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THE INTERACTING SUBJECT IN URBAN PUBLIC SPACE:
IN NEED OF PLACES FOR INTERPERSONAL COOPERATION

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The Interacting Subject in Urban Public Space

in Need of Places for Interpersonal Cooperation

Ruth Segers



Dissertation presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Engineering Science (PhD): Architecture

Supervisors
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in Need of Places for Interpersonal Cooperation

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Cover photo: *Workshop 'painting together': eight children aged from 8 to 12 years made this composition of a neighbourhood view*: *Filipe (11), Catarina (12), Leonardo (12), Erica (12), Miriam (8), Leonor (9), Josefa (8) and one name unknown, Centro Social da Musgueira - Bairro Cruz Vermelha, Lisbon.* Photo: Ruth Segers.

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ABSTRACT

This PhD research examines the relations between public space and interpersonal interaction. More in particular it looks at how spatial configurations, or actions afforded by particular spatial set ups, influence interpersonal interaction in a positive way. It sounds logical that interpersonal collaboration can be rewarding, but what encourages people to work together and what role does the spatial configuration play in this cooperative interaction? The doctorate searches for human drives and uncovers various ways in which people make adjustments to spatial configurations in (public) spaces in order to attend to and nurture the social need of belonging through interpersonal interaction.

The research is situated in the field of **planning** and more in particular of **social innovation** (SI). In spatial terms this broadly means that it involves among others the socio-spatial development of a certain spatial area, be it a neighbourhood or a site. SI is about transformation of social relations in a place, through stimulating or animating e.g. reconfiguration of identities, reconstruction of social relationships, (re)building of community identity, re-appropriation of (public) space through social mobilisation. The research also touches upon disciplines like **feminism** and **anthropology**, because throughout it uses a cross combination of ethnography and phenomenology as a research methodology in which, among others, intersectionalism is used. It also brings in a self-reflective account on research related topics. Intersectionalism allows to reveal various strands of discrimination; it further touches upon **social psychology** where it brings interpersonal interaction and the notion of 'social cues' to the fore, i.e. signals people transmit with their bodies such as facial expressions, pitch, occupying a particular place, … ; it makes use of **social and cultural geography** where its main context is 'space', i.e., the structural and geometrical qualities of the built environment. As such it also includes dimensions of lived experience, interaction and use of space, to which we refer as 'place'. Culture in this research's perspective is best understood in its contextual and historical context. It is the distinct ways that people living in different parts of the world classify and represent their experiences, and act creatively. This behaviour refers to a set of norms and values of a particular culture, its language, its artistic expression, its religion, politics, economy and technology and also its creation of

the liveability of the landscape by bringing in a particular culture; and in the instances where it focuses on the physical design and management of urban structures, it touches upon **urbanism**. The research also employs an innovative workshop method for the design of (public) mural making.

The PhD consist of four papers with four different case studies pursued in different research projects/environments. Paper one reports on a small-scale case study about first-generation Turkish migrant women who migrated to Belgium in the 1970s and who live in Antwerp 2060 (Belgium). A single-group analyses shows how this group of women copes with place related consequences of their migration. Complexity in the analysis is derived from situating the group as a 'social location', at the intersection of four single dimensions of four social categories: (place of) origin, socio-economic situation, age and gender. It shows how the interviewed women have taken on efforts to re-enact and renegotiate places in search of interpersonal connection within their new environment and illustrates how the benefit of economic migration for these migrant women comes with several social, including interpersonal sacrifices, that are reflected in a 'deduplicated' feeling of belonging. Paper two describes place related aspects, both material and immaterial, that support a small group of people of very diverse (cultural) origin to cooperate in a natural way in the SPIT vzw business kitchen. The study uncovered a dialogical work attitude, often based on social cues, between workers and work leaders. This attitude not only promotes recognition of a person but, at the same time, gives a natural and informal feeling to working together in diversity. Paper three shows that genuine youth participation in neighbourhood development requires a deep and enduring commitment to invest in interpersonal relations with youth and look at their relation with space. The small St Remi Park once was a physically and socially dilapidated environment where one youth gang ruled to the detriment of other children, youth and locals. It was a basis of trust and true listening skills that made up the core of a successfully implemented youth participation process to the redevelopment of one of Molenbeek's (Brussels – Belgium) public places attracting an ethnically diverse public. Paper four describes the fully collaborative 'mural making experience' of Welcome (W)all - MURO. It is a context sensitive participatory art project embedded in an action research process located in the socio-economic disadvantaged neighbourhood of Cruz Vermelha, Lisbon. A researcher, a youth organisation, a school

and pupils together with the local public administration of Lumiar, were the principal partners of the project. The project took the pupils outdoor to create a mural on which they could display their (public) place related needs, attachments and personal capacities. Findings confirm that the arts and crafts workshop setting for mural making does accommodate empowering opportunities for learning and socialisation in youth as seen through the mediating factor of the body.

The overall research findings inform on the importance of social cues. Social cues are important instigators for people to make adjustments to a spatial configuration in (public) spaces in order for them to attend to and nurture the social need of social interaction and belonging. The transmission of these social cues is afforded by spatial objects and is always context specific. People in need to belong, which often coincides with living in a socio-economic precarious situation, show a higher degree of attentiveness and reactivity to social cues. Especially in workshop settings involving crafts or creative manual labour activities, attending to social cues can create positive visceral feelings which foster a feeling of belonging and, in turn, contribute to interacting in a cooperative way.

SAMENVATTING

Dit doctoraat onderzoekt de relatie tussen openbare ruimte en interpersoonlijke coöperatie. Het kijkt meer in het bijzonder naar de wijze waarop ruimtelijke configuraties, of acties die door bepaalde ruimtelijke opstellingen worden ondersteund, interpersoonlijke interactie in positieve zin kunnen beïnvloeden. Het klinkt aannemelijk dat samenwerking lonend kan zijn, maar wat is het precies dat mensen stimuleert om samen te werken en welke rol speelt de ruimtelijke configuratie in deze coöperatieve interactie? Het doctoraat zoekt naar drijfveren voor samenwerking en beschrijft verschillende manieren waarop mensen aanpassingen maken aan (openbare) ruimtelijke configuraties. Deze aanpassingen ondersteunen op hun beurt de sociale behoefte aan interpersoonlijke interactie en verbondenheid.

Het onderzoek situeert zich binnen het gebied van **planning**, maar meer in het bijzonder van **sociale innovatie** (SI). Dit betekent dat het onderzoek gericht is op de ruimtelijke en sociale ontwikkeling van een bepaalde ruimtelijke eenheid, zoals een buurt of een site. Het zet meer specifiek in op die transformaties van sociale relaties die verbeteringen in governance systemen kunnen teweegbrengen binnen een bepaalde ruimtelijke eenheid. SI heeft namelijk de bedoeling om de toewijzing van goederen en diensten beter geregeld te krijgen zodat er beter voldaan kan worden aan basisbehoeften. Het onderzoek besteed aandacht aan de stimulering van het her configureren van identiteit, het reconstrueren van sociale relaties, het (her) opbouwen van gemeenschapsidentiteit of het (terug) claimen van (openbare) ruimte door sociale mobilisatie. Het onderzoek betrekt verder ook aspecten van andere disciplines: van **feminisme** en **antropologie** ontleent het een onderzoeksmethodologie die de kruising maakt tussen etnografie en fenomenologie. Tevens past het onderzoek onder andere het kruispuntdenken toe en neemt zelfreflectie in aanmerking als weergave van onderzoeksonderwerpen. Het kruispuntdenken maakt verschillende soorten van discriminatie of machtsongelijkheid zichtbaar door verschillende, expliciet omschreven sociale categorieën, zoals gender, socio-economische situatie, origine, leeftijd, … op te nemen in de onderzoeksanalyse; van **sociale psychologie** ontleent het onderzoek het begrip social cues, dit zijn signalen die mensen met hun lichaam overbrengen. Het gaat om gezichtsuitdrukkingen, toonhoogte, voortbrengen van geluiden, een bepaalde plek

