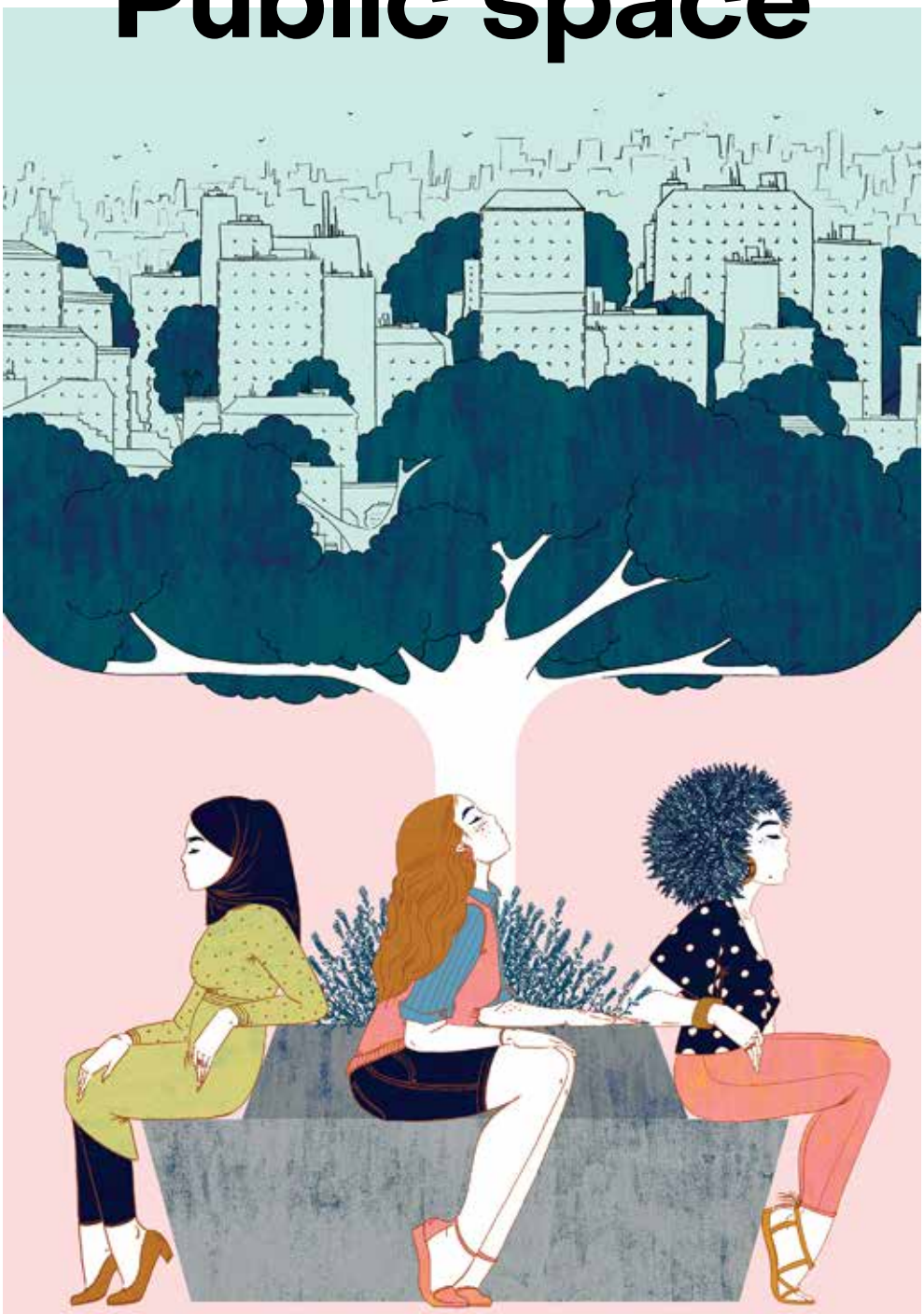
Public space



Always under construction

Linda Zuijderwijk

Public space

Always under construction

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Public space

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Linda Zuijderwijk

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Introduction

Bospolder Square, Rotterdam. Today Master Frans is manning the Duimdrop[1] container, from which he lends toys to the children at the square. Children are playing all over the square, while some of their mothers bunch on the long benches, facing the sun. A fair-skinned girl has just asked for an elastic rope for French skipping; she and a black girl want to jump. Other children are asking for bikes, and Turkish Dutch Arda gets a small silver bike. In the meantime I ask Master Frans whether Bulgarian and Polish children are coming to the square or not. He pauses before replying, then says: 'Yes, actually – since this spring. […] Yes, they are coming now, but it is difficult with the language and so on.' 'Why is it difficult?' 'Well, they don't speak Dutch. And no English either, just a bit of German.' 'What about the parents?' 'Yes, they come as well, but they stay among themselves up there,' says Master Frans, pointing towards the elevated part of the square. 'And how do children interact with one another?' 'Well, some get bullied. There is one girl who can't come along, she gets bullied sometimes […] she is [Eastern European][2] and doesn't go to school yet, she'll start after the summer, so she doesn't speak Dutch yet.' 'I hear about Bulgarians that they speak Turkish, they are Turkish Bulgarians.' 'Oh yes,' says Master Frans, 'that goes somewhat better. They can connect somewhat better.'
(Participant observation, 27–6–2011)

1.1
Introduction to the squares

Bospolder Square, a neighbourhood square in Bospolder-Tussendijken in district Delfshaven, Rotterdam, is a square used by many children of various ethnic backgrounds, under the supervision of their parents, their aunties, and other professional supervisors such as Master Frans. Most of the adults and children speak Dutch, although some apparently lack this ability. Among the children there are quarrels and exclusion – but ordinarily this seems to be no more than the outcome of some game or another. The parents either group together or sit by themselves.

This square is not an isolated case: in Rotterdam alone there is a very large number of such neighbourhood squares, which play some role in both children's and parents' lives. In this city, where 22 per cent of the population is aged under 20 (GGD Rotterdam–Rijnmond 2017), many are dependent on public space for their out-of-doors life and experiences. As

1 Duimdrop literally means 'Thumb Liquorice' – a typically Dutch liquorice candy.
2 The very general label of Eastern European is used to ensure anonymity for these respondents.

the city pursues strategies designed to add 'smart' density and to increase the quality, liveability, and micro-climate of its relatively sparsely populated inner core by adding housing, outdoors and public space – the space outside the home – is becoming more important as an extended living room for the inhabitants (Tillie et al. 2012: 10).

At the same time urban populations in Western Europe have grown ethnically and culturally more diverse than ever before, as a consequence of migration and of simple reproduction; and Rotterdam's population is no exception. Western cities are increasingly becoming 'majority-minority' cities, which means that they are losing their traditional indigenous ethnic majority and that eventually everyone 'will belong to an ethnic minority[3] group' (Crul et al. 2013: 12). This phenomenon, whereby the indigenous ethnic majority of old will probably lose its 'numerical majority position' within the cities' municipal boundaries, is relatively new for many of them.

The question that arises is what these developments mean for the use and experience of ordinary urban public spaces such as neighbourhood squares. When it comes to meeting others on an everyday basis, research indicates that the neighbourhood is important for building 'social trust', 'feeling at home', and trust in our democracy (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid 2005: 11, my translation; see also Duyvendak 2011). In consequence, public spaces of this sort have been recognized and valued as places of meeting and encounter (Burgers 2000; Burgers and Oosterman 1992). In particular, they are regarded as important loci of the 'social integration' of ethnic groups in Dutch society insofar as they offer leisure activities and recreation (Peters 2011; Keune et al. 2002; Jókövi 2000); they are sites where liveability is shaped, both among ordinary citizens and among professionals (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid 2005).

Here are some of the questions that arise from this discussion. What is the meaning of such public spaces in the everyday interaction among various ethnic groups and encounters between users of public space? Does ethnicity play a role? How important is language ability in these interactions and encounters? And how are newcomers to the neighbourhood using the public space? How do they blend with other groups that are already established in these neighbourhoods?

1.1.1 From Bospolder Square, Rotterdam to Amsterdam, Surinam Square

Surinam Square in Amsterdam is a square of very different character. It is dominated by a large roundabout and constitutes one of the most important routes of access into the city. People are mainly using it as a space of transit, as I observed:

To my right there are some parking spots; three cars have parked there during my stay, and after this people walked towards Curacao Street. A woman standing next to me in the pedestrian area is on the phone, drawing little circles with her foot as she talks. There are plenty of cyclists

3 The category of 'ethnic minorities' is a social construction, as Rath (1991) has argued: such minorities are undergoing a process of 'minoritization' within public and political debate.

on the road, and they go pretty fast. A lot of cars drive by and three trams pull into the stop while I was here. There are many people walking towards the trams and waiting for them to stop. The part of the pavement near the statue looks somewhat abandoned, even though every once in a while someone walks past it and there is a lot of noise from the cars.
(Participant observation, 6–6–2010)

In this place of transit there stands a statue, which is a monument for the remembrance of the history of slavery in the Netherlands, the Dutch Antilles, and Suriname. A commemoration of this history is held in this square every year, on 30 June, when many Afro-Suriname Amsterdammers gather to remember their shared past. During the day of the ceremony,

a part of the square is fenced off. It is the area around the statue. In the fenced off part a white tent is erected, and performances take place within it. In the other parts of the area, people cluster around the statue and there are stands that sell food, drinks, and booklets and hand out free flyers. In the middle of the roundabout, flags are hanging at half mast. There will be a ceremony at 20.00.
(Participant observation, 30–6–2009)

Once a year, then, the square is used by many Amsterdammers with Afro-Surinamese background for the symbolic purpose of remembering the history of slavery. During this ceremony they usually lay wreaths, sing the anthems of the Netherlands, Suriname, and the Dutch Antilles, and hoist the flags of these nations. Apart from the official programme, people set up market stalls and consumables are sold in a cozy atmosphere.

Surinam square is not an isolated case any more than Bospolder Square is: capital cities in particular are, pre-eminently, places of symbolic gathering and are often understood as democratic spaces that show 'who belongs' to the nation (Parkinson 2009). Symbolic gatherings founded by indigenous groups – for example the Dutch National Remembrance on 4 May, when victims of war are remembered – illustrate this idea quite well. The celebration is held in several cities across the Netherlands, but the Remembrance Day in Dam Square, Amsterdam is attended by the royal family and broadcast live on public television. But symbolic gathering is not limited to indigenous groups. There are several places in the Dutch cities where particular ethnic minorities hold reunions in order to remember, celebrate, and give expression to their opinions, beliefs, or culture. These events happen in mosques, but there are also festivals such as the Kwaku Festival in the Nelson Mandela park in Amsterdam, which started as a football tournament in the Amsterdam Bijlmermeer, where many Surinamese Amsterdammers were – and still are – housed. Nowadays it is a celebration of 'cultural diversity and identity' that acknowledges its Surinamese roots (KWAKU summerfestival 2017). São João, a midsummer festival that celebrates Cape Verdian culture in Rotterdam, is another example (Rotterdam Festivals 2017). One could also add to this category political acts of coming together, as seen during the March 2017 demonstrations in front of the Turkish consulate in Rotterdam, which protested the 'arrest and sending away of the Turkish minister of family issues' (Redactie 2017).

It has been generally suggested that acts of organizing such religious, ethnic, or cultural festivities and of literally setting identities in stone, for instance by building mosques (McLoughlin 2005), are connected to these groups' striving for symbolic representation. In this view, especially 'processes of globalization' elicit a wish for the commemoration of 'links with time, place and community, in an effort to combat the sense of dislocation' (Manning 1983 and Boissevain 1996, both quoted in Quinn 2003: 333).

Such proposals prompt a whole series of questions. What is the actual role and meaning, for minority groups in the city, of remembering and celebrating, in public space, connections to other places, times, and contexts? How are non-indigenous ethnic groups able to appropriate public space for their symbolic purposes? What techniques do they employ to do so, and what types of urban places can be appropriated in this way? And how does their symbolic appropriation affect the ways in which other groups, including groups of indigenous people, are using public space?

1.1.2 From Surinam Square, Amsterdam to Utrecht, Smaragd Square

Finally, Smaragd Square in Hoograven, Utrecht is different too – but in another way. The square and the area around it are characterized by a functional, modernist division of the architectural space whereby housing, working, and shopping take place each in its designated area, in typical post-war fashion. The shopping function, which extends to the weekly market and the library, is relegated to the square itself, which occupies a central position in the neighbourhood. People who frequent the square have seen how this square has changed, in terms of its built environment, during its 50 years of existence and often make comments about it. 'Everything has changed', observed a neighbour in April 2010. Born in 1926, she has been living in the neighbourhood for more than four decades, since 1977, and has witnessed the recent reconstruction of the square:

[woman, Dutch, 1926, living in the neighbourhood since 1977]: The square has changed, there are many cars now. That was quite different 33 years ago. There were not so many cars [...] The Plus [super]market was not there yet, shops have been added since. The Lidl-supermarket in that corner was not there yet. Everything has changed.
(Street interview 3_LZ, 14–4–2010)

Again, this square is not an isolated case. Situated in a typical 1960s neighbourhood, it is comparable to many post-war neighbourhoods in North-Western Europe (Dekker and Van Kempen 2004; Dekker 2007). These neighbourhoods were built in the heyday of the 'neighborhood unit', when urban planning was driven by the ambition to contribute to the well-being of the community by shaping its physical environment (Reinders 2013), and an accompanying 'urban design principle', called the 'stamp',[4] reflected this ambition (Steenhuis 2008: 60). But then why did these built environments suffer any change at all? Does this mean that the ambitions that drove the construction of Smaragd Square have themselves changed?

4 A 'stamp' is a pattern created by repeating a number of times blocks of different types of houses of varying heights (Gemeente Utrecht Cultuurhistorie en Monumenten 2010).

A *prima facie* answer to this question, made from the angle of Anglo-Saxon urban and social studies, is 'yes': the ambitions and aims have changed. According to scholars in this field, social life is increasingly commodified or economified, and consequently cities are seen as investment opportunities. Professionals in both the public and the private sector – politicians, civil servants, businessmen – increasingly apply the logic of the market to the public or social realm, for instance to social housing, telecommunications, public transport, urban infrastructure, and education (see Schmidt and Németh 2010: 454; Harvey 2006a, 2006b; Logan and Molotch 1987; Sager 2011: 154; also Madanipour 2006, Crawford 1992, and Mudge 2008). The common denominator in processes of commodification of the public realm is 'neoliberalization', which in its broadest meaning encompasses 'political discourses of the economizing of social life, the reformation of the welfare states, and the complex processes of globalization' (Sager 2011: 148). Researchers have asked whether the 'rationality of the market' is becoming 'the organizational principle for state and society as a whole' and, if so, how (Shamir 2008: 6). It has been contended that economic principles – such as those that govern the financialization of relations between the private and the public sector – enter now the social sphere and that the social becomes economized as a result (ibid.; see also Harvey 2006a).

How much can these concepts and heuristics help us to understand the Dutch urban context? In recent decades, studies have showcased how notions such as gentrification, privatization, and revanchism, formed so as to reflect American urban phenomena, are helpful in clarifying Dutch urban reality (see Uitermark and Duyvendak 2008; Aalbers 2011; Van Kempen and Van Weesep 1994; Uitermark et al. 2007; Oudenampsen 2007; Van den Berg and Chevalier 2017; Van Melik 2008; Van Melik et al. 2007, 2009). But these concepts are often in need of some adjustment and moderation, if indeed they are to work in Dutch reality (for a critical approach to this idea of moderation, see Van Eijk 2010).

Hence, to what extent does the Anglo-Saxon literature actually contribute to explaining change in the Dutch urban context? If this literature is used to explain the changes that occurred in the built environment of Smaragd Square, one will be led to conclude that the transformation of this public space was supposedly driven by four main factors: first, the rising competition among cities; second, the transformation of urban places into sites of shopping and identity display; third, the tendency for urban places to become privatized for the benefit of a privileged group of users; and, fourth, the changing roles between the local state and the private sector. However, bearing in mind that this is just an ordinary square, does all this apply? Were indeed these factors the driving force behind the reconstruction of the square?

1.1.3
The ordinary public spaces of Bospolder Square, Surinam Square, and Smaragd Square

Bospolder Square, Suriname Square, and Smaragd Square are three ordinary squares that play a role in the everyday lives of local residents (see Amin and Graham 1997; Robinson 2008; Binken et al. 2012; Burgers, Zuijderwijk et al. 2012; Van der Wilk 2016). They provide three different lenses through which the use of everyday public space, its production –

from concept to materialization, with the help of developers, financiers, designers, and builders (Madanipour 2006) – and its regulation – as part of urban development, planning, and the economy (ibid.), in short: the making of public space, – can be studied in the context of various societal developments, for example the increasing (ethnic) diversification of cities, the quest for symbolic and political urban representation, and the mounting economization of urban space.

I am not the first to be interested in public places and in how they are used, produced, and regulated in a changing society. I am indebted to many empirical researchers, mainly Dutch, who inspired me. The first works to deserve mentioning here are Van Melik et al. (2007, 2009), Van Melik (2008), and Spierings (2006), all of which focus on the increasing influence of privatization and of private and market parties onto the development of public space. The second place is reserved for works that have asked questions about the production of public spaces and its interface with accessibility and experience in the context of local bans (Chevalier 2015), gentrification (Van der Wilk 2016), and urban food markets (Janssens 2017). Third come Oosterman (1993) and Müller (2002), two studies that focused on how the city's social life is experienced and constituted by its users against the backdrop of ideas, dominant at the time, about urban unsafety, depletion, and anonymity. Others – such as Reijndorp (2004), Reijndorp and Reinders (2010), and Reinders (2013) – have focused on the interaction between the produced or planned and the used city, and these come next on my list. The planned and the used city are two very different entities that cover, both physically and socially, one and the same space.

The strength of these qualitative and often ethnographic studies comes from their focus on just one type of contextualization, trend, or interaction and from the deep insights gained in this way. Nevertheless, I consider this strength to be at the same time a weakness. This is because, in my view, such studies often lack the ability to compare observations across various contexts and cases and to draw broader conclusions about the meaning of various societal developments for the making of public space, i.e. the use, production and regulation of ordinary public space. Hence the present work will review three case studies and not just one. This will allow us to refine our understanding of how everyday use, production, and regulation are embedded in *various* societal developments. Therefore the first leading question will be:

How are the ordinary urban public places studied here used, produced, and regulated in the context of general societal developments?

Something else that in my view often is ignored is a reflection on how the practices and contexts under study affect the construction of *public* space, meaning the experience of the public character of space. There is a long tradition of understanding public space as the proper sphere of free conversation and debate on themes concerning the public interest (Habermas 1989 [1962]), which makes public space essential for the functioning of democratic citizenship (Arendt 1998 [1958]). Allegedly this democratic function is diminishing: it has been argued that public space is under increasing pressure, mainly as a result of privatization, which has

inter alia generated problems of control of access (Davis 2006 [1990]; Zukin 1991; Németh 2009; Aalbers 2010). Often public spaces seem to be publicly owned when in reality they are 'privately owned public space[s]' or 'pseudo-public space[s]', as the *Guardian* has called them (Shenker 2017).

The three squares studied here can be considered 'public' in the legal sense.[5] However, the observations that opened this chapter indicate that, within forms of use, production, and regulation, subtle mechanisms are at work that may account one way or another for the underground currents and degrees of 'publicness' and 'privateness' that various individuals or groups may experience in these spaces. In Bospolder Square, such mechanisms may have to do with language ability; in Surinam Square it looks like they relate to participating in the remembrance ceremony or not; and in Smaragd Square they seem to pertain to reconstructing the built environment so as to attract a certain group of privileged residents.

It will be immediately obvious that these subtle (or perhaps not so subtle) mechanisms impinge on the rather normative idea that public spaces are 'inherently democratic' and that 'the question of who can occupy public space […] is open-ended' (Zukin 1995: 11). Madanipour (2003), too, has observed that places that are legally public are not necessarily 'public' *in practice*, given their everyday behaviour, use, production, and regulation. This is further confirmed by Yücesoy (2006), who found many shades or dimensions of 'public' and 'private' from the perspective of Turkish immigrant women; by Lofland (1998), who described how public, private, and parochial 'realms' change when it comes to the movement of anti-urbanism; and by Atkinson (2003), who observed how processes of 'privatization of spaces' could occur through consumption and zero-tolerance policing.

Studies such as these document that the public, the private, and everything in between are shifting dimensions that respond to changing societal conditions. For the time being, this is the statement that I will take on board as a starting point. So my question will be, not whether these dimensions are shifting or not, but rather how exactly the shifts occur. It is the starting point of this study that they must do so through imperceptible, small, and ordinary-looking mechanisms in the everyday use, production and regulation of urban public spaces. This prompts the second question that led my research:

How do processes of everyday use, production, and regulation of Bospolder Square, Suriname Square, and Smaragd Square affect the perception of their 'public' character?

5 'Legal' here refers to the rights of various user groups should be respected in public spaces (Carr et al. 1992: 19). 'Public space' (*openbare ruimte*) is not defined in Dutch law. According to the Act on Ways, a differentiation can be made between an actual and a legal definition of a public road. A legal definition (in my interpretation) would come down to saying that everyone has in principle the right to use that road without requesting permission or toleration from the owner (often the municipality or the government). According to the Dutch Public Manifestations Act, a 'public place' is a 'place that, by virtue of its purpose or established use, is accessible to the public'. This is 'in principle' the case, which then means that exceptions to the basic rule that space is accessible to everyone are always conceivable. 'In principle' is used in order to protect oneself in such situations (think about a temporary street ban, for example). I am grateful to Mr I. Blanken-Parisius for this material (personal communication on 27 August 2013).

These three squares were part of the NICIS project 'The Power of Beautiful Public Spaces: Use and Experience of Squares and Shopping Streets in Advantaged and Deprived Areas', which aimed at examining 'ordinary public places' in Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Rotterdam (Blokland et al. 2008; Binken et al. 2012; Burgers, Zuijderwijk et al. 2012; Burgers, Binken et al. 2012; Van der Wilk 2016). Apart from these three squares, the 'tree squares' in Amsterdam (Van der Wilk 2016), the Amsterdamse Straatweg in Utrecht, and the Afrikaander Square in Rotterdam were part of the project. All these squares are considered to be spaces endowed with meanings related to the ordinary activities they are used for (see Amin and Graham 1997; Robinson 2008). Such activities range from passing through to buy groceries or to take children to or from school to meeting neighbours and hanging out with one's peers.

Of course, these are not among the most prominent and well-known squares located in major cities (see Burgers, Zuijderwijk et al. 2012; Binken et al. 2012: 4–5). Examples of major and heavily studied cities are Los Angeles (Davis 2006 [1990]; Soja 1989; Hayden 1997 [1995]; and Lofland 1998), Chicago (Wacquant 2008; Park and Burgess 1984 [1925], founders of the Chicago School), and New York (Zukin 2010; Duneier and Carter 1999); and their European counterparts are London (Lofland 1998; Hall 2008 and later works; Wessendorf 2013, 2014; Watson and Saha 2013) and Paris (Wacquant 2008). According to Amin and Graham (1997: 411), '[t]oo often, single cities – most recently, Los Angeles – are wheeled out as paradigmatic cases, alleged conveniently to encompass all urban trends everywhere'. Therefore I believe that the impact of societal changes on these large cities, which serve as 'paradigmatic cases' (Flyvbjerg 2006; Amin and Graham 1997), is different from what it is on smaller cities and their smaller squares; and this increases the relevance of studying the latter. Societal developments impacting cities may be of the same type, but their impact is very diverse – and highly unequal, too (see Katz 2010; Massey 1994).

Hence the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Utrecht will not be treated as paradigmatic cases. Nor should they: on the contrary, the challenge is to refine our understanding of the local, contextualized impact of societal developments on ordinary public spaces – to see how specific, often mundane, practices affect the perception of what it is for space to count as 'public'. The present study aims to contribute to such an understanding.

1.2 Methodology

In this section I discuss my research strategy, the principles that guided my selection of cases, the methods of data collection and analysis that I pursued, and the approach for judging validity.

In order to study the everyday use, production, and regulation of public places, how these three categories are embedded in various societal developments and, in turn, how these affect the perceived publicness of space, it was necessary to use a methodology that allowed me to arrive at an in-depth understanding of the three squares from various perspectives, retaining the social and societal context of each. This is what I was

interested in. Hence a qualitative case study was the most appropriate research strategy.

Since the three squares analysed in this book were part of a NICIS project, the pre-selection had already been made by the sponsors of this research. My particular challenge was in the field: I actually had to go to the squares and *find* the questions and topics that suited each place best and at the same time could inform the sociological debates; and I developed a strategy for finding these questions. This strategy was informed by reporting on some general research questions about the square as a professional task and as an everyday environment (Binken et al. 2012; Burgers, Zuijderwijk et al. 2012). This reporting also created a 'relationship of dialogue' (Nencel 2005: 348) with both the sponsors and the everyday users of the square and would address their knowledge of these places.

From this reporting (Binken et al. 2012 and Burgers, Binken et al. 2012, Burgers, Zuijderwijk et al. 2012), I concluded that Smaragd Square, Bospolder Square, and Surinam Square revealed certain active processes, relations, and actors that made me decide to continue the study of these squares. Thus my strategy of case selection was explicitly 'information-oriented' (as Flyvbjerg 2006: 230 calls it), in other words I had selected these cases 'on the basis of expectations about their information content'. Therefore I regard them as critical cases – that is, cases that allow us to 'achieve information that permits logical deductions of the type' (ibid.), the 'type' being the ordinary urban public square shaped by various societal configurations. This attribute has increased the model's explanatory generalizability: most probably the conclusions reached here on the basis of my research can be extended to populations and phenomena situated well beyond the scope of this research.

In case study research, qualitative research methods are employed when one attempts to gain an in-depth understanding of the object of study (be that processes, perspectives, meanings, or values). Ethnographic methods are particularly suitable for collecting – or rather producing – these data (Low et al. 2005: 188) and are praised as being the most useful methods for the understanding of social–spatial relations. Ethnography is 'concerned with the everyday inner life and texture of the city' (Lees 2003: 111) and it is able to address matters of human life and culture – for example the social construction of phenomena – that cannot be addressed directly through other qualitative approaches such as discourse-analysis (ibid.). Herbert (2000: 550) reckons that ethnography is a 'uniquely useful method for uncovering the processes and meanings that undergird sociospatial life'. This point is important for my research, because the practices I am interested in – namely the use, production, regulation, and contestation of public space – take place in the context of various societal developments that have shaped that very space.

On top of being the best method for the study of sociospatial processes and meanings, ethnography offers an avenue for collecting a variety of perspectives – ranging from the professionals' perspectives to those of urban residents – on the making of spaces. It is important to stress this feature because, as Elwood (2005) and Lees (2003) have noted, the perspective of the ordinary local citizen is often absent. This means that

I considered the information gained from professionals or key informants not to be truer or more valid than the information derived from ordinary participants – the locals or urban residents. Another consequence of using ethnographic methods is that I aimed to include a full range of voices within each category I dealt with. I was also hoping to make the less dominant 'voices' – of users, producers, and regulators – better heard (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003: 13–14, see also Burawoy 1998 on 'silencing').

In qualitative research, this 'full range of variation', as Becker (1998: 71) calls it, is important when it comes to truly understanding a phenomenon. Here, unlike in quantitative research, it is not the frequency of occurrences that counts; it is often the 'infrequent gem that puts other data into perspective, that becomes the central key to understanding the data and for developing the model' (Morse 1995: 148). In order to arrive at such 'gems', all the data are treated with equal attention in the early process of data collection and analysis, where variety is valued over quantity. The rule of thumb, perhaps not always well understood or explained, that governs this process is 'to collect data until saturation occurs' (Morse 1995: 147). This allows for the data to present themselves in all their richness.

Both the collection and the mixture of ethnographic methods in this book were inspired by the rapid ethnographic assessment procedure (REAP) as developed by Low et al. (2005), Taplin et al. (2002) and Harris et al. (1997) and also applied in Binken et al. (2012) and in Burgers, Zuijderwijk et al. (2012). Low et al. (2005), Taplin et al. (2002) and Harris et al. (1997) have used this method in studying the use and experience of public parks by culturally diverse groups. REAP entails many methods: historical and archival documents review, physical traces mapping, behavioural mapping, transect walks, individual interviews, expert interviews, impromptu group interviews, focus groups, and participant observations (see Low et al. 2005: 188–90 for a short description of all the methods involved). I mainly conducted semi-structured interviews with professionals ('experts', as they are called in Low et al. 2005; however, I prefer to speak of 'professionals', since in this research users, too, are understood to be 'experts' on their respective public places) and individual or collective street interviews with users; I made participant observations; and I collected and reviewed archival (policy) documents. Ideally, such a mix of methods allows for triangulation. However, in the practice of most case studies in this book, often only two out of three methods proved to be useful. For instance, in the study of Smaragd Square, the collection of documents and semi-structured interviews with professionals were mainly required, whereas for Bospolder Square I relied much on street interviews and participant observations. I practised triangulation only in the case of Surinam Square, through the use of street interviews, participant observations, semi-structured interviews with professionals, and the collection of documents. Each of these methods is further elaborated upon in the relevant chapters.

The analysis was informed by grounded theory principles (Corbin and Strauss 2008), which means that all data were coded and categorized and that memoing was the main instrument for arriving at an answer to the research questions raised. The process unfolded roughly as follows: after the fieldwork, the participant observations, the street interviews, and the semi-structured interviews were transcribed; the documents were

collected and scanned for their content. An early interpretation followed and shallow first analyses were jotted down (see Crang and Cook 2007 and Richards 2005 on the development of codes). At a later stage all the data were uploaded to Atlas.ti[6] – a programme that allowed for a more structured type of analysis, in the form of computer-assisted coding, categorizing, and memoing. The process of 'constant reevaluation' (Low et al. 2005: 185) of the data started after a couple of fieldwork sessions, bearing in mind that all the data should be treated with equal attention in the early stages of a qualitative analysis, as mentioned above. The codes were partly generated by the data and partly inspired by the theory review (see DeCuir-Gunby et al. 2011 for elaboration on these two forms of coding). The theory review itself began once the topics and the questions of interest for each square looked clearer as a result of incipient research. In time, the analyses became more structured and the number of topics under study narrowed down (see also Morse 1995).

In qualitative research, validity is often put under a magnifying glass. To what extent can conclusions be drawn on the basis of the available data? The way validity is assessed relates to how one believes 'reality' can be known. It is fair for me to say that I work from a perspective of 'interpretivism': I view myself as a researcher who has an impact on the social world and whom the social world has an impact on in its turn. Hence I question the possibility of conducting objective and value-free research (see also Ritchie and Lewis 2003). I will now present a summary of my attempts to increase validity and to reflect on my persona as a researcher; and I will discuss the potential for such reflections to influence validity. Needless to say, this section should be read with the proviso that reflexivity is limited (Mauthner and Doucet 2003).

All my data are digitally archived in a folder on the network drive of Erasmus University Rotterdam, and all the hard-copy originals of the street interviews are archived at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Erasmus University Rotterdam. Atlas.ti is also used as an archiving tool, with the help of which any subsequent researcher can retract the codes, categories, and memos used as the basis for this study. This dataset has not been made public for the time being.

All throughout my research I took great care to describe in detail what happened during fieldwork sessions. After each session I would write down a first analysis, of the shallow type, accompanied by my reflections. Handwritten logbooks helped me to keep track of all the interpretations, ideas, and plans that arose in between sessions (see Nencel 2005). As Emerson et al. (1995: 26, see also Wolfinger 2002 and Mulhall 2003 on writing fieldnotes) advise, during fieldwork I always began by noting the first impression; then all the events observed were systematically jotted down, including how I reflected on the situation.

6 Atlas.ti is a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS; see Friese 2012 for an extensive overview). There are concerns about various aspects of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (see Clare 2012), for example about the possible identification of, or confusion between, 'coding' and 'analyzing', in conjunction with the fact that interpretation and 'thinking through' are the work of the human mind, not of a computer program. Webb (1999) advises users to do some handicraft coding beforehand, so that the computer-assisted analysis may alternate with handicraft techniques.

In the early stages of the research, while conducting some of my semi-structured interviews with professionals and street interviews with users, I worked with a team of researchers with various cultural and disciplinary backgrounds, in an attempt to reduce the risk of researcher bias. For example, the street interviews were conducted by an ethnically and culturally heterogeneous team of people with various backgrounds. We put this team together in order to prevent the so-called ethnicity-of-interviewer effect (Weeks and Moore 1981; see Davis et al. 2010; Hoong Sin 2007; Van Bochove et al. 2015).

Throughout my research it became clear to me that my role as a researcher was influencing the collection, the interpretation, and the analysis in various ways. Such problems have been addressed by Mauthner and Doucet (2003). In the early days I aimed to position myself, as a researcher, at the point of maximum distance from my object of research (see Burawoy 1998: 10): I would enter the field and act as a note-taker (see Emerson et al. 1995) and would aim to reduce researcher bias, as described above – a rather positivist perspective, given my interpretivist beliefs. As the research progressed it became hard to maintain such a detached stance towards the situations and people I came across in my research. Distancing myself (Burawoy 1998), let alone insulating myself (Becker 2001), was no longer a tenable position; I was forced, in Herbert's (2000: 563) words, to reflect on my 'own cultural and intellectual position'.

All this became painfully clear to me on 7 July 2011. Kasia is a girl who had recently moved from Eastern Europe to live with her parents in the neighbourhood of Bospolder Square (there will be more on her in chapter 4). It appeared she was harassed and mocked on account of her poor ability to speak Dutch. As a researcher, I had to study the other kids' reaction to her language ability, so I was aware that I should not intrude in the situation. However, as a human being, I felt that I had to intervene and help Kasia, lend her an arm against those vicious attacks. Here is a passage from my fieldwork notes:

My heart broke today. I do not want to be a researcher, but a human being. And as a human I am asking myself whether you can be a [objective] researcher. I want to intervene when kids are obnoxious to one another. What do I care about more: my own PhD or the girl who is being harassed and tries to keep herself afloat and coming to the square? […] I think I have to follow my feeling, regardless of [positive research] ethics. And I didn't, because a supervisor [Master Frans] was present, a guard who prevented worse things from happening. But this is a fundamental question. […] This girl needed a girl. And that girl was me. The next time, when there is no supervision, I will ask them why they do stuff like this.
(Participant observation, 7–7–2011)

This proved to be the turning point. From then on I started to give rein to my own reaction to the research situation – to 'embrace' it instead of resisting – just as Burawoy (1998) advises. Besides, I realized that, as I was doing ethnographic research on squares used mainly by non-indigenous groups in majority-minority cities, my own ethnic background, command

of language, and gender did matter, so I had to reflect upon that. That my situatedness was meaningful is illustrated by two incidents. On one occasion a girl at Bospolder Square asked me whether I was 'Moroccan' and, when said 'no', she asked: 'Then, what language are you?' (Participant observation, 12–7–2011). Combining this incident with other data from the square indicated that, next to ethnicity, 'language' could play an important role in categorization in public space, as will be demonstrated in chapter 4. On another occasion, during the commemorative event in Surinam Square, I noticed that my personal reaction was comparable to those of several other onlookers and bystanders; and this personal reaction was related to the question whether 'we' were welcome or not. This incident is further discussed in chapter 5.

1.3
Outline of this book

The aim of this study is to improve and refine our understanding of the local, contextualized impact of societal developments on ordinary public places and of the factors that affect both the impression of the publicness of these places and the idea of what it means for space to be public.

Chapter 2 outlines the theory behind this research – its framework. It dives into the sociological traditions of studying public space, presents the social constructivist perspective of this book, and elaborates on the users, producers, and regulators of urban public spaces. Each subsequent chapter will then discuss a case study.

Chapter 3 starts from the observation that a major trend in urban literature in the past few decades has been to attribute the production and management of urban public space to an amalgam of neoliberal processes, in particular marketization, privatization, and an increasing entrepreneurial rationality that urban managers seemingly adhere to. In a critical reading of this literature, the chapter dissects four major principles supposed to govern these neoliberal processes:

1 The local state facilitates financial interests of the private sector.

2 Public places are deployed in competitive intercity relations.

3 Public places are meant for leisurely shopping and consumptive identity display.

4 Public places are privatized places that exclude non-white and non-middle-class groups and activities.

After introducing the case of Smaragd Square in Utrecht, the chapter scrutinizes its recent reorganization against the background created by these four principles. The central research question is: *Do neoliberal principles account for changes in the production of Smaragd Square?*

Chapter 4 starts by describing an ordinary moment in the life of Bospolder Square, a square in the district of Delfshaven, Rotterdam. This is one of the most diverse neighbourhoods in Rotterdam: in 2011, when this case

study was carried out, over 70 per cent of its population was registered as 'non-western migrant'. Bospolder Square is one of those urban grounds where a majority-minority composition is actually experienced and 'lived' on a day-to-day basis. After discussing the process of categorization and attempting to figure out how ethnic categorization can be assessed without essentializing ethnicity, the chapter examines the ethnic categorization of the uses and users of Bospolder Square. Various kinds of use (and non-use) are reviewed, together with the dynamic relations between groups such as 'established' and 'outsiders' (following Elias and Scotson 1965; Elias 1976). The empirical analysis ends with a discussion on the meaning of language. The central research question in this chapter is: *What are the role and importance of ethnicity and ethnic diversity in the everyday use and experience of Bospolder Square?*

Chapter 5 starts with notes and observations taken on a day of very special significance to the Surinamese (and Caribbean) community in the Netherlands: 30 June, when the abolition of slavery is commemorated. The commemoration takes place in Amsterdam, the first majority-minority city in the Netherlands. The chapter offers a theoretical review of symbolic urban places and their understandings. In turn, this review lays the groundwork for an empirical analysis of how the meaning of the monument in Surinam Square was constructed, how public space is temporarily appropriated and transformed during the feast, and what 'urban citizenship' signifies throughout this process. The research question this chapter seeks to answer is: *How do minority groups symbolically claim Surinam Square?*

Chapter 6 finally answers the two leading questions of the book. I start the chapter with a reiteration of the methods employed and of the theoretical framework of the entire study, This takes me straight to my two leading questions. The first leading question that I have been attempting to answer is: *How are the ordinary urban public places studied here used, produced, and regulated in the context of general societal developments?* This chapter rehearses the main points of my three case studies, which unveil how ordinary public places are used, produced, and regulated in contexts of great variety – such as ethnic diversification, assumed neoliberalization, and the development and appropriation of urban citizenship. The other leading question is: *How do processes of everyday use, production, and regulation of Bospolder Square, Suriname Square, and Smaragd Square affect the perception of their 'public' character?* In my view, publicness is constantly and dynamically in the making, along lines of inclusion and exclusion for various groups. I summarize my perspective on this dynamic of inclusion and exclusion by reviewing the two types of groups that turned out to be re-created and refashioned in all my three case studies: the established–outsider configuration and the imaginable community. Second, I discuss three ways in which this dynamic production affects the making of public space. Finally, by way of conclusion, I end this chapter with an attempt to offer answers to three related questions. How much is physical space an expression – or even a re-creation – of societal relations? Can physical space determine how it is used and who is using it? And under what conditions can users claim public space and use it the way they want?

The reflections in the Epilogue are dedicated to the many urban specialists and professionals without whom it would not have been possible to perform

this research. Four such reflections are reviewed, all of them accompanied by questions designed to help readers to analyse and process their reactions in different contexts, especially in various public places.

2

Theoretical exploration: The making of public space

In this chapter I outline the larger theoretical debate within which this research is positioned and introduce the three perspectives on the making of public space that will dominate the discussion. More than organizing the material, these are three lines of enquiry through which I hope this book will make a substantial contribution to the field.

The chapter consists of two parts. The first part investigates briefly the traditions of studying 'public space' in urbanity and concludes that the (normative) understanding of this notion in cultural and early urban sociology is only minimally connected to how the built and lived in environments are used, produced, regulated, and contested. The second part examines precisely this: how the built and lived in environments of public space are used, produced, regulated, and contested. Three theoretical points of departure will emerge from this discussion, to be further explored in the case studies.

2.1 Sociological traditions of studying public space

'Public space' is a topic of discussion in two traditions of studying urbanity. One is the cultural sociological tradition, which is concerned with urban culture and urban ways of living (Häussermann and Siebel 2004). The other is a tradition in which urban design and the use of urban space are the focal point. However, these two traditions are strange bedfellows in empirical studies about public space. This is striking, because a combined approach would make us able to say something about how the public nature of space – considered in terms of its democratic character, accessibility, and role in building and maintaining citizenship – is at work in everyday processes in ordinary (public) places. This would be of great benefit – and the benefit would attach precisely to an approach that embraces both traditions.

The cultural sociological tradition is grounded in the study of the consequences of rapid industrialization – one of these consequences being the need to live together with strangers in a limited space (Häussermann and Siebel 2004). At the time of industrialization, the paradigm of country life was the lifestyle of farmers. The countryside represented a pre-modern society, not yet touched by modern transformations, but a society no longer possible to maintain. Living conditions had changed and, with them, an urban lifestyle came into existence, accompanied by a 'mental life' of its own (Simmel 2002 [1903]). This new package had two defining characteristics. One was impersonalism, which treated relations, basically, as monetary exchanges and placed great store by exactness, calculation,

and punctuality as important values that held these relations together. The second characteristic was intellectualism: this lifestyle was accompanied by the 'blasé outlook' (ibid., 14), which served as a kind of mental protection from all sensory inputs and 'changing images' – always changing – in the city (ibid., 11).

Simmel studied forms of life and behaviour that were publicly visible; but a private sphere was also present in the city (Häussermann and Siebel 2004), and in this sphere behaviour and relationships were different from what they appeared to be in the public sphere. 'Publicness' and 'privateness' came to represent both urban social life and a space characteristic of it – urban space. According to Bahrdt (1998 [1961]; and see also Häussermann and Siebel 2004), the stronger the polarity between public and private, the more 'urban' (in the sociological sense of the word) the life and behaviour that contain this polarity are.

A series of prominent authors propose to us that, one way or another, this polarity between a public and a private sphere encapsulates the very essence of the city (Bahrdt 1998 [1961]; Sennett 2002; Habermas 1989 [1962]; Arendt 1998 [1958]). 'Public space' represents the practice of free conversation and discussion between private individuals on themes related to the public interest (e.g. Habermas 1989 [1962]); and, as the sphere of public action, this space is essential for the functioning of democratic citizenship (Arendt 1998 [1958]; Goodsell 2003: 362). Zukin (1995) and Madanipour (2003), for example, belong in this sociological tradition of perceiving public space in terms of access and democracy; thus, Zukin sees public places as inherently democratic, whereas Madanipour sees them as non-exclusivist (see Madanipour 2003: 232–3):

Public spaces have been multi-purpose accessible spaces distinguishable from, and mediating between, demarcated exclusive territories of households and individuals. Normatively, these spaces are considered public if they have been provided and managed by public authorities, and have concerned the people as a whole, being open or available to them and being used or shared by all members of a community.

For many authors interested in public space in the present-day city, Los Angeles is the perfect paradigm of a city where quintessentially public space has largely disappeared (Amin and Graham 1997; see Davis 2006 [1990]; Soja 2006 [2000]: 180–1; also Lofland 1998; Low and Smith 2006). New York is another rewarding and typical example for those who wish to demonstrate and investigate the loss, or at least the demise, of public space and its qualities. In New York 'and other major cities', as Németh (2009: 2464) claims, such space is often provided and managed through a programme of incentive zoning, whereby public places are installed and controlled by developers in exchange for floor area ratio. Németh argues that these places are not able to fulfil their intended function for citizenship and democratic representation. Both these paradigmatic cases – New York and Los Angeles – show how processes of privatization and commercialization manifest themselves, how they can be recognized for what they are and what their effects are in terms of its qualities and its role in generating citizenship.

Hence the value of this cultural sociological approach is that it provides a normative meaning of 'public space'. This normative content reverberates in the often cherished ideal that public space should be a space of meeting and free exchange, should be accessible to all, and should be used by everyone (Burgers 2000). A high standard like this allows us to appreciate how 'public' a space actually is in its realization; and it would be interesting to explore, further, how this realization relates to practical factors such as architectural design and construction on the one hand, everyday use on the other. This is what is happening in the second research tradition.

