Encounter. *Journal of Intercultural Studies, 38*(6), 606-620. DOI:10.1080/07256868.2017.1386631

Witten, K., & Ivory, V. (2018). *Urban Public Sapces, Social Inclusion and Health*. In V. Crooks, G. Andrews, & J. Pearce, Routledge Handbook of Health Geography (pp. 259-266). London: Routledge. Retrieved April 15, 2022, from https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315104584

Wolfers, M., Stam, B., & Machielse, A. (2022). Correlates of emotional and social loneliness among community dwelling older adults in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. *Aging & Mental Health, 26*(2), 355-367. Retrieved April 17, 2022, from https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2021.1875191

Yarker, S. (2021). A research agenda for geographies of everyday intergenerational encounter. *Area, 53*(2), 264-271. DOI:10.1111/area.12716

Zhang, W., & Lawson, G. (2009). Meeting and Greeting: Activities in public outdoor spaces outside high-density urban residential communities. *Urban Design International, 14*(4), 207-214. Retrieved April 22, 2022, from https://link-springer-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/article/10.1057/udi.2009.19?msclkid=64cab813c57311eca5acee7ccf912f4e