innemen, ... deze vorm van communicatie werkt dadelijk in op het sympathisch zenuwstelsel en wekt gevoelens op van zich welbevinden of net niet; van **sociale en culturele geografie** ontleent het onderzoek het sleutelbegrip (public) space. Hiermee bedoelen we de structurele en geometrische kwaliteiten van de (openbare) bebouwde omgeving. In zover hieraan ook dimensies van doorleefde ervaring, interactie in en gebruik van ruimte plaatsvindt, praten we over place. Verder gebruikt dit onderzoek het begrip 'cultuur'. Cultuur verwijst hier naar de verschillende manieren waarop mensen in verschillende delen van de wereld creatief handelen en hoe ze hun ervaringen beoordelen en belichamen. Dit gedrag verwijst naar een reeks normen en waarden van een bepaalde cultuur, zijn taal, artistieke uitdrukking, religie, politiek, economie en technologie. Het verwijst tevens naar wijzen waarop een ruimtelijke configuratie leefbaar wordt gemaakt door het inbrengen van cultuur-eigen ingrepen. Tenslotte en in zoverre het zich richt op het fysieke ontwerp en beheer van stedelijke structuren raakt het aan de discipline **stedenbouw**. Het onderzoek lanceert een eigen workshop methode voor het ontwerp van openbare muurschilderingen.

Het doctoraat bestaat uit een verzameling van vier artikels. De artikels zijn gebaseerd op vier verschillende case studies. Deze werden uitgevoerd in verschillende onderzoeksprojecten / omgevingen. Artikel 1 rapporteert over een kleinschalige case study over Turkse migrantenvrouwen van de eerste generatie die in de jaren zeventig naar België emigreerden en nu in Antwerpen 2060 (België) wonen. Een intracategoriale benadering van het kruispuntdenken, waarbij complexiteit wordt bereikt door het uitkiezen van een sociale locatie op de kruising van een beperkt aantal afzonderlijke dimensies van enkele sociale categorieën, leeftijd, afkomst, gender en socio-economische situatie, laat zien hoe één enkele groep vrouwen het hoofd biedt aan plaatsgerelateerde gevolgen van hun migratie. Het geeft een inzicht in hoe de geïnterviewde vrouwen inspanningen ondernamen om plaatsen in hun nieuwe omgeving zo in te richten dat ze hun behoefte aan interpersoonlijke connectie ondersteunen. De case studie illustreert tevens hoe het economische voordeel van de migratie gepaard gaat met spanningen op verschillende vlakken, waaronder sociale. Een 'ontdubbeling' van *belonging* weerspiegelt deze spanning. Paper 2 beschrijft zowel materiële als immateriële aspecten van plaats die een kleine groep mensen van zeer diverse (culturele) oorsprong ondersteunen om op een vanzelfsprekende manier samen

te werken in de industriële keuken van de sociale onderneming SPIT vzw. De studie onthult een dialogische werkhouding, vaak gebaseerd op *social cues*, tussen arbeiders en werkleiders. Deze houding bevordert niet alleen de erkenning van de werknemer als persoon, maar geeft tegelijkertijd een natuurlijk en informeel goed gevoel dat samen werken in diversiteit bevordert. Paper 3 laat zien dat echte jongerenparticipatie bij wijkontwikkeling een diep en langdurig engagement vraagt om te investeren in interpersoonlijke relaties met hen en daarbij ook hun relatie met de ruimte onder de loep te nemen. In een nabij verleden was het kleine St Remi Park in Molenbeek (Brussel - België) een fysiek vervallen omgeving waar een bepaalde jeugdbende de overhand had. Vertrouwen en echte luistervaardigheden van architect, gemeente en jongerenbegeleidster vormden de basis van een succesvol geïmplementeerd herontwikkelingsproces met jongerenparticipatie. Met als resultaat een 'speelbaar' park waarbij een etnisch divers publiek wordt aangetrokken. Paper 4 beschrijft de 'muurschilderingervaring' van Welcome (W)all - MURO. Het is een contextgevoelig participatief kunstproject ingebed in een actieonderzoeksproces in de socio-economisch achtergestelde wijk Cruz Vermelha, Lissabon. Een onderzoeker, een jongerenorganisatie, een school en de leerlingen waren samen met de lokale openbare administratie van Lumiar de belangrijkste partners van het project. Het project engageerde de leerlingen om een muurschildering te maken. Het was een mogelijkheid om hun gehechtheid en nood aan de publieke ruimte waar ze wonen weer te geven. De bevindingen van dit onderzoek bevestigen dat de gebruikte workshop vorm ruimte biedt voor empowerment: het levert de betrokken jeugd mooie leerkansen in sociale samenwerking en oogst publieke erkenning.

De onderzoeksbevindingen wijzen op het belang van *social cues* in interpersoonlijke interactie. Het begrijpen en opvolgen van *social cues* is een belangrijk aanknopingspunt voor mensen om een (openbare) ruimtelijke configuratie zo te gebruiken of in te richten dat ze hun sociale behoefte aan interactie en verbondenheid kunnen bestendigen. De overdracht van deze sociale signalen wordt beïnvloed door de ruimtelijke configuratie en is dus altijd context specifiek. Mensen die nood hebben om 'erbij te horen', vaak net diegenen die leven in een sociaaleconomische precaire situatie, reageren in grotere mate op *social cues*. Vooral in 'workshop settings' die ambachtelijk werk of (creatieve) handmatige arbeidsactiviteiten met zich meebrengen, kan het opvolgen van *social cues*

positieve viscerale gevoelens opwekken die op hun beurt bijdragen aan coöperatieve interactie.

LIST OF ABBRIVIATIONS

BOM: Neighbourhood Development Society [Buurtontwikkelingsmaatschappij]

CSM: Centro Social da Musgueira

DieGem: Flemish IWT/SBO research project about Diversity and Community [Diversiteit en Gemeenschap]

IAD: Integrated Area Development

IMSDP: International Module Spatial Development Planning

IWT/SBO: Flemish funding organisation Innovation, Science and Technology/ Strategic Basis Research [Innovatie Wetenschappen en Techniek/ Strategisch Basisonderzoek]

JES stadslabo: Youth and Society [Jeugd en Stad] stadslabo

K2A: Architecture office in Brussels

SP2SP: Flemish IWT/SBO research project “Spatial Planning to Strategic Projects”

SPINDUS: Flemish IWT/SBO research project “Spatial Innovation Planning Design and User involvement”

SPIT: Structural starter to Participation and Integration of the Homeless [Structurele aanzet voor Participatie en Integratie van Thuislozen]

Vagga cgg: Association for Ambulatory Mental Healthcare Antwerp - Centre for Mental Healthcare [Vereniging voor Ambulente Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg Antwerpen - Centrum voor Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg]

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PART 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. General introduction

'We cannot "become" without others. And it is space that provides the necessary condition for that possibility'