The second tradition places the design and use of public spaces at its core. Authors as different as Sitte (2005 [1889]), Lynch (1960), Whyte (1988), Gehl (1987 and later work), and more recently Talen (2012) made it their business to understand how people use the urban environment and how design contributes to diversifying their use and improving the qualities of public place. Take for example Talen's work on the relationship between building rules, the built environment, and various social effects – a vibrant street, or the 'best urban places' on the ground. She studies maps, pictures, and zoning regulations in order to come to an understanding of how '"good urbanism" [has] a compact urban form that encourages pedestrian activity and [...] has a quality public realm that provides opportunities for interaction and exchange' (Talen 2012: 1–2). Gehl has been on a mission to create places that contribute to what he calls 'public life' – that is, foster the social inclusion of various groups that use the same public space (see Gehl Institute for Public Life 2017). Whyte (1988) filmed the way people were making use of public places and discovered some of the ingredients of 'best-used plazas', for example 'integral seating', steps, and 'sitting height'; and Lynch (1960) investigated how people perceive the city through 'paths', 'edges', 'districts', and 'landmarks'. But it had been Sitte (2005 [1889]) who paved the way for these studies of urban design at the turn of the nineteenth century. He did so by looking into the qualities not only of the modern city but also of the Greek *polis* and the Roman *urbs*, and by investigating how all of them could be incorporated into contemporary design.

The value of this urban design approach is that it equips the urban sociologist with methods, tools, and concepts adequate for studying how public space is used, designed, and experienced on the ground. But the question is, can the use, design, and experience of public spaces be fully understood without taking into account societal changes – or even society at large – in the world where these spaces are situated? I doubt it. The works mentioned above are all studies of Northern American or Western European society – in which this very situatedness is not questioned at all.

Because of such doubts, I decided to attempt to bridge the two perspectives in a manner that should allow me to understand on the one hand how the democratic character of public space is affected by large societal developments – such as increasing privatization and commercialization – and, on the other, how these developments are observable on the ground, in the ordinary life of much smaller and less paradigmatic, but very numerous and widespread public places.

In fact many studies *do* take into account the societal embeddedness of day-to-day local interactions in public places such as streets and squares,

together with the societal roots of the use of these places and of the experiences they generate. But the understanding of the 'publicness' of public space is often not explicitly addressed in these studies; in my view, they do not elucidate the meaning of this concept. Let me give a few examples.

Hall (2011) studies how a London retail street has changed under the combined pressures of an increasing local retail sector, global economic crises, immigration, and ethnic diversity. In doing so, she demonstrates a good grasp of various developments in society and of how these could affect a local shopping street in all its particularities. She acknowledges that, 'potentially', such streets are 'avenues for cross-cultural contact' (Hall 2011: 2573) that would allow us to reflect on the 'ordinary but expansive sense of public space' (ibid., following Watson 2009). However, she never stops to do such reflecting herself.

Karsten (1998) studies segregation in children's daily life 'in the public domain' in Amsterdam, for instance in playgrounds, in the context of family life in the city, in all its ethnic and cultural diversity. She arrives at the conclusion that both ethnicity and gender are relevant to segregation and indeed contribute to it, but she does not situate her finding in debates about public space, for instance on its increasing or decreasing accessibility.

Wessendorf (2013) is explicitly interested in cultural diversity as experienced in everyday life and in ordinary encounters in the London neighbourhood of Hackney. She finds that encounters in public space can lead 'to a more differentiated picture about the "other"', although such interactions do not take place at the level of 'private relations' (2013: 419). But, again, she does not relate her topic to the larger question of the public character of public space.

These three studies do pay heed to the quotidian in relation to societal developments; however, they tend to treat public space uncritically, as no more than a site or container of the phenomenon under study, often as a space where contacts with and meetings between cultural others do happen or could in all probability happen.

Oosterman (1993), Müller (2002), Van der Wilk (2016), Janssens (2017) and Watson (2009) actually do take the actual site of public space into their equations by, sometimes more, sometime less, reflecting back on the meaning of their findings for the public character of public space. Van der Wilk for instance pursues questions about how interventions from a gentrifying neighbourhood can influence public space, or by whom this space is used. She makes some references to 'inclusive public spaces' from the perspective of displacement, appropriation, and exchange. However, she pays little attention to the societal backdrop against which this gentrification occurs – for example the ethnic diversification and generally left-wing political climate in Amsterdam – and to its contribution to the outcomes she is researching. Also, Chevalier (2015) takes all the dimensions of space into account but overlooks the broader societal context in which the objects of her study (local bans in public spaces) are placed.

Oosterman's study of public space in Utrecht in 1993 was trying to

understand how urban 'fun and sidewalk cafés' relate to notions of 'publicness'; and he came to believe that such places embody the public nature of urban space in a specific way, for he saw 'the public realm in a city [as] a particular manifestation depending on the form of its society' (Oosterman 1993: 297). He proposed that 'fun' in the city is not just the expression of a changing culture and society, but a phenomenon generated by the urban centre itself, insofar as these centres, as he observed, actually create space for a variety of activities and put it at the public's disposal. Thus Oosterman reached the view that 'fun' was a 'derivative of publicness', which can only exist in 'normal city life' (ibid., 255). A decade later, in similar fashion, Müller (2002), who performed a micro-sociological study of 'urban warmth', attributed his findings to changing ideas about urbanity and the public sphere. In a nutshell, both Oosterman (1993) and Müller (2002) propose that, if one wishes to understand the notion of publicness, one should pay heed to societal developments that change the way publicness is perceived.

The 'marketplace', as a particular type of public space, appears to provide some starting points for when it comes to understanding the meaning and making of a place in relation to the normative understanding of what a public space is. Watson (2009) is one of those scholars interested in the role of the marketplace in mediating differences of gender, ethnicity, race, and class in the recent times of globalization and migration. She finds that the market plays an important role in bringing forth social encounters and social inclusion. On the topic of what this means for *public* space, she notes carefully:

> *Although the claim that the space of the market can be connected to the* notion of democracy *or can be generative of* urban politics *might be too grand, markets can nevertheless serve to dissolve some of the predictable boundaries and divisions and open up new possibilities for sociality and engagement in everyday public space (as Crawford, 1999, also found).*
> (Watson 2009: 1589–90, italics added)

Janssens (2017) seems to be taking up the gauntlet and continues the study of marketplaces in London, Amsterdam, and Istanbul and their respective societal contexts, such as the context of informal urbanization of Istanbul. He is concerned with the actual expression and performance of the exchanges of narratives and stories – which is the 'public domain' that comes into being in public spaces. He understands the 'public domain' to be 'performative, in the sense that it comes into being in the interaction in […] stories' (Janssens 2017: 27). He describes how marketplaces 'enable the development of a public domain', along the lines of functioning as 'public alleys', as 'spaces of 'comfortable surprises', and 'as spaces of "radical diversity"' (ibid., 257–9).

If we now move away from the topic of the environment lived in and fix our eyes on the built and managed public space, we'll find there Van Melik et al. (2007), who are interested in the relationship between various social dynamics at play in urban society, such as the angst aroused by 'fear' and the longing for 'fantasy' to be enacted in public space. In the same vein,

Atkinson (2003), who is concerned with the management of public space in Britain, understands access to it – and also its changing dimensions – to be part of an emergent will to 'empower or control' public spaces. Even though both these studies are able to successfully relate the built and managed environment of public space to wider societal developments, they limit themselves to investigating the truth of policies and other professional documents on paper rather than in the real world.

Hence this section ends with the observation that the (normative) conception of public space is only very minimally connected to investigations that look both at the built and managed environment and at the environment lived in in ordinary public spaces. It is thus necessary to delve some more into the problem of how the dimensions of the public and the private are changing. Exactly how are these sorts of shifts brought about? And what mechanisms and practices in the everyday use, production, and regulation of these urban public spaces can have such effects?

The next section will explore this matter by identifying the invisible mechanisms in our ordinary daily lives, as well the production, regulation and contestation of places that have such wide-ranging consequences.

2.2
Producing, regulating, and using urban space

Using, producing, and regulating public space are not 'neutral' activities: they come about in relation to, or as embedded in, a societal context characterized by continuous and dynamic change. This remark expresses a social constructivist perspective (see also Reinders and Van der Land 2008: 2; Reinders 2006: 116), in which use, production, and regulation are forms of social practice (Lees 2003: 111; Giddens 1984; see Reinders 2006: 115 and 2013 on social repertoires; also Richardson and Jensen 2003 and Lefebvre (1991 [1974] on sociospatial practices).

Who uses, produces, and regulates places? Everyone does. Everyone is at least a user of public space; and this dynamic role might overlap with a professional one, of a producer or regulator (Madanipour 2006: 175; on dynamic roles, see Becker 1998). Individuals, municipalities, businesses, and other actors can all take up the roles of producers, regulators, and users by turns.

To begin with, a place is produced and regulated by place professionals (Gieryn 2000: 470), who manage or govern (urban) development, planning, and the economy (Madanipour 2006: 175) and produce spaces by developing, financing, designing, and building the environment. Place is the product of a decision-making process among such professionals, and non-professionals take part in it as well. These people from the 'everyday world' 'are, then, part of the planned world, which they cannot control but can certainly influence' (Reijndorp 2010: 186, my translation).

Producers and regulators attribute symbolic meaning to urban space (Richardson and Jensen 2003) or have, each, a potentially different social utopia in mind (Jacobs 1992 [1961]). This is another reason why we can say

that producing and regulating urban space are not a neutral activities. Mainly at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was a dominant idea that the built environment can actually steer in certain directions the use of a place and people's behaviour in it, thus orienting or directing its function. Yet the producers and regulators of urban space are not necessarily aware of the ideals and meanings with which they set out to build and run the space (Hajer and Reijndorp 2001; Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003; Reinders 2006; Lofland 1998). Such values, and the cultural ambitions implicitly pursued in the process, can be brought to light by analysing the furnishing and management of urban space (Hajer and Reijndorp 2001: 73; Zukin 1995).

Especially in neo-Marxist traditions, space is understood as a structure through which dominant power relations are exercised and the oppression of less dominant groups is facilitated. Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) and Smith (2002) are concerned with how 'produced space' is embedded in capitalistic relations and reproduces them at the same time. Massey (1994: 22), too, sees the physical furnishings of space not just as an expression of (dominant) social relations but as a confirmation and reproduction of these relations as well.

This deterministic view of spatial planning has been heavily criticized (Gans 2002; Reinders 2006, 2013), the big question being whether it is possible to steer, or even influence, the behaviour of users and, if so, to what extent. According to Lefebvre (1991 [1974]), people are not necessarily aware of how they are instructed or manipulated by the spatial structures around them. Studies suggest that social relations are inscribed in the built space, which in turn reproduces them (May 2004). Lofland (1998) argues that the fear of the urban has been spatially translated and structures the behaviour of users in their interactions among themselves and with other people. Other scholars, such as Reinders (2013), stress the strategies and tactics of appropriation that users exhibit after the finishing of the built environment. What he calls the 'hard' city – the city of architecture and urban planning – is not, in his view, necessarily translated into the 'soft' city of inhabitants and users.

This soft city comes about through the everyday use of urban space, with its accompanying process of meaning giving. 'Use' in this sense consists of all variations of visiting, working, and living in a place (Madanipour 2006: 175). Jones and colleagues identified 11 different forms of use of varying degrees of intensity. According to their scheme, users of a public place range from 'socializers' who frequent it every day and spend there a couple of hours to people who pass through the square once a week, on their way from A to B (Jones et al. 2007: 50; see Binken et al. 2012). Lofland (1973, ch. 2: 29–55) distinguished forms of use of public space specific to the pre-industrial city – 'educating the young, 'elimination of body wastes', 'punishments', 'garbage and waste disposal', and many others – all of them mixed. By contrast, the modern city is characterized by a 'specialized public space use', in which activities and persons are spatially segregated; moreover, the pre-industrial uses have often been pushed into private spaces in the modern city (ibid., ch. 3: 67–91). As for who uses public space in what way, the ratio between categories of people is dynamic. This ratio may change depending on the time of day or night, on the increasing presence of some particular group,

on conflicts between users (Madanipour 2004; Binken et al. 2012; Zukin 1995), and on processes of segregation of an ethnic, social, and economic character that are taking place (Hogenstijn et al. 2008; Karsten 1998).

Sometimes the difference between using and producing space is not so clear: whereas many forms of use are simply transient and leave behind no trace whatsoever, some, for example the lighting of bonfires – or building playgrounds for oneself, or putting down a graffito tag – leave behind traces of use that become part and parcel of the produced environment. These kinds of uses of public space are appropriative (see Bijlsma et al. 2010), and they are generative of public space as well. This suggests that *using* public space *shapes* that space at the same time.

Use, too, is not a neutral activity; and users are not necessarily aware of the meaning they attribute to places or of the interplay between their ideals about and their actual use of those places. As Blokland (2009a) and Wright (1985: 215–49) have shown, various categories of people who use the same physical entity tell different stories about it – that is, they construct it in different ways, and these various constructions may conflict with one another. Wright has shown that the London neighbourhood of Hackney is interpreted in various ways by various groups such as the 'old white working class', a 'variety of ethnic minorities', and 'new monied gentrifiers'. Another example is Little Lon, a neighbourhood in Melbourne, which 'became entrenched in middle-class discourse as "the heart of slumdom"' (Mayne and Lawrence 1999: 328). Yet another example comes from Hajer et al. (2009: 180), who propose to see the practice of lighting New Year bonfires in The Hague as a meaningful practice, more in particular as an 'expression of neighbourhood culture, of neighbourhood solidarity and rivalry between neighbourhoods'.

Symbolic and actual use of the neighbourhood do not need to match. In Blokland's (2009a) study, the black poor, for example, turned out to make actual use of the neighbourhood more than other groups did; yet their symbolic use of the same neighbourhood – through the telling of collective historical narratives, for example – lagged behind that of other groups and they seldom or never turned up in the narratives of other groups.

To what extent is this soft city shaped and appropriated by a variety of groups with a variety of 'voices' or cultures? The landscape often reflects the dominant culture or the dominant voices, according to Low et al. (2005: 13). Blokland (2009a) has illustrated how such a process works: a process, that is, of dominant voices and cultures exerting influence on the finances, furnishings, and organization of a place. In her study, particular groups of neighbourhood residents, such as the 'gentrifiers' and the 'Italian Americans', tell their own 'collective narrative' about that neighbourhood, and this enables them to play their part in determining the dominant discourse on what the neighbourhood actually is. In its turn, this discourse influences how resources are allocated. On the other hand, the media and the lifestyle preferences of the middle class have also become powerful symbolic images that inform the design, production, and regulation of urban place (Zukin 2010: xiii, 223). Over time, such dominant images can be contested and changed.

Groups without a 'collective narrative' or powerful symbols of this kind are

thought to have proportionally little influence on the actual production and regulation of place (Blokland 2009a). In consequence, political, economic, and cultural differences and conflicts among and between users, producers, and regulators can become manifest in public places (see Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003: 245; Massey 1994, 2005; Zukin 2010; Madanipour 2006).

Hence the question that imposes itself is this. Are the various perspectives, intentions, ambitions, and actual forms of use, production, and regulation of space, both in the hard and in the soft city, consistent with one another (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003: 20; see also Lofland 1998; Hajer and Reijndorp 2001; Low et al. 2005; Reinders 2013)? According to Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003: 20), urban spatial experiences are rarely consistent in actual fact. In cases where various differences in the attribution of meaning and use become manifest through discussion or negotiation, these urban spaces are understood as contested spaces (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003: 18).

With regard to the mechanisms socially embedded in everyday practices that reflect the use, production, and regulation of urban space, all this material indicates that such practices are not neutral; on the contrary, they are accompanied – sometimes even informed – by the political, economic, and cultural ambitions of their producers and regulators and by the (collective) narratives, culture, and lifestyles of their users. The hard and the soft city do not necessarily reveal the variety of groups and voices that make use of either of them; and not all the groups of users and inhabitants necessarily contribute to the creation of the dominant discourse that informs the allocation of resources.

This exploration permits me to outline three theoretical avenues of inquiry that constitute as many starting points for the study of ordinary public space in the context of societal developments. At the same time, these lines of inquiry represent (1) the main perspectives from which the material about to unfold has been looked at; and (2) main points of departure from the mainstream literature in the field.

First, I am interested in how *cultural ambitions* inform the production and regulation of an ordinary public space. This is the topic of chapter 3.

Second, I am interested in how the *use* of an ordinary public space is *socially embedded*. This will be discussed in chapter 4.

Third, given the assessment that *dominant voices* and *discourses* inform both practices and the allocation, I am interested in how a non-dominant group is able to use, and eventually produce, a public space. This will be discussed in chapter 5.

3

The value of neoliberal principles: Explaining the reconstruction of Smaragd Square, Utrecht

In recent literature, urban developments are predominantly explained in relation to processes of marketization, privatization, and increasing entrepreneurialism, which are designed to attract capital to a city increasingly managed by public–private partnerships. A good example is Davis, who claims in his successful book *City of Quartz* (Davis 2006 [1990]: 226–8) that a 'class war' was waged in and over public space in Los Angeles in which in the end the 'untouchables' were pushed out and new megastructures and supermalls have taken over the city centre. Similarly Zukin, in both *Landscapes of Power* (1991) and *Naked City* (2010), portrayed a grim image of urban public spaces, where '[s]hopping centres have replaced political meetings and civic gatherings as arenas of public life' (Zukin 1991: 51). In *The Public Realm* Lofland (1998: 210) notes, in the same vein, that public space is socially 'sanitized' through processes of privatization that control and reduce the chance of meeting undesirables, such as 'abusive streetpeople or beggars' (ibid., 209). And Smith and Low contend that '[p]roperty owners and consumers in the marketplace are the new citizens' who produce public spaces (in Low and Smith 2006: 2). In short, the general point is the increased privatization, marketization, and increased securitization, under the common denominator of 'neoliberalization', of public places. The logic of the market is coming increasingly to dominate what used to be the public or social realm: social housing, telecommunications, education, healthcare, and even the penal and judicial system (see Brenner et al. 2010: 328, 329; Schmidt and Németh 2010: 454; Harvey 2006a, 2006b; Logan and Molotch 1987; Sager 2011: 154; Madanipour 2006; Crawford 1992; Mudge 2008; Shamir 2008; Wacquant 2009).

Nevertheless, the theories, which claim that neoliberalism is on the rise in the public realm, have been criticized on the grounds that neoliberalism is not a clear-cut, sharply defined concept but comes in many guises and the reality it covers may take different forms and have different outcomes, depending on the specific social, historical, and institutional context in which it unfolds. Brenner et al. (2010: 328, 329) for example remarked that the concept of neoliberalism is accompanied by 'imprecision, confusion, and controversy'. Mudge (2008: 705, 706) states that neoliberalism is 'an oft-used term that can mean many things' and that it 'lacks historicity and parsimony', and Amable (2011: 3) observes that 'its main characteristics are often wrongly perceived'. Peck and Tickell (2002: 457) suggest that neoliberalization should be studied with a focus on emerging 'local

versions' of neoliberalism (see also Brenner and Theodore 2002). Clarke (2004: 44) finds that '[n]eo-liberalism is enacted in different hybridized formations', while Mudge (2008: 724) calls attention to the diverse 'faces' and appearances of neoliberalism (see also Harvey 2006a: 29).

Being about the reconstruction of Smaragd Square in Utrecht, the present chapter is interested in how the ambitions that drove the initial Smaragd Square have changed. Can they indeed be understood from this dominant Anglo-Saxon perspective? To what extent would an Anglo-Saxon, neoliberal perspective help to clarify the reconstruction of a secondary space such as Smaragd Square? In recent years there have been several attempts to demonstrate, mainly, how concepts based on American phenomena help in explaining Dutch urban reality. I present here a few examples.

Uitermark and Duyvendak (2008) found that 'revanchist urbanism', originally grounded in the American context, is taking a different form in Europe. They conclude, along with others, that 'a wholesale displacement of social-democratic policies by revanchist policies is not observed' (ibid., 1485). In another study, Aalbers (2010: 1698) uses the 'revanchist city as a heuristic device', and in doing so further expands the concept of 'European revanchism' (ibid., 1699). Van Eijk (2010) argues that exclusionary urban policies should not all be viewed from the perspective of 'urban revanchism', as this may in principle cloud some of the actual drivers of these policies.

With regard to 'gentrification', Van Kempen and Van Weesep (1994: 1054) conclude that '[i]n the Netherlands [...] extensive housing market regulations interfere with market logic', and their study indicates three different types of gentrification in this context. Another study is interested in the 'emergence of gentrification as a "global urban strategy"', as originally described by Smith (see Smith 2002 in Uitermark et al. 2007: 125). Uitermark et al. (2007; see also Van der Wilk 2016) conclude that the driving force of gentrification is different from what happens in cities in the United States. Related to the concept of gentrification is the notion of the 'entrepreneurial city'. Oudenampsen (2007: 3) sees the city of Amsterdam through the lens of the 'entrepreneurial city' – a term originally coined by Hall and Hubbard (1996) – and recognizes some new kinds of urban development stimulated by typical American phenomena – for example the 'democratic deficit, the expulsion of lower incomes, and the neglect of the government's social responsibilities' –among the developments that take place in Amsterdam. Van den Berg and Chevalier (2017: 1) show how both gentrification policies and entrepreneurial strategies shape particular urban policies in Rotterdam, producing places for consumption and leisure (a case in point is the 'City Lounge') and, at the other end of the spectrum, putting a 'ban on gathering' for groups deemed problematic in public space.

Finally, in terms of privatization, Van Melik finds that public–private partnership places and 'publicly realised places' are affected by a 'general tendency towards greater control and predictability of activities' (2008: 190; see also Van Melik et al. 2007 and 2009). However, she cannot attribute this change directly to the involvement of the private sector in the transformations of public space.

These studies suggest that the Anglo-Saxon perspective is indeed important for explaining matters related to urban planning in the Dutch context. But at the same time they reveal that many provisos and conceptual adaptations are necessary for this perspective to be correctly applied and understood. Thus the very same studies allow us to cast some doubts on the actual help that a neoliberal perspective can offer, or at any rate to be analytical, nuanced, and circumspect when we apply it.

The present chapter moves in an area defined by this major point. Hence the central question it will attempt to answer is this: *Do neoliberal principles account for changes in the production of Smaragd Square?* Given the many-sidedness and critical accounts of the concept of neoliberalism, it is imperative to be specific and precise in using it. A review of the literature pointed out to me four principles that stand out when it comes to assessing whether neoliberalism can explain and make comprehensible the restructuring of public places in actual practice, as for example in the case of Smaragd Square.

3.1
Four neoliberal principles in the production and management of urban places

This section argues that there are four neoliberal principles that are commonly used in the literature to explain various urban developments.[7] These principles are related to (1) the entrepreneurial role of the local state, (2) the deployment of urban space in intercity relations, (3) the understanding of public space as primarily meant for shopping and consumptive lifestyles, and (4) the construction of urban space as a privatized category of space that gives differential access and rights of selection and exclusion.

First principle:
The local state facilitates the financial interests of the private sector.

One may discern three aspects to this first principle. First, it is about the role of the local state. Second, it involves making the private sector ethically accountable and devolving responsibility to it. And, third, it presupposes the democratic accountability of the process itself.

With regard to roles and practices of the local state, it has been argued that the public sector puts entrepreneurial values first (Harvey 1989; Crawford 1992; Swyngedouw et al. 2002) and that the main principle is 'capital accumulation' (Harvey 2006a: 27; see Oudenampsen 2007). Public managers provide certain favourable conditions, such as 'regulatory undercutting' (Leitner and Sheppard 1998, quoted in Brenner and Theodore 2002: 367), in order to enable the 'economic enterprise' (MacLeod 2002: 604). This view is supported by Blumenberg and Ehrenfeucht (2008), who studied the regulation of sidewalks in Las Vegas and found that local officials

7 These principles are taken from literature that refers to neoliberalism either explicitly (e.g. to a neoliberal framework, to processes of neoliberalization, or to neoliberalism itself) or implicitly, via processes such as marketization, securitization, commercialization, economization, or the privatization of urban space.

monitor public place in such a way as to 'to protect the financial interests of the gaming industry', since this is the 'county's bread and butter' (319). It has been suggested that local governments aim at convincing supposedly highly mobile firms that they are willing to cooperate with them and ready to repudiate the role of 'regulation-keen and controlling bureaucrats' (Sager 2011: 7; see also Schmidt and Németh 2010: 454).

Harvey (2006a) claims that the local government and the public sector nowadays are exhibiting entrepreneurial characteristics. In its most extreme form, the neoliberal state has a 'fundamental mission', which is 'to create a "good business climate" and therefore to optimize conditions for capital accumulation no matter what the consequences for employment or social well-being' (2006a: 25). This implies that the state is not 'absent', as it would be in classic liberalism, but still remains one of the leading actors in European urban development projects (Swyngedouw et al. 2002: 551–6). The turn to neoliberalism means that the state changes its values or goals, not that it vanishes.

Hand in hand with an entrepreneurial public sector goes the attribution of moral value to economic action – in other words its 'moralization', as Shamir (2008: 1) calls it or, as I prefer, ethicization.[8] Shamir notices an increase in the private sector's performing 'tasks that were once considered to reside within the civic domain of moral entrepreneurship and the political domain' (2008: 2). This is what responsibilization consists of: a process whereby actors such as companies are assumed and expected to be aware that they should feel responsible for their actions and should reflect morally upon them (ibid., 7). Similarly, Schinkel and Van Houdt (2010a: 699) understand responsibilization as 'the broader process of making individuals, private sector and community responsible for public tasks'.

In public–private partnerships the local state and the private sector are the leading agents in the process of place production. It is argued that, as a consequence of this form of collaboration, democratic accountability for producing places diminishes. Swyngedouw et al. (2002: 556; see Sager 2011; Harvey 2006a) find it problematic to identify who is represented and who represents what in these collaborations. In such a process 'participation […] operates through co-optation and invitation, usually by the key power brokers within the institutions' (Swyngedouw et al. 2002: 561). In this respect, Harvey (2006a: 27) speaks of 'governance by elites' – a type of formation that allows professionals to participate, whereas non-professionals, other social groups, and local communities are for the most part excluded from decision-making (Swyngedouw et al. 2002; Sager 2011).

Second principle:
Public places are deployed in competitive intercity relations.

Urban public places increasingly play a role in competitive relations over investments, upscale residents, visitors and tourists, status, and

8 I consider 'ethicization' to be a more accurate concept, since 'to moralize' and 'moralization' are extremely popular and well-established words in the everyday sense of 'giving a moral lesson' (usually from a position of superiority): a very different usage would easily be misinterpreted or misunderstood. 'Ethicization', on the other hand, seems to be exactly what Shamir (2008) wants to say.

image, as urban governments aspire to position and brand themselves in various urban hierarchies (Taylor 2004: 210–12; Sassen 2006: 68–71; Zukin 1991; 2010: 231; Brenner and Theodore 2002). This is true especially of American cities, which compete both to attract footloose (service) firms and tourists and to secure high-income residents in order to regulate their expenditures and incomes. Hence cities attempt to appear more alluring to investors (see Swyngedouw et al. 2002; Sassen 2006). The competition is also waged for consumers such as tourists, high-income inhabitants, clients, or customers of shops and restaurants or businesses, as is argued and demonstrated in a large body of literature (Sager 2011; Spierings 2006; Judd and Fainstein 1999; Németh 2009; Banerjee 2001; Stivers 2009; Swyngedouw et al. 2002; Zukin 1998; Turner 2002; Jackson 1999; Van Melik et al. 2007; Van Melik 2008; Pow 2009; MacLeod 2002). In this discourse, people are seen as consumers and each individual is an 'active choice maker' (Clarke 2004: 39; Savage 2008: 153) or a 'mobile housing-consumer' (Bijlsma et al. 2010: 98), who choses a place on the basis of criteria such as functionality, attractiveness, quality, and aura (Savage 2008: 156).

It has been argued that interurban competition eventually leads to unequal development in inner cities; scholars speak of 'new inequalities in cities' (Sassen 2006) in relation to the evolvement of standardized landscapes of consumption (Zukin 1998), and these inequalities lead to gentrification and polarization. What is more, the phenomenon is not confined to primary urban spaces such as inner cities or downtowns but extends into other, secondary spaces – and even into 'low-income, minority-group areas' (1998: 834).

Third principle:
Public places are meant for leisurely shopping and consumptive identity display.

According to this principle, urban public places are predominantly understood as spaces of spending and consumption and as spaces for the display and creation of identity (see Zukin 1991: 275; Atkinson 2003; Zukin 1998; Jackson 1999; Turner 2002; Schmidt and Németh 2010; Brenner and Theodore 2002; Spierings 2006).

The US shopping mall often serves as the archetypal space of consumption (Zukin 1998: 828; see Sager 2011: 173; Sorkin 1992). Within such a space, consuming ranges from shopping in order to fulfil daily, mundane needs to shopping that caters for functions related to self-expression – for example, symbolic marking and identity display (Jackson 1999; see Crawford 1992; Sorkin 1992), choice of urban lifestyles (Zukin 1998), or 'fun and enjoyment' (Mullins et al. 1999: 46–7; see Zukin 1998; Jackson 1999). This second end of the spectrum is much more emphasized in the literature than the first.

Shopping is marketed and planned as a recreational activity: Jackson (1999) shows how managers of shopping centres make an effort to turn shopping for daily needs into a leisurely act. Often the idea is that the economic function of public space is able to generate certain use values and social effects (see Logan and Molotch 1987) such as fun, leisure, and the expression of identity; and this is called a 'trickle-down effect' (MacLeod 2002: 604).

Fourth principle:
Public places are privatized places, which exclude non-white and non-middle-class groups and activities.

This last principle is about access: who is allowed to use public space, and what forms of uses are condoned? How is public space privatized by various kinds of social exclusion? Atkinson (2003) distinguishes between two strategies for exclusion. The first is Zukin's 'domestication by cappuccino' (Zukin 1995, also quoted in in Atkinson 2003: 1831), which can be understood as a form of exclusion and selection through 'codes' that communicate appropriate behaviour. Zukin argues that the design, maintenance, and surveillance of public places stimulate forms of use, in particular, forms of consumption that at the same time discourage other forms of use: 'In such spaces, non-consumption is a form of deviance' (in Atkinson 2003: 1834). Other studies have shown the same effect; for example, the 'aesthetization' of public places (Pow 2009; Walks 2006; Zukin 1998) is connected to social–spatial exclusion (Pow 2009). Such places communicate 'appropriate users and use' via 'semiotic [...] devices' and 'informal codes' (Gieryn 2000: 479).

The second strategy Atkinson (2003) discerns is Smith's (1996) 'revanchism', in which social groups are defined as a threat and explicitly targeted for expulsion from public places. This strategy contains a more direct and intentional form of exclusion. Using the concept of the 'revanchist city', Smith refers to less subtle and indirect forms, targeted at 'minorities, the working class, women, environmental legislation, gays and lesbians [and] immigrants' (Smith 1996: 44–5). Revanchism presupposes that urban places are occupied by non-middle-class groups and are now the object of a 'reconquest' campaign carried out by or for the middle classes. For example, MacLeod (2002: 619) has illustrated how, in the city centre of Glasgow, homeless vendors were portrayed as a threat to the consumerist downtown: undesirable users were defined along lines of income, class, ethnicity, gender, age, and occupation.

The 'privatization' of public places – understood as transference of ownership and control to market parties – is believed to facilitate better control and use of these places (Aalbers 2010). For instance, Németh (2009) studied privately owned but publicly accessible places and found various spatial and managerial strategies connected to gates, accessibility, and CCTV that control who is using these places and in what way.

3.2
Smaragd Square in Utrecht, where 'everything has changed'[9]

Now that the alleged influence of neoliberal planning on the construction of urban places has been channelled into four concrete principles, the stage is set for an empirical analysis of Smaragd Square – an ordinary Dutch public place in the city of Utrecht (Figure 1). Smaragd Square is situated in Hoograven, a typical post-Second World War neighbourhood,

9 Street interview 3_LZ, 14–4–2010. See Annex 2 for an overview of interviewees.

comparable to many others in the Netherlands and in Northwest Europe in terms of its population and housing (for an overview, see Dekker and Van Kempen 2004; also Dekker 2007). Utrecht is, after Amsterdam, Rotterdam and the Hague, the fourth largest city in the Netherlands; the number of its inhabitants was recorded as 343,134 on 1 January 2017 (WistUdata 2017). It is centrally located in the densely populated Randstad – a conurbation in north-western Netherlands constituted by the main cities and their surrounding areas.

Smaragd Square consists of a partly covered shopping passage or arcade (Figure 2), a parking area, and a footpath to the side.[10] Shopping trolleys are stacked outside Lidl supermarket and people park their bikes there as well. The footpath is a few meters wide; it is surrounded by plane trees and has benches for people to sit. Unreturned shopping trolleys and two kiosks block the passage for pedestrians.

One kiosk sells pizza, the other flowers. With one exception – the Movie Max videostore – all the shops have their windows sealed with advertisements. One of them is Polsky Sklepy, a Polish shop reputed to attract people from as far as Eindhoven and Venlo. A sculpted pillar called 'Zonnegodin', the 'Sun Goddess' stands erect (and solitary) in the parking space (Figure 5 and Figure 6), which is used as a market area once a week, ever since 1965 (Heurneman et al. 2005). The district library is situated at the top of Lidl supermarket.

Figure 1 Smaragd Square in Utrecht. Source: Google Maps, April 2014.

10 The description given here is based on a participant observation from 6–5–2010.

Figure 2 The shopping passage in Smaragd Square. Photo by Linda Zuijderwijk, 2010.

The shopping arcade hosts two supermarkets, a snack bar, a bike shop, a DIY-shop, a butcher's, a drugstore, and a household supply store. Dutch chain stores such as Kruidvat and Blokker also have branches in Smaragd Square; all in all, between 50 and 60 enterprises give the square as their address (Kamer van Koophandel 2017).

At the time of research, the independent hairdressing salon is the only shop that survived from the 1960s – the decade in which the square was initially built. The square was originally built on 'a meadow and tree groves', as a local born in 1937 recalled in 2010 (Street interview 3_LZ, 21–5–2010). In the 1950s only 22 shops existed in and around the place – among them a supermarket, a bank, a garage, and two workshops (Anonymous, 1962 = *Utrechts Nieuwsblad*, 18 August, p. 4). These shops were situated in the plinths of a block of flats that adjoined parking facilities and public gardens in the eastern corner of the square. The square's open space was pedestrianized; there was a raised area with the 'Sun Goddess' and a public garden. The library was housed in a pavilion in the middle of the square (see Figures 3–5).

Figure 3 Smaragd Square, two years after its first construction in 1964.
Source: Het Utrechts Archief, 2012.

Figure 4 Smaragd Square, seen from the south, 1999.
Source: Historische Kring Tolsteeg–Hoograven, 2012.

Figure 5 Smaragd Square, seen from the west, 1976.
Source: Historische Kring Tolsteeg–Hoograven, 2012.

Figure 6 Smaragd Square with the statue still in its old location.
Photo by Linda Zuijderwijk, 2009.

Back in the 1950s, the intention of the head of architecture at the Utrecht Department of City Development was to create the sort of amenities that would benefit the local neighbourhood and community. Here are his words:

An ideal design can be described as an image that is close to perfection. As far as this concerns urban planning, it is an important factor to shape those stimulating possibilities*, which can consciously cooperate to* beneficial conditions and norms of living*. In general it should be attempted to come to functional solutions which approach the requirements and needs of the community.*
(Van der Stad 1955: 24, italics added)

This quotation illustrates typical postwar ideas and is quite explicit about the view that urban planning should contribute to the well-being of the community at large, create new possibilities, and improve living conditions. This statement is a far cry from the four neoliberal principles mentioned above, which is why it is appropriate for it to head a discussion of these principles. In the next section I will look at all four of them in conjunction with the perspectives of Smaragd Square's producers and regulators, in order to understand and explain the recent reconstruction of Smaragd Square.

3.3
Scrutinizing the reconstruction of Smaragd Square

The producers' and regulators' ideas, aims, and points of view were captured mainly through semi-structured interviews with municipal officials, architects, financers, and others officials involved in the rebuilding of Smaragd Square. I also gathered a lot of documentation and newspaper articles produced just before and during this process. This constituted another important source for the producers' and regulators' perspectives.

Starting with a civil servant who was employed by the municipality of Utrecht, a sponsor of this project, the respondents were approached via chain referral sampling (on this method, see Riley and Harvey 2007). Apart from that, interviewees were also actively approached when the situation required it, for example when they were mentioned in documents relevant to my topic.[11] As some interviewees expressed a preference for remaining anonymous, all of them are referred to by title or position (e.g. civil servant, representative of the private sector) rather than by name. As for the collection of documents, 41 of them were analysed to the point of saturation. The dates of these documents range from 1991 to 2007, a period that spans the official completion of the project as a 2007 report by the Utrecht department of City Development confirms (see Annex 2 for City Development, 5–9–2007: 43).[12]

The four neoliberal principles presented above were broken down into 'codes' in the computer programme Atlas.ti, which helped to perform the analysis; hence they guided this analysis. The aim was to find out whether the principles were enough to explain the actual reconstruction of Smaragd Square and to make one understand it and, in case they were not, to see what other explanations there could be.

The next four sections unravel the factors through which this reconstruction took place (3.3.1), analyse the discourse of intercity relations (3.3.2), describe the perception of Smaragd Square as a place of shopping and consumptive lifestyles (3.3.3), and assess the intended decrease and increase of specific functions, uses, and users of the square (3.3.4).

3.3.1 A cooperation between municipality, constructors, and real estate owners

This section untangles the process and partnerships that produced the reconstruction of Smaragd Square.[13]

The first plans for redeveloping the square started in the early 1990s. In 1991 several requests for the expansion of various enterprises in the square led to a 'proposal for the integral [municipal] plan for the improvement of the shopping centre at Smaragd Square'.[14] This proposal was 'in principle' approved by the mayor and aldermen,[15] but in March 1992 planning was suspended. In 1995 shopkeepers and owners of real estate called in the

11 For an extended list of the topics covered in the interviews, see Annex 1.

12 See Annex 2 for the full list of documents and interviews discussed. At the time of this study, the majority of these documents were stored in an archive in the municipal district bureau Utrecht-South, which was made available to me by one of the interviewees. Further interviewees placed supplementary documents at my disposal. A structured search and selection carried out the Utrecht municipal archive and on the internet, especially on the websites of the Municipality of Utrecht, completed my research. I also collected newspaper articles in Lexis Nexis about the reconstruction of the square. These articles contain the producers' and the regulators' views on the reconstruction, either through quotation or through paraphrase.

13 The footnotes in this chapter cite the documents used as sources for quotations and data. This is archival material, for which I devised a special system of referencing; the main categories can be found in Annex 2, which in this respect acts as a 'bibliography' for these notes.

14 Department of Spatial Organization – Urbanism and Traffic, 31–7–1991.

15 Mayor and Aldermen, February 1992.

construction group BAM, which is the Dutch branch of what is in 2018 called Royal BAM Group).[16] In 1996 the construction group took the initiative of advancing a proposal to expand 'the shopping centre by about 2,500 to 3,500 m2 GFA [gross floor area]'.[17] In reaction to this initiative, a municipal project group was organized that involved officers from varying municipal services.[18] The tasks of this group, as officially defined, were 'to indicate the municipal preconditions, to test the proposals [of the construction group] within the limits set by these preconditions, [and] to facilitate and create conditions in which realization can be pursued'.[19] This shows that the municipal group aimed to make sure that the proposals of the construction group could be realized. What is more, the 'facilitation' and creation of good conditions were planned in a context in which a representative of the construction group and the representative of a major owner of real estate in the square were invited to be part of the project group.[20] This reunion took place in June 1997, six months after the formation of the group. The project management office then proposed 'to include the – first – reaction of [the construction group] and of [the real estate owner] when advising the municipal council, in order to present a "makeable", i.e. realistic plan (in agreement with [the construction group])'.[21]

A civil servant explained to me in an interview that the group discussed whether the preconditions should or should not be negotiated with the construction group already at that stage:

[T]his was also discussed within the municipality: during the period when we define the preconditions, should we design these preconditions for an ideal situation, or should we actually negotiate with the developing parties, which have to fulfil these preconditions? Because you want to learn from the other party whether the preconditions you defined are practicable. But there is a tension between public and private interest here.
(Interview 3_LZ & SB, 22–2–2010, civil servant)

Even without this tension, the redevelopment could not be projected without the construction group, as the following demonstrates. The municipality proposed to expand the shopping centre by 2,500 m2 instead of the 3,500 m2 originally proposed.[22] The construction group, in a letter also signed by shopkeepers, then stated that it 'will not agree' and reminded the municipality of the 'mayor's and aldermen's promise of 3,500 m2'.[23] The municipality had to sanction in principle this desired expansion, albeit cautiously, as the whole project of redesigning the square might otherwise have fallen through. A chief executive stated:

16 Project Management Office, 8–12–1996: 1; Secretariat Municipality of Utrecht, 11–3–1997; Interview 3_LZ & SB, 22–2–2010, civil servant; Interview 6, 22–5–2012, private sector; Interview 5, 10–5–2011, private sector.
17 Project Management Office, 8–12–1996: 1.
18 Project Group Smaragd Square, 21–1–1996.
19 Ibid.; see Project Management Office, 2–12–1996; Project Management Office, 7–1–1997.
20 Project Management Office, 2–6–1997.
21 Ibid.
22 Project Management Office, 2–6–1997; see also Department of Spatial Organization, 4–1–1995.
23 BAM Real Estate Development, 27–6–1997.

Considering the continuation of the project, the readiness of the municipality to cooperate in principle with an expansion of 3,500 m² GFA is important. […] further research should demonstrate whether this expansion is actually realistic.[24]

Hence it seems reasonable to say that the redesigning of the square would not have happened without the involvement of the construction group. In its cooperation with these private parties, the municipality aimed to create conditions for them to come up with a feasable design to put before the municipal council. It appears that the construction group, the other major owner, and the municipal representatives spoke as one body through the project group.

Both the municipality and the construction group aimed for a reconstruction of the square that should be at least neutral in terms of budget,[25] because this was 'a game of money too', according to this civil servant:

what is invested has to yield profit and that is a game of money too. [You ask yourself]: How many shops are built? And how much does that yield, so that we may invest it in public space and the refurnishing of buildings and the entrees to the area?
(Interview 2_SB & LZ, 12–2–2010, civil servant)

And the construction group aimed to 'sell the property' and 'make a profit', as one of its representatives declared:

'Yes, [the construction group] […] is the developing party and wants to sell the property at the end of the day. That is what it makes its profit off. And […] their costs in development need to be recouped.
(Interview 5, 10–5–2011, private sector)

Another representative of the construction group stated:

The initial interest is of course the possibility to expand, the building activities of course, but also just making profit by putting up some buildings and then being able to sell them, and so on. Yes, it is that easy for a developer.
(Interview 6, 22–5–2012, private sector)

Thus both the municipality and the construction group considered Smaragd Square as a financial investment that should have aimed for a break-even result.

Apart from serving that interest, the construction group considered itself to be part of what a representative of the private sector called the 'Dutch system' (Interview 6, 22–5–2012, private sector) – a system in which municipal strategic documents and policies played an essential role. Such documents included the 'retail note' or retail strategy, the retail planning

24 Chief Executive and the Mayor, 29–8–1997; see also Department of Spatial Organization, 29–8–1997; Mayor and Aldermen (date unknown; District Office South, Municipality of Utrecht, 9–10–1998.

25 Project Group Smaragd Square, 21–1–1996.

research, and the district development plan that is the basis for the works carried out in the district by the municipality, housing corporations, and property developers.[26] A representative of the private sector even used 'we' in a way that would not seem to make any difference between the private and public sector within this scheme: 'In principle, we arranged everything through zoning schemes and Retail Strategy and master plans' (Interview 6, 22–5–2012, private sector).

In consequence, the construction group perceived its performance as taking place within boundaries defined by these municipal policies. Both the municipality and the construction group used these policies to frame their actions during this work in the square. For the municipality, this was not surprising – they were, after all, municipal policies; the relevant part here is that the same policies also appear to serve as a self-evident framework for the construction group.