D. Massey (2005)

'"Place" places man in such a way that it reveals the bonds of his existence and at the same time the depths of his freedom and reality'

M. Heidegger (1958, p. 19)

My years of working with and among researchers in the field of planning and social innovation, which involves researching with and for human beings, made me feel compelled to situate my own research in its full social context. In this, I suggest, the researcher should not be overlooked as an integral part of that context. As for me, some deeply felt sentiments of 'missing something substantial' in the traditional research emphasis on 'objective' *rather than* 'subjective', 'theory' *rather than* 'method' and 'science' *rather than* 'ethics' drew me towards the latter elements of these binary constructs. In exploring these elements it became obvious for me that there should be no '*rather than*': both sides of the binary are infrangibly interconnected, making mutual contributions to each other. Especially in social sciences, there is and should not be an absolute hierarchy between both approaches or 'entries' to creating and valorising knowledge. What I indeed see is human agents and communities that create values. Those values are implicated in power differences, which, obviously, are not only found outside the academic world. Following this line of thought I have come to position myself as a 'critical' researcher and as a phenomenological researcher, taking a distance from the Cartesian method of analysis in which the world is seen as objects, sets of objects, and objects acting and reacting upon one another. As for me, trying to 'see' phenomena - those things or experiences as human beings experience them involves feeling as much as rational thinking (Hogarth 2001 and 2010; Bradley, 2007). As a phenomenological researcher, I want to cultivate a mode of 'seeing' that cultivates both

intellectual and emotional sensibilities. Therefore, in some instances, I am explicitly using a 'radical empirical approach' and more in particular a 'first-person phenomenological research', 'where the researcher uses her own firsthand experience of a phenomenon as a basis or starting point for examining its specific characteristics and qualities' and *subsequently* finds ways to involve the worlds of others (Seamon, 2000, p. 163 ff). For the ultimate aim of phenomenological research is not idiosyncratic descriptions of the phenomenon; phenomenologist hopes are that her descriptions, in time, will generate knowledge that accurately describes essential qualities and characteristics of a phenomenon, the way it has meaning in the concrete lives and experiences of (other) human beings. Also, since the Planning & Development unit of which I am a member is situated in the Department of Architecture (previously ASRO), KULeuven, my interest in design and material aspects of 'place' was triggered. This interest eventually surfaced fully in the final case study done for this thesis, by incorporating my painting skills.

Furthermore I am using 'ethnography' as a methodology and as implemented in varying methods throughout this thesis as it refers to an orientation towards culture that appeals to me as a starting point for research. It resonates with what I find in me and in the world around me, but also urges me to look deeper. Ethnography holds culture, as encountered in differing magnitudes like in migrant communities, class groups, youth gangs or employment settings as *heterogeneous, conflictual, negotiated, and evolving* (Atkinson et al., 2010). I take my research from there and explore how through negotiation and mediation elements of unity and cooperation can be found in heterogeneous but evolving groups. Also, unlike relativistic approaches towards culture that hold cultural groups as different-but-equal, critical ethnography assumes that cultures are positioned unequally in power relations. I agree, yet look concurrently at alternative elements of power embedded in the actions and attitudes of the seemingly less powerful. Moreover, like critical ethnography underlines, it is a variety of elements that shaped the description of the culture of the groups I am in and I was involved in: there is where my interest as a researcher lies, there are the peers in and sponsors of projects I was a member of and there are the particular journals I am writing for, … . That is why I cannot but acknowledge that my descriptions are always 'somewhat partial and partisan' (Code, 1996; Haraway, 2003; Atkinson et al., 2010).

The overall research topic of this doctorate is on the relations between public place and interpersonal interaction. I look, more in particular, at how spatial configurations, or actions afforded by particular spatial set ups, influence interpersonal interaction in a positive way. It sounds logical that interpersonal collaboration can be rewarding; but what encourages people to interconnect with one another and what role does the spatial configuration have in this cooperative interaction? I was looking for human drives for cooperation and gradually uncovered various ways in which people make adjustments to spatial configurations in (public) places in order to attend to and nurture the social need of belonging through interpersonal interaction. In the course of this work I will show that many of these actions of adjusting are inspired by attending to social cues.

A social cue is a verbal or non-verbal hint, expressed by the body, the face, it can be one's pitch height, one's smell, … . This hint guides conversations and other social interactions and can convey a positive or negative message. Social cues help to clarify people's meaning and intentions. They inform you on whether you belong or not (Picket et al., 2004). Besides, they allow for creating a higher degree of intimacy and quality of contact by providing a deeper level of information about a person, group or interaction. As such they can reduce ambiguity in social interactions. Yet not everybody is perceptive in the same manner or degree to social cues. For one thing, intuition plays a substantial role in the interpretation of social cues. Furthermore Pelligrini (1998) shows that children not only rely more on social cues than adults, and use these hints to comprehend and learn about their surroundings, but also have an inclination to focus more on gestural cues rather than other cues. Picket et al. (2004) expanded this find. They claim it is people in high need to belong that are most perceptive to social cues in general. Moreover, studies involving persons with 'social and behavioural disorders'[1] (like schizophrenia or autism spectrum 'disorders') show that those people have difficulty in correctly interpreting social cues connected to facial expression (Centelles, et al., 2013). They tend to have a particular aversion to the eye region, and therefore,

[1] I embrace the notion neurodiversity rather than behavioural and social *disorder*. For the social dynamics around neurodiversity are similar to the dynamics that manifest around a.o. cultural diversity or biological diversity. Relating to a dynamic of order and disorder includes considering an unequal distribution of social power as immutable; conversely, when embraced, diversity can act as a source of creative potential.

avoid looking at it. Herewith foregoing the valuable emotion information contained in the eyes (Averbeck, 2010). In Averbeck's study (2010), administration of the neurotransmitter oxytocin (a 'feel good' hormone) was found to increase the salience of the eye region in neuro divergent people and thus facilitates the identification of emotions. 'Getting cues' is something that happens on an interpersonal level, but can also be noticed in group settings. Sennett (2012) points at the release of positive visceral feelings (and thus the release of 'feel good' hormones') in all members of creative handcraft workshop settings whenever social cues are well interpreted (Sennett, 2012).

The introduction to this four papers thesis is further divided in three sections. In the first section I am using a self-reflective approach to introduce the notions (public) place, belonging, identity, intersectionalism and social innovation. This way I relate these notions to personal aspects that are important elements in my way of understanding and analyzing the empirical findings I retrieved in four case studies. The findings are interpreted and processed in four papers and are in turn the contributive elements of this doctoral thesis. In the second section of this introduction the structure of this thesis is brought to the fore. The thesis holds three parts of which the central part contains the four papers. In this section the abstracts of the papers are presented. The third section elaborates briefly on practical challenges and methodological insights I came across during this thesis writing process. It was a path leading from traditional qualitative research towards action research holding a radical empirical approach.

1.1. Reflexive observations on the research topic

1.1.1. Personal empirical findings regarding place

It was in the very early 1980s, my sisters and me must have been around the age of 10, when 'our (village) street', at the edge of our roaming circle, was divided in two by a tunnel underneath the railway. Of course, in a way the railway had divided the street since ages- we had a grade crossing with one barrier on each side-, but the view used to be open in all directions and the 'other side' was just an extension of 'our side'. The new physical form of the divide was a much more sturdy construction. It implicated a bigger hurdle to take to get to the other side.
One autumn evening we all went on our kids' cycles to encounter the new construction. What we found was disillusioning, but we did try to cope: instead of the barriers there was a concrete construction obstructing the view to the other side. Now we needed to enter this construction and slowly had to work our way down the rather steep alley, making a turn of 180° to the right, than 90° to the left and there we were. I remember the four of us standing there beside our bicycles, looking at the neon light lit shiny greyish tiled space, and looking at each other. The tunnel wasn't well lit at all, and the tiles had this particular faded bathroom tiles'. Then we started expressing what we saw and felt here, sharing our emotions about the place. This place that once was an open passage, now had become secluded and evoked a feel of uneasiness, how scary that was. So we decided among each other to call the place 'the bathroom'. Over time the smell of the place indicated that we were not the only ones that had become to see the place as a bathroom like secluded transit zone. Yet, after so many years, the place is still called 'bathroom' by the children of my sisters who still live in the neighbourhood. I do not think they know where the name comes from…

There are some interesting aspects to this vividly memorised story that I will explore further on a different level. For this story connects with my initial point of engagement with this doctorate, both on a personal and theoretical level. As 'place' and 'sense of

place' would prove to become basic scientific concepts throughout the four different case studies.

One of the most prominent aspects of my story is the immediately felt necessity to name the new place. Naming is one of the ways to appropriate space. According to geographer Relph (1976) naming enriches and confirms the 'personality' of the named space, it 'humanises' the 'wilderness' (Relph, 1976, p. 16). Hallowell (1955) argues naming places, maps, myth and tales, orientation of buildings, etc. facilitates the construction and maintenance of spatial patterns in which the individual must live and find his way. To me it is a form of formalising acquaintance with a place. The initialising phase of a conscious relationship. Like the newborn baby who gets his or her name, often in remembrance of someone. When the Masai of Kenya were forced to relocate they took with them the names of hills, rivers and plains and fitted them to the new topography; similarly, North America and Australia are sprinkled with the borrowed place names of Europe, for these once provided familiarity in an otherwise strange land (Lynch, 1972, p. 41). Relph states 'It is the significant *space* of a particular *culture* that is humanised by the naming of *places*, by its qualities for men, and by remaking it to serve better the needs of mankind' (Relph, 1977).

One other aspect to the story is the exchange of feelings related to physical space between siblings that resulted from the encounter with a new space and as a result of which a 'place' was created, not only for us, but also for our offspring. Toffler (1970, pp. 91-94) suggests that in present-day western society many people feel at home wherever they are with people of similar interests, regardless of the particular place they are in. Among some this belief is even increased as over the last decades digital communication is widely available, and transnational connections undermine any concerns about root (Calhoun, 1994). Varnelis & Friedberg (2008) describe how locative media, like GPS, wifi, Bluetooth, etc. alter our relationship with place. Yet they argue that the 'seemingly inescapable logic that the price of new (digital) connections is local disconnection' might not stand in the future. For not only might the emergence of the geospatial Web (GIS, Google maps) and ubiquitous computing bring solace in local disconnection, there will also be no more problem of 'non-places' or the disconnection that in-between spaces such as transit zones (like airports, airplanes, freeways, parking garages, but also refugee camps and shantytowns) bring, as pointed out by Augé (2009). On the contrary,

they say, loneliness will not be the problem anymore, there will be too much connection. Besides 'non-place' hardly exists. Varnelis and Friedberg go on to say, that for an aviation buff, airport worker, or true road warrior, the airport has history, and a highway engineer's trained eye can identify just when an overpass was built. They say pure place does not exist. All places are non-places for those who have not accumulated lived experience within them. The latter position, I endorse, but the previous position, 'there will be no problem anymore', I think gives too much credit to transnational and cybernetic connections without relations to sentient place, or to community without connection to embodied place. To me this seems to be an overly extreme denial of the importance of physical setting in place experience for creating a feeling of 'belonging'. I therefore take distance from Augé's position where he states that to him, 'place' never has been an empirical notion (Sturm, 2009).

Recent research (Lentini & Decortis, 2010) has shown that through active physical mobility in their environment, children develop spatial abilities and environmental competences that are necessary for their respective positioning in the physical and social spaces, i.e. to acquire a 'sense of place'. Children (and adults) learn from interacting with objects, and from body movements (Pellegrini & Smith, 1998). Especially physical engagement and movement in space (running, jumping, swinging, sliding,…), particularly in outdoor settings, enables children to apprehend space in its material and immaterial aspects. This together with social interaction within place or across space leads to the making of 'sense of place'. Authors like Seamon (2000), Relph (1976) and Tuan (1975), have developed a phenomenological perspective to highlight the meaning that spaces acquire through active and engaged participation in them, turning those spaces into meaningful places. Accordingly, Harrison and Dourish (1996) define 'sense of place' as a *'communally* [and personally] *held sense of appropriate behaviour, and a context for engaging in and interpreting action'*. Sense of place is conceived as the result of the appropriation of culturally defined norms and expectations that frame behaviours.

According to Harrison and Dourish (1996), framing of behaviour is not only linked to 'spatial features' of a setting but rather to social cues that are acquired by socialisation. Within that perspective, sense of place thus refers to knowing and understanding the

properties of places, i.e. not only spatial characteristics but also its social significance. Sense of place is what makes a space specific, and generally relates to the physical characteristics of the environment, the affect and meanings (including memories and associations) and the activities afforded by the place including the social interactions associated with the place. Therefore, in terms of people's experience, sense of place refers to the fact that people apprehend physical space not only through the perception of its spatial characteristics, but also through the awareness of the social cues related to it. Those social cues act as constraints or triggers of social behaviour. To successfully establish and maintain social relationships, individuals need to be sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of others and behave accordingly. Although sense of place gives the individual a communal sense of appropriate behaviour to frame his actions, this certainly does not exclude that sense of place is a very personal thing too. It is, concurrently, an individual and unique process of receiving, reconstructing and communicating in a narrative way the unique identity of space which then becomes place (Rose, 1995).

Subsequent research shows that individuals who are high in the need to belong are especially concerned with social connectedness and are particularly attentive to and accurate in decoding social cues (like gazing, glimpses, etc.). There is evidence that those high in need to belong show an enhanced skill in social perception, rather than cognitive problem solving more generally (Pickett, Gardner & Knowles, 2004). Therefore belonging can be considered an 'achievement' (Bell, 1999): *'one does not simply or ontologically belong to the world or to any group within it'*. However, although social cues are used universally, meanings of social cues are not universal. Interpreting social cues varies tremendously across cultures, and can often be very ambiguous. The anthropologist Hall analysed the many aspects of non-verbal communication and considers the concepts of space and time as tools for transmission of messages. In his foundational work on proxemics, *The Hidden Dimension* (1966), Hall emphasised the impact of proxemic behaviour (the use of space) on interpersonal communication. He also introduced the notions 'low context' and 'high context cultures' based on a cultural difference in communication (1980) and defined context as the information that surrounds an event and sees it as inextricably bound up with the meaning of that event.

In this work I seek to explore the context of culture in particular social locations in interpersonal interaction as far as it refers to ‘place’.

Throughout this work I am referring in numerous ways to two renowned key figures in theorising about ‘place’ and ‘sense of place’: philosopher Tuan and geographer Massey. According to Tuan, what makes the difference between the two notions is the extent to which humans give meaning to a particular area or space. In his opinion there are two ways in which meaning can be derived from or given to space: the direct and intimate way in which the human senses like vision, smell, sense and hearing play a major role and the indirect and conceptual way in which art, symbols, etc. convey or attribute meaning to space (Tuan, 1977).