With regard to the local residents' participation in this process, the municipality agreed to 'consult with and inform them and others with interests concerning the building plans', according to their statutory duties.[27] The residents were informed through a meeting and invited to discuss the proposal in a consultative group.[28] Furthermore, some of them wrote letters to the municipality on their own initiative.[29] When the municipal commission for spatial organization and housing approved the 'declaration of intent',[30] the residents' 'suggestions' had yet to be 'processed' by the project group 'insofar as possible', as was then stated.[31]

The construction group would then act as the first contact for shopkeepers, owners, and other interested parties;[32] it was supposed 'to care for the necessary consultation and agreement of the present owners and entrepreneurs'.[33] According to the final urban plan, 'regular consultation with owners, shopkeepers, representatives, as well as advisors of supermarkets, bank and pharmacy'[34] had been taken care of. In the end, shopkeepers received the redevelopment plan positively.[35] They had varying degrees of power in negotiating the design for the reconstruction. Thus the representatives of larger chain stores, for example, were seen or assumed to have more means to pursue their own interests, as this civil servant explained:

26 Unknown Author, 1996: 48 (District Development Plan for Hoograven/Tolsteeg).
27 Development Agency Municipality of Utrecht /Auditmanagement, 18–5–2000. See also District Office South, Municipality of Utrecht, 9–10–1998: 2.
28 Project Leader, District Office South, Municipality of Utrecht, 24–3–2000; see also Project Management Office Utrecht, 23–2–2000; District Office South, 17–2–2000: 3.
29 Service for the District Management and Urban Renewal, District Office South, 6–9–2000; Resident 6, 15–2–2000; Resident 7, 17–2–2000.
30 Council Committee on Spatial Organization and Housing, 19–1–1999: 13.
31 External Project Leader, Municipality of Utrecht, 25–5–2000: 5.
32 Project Group Smaragd Square, 21–1–1996.
33 Development Agency Municipality of Utrecht / Auditmanagement, 18–5–2000; see also District Office South, Municipality of Utrecht, 9–10–1998: 2.
34 External Project Leader, Municipality of Utrecht, 25–5–2000: 5.
35 Project Management Office Utrecht, 20–1–2000: 1.

Some pretty big guys come to the table in such a development, having their own interests. They may be rather dominating in some respects, I think. […] They have access to a whole machinery of expertise, which the mom and pop stores lack.
(Interview 3_LZ & SB, 22–2–2010, civil servant)

Besides, not all shopkeepers had the same ownership rights, and this influenced their negotiation power. One of them, for instance, had a leasehold agreement for his shop and, as a consequence, his negotiating position was much stronger than that of other shopkeepers.[36] Hence, whether the 'larger version [of 3,500 m2]' of the reconstruction plan was to be followed depended largely on the cooperation of this particular shopkeeper.[37] Thus some representatives of the shopkeepers had more of a say than others, and the construction group, too, had the power to determine the 'go–no go' of the redevelopment.

To conclude: representatives of the construction group and a major owner of real estate in the square were invited by the municipality to take part in the project group side by side with the municipal representatives. Local residents and shopkeepers were heard, but they were unequal and variable in terms of power to negotiate and it is not clear to what extent their wishes actually played a role in the final design. The municipality saw it as one of its tasks to facilitate the design and plans for the reconstruction, which was perceived as a financial investment, while the construction group also took care of various tasks, in essence public ones, as described in various policies. The private developer and the municipality operated as one actor, in the 'project group'.

3.3.2
Looking for spending capacity: Complementary shopping centres and competing districts

Who were the users the reconstruction focused on? Before the reconstruction of the square, the users could be described as consisting mainly of 'allochthonous families' with a lower income than deemed desirable for the neighbourhood, as this representative of the construction group explained:

The people who live around the square, let's say the families who come to do their groceries on Saturdays and during the week: mom came by cycling, with a little one in the bicycle seat […] As we sometimes tend to say: with a pretty large share of headscarves, in other words truly from the neighbourhood, but – yes – from among those with lower financial capacities. Because the people who had or have more spending power – they did go somewhere else.
(Interview 6, 22–5–2012, private sector)

The departure of people with higher incomes and more spending power was problematic and was a reason for the redevelopment: the neighbourhood

36 Council Committee on Spatial Organization and Housing, 20–6–2000: 16; Interview 5, 10–5–2011, private sector.
37 Council Committee on Spatial Organization and Housing, 20–6–2000: 16.

should have a more 'balanced composition of its population'.[38] From this perspective, the project boiled down to attracting and retaining people with higher incomes, who were by then leaving or considering to leave the neighbourhood;[39] and the goal was to 'maintain and strengthen the local orientation of the available spending power' (Interview 3_LZ & SB, 22–2–2010, civil servant).[40] This also shows from the following:

In a joint effort, the municipality, the corporations, and some market parties have formulated a development plan in order to make the neighbourhood more attractive, mainly to families and households with higher incomes.[41]

The 'drainage of the purchasing power' (Interview 4_SB & LZ, 2–3–2010, civil servant) was considered problematic, as the purchasing power supposedly flowed to other shopping centres nearby – for example the one in the neighbourhood of Kanaleneiland, which attracted clients of Smaragd Square. According to a shopkeeper, Kanaleneiland's somewhat earlier renovation caused 'a lot of local residents to go there for their purchases',[42] and another shopkeeper stated: 'We do hope that lots of the visitors who in the meantime are doing their groceries elsewhere will come back.'[43] This civil servant held a similar standpoint:

It is hard to attract sufficient people, so purchasing power is now leaking to the shopping centre of Kanaleneiland, which is a large shopping centre with an Albert Heijn [a supermarket in the middle and a higher-income segment], because when there is little attractive supply here, they will drive to the next shopping centre.
(Interview 4_SB & LZ, 2–3–2010, civil servant)

Smaragd Square was thus competing for spending power with near-by shopping centres such as Kanaleneiland.

However, this was not just a case of Smaragd Square competing with shopping centres in adjacent neighbourhoods. The district itself was feeling the effects of competition from other districts, 'and even cities', for more attractive residents and clients – in the form of families and people with higher spending capacity. This was admitted even in the Hoograven-Tolsteeg Neighbourhood [District] Development Plan:

This scaling-up of society [maatschappelijke schaalvergroting] *causes districts such as Hoograven to experience more competition with other districts, and even with cities other than Utrecht. People are looking further away, also because they can search for rental houses in the whole region and thus have a choice as to where they live. Before, they were assigned a house in their own city.*[44]

38 Unknown Author, 1996: 7 (District Development Plan for Hoograven/Tolsteeg).
39 District Manager South, 1998.
40 Unknown Author, 1996: 7 (District Development Plan for Hoograven/Tolsteeg).
41 Project Management Office, 2–12–1996.
42 Anonymous, 2002 (*Utrechts Nieuwsblad*, 11 October).
43 Ibid.
44 Unknown Author, 1996: 2–6 (District Development Plan for Hoograven/Tolsteeg).

Potential middle- and higher-income users of the shopping centre, including whole families, were considered to be mobile and able to choose the best location both for doing their groceries and for creating their own residence.

So at first sight it looks as if Smaragd Square and the district in which it is situated were in competition with other urban centres, districts, and even cities over customers and residents. But this impression does not stand scrutiny. The competition was much more complex; paradoxically, was carefully anticipated and channelled according to 'urban and distribution-planning desirability'.[45] There was an active policy of 'maintaining and strengthening the [shopping] amenities within the field of daily necessities', on the basis of functionality, quality, and location (among other criteria).[46] As part of this policy, a representative of the construction group stated that the renovated Smaragd Square 'offers some relief to the overcrowded shopping centers, such as Kanaleneiland'.[47] The effects of reconstruction were thus carefully considered beforehand, as a municipal plan for the reconstruction and extension of the square also demonstrates:

The expansion of the shopping centre in Smaragd Square is expected to be detrimental both to dispersed shopping [in the neighbourhood] and to the shopping centre in Ruygenhoeklaan, [which is] without future prospects. Considering the distance, the influence on the [shopping centre of] Montfoortlaan will be smaller.[48]

The retail strategy document followed the same reasoning:

Moreover, the Retail Strategy of 1988 already noted that such small shopping strips [Montfoortlaan and Ruygenhoeklaan] are not promising. To prevent undesirable vacancies and/or pauperization, a functional change of purpose was included in the district's development plan. [...] The function of 't Goylaan continues to be that of a neigbhourhood shopping centre and will have to be adapted to the district function of Smaragd Square.[49]

This is essentially a picture of complementary and rather competitive relations among shopping centres; we see here how competition was channelled into a structure characterized by complementarity. This is the main point. As I already observed, the construction group conformed to these policies, and one of its representatives made the point very nicely:

You are not going to expand exorbitantly and think, 'let the others take care of their own'. No: again and again, the meaning of an expansion for the surrounding municipalities and shopping centres has to be taken into account.
(Interview 6, 22–5–2012, private sector)

45 Mayor and Aldermen, February 1992.
46 Department of Economic Affairs, Service for Urban Development, Municipality of Utrecht, April 2000: 51.
47 Anonymous, 2002 (*Utrechts Nieuwsblad*, 11 October).
48 Mayor and Aldermen, February 1992.
49 Department of Economic Affairs, Service for Urban Development, Municipality of Utrecht, April 2000: 90.

This section has shown that the competition for certain social–economic categories, such as families with a certain income, was used as a stimulating factor or as an argument in favour of reconstructing Smaragd Square. However, this competition was not allowed to take its natural course; it was carefully staged, channelled, and monitored. Thus an *interdistrict or intracity* competition for people with greater spending capacity, people from the middle and higher echelons of income distribution in a city, came to play a role in redevelopment (side by side with the intercity competition for regional consumers, on which see Spierings 2006). This intracity competition was well thought out; the effects of the developments were estimated beforehand and a plan was followed to reach it. The aim was that the district centres should complement one another, and it was pursued through detailed estimates and anticipations of the specific effects of the redevelopment on the surrounding shopping centres. The result was a phenomenon that we may well call 'complementary intracity competition'.

3.3.3 How shopping should induce both desirable social behaviour and economic benefit

Was Smaragd Square perceived to be a place for shopping, consumption, and lifestyle display? This was certainly the declared outcome of its reconstruction, as the alderman for public space stated in a letter to the Society of Shopkeepers:

The Shopping centre in Smaragd Square has recently been revitalized. Through this intervention, the area has acquired attractiveness, fitting the world of experience of the modern consumer.[50]

On top of being well suited to the 'experience of the modern consumer', Smaragd Square was meant to be conducive to desirable social behaviour. The municipality, the construction group, and the major owner of real estate aimed at an effect in terms of 'liveability', '(social) safety' and 'atmosphere for sojourning [*verblijven*]'.[51] This is corroborated by the municipal retail strategy, a document that explains how retail was supposed to contribute to a 'lively public domain';[52] and we see from it that such contributions were understood to be directly related to the presence of shops or 'amenities':

The preservation and potential strengthening of an attractive offer of amenities for the residents is mainly a task of the municipality. The municipal interest is to promote that the public domain in the district remains lively and the citizens feel safe. This is most important for the vulnerable groups in the society. Social relations and amenities in the neighbourhood are important carriers of liveliness, safety, and

50 Alderman for Public Space, Land, Green, District Targeted Works and Personnel, 23–11–2006.

51 District Manager South, 1998; District Office South, 17–2–2000: 3; Project Group Smaragd Square, 21–1–1996; Unknown Author, 2–7–1997 (Short report: expansion/renovation shopping centre Smaragd Square).

52 Department of Economic Affairs, Service for Urban Development, Municipality of Utrecht, April 2000: 49; also 8.

commitment. Well-organized and facilitated shopping areas can play a very important role there.[53]

Thus urban places were supposed to be endowed from design with certain properties (such as the presence of 'well-organized' amenities), which were expected to inspire certain desirable collective or communal behaviours, related to the promotion of 'liveability' or '(social) safety'. Such effects were also acknowledged in a report for the construction group.[54] Thus it was anticipated that the reconstruction of the square would trickle down (MacLeod 2002) into social behaviour of a kind deemed 'desirable'.

In its turn, this behaviour was considered to spawn economic benefits, in what we may call a 'trickling-up effect'. A representative of the construction group found that 'the shop won't run well' if there is no 'traffic' – which is induced by a 'pretty' and 'cozy' environment:

Researcher *You just said [about another project]: 'we were able to put down some shops here and there, so that it would be cozier'. So coziness is in the interest of the construction group?*

Respondent *Yes, of course! […] shops benefit from traffic, so if only a few people walk by, the shop won't run well, it's as simple as that. […] It all has to do with money, but okay, if you think it's necessary, you have to make sure that the people want to visit and that it is well accessible and that there are no barriers to getting there and that they want to stay – that they won't just come and leave. So you have to make sure there's more, and it's pretty and cozy – you name it. Yes, that's all part of the deal.*
(Interview 6, 22–5–2012, private sector)

The municipality expected these effects too, as became clear during the preparation of the redesign:

[Expected] effects on the economic structure: preserving and strengthening the shopping structure in district South by extending and improving the atmosphere for sojourning in the shopping centre.[55]

Other amenities at the square, non-profit and semi-public institutions among them, were also expected to contribute to harvesting economic benefits. The weekly market as well as the municipal library and the health centre – which marked the presence of non-commercial real estate in Smaragd Square – were expected to attract visitors and to strengthen 'the position of the shopping centre'[56] and the 'economic structure' of the square.[57] For example, the municipal library was reputed to have 'an important role for attracting [people] to the shopping centre'[58] and was

53 Department of Economic Affairs, Service for Urban Development, Municipality of Utrecht, April 2000: 49.
54 Internal Report: this report is only for internal use and hence paraphrased. The title and date are known to the researcher but cannot be divulged.
55 District Manager South, 1998.
56 Project Management Office, 2–6–1997; see also Interview 3_SB & LZ, 22–2–2010, civil servant.
57 District Manager South, 1998.
58 Secretary, 18–2–1999.

deployed to foster the economic turnout by functioning as an attraction to the other facilities in the square.[59]

One may reasonably conclude that both the municipality and the construction group saw the facilities in the square as generating both desirable social behaviour and financial benefits for the community and that these would improve the quality of life in the neignourhood.

3.3.4 Dealing with loitering youngsters and alcoholics: Removing anonymous places and the replacement of 'functions'

Was the reconstruction of Smaragd Square also intended to discourage certain forms of use and the presence of specific groups of people? So it seems; in any case, 'loitering youngsters' and 'alcoholics' were seen as undesirables at the pre-reconstruction stage. This undesirable behaviour was supposedly related to the specific spatial constellation of the square. Here is the testimonial of a civil servant:

Researcher *Was it just physical – was that the only area in which something was wrong, or were things not going too well socially either?*

Respondent *Socially, yes – there was something wrong socially as well. I believe there were a couple of benches over there and a lot of alcoholics were sitting on them, there was a lot of complaining about that; and, of course, in this neighbourhood there are lots of migrants, so loitering youngsters were sitting there too. […] It all came together as a whole, it wasn't just the physical side, it's always a combination. So there was a large square, badly lit – a large dark space; and yes, in the evening that would attract people you don't necessarily want there, so it had an impact at that.* (Interview 4_SB & LZ, 2–3–2010, civil servant)[60]

The reconstruction project incorporated at least three design principles, two of which were related to discouraging the presence of undesirable social groups and uses. These principles were the removal of 'anonymous' places, the replacement of 'functions', and the improvement of the quality of the shopping centre in terms of renovation of facilities and general appearance. They will be discussed next.

First, anonymous places – such as 'dense bushes'[61] or a 'wall with no windows' interspersed among these bushes (Interview 2_SB & LZ, 12–2–2010, civil servant) – were cancelled simply through the presence of shops, entrances, and exits and the removal of benches from a public garden nearby. All these interventions were meant to enable forms of social control over the use of the square and to reduce phenomena such as vandalism and littering. This much is clear from conversation with a civil servant:

59 Internal Report; see Development Agency Municipality of Utrecht / Auditmanagement, 18–5–2000. See also Development Agency Municipality of Utrecht / Auditmanagement, 15–8–2000: 2, 3; External Project Leader, Municipality of Utrecht, 25–5–2000: 6; Municipality of Utrecht, December 1998: 5, Council Committee on Spatial Organization and Housing, 19–1–1999: 12.

60 See Advisory Committee on Housing, 5–4–2000: 3.

61 External Project Leader, Municipality of Utrecht, 25–5–2000: 20.

Researcher *Problems such as vandalism or deterioration, which of course are often enacted in public space: was that something that the design provided against? Street furniture that is resistant to vandalism, for example?*

Respondent *Most of the street furniture that we use is quite vandal-proof, but what is much more important is that you do not create many blind façades – or even any at all – on the ground level in a quiet area where there's nothing going on. There should be as many shops, premises, entrances, and exits as possible, so that there are always people walking in and out.*

Researcher *And what's the thought behind that? Why would you want that?*

Respondent *That will trigger some kind of social control. See, vandalism and the like do happen in those corners that are out of people's sight, for example where the façade is impersonal and blind – I mean a long brick wall with no windows. That's a very anonymous façade, and one will think: 'I can put a tag there.'*
(Interview 2_SB & LZ, 12–2–2010, civil servant)

In the final urban-planning document for Smaragd Square one will find that lack of supervision was identified as a direct cause of vandalism:

Located on the east side of the square, in a lane of plane trees, is a public garden with low and high bushes. A couple of benches are installed in the shelter of this public garden. This spot is definitely important as a hangout.[62] Youth from the neighbourhood meet here. Because of the dense bushes, there's no supervision of this spot from the houses in the square. As a consequence, the place is often subjected to vandalism. Garbage with a striking number of beer cans in it is found in these bushes.[63]

This was corroborated by another civil servant who stated: 'I do know that there was a public garden here with a hangout – a spot that was tempting and attractive for the invisibility [it offered]' (Interview 1_SB & LZ, 3–2–2010, civil servant). The community was not able to practice social control over these parts of Smaragd Square – which, following the civil servant quoted here, I'm calling 'anonymous'.

Then came the second step: after the liquidation of anonymous places, less necessary functions were eliminated too. Here 'functions' refers to various forms of use, for example sitting and parking, that take place in designated places. A representative of the construction group observed that an excess of public space:

The way it [the square] was established back then, everyone still had respect for public space. When I was walking around there, the excess of

62 'Hangout' (also in a subsequent quotation in this chapter) translates *verblijfsgebied* – which designates an area that is frequently visited or in which one spends a lot of time (a haunt). *Verblijfsgebied* is a concept frequently used in Dutch municipal documents, whereas 'hangout' appears to lack the formality that accompanies *verblijfsgebied*. It is certainly interesting that English language seems to lack a policy concept that captures the formal meaning the Dutch attach to this term.

63 Ibid.

space was misused rather than used. If you look at the constitution of the population groups that currently live in the neighbourhood of Smaragd Square, they had a very different vision of how to use public space from the people who used to live here when the neighbourhood was built. So the amount of litter, misuse, vandalism, criminality, etc. was of a total different order. And the excess of public space led to that. There was so much public space that it was just misused. With the raised square, they [the people that currently live in the neighbourhood] were racing it with scooters, I don't know, and that led to all kinds of things people didn't want there. Combining this with the fact there is too little square meter shopping centre, they said: 'we need to find a new balance [between functions].
(Interview 5, 10–5–2011, private sector)

As the shopping centre was to be enlarged to up to 3,500 m2, the outside public space had to have shops built in it, and new supporting functions such as parking[64] and (un)loading[65] had to be provided for. It appeared that old uses were removed by necessity, to make room for these new ones: there was no other option than to replace some functions with others. A civil servant observed:

In the old layout, the place was really meant to be a square where you could just be and do your thing next to the stores—with a statue, benches, and green areas. But here is what happened: some alcoholics got in the habit of sitting there. I am exaggerating because, of course, more people came there, but they were sitting there quite often. And, by necessity, that function has been removed, because parking space just had to be added for the upgrading of the shopping centre.
(Interview 4_SB & LZ, 2–3–2010, civil servant)

And another civil servant stated:

[T]here were a lot of calls for the expansion of the supermarkets, more shops, so the programme of the shops [winkelprogramma] *was expanded. Therewith also the parking demand in the area increased: more parking had to be added.*
(Interview 2_SB & LZ, 12–2–2010, civil servant)

Removing certain functions and replacing them with others appeared to be inevitable for the enlargement and upgrading of the shopping centre: parking spaces 'just had to be added', the need was obvious. In all these participants' eyes, the growth of the shopping centre is uncritically and apolitically coupled with the process of adding parking spaces, which suppressed or replaced other functions—other uses of the space. The idea was that these functions could still take place in the square, but were now secondary to the parking function. A civil servant observed:

The parking pressure will increase, while, with the added built environment, parking space is curtailed: that's why more 'program'

64 Interview 5, 10–5–2011, private sector.
65 District Office South, Municipality of Utrecht, 13–12–1999: 2; External Project Leader, Municipality of Utrecht, 25–5–2000: 6.

[i.e. functions or activities that may take place in the square] should be apportioned a place in the square. That's why this layered concept has been designed: a clear, homogeneous square floor, where directions are given for the different functions at the centre.[66]

Imagine a theatre. This 'program' with its accompanying 'layered concept' is comparable to a stage where white tape indicates the position and movement of the actors in various scenes. The 'sports field' is another useful metaphor for understanding this idea; this metaphor is explained by another civil servant:

A metaphor we used was the 'sports field', a field [as in an indoor gym] with these coloured lines drawn on it and that can be used in various ways. In this little square, we imagined that at one time there would be a market, whereas at another time it would be fully used for parking; but it could also host a manifestation or a street fair.
(Interview 2_SB & LZ, 12–2–2010, civil servant)

Through the substitution of certain functions with others, the formerly open space of Smaragd Square, where undesirable activities such as drinking and racing with scooters took place, had been transformed into a space first and foremost dedicated to shops and parking places.

Third, the quality of the shopping centre had to be improved through the renovation of facilities and general appearance. The old shopping centre was considered not to be 'up to date', which meant among other things that the facilities did 'not connect with current demands',[67] the 'shopping environment [wa]s not attractive', and its general appearance was 'poor'.[68] A civil servant explained:

it didn't fit the ideas of the time, the shops were having difficulties being profitable as the shopping centre actually was not outstanding in terms of its appearance and acreage, and then it is hard to attract sufficient people.
(Interview 4_LZ & SB, 2–3–2010, civil servant)

This is corroborated by the 'problem statement' as was also mentioned in this list of points in the urban plan:

the bad structure of the shops: the two most important attractors [sc. the supermarkets] are almost next to each other; the one-sided shopping [i.e. shops that face not other shops, but the street or the open space of the square] directly coupled to the outdated and badly maintained hangout; and parking areas of the shopping centre: the shape and size of the square.[69]

66 Committee on Spatial Aesthetics and Heritage, 12–10–1999.
67 Project Management Office, 8–12–1996; see Unknown Author, 1996: 3 (District Development Plan for Hoograven/Tolsteeg); District Manager South, 1998.
68 External Project Leader, Municipality of Utrecht, 25–5–2000.
69 External Project Leader, Municipality of Utrecht, 25–5–2000: 4. For 'hangout', see n. 63 in this chapter.

After reconstruction, a civil servant claimed that the square's image was 'qualitatively better' and that the exterior of the shops had charisma (Interview 4_LZ & SB, 2–3–2010, civil servant). The square was 'newly furnished' and paved with 'chic material' (ibid.). It is to be noted that interventions of this order were not directly related to any strategies of discouraging undesired behaviour but rather reflected the desire to attract certain groups of users to the square.[70]

If we turn now to the privatization of the square – meaning the transfer of ownership or control over the use of this space to private parties – this did not occur. During reconstruction, the square was developed; then, at a later stage, it was transferred back to municipal services for maintenance and management (Interview 3_LZ & SB, 22–2–2010, civil servant).[71] As it is a public place, the municipality remained the only party that could act as commissioner (Interview 6, 22–5–2012, private sector) and made a point of respecting the public character of the square. Thus, during development, the shopkeepers expressed a wish to close the shopping street with a fence, after opening hours. The municipality did not comply with their wish:

Yes, this is public space, property of the municipality. […] There was a lot of discussion about it […] the municipality's the point of view, like that of the police, was 'no, we are not going to close that'.
(Interview 4_LZ & SB, 2–3–2010, civil servant)

It is now clear that some uses – and whole social categories – were deemed undesirable for Smaragd Square. The reconstruction implemented at least two spatial strategies that are related to discouraging some forms of use of the square and those who practised them. The first one is rather straightforward: anonymous places believed to attract questionable forms of behaviour are removed. The second one is less outspoken: by substituting some functions for others, one did not question actual uses and users and their desirability; rather the necessity for certain functions, such as parking and shopping, came to the fore. These functions were related to the intended uses of those identified as future users of the place: people with greater spending power. The third spatial initiative, upscaling the quality of facilities and appearance, could not be linked directly to eliminating undesirable uses and users but rather to attracting desired shoppers and other groups of users to the square. Finally, the square was not privatized but rather deliberately kept 'public'.

3.4
Can neoliberal principles explain the reconstruction of Smaragd Square?

This chapter proposed to answer the question: *Do neoliberal principles account for changes in the production of Smaragd Square?* This question was induced by the fact that a reconstruction of the square had taken

70 In practice, the enhanced quality of the square in terms of facilities and appearance could have the effect of discouraging certain forms of behaviour, but this is beside the point; the matter of interest here is the intentions, not the effects.

71 Unknown Author, 1996 (District Development Plan Hoograven/Tolsteeg).

place, and this invited probing the tenability of the ambitions that gave rise to the initial construction in the 1960s. Looking at the reconstruction from an Anglo-American perspective, a *prima facie* answer is: 'yes', neoliberal principles do account for these changes. But was the reconstruction indeed driven by the four main neoliberal factors discussed here? The simple answer is: no, it was not. The empirical analysis of the reconstruction of this ordinary square in Utrecht revealed that these factors had little to no heuristic value. Rather, it appears that a Dutch system perspective offers a better explanation for this reconstruction and I suggest that the research community should reconsider a turn towards the Dutch system perspective rather than adopting the neoliberal perspective. By way of conclusion, the chapter will now examine the explanatory value of the four neoliberal principles distinguished in the relevant literature.

According to the first principle, the local state facilitates the financial interests of the private sector. At first sight this principle may seem to be pertinent here, were it not for the fact that, in the Dutch planning context, such 'facilitation' is nothing new at all. There is no need to invoke a turn to neoliberal planning to explain the local state's involvement in the transformation of Smaragd Square. Here are some arguments in support of this claim.

First, this chapter has shown that the Utrecht municipality invited the construction group and a major owner of real estate to participate in a 'project group' whose purpose was to develop a 'makeable' urban plan. By doing this, the municipality facilitated the interests of the construction group, which had the power to decide whether the redevelopment itself should go ahead or not. Although the scale finally tipped in favour of the construction group, it is too much of a reduction of the municipality's and construction group's differentiated objectives to understand their primary goal as simply being 'capital accumulation' (Harvey 2006a: 27; 1989; see Oudenampsen 2007), as both the municipality and the construction group complied with municipal strategies and goals.

Second, it is true that the reconstruction of Smaragd Square indeed suffered from a deficit in democratic accountability. The municipality actively invited the construction group and a major owner of real estate to participate in developing the plan, whereas the local residents and shopkeepers were invited just to voice their opinions. Still, to state – with Harvey (2006a), Swyngedouw et al. (2002), Sager (2011), and others – that democratic accountability was entirely absent is, again, rather reductionist.

Third, getting back to the basic idea that nothing was new here, the municipality was certainly not absent; it is an active agent throughout the whole process. This substantiates conclusions already reached by Swyngedouw et al. (2002), Van Melik (2008), and Priemus (2002). In fact the present analysis corroborates Van Melik's (2008) findings, in her study of the redevelopment of Dutch urban squares, that municipalities were always very present during the planning of the entire process, and also in the maintenance of public squares.

But the question is to what extent this finding can be attributed to a neoliberal turn in urban planning. Like other European countries, the Netherlands has a mixed economy, in which the state (national and local)

has been cooperating with the private sector in the field of housing and urban planning at least ever since the end of the Second World War, throughout the era now known as 'the Reconstruction', long before the rise of neoliberalism. In all this era, Dutch social-market economy, along with the German and Scandinavian, has traditionally adopted traits of the market, which it has regarded as a natural partner in negotiation processes.

The state has a long history of cooperating with the private sector in various ways – especially in the domain of housing and infrastructure, where the state played a directing role in the past and decisions used to be made by the national or local government (Brandsen 2004 [1999]). This is the Dutch system, which came into being during the Reconstruction. And, to give it more context relevant to my subject, two specifications are in order. First, this model of public–private cooperation was democratized only in the 1970s, particularly when urban renewal became important and residents protested and resisted against the planned demolition of their homes. Second, in the 1980s this system took a new turn, towards giving the local government less of a directive role and placing responsibilities with the executors of local and national planning bodies such as the housing corporations.

The second neoliberal principle, that public places are deployed in competitive relations, is not very fruitful either when it comes to understanding the history of the reconstruction of Smaragd Square.

First of all, in this case a lot of effort has been made to prevent competition at the intracity level. It appears that the standard discourse – appeal to the theme of competition for highly mobile families with a high level of spending capacity – was used only to legitimize the reconstruction (see Spierings 2006). But in fact the 'natural' competition among urban districts has been carefully monitored, planned, and directed to constructive purposes whereas complementary intra-city relations are promoted at the same time.

Second, there is the long-term policy of trying to establish a 'balanced population distribution' over districts in cities (see Burgers and Zuijderwijk 2016). In this respect, too, competition over middle- and high-income groups is cushioned. Most of the time, trying to attract well-to-do residents, as a matter of urban policy, is an effort to counterbalance a trend of decay more than a policy of accommodating the wealthy. This notion of a well-balanced neighbourhood is also part and parcel of the Dutch system. The idea of 'equal access to local public goods for minorities, including the lower classes (wherever congregated)' – an access financed through tax redistribution, no less – has long prevailed in Dutch urban planning (Terhorst and Van der Ven 1998: 471, 472). Historically, the premise of an 'interterritorial solidarity' (ibid.) was predominant in this system and the allocation and distribution of retail came about along the hierarchical lines of central place theory (Mulligan et al. 2012; see Spierings 2006). Hence one doesn't need a neoliberal turn in urban planning in order to explain the reconstruction of Smaragd Square at the competitive level either.

Nor does the third neoliberal principle – that public places are first and foremost meant for leisurely shopping and consumptive identity display – provide an explanation for the reconstruction of Smaragd Square.

Although the square seems now fit for the modern consumer and his/her modern lifestyle, it is equally believed to generate social benefits for the local community, such as liveability and safety. Again, it appears that the Dutch planning tradition suffices to explain expectations of this order. In this tradition, amenities such as stores, businesses, or marketplaces are assumed to have intrinsically desirable properties that benefit the community. In the context of the Dutch planning tradition, the anticipation of a trickle-down effect, as described by MacLeod (2002), can actually be seen as predating neoliberal discourse, since the presence of amenities has been historically related to the fact that social benefits were in place. Already in 1946, A. Bos – chair of a Rotterdam group that studied urban social–cultural life – identified ways in which the presence of economic amenities could be employed for the 'social–cultural development' of the 'urban community' (Bos 1946: 93). This is related to a very influential concept in the Dutch postwar urban context: the concept of the 'neighbourhood unit', according to which amenities such as shops are related to a 'concentration of social activity' and in consequence will 'help in stimulating a feeling of community' (Collison 1954: 464; see Bos 1946). Therefore the notion of a trickle-down effect is not to be exclusively ascribed to the neoliberal tradition: it characterizes the Dutch system as well. In both perspectives, it is expected that forms of economizing public space generate certain use values. But it would not be mistaken to suggest that there is difference in emphasis here: while out of the values generated in this way neoliberalism selects individual ones, such as consumer experience, the Dutch system fosters communal values, such as safety and liveability.

What cannot be explained by either the neoliberal or the Dutch system perspective is the rather explicit expectation that various communal values, such as a good atmosphere, accessibility, and coziness contribute to generating economic effects of the trickle-up variety, as I would conceptualize it (in this view, the trickle-up effect is the opposite of the trickle-down effect, on which see MacLeod 2002: 604). If one borrows Logan and Molotch's (1987) perspective on the notions of exchange value and use value, one may be led to believe that exchange values – that is, the market value of a place – prevail over use values – that is, the people's material, spiritual, and psychological connections with place (Weber 2002; MacLeod 2002; Logan and Molotch 1987). However, in the case studied here use values and exchange values are inextricably linked, which prompts one to question the heuristic merit of Logan and Molotch's (1987) uncoupling of these concepts.

The fourth neoliberal principle states that public places are privatized places that exclude non-white and non-middle-class groups and activities. But this principle is not in operation in the reconstructed Smaragd Square. The analysis shows signs that a 'domestication by cappuccino' strategy was used to some extent, but there is certainly no room here for the more radical, revanchist idea that public space belongs exclusively to the white middle classes.

Some forms of use, such as loitering and drinking alcohol, are deemed undesirable in the square; and, as was discussed above, efforts are made to attract families and households with more spending capacity to the neighbourhood. But higher-income groups are not equivalent with the

white middle classes, and undesirable users are not identical with Smith's 'minorities, the working class, women, environmental legislation, gays and lesbians [and] immigrants' (1996: 44–5). In other words, revanchism (in any guise) has not been a driving principle in the reconstruction. Therefore, following Van Eijk (2010: 831; and see also Snel and Engbersen 2009; Engbersen et al. 2005; Uitermark and Duyvendak 2008; Aalbers 2010), appeal to this principle 'cannot do justice' to the social practices observed in Smaragd Square, where the structuring focus is on desirability, especially in the form of undesirable versus desirable uses, and not on socioeconomic or cultural groups.

As for the spatial interventions that can be related to the expulsion of unwanted uses or functions, one may indeed characterize them as a kind of 'domestication by cappuccino'. Thus the transformation of anonymous places in the direction of enhancing social control is clearly inspired by the desire to discourage lurking in the dark and related behaviours. In this manner some functions or uses are replaced by others, seen to be more necessary; and, in the process, these functions are stripped of their political dimension. It may be pushing at an open door to say it, but this second part – the stripping – does raise questions about the politics of functions, especially as it seems that the new functions serve the projected activities of groups with higher spending capacity.

Even though the fourth neoliberal principle would appear to provide an explanation for the findings related to the exclusion and selection of certain user groups, one should still ask to what extent this finding is actually to be explained by the neoliberal framework. The Dutch planning tradition has always emphasized socioeconomically mixed neighbourhoods; this idea already prevailed in the 1950s and the neighbourhood unit concept presented above was an expression of it (Engbersen and Engbersen 2008). One can see how the selection and exclusion not only of functions but also of groups might serve the purpose of attaining this kind of social mixture; still, these are means towards a goal and should not be confounded for the actual goal itself (Van Eijk 2010).

With regard to privatization, the public space of the square is managed and owned by the municipality, so there is no sign of privatization in this strict meaning of the word. As we have seen, both the municipality and the local police opposed the idea of fencing the square off for private interests, so it seems that the opposite is the case: the authorities made a clear attempt to keep the space public.

The main conclusion of the present chapter is that the reconstruction of this ordinary public place cannot be explained by appeal to the rise of a neoliberal paradigm. There is essentially no clear break from the Dutch system of public–private cooperation – which aimed at achieving socially balanced neighbourhoods, tried to plan and control retail instead of leaving it to the market, and, at a later date, consulted the relevant actors involved – and the process of reconstruction of Smaragd Square. This Dutch style of urban planning shows a remarkable continuity since the 1950s. Therefore any application of neoliberal perspectives in this context should be handled with extreme care.

4

Making sense of changing urban neighbourhood demographics: The role of ethnic categorization in the everyday use of Bospolder Square, Rotterdam

Figure 7 Bospolder Square. Source: Google Maps 2010.

4.1
A warm June Wednesday afternoon in the 'majority-minority' city of Rotterdam: Celebrating the Bospolder Square Party

Rotterdam: Bospolder Square, Delfshaven, 1 June 2011. It is a Wednesday afternoon and National Outdoor Play Day, here called 'the Bospolder Square Party'. The sky is blue and the temperature feels good. The party takes place in Bospolder Square (Figure 7) – namely in the lower section of the square, which hosts two soccer fields and a basketball court. The square has an outer rim, flanked by trees with several climbing frames and concrete benches; the Duimdrop container is also located here (Figure 8). The container is a place where neighbourhood children can borrow toys – ranging from chessboards to bicycles and skeelers. It is open almost every weekday after school until twilight. Master Frans and his colleagues staff the container; generally these supervisors organize and supervise play, including soccer tournaments, set up volleyball and tennis courts, and guide children in their handicrafts. They also place inflatable pools on hot summer days, prepare the *sjoelbak*[72] for games of *sjoelen*.

Today three inflatable bouncers [*springkussen*] are placed in the square: a small one for the smallest kids, a larger one, blue, for the larger kids, and the largest, shaped as a red-black castle and placed in the basketball field. Two party tents are erected opposite a blue–white bus, and coffee tables are installed inside them (Figure 9). Master Frans, seated on a plastic garden chair, is organizing the play in one of the inflatables: when he blows the whistle, the next group of children can enter, under his watch. Later on Miss Azra will replace him at this job, and then the two of them will take turns. Music comes from loudspeakers and someone calls for the dancing to start.

In yet another corner of the square the children can build wooden dustbins. This activity is organized by another neighbourhood unit. As part of it, supervisors Ilja, Mieke, and Tom are helping the children with their carpentry work.

72 A wooden gameboard for sliding discs at four gates.

Figure 8 Duimdrop's container at Bospolder Square.
Source: Ossip Van Duivenbode, for Zuijderwijk 2012. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 9 Bospolder Square Party Day: party tents filled with women drinking coffee in a square full of children. Photo by Linda Zuijderwijk, 2011.

The party tents are getting fuller and fuller. The few tables are occupied and the women sit around in small groups, drinking coffee. Lizette, one the employees of an attending neighbourhood organization, walks around, pouring coffee, bringing milk and sugar around. Just before 3 p.m., two men walk onto the square. One of them starts cracking and eating sunflower seeds, together with a little boy on the concrete steps towards the outer rim of the square; the other, a black man, is joined by a child and two other men and they all sit in front of the Duimdrop. A group of non-western boys of about 15 years stand behind a bench at the edge of the square and look into it, seemingly a bit surprised with the activities of the day. Then one of the boys, carrying a rucksack on his back, runs into the square, takes a little girl with brown curly hair into his arms, and lifts her in the air. A woman with headscarf and in a long coat stands behind them. The boy gives the girl a kiss and walks back; then the boys leave the square.

There are many children, aged mostly between 4 and 8 years, not much older, and there are about as many boys as girls. Most of the adults present are women. They sit around tables; some stand with their buggies. They tend to wear headscarfs and, predominantly, long skirts or long coats. The men are quite striking, the way they stand apart, isolated from all other adults; typically they accompany smaller children and are often in the square by themselves. More often than not the women with headscarves sit together in groups, as do those under the party tent. A few women sit alone; one of them turns out to be of Eastern European[73] origin. She is Kasia's mother and speaks no Dutch, but can read – or at least she looks into the local Dutch newspaper. Her blond hair is pulled back in a ponytail. Another lady sitting by herself is an older Dutch woman with red hair; she is facing the soccer field. Two other women – both Dutch and both in their early thirties – both carrying their children. They are accompanied by their grandma, who is getting herself and her dark-skinned grandson a drink at the Duimdrop container. Around 3 p.m., two tall Dutchmen walk onto the square carrying two boxes. One of them wears a blond ponytail and both are tattooed. They came to clear away the inflatables. Parents and their children are leaving; all other activities have stopped. The Bospolder Square Party is over: time to go home (Participant observation, 1–6–2011).

This square, which is used by a variety of people for a variety of purposes throughout the day, is situated in one of the most ethnically diverse neighbourhoods of Rotterdam. At the time of research, in 2011, the three largest ethnic groups were Turks (22 per cent), autochthones (20 per cent), and Moroccans (17 per cent). Other population groups are Surinamese (12 per cent), Cape-Verdeans (10 per cent), other non-western allochthones (7 per cent), people from EU countries (6 per cent), Antilleans (3 per cent), and other western allochthones (3 per cent, including labour migrants from Eastern Europe) (see Gemeentelijke Basis Administratie (GBA) 2011). Within the space of four decades, the neighbourhood has changed from a predominantly autochthonous neighbourhood to a neighbourhood with no clear national or ethnic majority. Back in 1972, 96 per cent of the local residents of both Bospolder and Tussendijken were registered

73 The very general label of Eastern European is used to ensure anonymity for these respondents.

as Dutch nationals (Gemeentelijk Bureau voor Onderzoek en Statistiek Rotterdam 1973).

Bospolder Square and its history exemplify a more general trend towards further diversification among urban populations that are already ethnically diverse. The causes of this phenomenon are often found to be a population's natural growth, or various groups' migration in and out of a city. In this kind of process, larger European cities lose their 'indigenous' or 'autochthonous' ethnic majority of the past, with the result that a majority of urbanites 'will belong to an ethnic minority group' (Crul et al. 2013: 12). Thus the cities of western Europe are becoming 'majority-minority cities' (ibid.).

Rotterdam, the second largest city in the Netherlands, is one of them. In 2012 the municipality predicted that by 2015 the ratio between autochthones or indigenous Dutchmen and allochthones – that is, migrants and their descendants – would be about 50/50 (Gemeente Rotterdam Servicedienst 2012: 6). On 1 January 2017, a slight majority of 53.3 per cent households in Rotterdam were classified as 'autochthonous'. The Surinamese (8.7 per cent), the Turkish (5.7 per cent), and the Moroccans (4.7 per cent) are the next largest ethnic groups; they are followed by the Antilleans (4,0 per cent) and the Cape-Verdians (2,5 per cent). Other groups are the 'other non-western' (8,2 per cent), 'other western' (5,0 per cent) and 'other European Union' (8.0 per cent, including labour migrants from Eastern Europe; see Gemeentelijke Basis Administratie (GBA) Bewerking door OBI, 2017). At the time of this study, labour migrants from Eastern Europe did not necessarily register with the municipality; therefore it is hard to give an exact number or percentage for this group (Engbersen et al. 2011). On arrival, many of these (labour) migrants found a home in cheaper, less attractive neighbourhoods that had a relatively high proportion of migrants from their own country of origin.

It is through the lens of this ethnic diversification that Bospolder Square is relevant to the subject pursued here. This square is one of the various urban grounds in the Netherlands where the majority-minority constellation has already become an everyday phenomenon. At first sight, it looks as if this diversity is commonplace in the square, not experienced and lived as something exceptional (Wessendorf 2014). Passers-by talk to one another, children play together; some people cluster in groups, others sit by themselves. The 'Masters' and 'Misses'[74] are managing the inflatable bouncers with spirit.

However, on closer inspection, it appears that regulars themselves have interesting observations to make, and these allow one to question the 'commonplace' or taken-for-granted character of the diversity experienced in Bospolder Square. These people refer continuously to the ethnic or cultural backgrounds of those who, like themselves, frequent the square regularly. For instance, a Dutch woman says:

74 Note the attendance, in Bospolder Square, of officers who respond to the quite scholastic appellation of 'Masters' and 'Misses'. In Burgers and Zuijderwijk (2016) we argue that the role of such people in this public space is precisely one of teaching: in particular, they teach children norms and values.

[female, Dutch, b. 1948, living in the neighbourhood since 1948]:[75] *the square is reasonably well visited. You can see all nationalities here, it is truly a multiculti-neighbourhood. […] There used to be just Rotterdammers. I've seen that growing, first it is one, then two, then three and then all of a sudden your whole street is full with it.*
(Street interview 2_LZ, 1–6–2011)

A grandma of Central European origin[76] depicts the square as she watches her two grandchildren play:

[female, Central European, b. 1952, living in the neighbourhood since 1975]: Yet there is more than enough space: my grandchildren are rather here than in Hellevoetsluis [where they live]. People are nice and chatting, chatting, chatting. Predominantly Turks and Moroccans come here, you don't see many others, and then they stay until 12 p.m. I think it's beautiful. Sure, in former times it used to be quieter here. Not many Dutch people are sitting here alone. [My] children live in Hellevoetsluis; well, I have been there – there are only Dutch people in that place, and it's so quiet! Quiet!
(Street interview 3_LZ, 3–6–2011)

A Miss notes that 'almost no Dutch people live in this neigbhourhood' and that 'this is the domain of the Moroccan and Turkish kids':

Respondent *As you can see, these are Moroccan and Turkish kids, also Cape Verdean kids, but this is something you can see in the city throughout. Almost no Dutch people live in this neighbourhood; you can count the Dutch children on the fingers of one hand.*

Researcher *How come there are so few Dutch children? Don't they live here, or is there another reason?*

Respondent *Yes… they also get beatings-up here, and then they will no longer come. This is the domain of Moroccan and Turkish kids.*
(Participant observation, 1–6–2011)

These quotations indicate that ethnicity, culture, and nationality, together with the demographic changes that the neighbourhood experienced, play a prominent role in the social life of the square and are used in describing it. The various observations made here point to the relevance of ethnic diversity in the everyday experience of the square and to the role this diversity plays in the social and spatial positioning of ethnic groups.

75 The fact that respondents lived in the neighbourhood was established by asking for the name of the street they lived in. For the purpose of preserving anonymity, all streets in the Bospolder-Tussendijken neighbourhood are aggregated into one 'neighbourhood'.

76 The category of Central European is used in order to ensure anonymity.

This idea branches out into two very different lines of argument. On the one hand it has been claimed that cultural identities and cultural differences are frequently experienced in everyday life (see Berking 2003: 256); thus Blokland (2009a, 2009b) argues that ethnicity or ethnic identity allows one to 'read' and assess the other. This means that ethnicity is often the label used to make sense of certain practices and experiences – as can be seen for example in Marxloh, Germany, where German residents read 'gendered practices […] as racial practices' (Ehrkamp 2008: 129). On the other hand it is believed that in the contemporary world ethnic–national groups and categories do not (at least not any longer) necessarily play a substantial role in the people's understandings and descriptions of the cities they inhabit (see Wimmer 2004: 27). In this super-diverse era, ethnic difference is intermingled with a multiplicity of other differences, such as socioeconomic and legal (Vertovec 2007), and often these variegated experiences of diversity in everyday life are not regarded as something peculiar. A certain banalization of difference is involved here – a phenomenon that Wessendorf (2014) refers to as 'commonplace diversity'. It also corresponds to Alba and Nee's (2003: 11) idea of a 'more racially mainstream society':

Individuals' ethnic origins become less and less relevant in relation to the members of another ethnic group (typically, but not necessarily, the ethnic majority group) […] in other words, they mutually perceive themselves with less and less frequency in terms of ethnic categories and increasingly only under specific circumstances.

Rather than ethnicity, features like behaviour and generation seem to account for group formation in immigrant neighbourhoods (Wimmer 2004). On top of that, gender differences, too, are found to be more important than ethnic ones (Schippers and Wildemeersch 2007: 170 in Wessendorf 2014: 10).

Hence we need to understand the everyday 'phenomena emerging from diversification' (Wessendorf 2014: 19) and into the role ethnic diversity as part of this complex. Urban neighbourhoods such as Bospolder, which are frontrunners in the emerging 'majority-minority' constellations, provide an avenue for analyzing how '"ethnicity" is re-created' (Blokland 2003: 4) in everyday circumstances, such as using public spaces – the square in one's neighbourhood, for instance. This chapter set out to explore this matter. Its aim is to answer the question: *What are the role and importance of ethnicity and ethnic diversity in the everyday use and experience of Bospolder Square?*

4.2
A world of strangers? Making sense of 'others' in a public space

Since the emergence of cities, public space has been the archetypal 'world of strangers', as Lofland put it – a stranger being 'anyone personally unknown to the actor of reference, but visually available to him' (Lofland 1973: 18). In a later book titled *The Public Realm*, Lofland distinguishes three realms: the public, the private, and the parochial. She does this in order to

understand how and where people become strangers to one another, how much they know about these strangers, and to what extent they are able to categorize one another:

the public realm is made up of those spaces in a city which tend to be inhabited by persons who are strangers to one another or who 'know' one another only in terms of occupational or other nonpersonal identity categories (for example, bus driver – customer).
(Lofland 1998: 9)

Through elementary knowledge of this sort, one is able to reduce the social complexities that are part of living in cities. The most basic form of knowing is categorial knowing, in which knowledge about the other is 'based on information about' a person's 'role', social category, or status (Lofland 1973: 15); and this kind of information is often limited to what is visually available and unmaskable, for example age and gender. Berger and Luckmann (1991 [1966]: 112) called it 'self-evident "knowledge"'. This manner of knowing and categorizing people on the basis of what you see is a process rooted in the attempt to identify difference and similarity between oneself and others in order to create an in-group and an out-group (Tajfel 1982). Hence the 'knowings' and the corresponding categories (or orderings) that come about in this process are not 'neutral' – in other words they are not merely 'instrumental' means of putting order into complex social situations; they are meaningful entities and elementary forms of legitimation.

Lofland (1973) distinguishes three different criteria on which this knowing is founded: persons' external features; characteristics of a space or location; and behaviour. The third, which extends to the categorial interpretation of one's linguistic behaviour, requires more information than is available at first sight (Verkuyten 2005: 45).

In the preindustrial city the prevailing criterion was of the first type: persons were categorized on the basis of their external features, which included type of dress, body markings, and language use. This predilection ties in with the nature of the city at that stage – its mix and integration of different forms of use of urban space – and with the overt heterogeneity of the urbanites. But in the modern city,[77] with its specialized and segregated forms of use of urban space and a more 'masked' heterogeneity of the residents, the classification of the other is assumed to depend more on the second criterion – the characteristics of the space where this other is located. External appearance still counts, but features of this sort are no longer dominant (Lofland 1973: 27–91). More than in the preindustrial city, types of use of the urban space are connected with the specialized character of (public) places and with social categories such as ethnicity and age, which are reflected in varieties of spatial segregation between users. Lofland asserts that, in the modern city, the heterogeneity of the population is masked; for example, clothes lost a large part of their function as the dominant indicator of identity, since the same kind, however particular, can now be worn by various segments of the population. Thus the bar or neighborhood where one regularly meets others reveals more about someone's (presumed) identity than his or her external

77 That is, 'modern' as Lofland defined it in 1973.

features do. This corroborates the suggestion that diversity in everyday life is no longer experienced as something peculiar but has become trivial or commonplace (Wessendorf 2014).

But this is not the whole story. In contrast with Lofland's assertion that the meaning of external features is fading or losing edge, others have found that ethnicity – often based on 'limited indicators, such as dress codes, skin colour, hair, names and languages' (Blokland 2003: 4) – is especially meaningful as a category in ethnically diverse societies (Blokland 2009b; Baumann 1996) and that the coding of information 'along ethnic lines' is now taking place in a context of unprecedented 'public anonymity and scale of ethnic diversity' (Blokland 2009b: 188, my translation). As Baumann has shown, there are many 'social cleavages' relevant and the criteria used to discern one ethnicity from another, especially in plural societies, are numerous and varied – for example migration history, language, religion (Baumann 1996: 23).

Apart from external features and cleavages' (such as the ones Baumann is talking about), ethnicity is re-created on the basis of generalities picked up from the media and from various incidents (Blokland 2009b: 187). As Britton (2008) has shown, ethnic categorization also differs according to type of location and its users, insofar as public spaces are also used by 'third parties' such as police officers, whereas in other contexts third parties are absent and the groups are on their own (Britton gives the example of the in-door 'soup kitchen'). This shows that a category like ethnicity is not fixed but fluid, and defined relationally and contextually.

Especially in public places, ethnicity appears to be able to convey valuable information about power relations among the people who frequent those places (Blokland 2009c). This information is often based on stereotypes or rough generalisations, in the absence or unavailability of other types of data in public space. For instance, Blokland has demonstrated how ethnicity becomes 'a field of separation through which people (continue to) order their experience of public space' (Blokland 2009b: 147); Britton has shown how black men make claims to public spaces in explicitly 'racial terms' (Britton 2008: 463); and Duneier et al. (2001), who studied the practice of street vending in New York, found how this practice yields different perceptions of race, ethnicity, class, and occupational status – and hence different experiences – to black and white street vendors. It appears that ethnicity as a basis for categorial knowing acquires meaning as an ordering principle especially in the interpretation of negative experiences of a public space; for instance, newly arrived ethnic or migrant groups are often associated with decay (see Blokland 2003; Reijndorp 2004; Müller 2011).

However, many studies interested in the relation between ethnicity and the use of public places tend to take the ethnic identities of the people who use and experience these places as a point of departure (see also Wimmer 2004). There is ample evidence of research that focuses on specific ethnic (or racial) groups' use and experience of public places of and on differences among these groups. Here are just a few examples of such studies. Peters and de Haan (2011) and Peters (2010, 2011) examined contacts that develop between ethnic groups in outdoor place. Ziemer

(2011) studied young Armenians and their everyday encounters with racism in public space, while Alexander (2011) examined the different ways in which local Bengalis 'shape' and claim the space of Brick Lane, London. Blokland (2003) took 'native Dutch residents' as her starting point and disentangled various 'routes to discriminatory repertoires' along the process through which interethnic relationships come about. Stoller (1996) has examined West African traders and their practices in New York City's informal economy. A group of black men formed the subject of a study that Britton (2008) devoted to the question of why racial–ethnical categories are at the foundation of social and spatial segregation in public outdoor places and much less in public indoor places such as a communal kitchen. Van Lieshout and Aarts (2008) have taken youth and immigrants as their starting point and have analysed their perceptions of public space and practices related to it. Finally, Ehrkamp (2005) studied Turkish immigrants, their attachments to place, and their constructed place-based identities. Some authors study one group and find that the experiences and uses of space differ among the members of that group. An example is Yücesoy (2006), who has taken as a starting point the perspectives on, experiences with, and forms of use of public space of Turkish migrant women, whom she categorizes in different ways. In this respect her study is comparable to those of Müller (2011) and Müller and Fischer (2012), who research the variations and dynamics of experiences within Dutch ethnic groups.

If we compare the various ethnic categories of people who frequent public places, it turns out that, beside the similarities, there are also differences in their use of such places and in the needs related to it. For example, research carried out in Los Angeles by Loukaitou-Sideris (1995) shows that Hispanics visit parks more often than other groups, while Caucasians tend to frequent parks just by themselves more than other groups do. In the same vein, a study by Low et al. (2005: 53) reveals that people who depict themselves as 'whites' barbecue and picnic relatively less often than other categories do.

Thus much of the research into ethnicity in public places starts by distinguishing the various ethnic groups related to the place of interest, then looks for uses or experiences specific to each group. These studies should not be dismissed on the grounds that distinct immigrant or minority groups can share particular traits (Vertovec 2007). Yet this type of study can be problematic for at least two reasons. First, as Vertovec pointed out (and see also Wimmer 2004 and Wessendorf 2014), variables such as immigration status, position in the labour market, gender, and age constitute a complex amalgam, which may render research on particular, ethnically defined groups outdated. Second, given that in real life any ethnicity is relational and contextual, Low and colleagues raised the problem that 'all labels can lead to stereotyping and essentializing of what are slippery and constantly transforming social identities' (Low et al. 2005: ix; see Brubaker 2002; Baumann 1996; Ehrkamp 2005). The next section proposes a methodology designed to overcome this problem and discusses various outcomes of the research for the present chapter, which used this methodology.

4.3
Ethnic categorization of the use of Bospolder Square and its users

Street interviews and participant observations were the main research methods employed in the study of Bospolder Square. Together with a team, I collected 56 structured street interviews with regular users, 8 semi-structured interviews with professionals such as the employees of a neighbourhood organization, and at least 30 reports of participant observations (including naturally occurring conversations) and street interviews, also documented with photographs. This material made up the data file (see Annex 2 for an overview of the referenced material). [78]

Data collection was distributed into two phases. During the first phase in the spring and early summer of 2010, a team of street interviewers approached square users of various ethnic backgrounds. Annex 1 presents the interview format and the topics list. Out of 56 interviewees, 27 were female and 27 were male.[79] Years of birth ranged from 1934 to 1997, most respondents having been born between 1964 and 1986. Their parents were born in Turkey[80] and Morocco for the most part; the Netherlands and Surinam followed. Nine other countries of first-generation immigrants were mentioned, including the Dutch Antilles and Cape Verde Islands. Further, all interviewees and professionals have been anonymized.

Most of the research was conducted during the summer of 2011. Over its duration, I visited the square at least twice a week, on different days and at various hours, for participant observations and street interviews and for meetings with both users and professionals engaged in the management of the square. During participant observations I had extensive conversations with some of the regulars of the square. As time passed, a more regular contact with these people was established; this enabled 'naturally occurring' conversations, which also became part of the data file (on this point of method, see Fortune and Mair 2011). Observations and conversations were recorded on paper or mobile phone on the spot, then processed and classified immediately after the visits.

Acknowledging that research on the role of ethnicity and ethnic categorization can be problematic, as was concluded on the basis of the literature, this chapter takes one step further the attempt to de-ethnicize both (1) the research population in focus and (2) the explicit topic of research – during the fieldwork as well as in the process of collecting the data (on the notion of de-ethnicizing, see Wimmer 2007: 25).

78 The data gathered in this case study were also used in Zuijderwijk and Burgers (2015) and Burgers and Zuijderwijk (2016).

79 This means that in the two remaining cases the gender was not recorded.

80 Following Ehrkamp (2005: 362), the descriptor 'Turkish' has been used for migrants from Turkey as well as for Kurdish immigrants. This could be a simplification of their self-identification; but, as this study asked for 'country of birth', none of the participants offered 'Kurdistan' or the like.

To begin with the second point – de-ethnicization of the topic of research – the team and I did not bring up ethnicity during street interviews and participant observations. However, in order to allow it to come up, the team had to create conditions in which people could speak freely and felt able to make judgements on others – whether in ethnic terms of not – that would not be considered inappropriate. For this purpose I followed Harris et al. (1997: 375), who suggested that, in order to prevent an 'ethnicity-of-the-interviewer'-effect, one member of the team of interviewees should ideally be indigenous to the cultural group of interest (see also Weeks and Moore 1981; see Davis et al. 2010; Hoong Sin 2007; Van Bochove et al. 2015). In consequence, during the first phase in the spring and summer of 2010, the fieldwork was carried out by a heterogeneous team of street interviewers, composed of people with Antillean, Portuguese, Moroccan, and Dutch backgrounds.

This created a complication: since the interviewees were not probed into thinking in ethnic categories, it was not always clear, for the analysis, how the respondent identified or reflected on her or himself from an ethnical point of view. So the question was this: in terms of ethnic backgrounds, how should the users of Bospolder Square be referred to in this chapter? I decided to refer to them, apart from gender and age, by their country of birth and, in the case of children of immigrant descent born in the Netherlands, as 'hyphenated Dutch'. Therefore the format of the street interviews contained a background question designed to obtain information about the country of birth of the respondent's father and mother. By proceeding in this way, this chapter conforms to the institutional definition of ethnicity, as used by CBS since 1999,[81] and may not be able to do justice to multiple identities of various groups and their members in the Netherlands (Dukes and Musterd 2012). The institutionalization of ethnic representations, which is, 'evidently, the dominant discourse in practice' (Baumann 1996: 197), might influence these very representations – that is, the representation of ethnicity in daily discourse, which this chapter is interested in (see Baumann 1996). However, given the strategy of de-ethnicization, the ethnic categorizations made by respondents were not questioned in this research.

With regard to the first point about de-ethnicization – namely the de-ethnicization of the groups in focus – the actual practices of use and non-use were the place of start for data gathering and analysis. The general principle was to approach the physical context of Bospolder Square as a 'non-ethnic unit of observation' (Wimmer 2007: 26; see Wimmer 2002, 2004), in which forms of use – and also of non-use, as this proved to be a meaningful category in the course of research –were observed. During fieldwork, the regular visitors of the square were also invited to reflect on their and other people's uses and non-use of this place (see Becker 1998: 44; Low et al. 2005: 41). 'Use' must be understood here as a category focused on various activities performed in a public place – in this case,

81 CBS uses the country of birth of the parent born abroad, or even that of the person in the case of first-generation immigrants. For the standard definition of 'allochthon' and 'autochton', see Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (2000: 24).

sitting and playing. Fleeting forms of activity – in particular passing by – are also considered; these also belong in this data-driven category (DeCuir-Gunby et al. 2011). 'Non-use' refers to activities or people who are not or no longer present in the square.

4.3.1 The ethnic categorization of use and non-use

This section discusses the activities of playing, sitting, and passing by and various forms of non-use. As already explained, the category of 'non-use' and 'non-user' refers to the absence of a certain type of activity or person. This absence (or discontinuation) is generally experienced as a meaningful indicator of the attractiveness of the square and of the quality of the neighbourhood.

Bospolder Square is predominantly used for sitting, playing, and passing by. The majority of those who sit are adults, mothers who accompany their playing children, girls between the ages of 12 and 15, and boys between the ages of 15 and 25. Next to sitting, playing soccer is a dominant form of activity in this place. Soccer players are mainly boys between 8 and 14. Other children engaged in some kind of play or another are aged between 4 and 14, both boys and girls. They are regularly seen climbing frames or playing with borrowed toys, either by themselves or in small groups. The girls often play with elastic rope for French skipping, while the boys ride waveboards – a type of toy resembling a skateboard. Passers-by – chiefly pedestrians and cyclists – are mainly crossing the square. These are people who use the square and the neighbouring streets only for transit; they almost never stop to sit down or play. The majority are people in their fifties or older, who in most cases have lived in the neighbourhood (or visited it) for a long time. Some of these passers-by were more active users once, but now lack the time or have experienced a loss of purpose (e.g. their children are now grown ups no longer playing at the square). There are also formally excluded categories; for example people walking their dogs are not allowed in the square.

Moving now to the ethnic categorizations employed by square users, it appears that ethnicity is meaningful to them in three main ways.

In the first place, I observed that regulars of Bospolder Square categorize one another by appeal to visible characteristics such as those related to clothing, particularly when referring to Muslim women. For instance, a Dutch passer-by told us, pointing at a number of women sitting on a bench:

[Dutch, male, b. 1939, living in the neighbourhood since 1988]: I have been living here since 22 years, but it has changed. There are many foreigners right now. In the past I used to know all the names of the people who lived here; and those were real Dutch names. But no longer; these are now all foreign names. With some people I've lived in the same street for years and I still don't know their surnames. There is less contact; but I don't mind. It doesn't bother me [...] Nowadays, there are other people who come to the square. They're just very different. Those headscarves, sitting over there – they don't bother me.
(Street interview 4_MS, 24–4–2010)

Here is a Surinamese who, as he talks about the square, notices how people with similar characteristics sit close to each other:

[Surinamese, male, date of birth unknown, living in the neighbourhood since 2000]: The square has impoverished lately. There are more drug dealers. – Look, your colleague[82] there is talking with the biggest guy in the square. I always see him; he walks to a car, does his thing, then comes back later. – But you also see that culture sits with culture. Headscarf with headscarf. They need to integrate, but they are not doing that.
(Street interview 4_MS, 19–5–2010)

The square has a long metal bench. On some days you can find up to eight or nine Turkish women seated on this bench. Moroccan women sit somewhere else; for example, there is a group of about eight older Moroccan women who sit regularly on a few steps that lead further down, to a lower level of the square. One of the Turkish women seated on the metal bench makes these remarks (she is aged about 40 and often sits in this place together with her friends, watching the children play):

[Female, Turkish, b. 1971, living in the neighbourhood since 1973]: I usually greet the people who live here. That has changed with the coming of the cultures. Because some cultures are more closed than others. One talks easier than the other. That is a pity. [...] It is really a neighbourhood square. There used to be more schools, and back then it really was a schoolyard. So that is very different. Now it is a square of the neighbourhood. From three to five in the afternoon, mothers arrive with children, and they all sit on those benches over there. After three o'clock the place has really filled up. The adults take a seat on a bench and the children start playing. There are small groups, though. The Moroccans sit with the Moroccans and the Turks with the Turks. Sometimes there is a fight among the children, and then the parents get involved.
(Street interview 3_MS, 24–4–2010)

This attitude to ethnicity is very different from the one observed in the younger users. Overall, playing children do not use ethnicity to describe themselves, other players, or people around the square, although they make occasional references to their parents' countries of birth (or to the countries neighbouring them) during the game called Conquest, in which 'land' has to be conquered from an opponent; thus of the girls involved in the game called herself 'Morocco', while the other pretended to be 'Algeria' (Participant observation, 12–4–2010). Nor do children spatially separate themselves from others along ethnical lines, as their parents apparently do. For instance, when girls play on the swing, they do so regardless of anyone's ethnical background. Turkish Dutch Yildiz and her friend, a girl with plaited kinky hair, sit with Turkish Dutch Banu and Antillean Dutch Aaliyah, all four together on the same swing (Participant observation, 15–7–2011). This contradicts the assessment made by the professionals, who thought that ethnicity does play a role for the playing children:

82 It could not be established at the time who this respondent was referring to.

Researcher *How would you describe the children's behaviour in the square?*

Respondent *Ehm, well, very impertinent, I'd say! Not of all of them of course, but there are some… yes, the boys of about 10 to 14 years, let's say, are a bit like that. […] There is lots of mutual discrimination, perhaps without them even being aware, but they call each other 'Turk' and 'Moroccan', and they are not calling each other by their first names, but it is a bit like that and if one, who is a bit darker [in terms of skin color], then that one is really… yes, they are looking for someone they can bully*
(Interview 2, 7–7–2011, Neighbourhood Organization)

Another professional says:

The Turkish and Moroccan children are not really playing together. They may be in the same class and play together in the square, for instance when they start a soccer game, [but] they do so in opposing teams, they never mix. But an sich, it is going alright.
(Participant observation, 27–6–2011)

Hence these respondents themselves seem to perceive the way kids play in the square in terms of ethnicity.

I come now to a second kind of ethnical categorizations – and to the second way in which ethnicity is meaningful to square users. The observations recorded so far are more or less neutral. But these people use ethnic categories sometimes in non-neutral contexts, to describe negative experiences or negatively experienced changes in the neighbourhood. For instance, a man playing Rummicub at the coffeehouse remarks:

[male, Turkish, b. 1970, living in the neighbourhood since 1990]: It is bad here, there are only foreigners here. Moroccans come here to eat sunflower seeds. The people are dealing with each other in a bad way and they are fighting.
(Street interview 4_AK, 1–6–2010)

Here is a case where children got a beating in the square. This mother says:

[female, Portugese, b. 1964, living in the neighbourhood since 1997]: My children used to play outside, but then they were beaten by Turkish and Moroccan children. Now they no longer dare to go play outside and very often sit in the house. They sometimes go to family [she points at the opposite side of the square].
(Street interview 1_YK, 12–4–2010)

A Dutch German woman crossing the square gives us a similar account:

[female, Dutch German, b. 1945, living in the neighbourhood since 2000]: At some point my grandchildren, who live in [this neighbourhood] could no longer compete with these children here. They were between 4 and 5 years. There are very few Dutch young children here – and also in the school: there they really were the only two Dutch kids. They stopped coming here, too.
(Street interview 2_LZ, 24–4–2010)

She also feels that a certain space has been taken over. This comes across in her summary of the square's history: 'I just tell it like it is: the place has been taken over by the Turks.' This feeling is shared by other regulars, who convey a sense that they have lost access to a public place and were pushed out of it. Such a phenomenon, in which the (real or perceived) dominance of other groups is experienced negatively and leads to decreasing presence or withdrawal on the part of others, has been well described in the literature (Madanipour 2004; Binken et al. 2012; Zukin 1995) and is easy to recognize.

Some of the remarks presented here suggest a third way in which ethnic categorization is meaningful to these people. When regulars observe that 'Dutch people' are absent from the square or stopped visiting it, or that ethnic groups form and segregate themselves spontaneously within its perimeter ('Turks sit with the Turks'), they 'situate' the presence or absence of others in space. From observations of this nature, two partly overlapping categories of absentees took shape: elderly people and Dutch people. There seemed to be a certain degree of consensus about them. By 'elderly people' our respondents meant mainly the inhabitants of the senior citizens' houses, 'all of them people older than 60', who 'hardly' frequent the square nowadays but live in its immediate vicinity. For many users, this is a neutral, more or less objective characterization.

The other category of people perceived to be absent from the square are the ethnic Dutch. If this group itself indicates that they feel displaced from or even pushed out of the square by other ethnic groups, present-day users, for their part, often notice that 'Dutch' people no longer show up in the square. According to our respondents, they have been there in the past but gradually disappeared. A Turkish mother watching her children says:

[female, Turkish, b. 1971, living in the neighbourhood since 1999]: The Dutch used to have their own spot here, they went to sit here, just like us. They were sitting in that corner. And the [Central Europeans][83] used to have their own spot; the Moroccans as well. [...] Now, too, everyone has their own spot: Antilleans, [Central Europeans]. I am glad they put a sign that it has to be quiet after 10 p.m.; that sign wasn't there before. Then they were screaming and yelling until 1 a.m. So now there is a new sign. In particular, the Moroccans are fighting a lot here. Antilleans as well, but the Cape Verdeans are not.
(Street interview 2_LZ, 19–5–2010)

And another Turkish woman, who sits in the square among her friends, says, gives the following answer to the question whether changes have occurred in who visits the square:

Yes, there used to be Dutch people. That was when we played with people other than our own. I was 8 or 9 years old.
(Street interview 2_LZ, 7–6–2011)

Because many passers-by have been living in the neighbourhood for a long time, they have both knowledge and views about how use of the square, its

83 The very general label of Central European is used to ensure anonymity for these respondents.

regulars, and neighbours in general have changed over time. With regard to the withdrawal of the Dutch, one of the users says:

[female, Dutch, b. 1958, living in the neighbourhood since 1985]: I've been coming here for 25 years and during that time many more foreigners have come here. Now and then the tension between the Dutch and the foreigners is palpable. To tell you the truth, you don't see many Dutch people anymore.
(Street interview 6_FB, 12–4–2010)

This statement, which comes from a Dutchwoman, is corroborated by a woman from Central Europe, who puts things in historical perspective by drawing the following picture:

[female, Central European, b. 1952, living in the neighbourhood since 1975]: I arrived here in May 1975 and back then there still were Dutch people in the street [adjoining the square] where I lived. Now there are only five to ten Dutch families left. There are also about five or six Dutch families left in the senior citizens' houses; but there used to be many. They have been chased away. They say: 'my neighbours stomp around, they listen to loud music'.
(Street interview 3_LZ, 3–6–2011)

In much the same spirit, a Dutchman says:

[male, Dutch, b. 1965, living in the neighbourhood since 2000]:[84] I've lived here all my live – for 40 years. Nowadays only foreigners live here, no more Dutch. That change has been happening over the years. Just try to read some of the nameplates without stuttering!
(Street interview 3_LZ, 12–4–2010)

And a Dutch woman, mother of children with a Turkish father, is watching her two youngest play as she sits on a bench with her Dutch friends and their baby. She tells us how she once saw an ethnic Dutch child playing in the square; and she makes it sound as if she had witnessed a truly remarkable event:

Researcher *Are there people who don't come out at all, you think?*

Respondent *[female, Dutch, b. 1972, living in the neighbourhood since 1995]: Yes, I think so. Especially the elderly and the typically Dutch people.*

Researcher *Why is that so, you think?*

Respondent *Yes, that is the unknown. It is a[n instinctive] stop towards foreigners… the square is full. Look, last week there was a Dutch child. You almost never see that. I almost fell off my chair, I was so surprised! I thought: 'What's that child doing here?' And a while ago there was a school visiting from Bergschenhoek [a village near Rotterdam]. All children were blond! I thought: 'What are they doing here?' But look, this is still my square. But*

84 Judging by his account, he lived in the neighbourhood for 40 years, most probably changing address.

some people who live here, you almost never see. My own children are half Turkish, this really is my square.
(Street interview 3_LZ, 7–6–2011)

It appears, then, that the square provides its users with a 'vehicle of memory' (Riley and Harvey 2007) for phenomena experienced at a wider level, such as the diversification of neighbourhood demographics in general. When they refer to the absence of Dutch people from the square, they seem to make an implicit statement about changes they perceive in the neighbourhood at large. The Dutch can be understood here as the relevant absentees. This phenomenon has been identified before, for example by Baumann (1992: 113), who speaks of 'invisible categorical referents'. The Dutch are absent from the square but present in the stories and memories of others users. It would be interesting to compare this notion with the opposite one of 'absent agents' proposed by Blokland (2009a), where a certain type of residents (in that case, black) are absent from collective narratives but do use the neighbourhood intensely. Key to the meaning – and meaningfulness – of relevant absentees is the fact that this category is used to symbolize all the changes that a given neighbourhood and its population went through over a historical period.

However, a comparison between actual and perceived behaviour (see Brown and Duneier in Brown 2010 on comparative ethnography) reveals that the Dutch are not entirely absent. They often pass by, or they even sit in the square and partake of its life and activities – as the Dutch respondents quoted above do. The Dutch are absent only in the perception of regular users, including users who are themselves Dutch or have a Dutch background. Such a discrepancy between perception and reality demonstrates that, in these narratives about neighbourhood decline or group antagonism, presence in and absence from a public place are observed and interpreted along ethnic lines.

4.3.2 Local ethnic change: Dynamic relations among the established and the outsiders

In this section I develop the argument that ethnicity tends in particular to be used in ways that indicate a dynamic relation between 'established' groups and 'outsider' groups (Elias and Scotson 1965; Elias 1976).

To begin with, the arrival of new ethnic groups elicits references to changes in the neighbourhood that are experienced as negative, such as declining standards of cleanness or general inconvenience. Here is how the matter stands in the eyes of this woman – a passer-by:

[female, Dutch German, b. 1945, living in the neighbourhood since 2000]: There are mainly migrants at the square. It's as though they only come out of their holes at about two, half past two, and then they'll sit there until midnight. They play soccer all the time, are a great nuisance, and the police don't do anything about it.
(Street interview 2_LZ, 24–4–2010)

Another interviewee states:

[female, Dutch, b. 1938, living in the neighbourhood since 1997]: It is a beautiful square with many children. In general, you see a lot of foreigners who are grouping here. Often the mothers are sitting on benches, chatting. People treat to one another well and have good relations, as far as I can see. I never witnessed a fight. I've been coming here since I was 13 and over the years things have changed; people have changed too, more foreigners are living here now. There used to be schools and a church here. The Diamantflat [for the elderly] wasn't there yet. But it's beautiful here now; it's just a pity that you can't reach [out] to people more quickly. We used to like neatness a lot; and when the foreigners arrived here, with their own habits, there were clashes sometimes – when they didn't clean up their mess or didn't keep an eye on their children.
(Street interview 1_NA, 1–6–2010)

These quotations corroborate a well-known phenomenon, already mentioned here: the presence of migrants (or of their descendants) makes the neighbourhood less attractive in the eyes of some ethnic Dutch inhabitants, who frequently feel that they are being pushed out and are in the process of losing 'their' neighbourhood (Burgers and Engbersen 2001). It has been argued that those who feel this way often are the ethnic Dutch citizens who, in the past decades, witnessed the withering away of traditional ways of life in the older urban districts. They may feel uprooted or get a sense that they have become a minority in their 'own' neighbourhood (Reijndorp 2004: 33 ff.). Further, newly – or not so newly, as their arrival as a group dates back decades – settled ethnic groups, such as native Turks and Moroccans, but also Poles and Bulgarians, are linked to the decay of public space (see Blokland 2003; Reijndorp 2004).

However, these quotations also reveal that there are residents who perceive themselves as being part of an 'established' group versus some outsider groups, whose members are seemingly 'non-human' as they 'come out of their holes', are a 'nuisance', and do not 'clean up their mess'. These residents also construct a 'we' and brood about the past ('we used to like neatness a lot'). By so doing they re-create 'oldness', which is 'a great social asset, as a matter of pride and satisfaction' (Elias and Scotson 1965: 149, see also Blokland 2001) and which is able to create 'group cohesion, collective identification and the commonality of norms' (Elias 1976: xviii). Hence one could say that these users perceive themselves being part of an established group (ibid., xxvi–xxvii). And it appears that these 'established' people experience a contestation of their old social position in the neighbourhood whereby they are pushed into an 'outsider' position, while being a majority group at the national level. In this 'outsider' position they no longer enjoy the power to set communal norms about the upbringing of children – their not sitting out until late, their cleaning up their own mess, and the like (see Meier 2013: 456, 461). They seem to be a 'forgotten' group: even the 'police don't do anything about it', as one respondent said.

It can be suggested that the perceived absence of Dutch people – their status as the 'relevant absentees' – equals an absence of certain norms of behaviour associated with this 'established' group. In answer to the question 'Who is not coming here?', a Turkish woman replies:

Respondent *[laughing]: Smart people are not coming here.*

Researcher *Smart people?*

Respondent *Smart and modern people are not coming here.*

Researcher *But why are they not coming here?*

Respondent *Well, there are only Moroccans and Turks and one [Central European]. You don't see other people here. And they never let their children play outside the house. I have two Dutch neighbors, but they never let their children play outside. Only foreigners are coming here.*
(Street interview 2_LZ, 7–6–2011)

There seems to be a shared idea of Dutch people as an the established group, who at the same time feel pushed out of this space or choose to not mix with its regular users or be part of them ('they never let their children play outside').

However, the very same groups that the 'established' Dutch set apart as outsiders demonstrate the characteristics of an established group in their turn. The following conversation between the previous respondent and another Turkish woman shows how more recent migrant groups constitute a threat in the eyes of more established migrants or descendants of migrants:

First woman *Besides, lots of Dutch people went away. Dutch out, foreigners in. Look, that's how it is divided. In Schiemond [a neighbourhood close by], they are Antillean. Here they are Moroccan and Turkish; in Spangen [another neighbourhood in the vicinity], they are Moroccan. That's just the way it is. They also say that this is a bad neighbourhood. Well, I've never witnessed anything happening here. But it's true that ours has turned into a bad neighbourhood.*

Second woman *Many Poles and Bulgarians have come to live here now.*

First woman *Now there's stealing, there's drugs, people are now shot dead, there's harassment.*
(Street interview 2_LZ, 7–6–2011)

Although the woman admits to 'never hav[ing] witnessed anything happening' herself, she considers the arrival of Poles and Bulgarians, given their behaviour, as a sign of neighbourhood decline.

All this material indicates how both native Dutch and minority groups conceive of themselves as established and create reference categories of outsiders, who consist of (newly) arrived migrants. In this respect, both groups feel disgraced in the neighbourhood by the arrival of other ethnic groups. It was already noted that the categories of 'established' and 'outsider' should not be taken as absolute (Hogenstijn et al. 2008; Meier 2013). One can argue now, in this particular context, how the established–outsider balance is constructed and continuously redefined through a mutual process: groups are framed as 'established' and as 'outsiders' at the same time. In the order of their arrival, allochthonous groups in this neighbourhood are able to experience what I prefer to call social

elderliness as much as ethnic Dutch do; and this is a characteristic of the established group.

The extent to which one perceives oneself and the other as being 'established' or as being an 'outsider' could explain how the use of the square, which I consider a resource in Elias' (1976) sense, is distributed among groups and why this distribution is contested. This becomes clear by examining why some children are able to play in the middle of the square, in other words to take a geographically central position, while why others cannot. There was a particularly revealing incident in this respect. On a sunny day, Dutch Lieke, who has moved here from another city and now 'knows very few people' in the square, as her grandmother tells us, is sitting and playing at the edge of the square. Almost all children play in a small inflatable swimming pool at the centre of the square. Boys and girls – one of them fully dressed, in long leggings, shirt, and blue headscarf – are all soaked in water. But this little girl is sitting by the side. Asked why, her grandmother says:

Grandmother *She's harassed here.*

Researcher *Why do you think that is?*

Grandmother *She's Dutch while the rest isn't.*

Respondent *What happens?*

Grandmother *It's really horrible here. They'll say: 'This is our square, not yours!'*

Lieke *They harass me, they take away my things. A while ago I was playing there [she points at the square's edge] a game, and then the older boys came to take the little pawns from me.*
(Participant observation, 5–7–2011)

This indicates that grandma finds that the 'Dutch' have taken the position of outsiders. This girl's and her grandma's experience of being marginalized as users of Bospolder Square is framed in ethnic categories. Literally they sit at the edges of the square. Thus defined, their position in the 'established–outsider' balance is not captured by 'physical spatial structures', as May (2004: 2177) suggests, but translates into a form of spatial self-arrangement instead. Lieke is referring to an event in the course of which her things were taking away: some 'older boys came to take the little pawns from me'. This indicates that some of the children who play the square are exercising what Lofland has called 'proprietary rights' (Lofland 1973: 118–39; Karsten 2003: 459). In this case, it appears that the rights and power relations involved follow from and strengthen racial and ethnic symbolic boundaries, and that this may prevent sustainable interethnic contact (Britton 2008).

The question is, is this indeed an 'ethnicization' of proprietary rights, or is it rather an expression of standard behaviour in children who get used to playing together everyday and consciously keep out those who do not make part of the territorial network (see Peleman 2003: 154)? As was noted, Lieke 'knows very few people' in the square,since her parents moved out of the city a while ago. Another event offers an interesting parallel. A small boy who had been coming to the square for only about four weeks at the

time of this research could join in and play with the others just like that – because, according to the attending Master Frans, his older brother already knows some of the children (Participant observation, 27–6–2011). In contrast, the children of a mother who works in a nearby building were driven away when they attempted to play in the square, as their mother tells her colleague:

Mother *My children were chased away from the square.*

Colleague *Are you serious?'*

Mother *They were playing here and all of a sudden there were children who said: 'Hey you, where do you live, you don't belong here!' And they came running back inside.*
(Interview 1, 17–6–2011, District Office Delfshaven-South)

Around this range of issues, the Master speaks of a 'family spirit', which he explains in the following way:

Yes, they all feel family to each other, they have a family spirit. They have that very strongly. [In contrast], we Dutchmen [looking at the researcher], quickly think something like: 'That neighbour, never mind'.
(Participant observation, 27–6–2011)

With this he seems to imply that Dutch people do not have this level of 'family spirit' in their culture. I propose that 'family' can be understood in three distinct ways, and two of them cannot be reduced to just ethnic background. The first meaning is metaphorical: a 'family' in this sense would be a group of people who share the same ethnic background, as explained by the 'Master' in the above quotation.

The second sense of 'family' is also metaphorical; it becomes manifest when 'outsiders' visit the square, especially children who come from far away and are not part of the regulars' network. In such cases, a newcomer's ability or inability to join the group takes on a territorial rather than an ethnic character: children from outside the local network are usually kept out (see Reijndorp 2004: 53–4, Peleman 2003).

The third sense is not metaphorical; 'family' is family in the strict sense of the word. The square is used, or privatized (Lofland 1973), along family lines that, although in many cases embedded in ethnicity, have to be understood as kinship rather than ethnicity: children play in the square with their sisters, brothers, and cousins while an aunt sits next to their mother on a bench. But, because in most cases ethnicity is more visible than kinship, children who occupy the square by playing in it are perceived as expressing ethnic 'ownership rights' (ibid.).

4.3.3 Bridging and limiting the contact between groups: The meaning of speaking Dutch

This section delves into the meaning of 'language' in categorization, both of and by square regulars. And in this way it will show how language is used for bridging among various 'realms' (Lofland 1998) and for constructing difference and boundaries between groups.

The people who spend time in the square engage in various verbal interactions. Depending on whom they are talking to – relatives, friends, acquaintances, or complete strangers – communication takes place in different languages. For example, a Central European woman who came to the Netherlands several decades ago talks to her grandchildren in her native tongue. Here is a little episode showcasing another instance in which communication among users of the square occurs in different languages. Some children are playing in a climbing frame on the heightened playground, near the long metal bench. Two men, probably closely related, are sitting on this bench; they watching the children play as they talk to each other in their native language, which cannot be identified from far away. The men smile when they look at the children. Three or four meters away on the same bench, two women are softly conversing. They, too, watch the children play. The older woman wears a coloured, dressy veil, while the younger woman is unveiled. One of the children, a girl, walks to the unveiled woman and says: 'Mom, he has my bike.' She points at one of the boys. This boy stands close by the two men; he is obviously related to them. Thus the mother (the younger, unveiled woman) and the two men engage in a short conversation about the age of the two children. That conversation is carried out in Dutch:

Man *He'll turn 7 at the end of August.*

Woman *That makes him 14 months older than mine [her young daughter].*

Shortly after the conversation, the two women get ready to leave. The mother calls on one of her other children – a son, who is walking on top of a low wall: 'Get off it! Now', she shouts in Dutch, threatening to leave if the boys don't follow (Participant observation, 24–4–2010). This incident indicates that contact among groups that do not share each other's native language is made by switching between languages, which is a sign of 'crossing behavior' (Blommaert 2008: 85). This incident illustrates that the language that people switch to in these situations is Dutch – the national 'public' language (see Gudykunst and Schmidt 1987). Such switches have a transformative potential: they change the type of 'realm' to be experienced in the square. A parochial or private realm is becoming a public realm (Lofland 1973, 1998).

However, users also experience the feeling that it is not possible to speak the national public language in the square. Not speaking Dutch is perceived either as a strategy, as the next extract shows, or simply as the consequence of the absence of Dutch people from the square, as the extract after it (from a Turkish respondent) suggests. The first extract in this pair comes from a Dutch German woman who feels that she cannot speak Dutch in public – or should not try. She has been living in the neighbourhood for more than four decades and this is her answer to the question of whether she chats with anyone sometimes:

[female, Dutch German, b. 1945, living in the neighbourhood since 2000]: No, I never talk to anyone here, nobody here speaks Dutch. Everyone who lives in the apartment building is about 70 years old, they all came to the Netherlands late in life; they don't understand anything. Their children,

often ladies around the age of 30, don't speak Dutch either. So I don't have contact with them. I greet these people. I have a Turkish neighbour in her seventies, she is really sweet. My Cape Verdean neighbor is fine, too. […] I don't talk to the Turks, they ignore me. If I say 'Good morning', they just keep on talking in their own language. That happened for instance when I went to fetch my grandchildren from school here.
(Street interview 2_LZ, 24–4–2010)

The second quotation shows that the perceived absence of the Dutch appears to have an interesting effect: in reaction to this absence, square regulars speak Dutch less frequently and less well. The result is a decreased ability to speak the national and public language. While continuously telling the researcher that he doesn't speak Dutch very well, a Turkish man says:

Respondent *[male, Turkish, b. 1978, living in the neighbourhood since 2006]: My daughter, who is 2 years old, cannot play here, it's too dangerous. Up there [up the stairs] she can, that part of the square is good; this part is dirty. But over there it is too small. Yes, I have been in the Netherlands for four years now, but I don't speak Dutch very well.*

Researcher *Who is not coming to the square?*

Respondent *Who is not coming here? Yes… families don't come here, men don't come here, just women do. Chiefly Turkish and Moroccan women come here. […] That's really not good, [there are] no Dutch women here. They don't live in the neighbourhood anymore. Actually, that's not so good, [there being] no Dutch [people] here. I can't speak Dutch [here].*
(Street interview 1_LZ, 7–6–2011)

An insufficient command of Dutch can cause conflicts, or at least a lack of assertiveness. As this Turkish woman states:

[female, Turkish, b. 1971, living in the neighbourhood since 1999]: I can stand up for myself pretty well, because I speak Dutch. But it's quite different when people don't speak Dutch. Those boys kick their football against these older people from the houses for senior citizens who can't speak Dutch. They are mainly Moroccan boys about 12, who are loud-mouthed and show no respect.
(Street interview 2_LZ, 19–5–2010)

Regardless of whether they don't speak Dutch on purpose or through lack of ability, these users feel that this deprives them of the ability to bridge between various realms and that the consequences range from feeling excluded to not being able to defend oneself.