What strikes me as fundamental and what attracts me in Tuan’s delineation is the central position given to human senses. Because, throughout, human senses ‘know’ in a different, but not less essential way than the cognitive mind would consciously acknowledge or articulate. ‘Place’ is more than a (known) location and far more ‘ingrained’ than an abstract given, like space. What I miss in Tuan’s work, though, is a conceptualisation of power relations, we are not only experiencing place as individuals, we are also experiencing place as social beings, who, inevitably, influence each other’s senses, being aware of differences in power positions. Therefore conceptualisations of spatial relations addressing dominance and exertion of power should also be traced (Van Dyck, 2010; Van Dyck & Van den Broeck, 2013). Furthermore and, therefore, giving central importance to the human senses as discriminating element between place and space does not exclude my understanding, of places relationally. This understanding is close to that of Massey. Thinking of places, she says, is often characterised by seeing them as bounded areas, as enclosure rather than open and porous networks of social relations (Massey, 1995, p. 120). She goes on saying that for her ‘social relations always have a spatial form and spatial content. They exist, necessarily, both in space (i.e., in a locational relation to other social phenomena) and across space (Massey, 1995, p. 168). As a consequence, I endorse a need to conceptualise the social and the spatial together (Massey, 1995; Heynen, 2013).

In discipline or domain-based approaches however, place is often reduced to the three elements: locale, location and sense of place. 'Approaches to defining a geographical concept of place have tended to stress one or another of the three elements rather than their complementarity. Firstly, economists and economic geographers have emphasized location, or space sui generis, the spatial distribution of social and economic activities resulting from between-place factor cost and market price differentials. Secondly, micro sociologists and humanistic geographers have concerned themselves with locale, the settings for everyday routine social interaction provided in a place. Thirdly, anthropologists and cultural geographers have shown interest in the sense of place or identification with a place engendered by living in it' (Agnew & Duncan, 1989, p. 2). Sense of place, examines people's ties and attachment to their places. A strong sense of 'belonging' to a place, either consciously or as shown through everyday behaviour such as participating in place related affairs, would be indicative of 'sense of place'. This need be neither totalistic, in the sense of excluding other objects of affection or identity, nor reactionary and exclusionary. In this context, sense of place attributes a particular quality (of belonging) to the relationship between space and people which is not reflected in purely envisaging the relationship as 'mutual'.

What I find thoroughly interesting though is that this process of 'sensing place' can be traced back in our biology. Relph (2015) says there are 'growing indications that 'place cells' and 'grid cells' – the neurons in our brains that react to specific locations – play key roles in our experiences of places. The three key scientists involved in the discovery of these cells – John O'Keefe, and Edvard and May-Britt Moser – were awarded the Nobel Prize in the Physiology of Medicine in 2014, and the nomination stated that: 'The sense of place and the ability to navigate are some of the most fundamental brain functions. Sense of place provides a perception of the position of the body in the environment and in relation to surrounding objects.' Relph goes on to say that 'place and grid cells record our experiences of places as memories and the memories stored in those cells continually inform our experiences of places. Place and grid cells are in parts of the brain known to play critical roles in memory. It has been established that their functions are related not only to remembering how to get from place to place but also to episodic memories – memories related to one's own experiences. It has also been established that there is 'plasticity' in these memories of places. In other words,

even if some of the characteristics of a place are changed, such as colours, or heights of walls, or lighting, the same place cell continues to respond to it. By extension, notions of an objective world that is separate from subjective experience seem to have no neurological substance. What goes on in our brains, and what goes on in the world those brains encounter is so profoundly interconnected that to separate them has to be considered equivalent to self-imposed dementia'. However this positioning of the body in connection with place is not new, Nast & Pile (1998) have opened up poignant ways in which people move through places through their body, introducing novel theories of embodied places and the placing of bodies.

Thus, semantically for me, location can be a particular social location (which I see as place specific) at the intersection of certain categories such as origin, gender, socio-economic, age, … , but can still be the materiality of a building or natural landscape elements, as conceptualised by human beings but without having been in bodily and, thus sensory contact with these particular qualities of the environment. Furthermore understanding the space-people relationship naturally involves a transdisciplinary approach (Segers et al., 2016). It demands insights from various disciplines assimilating socio-spatial perspectives, as well as an inclusion of insights from those 'involved-in-location'. Moreover, understanding this relationship begs for an openness to understanding (and integrating) difference in approaches. For each discipline has its own methods of investigation and everyone involved has his/her own ways of conveying information. Discourse indeed is albeit a common way, just one way of analysing or representing the relationship between space and people, next to e.g. photographic or graphic representations (Heynen, 2013). This brings me back to my personal endeavour to understand this relationship in which I observed and explore the importance of social cues. I therefore welcome the idea of conceiving (the results of) architecture, or the built environment as a gesture too. From this viewpoint the built environment is a 'moving project', something that is 'continuously being transformed', but also as 'an essentially performative mode that ties together, negotiates and modulates the many relational contexts it is involved in' (Heynen, 2013). However, analysing gesture or representing it is not an easy task. Its inherent ephemeral quality does not make discourse the most suitable way to disclose it – hence this opens up a way towards creative expression.

In brief, here and in the subsequent text ‘space’ refers to the structural, geometrical and physical qualities of the environment as conceptualised by human beings but without having been in bodily and, thus sensory contact with these particular qualities of the environment. As such, social connections are not readily recognised or discussed in it and it does not invite or encourage people to ‘fill’ it by being creative, so no meaning has been described to it. ‘Place’ on the other hand includes dimensions of lived experience, interaction and use of space. History is readily visible and memory is nurtured as there is art, monuments and architecture that explicitly refer to a particular time period (Tuan, 1977; Hayden, 1995).

In seeing ‘objects’ as inherent parts of a system or a kind of ecology called ‘space’, a causal relationship can be conceived between economy, society, and culture on the one hand, and the urban environment on the other hand (Low, 2000). Culture in this perspective is best understood in its contextual and historical context. It is the distinct ways that people living in different parts of the world classify and represent their experiences, and act creatively. This behaviour refers to a set of norms and values [of a particular culture], its language, its artistic expression, its religion, politics, economy and technology and also its creation of the liveability of the landscape by bringing in a particular culture. In this thesis, the set of norms and values that adhere to the notions ‘place’ and ‘space’, are embedded in the culture of the English language. In my mother tongue, Flemish, the connotation of the notions differ: ‘plaats’ [place] cannot fully cover the meaning of ‘place’. So, in a way, a degree of relativity always slips in in using a particular language.

The included papers deal with four different ways in which people use spatial strategies to foster a need for social interaction and belonging. All papers involve examples of ‘sensing’ space, in various spatial settings.

Paper one shows how migrant women, in attending to social cues obtained in public place, configure their private physical setting as to accommodate their need for social interaction beyond the family. Paper two gives an account of my not anticipated experience with the importance of social cues in facilitating cooperation in a kitchen workshop setting. Paper three describes how youth used to informally spray graffiti on public space furniture and occupy a park and how the process of design participation

for redevelopment of the park has lead them (or there younger siblings) to co-creating a space that accommodates for positive interactions between the park users, while also increasing their sense of place. The general topic of paper four is about the formal painting of a public mural, a clear way of 're-appropriating space'. The workshop setting in which the creation of the mural is situated reveals several instances of attending to social cues that benefit cooperation. The evidence of cooperative behaviour on the kitchen floor, in paper 2, made me focus on social cues in an arts and crafts workshop setting in paper four.

Being immersed in pursuing a doctorate which has 'place' as one of its central notions to work with had an effect on place related decisions I made in life. 'Place' and its social and personal implications made me reflect on my own sense of place. Again, I go back to childhood memories from my home town in Flanders. Especially in my years at primary school, which was in the 1970s, I started noticing the difference between me and the others. Obviously I was different as an individual, but that is not what made me different. It was the 'cultural attributes' that coloured my life that were not identical to the 'attributes' that seemed to be mainstream in my class. When there was a discussion about food in class I noticed my food pattern was a misfit. At home we ate wholemeal bread or had oatmeal porridge for breakfast. We also had brown rice, salad, ate pickled cabbage or potatoes with peel. The others had white bread or sausages with cauliflower, white sauce and 'flowered' potatoes. In conversation my spoken language was far more polished than the local spoken language. Once I became conscious about the difference I felt the need to fit in better and did my best to learn the local language. It was a process of trial and error. I will never forget my participating in a youth camp at the age of 14. We were busy painting an ornament with the group. I asked for the colour 'pink' [roos] in local language. In analogy to pronouncing the colour 'red' [rood], 'roe-ed', I asked for 'roe-es'. It was promptly corrected with a definite 'roas'. I had been put decisively in 'place'. Consequently I felt I did not belong to the group as a fully integrated member. I was not able to speak the same language. It was a sentiment, yet a persistent one. Although in later years I practised the language a lot and I grew accustomed to using it, even with siblings, there would always be those encounters with locals who, from the moment they started listening to me, would answer with a more polished version of the language, no matter how hard I tried to fit in.

Later in life, and certainly while doing this doctorate, I experienced that this feeling of 'socially not completely fitting in' commonly occurs with people with migrant roots. For I could be considered one too, a migrant of the third generation in Flanders, but with European roots. My grandfather had fled Berlin in 1933. As a student in politics he had felt unsafe with the regime and had migrated to Brussels. In Belgium he met and married my grandmother. My mother, their daughter, still tells me how extraordinary it had been for her to have to wear a dirndl (typical South German dress) at school in the post WWII years. She has experienced the same feeling throughout her life.

My experiences in the Antwerp case study with Turkish migrant women contributed to my decision to move houses again, for the third time with children. In contrast to what I had observed in Antwerp I felt I was able to 'return home'. For the first time in my adult life I opted for living in the community I grew up in, for this I knew was the place I felt I belonged to most strongly. For me, so far, one of the most rewarding decisions I ever made. It feels like having made my journey of moving from place to place and simultaneously through life, become meaningful. For my two children, moving again had positive and negative consequences. It was difficult for them to leave, once more, the place they felt they belonged to. But being able to connect deeply with relatives and roam in local public space with them and with new friends brought a very positive side to this transition.

In the Antwerp case study it was a constant wondering about placeness that guided me: how deep would this feeling of being a misfit be in people with distinctly different cultural background? How do they cope with 'being different' in a place related way? Which place would be considered 'home'? How would the interviewees perceive 'belonging'? What is the role of (social relations in) public space in this?

Relationships to places are enduring. They are not static though, they develop and transform over time. Past experiences in places continue to influence people's current relationships to places. Having migrated not only means bringing in relationships to places from elsewhere acquired over time, it also means bringing in a particular cultural background. '*Migrants are the living embodiment of continuity and change, mediating memories of the past with present living conditions or bringing the past into the present*'

(Fortier, 1999, p. 55). In tracking the meaning of place, the process of developing rootedness can be traced as the most natural, pristine, unmediated kind of people - place tie. This is particularly evident in research regarding people's relationships to their residence. Manzo's research (2003 and 2005) shows that people's stories about significant places in their lives narrate their particular journey in the world, as important and meaningful places can act as milestones in their life journey. The concept of 'journeying' reflects a developmental process or personal evolution through time and space. Thus the relationships to places can be seen as a reflection of our journey in the world literally, as dealing with physical boundaries and conditions we encounter and simultaneously enable us to see how feelings of comfort, belonging and self-affirmation can transcend physical boundaries. In an increasingly globalised world, this particular understanding of place meaning can serve as a rich complement to notions of 'home' as was often found in the first research accounts on place (Tuan, 1975).

Another aspect that surfaces in this piece of personal story refers to 'identity'. Who am I? Where is the difference between me and the other? Where is the similarity? How about our relationship? A helpful perspective for identifying difference and sameness in people in a social context is intersectionality. Originally designed in the late 1980s to uncover interlocking power systems that have an impact in black women of lower class (Crenshaw, 1991), the intersectionality framework nowadays considers various modes of social stratification, such as origin, culture, socio economic background, education, age, health and gender to be complexly interwoven identity categories which cannot be evaluated separately.

The intersectionality framework is applied in paper one. The story above tells that the *social category dimensions* of being a 'female' with 'migrant roots' obviously connects me in some instances with other women with migrant roots, yet makes me quite different in so far 'education' and 'origin' are concerned. Moreover, the *intersection* of being a female migrant but born in Flanders, with elements of German culture makes my particular cultural background quite different from the women migrants of Turkish origin and cultural roots. Intersectionalism helps me to discern similarities and differences in making an analysis of different social groups.

1.1.2. Towards place related artistic action research

From childhood onwards humans come to know places through engaging all five senses, sight as well as sound, smell, taste and touch. In making a firm connection with particular places through the senses the 'knowing' of places turns into lived through, embodied connection with place. On the level of interpersonal cooperation a similar mechanism can be discerned. If we engage our senses in communication with each other, an embodied way of connecting with others can be opened up. Sennett (2012) claims that craftsmen, in pursuing their job develop physical skills which apply to social life. Here he links the physical with the social. He goes on to demonstrate how this process of an embodied way of communicating works in a triple way: 1. In linking the rhythm of physical labour with rituals; 2. In showing how physical gestures or social cues make way for informal cooperative social relations; and 3. In clarifying how craftsmen's coping mechanisms with physical resistance can illuminate the challenge of dealing with social resistance and difference.

Keeping in mind that I love to paint and have experience with making murals in public space, the question that popped up in me was: how can these insights about embodiment and place contribute to uplifting social relationships in precarious neighbourhoods? Moulaert and André (André et al., 2013; Moulaert, 2018) show that a possible way out of poverty may go through self-emancipation or empowerment based on culture in the form of creative expression as a mode of communication and decision making. In essence empowerment would come from the satisfaction of alienated human needs through the transformative force found in social relations (Moulaert 2009). Transformations that imply improvements in the governance systems that regulate the allocation of goods and services in order to satisfy those needs, are considered social innovations. In spatial terms this means that social innovation involves among others the transformation of social relations in a place, be it a neighbourhood or region, through e.g. reconfiguring identities, reconstructing social relationships, (re)building community identity, re-appropriating (public) space through social mobilisation (Mehmood & Moulaert, 2011). Some artists stress complementary dimensions of creativity and art within neighbourhood and community development

(Dietvorst, n.d.; Dietvorst, 2004). Here, artistic expressions and communication are inseparable twins. Art is actively used as a mode of communication, as a ground for rediscovering social identity, as day to day activity in community building, as creativity of local artistic aspirations, in cooperation with neighbourhood communities. This means that social innovation is often locally or regionally specific. It also and preferably involves negotiation between agents and institutions that have a strong affiliation with the local context. Therefore it is very useful to analyse how actors conceptualise and use space and whose spatial conceptualisations dominate and how these are structurally embedded in the institutional frameworks (Van Dyck, 2010; Van Dyck & Van den Broeck, 2013).