Command of a non-public language appears to be an important indicator on the basis of which ethnic groups are reconstructed. More established migrant groups appear to practice such reconstructions with recently arrived migrants, as the following comment indicates. A Turkish woman speaks about Bulgarian newcomers:

And those Bulgarians [who came to the neighbourhood] sometimes speak Turkish; and there are lots of fights. They say they're Turkish, and

they do speak Turkish because they come from near the border, but I immediately hear that they're Bulgarian, you can tell from the accent.
(Street interview 2_LZ, 7–6–2011)

Apart from being a basis for knowing which ethnic group one belongs to, for children language also serves to further confirm the relations between established people and outsiders. This may be because the concept of ethnicity is too abstract, whereas language is something that one can grasp: for example, the researcher was asked whether she is Moroccan and, when she denied, the girl asked: 'Then, what language are you?' (Participant observation, 12–7–2011). Here language intertwines with ethnicity – a phenomenon known as 'ethnolinguistic identity' (Blommaert 2008; see De Swaan 2004, Gudykunst and Schmidt 1987). This is further becoming clear from the following incident: Eastern European Kasia is playing in the square and three boys yell at her; then Master Frans steps in and Kasia hides behind him. Laughing, she shouts "Masta, masta!"[85] and "Nanana" while jumping up and down. Previously the boys walked away, but now they come back. One of them says, exaggerating her faulty pronunciation: 'She says: 'Maista, maista'! You're supposed to say 'master' [*meester*]!' – and he points the finger at her. Three other children on skates join the group and leer at her. The boy starts yelling: "Mista! Mista!" (Participant observation, 7–7–2011). By ridiculing the faulty pronunciation of a Dutch word by a child of recently arrived immigrants, the other children, themselves first- or second-generation immigrants, implicitly make clear that they are more familiar with the established group, at least in terms of language.

At first sight, this seems to suggest that speaking Dutch is actually a communal norm (see Meier 2013), further confirming established–outsider relations. If so, then speaking Dutch as the language of the established group may solve any marginalization experienced in the course of one's attempts to use the square – provided that one is not just able but also willing to speak Dutch. But the incident with Lieke and her grandma already indicated that speaking or not speaking Dutch is not the problem; as we have seen, both Lieke and Kasia are unable to perform any 'proprietary rights' simply because they have not being around long enough to have built or gained such rights.

Rather, this latest story about Kasia substantiates Britton's (2008) suggestion that the presence of an authority figure is important in helping to facilitate interethnic contacts. In particular, it helps with finding a way to break through the territorialization of established–outsiders relations in this context. When the boy and his buddies push Kasia, Master Frans raises his voice: 'Now you leave her alone!' Kasia then chases the boy, shouting and laughing at him. He pushes her and Master Frans intervenes by separating the two (Participant observation 7–7–2011). The role of the authority figure is further confirmed by another occurrence. On a hot summer's day, all children, including Kasia, were playing with water balloons. Kasia filled

85 In Dutch, Kasia shouted after the *Meester* ('Master'), pronouncing this word *Meistej! Meistej!*. [Meistej] is thus my phonetic transcription of her pronunciation. The boys who come after her tweak and exaggerate her pronunciation into *Meistoj! Meistoj!*. Given that this excerpt is a translation, I chose 'Masta' for *Meistej* and 'Mista' for the exaggerated version thereof.

hers with water. She then positioned herself next to Antillean Dutch Deliza, picking at the nozzle of her balloon – apparently in an effort to get help with making a knot in her balloon. Deliza looked at Kasia's balloon and said under her breath: 'Jeez'. She then turned her back and walked away. The mother of one of the children tied a knot in the balloon, after which Kasia went on to play by herself (Participant observation, 19–7–2011). Without authority figures such as the 'Master' and the attending mother, children like Kasia are likely to experience a difficult time playing in the square. How authority figures – security guards, Masters, Misses, and other professionals – are able to set the norms for play is further elaborated in Burgers and Zuijderwijk (2016).

4.4
The meaning of ethnicity in using and experiencing Bospolder Square

This chapter was built around the question: *What are the role and importance of ethnicity and ethnic diversity in the everyday use and experience of Bospolder Square?* 'Ethnicity' is not an easy concept as a topic of investigation. It is often used as a label that essentializes a certain identity; or it is too much of a reduction of reality – insofar as position on the labour market, legal status, and educational background are important 'transmitters' of information about one's (ethnic) identity. My intention has been to de-ethnicize this research as much as possible, in an attempt to overcome this problem.

The main answer is that Bospolder Square regulars use ethnicity in conjunction with notions of, or intuitions about, language and linguistic capability in order to make sense of changing neighbourhood demographics; and they do so in various ways. The square appears to serve as a 'vehicle of memory' (Riley and Harvey 2007). More specifically, I suggest that places such as Bospolder Square function as vehicle for shared narratives of local ethnic change (see also Blokland 2009b on shared historical narratives).

It appears that, in this majority-minority neighbourhood, ethnicity is important for making sense of practices and experiences in everyday life (as has been shown, among others, by Berking 2003 and Blokland 2009a, 2009b). The view that differences between ethnic groups are nowadays 'commonplace' (Wessendorf 2014), or that ethnicity does not play a substantial role in understanding the world (Wimmer 2004), is not supported by this study. In what follows I summarize my finds in this area around seven major points.

First, ethnicity is used for describing people, for interpreting negative experiences, and for 'situating' the meaningful presence or absence of others in one's space – the square. This resonates with earlier findings to the effect that ethnic categories have symbolic meanings, especially for interpreting negative experiences (see Müller 2011; Lancee and Dronkers 2008; Blokland 2003). In most cases, these experiences are formulated in terms of status, order, and cleanliness. This is a mechanism of creating an established–outsiders balance (Elias and Scotson 1965; Elias 1976) that operates among various ethnic minorities: the more established ethnic

groups consider the arrival of new migrants as a factor that degrades or demeans their neighbourhood. Both native Dutch and people with an immigration background conceive of themselves, by turns, now as 'established', now as 'outsiders', and hold various ideas about the identity of their reference group – respectively of 'outsiders' and of 'established' – in all these scenarios.

The use of ethnicity – in conjunction with language and awareness of linguistic command – to create a set of relations between the established and the outsiders differs depending on context and activity. There are no prevailing or one-dimensional ethnicized classifications of regulars according to their use and perception of the public place they frequent. This corroborates the findings in Blokland (2003).

The second point continues and expands on this last idea. Regular visitors construct established–outsiders configurations by distinguishing people in terms of ethnicity, language, and linguistic capability. This corroborates Meier's finding that 'ethnicity is mobilised as a marker of difference and change between established and outsiders' (Meier 2013: 467). In this study, these three factors – ethnicity, language, and linguistic capability – function as proxy for, or sources of information about, the social position of people within an established and outsiders balance. As Elias and Scotson (1965; and see also May 2004) have theorized, differences in status and power between established and outsiders are generated by 'social elderliness' (age or seniority) and cohesion. Going back a long time – having lived for many years in a certain locality – is a strong ingredient; and so is the fact that families have known one another for generations. Such sentiments often go hand in hand with a stigmatization of, and sense of entitlement to power over, the other. However, I find that the sense of entitlement to power is not the same as the capacity to exercise power; thus groups of people who conceive of themselves as forming the established group feel pushed out at the same time.

This use of ethnicity for constructing patterns of established–outsiders power balances is different from what might have been expected, to judge from Wessendorf's (2014) study. Hers is a study of Hackney, a London neighbourhood that has a history of ethnic diversification, and yet where Wessendorf actually showed that, if people construct an established–newcomer narrative, this is 'not defined along clear ethnic lines' (Wessendorf 2014: 15). Instead of being based on a re-creation of a 'shared past', as is the case in Blokland (2009b), narratives of belonging in Wessendorf's study are rather rooted in interaction and in perceptions of the use of public space (Wessendorf 2014: 16). But this chapter has demonstrated that ethnicity *along with* the use of public space and perceptions associated with it are very much entangled in the narratives of local ethnic change shared among the regular users of a given public place.

The question is whether this is the 'race relations' pitfall that Elias warned against. In his 1976 book, Elias stated that he could not explain differences, relations, and interactions between groups by resorting to concepts like ethnicity, race, or religion, as these were fairly comparable across the groups under his study. In discussing a Japanese case where differences in IQ between various groups were observed, he finds that

these differences cannot be explained by racial or ethnic difference but by the fact that one group has more and better power resources than the other. Hence he concludes: 'What one calls "race relations" [...] are simply established–outsider relationships of a particular type' (Elias 1976: xxx). To categorize people on the basis of their skin and language – as a means of social classification *and* stigmatization – will only reinforce the recognition of someone as a member of an outsider group.

By looking at ethnicity instead of power, we may turn a blind eye to what actually constitutes the core of inequity in societal relations, namely difference in access to various resources (Elias 1976: xxx, see Meier 2013). This chapter agrees that what seems to be 'ethnicity' in reality emanates from 'propriety rights' or other forms of 'territorializing' public space. But this does not alter the fact that, to people like the users of Bospolder Square, ethnicity is meaningful as proxy for power differences in established–outsiders configurations and helps them understand such differences. In that sense, ethnicity has real consequences.

Third, the established–outsiders balance is dynamic, as argued by Hogenstijn et al. (2008) and by Meier (2013). Who exactly is considered 'established' or not and who is held responsible for experiences of 'disorder' is not unchanging and univocal but depends on the situation and on who is defining it. These are dynamic and multidimensional relational constructions.

It appears to be useful to combine this line of reasoning, on the established–outsiders balance – which is in essence a theory for the understanding of power relations among groups – with the one on (perceived) ethnic hierarchies. Ethnic hierarchies can be understood from the group position theory, which explains that ethnic groups hold certain positions in society in virtue of which they assess and reassess each other, in a collective process (Blumer 1958 in Bakker and Dekker 2012: 2032, 2034, see Verkuyten et al. 1996; Snellman and Ekehammar 2005). However, whereas an ethnic hierarchy is in most cases agreed upon by the groups, both at intergroup and at intragroup level, as studies show (Verkuyten et al. 1996; Snellman and Ekehammar 2005), the matter of relations and power balances between the established and outsiders is more open to contextualization and interpretations can vary. Belonging to a higher ranked group in an ethnic hierarchy – as the 'primary group (in-group) in the culture or society' (ibid., 84) often is – should not be confused with being, or even being perceived, as more or less established individually. The reason is that established groups are relationally and contextually constructed and can differ according to which group counts as the 'out-group' (outsiders) and which one counts as the 'in-group' in a certain context, such as a public place. The established–outsiders balance is not a 'shared cultural model' across and within groups. Rather, as this chapter has shown, this balance offers explanations as a *contextualized* cultural model that could be shared *within* groups, but not necessarily *across* them.

Fourth, language is used in constructing established–outsiders relations, especially by children. Almost all of the children who come to play in the square speak Dutch; and they perceive ethnicity as an arbitrary phenomenon. One's position is relative; it shifts permanently between

being established and being an outsider, especially when one speaks, or chooses to speak, the 'public' or the 'private' language. Tajfel (1982: 26) allows us to conclude that speaking the dominant language in society is 'a strategy of individual assimilation', and this seems to be true the other way around as well: one may wish not to 'go public' (see Ehrkamp 2008) and not to create or contribute to a 'public realm' (Lofland 1998) in a public square.

This finding implies that the heavily discussed 'norm' that Rotterdammers speak Dutch in public, as proposed by the local political party Leefbaar Rotterdam in 2006 (Pama 2006), would not solve the problem of unequal power relations as reflected in differential capacities to exercise 'ownership rights' over public space; but not being bound by 'language' any longer could at least open the black box of 'ownership', allowing us to address the underlying issues.

The fifth point is that the ethnic categorizations of 'established' and 'outsiders' are intertwined with how the use of public places is perceived and with how the other is categorized in such a place – which is in terms of outward appearance and geographical location. Various authors present to us the importance of location: Lofland (1973) has suggested that the social categorization of the 'other' in public space in modern cities is done mainly on the basis of location and to a much lesser extent on the basis of appearance. Elias (1976: 103), too, finds that stigmatization depends heavily on the neighbourhood one lives in; and May (2004: 2177) argues that 'space is used as one of those characteristics that supposedly "prove" the inferiority'.

On the basis of the research discussed here, I stress that behaviour and ethnicity are as important as location. In this chapter the categorization made on the basis of location is clearly intertwined with the behaviour of alleged withdrawal on the part of the ethnic Dutch, who are persistently described as not being there. This absenteeism is meaningful and symbolic – and an actual practice, though not necessarily so: they are relevant absentees, the '"invisible" categorical referents' (Baumann 1992: 113). In line with Blokland (2009b) and Baumann (1996), it can be suggested that visible features such as outward appearance, language, skin colour, and clothing do play an important role in describing and interpreting what is and what is not going on in the square in this majority–minority context.

Of course, cities have changed since Lofland's work in 1973 and the concept of a 'modern city' has been revised; think only how Lofland (1998) herself unravels that mainly modernist designs are an 'assault on the public realm' (179). But one need not go further than Zukin's (1991) deconstruction of various urban landscapes and criticism of postwar projects, sometimes never built, such as the designs by Le Corbusier, and De Bijlmermeer in Amsterdam South-East.

On the one hand the current postmodern city is characterized by super-diversity (Vertovec 2007; see Baumann 1996) and by the reintegration of activities segregated in the modern city through the presence of inner-city consumer services; these are tasks often performed by immigrants, a point that Sassen (2006) argued for (and continues to do so in later work). On the other hand, the current city is said to be characterized by further social segregation and marginalization (Wacquant 2008) as a consequence of gentrification and of central public places having become 'landscapes of

consumption' (Zukin 1991). In these circumstances it is time to ask whether Lofland's (1973) vision of the difference between the preindustrial and the modern city is still useful for understanding categorial knowing in the postmodern city. The findings suggest that, contrary to Lofland's view, classification based on outward appearance is still important, although the relevance of location itself has not diminished.

Sixth, demographic change is taking place in the neighbourhood, the city, and the nation at large. This prompt the following question: If the majority is no longer perceived to be one and the same in all these various contexts, then who gets to consider themselves as established? Who gets to decide who the outsiders are? Who gets to set 'normality' (Ehrkamp 2008)? According to Ehrkamp,

the dominant group in society thus often assumes the power to define appropriate uses of space, and appropriate public behaviors. Often, the majority is unaware that they are defining normality in their practices. [...] material practices from immigrant groups that differ from the majority's conceptions of normality may render spaces uncomfortable for the majority, or even threaten it.
(2008: 119–20; see also Ehrkamp 2005)

However, some of the non-users of Bospolder Square who felt they were pushed into an 'outsider' position are very much aware of losing or having lost the power to set the rules for 'normality'. One may suggest that this awareness is caused by the experience of belonging to a majority group at national level, while being one of the 'minority' groups in the neighbourhood. If they – as 'the dominant group in society' – can no longer 'define appropriate uses of space, and appropriate public behaviors', then how do these appropriate uses and behaviours actually come about, especially in a context in which there are minority groups only? With regard to children's play, the presence of an authority figure enables at least the presence of children in the square's common space, regardless of their background or ownership rights (see Burgers and Zuijderwijk 2016 for an elaboration of the role of such authority figures, in particular the 'Masters' and 'Misses' present in the square). Whether authority figures of a similar sort can also set the norms in the various worlds of grown-ups remains still to be seen.

Finally, the institutionalization of ethnic representations might affect this daily mode of representation to its very core (see Baumann 1996). The question is whether moving away from the institutional practice of assigning ethnic labels to people will eventually render ethnicity less meaningful as a proxy for established–outsiders relations. Although this chapter's conclusions may not apply to all minorities to the same extent (see also Alba and Nee 2003 for a discussion), the children of Bospolder Square are, unlike their parents, largely unaware of the social construct of ethnicity. In this community it is language that seems to take over as a main criterion for deciding whether one is established or not. A child like Kasia may never shake off her 'institutionalized' background – the fact of her coming from an Eastern European country – but she can certainly continue to play in the square under the watchful eye of an authority figure, build some ownership rights in time, and learn Dutch along the way.

5

The symbolic use of public space: Remembering the history of slavery at Surinam Square, Amsterdam

Figure 10 Surinam Square, Amsterdam, with the monument encircled. Source: Google Maps, 2012, drawing my own.

5.1
Commemorating in song a history of slavery: Three national anthems at Surinam Square

Amsterdam: Surinam Square, 30 June 2011.[86] In a corner of the square many Afro-Surinamese Amsterdammers have gathered for a ceremony of remembrance of the history of slavery. They are part of a community of 348,662 people of Surinamese descent in the Netherlands; about half of them are born there, being in most cases second-generation descendants of at least one Surinamese migrant from the 1970s (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2015).

This remembrance takes place in Surinam Square, which hosts a mix of functions. The square is a major roundabout in the Amsterdam traffic system: it contains broad lanes for car traffic, tramways, cycle paths, footpaths, and a parking space for local residents and employees, all of which mark its role in everyday traffic. Less dominant features of the square are a grass plot with some plane trees and, in the middle of the roundabout, a green plot with some flagpoles. There is also an inner square with some benches, a flower stall, a small monument, and a parking space (Figure 10).

On days like today the inner square with the monument and the green plot with the flagpoles acquire a special function: together, these spaces serve as a podium for an annual memorial service dedicated to the history of slavery.

An official programme takes place in a tent. Apart from public speaking, several performances are held on this occasion, for instance by the Kwakoe choir (Figure 13). In 2009 the stage was filled with Amsterdam schoolchildren, who executed a dance and sang 'We Are the World' (Participant observation, 30–6–2009). Outside the tent, meat is prepared and sold and various stands are selling or gifting small items, for example buttons (Participant observation, 30–6–2011) or free leaflets on themes such as 'Amsterdam and slavery' (Participant observation, 30–6–2009). Police officers are present, too; they are involved in the remembrance in several ways. Some man an information desk, others regulate the traffic, still others make speeches.

Minutes before 8 p.m., when the official flag ceremony starts, the traffic is held to a standstill and the native music group Shirityo Yare crosses the car lane into the green plot in middle of the roundabout (Figure 17). It does so in procession, drumming and singing, while its members wear colourful attire and a red cape with little white balls sewn onto it over their t-shirts. In the middle of the roundabout, where the flags of the

86 This section is in principle based on a participant observation made during the commemoration in 2011. In three instances, I used descriptions from my participant observations on 30–6–2009 and 30–6–2012. For clarity, these instances are mentioned separately in this section and the corresponding observations are listed in Annex 2. For the exact names and times mentioned, I have used the programme of 30–6–2011, which features in Annex 2 as Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July, 30–6–2011a. The photographs for Figures 11 and 12, referred to in this section, were taken on 30 June 2009.

Netherlands, the Antilles, and Surinam are flying at half-mast, a two-minute silence is observed at 8 p.m. (Figure 11). Representatives of the organizing committee, the Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July [*Stichting Amsterdams Centrum 30 juni–1 juli*], and police officers lower the flags. Once the accompanying anthems have been sung, people lay wreaths at the monument (Figure 15).

All kinds of food and drink are sold both before and after the ceremony, which thus takes place in a convivial atmosphere of meeting and eating. Meat is barbecued and shredded ice is sold too. Consumables range from Fernandes soft drinks, rosé, ginger beer, saoto soup, liver, Chinese noodles, barbecued chicken satay, and bakbana to cookies and cake, rolls of pom, chicken, and bakkeljauw (salted and dried cod). In 2012 I observed women and children sit on benches, while others sat on chairs that they brought themselves. People are talking all the time and greet one another with a hug and a kiss. They eat, drink, and laugh in the last of the day's sunbeams on the square (Participant observation, 30–6–2012; see Figure 12).

In 2012, when I was focussing on passers-by or outsiders – that is, the people outside the fenced-off commemorative area – I noticed that these people used the square just as they always did, on any other day: they walked through or cycled, waited for the tram, or drove their cars around the square – and sometimes their attention was drawn towards the celebrations. In general, on these occasions people refer sometimes to the fact that the barbecue 'smells good', which means that it caught their attention; and during the procession to the roundabout, when the police officers order them to stand still and wait, they sometimes watch, take pictures, or film the event. Cyclists switch to driving slowly, or even stop briefly to see what's going on (Participant observation, 30–6–2012).

On 30 June Surinam Square is not the ordinary square it is the other 364 days of the year. It is a public place that has assumed the symbolic power of recalling and commemorating the history of slavery. Apart from Surinam Square, Amsterdam houses at least two more monuments dedicated to remembering the history of slavery. These are, namely, the National Slavery Monument in Oosterpark, officially inaugurated on 1 July 2002 in the presence of the queen, the premier, and the mayor of Amsterdam; and the monument for Anton de Kom, named after the eponymous Surinamese author, resistance fighter, communist, and activist (Anton de Kom 2017) and situated in the Anton de Kom-Square in Amsterdam Zuid-Oost.

Figure 11 Surinamese, Dutch, and Dutch Antillean flags waving at half-mast at the green lawn in the middle of the roundabout. Photo by Linda Zuijderwijk, 2009.

Figure 12 The area of the remembrance. Photo by Linda Zuijderwijk, 2009.

Figure 13 The Kwakoe-choir on stage. The choir signifies its cultural history for example through the women's colorful headscarf (*angisa*; see Balkenhol 2014: 203) and colorful dress (*koto*; see Balkenhol 2014: 203). Photo by Linda Zuijderwijk, 2009.

All these public spaces are located in the country's largest city: Amsterdam has currently 834,713 inhabitants (Gemeente Amsterdam Onderzoek, Informatie en Statistiek 2016), many of whom were not born in the Netherlands (or came from parents who were not). This is not a new phenomenon: Amsterdam has been a diverse city since the Middle Ages.[87] At the time of doing fieldwork at the square, its allochthonous inhabitants were statistically categorized according to their 'group of descent' [*herkomstgroepering*]. These groups are Antillean (1.5 per cent of the population in the city), Turkish (5.3 per cent), Surinamese (8.7 per cent), Moroccan (9 per cent), and 'remaining non-western allochthones' (10,5 per cent). Another 15.3 per cent of the population has entered the statistics as 'western allochthone', while 'autochthones' make up 49,5 per cent of the total (Gemeente Amsterdam Bureau Onderzoek en Statistiek 2013). But this proportion – and, more specifically, the percentage of allochthones – is not to be confounded with the share of immigrants in the city: 'nearly 30% of the city's population is foreign-born with immigrants from around the world', as Price and Benton-Short (2007: 113) note. In this respect Amsterdam has been compared with other 'hyperdiverse gateways' such as New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Hamburg, San Francisco and Washington, DC (see Price and Benton-Short 2007: 113; Crul et al. 2013; Nell and Rath 2009: 13–14).

87 Since the seventeenth century, the growth of Amsterdam's urban population was due to the arrival of migrants from various European countries (from the Southern Netherlands among other places; see Kuijpers 2005).

Amsterdam is the first 'majority-minority' city in the Netherlands (see Crul et al. 2013), while Rotterdam is on its way towards becoming another (see chapter 4). Especially in Amsterdam, an important reason for the increasing amalgam of minorities (apart, of course, from the natural growth of the population) is (postcolonial) migration, a large share of which is Afro-Surinamese.

Amsterdam is at the same time the capital of the Netherlands. It has been suggested that capital cities function as cities that represent 'nations and people' (Parkinson 2009: 1) when it comes to 'who is recognized as being a part of the demos and who is not' (ibid., 10). This implies that capital cities represent the nation through a number of symbolic places; and it is indeed the case that Amsterdam has many places that are of national symbolical importance, both in terms of architectural design and in terms of the events that take place there. Examples are Dam Square, where the national event of Remembrance Day is held on 4 May, and Nieuwe Kerk ('New Church') in the city centre, where for example the heir to the Dutch throne is inaugurated.

How do all the different minority groups relate to a capital city as a representative of the nation? This is a relevant question because it has been suggested that, in a globalizing world, it is important to celebrate 'links with time, place and community, in an effort to combat the sense of dislocation allied with globalization' (Quinn 2003: 333) and that community festivals, for example, perform a role in this process (see also De Bres and Davis 2001). This presupposes that places that are symbolic both in terms of design and in terms of use can distinguish and express identity and community in an era of globalization (Bell 1999; see Gale 2004, Massey 1994, Oostindie 2011, Waterman 1998, Alferink 2012, Quinn 2006, Eade and Garbin 2006).

All this indicates that ethnic minorities can, if only temporarily, appropriate or claim urban public space for symbolic use, which raises the question of how they can they do so The present chapter aims precisely at answering such a question. *How do minority groups symbolically claim Surinam Square?*

5.2 Contested symbolic urban places and their dynamic readings

Symbolic urban places are understood as places that bear a symbolic meaning for at least one of the diverse urban groups, either on a temporal or on a structural basis. Such places are of ordinary, everyday character for some groups, while being of symbolic significance for others. By acquiring symbolic meaning, such places become ultimately political: they are often organized so as to represent (contested) political events carried out by powerful actors such as hegemonic governments or their supporters, or they are appropriated by the people for longer periods of time and made to serve a greater cause, which often leads to great turbulence.

It is not necessarily the best known, often larger urban squares in the city centre that are imbued with a certain symbolic meaning. Often these

symbolic places are ordinary ones, not planned with a view to performing some symbolic function; they do not have 'inbuilt' symbolic values but acquire them. They can be everyday places – 'purely material site[s]' or 'purely functional site[s]' (Nora 1989: 19) – which become charged with a symbolic meaning at some point along their history. But the key factor is this: a space cannot acquire the kind of value that makes it a '*lieu de mémoire*' unless 'the imagination invests it with a symbolic aura' (ibid.). Such places are, then, of 'liminal nature', as there is just a thin line between the 'ordinary, everyday' and the 'extraordinary' (Viejo-Rose 2011: 471).

Precisely because of their symbolic character, these (extra)ordinary places lend themselves well to a study of how the meaning and use of space is contested, negotiated or struggled over among majority and minority groups. They do symbolize certain societal relations (Burgers and Oosterman 1992) and materially embody the struggle over the character of public space (Sunier 2009).

Among all the possible classifications (Nora 1989: 23), this chapter discerns three types of symbolic places, which will be further explained in this and the next paragraph. First, there are symbolic places that came into being through planning and design: they have been deliberately built for this specific symbolic purpose, for example in a process of political participation and integration. Second, there are counterplaces meant to provoke or unsettle dominant relations intentionally – an effect sometimes derived from what has been called 'counterhegemonic' monuments (Burk 2006a). Smaller private 'do-it-yourself' symbolic places also fall in this category. Third, there are places that are temporary endowed with a symbolic character, for instance during an occupation, a protest, an event, or a festival. These three types are not mutually exclusive but can coexist and overlap. Places of worship, for example, are often seen as the outcome of a long process of political emancipation (Sunier 2009), whereas monuments often also appear in an unplanned manner (e.g. Haskins and DeRose 2003), in public places – as in the case of 'do-it-yourself' monuments where teddy bears and flowers are left behind at the site of a traffic accident or in the case of (suspected) terrorism. Events and festivals (Quinn 2003, 2006) can be staged to celebrate such places of worship or monuments.

Let me start with symbolic places of the first type: places that came into being by being planned and designed for a specific symbolic purpose, for example in a process of political participation and integration. These are often places of worship (Sunier 2009) – for example mosques (McLoughlin 2005) with its their corresponding azan (Gale 2004, 2005) – or monuments (e.g. Strakosch 2010, Parkinson 2009, Burk 2006a), which usually result from a political democratic process through which public authorities have acquired the mandate to build them. But the instalment of a symbolic place or monument is not solely the outcome of a democratic process in which various groups politically emancipate; it can also a be the outcome of an hegemonic project, which draws attention to specific historical events and figures found to be significant in the local or the national canon (Burk 2006a; Strakosch 2010). As Oostindie (2011: 142; and cf. Johnson 1995) notes, 'the government does have the means to shape a memorial culture and to make material gestures'. These 'material gestures' should not be understood as a

purely technical or neutral matter: from Bourdieu's (1970) study of a Kabyle House it can be understood that the ordering of a memorial in public and private place is a representation of how power is distributed, in Bourdieu's case among men and women. The symbolic meaning created in this way is often 'imposing and, generally, imposed' (Nora 1989: 23). Examples are found in the many war memorials, such as Civil War memorials in the United States and World War I memorials in European countries (see Johnson 1995 for an overview).

Even when the production of a symbolic place is based on political participation and emancipation, and preceded by a formal process of public decision-making, this does not always mean that agreement is reached where the 'social meanings' and 'historical narratives' themselves are concerned (Svendsen and Campbell 2010: 320). For example, when plans are made to build a place that should engage with, and evoke, a past of exclusion and exclusionary relations – a 'dark page in history' (Strakosch 2010) – the symbolism can be quite selective of character. This was remarked for instance by Parkinson (2009) and Strakosch (2010) with regard to the official monuments erected in the Australian capital of Canberra. According to Parkinson (2009: 7), these monuments are 'tokenistic': the officials were simply doing their duty of including aboriginal people in 'an otherwise whitefella symbolic context'. The holocaust monument in Berlin is another example: an elaborate competition, followed by an extensive political process and decision for a national monument that should be 'a manifestation of state-sanctioned memory' (Gay 2003: 158), were not enough to 'cast in stone' a remembrance such that it could be deemed appropriate for all (ibid., 161).

Especially in a 'contested city', in which 'ethnically conscious groups [...] do not 'acknowledge the ascendency of the other' (Hepburn 2004 in Gaffikin et al. 2010: 494), the planning and building of shared symbolic places is difficult and the question is whether urban design is capable of creating 'integrated cityscapes' (ibid., 493). Thus carrying out such plans can potentially function as a main instrument in conflict resolution; in such cases the groups in question would work on, and place their priorities in, 'potentially integrative over potentially segregating projects' (ibid., 510). However, this kind of situation also makes it possible sometimes for people to use 'discriminatory planning' in uneven power relationships, and such a possibility should be acknowledged (ibid., 495).

Second are the counter-places – that is, places of a counter-hegemonic nature, meant to address states of affairs not addressed, or not correctly addressed, by governmental institutions. They aim to cause uncertainty and agitation instead of closure and seek for the intentional provocation aroused by 'historical incompleteness, inherent errors, contradictions, and decay' (Burk 2006a: 952). Often they are produced by socially marginalized communities or meant to address their problems. They play with deviating design norms and are located outside expected monumental spaces (Burk 2006a; cf. Burk 2006b), for example in neighbourhoods historically or socially related to the cause these counter-places represent. Hayden (1997 [1995]) presents some of these unexpected monuments in the course of demonstrating how the history of workers in Los Angeles – African Americans, Latin Americans, and Japanese Americans – is being

told, imagined, designed, and rebuilt down to its local roots. Counter-monuments and counter-places of this kind are often established without civic funding but may have attracted private funding (Burk 2006a: 960). Burk mentions, among other things, the AIDS Memorial Quilt, studied by Sturken (Sturken 1997 in Burk 2006a: 952), Melbourne's Walking Trail Markers, as described by Jacobs (Jacobs 1998 in Burk 2006a: 952), and the deserter monuments in various German cities. These last ones are 'seeking to provoke reflection about traditional soldierly values and to challenge existing war memorials' (Welch 2012: 370).

The private and smaller 'do-it-yourself' symbolic places and monuments, such as street memorials (Haskins and DeRose 2003) and community-based memorials founded after 9/11 (Svendsen and Campbell 2010), are made in the same vein and can be understood along similar lines. They all address personal loss through an appropriation of urban space and draw attention to some public cause or collective worry. Confrontation with such monuments is unsettling – and often unexpected in terms of where one encounters them.

Third, there are places that acquire symbolic significance for given periods of time, whereas for the rest they are saturated with the regular, every-day use. These are places that host symbolically significant events or festivals, which usually come about through a process of requiring permits and making public announcements. Protests or demonstrations, on the other hand, often arise quickly and are initially spontaneous and unplanned, but followed by deliberate organization through social media, as the Occupy Movement has shown (Castells and Kumar 2014). While an event of this kind is going on in some place, the everyday-use of that place is usually interrupted – but not necessarily so; the event is able to '[break] a temporal continuity' (Nora 1989: 19), but at the same time both the everyday experience and the symbolic use can mix. For instance, Quinn finds that the town of Wexford is once a year, temporarily, 'Wexford the festival place' and at the same time the 'Wexford within which people live year-round' (Quinn 2003: 346).

In these classifications, certain social–historical relations are (temporarily) fixed. Over time, a process of changing, appropriating, or dismissing and replacing certain meanings can take place. This process of layering and relayering is appropriately described as an 'accretion' of meaning (Parkinson 2009; Dwyer 2004; Viejo-Rose 2011). Examples are found around monuments that accompany the remembrance of important and often contested events in national history, such as the Vietnam War. Thus Foote describes how a battlefield park in Texas became invested with meaning for veterans of the Vietnam War, who erected an additional 'prisoner of war/missing in action' memorial at the site (Foote 1997 in Dwyer 2004: 420–1). The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall itself – the original 1983 memorial in Washington, DC – was a subject of disagreement as to how this past was supposed to be represented, and visitors brought many items to the Wall, including combat boots, parts of bicycles, and other objects or materials such as flowers and wrappers for hot dogs (Hass 1998). They were creating 'do-it-yourself' monuments at the foot of the Wall so as to reappropriate the memorialization of the lost lives; and this, in turn, became 'part of the dominant representation' (Schramm 2011: 12; Hass 1998). Another example

is Taksim Square, which came to represent the secular Turkish state. Mass protest was not allowed at this square since the 1977's protest (Baykan and Hatuka 2010), but recent history shows that people are breaking through such regulations and reappropriating the square for the defence of ideas that oppose the national state: the protests surrounding the Istanbul Gezi Park came to symbolize political opposition on a national scale (Gül et al. 2014; Baykan and Hatuka 2010). Such a process of accretion does not necessarily mean that new meanings are substituting the old ones: the latter 'are still part of their symbolic capital' but are rather complemented and recharged (Viejo-Rose 2011: 467).

A symbolic narrative 'set in stone' – in a monument, in a place, or in some other form – cannot be enforced on the minds and hearts of the people. Even though places and monuments are produced in order to reify or embody narrative meanings in stone, these meanings are not fixed but rather fluid and transient, dynamically and relationally defined by 'a public', which can be either an actually present audience or an absent (or rather non-present) one, namely the 'invisible categorical referents' (Baumann 1992: 113, see also chapter 4, cf. Habermas 1989 [1962]: 10). Such a public can, in its everyday-use and experience of a place, dismiss or interpret these symbolic messages differently; besides, the symbolic messages can be inconsistent or out of tune with the everyday-practices and meanings attributed to the place (see Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003; Graham et al. 2000: 24; Low et al. 2005: 13).

This is especially important when we consider public space and diverse societies. A public symbolic ritual or symbolic place appears to be open to diverse understandings. According to Baumann (1992: 100), in a diverse society a '[p]ublic ritual … allows and encourages multiple readings of symbolic messages'. It has been argued that in such a society hegemonic monuments cause experiences of exclusion for minority groups (Parkinson 2009; Strakosch 2010; Eade and Garbin 2006; Gale 2005). Also Ehrkamp (2008) has suggested that identities and relations in public space are not always representative of the identities and relations of the users and inhabitants.

5.3 Inquiring the symbolic use of Surinam Square

The present research took place between 2009 and 2012. It covers the coming into existence of the monument in Surinam Square and subsequent developments, and focuses on the period between 2008 and 2012. The research was carried out through qualitative methods grounded in the rapid ethnographic assessment procedure approach, as explained in Chapter 1. These methods allowed me to gain insight into the minority group's perspectives on the symbolic use of Surinam Square. The methods consisted of (1) semi-structured interviewing with professionals, (2) ethnographic fieldwork on the square, on ordinary days throughout the early spring and summer and during the commemorative event of 30 June in subsequent years until 2012, and (3) street interviews of everyday users. In total, the data consisted of:

- speeches held during the commemoration by special guests and by the chair of the organizing committee, which was the Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July;[88]
- programmes of the commemoration;
- interviews with the chair of this committee and with a former member of the local council;
- newspaper articles on the history of commemorating slavery;
- participant observations of Surinam Square during the commemoration (including pictures);
- press releases;
- 61 street interviews with everyday users of Surinam Square;
- participant observations and pictures of the everyday use of the square; and
- 'naturally occurring' conversations with commemorators (on this concept, see Silverman 2006 and Wodak 2008).

The topics and the questions asked during the interviews and street interviews are gathered in Annex 1. All primary materials referenced in this chapter are listed in Annex 2.

This chapter aims to render the perspective of the commemorating minority group and in order to describe that perspective, relies much on the organizers' views of the commemoration (members of the Amsterdam Committee among others), in combination with naturally occuring conversations with commemorators at the square. Hence the question is whether an 'insider's perspective [of the minority group in casu] is possible, and whether that this can unproblematically represent the associated group' (Narayan 1993: 678; see Mauthner and Doucet 2003; Feleppa 1986)?

There were two complications that made it difficult to reach an insiders' perspective – that is, the perspective of the minority group. First, there is the obvious fact that the commemoration takes place just once a year, which limits the time for building rapport with the visitors. Second, this is a kind of commemoration in which I felt I was a representative of the 'guilty party' (see Strakosch 2010) – a feature that required constantly reflection on my own values and position. I entered the field with a name tag and a questionnaire, which somehow helped to create some necessary distance between my persona – my role as researcher – and my private identity (see Burawoy 1998 on distancing). This was quite desirable, for instance when asking questions that might have been construed as 'inappropriate' or 'insensitive' about the meaning of remembering the history of slavery. The

88 The commemoration was organized by a committee originally named 'the National 30 June–1 July Committee' or, more elaborately, 'the National 30 June–1 July Committee of the Netherlands and Surinam' (Nationaal 30 juni/1 juli Comité) – henceforth the National Committee. When a new board took office, the National Committee was renamed 'the Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July' – henceforth 'the Amsterdam Committee' (or simply 'the committee').

issue of shame was continuously present; once, for example, I confessed to a woman that 'I know so little about it' and she reacted, tellingly: 'Yeah [Dutch: *tja*]…' (Participant observation¸ 30–6–2011).

To be able to make sense of such accounts, I had to let go of my insulated position of a rather 'positivist' researcher, as was more elaborately discussed in Chapter 1. This opened up the complication – a danger, but also a chance (see Burawoy 1998) – that my own interpretations became part of the analysis of the situation. The following circumstance illustrates this. A couple of weeks before the remembrance in 2013, I sent the chair of the committee an e-mail in which some analyses that I thought might be of interest to him were mentioned; and I asked whether he was interested in seeing the draft of the chapter. He replied that he was 'very interested' and that he had found in the email some 'fantastic starting points and observations, which I would like to use in my public speaking, with your consent' (Personal communication, 30–5–2013). I gave him my consent and subsequently visited the 2013 commemoration. The following description is based on this experience (Participant observation, 30–6–2013).

The year of 2013 was a jubilee year – *bigi jari*. On 30 June 2013, at about 6.20 p.m., the chair of the committee appears on stage in the white tent mounted at the square. All seats in the tent are taken, and still more people watch the stage through the opened sides of the tent. The plantations are filled with people trying to peek inside. Inside the tent, black and yellow balloons fill the ceiling; they will be released later, to mark the fact that 2013 is a *bigi jari*. To add some extra lustre to this special feature, members of the armed forces are present during the flag ceremony. Slavery was officially abolished 150 years ago to the day, and this is the 20th ceremony in honour of this event; the remembrance has taken place at Surinam Square 20 times before 2013. The chair speaks on stage. In the middle of his speech he says:

This does not eliminate the fact that we, too, did feel various forms of distance from our remembrance during the past 20 years. Thus we experienced geographic distance, which registers that slavery took place in Surinam and the Antilles, and hence is not something to do with the white Dutchmen. Further, everyone is familiar with historical distance: 'It has been so long and we should not whine about that, but assimilate.' Finally, not devoid of importance is the ethnic distance, which prompts comments like: 'This is something for the Surinamese, for their culture and I don't know whether I am welcome or not.' The paradoxical situation is this: the Amsterdam [policy concept of] citizenship wants to transcend all these differences. Different ethnic backgrounds, age, and so on do not matter: everyone is an Amsterdammer. The history of Amsterdam, of which the slavery is an important part, belongs to the city as a whole, whereas these differences do seem to matter only to some white Amsterdammers. And this is also true for some of the Surinamese who attend this remembrance and claim it as their property.
(Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July, 30–6–2013)

This part of the speech indicates that the chair interpreted the results of this study, which were at the time preliminary but resonated with some of his own experiences. He translated the various 'distances' that the users

of the square experienced – as they had been conceptualized in research at that time – into the various 'distances' that the Amsterdam Committee members and the rememberers present on 30 June experienced. And it must be noted that the Amsterdammers I wrote about were not just 'white Amsterdammers' or 'white Dutchmen' (as this speech implies) but had various ethnic backgrounds.

The preliminary analyses that found their way into the chair's speech were in their turn integrated into the research situation, becoming part of the symbolic use of the square. Hence I decided that the chair's speech of 2013 was not to be analysed. It was cautiously concluded that the preliminary results apparently called for recognition and resonated with his experiences. For him, these results were valid and representative of the situation.

5.3.1 Surinam Square becomes a counter-symbolic place for the remembrance of the history of slavery

This section examines how the committee organizing the remembrance ceremony has worked to install and adapt the symbolic meaning of the square, the monument, and the accompanying remembrance on 30 June every year.

To begin with, the name of the square is clearly related to the history of colonization. The names of adjacent streets and squares (Curacao Street, Aruba Street, and Paramaribo Square) are all related to this history too. When the neighbourhood was built in the 1930s, Surinam was a colony of the Netherlands. In essence, the name of the square symbolizes the same historical relations encapsulated by the monument and by the remembrance. A former member of the National Committee asked, without expecting an answer: 'Why is there a Surinam Square in Amsterdam?' He immediately observed that this actually makes you 'start thinking about it' – that is, about how a square in Amsterdam came to bear this name (Participant observation, 30–6–2011). The origins, both of the event and of monument, lie in a *tori neti* – a night in which stories about slavery and the olden days were told – that took place on 29 June 1993 and was followed next day by an event with 'contemplative meetings' (Balkenhol 2011: 156), organized by the National Committee, named National 30 June/1 July Committee of the Netherlands and Surinam. Six years later, on 30 June 1999, a plaque was unveiled in Surinam Square (Thijssen 1999, 1 July; Willemsen 2006). This plaque served as a herald for the Monument of Awareness, which was erected in the square and unveiled on 30 June 2004 (Figure 14; see also Figures 15 and Figure 16).

But here something should be said about the background to this event. During the June 30 ceremony of 2002, a '30 June Manifesto of Awareness' was finalized, which – according to its anonymous authors – 'came into being through the contributions of tens of organizations and persons, as brought forward during various meetings of the National Committee in the past ten years' (anonymous, date unknown, in Kout and Wong, 30–6–2003). The Manifesto addresses the nation-state of the Netherlands and demands that the circumstances of the Surinamese and Antilleans population be improved (Kout and Wong, 30–6–2003; see also Interview 2, 18–3–2013,

chair of the Amsterdam committee).

The Manifesto begins with an elaborate description of how the power relations in which Surinam and the Dutch Antilles were historically involved have wronged these nations: 'As it is now, Surinam and the Dutch Antilles, with their population, are a creation of the Netherlands' (anonymous, date unknown, in Kout and Wong, 30–6–2003). The anonymous authors find that an entire history of slavery is ignored and that this fact, together with the current policies towards the two population groups, is the cause for 'the problems we had and are having in the Netherlands' (ibid.). They make 15 demands. Here is an excerpt of the first three:

The Netherlands never took the time to develop a vision and plan to solve these problems. Therefore we demand that your government and Staten Generaal come together in united assembly and proceed to

(1) delegate the queen of the kingdom [Beatrix, who reigned as queen from 30 April 1980 until 30 April 2013] [to travel] to the Republic of Surinam and the Dutch Antilles to ask for forgiveness from the Suriname and Antillean nation for all suffering that the kingdom has inflicted on them;

(2) draft and offer Surinam and the Dutch Antilles a complete proposal for how they could develop socially, economically, culturally, and religiously into a prosperous nation;

(3) adapt a law by which the Netherlands awards, at all times, a full retirement pension to all Surinamese and Antillean Dutchmen from the age of 55, so that they may contribute to the development of Surinam and Antilles while they are in the prime of their lives.