Because action research's purpose is, unlike conventional social science, not primarily or solely to understand social arrangements, but also to effect desired change as a path to generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders this methodology fits in well with social innovation's objectives (Bradbury Huang, 2012).

Taking into account the various viewpoints about place, embodiment, action research and (self) empowerment through social innovation I was very curious whether focusing on the experience of the process of making art or making a creative product in a workshop setting would enhance the social meaning of place by offering a base of empowerment. Hence in paper four I describe my artistic action research of implementing a mural together with local youth in the precarious neighbourhood of Cruz Vermelha in the north of Lisbon. In this case study I followed up on a mutual agreement between researcher and the leading involved partner on full transparency about agenda and actions in order to make every step in this process negotiable. This is encouraged in the Planning and Development tradition of action research, and more in particular in the SPINDUS research (Segers et al., 2016). In doing so I made my research a participative enterprise, while paying attention to place related sentiments, local power positions and (historical) connections with place.

1.2. Structure of this thesis

This thesis consists of three parts. Part one has a general introduction, part two holds the body of the thesis with four papers and part three has the general conclusions.

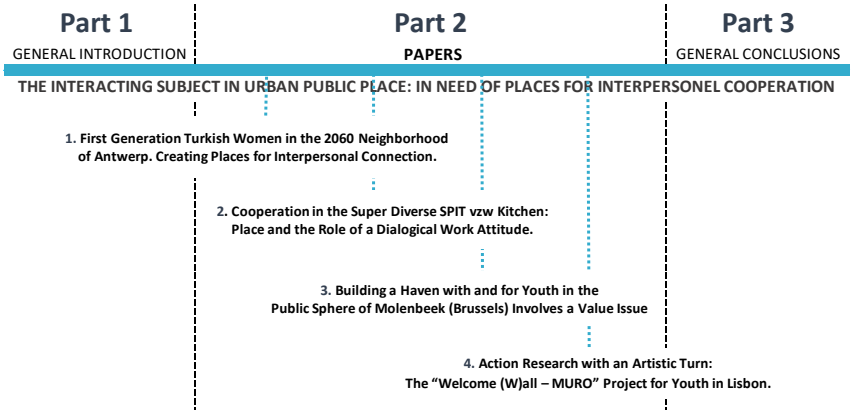

Figure 1: Structure of this doctoral thesis. Ruth Segers.

Part two starts with the presentation of paper one. It reports on a small-scale case study using an intersectionalist analysis of how first-generation Turkish migrant women who migrated to Belgium in the 1970s and who live in Antwerp 2060 (Belgium), cope with place related consequences of their migration. It shows how they have taken on efforts to re-enact and renegotiate places in search of interpersonal connection within their new environment. The case study focuses on three slightly overlapping time periods in the life of these women, before migration, in the extended arrival period and today. It makes use of an intra categorical approach to intersectionalism on the basis of a narrative and is empirically supported by semi structured personal interviews covering place related life stories situated at the intersection of four social identity categories, i.e. age, gender, socio-economic background and culture. The situatedness and partiality of the researcher is mirrored on the narrative of the interviewees. The analysis illustrates how the benefit of economic migration for these migrant women comes with

several social, including interpersonal sacrifices, that are a reflected in a 'deduplicated' feeling of belonging. This paper is published in 'Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies' (Segers, 2018).

Paper two describes place related aspects, both material and immaterial, that support a small group of people of very diverse (cultural) origin to cooperate in a self-evident way in the SPIT vzw business kitchen. SPIT vzw is a tailor-made social economy company in Leuven that focuses on structural support for people in precarious situations by providing jobs. A month of participatory observation in the SPIT business kitchen and interviews with workers, work leaders and executives gave me some interesting insights about the relationship between the workers' daily experience of this place and its social organisation, the process of identity formation and sense of place and its effect on cooperation. The study uncovered a dialogical work attitude, often based on social cues, between workers and work leaders. This attitude not only promotes recognition of a person but, at the same time, gives a natural and informal feeling to working together in diversity. All this is happening, perhaps surprisingly so, within a larger organisational framework holding on to a Flemish oriented base.

Paper three shows that genuine youth participation in neighbourhood development requires a deep and long-standing commitment to invest in interpersonal relations with youth and look at their relation with space. It was a basis of trust and true listening skills that made up the core of a successfully implemented youth participation process to the redevelopment of one of Molenbeek's (Brussels – Belgium) public places attracting an ethnically diverse public. The small St Remi Park once was a physically and socially dilapidated environment where one youth gang ruled to the detriment of other children, youth and locals. Findings were obtained by the use of qualitative research techniques, like interviews, policy documents and a small-scale ethnographic study in the park. They show that the implementation of a socially useful park design for youth involves working with participation time and space in a different way whereby the experience of satisfaction of a need for recognition of place related identity issues of youth, which fosters belonging, is a primordial target. This paper is submitted to the international, peer reviewed journal 'Children, Youth and Environments'.

Paper four describes the fully collaborative 'mural making experience' of Welcome (W)all - MURO. It is a context sensitive participatory art project embedded in an action research process in the socio-economic disadvantaged neighbourhood of Cruz Vermelha, Lisbon. A researcher, a youth organisation, a school and the pupils together with the local public administration of Lumiar, were the principal partners of the project. The project took the pupils outdoor to create a mural on which they could display their (public) place related needs, attachments and personal capacities. A critical ethnographic account is used to communicate the findings of this research. They confirm that the arts and crafts workshop setting for mural making does accommodate empowering opportunities for learning and socialisation in youth as seen through the mediating factor of the body. The whole mural making experience concurrently nourishes a sense of belonging in the involved youngsters. Finally, the central importance that is given to (place) negotiation between the partners of the project, enriches them with an experience of personal growth and learning. This paper is re-submitted to the international, peer reviewed journal 'Action Research'.

1.3. Practical and methodological stepping stones towards action research

Prior to starting my PhD trajectory, a professor of an affiliated university told some PhD making colleagues that writing a PhD thesis basically resembles learning a skill - you only have to prove whether you are capable of conducting a research according to standards. She said there is no need to make fuss about more than that. Nevertheless, in concluding my own PhD I can see that making a PhD 'according to standards' is a fuzzy norm description. Knowing particular academic standards and applying them is one way to go; knowing particular academic standards, but seeing alternative potential routes in applying them is another way to go.

In this I do not even try to question the academic standards and guidelines of the Arenberg Doctoral School. In the small environment of my own research I discovered a wide universe of ways to apply academic standards. In being a member of diverse research projects and carrying out case studies according to different templates I found out that not all modes of applying research appeal equally to me. At a particular point, I thought being a researcher or pursuing a PhD was absolutely not what I was made for. Among other things I felt I completely failed in complying with norms that approach social research in a so called 'objective' way. This mostly meant leaving out self-reflexivity, or for that matter, the researcher as an involved, and thus contributing actor in his (her) own research. It also involved leaving out embodied emotions and communication styles in what is researched. What eventually helped me through to the stage of writing this conclusion is a resolute determination to follow the way that inspired me the most. Boldly put: the most weighted input in research is made by the researcher, without this person's unique contribution there would be no such thing as 'research in the social sciences'. Moreover, I cannot help but see (another sort of) partiality in that type of social research that leaves embodied emotions and communication styles out of view. So, without doing away with the merit of other types of research I am just saying: I followed 'my way' of doing research.