Clearly the National Committee saw itself as the representative of a historically marginalized community of Antilleans and Surinamese, the descendants of the enslaved. I support Balkenhol's (2011) view that the National Committee intended to use the monument and the event as means of appealing to the Dutch state and of arousing both its sense of responsibility for the past grievances of Surinamese and Antilleans and its willingness to put things right. In this respect, the monument appears to be counterhegemonic in the sense defined by Burk (2006a).

This Manifesto was contemporaneous with the unveiling, on 1 July 2002, of another monument dedicated to the remembrance of the history of slavery, namely the National Slavery Monument in the Amsterdam Oosterpark. As mentioned before, that ceremony took place in the presence of the queen, the prime minister, and the mayor of Amsterdam (among others), which meant that national and local governmental institutions approved of the monument and supported the initiative behind it. But the National Committee was not pleased: its view was that the most suitable place for such a national monument would be a 'national square, the Museum square in Amsterdam'. And, even then, such a monument would be truly 'national' only if the Dutch people first became 'aware of the fact that slavery is a part of the total history of the Netherlands, Suriname and the Antilles' (Kout in Zandbergen 2003, 30 June).

Figure 14 The Monument of Awareness at Surinam Square. It is a tree whose leaves symbolize the Netherlands, the Dutch Antilles, and the Republic of Surinam. Photo by Linda Zuijderwijk, 2011.

A 'guilty party' (Strakosch 2010: 268), such as the Dutch state, is not accepted, wholly and unreservedly, as producer of symbolic places and monuments that aim to engage with the historical errors and damaging relations it has caused – in this case, with a past of slavery. The National Committee opposed the Dutch politics of dealing with the history of slavery and with the production of the national monument in Oosterpark as a national symbol in Amsterdam.

But, even though the National Committee opposed the national government in the case of the national monument in Oosterpark, the monument in Surinam Square came about through cooperation with the local government, which participated in discussions on how the remembrance should be dealt with, as this former member of the National Committee states:

Yes, some can handle the abstraction of the plaque, whereas others needed a statue to remember – and sure enough, a statue it was. That was discussed with the local district, like: 'How shall we do that with that remembrance'?
(Participant observation, 30–6–2011).

According to this former member, the monument is basically the result of private initiative and is privately funded (Participant observation, 30–6–2011); its erection was recommended by a then member of the city council, also a former district chair of Amsterdam South-East, on the grounds that the already existing national monument in Oosterpark evoked many emotions. This person presents herself as 'a prominent from the Surinamese community' and recalls having 'really put an incredible effort in realizing [the monument]' (Interview 1, 13–3–2013, former city council member). She explains that she recognized the need for 'new traditions in the city':

I noticed that the [instalment of a] national monument [in Oosterpark] was recalling a lot of emotions, and consequently, these emotions were passed on to the city council, like: 'should we, as the city of Amsterdam, do something'? I think I can justly state that I politically made out a case for it.
(Ibid.)

As a politically participating member of the Surinamese community, she obtained access to (formal) urban decision-making processes related to the planning of symbolic functions (*inter alia*). In this way she was able to broker the claims of the National Committee to the local government. This enabled the National Committee to hold on to its discourse of political opposition, while at the same time making use of the local political integration of the Surinamese community. This appears to be an example of a broader phenomenon, which is typical of Amsterdam: the city has a history of being receptive to new social movements, 'even to groups who challenged their authority' (Vermeulen and Van Heelsum 2009: 152, cf. 156).

Surinam Square was thus selected in order to address certain wrongful historical relations; but more recently this very point of departure has become actively challenged. The National 30 June–1 July Committee was

relaunched under the name of 'Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July' or Amsterdam Committee in the following (Personal communication, 23–6–2011; Interview 2, 18–3–2013, chair of the Amsterdam Committee). This change of name symbolizes a change of direction: the ritual of remembrance celebrated in Surinam Square would have an urban rather than national or ethnic focus. The chair of the relaunched Amsterdam Committee explains how this change of direction is to take place:

Under my leadership, I did not want this to be a marginal organization for Surinamese and Antilleans who express their frustrations in the square, but it should actually be an organization for Amsterdam; not a Surinamese [organization], but an Amsterdam organization, and one that would represent the involvement of Amsterdam.
(Interview 2, 18–3–2013, chair of the Amsterdam Committee)

This indicates that the Amsterdam Committee aims at transforming its status of a socially marginal national counter-committee into that of an urban committee for, of, and with the people and municipality of Amsterdam.

By itself, the erection of the monument adds a new perspective on the interpretation of the national monument in Oosterpark as indirect 'evidence of successful integration' of migrants from the former colonies (Oostindie 2011: 152): I argue that the Monument of Awareness in Surinam Square, too, should be seen as a sign, albeit local, of political emancipation and integration, even though it was explicitly designed as a counterhegemonic monument, representing a historically socially marginalized community and addressing the Dutch state's lack of ability to deal with the grievances of the descendants of slaves.

The next sections discuss how, although the square's monument itself did not change, its intended meaning did: whereas formerly it could be understood as an explicit counterhegemonic monument that addressed wrongful historical relations, the relaunched committee chose to use the annual remembrance festival held on the square to create affiliations to the local, common, and shared Amsterdam identity – in other words, to create a local urban citizenship. However, this certainly does not mean that committee members have turned away from, let alone started to critique, national and hegemonic ways of remembering; rather they ascertain them, at least according to Balkenhol (2011), who studied the ceremony in Surinam Square for his research on the historical experience of slavery in the Netherlands (and see also Willemsen 2006). The following section starts by disentangling this potpourri of meanings, which focus on a local, shared kind of identity and on the use of hegemonic techniques of remembering.

5.3.2
The temporal transformation of Surinam Square into a place of remembrance and Amsterdam urban citizenship

This section starts by discussing the rather hegemonic techniques of remembering – that is, roughly speaking, the techniques employed in commemoration festivals held across the Global North. Then I move on to show how the local concept of Amsterdam citizenship is appropriated. In short, the message of this section is that the remembrance celebrated on this square can largely be interpreted as an affirmation of hegemonic techniques – an observation made earlier by Balkenhol (2011) – and of (local) policy concepts. This section is mainly based on participant observations made during the 30 June festivals of 2009, 2011, and 2012 and on the programmes distributed at these events (Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July (30–6–2009a, 2011a, and 2012)).

I begin, as announced, by discussing the techniques of remembering. On 30 June, the square is temporarily transformed into a place endowed with symbolic meaning for the commemorators. This is done by employing various signs and symbols (see Willems-Braun 1994, Quinn 2003, Waterman 1998) that, together, indicate that there is a remembrance taking place in which several unwritten codes should be observed. These signs and symbols show some similarities with, but also differences from, those of remembering and celebrating of national Remembrance Day on 4 May and Liberation Day on 5 May (Balkenhol 2011; see also Willemsen 2006). The 4th of May is the Dutch national commemoration day of war victims, and the 5th of May is the Dutch national celebration day of the liberation in 1945. Balkenhol (2011: 157–9, cf. Willemsen 2006) has identified these techniques employed in Surinam Square as an 'affirmation of hegemonic notions of autochthony rather than a critique'.

First, there is an attempt in Surinam Square to interrupt daily routines in and around the place (Balkenhol 2011). For instance, the traffic is banned while the celebrants cross the roundabout (Figure 17). This temporary suspension of traffic is even more serious during the 4 May remembrance in Dam Square, when the full surroundings of the Dam are free of traffic for hours.

Second, these ceremonies often include the obligatory observance of a two-minute silence; in Surinam Square, this silence is summoned when all visitors have crossed the roundabout. People stand in a semi-circle around the flags, making almost no noise or talking very quietly.

Third, there is always a flag ceremony. At the roundabout in Surinam Square the flags of the Netherlands, Dutch Antilles (and, in later years, Aruba), and Surinam wave at half-mast from 6 a.m. on the day of remembrance. The Kwakoe choir sings the national anthems; the Surinamese anthem is louder than the others, because bystanders join in, singing more loudly. Policemen wearing their decorated black jackets position themselves next to the flags, then pull them down and hand them over to children nearby. The highest district police officer is in attendance, as are various local administrators, all watching the ceremony in front of other visitors.

The three flags and the three anthems draw the public's attention to all the nations that were somehow involved in the history of slavery, both as victims or victimized nations (in the case of Suriname and Dutch Antilles) and as perpetrators or 'the guilty party' (Strakosch 2010) in the case of the Netherlands. Comparing this to national Remembrance Day of 4 and 5 May, only war victims are commemorated; whether Germans or Germany, being the guilty party, should be part of that commemoration as well is heavily debated. In 2012, Nooter, the co-director of the National Committee of 4

Figure 15 The monument and the wreaths. Photo by Linda Zuijderwijk, 2011.

and 5 May (Nationaal Comité 4 en 5 mei), concluded that 'on 4 May you should not be remembering the perpetrators' (Havermans 2013, 2 May). However, if the integration of the guilty party into the commemoration in Surinam Square, added to the episode of Mitterrand and Kohl holding hands in Verdun in 1984 – a famous image in the history of commemorating the Great War – is anything to go by, it may be just a matter of time before the guilty party is integrated into the National Remembrance of 4 and 5 May as well.

Figure 16 The white pebbles at the monument. Photo by Linda Zuijderwijk, 2011.

Figure 17 Policemen holding traffic to a standstill. Music group Shirityo Yare, with red attires in front of the procession, leads the crossing. Photo by Linda Zuijderwijk, 2011.

Fourth, these celebrations are accompanied by specific forms of ritual. In the remembrance at Surinam Square there is a ceremony of laying wreaths at the monument (Figure 15). Wreaths are laid on behalf of district West, district Zuid-Oost, the Amsterdam–Amstelland district police, a local political party, and the Municipal Committee of 4 and 5 May. During the laying of the wreaths, the Kwakoe-choir sings 'Mi Kondre Tru' ('My true country') (Foundation Amsterdam Centre, 30–6–2009a). Whereas the wreaths are often laid in the name of a community or of a particular organization, individual remembering used to take the form of placing white pebbles at the foot of the monument at Surinam Square (Figure 16). A former National Committee member indicated that nowadays this practice is slowly being replaced by the laying of flowers (Participant observation, 30–6–2011).

Fifth, during the day of the ceremony various local institutions are represented at the square; for example, the Amsterdam alderman for diversity, the mayors of district De Baarsjes and district Zuid-Oost (Interview 1, 13–3–2013, former city council member), and the local alderman of education for district Zuid-Oost (Participant observation, 30–6–2011) are usually in attendance.[89] Also present are high representatives of Suriname and Curacao and of the Dutch Antilles (Participant observation, 30–6–2011). They are speakers, either solo, on stage, or in round-table talks. They speak Dutch during the official program – and not Sranang Tongo, as was stated happened before 2007 (Interview 2, 18–3–2013, chair of Amsterdam Committee). The Dutch language appeals to all in the Netherlands, and by using it these representatives indicate an intention to address everybody instead of 'mainly Surinamese' (ibid.).

Thus the points reviewed above serve to show my agreement with Balkenhol (2011: 161), who has interpreted these hegemonic techniques, signs, and symbols as proof of an adoption of 'the very forms of commemoration that are part of the very historical regimes that are under critique' (Balkenhol 2011: 161). Their use indicates that the commemoration in Surinam Square integrates both a critique and an affirmation of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands as a historical regime.

Another way of asserting hegemonic notions is through appeal to the values of autochthony and allochthony and through the appropriation of local policies and discourses concerning urban citizenship. I now turn to discussing how this kind of assertion is made.

This study concurs with Balkenhol (2011) that values related to autochthony and allochthony are engaged during the remembrance. This becomes clear at specific moments, for example when the native music group Shirityo Yare was preparing to lead the procession across the lawn in the middle of Surinam Square. A visitor explained that these musicians were 'our autochthons, Indians. In Surinam, we are the "allochthones"' (Participant observation, 30–6–2011; scare quotes added). With these words she differentiates between the indigenous inhabitants of Suriname – the 'Indians' – and the people 'from a different land', the allochthones – that is, the Afro-Surinamese, whose ancestors were transported to Suriname, enslaved.

Apart from that, however, the remembrance is actively engaging with the notion of Amsterdam and its residents, the Amsterdammers, including people who feel affiliated to the city (Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July, 30–6–2011b). These notions are sometimes intertwined with notions of allochthony and autochthony. Indeed, it has been observed, in the case of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, that people with a migratory background have 'very strong feelings of belonging to their city' (Groenewold 2008; see Entzinger 2009), but whether one can compare the Afro-Surinamese to these groups, and to what extent, is questionable. I will argue that you can't – and for two main reasons. For one thing, they may or should hold a different status from that of these groups; and, for another, belonging is itself a complicated matter: as Suriname had been

89 Since the Surinamese independence in 1975, the district Zuid-Oost houses a relative large proportion of people with a Surinamese background.

part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for ages, would not the Afro-Surinamese's belonging to it mean that their ancestors 'have been "of the land" [autochthonous] for ages', as a former National Committee member insists (Balkenhol 2011: 158)?

Nonetheless, the remembrance is aimed to address 'all Amsterdammers'. The chair of the Amsterdam Committee, stated:

We wanted to bind all Amsterdammers around the dates of 30 June and 1 July, that is still what we want, and we want to inform people about the Amsterdam history of slavery.
(Interview 2, 18–3–2013, chair of Amsterdam committee)

The chair asserted that 'our foundation stands amid Amsterdam society when it comes to promoting citizenship and social cohesion' (Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July, 30–6–2011b). I suggest that, by appealing to 'all Amsterdammers', the committee is demonstrating its affiliation to the local policy of urban citizenship. Every individual is perceived as having a 'multifaceted identity' (Uitermark et al. 2005: 629) – an identity that is built from various sources, such as this history of slavery, as the alderman for diversity states in her speech of June 30, 2011:

Everything has not disappeared and is not forgotten with the abolition of slavery on 1 July 1863. And yet this event still determines the identity of many Surinamese and people from Curacao, Aruba, St Maarten, and the BES-islands [Bonaire, St. Eustasius and Saba].
(Van Es, 30–6–2011)

This diversity is openly recognized (Uitermark et al. 2005: 635) and valued as something to be proudly upheld and continued by the city as a municipality, as the alderman's speech of 2012 shows:

Thanks to its unique history, Amsterdam is the city she is today. With 180 nationalities, we are the most multicultural city of the world. The municipality of Amsterdam wants to convey the message that we should be proud of this diversity, because all these differences make our city so colourful, so powerful, and so international.
(Van Es, 30–6–2012)

One of the alderman's speeches also emphasized that all the attendees shared a local identity, expressed in their being 'Amsterdammers', and that it is the task of the municipality to promote this communality:

At the same time, all of us together, in all our diversity, we are Amsterdammers and we are making Amsterdam what it is today […] it is the task of the Council of Amsterdam to create a basis of communality, of solidarity, for all those differences, this diversity. This is why we are standing here today, together: to remember our shared past. Awareness of the history of this city, of which the history of slavery is part, bonds Amsterdammers of diverse backgrounds and ethnicities with one another. I am talking about citizenship: about every Amsterdammer and about all of us standing here as citizens of this city, regardless of age, origin, sexual inclination, religion, or ethnicity.
(Van Es, 30–6–2011)

This diversity and commonality of the Amsterdammers as propagated is reflected at least three times in the committee's strategy with visitors and invitations. First, ever since 2008, 'all local residents in the wide surroundings of Surinam Square' (Interview 2, 18–3–2013, chair of Amsterdam committee,) receive an invitation to the remembrance ceremony; thus it is possible for the chair to assert that 'dozens of neighbourhood residents are attending today at our special request' (Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July, 30–6–2008). Second, 50 neighbours receive special, personal invitations (Verburg, 30–6–2008). And, third, about 60 police officers are invited, on the grounds that they are 'of service to our social surroundings' (Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July, 30–6–2011b). In 2011 the Surinamese and Antillean Network, the Moroccan Network, the Women's Network, and the Gay Network of the Amsterdam-Amstelland police force were attending. These various networks reflect societal diversity in terms of ethnicity, gender, and sexual preferences.

This emphasis on local urban identity, which we find in the notion of a local urban citizenship, is obviously different from the general Dutch policy and discourse on citizenship, where the 'cultural values and norms' of '"Dutchness" and of "Dutch society"' are paramount (Schinkel and Van Houdt 2010b: 702, 703). Now, it is true that national approaches to citizenship – approaches 'based on the sharing of ethno-national identity and citizenship' – are untenable in an increasingly diverse society (Uitermark et al. 2005: 622). However, this is not to say that urban notions of citizenship are less focused on a 'shared identity' of a similar kind: in its own right, this urban type of citizenship, in which 'Amsterdammers of diverse backgrounds and ethnicity' are bonded together, reflects a 'difference-neutral' conception of citizenship that speaks to people as being 'Amsterdammers', which is a 'homogenizing identity' (Holston and Appadurai 1996: 194, 195).

The twin recognition of the diversity and common identity of Amsterdammers is an important aspect of Amsterdam citizenship. Another key aspect is that every Amsterdammer is asked to take individual responsibility for becoming a good citizen and for helping others to do so. For example, the juvenile Surinamese Amsterdammers have a high dropout rate at school (Van Es, 30–6–2011). In order to ensure that 'every Amsterdammer can participate, regardless of background, ethnicity, and sexual preference', the alderman requires help from 'the community', from 'you as citizens of Amsterdam', and 'often' from 'you as parents'. And she is urging them: 'I am sure every parent wants [a future full of participation

and work] for their children. Demonstrate that; be involved in school and education; you can really make a difference' (ibid.).

This is further corroborated by a quotation from the alderman's address in the previous year, where making use of one's citizenship rights is viewed as an instrument that sharpens the citizens' responsibility for the 'good functioning of the society':

Everyone should experience the feeling that there is a place for them in Amsterdam. That everyone has the opportunity to make his or her own way. But also that people catch this opportunity. At the same time, all this means that everyone contributes to the good functioning of the society; that one goes to vote, for example – and, for that matter, I was shocked by the low turnout among of the Surinamese.
(Van Es, 30–6–2010)

This shows that the urban agenda of empowerment and emancipation will only work if every individual assumes responsibility for being a good citizen. The organizing committee shares this worry about education. In order to contribute to improving the education of primary-school children in Amsterdam, its members developed their own material and use it to lecture the children on the impact of slavery (Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July, 30–6–2008); thus the Amsterdam Committee offers classes on 'the history of slavery in relation to good citizenship' (Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July, 30–6–2011b) that are focused on the 'well-being of and interaction between all Amsterdammers' (Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July, 30–6–2009b). In this way the history of slavery is becoming part of the educational track and aims to contribute to raising good citizens. I suggest that this can be understood as a form of 'active citizenship' (Schinkel and Van Houdt (2010a, 2010b) at the urban level. Schinkel and Van Houdt studied the case of immigration and integration in the Netherlands and noted that citizenship is employed there as a technique for population management, insofar as citizens face the actual attainment of active citizenship as a matter of choice and as a responsibility.

This section has made two important points. First, it has demonstrated how the committee encourages people to adhere to Amsterdam citizenship, in which a shared identity, a recognition of diversity, and a form of active citizenship are key aspects. Second, techniques of remembering that criticize as well as affirm hegemonic society are in operation in the square. However, apart from these two points, the Amsterdam Committee is seeking to give a voice to the Afro-Suriname community and to fulfil its 'particular aspirations' and desires (Holston and Appadurai 1996: 194, 195). This will be the topic of the next section.

5.3.3 The redefinition of a discourse on local citizenship

Central to this section is the question of how, while the Amsterdam Committee attempts to address the Amsterdammers in general, it actually emphasizes the socio-historical status of the Afro-Surinamese in the city – a status that, in the eyes of committee members themselves, differs from that of other ethnic groups in the city (see also Balkenhol 2011, with whom I concur in this argument).

In emphasizing the differences between Afro-Surinamese and other ethnic groups in Amsterdam, the committee is redefining the very concept of urban citizenship: it attempts to create for Afro-Surinamese Amsterdammers, vis-à-vis the local government, a different status from that of the other ethnic groups, but at the same time it acknowledges the rights of these other ethnic groups in Amsterdam. These are two complementary aspects of the redefinition.

With regard to the first aspect or point, the chair thinks that it is important that all groups 'really have to live together':

*This theme [i.e. 'pause (*stilstaan*), live, and celebrate together'] emphasizes our commitment, since we really have to live together, to making life in Amsterdam worth celebrating. We, white Dutchmen, Surinamese, Antilleans, Moroccans, Turks, or wherever our roots are, have the duty to hold on to and support one another, in the interest of making and keeping our society healthy.*
(Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July, 30–6–2009b)

The committee believes that all Amsterdam citizens should be able to share in the 'achievements of our city' and that all groups should be treated equally in the sense of receiving equal access to resources. It expresses this belief by referring to the motto of the then national government: 'Working together, living together':

*When the government upholds the slogan 'Working together, living together', this suggests in fact that one wants to involve all citizens not only in the challenges that the country is facing but also in the yields that we, as a society, generate. Living together [*samen leven*, which can be interpreted as a reference to* samenleving*, i.e. 'society' or 'community'] can only come about if we show respect for the grief, the pain, and the problems of others. […] Togetherness means that there is someone who takes care of you, who is guarding you, because that one knows that you would do the same for him or her. Togetherness means that we share the achievements of our city and not just hand them to one or two selected groups.*
(Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July, 30–6–2008)

So as to stress that all groups should have equal access to resources, the Amsterdam Committee requested a subsidy – framed as a 'wish for a present' [*cadeauwens*] – for an 'orientation trip' to Ghana in which 'white autochthonous Amsterdammers' were also invited to partake:

On behalf of the Afro-Surinamese community, I, as the chair of the Committee 30 June–1 July, have deposited with the alderman for diversity a voluntary gift […] related to tomorrow's anniversary of 145 years since the abolition of the slavery. We wish, as a present, an orientation trip to the gold coast of Ghana, paid for by the municipality to about 15 active volunteers of our foundation. Given the goals of our foundation, we think it would be a great idea if the group could be supplemented with some white autochthonous Amsterdammers.
(Ibid., 30–6–2008)

Once it is called a 'wish for a present', the subsidy acquires a compensatory and reciprocal character vis-à-vis the wrongful history of the Afro-Surinamese by comparison to that of other ethnic groups. Characteristically, a present is never free but comes with three obligations: the obligation to give, the obligation to receive, and the obligation to give back (Komter et al. 2000, summarizing Marcel Mauss 1923). Key here is the fact that gift giving is a mutual gesture – an exchange – that bonds people via feelings of obligation and gratitude (Komter et al. 2000). In Surinam Square, the Amsterdam Committee is asking for a present; this could be interpreted as implying that the second obligation, namely to receive, has not yet been met. Komter et al. (2000) also found that gift giving is selective and exclusive; it reflects the principle that 'good things come to those who make them happen' (*wie goed doet, goed ontmoet*). This can help us to understand why the committee is asking for a gift in Surinam Square: the gift is presented as reparation for the historical fact that, as the committee observed, resources were used in the past so as to benefit only a few privileged groups, whereas its current belief is that resources should be made equally accessible to all.

In general, urban citizenship seeks not to 'give voice or specific rights to groups' (Uitermark et al. 2005: 631), since the focus is on the individual rather than on the group, and on strengths rather than on social problems (Vermeulen and Van Heelsum 2009: 155). By attempting to express or give a voice to aspirations of the Afro-Surinamese community vis-à-vis other ethnic groups in the city, the chair of the committee revises the very notion of Amsterdam urban citizenship. He further explains:

Our wish for a present is not due to the visit of 35 older Moroccans to Auschwitsch financed by District Slotervaart. Nor is it stimulated by the Sugar Feast for the Moroccans, which costs at least €100,000 and is financed by the municipality, or by the Soccer Feast for the Turks, organized here at Surinam Square in one day. Our wish is due to the fact that between 1667 and 1827 our city has helped the West Indian Company to transport at least 600,000 slaves to Curacao and Surinam.
(Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July, 30–6–2008)

One can find in this quotation two motivations for the 'wish for a present'. First, the request is clearly related to, and implicitly justified by, the social elderliness or 'social oldness' (Elias and Scotson 1965) of Afro-Surinamese Amsterdammers vis-à-vis other ethnic groups in the city (see also Balkenhol 2011, who speaks of 'seniority'; and see chapter 4 here). The reference to the years in which the West Indian Company operated makes clear that, in terms of history and social elderliness, the Afro-Surinamese perceive themselves as belonging to the more established layer of Amsterdam society; they are not outsiders. But, in terms of status and power, being part of an established group means that one should be treated by the local municipality as an equal, on the basis of reciprocity, which is not the case at the moment.

Second, the wish is sanctioned by the specific experience of slavery, which marked the Afro-Surinamese and their ties with the Dutch. The Amsterdam Committee distinguishes them from other ethnic groups on these very

grounds: the historical relations they have with the Dutch state and with the local government simply appear to entitle them to the present. Other groups cannot make similar claims – that is, claims based on such a long history of wrongful relations and suffering at the hands of the state.

The question, then, is this. How can the unifying aspects of the policy concept of urban citizenship as locally adopted – the shared identity of Amsterdammers, the recognition of diversity, the focus on being good citizens (see section 5.3.2) – and the desire, discussed here, that all groups have equal access to resources, coexist with the perception that the Afro-Surinamese are different from other groups in the city, given their social elderliness and the specific nature of their historical relations with the national state and local government? It appears that the 'all-in-one' character of citizenship in a heterogeneous urban society comes to be at odds with the equally heterogeneous desires that a variety of groups are also trying to express or satisfy. This phenomenon has been baptized 'the citizenship paradox': 'The universal pretensions of citizenship are forever destined to clash with the particular aspirations arising from the complex heterogeneity of civil society' (Purvis and Hunt 1999: 476). Purvis and Hunt are mainly interested in citizenship in the modern state, but the analysis of Amsterdam citizenship reveals that this paradox is also detectable here.

It appears that, while national citizenship can take the form of a 'homogenizing identity' that covers the differences in individual traits related to gender, ethnicity, culture, race, and class between its members (Purvis and Hunt 1999: 476; see Holston and Appadurai 1996), urban citizenship can do the same. But the present chapter indicates that urban citizenship can also be used and redefined strategically, to make certain claims and to express entitlements that are based on shared identity, history, and community. Whether the same holds for national citizenship remains an empirical question for now.

The transformation of Surinam Square into a place of remembrance through signs and symbols, through various techniques, and through the manifestation of a new, redefined local notion of citizenship is read and understood in multiple ways in this diverse city. This will be the topic of the chapter's last empirical section.

5.3.4 The manifestation of the paradox of urban citizenship on the ground

So far the perspective of the commemorators, voiced by the Amsterdam Committee, has taken center stage in this chapter, devoted as it is to the symbolic use of Surinam Square. Now this final section turns to examine the public's or the audience's perspective on the commemoration.

The theoretical insights introduced in section 5.2 indicate that meaning – which, in the case of Surinam Square, is an amalgam of critique and affirmation of hegemonic notions, shared identity of Amsterdammers, recognition of diversity, active urban citizenship, and differentiation between the Afro-Surinamese and other ethnic groups – cannot be imposed or forced on the public (attending or non-attending). The public, in Baumann's (1992: 113) words, acts as an 'invisible categorical referent', which means that the action (i.e. the remembrance) takes place with a

certain kind of public in mind. And it is the empirical reality of the public's understanding in Surinam Square that will be of interest here. This section is based on street interviews carried out in 2010 and 2012 and on participant observations from 30–6–2012.

I focused my participant observation in 2012 on what I called 'outsiders' – people who were spending time in the square but were not entering the fenced-off area. The introduction to section 5.1 makes it clear that the square is used mostly for transit: people are cycling through and around it, waiting for the tram, driving through – all without making Surinam Square their point of destination (but see Binken et al. 2012 for a more elaborate discussion on Surinam Square as a space for passing through and as a space for meeting others and hanging out). The introduction also points out that the commemoration usually catches the attention of 'pure' passers-by – people with no interest in the ceremony and with no intention to stop, who get caught in the traffic and are forced to wait for a short while; or people who get occasionally diverted by the smell of barbecues.

First, some users[90] perceive the event as being designed for a particular (ethnic) category, namely the 'Surinamese' or the nation of 'Surinam'. Here is for instance how this Dutchman, who has lived in the neighbourhood since 1975, answered the question: 'Could you describe what is happening today at the Suriname Square?':

[male, Dutch, b. 1940, living in neighbourhood since 1975]: Today is the remembrance of the abolition of slavery over there. […] There actually is quite some solidarity. I will not go there myself, I have nothing to do with Surinam – and, by the way, also not with Asian countries. I do like Greece, I like to go there […] It is like, it is 350 years ago that your grandpa died, that is not something you are going to commemorate, right? We do not all the time have to bring up what happened?
(Street interview 1_LZ, 30–6–2012)

On an ordinary day, another man stated, in answer to the question whether he 'is familiar with the statue on the square':

[male, Dutch, b. 1939, born and living in the neighbourhood since 1939]: I know the statue that is over here! It represents slavery. It is some kind of remembrance, but I think: 'Bah! Is this really necessary?' […] We have not been too good for the Surinamese, but the same applies to Indonesia. But if you visit those countries nowadays, it has not become much better. And of course, what happened is terrible, but is it necessary to commemorate it?
(Street interview 1_FB, 27–5–2010)

Both respondents in this pair of quotations make comparisons between Surinam and other places, not seeing why the Surinamese or their state

90 N = 61 everyday users of the square. About one third of them use Surinam Square as a destination in itself, another third use it exclusively for transit purposes, and the remaining third use it both ways. These users are pedestrians waiting for public transport, passing through with groceries, or stopping to talk to friends and local residents. Note that non-slow-traffic users, such as car drivers and motorists, are thus excluded.

should be a special case. The first interviewee draws a contrast between places he would and places he would not visit; Surinam belongs in the latter category (together with Asian countries), while countries like Greece belong in the former. The second interviewee compares Surinam to Indonesia. Both states were visited by the spice traders of the VOC (Verenigde Oost–Indische Compagnie) – the Dutch East India Company – and the Dutch power expanded gradually in both, until their independence in the twentieth century.[91]

Second, it appears that everyday users cannot assess whether they are welcome to enter the area of the commemoration or not. Standing at a tram stop during the commemoration, an Afro-American man finds that he may not:

Researcher *[pointing at the lawn where the flag-ceremony is taking place] Do you know what is going on there?*

Respondent *Well, no. It looks like some kind of ceremony, but I don't have any idea. I thought I would go and look there, but then I saw there were some kind of Indians, and I don't know. And I didn't want to offend anyone by asking what was going on.*

Researcher *That's the remembrance of the history of slavery.*

Respondent *Oh, okay, well yeah, I saw these Indians, but the people did not quite look like me, and I saw a picture with these Indians and a Dutch person in the middle, so then I thought I could understand how their cultures could mix.*
(Participant observation, 30–6–2012)

And another man is standing among friends on the pavement near a coffee shop – states:

Researcher *Could you describe what is happening on Surinam Square today?*

Respondent *[male, Moroccan, b. 1985, visiting the square for the past 13 years]: That is the Surinamese celebration, the independency. That's what the statue represents. It's about the abolition of slavery. It really is something for them, the Surinamese. In itself, I would like to go there, but I don't know whether I'm welcome or not. I don't know if it's really necessary, there has been no slavery since two centuries. It should be possible, though. [...] The atmosphere is a cozy and there is a lot of food. It is something for their own culture.*
(Street interview 2_LZ, 30–6–2012)

Both quotations indicate that not knowing whether one could or should enter the area is related to the actual recognition that this is an event designed for a special group, namely the 'Surinamese' – even if one does not know how to classify the commemorators or what to say about them, as we saw in the first quotation. This attitude could be understood as a form of 'segregation through collective processes of influx and withdrawal'

91 It is beyond the purpose of this study to discuss the historical relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands and between Indonesia and Surinam. More on these topics can be learned from Burgers 2011.

(Dixon and Durrheim 2003: 16). It is a phenomenon that Dixon and Durrheim observed especially on festive days in South Africa. Their study shows blacks visiting a particular beach collectively, on Boxing Day or on News Year's Day, in larger numbers than usual, then whites withdrawing from that beach for a while after that. According to Dixon and Durrheim, the withdrawal was motivated by the behaviour of the black holidaymakers, which the whites described as negative; and this made the withdrawal seem a reasonable response. However, in Surinam Square I did not find that the commemorators' behaviour is perceived negatively. Rather, what seemed to keep square regulars from stepping into the commemoration area was a somewhat guarded attitude of not knowing whether one is welcome or not in this special event.

Regular users feel neither invited to the commemoration as citizens of Amsterdam nor excluded from it by reason of their ethnic identity, which is different from that of the commemorators. The public, being itself heterogeneous, reconstructs ethnic 'others' and not 'Amsterdammers' with a shared identity.

From the amalgam of meanings attached by the organizers to this special event in the square, one clearly gets across: everybody grasps the fact that the ceremony commemorates a particular aspect of the history of slavery, namely the wrongful relations imposed by the masters. Whether or not the Afro-Surinamese or their nation are to be granted special status as a result of this is less clear: some make the point that this does not follow as a necessity, while others feel that it is conceivable. This is precisely the sort of tension that the organizing committee encounters as well: on the one hand, the notion that all groups should have equal access to communal resources; on the other, the impression that the Netherlands' historical relations with the Afro-Surinamese are different from those with other groups. I conclude that Surinam Square is one of those places where the citizenship paradox can be observed on the ground (see Purvis and Hunt 1999 for the citizenship paradox and Ehrkamp and Leitner 2003 for the notion of citizenship happening 'on the ground' in other contexts).

The phenomenon of monuments causing exclusionary experiences for minority groups has been noted before (Parkinson 2009; Strakosch 2010; Eade and Garbin 2006; Gale 2005). On the basis of these data, I can say that I encounter it here too, but with a twist: a monument and an accompanying event, themselves related to a minority group, can cause a feeling of exclusion among other urban (minority) groups.

5.4
Minority groups and their symbolic claim on ordinary public places in 'majority-minority' cities

The question this chapter aimed to answer was: *How do minority groups symbolically claim Surinam Square?* The conclusion is that minority groups have more than one way of making a symbolic claim on the public space of the city.

To begin with, a minority group can make such a claim when it proves itself able to create a bridge with the hegemonic society even in spite of using a discourse that challenges hegemonic discourse. I suggest that the local political integration of the Surinamese made it possible for the privately funded monument to be built in Surinam Square and then for the annual event to be organized around it. Amsterdam in particular is a strategic site for the active development, under the banner of 'urban citizenship', of the specific aspirations and desires of minority groups (see Holston and Appadurai 1996 on cities as 'strategic arenas' for the development of citizenship – and they mean here different kinds of citizenship, such as national and urban). This is due to the combination of two features: being a majority–minority city and being a city that is historically open to new social movements. The latter is in turn explained by Amsterdam's local political opportunity structure (POS; see Vermeulen and Van Heelsum 2009), which means in effect 'the extent to which [immigrants] are supported by state authorities to establish their own organisations – through subsidies, positive policy implementation and personal support' (Vermeulen and Van Heelsum 2009: 145). This chapter has also demonstrated that a claim of the sort we are looking at here comes about through the appropriation of certain techniques and styles of discourse, such as the language of urban citizenship. Hence public counter-memorials and 'do-it-yourself' symbolic places in majority–minority cities offer excellent research opportunities for those who wish to study how a claim for public space comes about.

Second, a minority group is able to redefine the techniques of remembering and the local discourse on citizenship, thereby emphasizing its own aspirations and desires. This is what the organizing committee claimed to do on behalf of the Afro-Surinamese when showing that their specific history gives them some kind of social elderliness or oldness (on this concept, see Elias and Scotson 1965 and Chapter 4 here) vis-à-vis other ethnic groups in Amsterdam: on the basis of this historical and social antecedence, the committee argues that the Afro-Surinamese have a stronger entitlement than all other groups to being the recipients of various benefits.

The process of appropriation and redefinition of techniques and discourse observed in such cases can be understood as a reversal of the beginning stages in a classic co-optation process, as described by Coy and Hedeen (2005). In the classic version of this process, some 'challenging movement' addresses a social problem and demands change. This movement is then co-opted by the state and by 'vested interests' in four stages. The first stage is one of inception and engagement, in which the challenging movement addresses social problems and demands change. The state and the other vested interests perceive the need to reform (ibid., 411). The second stage is one of appropriation, in which the state and the vested interests appropriate the languages and techniques of the challenging movement and redefine some of its terms. The challenging movement starts to participate in policymaking (ibid., 413). The third stage is one of assimilation and transformation, in which the leadership of the challenging movement is incorporated into the state and the vested interests. The state and the vested interests sponsor or develop reform programmes, while the challenging movement is restructuring to meet these goals (ibid., 420). The fourth and last stage is one of regulation and response,

in which the state and the vested interests routinize and regulate their new practices and the challenging movement is starting to protect their goals in response (ibid., 424). By comparison, what happens in the type of case discussed here seems to go the other way round: the committee starts by availing itself of a certain technique of co-optation, namely the appropriation and redefinition of a certain language and technique related to Amsterdam citizenship (ibid., 413–14) that originate from the desks of the local Amsterdam government. In lack of a better concept, I call this process 'counter-cooptation'.

Third, the question is whether the citizenship paradox can ever be solved; this paradox describes a situation in which an overarching identity is in tension with the particular desires of various urban groups. According to Purvis and Hunt, a solution is neither possible nor desirable, because the continuous struggle between the two sides that create the paradox is essential to democracy:

for it is precisely through the contest between these two that the boundaries of the political are contested and resolved. In this paradox – in the struggle to achieve an always contestable equilibrium of compromise between universality and particularity – resides the very precondition of democracy.
(Purvis and Hunt 1999: 476)

However, more recently the question has been raised whether this type of urban citizenship is able to develop mutual support among various groups (see Blokland et al. 2015). It was observed in more contemporary studies that urban citizenship itself offers a venue for producing difference and that the corresponding practices have a fragmenting rather than unifying effect on social movements (ibid.). They ask to what extent this 'tension' contributes to a 'diversification of interests, a weakening of movements, and even a competition of rights and resources rather than a development of mutual support' (ibid., 655). My study in this chapter agrees with Blokland et al.'s observation up to a point, but also emphasizes the opportunity that urban citizenship offers for unifying urban identities in this particular context, which is one of opportunities and openness to social movements in the city.

Fourth, I concur with Holston (2009) that ordinary places in a city can function as sites of innovation in citizenship practices and discourses. Moreover, by exhibiting how this innovation happens, it helps us to understand why such processes do not take place in the symbolically 'packed' and hegemonic urban centers, but rather in ordinary public places, and how the latter become 'expected monumental space[s]' (Burk 2006a: 961) for socially marginalized groups.

This, too, ties up with Holston's view. On the basis of his work in Brazil, Holston argues that 'metropolitan innovation often emerge[s] at the very sites of *metropolitan degradation*' (Holston 2009: 249; italics added) – that is, in places characterized by poverty, inequality, and struggle for shelter and for resources of daily subsistence. He sees such urban peripheries as areas where new practices and discourses of citizenship come into existence. It is hard to transfer this notion to the developed industrial

cities of the global North, but we can conceptualize its equivalent there as 'metropolitan mediocrity'. Then it is possible to suggest, completing Holton's idea, that 'metropolitan innovation' does not thrive only in exceptional sites of absolute degradation, but also in ordinary sites of mediocrity. As my study has shown, this is where local government, community organizations, minority groups and other citizens confront each other every day and, together, literally ground urban citizenship. These places of metropolitan mediocrity function as spaces of political expression and civic participation just as much as the more well-known, larger urban public places, for instance Dam Square or Museum Square in Amsterdam, discussed in this chapter, but also Taksim Square in Istanbul (see Baykan and Hatuka 2010 for a study into how this square plays a role in power dynamics and political culture in Turkey).

Fifth, the public space invested by the minority group is experienced by others as having an exclusive character, although the aim is to hold a commemoration where 'everyone is welcome'. This was already known about the effect of hegemonic monuments on minority groups (Parkinson 2009; Strakosch 2010; Eade and Garbin 2006; Gale 2005); this chapter has demonstrated how non-hegemonic monuments can have the same sort of effect on other (minority) groups. Place and other materialities, such as monuments, are capable of reproducing social identities. These identities – or rather their meanings, the ways in which they are read – are in essence dynamic and continuously changing; in this case, it appears that the intended meaning is only partially read by the everyday users in the square. These users very much focus on the 'ethnic other', that is, on the Surinamese character of the event, and sometimes question whether the Surinamese or the event itself should have such a special status. Elements such as a shared Amsterdam identity and active urban citizenship eluded the audience.

This shows how the groups are 'racialized', or rather 'minorized', in this public space (on racializing, see Ehrkamp 2008: 118, 2005). The concept of 'racialization', with its focus on 'race', is not one that can be self-evidently used in the Netherlands.[92] Instead, 'minorized' fits better in the Dutch context. The term derives from 'minorization' (Rath 1991: 270), which designates a process of exclusion or selection of people on the basis of their 'sociocultural non-conformity'. This is, at least in part, a case of failed symbolic communication. Indeed, the question is whether the resulting portrayals are 'indeed adequate representations of entire groups or selectively favor segments of groups' (Ehrkamp 2008: 120).

Finally, the question was raised whether the symbolic use of public places, which celebrate 'links with time, place, and community' (Quinn 2003: 333), is actually related to experiences of what was termed dislocation. My study confirms that the symbolic claim on a public space is related to multiple experiences of dislocation, given the various references, during the event, to allochthony, the fact of coming 'from a different land', and to autochthony, which indicates descending from the same land, in other words being

92 Ehrkamp (2008) applies this concept in the German context, for which a similar argument could be designed: namely that race is not at the forefront of academic and societal debate, owing to its historical burden.

indigenous or native. One may suggest that this dislocation should actually be understood as a social phenomenon, for which compensation in terms of spatial location becomes necessary, since a dislocated person is not valued – or 'located' – according to the status or power that s/he deserves in terms of social elderliness (or 'oldness').

This chapter also demonstrates the importance of political structure and integration in claiming public space for symbolic purposes – although this is not to say that political emancipation equals the ability to allocate resources for a certain purpose as a consequence of this very political emancipation (Sunier 2009). As was exemplified in this chapter, the pursuit of the particular aspirations and desires of a community can be just such a purpose. This is the kind of pursuit for which public funding is hardly available nowadays, as public resources are no longer employed to celebrate community, history, or identity but target the individual instead, being used to instil empowerment, emancipation, and a sense of responsibility for their acquisition. But this chapter indicates that, by appropriating and redefining ideas as exemplified in the case of commemorating the history of slavery as part of good citizenship, a minority group is able to direct public resources to its own purposes.

6

Summary and discussion: The dynamics of ordinary public space in the context of societal changes

The squares and streets we walk when buying groceries, taking children to school, or meeting neighbours and friends often receive no attention from us as we pass through. They are part of our everyday live and an arena of common, daily processes of inclusion and exclusion: places where some children get harassed because they lack linguistic ability, or a square is fenced off to host some celebration. And, apart from being an arena for everyday life events, they are constructed with certain ideals in mind – one may even say utopias – or expectations about their regular use and functioning. Here I argue in the first place that the use, production, regulation, and contestation of these ordinary squares – four major aspects or factors I am interested in (and I will sometimes use the formula 'the major four', to save repetition) – cannot be fully understood without taking into account the societal context in which all this happens. Apart from that, it is also my view that all these 'normal', mundane practices and processes are permanently influencing publicness of these places and its perception. This is the second, complementary part of my argument.

Three ordinary public spaces in three big cities in the Netherlands have provided the setting for this research: Bospolder Square in Rotterdam, Surinam Square in Amsterdam, and Smaragd Square in Utrecht. The study of these squares was part of the NICIS project 'The Power of Beautiful Public Spaces: Use and Experience of Squares and Shopping Streets in Advantaged and Deprived Areas', which aimed at examining 'ordinary public places' in all three cities (Blokland et al. 2008; Binken et al. 2012; Burgers, Zuijderwijk et al. 2012; Burgers, Binken et al. 2012; Van der Wilk 2016). In the approach I took in this book, each square made a case study.

This last chapter draws the main threads from all three case studies, and then discusses the implications of the findings on publicness and its perception, before it arrives at three main conclusions. I start in section 6.1 by rehearsing the methods I employed and the theoretical framework of my study; and this recapitulation will lead straight to the two leading questions of the entire book. Here is the first leading question:

(1)
How are these ordinary urban public places used, produced, and regulated in the context of general societal developments?

Section 6.2 will answer it by way of going through the main finds that resulted from the study of the three squares.

Since my premise was that publicness is affected by small and ordinary-looking mechanisms and practices, the second leading question is this:

(2)
How do processes of everyday use, production, regulation, and contestation affect the perception of the 'public' character of these three squares?

The answer to this question and its implications will be discussed in section 6.3. Section 6.4 will then present the final conclusions of the book.

6.1 Theoretical considerations and the methods employed

I am not, of course, the first one to explore empirically how public space is being managed, used, or contested. For the Dutch context (which is the one I am interested in here), I was for starters inspired by the works of Van Melik, Van Aalst, and Weesep (Van Melik et al. 2007 and 2009; Van Melik 2008), and Spierings (2006), all of whom studied the development of public spaces in an era of allegedly increasing privatization. Others whose research was inspirational here have asked how public spaces are produced, and often used, in the context of various societal phenomena such as local bans (Chevalier 2015), gentrification (Van der Wilk 2016), and urban food markets (Janssens 2017). I should also mention two older studies of importance to me – Oosterman (1993) and Müller (2002). These two investigated how the use and experience of the city can be understood in a landscape dominated by change: a changing society and changing ideas of urbanity. Finally, I am indebted to works that combined the study of the city as used and experienced with the study of the city as managed or planned. These are mainly Reijndorp (2004), Reijndorp and Reinders (2010), and Reinders (2013), but I have discussed others, too. The strength of these works lies in their focus on no more than one type of context – be that gentrification, privatization, or anonymity and urban fear (depending on their choice of perspective). The advantage of such focused inquiries is that they allow for a deep and contextualized understanding of the type of processes that interest me in the highest degree, namely processes related to the production, use, or contestation of the place under study. But I suggest that, precisely because of that, studies of this kind lack the possibility to compare their object to other cases from other contexts and to draw conclusions about these various contexts too. In reviewing my three case studies here, I set out to do exactly that.

Something else that, in my judgement, is often absent is a reflection on how the various practices and contexts they study affect the publicness of public spaces. By 'publicness' I mean the normative conception of what is public, as developed from a cultural sociological perspective. Studied from this angle, 'public space' is the kind of place where private people can have free conversations on matters of public interest; 'public space'

can even stand for the practice of such conversations, as it comes fully characterized by the attributes of the sphere of public action (Habermas 1989 [1962]) – which is in turn necessary for the functioning of democratic citizenship (Arendt 1998 [1958]). According to Bahrdt (1998 [1961]; see also Häussermann and Siebel 2004, Simmel 2002 [1903] and Madanipour 2003), the stronger the polarity between public and private, the more urban (in the sociological sense) life and behaviour are. Thus, in this vein, I understand 'public space' as the opposite of private space and as a space where *in principle* practices of free conversation and discussion of the public interest are carried out, a space that provides the essential sphere for the functioning of democratic citizenship.

Nowadays it appears that authors such as Madanipour (2003) and Zukin (1995) perceive public spaces and their publicness from this rather normative perspective. Ideally, these are spaces provided and managed by public authorities and used for multiple purposes by the entire community (Madanipour 2003). Both the use and the experience of these spaces are of a democratic character, which means that the answer to the question 'who can occupy public space and so define an image of the city' is in principle not predetermined (Zukin 1995: 11). What is valuable about this perspective is that it gives us a standard to measure things by – an ideal type, which can be useful when we want to study how 'public' public space actually is.

This first, normative perspective is rather different from the second one where public space features. That is a perspective from urban design; and its focal point is the use of public space and how design influences this use – as one sees in Lynch (1960), Whyte (1988), Gehl (1987 and later work), and Talen (2012). The urban design perspective is useful because it generates a micro-analysis of the use, production, regulation, and contestation of public space (my major four). But, here too, something is missing: the questioning of the societal situatedness of these practices. In other words, the societal context is often taken for granted and its hidden premises are not discussed. Yet how can the public character of space be analysed without an appreciation of the societal context in which public places are made?

Hence my summary of the two perspectives is as follows. On the one hand, the high standard of the normative perspective should indeed allow us to appreciate how 'public' a place is, yet it does not say much about the actual everyday processes and practices that take place in public space. On the other hand, the urban design perspective tells us or lets us see how public space is used, produced, regulated, and contested, yet it leaves unclear (at least in my view) how 'publicness' comes about in the places and contexts where these very processes occur. Because of these complementary lacunae, I have endeavoured to bridge the two perspectives in a way that helps us to understand, first, how publicness is affected by various societal processes such as privatization and commercialization and, second, how publicness is observable on the ground, in the ordinary life of the city, as it is made by everyday users of public places and by urban professionals.

One finds that many authors actually do take into account the societal embeddedness of everyday usages and of urban design; but these authors do not comment on the publicness of the places under study. I

can give a few British and Dutch examples here. Authors such as Hall (2011), Karsten (1998), and Wessendorf (2013) have taken into account the societal context in their discussions, but they have not explicitly addressed the consequences on the perception of 'publicness'; and they seem to consider the studied locations simply as a given for their study, without further ado. Others – such as Van der Wilk (2016) and Chevalier (2015) in the Dutch context and Watson (2009) in the British context – do reflect on this given but do not embed their reflections in a picture of larger societal developments, such as the commercialization of public space and the ethnic diversification of the city. The exception are Oosterman (1993) and Müller (2002), who reflect on their notion of 'publicness' and on its relation to elements in the changing societal context.

To restate briefly, it is my premise that practices of use, production, and regulation – a tripartite division that I originally borrowed from Madanipour's (2006) study of urban design in a changing world – together with practices of contestation – which complete my major four – influence the publicness of space. These practices are not neutral activities; they are socially embedded and informed by political, cultural, and social ambitions, narratives, and lifestyles. On the one hand, producers and regulators often have a social utopia in mind (as Jacobs 1992 [1961] puts it) – even though the idea that physical space determines behaviour or use has been heavily criticized (Gans 2002; Reinders 2006, 2013). On the other hand, users themselves may attach meaning to a place, or may have certain ideals about it that inform their use. And even though a public space may be used by a variety of groups, still, the produced and regulated environment often reflects the dominant culture (see Low et al. 2005). But these dominant attributions or reflections of meaning can become contested, given that the spatial experiences of various (cultural) groups are rarely consistent (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003).

The theoretical exploration led me to adopt a social constructivist approach in my actual study of public space – that is, in my three case studies. In principle, this type of approach views the making of space – and this bears repeating – not as a neutral activity but as one informed by cultural ambitions, narratives, and discourses; dominant or not, these are embedded in various societal contexts, which are generally changing. In short, this is my tripartite social constructivist application:

First, I was interested in how the *cultural ambitions* of urban professionals inform the production and regulation of an ordinary public space.

Second, I wanted to discover how the *use* of public space is *socially embedded*.

Third, given the assessment that *dominant voices* and *discourses* inform both practices and the allocation of resources, I was interested in how a non-dominant group can contest these voices and discourses and eventually produces a public space of its own.

These are also the three avenues that functioned as theoretical starting points for my entire study. They represent the main conclusions I extracted from the literature in this field, as well as the main perspectives from which I examined the empirical material in my three case studies.

Bospolder Square, Surinam Square, and Smaragd Square provide three different lines of approach for studying the four major aspects of public space of interest to me here and how they are informed or affected by societally embedded dominant or subordinate cultural ambitions and narratives. As the squares themselves were pre-selected in this sponsored research, the challenge for me was to find in the squares the most relevant questions that could enlighten the ongoing sociological debates and move the subject forward. In attempting to do so I came up with three research questions – one for each case study – that, I hope, contribute to informing and elaborating theoretical perspectives; at the same time these questions remain heavily rooted in the everyday realities of the pre-selected squares. Each empirical chapter opens with in-depth considerations, both theoretical and practical, before tackling the research questions particular to each case.

In order to select my three cases from the list of five pre-selected squares and one street, I used what Flyvbjerg (2006: 230) calls an 'information-oriented' strategy. After studying the design and use of all six pre-selected locations (see Burgers, Zuijderwijk et al. 2012; Binken et al. 2012 for a description of these six locations), I estimated that these three squares would reveal some active social processes that could inform the sociological questions of interest to me. I considered them to fall into the category of 'critical cases' (ibid.). This means that the information they yield can disclose something of general value about the *type* of place where they belong – in my case, the ordinary urban public place. This feature has increased the study's explanatory generalizability: I should be able to extend the conclusions arrived at here to places, people, and phenomena beyond the scope of this research.

The methodology I used was designed to help me to reach an in-depth understanding of the squares under study. A qualitative research, in particular of the ethnographic type, seemed the most appropriate strategy for my case studies. I consider ethnography to be the best method for collecting material that pertains to a great variety of perspectives (such as those on the making of places) and for the study of socio-spatial processes and meanings.

I employed several ethnographic research methods, for example street interviews, participant observation, semi-structured interviews with professionals, and the study of documents. In doing so I was inspired by rapid ethnographic assessment procedures (REAPs) developed by Low et al. (2005), Taplin et al. (2002), and Harris et al. (1997). For the analysis, I made use of grounded theory principles (Corbin and Strauss 2008) – for example categorizing and memoing with the help of the computer program Atlas.ti.

In the following section I will quickly take the reader to the main conclusions reached in each case study and, in doing so, I will answer the first leading question set for this research:

(1)
How are these ordinary urban public places used, produced, and regulated in the context of general societal developments?

6.2
The making of public space in the context of societal developments

6.2.1
The value of neoliberal principles in understanding the building of Smaragd Square

In chapter 3, which contains the first case study, I was interested in how *cultural ambitions* inform the production and regulation of Smaragd Square – an ordinary public space in Utrecht, the Netherlands. With regard to these cultural ambitions, a significant body of literature has focused on processes of marketization, privatization, and increasing entrepreneurialism, and has done so by putting them under the common denominator of neoliberalization. My own study is about the most recent reconstruction of this square. I am interested, specifically, in whether the cultural ambitions that drove the initial building of Smaragd Square have changed and, if so, how. Can they indeed be understood from the dominant Anglo-Saxon perspective of neoliberalism? How much could an Anglo-Saxon perspective like that contribute to clarifying the motives and aims behind the reconstruction of a place of secondary importance such as Smaragd Square?

In recent years there have been several attempts at showcasing how concepts mainly based on American phenomena can contribute to explaining Dutch urban developments. One example in this category is the concept of revanchism and the research clustered around it. Thus Uitermark and Duyvendak (2008) are interested in revanchist urbanism, Aalbers (2010) works with the notion of the revanchist city, and Van Eijk (2010) argues that exclusionary urban policies should not necessarily be dressed as 'revanchist'. Further examples are Van Kempen and Weesep (1994), Uitermark et al. (2007), and Van der Wilk (2016), who work on gentrification, Oudenampsen (2007), who discusses the entrepreneurial city, and Van den Berg and Chevalier (2017), who deal with both gentrification and entrepreneurial strategies. Finally, Rianne Van Melik, both alone (Van Melik 2008) and with her team (Van Melik et al. 2007, 2009), have made contributions related to the practice of privatization.

If one looks at all this, one could incline to believe that the Anglo-Saxon perspective is indeed important in explaining problems or questions in urban planning in the Dutch context. At the same time, these very works seem to cast a doubt on the actual help that this neoliberal perspective can offer, or at least to allow one to be rather sceptical, since too many provisos and conceptual adaptations necessary – or so it would appear. I will move into this grey area of uncertainty and deal with it now, by way of beginning to answer the chapter's leading question.

A review of the literature pointed out to me four principles of neoliberalism, which appear to be used in explaining the restructuring of urban public places:

1 The local state facilitates financial interests of the private sector.

2 Public places are deployed in competitive intercity relations.

3 Public places are meant for leisurely shopping and consumptive identity display.

4 Public places are privatized places that exclude non-white and non-middle-class groups and activities.

Consequently the chapter's central question is this:

(1a)
Do neoliberal principles account for changes in the production of Smaragd Square?

Now I will briefly recall my findings in chapter 3, then integrate them in the wider picture in the following sections.

The immediate and simple answer is: no, the neoliberal principles do not account for these changes. I find that there is essentially no clear break between the reconstruction of Smaragd Square and the long Dutch tradition of public – private cooperation in urban planning. This kind of cooperation aimed at achieving socially balanced neighbourhoods, tried to plan and control retail instead of leaving it to the market, and, at a later date, consulted the relevant actors involved. All these factors indicate that the persistence of a traditional Dutch system should offer a better explanation, vis-à-vis the neoliberal principles, for the reconstruction this square. So, I suggest that the research community should reconsider what could be called 'the Dutch system perspective' rather than adopting a neoliberal perspective in such cases. By way of an enlarged comment on this conclusion, I will now briefly summarize the explanatory value of the four neoliberal principles that I extracted from the relevant literature.

The first principle says that the local state facilitates the financial interests of the private sector. At first sight this principle may seem to be pertinent here, were it not for the fact that, in the Dutch planning context, such 'facilitation' is nothing new at all. There is no need to invoke neoliberal planning in order to explain the local state's involvement in the transformation of Smaragd Square. In the Netherlands the state has a long history of cooperating with the private sector in various ways – especially in the domain of housing and infrastructure, where it played a directing role in the past: decisions used to be made by the national or local government (Brandsen 2004 [1999]). This is the Dutch system, which came into being during Reconstruction (roughly, during the period 1945–65), in other words before the 1970s and 1980s, when neoliberalism became prominent in its current form.

The second principle states that public places are deployed in competitive intercity relations. In general urban places are strategically developed to attract investments, upscale residents, visitors, tourists, and status, and climb the various urban hierarchies (Taylor 2004: 210–12; Sassen 2006: 68–71; Zukin 1991; 2010: 231; Brenner and Theodore 2002). This idea is not very fruitful either when it comes to understanding what drove the reconstruction of Smaragd Square. 'Natural' competition among urban

districts – that is, intracity competition – was carefully monitored and directed; complementary and intracity relations were promoted at the same time. This context cushioned any competition over middle- and high-income groups. Overall, the redevelopment did not aim to accommodate the wealthy; it was more of an effort to counterbalance a trend of decay. This notion relates to traditional ideas of equal access to public goods prevailing in Dutch planning.

The third principle, which tells us that public places are first and foremost meant for leisurely shopping and consumptive identity display, is not able to provide a sufficient explanation for the reconstruction of Smaragd Square any more than the previous two. I tried to show that the square generates social benefits for the local community, apart from seeming to fit the experience of the modern consumer. In this case too, the Dutch planning tradition appears to have greater explanatory power for accounting for these joint aspects of the reconstruction, which relate to practices that date back to the influential concept of the 'neighbourhood unit'. The Dutch system fosters communal values such as safety and livability over individual values that stem from neoliberalism.

The fourth and last principle states that public places are privatized places that exclude non-white and non-middle-class groups and activities. Again, this principle does not fully account for the reconstruction of the square. I reviewed two strategies that represent this principle. The first one is Zukin's 'domestication by cappuccino' (see Zukin 1995; also in Atkinson 2003: 1831, who quotes and uses Zukin). Central to this strategy is the fact that processes of exclusion and selection come about through certain codes (in design, maintenance, and surveillance) that communicate the appropriate behaviour, for example consumption. My analysis concluded that this strategy was used to some extent; but the second and more radical strategy could not be supported. By a more radical strategy I mean to refer to Smith's idea of 'revanchism', according to which particular social groups are defined as a threat and explicitly targeted for expulsion from public places (see Smith 1996, also in Atkinson 2003). Revanchist strategies are less subtle and less indirect forms of exclusion and selection than domestication ones and are targeted at certain social, economic, and cultural categories, such as minorities, and the working class. Revanchism presupposes that certain urban places have been occupied by non-middle-class groups and are now the object of a 'reconquest' campaign carried out by, or on behalf of, the middle classes. But my analysis indicates that the high-income families that are to be attracted to the Smaragd Square are not necessarily coextensive with the white middle classes as conceived of in revanchist strategies, to which they are so central; and undesirable users, as envisaged by planners of the reconstruction, are not identical with Smith's 'minorities, the working class, women, environmental legislation, gays and lesbians [and] immigrants' (1996: 44–5). In other words, I cannot defend the view that revanchism has been a driving force in this reconstruction.

With regard to the 'domestication by cappuccino' strategy, I suggested that the spatial interventions designed to replace some of the less desirable 'functions' with more desirable ones can indeed be characterized as an expression of this strategy. Besides, privatization – in the proper, formal sense – did not occur.

In short, in this case study, Dutch urban planning shows a remarkable continuity since the 1950s. Therefore any application of neoliberal perspectives in this context should be handled with extreme care.

6.2.2 The meaning of ethnicity in the use and experience of Bospolder Square

Chapter 4 (my second empirical chapter) presents my study of Bospolder Square. Here I was attracted to studying how the use of public space is socially embedded. More specifically, I was interested in whether ethnic diversity and the phenomenon of ethnicity in general inform the use and experience in this square; and, if so, how. My choice to focus on ethnic diversity and ethnicity in this case study was determined by the fact that Bospolder Square and its surroundings can be viewed as one of the urban grounds in the Netherlands where the 'majority-minority' constellation develops at a local level. The concept of 'majority-minority' (for which see Crul et al. 2013) captures a phenomenon where all urban ethnic groups (hence the majority of the population) consist of minority groups and what used to be the indigenous majority is now a minority group. At first sight, it looks as if this type of diversity is commonplace in the square – not experienced and lived as something exceptional (Wessendorf 2014). Yet a closer inspection reveals that both square regulars (people who use it every day) and neighbourhood residents have interesting observations to make, which allow us to question the commonplace character of ethnicity and ethnic diversity. How, then, are these two factors meaningful, if at all, and how are they reflected in the use and experience of Bospolder Square? A preliminary answer emerges by confronting two divergent lines of argument.

On the one hand, it has been claimed that cultural identities and cultural differences are frequently experienced in everyday life (see Berking 2003: 256); thus Blokland (2009a, 2009b) argues that ethnicity – understood as ethnic identity – allows one to 'read' and assess the other. On the other hand, it is believed that in the contemporary world ethnic – national groups and categories do not necessarily play a substantial role in people's understandings and descriptions of the cities they inhabit – at least not any longer (see Wimmer 2004: 27). In this super-diverse era, ethnic difference is intermingled with a multiplicity of other differences, such as socioeconomic and legal (Vertovec 2007), and often these variegated experiences of diversity in everyday life are not regarded as something peculiar.

Hence I identified a strong need to understand the everyday 'phenomena emerging from diversification' (Wessendorf 2014: 19) and the role of ethnic diversity as part of this complex. Urban neighbourhoods such as Bospolder, which are front runners in the emerging majority-minority constellations, provide an avenue for analysing how '"ethnicity" is re-created' (Blokland 2003: 4) in everyday circumstances related to the use of everyday public spaces. Chapter 4 set out to explore this matter. Its aim is to answer the question:

(1b)
What are the role and importance of ethnicity and ethnic diversity in the everyday use and experience of Bospolder Square?

The main answer I found is that the users of this square refer to ethnicity in conjunction with notions of, or intuitions about, language and linguistic capability, which they resort to in order to make sense of changing neighbourhood demographics. Bospolder Square appears to serve as a 'vehicle of memory' (Riley and Harvey 2007). More specifically, I suggest that places of this kind function as vehicles in the transmission and sharing of collective narratives of local ethnic change (see also Blokland 2009b on shared historical narratives).

But, beyond this function, it appears to me that, in this majority-minority neighbourhood, ethnicity works in everyday life by helping people to make sense of one another's practices and experiences (here I am substantiating among others Berking 2003 and Blokland 2009a, 2009b). The view that differences between ethnic groups are nowadays 'commonplace' (Wessendorf 2014) and therefore do not play a substantive role in understanding the world (Wimmer 2004) is not supported by this study. In what follows I summarize my finds in this area around seven major points.

First, I found that ethnicity was used for describing people, for interpreting negative experiences, and for 'situating' the meaningful presence or absence of others in one's space – in this case, the square. We already know that ethnic categories appear to be especially relevant in the interpretation of negative experiences (see Müller 2011; Lancee and Dronkers 2008; Blokland 2003), which are often formulated in terms of status, order, and cleanliness. The mechanism at work in such interpretations creates an established–outsiders balance – that is, very basically, a situation in which certain groups perceive themselves as being established and perceive other groups and their members as being outsiders (Elias and Scotson 1965; Elias 1976). This kind of balance operates among ethnic minorities so that the more established ethnic groups consider the arrival of new migrants as a factor that degrades or demeans their neighbourhood. Interestingly, in my research, established–outsiders relations proved to have a dynamic character: both native Dutch and people with an immigration background conceive of themselves, by turns, now as 'established', now as 'outsiders', depending on their reference group, and hold various ideas about the identity of 'outsiders' and 'established' in all these scenarios.

Second, I suggest that minimal three factors function as proxy for the social position of people within an established–outsiders configuration and that ethnicity is one of them. The other two factors I found are language and linguistic capability. This result is in line with one of the conclusions of Rath (1991), namely that social position is not defined by one's characteristics taken by themselves – say, ethnicity or race – but by the meaning attached to them – in this particular case, the meaning attached to ethnicity, language, and linguistic capability. Differences in status and power between established and outsiders are generated by social age (seniority) and cohesion. Going back a long time – that is, having lived for many years in a certain locality and community – is a strong ingredient here; and so is the fact that families have known one another for generations.

Third, on the basis of this analysis, I find that ethnicity, along with the use of public space and perceptions associated with it, is very much entangled in the narratives of local ethnic change shared among the regular users of a given public place. I agree with Elias (1976) that what seems at first sight to be 'ethnicity' in reality emanates from 'propriety rights' or other forms of 'territorializing' the public space. However, chapter 4 has also suggested that, to the users of Bospolder Square and to other people like them, ethnicity is meaningful as a surrogate or symbol for power differences in established–outsiders configurations and helps them to understand such differences. 'Ethnicity' has real consequences. As I already noted, the established–outsiders balance is dynamic and does not conform to some cultural model shared by all groups, as the ethnic hierarchies theory would suggest. Rather it offers explanations as a *contextualized* cultural model that could be shared *within* groups, but not *across* them.

My fourth point is a feature that I already presented; but it needs to be singled out on account of its novelty and importance. In established–outsiders relations, position is relative. Each group (and group member) shifts permanently between being established and being an outsider, especially according to whether one speaks – or chooses to speak – the 'public' or the 'private' language.

Fifth, the ethnic categorizations that operate at the level of 'established' and 'outsiders' are intertwined with both how the use of public places is perceived and how the other is categorized in them. Such categorizations are made according to outward appearance and geographical location. The absence of, in this case, ethnic Dutch is meaningful and symbolic: these are what I've called 'relevant absentees'. These absentees are either actually absent (they are not present) or perceived to be absent (they are present, but not observed or perceived). The findings suggest that, contrary to Lofland's (1973) view that the meaning of external features is fading away or losing edge, classification based on outward appearance is still important, although without the diminished relevance of location itself.

Sixth, demographic change is taking place in the neighbourhood, the city, and the nation at large. What if 'the majority' is no longer perceived to be one and the same in all these various contexts? Who gets then to consider oneself established? Who gets to set the 'norms'? The ethnic Dutch—often former users and non-users of Bospolder Square – who felt that they were pushed into an 'outsider' position were very much aware of losing (or having lost) the power to set the rules for 'normality'. One may suggest that this awareness is caused by the experience of belonging to a majority group at national level while being one of the 'minority' groups in the neighbourhood.

My last point is a question that remains open – namely whether the importance of ethnicity and ethnic labels will decline. Given the trivial truth that children are tomorrow's adults and a mirror of the future, yes, this may be the case. The children of Bospolder Square are, unlike their parents, largely unaware of the construct of ethnicity.

6.2.3
Minority groups and the symbolic claim on Surinam Square

In chapter 5 (my third empirical chapter), I studied Surinam Square in Amsterdam using the postulate that *dominant 'voices' and discourses* (1) inform the allocation of resources in the construction and regulation of public space and (2) are themselves challenged by non-dominant groups. Every 30 June, Surinam Square houses a commemoration of the history of slavery as seen through the eyes of the Afro-Surinamese Amsterdammers. Interestingly, this commemoration takes place in Amsterdam – the first majority-minority city of the Netherlands (see Crul et al. 2013), and one that offers a place to live to a large group of (postcolonial) migrants, many of them Afro-Surinamese. My research on this square was driven by the question whether this minority group can, if only temporarily, appropriate or claim urban public space for its own very special brand of symbolic use. Briefly put, the research question was:

(1c)
How do minority groups symbolically claim Surinam Square?

The answer to this question is that various ways are at hand for a minority group to make a symbolic claim on the public space of a city. I'm going to summarize them here under five points derived from the study in chapter 5.

To begin with, in order for such a group to be able to claim a public space, it is vital for it to connect with hegemonic power – and to do so even while using a challenging discourse. In my case study, this connection is created through the local political integration of Surinamese citizens. The study shows that the square is a strategically important site when it comes to the specific aspirations and desires of this minority group – and I say this bearing in mind Holston and Appadurai's (1996) comments on cities as 'strategic arenas' for the development of citizenship. It is (in my view) no coincidence that Surinam Square has this strategic quality, given two features of Amsterdam. First, Amsterdam is a majority-minority city. Second, it is historically open to new social movements – which are, as I would like to add, present and visible in public places; thus Vermeulen and Van Heelsum (2009) talk about Amsterdam's 'political opportunity structure'. The claim to public space can come about through an appropriation of the language and discourse of Amsterdam-style citizenship.

But, quite apart from adopting the vocabulary of this local urban citizenship, the minority group I studied was able to refashion and redefine the citizenship discourse and certain techniques of remembering. That kind of redefinition emphasized the group's own aspirations and its relations with other groups in the city. This is illustrated by the Surinamese community's appeal to history, when it became apparent to its members that social ties in the past entitled them to a certain status in the present. I also showed that the process of appropriation and redefinition observed can be understood as a reversal of the initial stages in a classic co-optation process, as described by Coy and Hedeen (2005: 413–14); and for this reason I called it 'counter-cooptation'. A quick reminder: in the classic version of this process, some 'challenging movement' addresses a social problem and demands change. By contrast, the type of process envisaged

here seems to go the other way round: the committee, understood as the 'challenging movement', itself starts by adopting a certain technique of co-optation. And the technique in question is the appropriation and redefinition of language and methods that originate from the desks of the local government.

The third point I wish to highlight here concerns how such claims to public space intersect with the phenomenon described by Purvis and Hunt (1999) as 'the citizenship paradox'. In a nutshell, this concept points to a structural tension between the universal claim and the particular entitlements of citizenship. The paradox is particularly visible when an overarching identity (say, Amsterdammer) clashes with the desires and characteristics specific to different social groups. According to Purvis and Hunt, this paradox is permanent: it is in the very nature of a democratic society, so it can never be eradicated or solved; nor would it be desirable to solve it, since the continuous struggle between the two sides of citizenship involved in it is essential to democracy and to the proper functioning of society. In line with this view, Purvis and Hunt also consider the paradox to be not necessarily problematic. More recently, however, it has been suggested that such a concept of urban citizenship is problematic: it would appear to fragment social movements rather than unify them. Hence the question has been raised whether this 'paradoxical' type of urban citizenship is able to sustain the development of mutual support among various groups (see Blokland et al. 2015). In view of my findings, I agree with Blokland et al., as I noticed that claims are indeed made on the strength of particular historical relations of a group with Amsterdam. However, I also accentuate that urban citizenship offers an opportunity for the unification of various interests: in this context, the group that emphasizes its members' particular historical relations at the same time actively chooses to connect with the discourse of Amsterdam urban citizenship.

Fourth, I suggest that ordinary public places such as the one studied in chapter 5 foster innovation in the area of citizenship, hereby confirming Holston's (2009) view that, in a city, ordinary places can function as sites of creativity and renewal of citizenship practices and discourses. However, Holston has situated this citizenship work in 'sites of metropolitan degradation' (ibid., 249) characterized by poverty, inequality, and struggle for shelter and daily resources. Limited in such way, this idea is not very helpful in explaining how innovation in citizenship comes about in the Global North, where the incidence of 'metropolitan degradation' of the kind described by Holston is relatively low. Hence I suggested that in this context it may be more useful to speak of sites of 'metropolitan mediocrity', that is, ordinary sites where local governments, users and other actors meet on a daily basis. As I see it, sites of metropolitan mediocrity function as spaces of political expression and civic participation just as much as the more well-known, larger urban public places – say, Dam Square or Museum Square in Amsterdam, and, also discussed in chapter 5, Taksim Square in Istanbul (see Baykan and Hatuka 2010 for a study of how this square plays a role in power dynamics and political culture in Turkey).

Fifth, I concluded that non-hegemonic monuments such as the one studied in chapter 5 have an exclusionary effect on non-participants in the commemorations that take place in this case. This was already known

about the effect of hegemonic monuments on minority groups (Parkinson 2009; Strakosch 2010; Eade and Garbin 2006; Gale 2005); chapter 5 has demonstrated how non-hegemonic monuments can have the same sort of effect on non-participants, who, in this particular context, belong to various urban minority groups. This is striking, as one of the goals of the commoration in Surinam Square is inclusiveness. We may be dealing here, at least in part, with a failure in symbolic communication. This may also be a case in which the reproduced social identities are in essence dynamic identities, whereas they do not appear so to the audience. The everyday users tend to focus on the ethnic other, that is, on the Surinamese character of the event, and sometimes question whether the Surinamese or the event that celebrates them should have such a special status. Elements such as a shared Amsterdam identity and an active urban citizenship seem to elude the audience in a case of this sort: the groups present are reduced to one facet of their identity – a facet through which people, their actions, and their spaces become, as Ehrkamp (2008) calls it, 'racialized'. But I must note immediately that 'racialization', with its focus on 'race', is not a concept that can be self-evidently used in the Netherlands – or in Germany (as in Ehrkamp 2008), for that matter. Because of the historical burden of the concept of 'race', it is not at the forefront of academic and societal debate. I agree with Rath (1991: 270), who proposes 'minorization' as a descriptor of what happens in such cases: the exclusion or selection of people on the basis of their 'socio-cultural non-conformity'.

One of the questions raised in chapter 5 was whether a symbolic use of public places that is dedicated to celebrating 'links with time, place, and community' (Quinn 2003: 333, who refers to works by Manning and Boissevain) – can actually relate to an experience of what these authors term 'dislocation'. As this notion leaves some room for interpretation, I propose, on the basis of my study, to interpret it as 'social dislocation', which is experienced when one's social status, in terms of social seniority and age (Elias and Scotson 1965), is not valued accordingly. Such an experience requires a spatial compensation.

For a minority group to claim a public space for symbolic purposes, it is important that political emancipation and integration have taken place to a certain extent. However, a symbolic claim is often made for the purpose of celebrating a collective history, or the identity of a minority group; but in an age of citizenship such as ours – an age best described as focused on individual empowerment and participation – public resources are not often directed towards this kind of collective celebration of minority groups. The study of Surinam Square has shown that, if this collective celebration is placed within the urban citizenship discourse, and strategically so, the minority group is able to steer these public funds towards its own cause.

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These three empirical chapters unveil how ordinary public places are used, produced, and regulated in contexts of great variety – such as ethnic diversification, assumed neoliberalization, and the development and appropriation of urban citizenship. This approach facilitates an understanding of how cultural ambitions, local, collective narratives, and often contested discourses affect what is often the contestation

and otherwise the use, production, and regulation of ordinary public space. These ambitions, narratives, and discourses are nested in societal developments that often escape the understanding of the users, producers, and regulators of public space, yet are co-shaped by them as well.

6.3 Discussion

I will now turn to discussing how the perception of publicness of public space is influenced by the socially embedded practices of using, producing, regulating, and contesting public space. This discussion will provide an answer to my second research question, which can now be addressed:

(2)
How do processes of everyday use, production, and regulation of Bospolder Square, Suriname Square, and Smaragd Square affect the perception of their 'public' character?

The purpose of this question was not to find out *whether* the dimensions of public and private (and everything in between them) are shifting, but *how* these shifts happen. My initial proposition was that *publicness is affected by small and ordinary-looking mechanisms*, and that public space is always under construction, in one way or another.

I will embark on this discussion with the observation that the normative concept of public space is valuable as an ideal but does not allow me to understand how public space – and publicness – come about in the real world. I found that, in empirical reality, publicness is continuously *in the making*, along lines of inclusion and exclusion of various groups. It comes about as lines are drawn between people who are, or should be, included or present in a given space and people who are, or should be, excluded or absent from it. It is my view that these distinctions and boundaries between who is 'in' and who is 'out' are persistently created.

When I moved into the subject of boundaries and boundary making, I made use of a concept central to the 'classical conceptual tool-kit of social scientists' (Lamont and Molnár 2002: 167). In retrospect, I have instanced in this book several studies, some of them real classics, that engage with the making and remaking of boundaries. Here are some of them: the study of Elias and Scotson (1965) and Elias (1976), whose attempt to understand the social relations and power differences among inhabitants of Winston Parva crystallized into a theory of established–outsider relations; Tajfel's (1982) study of social behaviour and relations among groups; Blokland's (2003) study of the relationships between native Dutch citizens and their migrant neighbours; Lofland's (1973) work on the understanding and classification of strangers in public space; and Britton's (2008) examination of how racial and ethnic categories translate into social and spatial segregation. One way or another, all these authors are concerned with the consequences that boundaries have for society in terms of unequal power relations, unequal allocation of resources, and unequal access to them. I mention these studies here again as a stepping

stone towards my own concluding analysis, because they illustrate how the boundary-making process – the very same process that I observed – affects the access to and the allocation of public space. I view the use, production, and regulation of public space as a resource – and as a manifestation of social difference. I adopt Lamont and Molnár's (2002) explanations as to how social boundaries materialize in unequal access to and distribution of resources.

In the remainder of this concluding chapter I will tackle three themes. First I will briefly summarize my views on this dynamic production of inclusion and exclusion by reviewing the two *types of groups* that turned out to be created in all my three case studies: the established–outsider figuration and the imaginable community. Second, I will discuss three ways in which this dynamic production *affects the making of public space*: via spatial distribution (which reflects group formation); via a temporal fixation of this spatial distribution; and via an interruption of the spatial distribution that reflects the present and undesirable local groups. And third, on the basis of this concluding review, the chapter will end by attem pting to offer answers to the following three questions. How much is physical space an expression – or even a re-creation – of societal relations? Can physical space determine how it is used and who is using it? And under what conditions can users claim public space and use it the way they want?

6.3.1 Types of groups

With regard to the type of groups, the analysis yields, one way or another, *established–outsider figurations* or patterns in the social realities in the squares observed in this book. These patterns are created on the basis of social 'oldness' (Elias and Scotson 1965) or social age and seniority (among other factors). This means that a socially established group – such as a family with a long history in a certain location – is entitled to have certain expectations about its own rights and duties – and about the rights and duties of members of other, less established groups. The case study of Bospolder Square in Rotterdam has shown that such an established–outsider balance appears within ethnic minority groups. For example, the indigenous group can itself be an ethnic minority at the neighbourhood level, although it is a majority at the level of the nation. The balance in such a neighbourhood is a dynamic one: the more established migrants consider the newer migrants to be outsiders, while at the same time these more established migrants are themselves considered outsiders by the indigenous population – in this case the Dutch. In return, the indigenous Dutch in and around Bospolder Square conceive of themselves both as established and outsiders. Different narratives and understandings of the boundaries between established people and outsiders come to the fore in relation to one's social position, too – something that Blokland (2009a) and Wright (1985) discuss in their work. In the context of increasing ethnic diversification of the city, it appears that ethnicity is used as a proxy for social oldness. In other words, one's social position – which, according to Elias and Scotson (1965) and Elias (1976) is partly defined by this factor of social oldness – depends on the meaning attached to 'ethnicity'. In this particular case, the category of ethnicity communicates information about one's social oldness in the neighbourhood. On top of that, ethnicity

is associated with the appraisal and ranking of the neighbourhood in terms of order, cleanliness, and degradation.

In the case study carried out in Surinam Square, social oldness and socio-historical relations are also used to generate an established–outsider figuration, of a contextualized nature. A distinction is created between the Afro-Surinamese and other ethnic groups in the city, and this distinction is used to legitimize the former's request for extra financial resources. In short, these established–outsider figurations are contextualized social constructs that are not necessarily shared by all parties; they are relative, not absolute. Various users and people in general hold various ideas about the identity of established and outsider groups, and these ideas are dynamic, which means that they are in constant change.

Apart from the established–outsider pattern, I observed another type of group formation in two of the squares, namely Smaragd Square and Surinam Square: the *imaginable community*. By this I mean, along with Kezer (2009), a community that originates in the desks of policymakers and principals and that ought both to guide citizens towards an identification with the nation and to instruct them in practices of 'nation-making'. The intended parallel is clear with Anderson's (2016 [1983]) 'imagined community', which he conceptualized to explain the phenomenon of nationalism. Key to Anderson's imagined community is that it is imagined and re-created by the people who are part of this community or see themselves as belonging to it. An imaginable community is not (or at any rate not yet) imagined by its very own people; it is a prospective community, imagined from the outside. The imaginable community is a social utopia or perfect state conceived of by urban professionals (see e.g. Jacobs 1992 [1961])

In Surinam Square I observed the imaginably community in the from of a shared urban identity as it was propagated by the municipality and by the organizers of the commemoration. This is not to say that Amsterdammers do not envision themselves as being part of the Amsterdam urban community – just as in Anderson's imagined community. But the point I argue here is that, in Amsterdam, the imaginable urban community is a project conceived and designed by policymakers and administrators who have a few concerns at heart. One of these concerns is to educate Amsterdammers about their rights and responsibilities: the idea is to make them active citizens, ready to become responsible members of their community (see also Schinkel and Van Houdt (2010a, 2010b). Two other major concerns of the planners are to make citizens share in an Amsterdam identity and to bring them to accept diversity. Urban citizenship seems to be a crucial instrument for socialization into an imaginable urban community.

In Smaragd Square, Utrecht, I observed another type of imaginable urban community. I also noticed that, against the current view that professionals may not be much aware of their utopia (see Hajer and Reijndorp 2001; Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003; Reinders 2006; Lofland 1998), I find that they are well aware of their imaginable community, as I will show now. In Utrecht, again, this community was a desk project conceived of by urban professionals such as policymakers; but in generating it they also had private partners, such as the building party and their architect himself. The imaginable community in the neighbourhood of Smaragd Square is very

diverse in terms of residents' income, but middle- and high-income groups feature more prominently now than they did before the reconstruction. Professionals predict that this imaginable community will positively affect communal values such as liveability and safety in the neighbourhood.

Hence, in this context, attracting residents from the upper end of the scale is a means towards an end and not itself a goal. It is expected that people will actively choose to belong in this local community of the Utrecht neighbourhood – in the sense defined by Savage et al.'s (2005: 29) notion of elective belonging, whereby people attach their life to a location of their own choice. The imaginable inhabitants of the future are approached as 'active choice makers' (Clarke 2004: 39) or as 'mobile housing-consumer[s]' (Bijlsma et al. 2010: 98) – assuming that one can leave a particular place, or one's birth ground, to become part of a new community somewhere else. Mobility and individualisation make this increasingly easier (see Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001; Hogenstijn et al. 2008).

The imaginable community and the established–outsider configuration do not necessarily correspond, as the analysis of Surinam Square indicates. The imaginable community shaped by Amsterdam citizenship aims to be universal and inclusive with regard to social groups in Amsterdam, whereas the analysis has also shown that this universality is on bad terms with the particular desires of various urban groups, for example the Afro-Surinamese. Even though the remembrance is supposed to be an inclusive event and all Amsterdammers are in principle invited, it is definitely not experienced this way; on the contrary, it appears to have an exclusionary effect on other regular users in the square, in the shape of an established–outsider configuration. Its intended inclusiveness failed in actuality.

6.3.2 Groups and the making of public space

The second question that lies before me now is *whether these group formations affect the making of public place* – and, if they do, then how. All my case studies indicate that the making of place is affected by this dynamic, but in divergent ways.

In Bospolder Square, I suggest that *the spatial distribution* of users throughout the square *mirrors the established–outsider relations*: for instance, both the absence or (intermittent) presence of the Dutch and the children's withdrawal or willingness to play in the square reflect a spatial distribution, which is not fixed – just as the established–outsider pattern is not fixed either. Besides, the spatial distribution is interrupted by the authority figure who enables bullied children to stay and play.

The case of Surinam Square further shows how it is actually attempted to *temporarily fix* a socio-spatial position. On the one hand, this socio-spatial position is supposed to mirror an imaginable community in which all are Amsterdammers; on the other hand, it appears to reflect, through the eyes of regulars, the established–outsider pattern that is present in that context. Moreover, the temporal fixation of the socio-spatial position – that is, of the group – expresses in fact an experienced social dislocation, which it tries to give compensation for. The organizers of the commemoration interrupt the normal use of the square for a whole day, calling attention to a wrong committed in the past and, by the same move,

to the universal identity of Amsterdammer, which they invite everyone to share.

As for Smaragd Square, this case study indicates that urban professionals direct their financial and managerial resources towards *the interruption of any spatial distribution that, in their view, may encourage the presence of undesirable local groups and behaviour*. Smaragd Square shows us how the planners of an imaginable community support the implementation of certain functions such as parking, which ought to attract a desirable, imaginable community, and deter other functions, such as loitering, which supposedly attract undesirable groups.

6.4
Three conclusions

Based as it is on the material presented in this book and reviewed in this chapter 6, my first conclusion pertains to the extent to which physical space is an expression, or even a re-creation, of societal relations. This is a question raised made by many authors, for example Low et al. (2005) and Massey (1994). Some, such as Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) and Smith (2002), have argued that space reproduces capitalistic relations. In their view, built public space is the outcome of a conflict in which the dominant group prevails over minority groups and less dominant groups. Given the analysis of Smaragd Square presented in this book, I suggest that the professionals are indeed building for a certain imaginable community that contains the dominant groups in society – dominant, that is, in terms of these groups' income and spending power. The realization of certain functions in Smaragd Square at the expense of others is closely bound up with the desired absence or elimination of certain undesirable groups. But I also argue that the professionals and the built landscape itself do not necessarily serve current societal relations or reproduce them. The professionals' aspiration is, primarily, to realize certain communal values, such as liveability and safety, and this supports my view. Goals related to these values and the means to achieve them should not be confounded with goals that just relate to increasing the presence of higher-income groups and decreasing the presence of other groups. Van Eijk (2010) makes a similar argument with regard to the means and goals of exclusionary policies in Rotterdam.

Moreover, if we focus on the use of the square, putting aside for a moment the matter of its production, the analysis at Bospolder Square and Surinam Square reveals that an authority figure employed by these same urban professionals, if not the users of public space themselves, are able to interrupt the dominant social relations – either real and present relations, as in Bospolder Square, or imaginable ones, as in Surinam Square. And, in both places, such interruptions are not in favour of strengthening the dominant, often capitalistic relations but intend to make room or create space for minority or less dominant groups.

One question that I am left with here is, then, whether the building, use, and management of public space enables local residents to envision or picture the imaginable community as projected by the urban professionals. This matter was raised and investigated by Kezer (2009), who argued that

actions in the real world – in the form of large-scale public works, such as nationwide railroads and national ceremonies – helped Turkish citizens to envision the Turkish Republic in the early years of its existence; and Weber's (1976) study into the construction of the French state can be considered a precursor along this line of research. The one negative indication in my study that contributes to this issue comes from the material gathered in Surinam Square. The event analysed there focused on the value of being inclusive for the imaginable community of the Amsterdammers. However, the commemoration was perceived as having an exclusive character: the event was 'minorized', to use Rath's (1991) terminology. The phenomenon of monuments causing exclusionary experiences for minority groups has been known for a while and is already discussed (see Parkinson 2009; Strakosch 2010; Eade and Garbin 2006; Gale 2005). As mentioned before, I observed it here too, but working in an unexpected direction: a monument and an accompanying event, themselves related to a minority group, can cause a feeling of exclusion among other urban groups, minority or not. What do we learn from this? We learn that it is rather questionable whether such events – and, I suggest, also the broader production and management of public spaces in urban and ethnically diverse contexts – can actually help individuals or small groups to envision, or construe in their minds' eye, the imaginable community as intended in the abstract by planners. It is not only who takes part in the imaginable community that matters: it also matters how this partaking is practiced and whether the various urban groups feel that they can indeed be a part of it, that they are really welcome in it.

Following that conclusion, is my second conclusion relating to the idea that space itself determines how and by whom it is used. I noticed that the idea that space strongly steers behaviour and use is quite present among the urban professionals I studied. Thus they all give instructions related to correct types of use, such as parking, and make the point that they will attract certain groups and discourage others through the design and implementation of certain functions, such as parking and shopping, at the expense of others, such as seating and loitering.

It is striking that this idea is still prevalent among planners: this idea has been heavily criticized, among others by Reinders (2013) and Gans (2002). Reinders points out for instance that users exhibit many strategies and tactics of appropriation of the built and produced physical space; and I agree with that observation. Of course, my finding that people are able to use public space in many ways puts into perspective the relative importance of urban design. The use of Surinam Square on 30 June transformed a space of transit into a space of remembrance. Following this testimonial, I argue that local residents and users of public spaces will do exactly that to the professional designs: they will temporally claim a space and use it in their own way.

My third conclusion is about the ability to claim and use public space. An important condition for local residents to be able to organize themselves for their symbolic purposes in public places in the neighbourhood is that their goals and uses encounter openness – the kind of attitude that Amsterdam has exhibited in the specific case I studied in Surinam Square. I cannot say whether users and local residents encounter this kind of openness in all cities; this is a topic that deserves future research.

But what I could do has been to describe the context in which this openness for the diverse makings of current public places is to be situated nowadays. The cities in my research are facing major societal changes: they are in the process of becoming majority-minority cities; they propose an inclusive urban citizenship in the era of a culturalist model of national citizenship (see Schinkel and Van Houdt 2010a); and, confronted with the prospect of austerity, they employ their public works, especially their public spaces, in intercity competitive relations.

From here it is a small step to concluding that public space, in the classic terms of accessibility to it, control of its access, and its role in democratic processes and citizenship, is thus under pressure. As I have discussed, Los Angeles and New York offer abundantly clear examples of the demise of public spaces (see e.g. Németh 2009; Amin and Graham 1997; Davis 2006 [1990]; Soja 2006 [2000]; Lofland 1998; and Low and Smith 2006). Are the public places discussed in this book under similar pressure? Do they serve as examples of public space in demise?

My answer is negative: this book has documented the variegated ways in which three Dutch public places have been 'made' or generated, in all the contexts relevant to this discussion. These are public squares situated in so-called disadvantaged areas and are not among the best known locations of their kind in their respective cities, but they are representative in their 'normalcy' or ordinariness; in other words, there are numerous public squares like these.

Can they serve as examples of public places in demise, under the pressure of various societal changes? I doubt that they should, because I have shown how these public places continuously come about along dynamic lines of inclusion and exclusion, reflecting on the one hand the diversity of the population and the relative social position of urban groups therein and, on the other hand, the social utopian element that springs from urban professionals in the form of an imaginable community. These public spaces are continuously made by users, local residents, and urban professionals; they are numerous, they are diverse, and they are always fluid or 'under construction' – especially in terms of who is included and who is not. Public space, as I see it, is a space alternatively claimed by groups with porous boundaries that attempt to exclude – or include – one another continuously. By no means are these squares public places in demise: their use, production, regulation, and contestation are dynamic and demonstrate flexibility or resilience in times of huge social change.

Epilogue

This study would not have been possible without the contribution of many urban specialists and professionals who work in or with public space – architects, planners, policymakers, social workers, the children's 'masters' and 'misses', builders, investors in shopping centres – and, in return, aims to offer these specialists some general reflections. These are reflections that will elicit different reactions in various contexts, especially in various public places. Here, in closing, I will review four such reflections, most of them accompanied by questions designed to help readers to analyse and process the topic under discussion.

*

A. The first point for reflection is that the term 'public' in 'public places' is often taken to have *a normative component* that does not help us to understand the social reality of these public places. Nor does the addition of a normative element necessarily help the planning and management of these places. In order to understand the normativity of the views that various urban specialists may entertain, it could be useful to discuss the following statement:

A public space is a space alternatively claimed by various groups that include and exclude one another continuously.

*

B. The second point for reflection is that *publicness comes in different shapes*. Publicness has a different look in every public place. How can you find out what it entails in a particular place? Answering this question demands reflecting on one's own ideas of publicness: what publicness involves – or rather whom it touches – and what it means to the users of a given public place and to residents in the neighbourhood. Given this need, I would recommend that urban specialists *engage in self-research in order to get to know their imaginable community* with respect to a particular public place – that is, what functions as their social utopia. The following questions may help towards this end:

1 What is the targeted use and who are the targeted users of this particular public space? [93] Why?

2 Who is present in my imaginable community? Why is my imaginable community composed of these groups or people?

3 What kind of functions and uses do I visualize?

4 What groups or people do these functions and uses serve?

5 What groups of people are absent from my imaginable community?

93 The observant reader will notice the repetition of some particular questions mentioned under the various topics I discuss in this Epilogue. I choose to do so, because the answer to these questions provides valuable insights into a variety of topics.

However, apart from the *imaginable community* of planners and specialists, the local residents and the users may have in mind a very different kind of group, namely one that embodies an established–outsider pattern of relationships. In consequence, the professional should try to find out *whether the imaginable community and the established–outsider pattern overlap* and, if they do, *how*. Here are some questions that professionals should ask public place users that may help along this line of research:

6 How long have you been coming here?

7 What is it that you do in this public place?

8 Now and again, do you talk to anyone when you are here?

9 Could you describe this place, say what it looks like? Could you describe the kinds of people who come to this place? Could you say who does not come to this place?

10 How is this place today by comparison to what it was when you first visited it?

11 Could you tell me something positive about this place? And something negative?

12 Do you feel at home in this street? Do you feel comfortable?

*

C. The third point for reflection is that *publicness is a delicate matter*. It comes and goes. It is a political question whether publicness and experiences specifically related to it should be protected, promoted, and worked upon or whether they should rather be left at the mercy of general social forces. In a public place, manifestations of unequal power relations and unequal access to resources are indirect; usually these kinds of imbalance are concealed under a focus on ethnicity and language. Should such inequalities be brought to light and levelled in public places? Or should they just be left to take their 'natural' course, as it were?

This book concluded that openness was an important condition for using and claiming public space in a certain way. What is the potential role of urban planners and architects, and of urban design in general, in promoting this openness? Those who wish to reflect on this question may find the following questions helpful:

13 What types of functions, uses and users are envisaged for this place?

14 What kinds of professionals, such as social workers and area-based civil servants, work in or with this place, and what does their imaginable community presuppose?

15 How do these professionals interact with those who use this place?

16 What events have been licensed in this place? Who has organized them? How do the organizers relate to the local residents?

17 Can local residents use this public place? How can their use of it be facilitated?

18 When a special event is organized, how can everyday users who are not attending the event but are present in the area be induced to join in?

In fact, on the occasion of special events (as captured in question 5), it is to be expected that some of the local residents and regular users will feel excluded from this place – notwithstanding the good intentions of organisers and of the professionals entrusted with the production and regulation of public space.

The following questions, if answered by users from this marginalized category, can help us to learn more about the experience of exclusion; what is more, the material gathered in this way can provide a beginning for unearthing experiences of unequal access to resources or unequal power relations. The questions I have in mind look like this:

19 Could you describe the people who come to this place? And could you say who does not come to this place?

20 Could you give a 'history' of your impressions of this place since you were first acquainted with it? Has it developed? How?

21 What does it mean to you to feel 'at home'? What kind of feeling does this place give you?

22 Were there instances in which you or other users did not feel at home in this place? Could you describe these instances? Who was involved on such occasions (think of others users and professionals), and how?

23 In case you have felt excluded or have observed someone having an exclusionary experience, have you ever contacted or considered contacting a social worker or another type of professional to ask for help? If you have, please describe what happened. If you did not contact, or consider to contact, such a professional, could you explain why not?

24 In general, what is your experience with professionals such as social workers in the field of urban space?

*

D. The last point for reflection is this. Neoliberal policies of austerity influenced the affordability of public places, and hence their production and management. Yet this is not necessarily *a reason to let go of more traditional, socio-democratic values and norms* embedded in typical forms of Dutch urban planning, such as the neighborhood unit. When it comes to planning the reconstruction of a public place, here is a set of questions that can help the professional to identify the leading values and norms:

25 What are the targeted forms of use in this public place? What is expected from its users? What types of functions or uses are envisaged for this place?

26 How do these new objectives, expectations, and functions differ from the old ones, with which the place was endowed when originally built?

27 Who was present in the original imaginable community? Who is present in the current imaginable community? And why?

28 What interventions would make this place effective in terms of its exchange value, that is, in terms of its financial value, as expressed in costs and revenues? What interventions would make this place effective in terms of its communal and individual use values? Do these values strengthen or weaken each other?

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Annexes

Annex 1
Topic list and questions for the interviews with professionals and for the street interviews conducted for this project

1
Topics for the interviews with professionals carried out in Smaragd Square; probing questions excluded

Note *This topics list was also applied in Binken et al. (2012) and Burgers, Zuijderwijk et al. (2012).*

1.1
Present: current design, layout, and objectives

- description of the functioning, use, and experiences of the square, as perceived by the professional
- objectives, intentions, and expectations related to use, users, functions, and experiences of the square and shopping mall, before and after reconstruction
- reasons for these objectives, intentions, and expectations
- means of realization of these objectives, intentions, and expectations, in the design and layout
- public and private places on the square
- location's potential and downsides
- role of regulation and management in relation to objectives, intentions, and expectations

1.2
The processing of past and recent designs for reconstruction

- the last design for reconstruction
- reasons for a new reconstruction design
- rejected alternative designs
- participants involved in designing and reconstruction
- conflicts and discussions throughout this process

1.3
Future plans and evaluation

- evaluation and lessons learned from the former design and construction
- future plans for the square

1.4
Completion

- relevant information that was not discussed during the interview
- references to three other persons who could be interviewed
- documentation or minutes regarding the process of reconstruction
- professional background of interviewee

2
Street interviews with the users (regulars) of the squares; probing questions excluded

Note *The format of street interviews was based on Low et al. (2005), Taplin et al. (2002), and Harris et al. (1997) and was also applied in Binken et al. (2012) and in Burgers, Zuijderwijk et al. (2012).*

2.1
Control questions (if the interview is not conducted on the research location)

- Are you familiar with the square?
  - yes
  - no → That's a shame. I am looking for people who frequent Bospolder/Surinam Square and are well acquainted with it. Thank you for your time.
- Have you ever been to the square?
  - yes
  - no → That's a shame. I am looking for people who spend time in Bospolder/Surinam Square and know it. Thank you for your time.

2.2
Questions

- How often do you visit the square?
  - (almost) every day or weekly
  - every other week or every third week
  - every month or so
  - (almost) never

- Do you come here during the week, at weekends, or both?
  - mainly during the week
  - mainly at weekends
  - both during the week and at weekends
- Do you come here mainly …
  - in the morning (6.00–12.00)
  - in the afternoon (12.00–18.00)
  - in the evening (18.00–24.00)
  - at night (24.00–6.00)?
- If you are on the square, what do you do?
- Now and again, do you talk to somebody on the square?
- Could you describe what the square looks like now? How does that compare with your impression when you first visited it?
- Could you tell me something positive about square? And something negative?
- Do you feel at home in the street? Do you feel comfortable?

2.3 **Background information**

- year of birth
- place of residence (town)
- domicile (street only, not full address)
- first year of living in this street
- plans for continued residence at the same address
- household composition at the time of first visit to the square
- household composition at the present
- number of children
- children's place(s) of residence (town(s))
- description of your children's visits to the square
- education/training and/or job status
- place of education/training (in or outside the city)
- education/training and/or job status at the time of first visit to the square
- highest degree attained
- country of birth
- parents' country of birth
- gender

2.4
Completion

- anything interviewee would like to add
- interest in further interviewing
- record of address for further contact

2.5
Two adjustments for the street interviews in Surinam Square

(I) *The interviews conducted on the square included the following questions:*

- Are you familiar with this statue? [pointing it out]
- Are you familiar with the events and celebrations that take place here?

(II) *The street interviews held on 30 June 2012 did not contain all eight questions in section 2.2 (only the first, fourth, sixth, and seventh), because the interview was focused on the commemoration during that day. Instead regulars were asked the following question:*

- Could you describe what is happening today at Surinam Square?

3
Topics list for users (regulars) of Bospolder Square (2011)

Note *This list covered the same topics as the street interview list, but allowed me more freedom to concentrate on new lines of discussion that emerged during the conversation. The recording of these interviews contained a description of the situation at the start of the interview as well.*

3.1
Start topics

- frequency of visits to the square
- present forms of use of the square
- comparison with other squares
- description of visitors and observed changes (if any)
- contact among users
- past forms of use of the square
- description of the square in the past
- description of visitors and observed changes (if any)

- opinions
- memories of one's first visit

3.2
Especially for adults

- the presence of children
- whether the children of interviewees make use of the square

3.3
Especially for children

- how frequently they play in the square
- what games they play
- with whom they play
- how they met one another
- what they think of the square

4
Topic list for interviews with professionals Surinam Square

Note *Both interviews were telephonically administered. These are the topic lists. New topics emerged and were discussed during both interviews.*

4.1
Topics for the interview with the chair of the Amsterdam Committee (18 March 2013)

- description of the monument and of the event
- account of the development of the monument
- description of those who attend the event and of changes observed in this public
- invitation to the event extended to local residents
- invitation of other guests
- public speeches
- structure of the programme
- selection of Surinam Square as venue
- the laying of wreaths by municipal districts

4.2
Topics for the interview with a former member of the city council and chair of District South-East (13 March 2013)

- the interviewee's public speeches
- description of the event
- description of the statue
- history of the interviewee's involvement in the development of the monument
- relationship between District South-East and District De Baarsjes
- the homage paid to the interviewee during the event
- the genesis of the commemorative event and statue
- the location of the statue
- the laying of wreaths by municipal districts
- the objective of the commemoration

Annex 2
References to sources of data

This annex contains the references to the sources of data in this book. These sources are interviews with professionals, street interviews, participatory observations and documents, mainly policy documents, but also newspaper articles and personal communication.

Chapter 1
Introduction

Street interviews

- Street interview 3_LZ,[94] 14–4–2010.

Participant observations (listed in chronological order, i.e. the order in which the participant observations in the squares took place)

- Participant observation, 30–6–2009.
- Participant observation, 6–6–2010.
- Participant observation, 27–6–2011.
- Participant observation, 7–7–2011.
- Participant observation, 12–7–2011.

Chapter 3
The value of neoliberal principles

Interviews with professionals (listed in chronological order)

- Interview 1_SB & LZ,[95] 3–2–2010, civil servant
- Interview 2_SB & LZ, 12–2–2010, civil servant.
- Interview 3_LZ & SB, 22–2–2010, civil servant.
- Interview 4_SB & LZ, 2–3–2010, civil servant.
- Interview 5, 10–5–2011, private sector.
- Interview 6, 22–5–2012, private sector.

94 As the street interviewing was a team effort in 2010, the capitals (e.g. LZ) refer to the interviewers.

95 In cases where the interviewing of professionals was a team effort in 2010, the capitals (e.g. LZ) refer to the interviewers.

Street interviews (listed in chronological order; each number identifies the exact street interview recorded by the same interviewer on a given day, e.g. 'Street interview 3_LZ' of 14 April is the third interview recorded by interviewer 'LZ' on 14 April)

- Street interview 3_LZ, 14–4–2010.
- Street interview 3_LZ, 21–5–2010.

Participant observations

- Participant observation, 6–5–2010.

Documents (listed in alphabetical order)

- Advisory Committee on Housing (5–4–2000). Voorlopig verslag: Woonadviescommissie 6 [Interim report: Advisory Committee on Housing 6].
- Alderman for Public Space, Land, Green, District-Targeted Works, and Personnel (23–11–2006). Inrichting Smaragdplein (brief) [Organization Smaragd Square (letter)].
- Anonymous (1962). Smaragdplein in Utrechtse wijk Tolsteeg nadert zijn voltooiing [Smaragd Square in the Utrecht district Tolsteeg is about to be completed]. *Utrechts Nieuwsblad*, 18 August, p. 4.
- Anonymous (2002). Smaragdplein winkelcentrum voor Utrecht-Zuid [Smaragd Square shopping centre for Utrecht-South]. *Utrechts Nieuwsblad*, 11 October, no pages.
- BAM Real Estate Development (27–6–1997). Winkelcentrum Smaragdplein (brief) [Shopping Centre, Smaragd Square (letter)].
- Chief Executive and the Mayor (29–8–1997). Renovatie winkelcentrum Smaragdplein (brief) [Renovation of Smaragd Square (letter)].
- City Development (5–9–2007). Meerjaren perspectief grondexploitaties 2007 (rapportage) [Long-term perspective on land exploitations, 2007 (report)].
- Committee on Spatial Aesthetics and Heritage (12–10–1999). Verslag van de honderdéénentachtigste openbare vergadering [Report of the 181st public meeting].
- Council Committee on Spatial Organization and Housing (19–1–1999). Conceptverslag van de openbare middagvergadering van de raadscommissie Ruimtelijke Ordening en Wonen [Concept report of the public afternoon meeting of the Council Committee Spatial Organization and Housing].
- Council Committee on Spatial Organization and Housing (20–6–2000). Stedebouwkundig plan renovatie en uitbreiding Smaragdplein (verslag) [Urban plan of renovation and expansion, Smaragd Square (report)].

- Department of Economic Affairs, Service for Urban Development, Municipality of Utrecht (April 2000). Boodschap aan Winkels: Detailhandelsnota Utrecht (strategie nota) [Message for shops: Retail strategy, Utrecht (strategy note)].
- Department of Spatial Organization (4–1–1995). Renovatie Smaragdplein (brief) [Renovation of Smaragd Square (letter)].
- Department of Spatial Organization (29–8–1997). Renovatie winkelcentrum Smaragdplein (startnotitie) [Renovation of shopping centre in Smaragd Square (starting memo)].
- Department of Spatial Organization – Urbanism and Traffic (31–7–1991). Aanpassing winkelcentrum Smaragdplein, renovatieplan (interne mededeling) [Adaptation of shopping centre, Smaragd Square, renovation plan (internal memo)].
- Development Agency Municipality of Utrecht / Auditmanagement (18–5–2000). Stedenbouwkundig plan renovatie en uitbreiding winkelcentrum Smaragdplein (advies) [Urban plan of renovation and expansion for the shopping centre, Smaragd Square (advice note)].
- Development Agency Municipality of Utrecht / Auditmanagement (15–8–2000). Stedenbouwkundig plan renovatie en uitbreiding winkelcentrum Smaragdplein (Raadsvoorstel) [Urban plan of renovation and expansion for the shopping centre Smaragd Square (proposal for the Council)].
- District Manager South (1998). Projecten stedelijke investeringen (overzicht) [Urban investment projects (overview)].
- District Office South (17–2–2000). Informatiebijeenkomst (bewoners en belangstellenden) Smaragdplein (verslag) [Information meeting (residents and other interested parties), Smaragd Square (report)].
- District Office South, Municipality of Utrecht (9–10–1998). Toelichting bij advies (brief) [Explanatory notes to a letter of advice (letter)].
- District Office South, Municipality of Utrecht (13–12–1999). Informatieavond voor eigenaren en ondernemers winkelcentrum Smaragdplein (verslag) [Evening information meeting for owners and entrepreneurs Smaragd Square shopping centre (report)].
- External Project Leader, Municipality of Utrecht (25–5–2000). Stedenbouwkundig plan Uitbreiding en Renovatie Winkelcentrum Smaragdplein [Urban plan for the expansion and renovation of the shopping centre in Smaragd Square].
- Internal report. (This report is only for internal use and hence only paraphrased. The title and date are known only to the researcher.)
- Mayor and Aldermen (n.d.). Renovatie Smaragdplein (brief) [Renovation of Smaragd Square (letter)].

- Mayor and Aldermen (February 1992). Uitbreidings- en herstruktureringsplan Smaragdplein (brief) [Plan for expansion and reconstruction, Smaragd Square (letter)].
- Municipality of Utrecht (December 1998). Ontwerp: planidentificatie winkelcentrum Smaragdplein (ontwerpnota) [Design: identification of plan for the Smaragd Square shopping centre (planning note)].
- Project Group Smaragd Square (21–1–1996). Verslag Projectgroep Smaragdplein [Report of the Project Group Smaragd Square].
- Project Leader, District Office South, Municipality of Utrecht (24–3–2000). Aan de mensen die zich opgegeven hebben voor de klankbordgroep … (uitnodigingsbrief) [To the persons that signed up for the consultative group … (invitation letter)].
- Project Management Office (2–12–1996). Offerte projectmanagement/ renovatie winkelcentrum Smaragdplein (brief) [Quotation for the project management/renovation of the shopping centre in Smaragd Square (letter)].
- Project Management Office (8–12–1996). Startnotitie uitbreiding en renovatie winkelcentrum Smaragdplein [Starting memo for the expansion and renovation of the shopping centre in Smaragd Square].
- Project Management Office (7–1–1997). Uitbreiding/renovatie winkelcentrum Smaragdplein (brief) [Expansion/renovation of the shopping centre inSmaragd Square (letter)].
- Project Management Office (2–6–1997). Uitbreiding/renovatie winkelcentrum Smaragdplein (brief) [Expansion/renovation of the shopping centre in Smaragd Square (letter)].
- Project Management Office Utrecht (20–1–2000). Verslag projectgroup uitbreiding/renovatie winkelcentrum Smaragdplein [Report of the project group for the expansion/renovation of the shopping centre in Smaragd Square].
- Project Management Office Utrecht (23–2–2000). Projectgroep uitbreiding/renovatie winkelcentrum Smaragdplein (verslag) [Project group for the expansion/renovation of the shopping centre in Smaragd Square (report)].
- Resident 6 (15–2–2000). Geen titel (zesde brief aan wijkbureau Zuid) [No title/reference (sixth letter to District Office South)].
- Resident 7 (17–2–2000). Vernieuwing Smaragdplein (zevende brief aan wijkbureau Zuid) [Renewal Smaragd Square (seventh letter to District Office South)].
- Secretariat Municipality of Utrecht (11–3–1997). Persconferentie College van Burgemeester & Wethouders (persbericht) [Press conference Mayor and Aldermen (press release)].
- Secretary (18–2–1999). Openbare vergadering van de Gemeenteraad (verslag) [Public meeting of the Council (report)].

- Service for the District Management and Urban Renewal, District Office South (6–9–2000). Ontvangstbevestiging (brief) [Recorded delivery (letter)].
- Unknown Author (1996). Wijkontwikkelingsplan Hoograven/Tolsteeg (strategienota) [District development plan, Hoograven/Tolsteeg (strategy note)].
- Unknown Author (2–7–1997). Kort verslag: uitbreiding/renovatie winkelcentrum Smaragdplein [Short report: expansion/renovation of the shopping centre in Smaragd Square].

Chapter 4
Making sense of changing urban neighbourhood demographics

Interviews with professionals (listed in chronological order)

- Interview 1, 17–6–2011, District Office Delfshaven-South.
- Interview 2, 7–7–2011, Neighbourhood Organization.

Street interviews (listed in chronological order)

- Street interview 1_YK, 12–4–2010.
- Street interview 3_LZ, 12–4–2010.
- Street interview 6_FB, 12–4–2010.
- Street interview 2_LZ, 24–4–2010.
- Street interview 3_MS, 24–4–2010.
- Street interview 4_MS, 24–4–2010.
- Street interview 2_LZ, 19–5–2010.
- Street interview 4_MS, 19–5–2010.
- Street interview 1_NA, 1–6–2010.
- Street interview 4_AK, 1–6–2010.
- Street interview 2_LZ, 1–6–2011.[96]
- Street interview 3_LZ, 3–6–2011.
- Street interview 1_LZ, 7–6–2011.
- Street interview 2_LZ, 7–6–2011.
- Street interview 3_LZ, 7–6–2011.

96 From 2011 on, all street interviews include participant observations.

Participant observations (listed in chronological order)

- Participant observation, 12–4–2010.
- Participant observation, 24–4–2010.
- Participant observation, 1–6–2011.[97]
- Participant observation, 27–6–2011.
- Participant observation, 5–7–2011.
- Participant observation, 7–7–2011.
- Participant observation, 12–7–2011.
- Participant observation, 15–7–2011.
- Participant observation, 19–7–2011.

Chapter 5
The symbolic use of public space

Interviews with professionals (listed in chronological order)

- Interview 1, 13–3–2013, former city council member.
- Interview 2, 18–3–2013, chair of the Amsterdam committee.

Street interviews (listed in chronological order)

- Street interview 1_FB, 27–5–2010.
- Street interview 1_LZ, 30–6–2012.
- Street interview 2_LZ, 30–6–2012.

Participant observations (listed in chronological order)

- Participant observation, 30–6–2009.
- Participant observation, 30–6–2011.
- Participant observation, 30–6–2012.
- Participant observation, 30–6–2013.

Documents (listed in alphabetical order)

- Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July (30–6–2008, document adjusted on 27–5–2009). Toespraak v.d. voorzitter [Speech delivered by the chair].
- Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July (30–6–2009a). Programma herdenking 'Slavernijverleden 30 juni 2009': Thema 'Samen stilstaan, leven en vieren' [Program remembrance 'History of Slavery 30 June

97 All participant observations from 2011 on include naturally occurring conversations.

2009': Theme 'Pause, live and celebrate together']. http://www.30juni-1juli.nl (accessed on 1–7–2009).

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- Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July (30–6–2011b). Toespraak herdenking van het Amsterdams slavernijverleden op 30 juni 2011 [Speech for the remembrance of Amsterdam's history of slavery on 30 June 2011]. http://adamscentrum30juni-1juli.nl/over-ons/toespraken/k-renfrum-1-juli-2011.html (accessed on 10–1–2012).
- Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July (30–6–2012). Programma 30 juni 2012 [Program, 30 June 2012]. http://www.30juni-1juli.nl (accessed on 29–6–2012).
- Foundation Amsterdam Centre 30 June–1 July (30–6–2013). Toespraak. [Speech]. http://www.30juni-1juli.nl/toespraken/k-renfrum-30-juni-2013 (accessed on 22–7–2017).
- Havermans, O. (2013). 4 mei is er niet voor verzoening [4 May is not here for reconciliation]. *Trouw*, 2 May, p. 1.
- Kout, W., and Wong, P. (30–6–2003). Onthulling monument van besef op Surinameplein Amsterdam (persbericht) [Unveiling Monument of Awareness in Surinam Square Amsterdam (press release).
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Samenvatting

Het doel van dit boek is om inzicht te bieden in hoe alledaagse openbare ruimten in Nederlandse grote steden in een tijd van grote maatschappelijke veranderingen tot stand komen en na te gaan welke invloed die veranderingen hebben op het ervaren openbare karakter van deze ruimten. Dit is belangrijk, omdat het openbare karakter van stedelijke pleinen en straten volgens sommigen onder druk staat. De uitdaging is om het inzicht in de invloed van deze maatschappelijke veranderingen op de alledaagse stedelijke openbare plekken in Nederland te verfijnen. Daarbij staan de volgende twee onderzoeksvragen centraal:

Hoe worden alledaagse stedelijke openbare plekken gebruikt, geproduceerd en gereguleerd in de context van maatschappelijke veranderingen?

Hoe hebben alledaags gebruik, productie en regulering invloed op het openbare karakter en de perceptie daarvan, op alledaagse stedelijke openbare ruimten in Nederland?

De maatschappelijke veranderingen die in dit boek centraal staan, zijn de toenemende etnische diversiteit, de zoektocht naar (politieke) representatie van verschillende groepen en commercialisering van de stedelijke openbare ruimte. De beide vragen worden beantwoord aan de hand van studies van het Smaragdplein te Utrecht, het Bospolderplein te Rotterdam en het Surinameplein te Amsterdam.

Hoofdstuk 1: *Introduction* introduceert de pleinen en presenteert theoretische uitgangspunten en methodologische werkwijze.

De drie pleinen die centraal staan in dit onderzoek zijn onderdeel van het project 'De kracht van prachtige openbare ruimten' dat gefinancierd is door de gemeenten Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Technische Universiteit Delft, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam en het NICIS-kennisinstituut[98]. Dit boek beschouwt deze pleinen als 'kritische casussen' (Flyvbjerg 2006: 230). Dat betekent dat op basis van de informatie die zij opleveren iets gezegd kan worden over het type plekken waartoe zij behoren – in dit geval dus de alledaagse stedelijke openbare ruimte in de Nederlandse grote steden.

Deze studie is geïnspireerd door werk van verschillende, vaak Nederlandse, auteurs, zoals Van Melik (2008), Van der Wilk (2016), Oosterman (1993), Reijndorp (2004) en Reinders (2013). Deze eerdere studies hebben diepgaande en context-gebonden kennis opgeleverd, maar hebben als nadeel dat de mogelijkheid tot vergelijken beperkt is. Daardoor is het lastig om tot meer algemene conclusies te komen over de invloed van de bredere maatschappelijke context op de totstandkoming van openbare ruimten. Dit boek poogt deze lacune te vullen.

98 Na een fusie is NICIS-kennisinstituut opgegaan in kenniscentrum Platform31.

De in dit boek toegepaste onderzoeksmethoden zijn kwalitatief van aard. De nadere details van de toepaste methoden, waaronder participerende observaties, interviews en analyse van documenten, worden besproken in de hoofdstukken 3, 4 en 5 waarin de empirische casussen worden gepresenteerd.

Hoofdstuk 2: *Theoretical Exploration: The making of public space* gaat dieper in op de theoretische achtergrond van deze studie en bespreekt de manieren waarop openbare ruimte centraal staat in twee onderzoekstradities.

De eerste onderzoekstraditie betreft een cultuursociologische invalshoek, die openbare of publieke ruimte als het tegenovergestelde van private ruimte beschouwt en die ziet als een plek waar vrije discussie over het publieke of algemene belang plaatsvindt. Deze traditie verschaft ons een normatieve standaard aan de hand waarvan we kunnen bestuderen hoe 'openbaar' de openbare ruimte eigenlijk is. Maar deze benadering geeft geen uitsluitsel over de alledaagse processen en praktijken die in zo'n ruimte plaatsvinden. Die praktijken komen wel aan bod in de tweede traditie. Hierin wordt nauwkeurig naar ruimtegebruik en -ontwerp gekeken, maar geen aandacht besteed aan de bredere maatschappelijke inbedding van praktijken in de openbare ruimte. Dit boek poogt deze tekortkomingen te overstijgen. Dit gebeurt op grond van het sociaal-constructivistisch vertrekpunt dat nader wordt uitgewerkt in de drie deelstudies.

De eerste deelstudie staat centraal in hoofdstuk 3: *The value of neoliberal principles: Explaining the reconstruction of Smaragd Square, Utrecht.* Dit hoofdstuk gaat over de culturele ambities achter de bouwkundige reconstructie van het Smaragdplein in Utrecht. Is er sprake van een commercialisering en privatisering van dit plein, zoals we vooral uit de Angelsaksische literatuur kunnen afleiden?

Het hoofdstuk begint met een bespreking van de literatuur die suggereert dat er sprake is van toenemende 'neoliberalisering' van stedelijk beleid. Uit deze literatuurstudie worden vier neoliberale principes afgeleid, die de herstructurering van openbare ruimten mogelijk kunnen verklaren. Ten eerste zou de lokale overheid de financiële belangen van de private sector faciliteren. Ten tweede zouden openbare plekken ingezet worden in de competitie tussen steden. Ten derde zouden openbare ruimten met name bedoeld zijn als consumptieve ruimte en tot slot zouden openbare plekken geprivatiseerd zijn en vooral bedoeld voor de "autochtone" middenklasse. De vraag is of deze principes de reconstructie van het Smaragdplein in Utrecht kunnen verklaren?

Het antwoord is simpelweg nee, dat is niet het geval. De Nederlandse traditie van publiek-private samenwerking in stedelijke planning biedt een beter inzicht in de ambities achter herontwikkeling van het Smaragdplein dan het veronderstelde neoliberale perspectief. Het is daarom belangrijk dat onderzoekers dit 'Nederlandse systeem' in overweging nemen en voorzichtig zijn met de toepassing van het neoliberale perspectief.

Hoofdstuk 4: *Making sense of changing urban neighbourhood demographics: The role of ethnic categorization in the everyday use of Bospolder Square, Rotterdam* presenteert de tweede deelstudie. Binnen afzienbare tijd vormen in Rotterdam minderheden de stedelijke meerderheid (zie Crul et al. 2013 over 'minority-majority'-steden), en het is de vraag wat dat betekent voor gebruikers van alledaagse openbare ruimten, zoals het Bospolderplein in de wijk Delfshaven. Literatuurstudie toont dat etnische achtergrond van 'de ander' belang is, omdat deze als basis fungeert voor categoriale kennis over deze ander, in het bijzonder in het geval van negatieve ervaringen in de openbare ruimte.

Uit deze deelstudie blijkt dat etniciteit, taal en taalvaardigheid voor gebruikers van belang zijn om demografische veranderingen in de buurt te duiden. Etniciteit is in de alledaagse omgang dus van belang, maar de focus hierop kan tegelijkertijd de onderliggende verschillen in macht en toegang tot hulpbronnen verdoezelen. Zo hangt het claimen van het plein hangt vaak samen met onderlinge relaties tussen gebruikers, en niet in de eerste plaats met hun etnische achtergrond.

Op basis van de categoriale kennis over etniciteit, taal en taalvaardigheid creëren buurtbewoners een balans tussen 'gevestigden en buitenstaanders' (zie Elias en Scotson 1965; Elias 1976). Deze is dynamisch en relationeel van aard. Ook is locatie van belang om de ander te categoriseren: de etnische Nederlandse groep wordt stelselmatig omschreven als 'afwezig' op het plein. Hun vermeende niet-gebruik van de locatie is betekenisvol en laat tegelijkertijd zien, dat een classificatie van de ander op basis van uiterlijke kenmerken, zoals huidskleur en kleding, nog immer van belang is.

De laatste deelstudie komt aan bod in hoofdstuk 5: *The symbolic use of public space: Remembering the history of slavery at Surinam Square, Amsterdam.* Op het Surinameplein vindt elk jaar op 30 juni een herdenking van het slavernijverleden plaats, georganiseerd door voornamelijk Afro-Surinaamse Amsterdammers. Volgens de literatuur kan een hoofdstad gezien worden als een verzamelplaats van symbolische plekken die 'het volk' representeren. In combinatie met het gegeven dat steden steeds diverser van samenstelling worden is het een belangrijke vraag, hoe een minderheidsgroep zich de stedelijke publieke ruimte kan toe-eigenen, en wat de effecten daarvan zijn op andere bezoekers van de plek.

Een belangrijke uitkomst van deze deelstudie is dat de claim op het Surinameplein als ruimtelijke compensatie dient voor een ervaren sociale 'dislocatie'. De organisatie vraagt enerzijds aandacht voor de specifieke sociaalhistorische relaties die Afro-Surinaamse Amsterdammers hebben met de stad en eigent zich anderzijds ook het Amsterdams burgerschap toe, terwijl zij die ook herdefinieert. Op deze alledaagse plek vindt zodoende een vorm van 'burgerschapsvernieuwing' plaats.

De specifieke aspiraties en overkoepelende identiteit lijken in tegenstelling met elkaar. Het hoofdstuk laat zien hoe het toegeëigende idee van burgerschap een ingang biedt voor het ervaren van gedeelde belangen terwijl er aanspraak wordt gemaakt op een gezamenlijke stedelijke identiteit.

Hoofdstuk 6: *Summary and discussion: The dynamics of ordinary public space in the context of societal changes* is gewijd aan het beantwoorden van de twee centrale onderzoeksvragen. Op basis van de drie deelstudies geeft dit hoofdstuk inzicht in hoe gebruikers, producenten en beheerders 'openbaarheid' constant construeren langs lijnen van insluiting en uitsluiting van sociale groepen.

Er zijn twee typen groepsformatie die steeds weer op verschillende wijze langs die lijnen tot stand komen. De eerste is die van de gevestigden en de buitenstaanders (zie Elias en Scotson 1965 en Elias 1976), die gebaseerd is op sociale senioriteit, gekoppeld aan etnische achtergrond. De tweede is de 'denkbare gemeenschap' (Kezer 2009), die ontstaat als een bureauproject van stedelijke professionals langs lijnen van inkomen en koopkracht. De denkbare gemeenschap en de gevestigden–buitenstaander figuratie komen overigens niet per se overeen.

Er zijn tenminste drie effecten van deze groepsformaties op het construeren van openbare ruimte. Ten eerste weerspiegelt de dynamische verdeling van de gebruikers over het plein de dynamiek van de gevestigden – buitenstaander relaties. Ten tweede kan een claim op de openbare ruimte een uiting zijn van sociale dislocatie, als een groep gevestigden of buitenstaanders van mening is dat hun sociale status of identiteit niet erkend wordt in de denkbare gemeenschap zoals ontworpen door de stedelijk professionals.

En tot slot kunnen stedelijk professionals de openbare ruimte laten herinrichten met het oog op het aantrekken en vormen van een denkbare gemeenschap.

Een en ander leidt tot de volgende conclusies. De eerste conclusie is dat de gebouwde openbare ruimte niet per se dominante maatschappelijke groepen, zoals gedefinieerd op basis van hun koopkracht en inkomen, dient of reproduceert. Vaak is het doel van stedelijke professionals 'achter het bureau' om bepaalde gemeenschappelijke waarden te realiseren, zoals veiligheid en leefbaarheid, terwijl de professionals 'op straat', zoals de beheerders van openbare ruimten, juist ruimte te maken voor minder dominante groepen. Een daarop aansluitende tweede conclusie is dat, in weerwil van wat daarover in de literatuur vaak beweerd wordt, professionals het idee koesteren, dat de inrichting van de ruimte bepalend is voor hoe en door wie die gebruikt wordt. De derde en laatste conclusie benadrukt dat een open houding ten aanzien van ideeën of groepen die de autoriteit van de (lokale) overheid uitdagen, een belangrijke voorwaarde is om zich in de openbare ruimte te organiseren voor symbolische doeleinden.

Tot slot: zijn de zorgen, zoals geuit in de literatuur, over de teloorgang van het openbare karakter van de stedelijke openbare ruimte terecht? Dat is twijfelachtig met betrekking tot deze alledaagse openbare ruimten: hun openbaarheid is juist altijd 'onder constructie' in termen van wie erbij is of hoort en wie niet.

De *Epilogue* presenteert enkele vragen en stellingen voor professionals, die hen kunnen helpen bij het nadenken over de betekenis van 'openbaar', het formuleren van hun normen ten aanzien van en hun ideeën met betrekking tot de openbare ruimte.

About the author

Linda Zuijderwijk was born on 26 December 1983 in Monster, the Netherlands. At Erasmus University Rotterdam she obtained a bachelor degree in cultural studies and a master's degree in sociology. Since then, she has worked on various research projects at the University of Amsterdam, at Erasmus University Rotterdam, and at RISBO, an independent institute for research, training and advice. In 2009 she returned to the Faculty of Social Sciences at Erasmus University Rotterdam and embarked on a PhD, which was combined with various educational tasks at both bachelor and master level. In 2014 she became a project leader, lecturer, and researcher at the university's International Institute for Housing and Urban Development. One of her main projects was the organization of communication for, and the engagement in, the four-year FP7-funded TRANSIT project, a research project on social innovation and societal change. In 2017 and 2018, she worked with the Centre for BOLD cities. In 2019 she founded research and training company Zuijderwijk Stadssociologie. She leads and executes streetwise research projects, and trains professionals in sampling and recording valid and reliable data from the streets.

Visit www.lindazuijderwijk.nl for recent updates.

Portfolio (selection)

Note *Items within each section are organized chronologically, not alphabetically*

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- Wittmayer, J., Backhaus, J., Avelino, F., Pel, B., Strasser, T., Kunze, I. and Zuijderwijk, L. (2019). Narratives of change: how social innovation initiatives construct societal transformation. *Futures*, 112 (online publication). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2019.06.005
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- Weltevrede, A., De Boom, J., Rezai, S., Zuijderwijk, L., and Engbersen. G. (2009). Arbeidsmigranten uit Midden- en Oost-Europa: Een profielschets van recente arbeidsmigranten uit de MOE-landen [Labour migrants from middle and eastern Europe: A profile of recent labour migrants from middle and eastern Europe] (External rapport). Rotterdam: Risbo.
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- Emans, D., Van de Wetering, G., Zuijderwijk, L., and Ruijsink, S. (2017). Highlights from the project TRANSIT video. TRANSIT: EU SSH.2013.3.2-1 Grant agreement no: 613169. Retrieved 10 July 2018, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=MEwAh9U_8mE.
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- Zuijderwijk, L. (2015). An age-old craft? Lessons on collaborative storytelling. Retrieved 10 July 2018, from http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/blog/an-age-old-craft-lessons-on-collaborative-storytelling
- Erasmuspodium. (2013). Socioloog Linda Zuijderwijk over het Bospolderplein [Sociologist Linda Zuijderwijk on Bospolder Square]. Retrieved 10 July 2018 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5653kUAoQIU
- Zuijderwijk, L. (2012). Buitenspelen in Delfshaven: 'Dag meester?' [*Playing outside in Delfshaven: 'Bye Master?'*]. Retrieved 30 April 2014, from http://versbeton.nl/2012/11/buitenspelen-in-delfshaven-dag-meester.

Workshops, presentations, and lectures for professionals

- TRANSIT consortium. (2017). 'Learning for Change'. I co-organized the TRANSIT-final conference 'Learning for Change' and organized a session on the potential of sharing cities.
- TRANSIT consortium. (2017). 'Transformative social innovation: Insights from state-of-the-art research and practice'. I co-organized the first TRANSIT-engagement workshop and moderated several sessions during the workshop with social innovation practitioners.
- Zuijderwijk, L. (2014). 'Rotterdam in viervoud' ['Rotterdam in quadruplicate']. In this lecture for the Dutch School for Public Administration, The Hague, I have introduced the Rotterdam 'stadsmariniers' [urban marines], who are high ranked Safety Officers, to four sociological perspectives onto urban public space.
- Zuijderwijk, L. (2013). 'Citybranding Katendrecht, Rotterdam'. In this session in Letterencafé Tjechov, Rotterdam, I have introduced and moderated a discussion on city branding in the renovated Rotterdam neighbourhood of Katendrecht.
- Binken, S., Burgers, J., Van der Wilk, D. & Zuijderwijk, L. (2012). 'De gespannen relatie tussen professionals en gebruikers van openbare ruimten' ['The tense relations between professionals and users of public spaces']. I co-organized the Nicis Institute Knowledge Atelier on lively and safe urban space, which included presentations and sessions on my research on Smaragd Square, Utrecht.
- Zuijderwijk, L. (2012a). 'Become a street-sociologist!'. On a stage in the street, I presented the outcomes of my 'real-time' research and analysis of the use and experience of the Rotterdam art festival Wereld van de Witte de With [World of Witte de With] on stage.
- Zuijderwijk, L. (2011). 'Sociale kennis voor de inrichting van pleinen'['Social knowledge for the lay-out of squares']. I presented the early outcomes of my PhD research during a workshop for Rotterdam professionals in urban development.

Colophon

Illustration cover: Ez Silva (www.ezsilva.nl)

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Public space

Is the public character of urban space under severe pressure, as much scientific literature suggests? By a meticulous study of three squares in the Dutch cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht, Linda Zuijderwijk shows that the demise of the public nature of urban space lacks empirical underpinning.

Based on an analysis of everyday practices of producing, regulating and using public space, Zuijderwijk argues that the changing composition of the urban population, public authorities largely subcontracting the management and production of urban space to external parties and the development of urban citizenship, are main factors shaping the 'publicness' of urban space. The book closes with reflections and questions for urban policy makers about how to deal with urban space and the preservation of its public character.