This doctorate is not based in one particular research project providing strict guidelines for the research but has ties with three research projects: two case studies were

conducted in the margins of two research projects and two case studies were embedded in a third research project.

The first paper is the result of a case study which was mainly performed in the living rooms of Turkish migrant women in the 2060 neighbourhood of the city of Antwerp (Belgium) in 2013. This research is situated in the margins of the IWT/ SBO research project SPINDUS (2009 – 2013) about transdisciplinary ways to dealing with spatial quality involving planning, urban design, social innovation and stakeholders in which I was the valorisation coordinator. Although I had followed up many case studies that were parts of other doctoral research projects by that time, not only in the SPINDUS project but also in the preceding IWT/SBO project SP2SP (2005 – 2009) about spatial planning and strategic projects, I had designed and implemented this study as a first step in the direction of my own doctorate which started in the academic year 2010 – 2012. During this first year I followed two preparatory doctoral courses: the full year doctoral course on gender studies at UGent and the intensive doctoral course IMSDP offered by the research group of Planning & Development of the Architecture Department. Both courses would prove to become decisive factors in the eventual outcome of this doctoral research. In 2013 I set up my first case study, following a fairly traditional methodological path of qualitative investigation, whereby interviews were used as the dominant method of gathering empirical findings. It proved to offer many entries to use the critical feminist literature I had come to know during the gender studies course. Still the methodology did not fully satisfy me. Although I obtained sufficient material, I personally felt I could have been more 'in touch' with the problematics of this research if I had 'contributed' something more substantial than a 'talk' with the interviewees.

The second and the third paper have their respective basis in two assigned case studies that had to be carried out over a total period of one and a half year as a researcher for the IWT/SBO project DieGem about diversity and community (2013 – 2017). Here, the first case study was situated in the kitchen of the social economy enterprise SPIT vzw in the city of Leuven (Belgium) and carried out in 2014. The DieGem research group decided that this would be a retrospective case (hereby excluding action research), but did not determine the methodology. So I opted wholeheartedly for complementing

interviews and literature overview with participative observation in the SPIT vzw kitchen. The latter empirical approach proved to be very rewarding to me. Not only because I was able to seemingly effortlessly integrate in the SPIT kitchen as a co-worker, but also, and with hindsight, because I would very likely never have come across literature on social cues or at the least not have seen this element as such a valuable factor of interpersonal communication and cooperation if I had not experienced the effects of it myself. Here I touched on phenomenology's great strengths: seeking out what is obvious in human relations as it is known in everyday life, e.g. work cooperation in an industrial kitchen, but unquestioned and thereby questioning it (Seamon & Sowers, 2008). It sounds very logical and normal that a group of people are able to work together harmoniously in a kitchen setting. Nevertheless, when you read literature about kitchen workers, a lot of stress related diseases and discomforts surface. How come that these people of very diverse origin (some are not even able to verbally communicate which each other, as they do not possess the ability to use a common known language) work this harmoniously together? Taking part in this work group not only made me aware of the mental serenity that prevailed in the group, notwithstanding the precarious everyday life situation of those individual workers, it also made me wonder why no apparent teaching was available nor any clear work guidelines (apart from hygiene related matters, like a sign to wash your hands). After all the group had the official naming of being a group in 'training'. As such my research method put me on the way to a theory of which I felt was most congruent with what I had experienced in the SPIT kitchen. I found something that profoundly resonated with my experiences in Sennett's exploration of 'cooperation as a craft' in his book 'Together' (2012). This knowledge would not have been accessible to me without participation, as the workers and work leaders themselves were not aware of the scope of influence of their gestures and small rituals (as confirmed by them in the interview of 30 June 2014).

Paper three describes the case study that was mainly performed in the public place of the small St Rémi park in Molenbeek, Brussels (Belgium) in 2016. It represents an example of social innovation in participative playground planning cum design with youth as supported and organised by the Brussels based youth organisation Yota!. In this case study I used traditional qualitative research methods like interviews and literature. In looking for empirical findings with regard to current use of the park I

followed Low's (2010) reasoning about observation methods in public space. My (reactive) observation in the form of making sketches and taking pictures complemented regular observation as it gave youth an excuse to talk to me.

Like the previous, this case study also followed a project prescribed template for a retrospective research. Unlike in the previous, in this case study it felt a restriction not to be able to implement some action in research. Although I had an initial agreement with the coordinators of the park (JES vzw) on implementing an artistic action, there was no support from the research project to implement any action with the youth as this would implicate action research, for which there was 'no go' in this case study. Ultimately the reluctance of the local coordinators to facilitate any further action beyond that defined as necessary for the DieGem project gave way for cancelling further investigation. What I learned from this is how important it is to uncover and respond to a consciously felt (human) need (and thereby transcending the purely material aspect of 'need') in whatever context you want to implement action research in. Yota! had clearly asked for action research, but this was not supported by DieGem; and the local park coordinators, members of the overarching organisation, JES vzw, had never really supported the idea of research, so I could not go beyond what was officially agreed upon.

The inability to implement action research in the Molenbeek case fostered the creation of a fourth case study where I could further develop the idea to experiment with artistic action research. The project 'The return of the Swallows' of Dietvorst (2004) inspired me in several ways. Like Dietvorst I am also interested in art as a social process, one that engages the viewer/ participant with their environment and the politics of everyday life. Like Dietvorst I am not interested in making collectable objects, but rather in connecting people through engaging them in a common creative process (Dietvorst, n.d.). Thus, paper four, in which I wanted to focus on trying out action research methodology, is based on yet another case study. This time the setting of the research study was in the neighbourhood of Cruz Vermelha, in Lumiar, Lisbon (Portugal) in 2017. The youth organisation of this neighbourhood had tried to make a participative mural with youths of the neighbourhood in the previous year. A beautiful mural was accomplished, but it had completely failed to be a participative initiative. So my offer to make a mural with

a specific focus on the participative element with all involved was readily welcomed. Hence, for me, it was a most wonderful opportunity to implement action research in which I could investigate the role of social cues and place in interpersonal cooperation. I wanted to investigate whether I would be able to reproduce the experience of cooperation in a workshop setting which I had experienced in the SPIT vzw case study, yet this time in a setting for creating a mural instead of preparing food. The case study did bring me confirming insights in the power of (arts and crafts) workshop (settings) in creating positive interpersonal connections via social cues. The involved organisations, in turn, became (co)producers of a very nice and strategically positioned mural in their neighbourhood.

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PART 2

PAPERS

Segers, R. (2018). First-generation Turkish women in the 2060 neighbourhood of Antwerp. Creating places for interpersonal connection. *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies*, 21(4), (forthcoming).



Figure 2: Making acquaintance with the family before starting the interview. Photo: Ruth Segers

2. First-generation Turkish Women in the 2060 Neighbourhood of Antwerp. Creating Places for Interpersonal Connection.

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a small-scale case study using an intersectional approach that reflects on sense of place in first-generation Turkish migrant women who migrated to Belgium in the 1970s and who live in Antwerp 2060 (Belgium). It shows how migrant women have taken on efforts to re-enact and renegotiate places in search of interpersonal connection within their new environment. The case study focuses on three significant time periods in the life-cycle of the women, before migration, in the extended arrival period and today. It is empirically supported by semi structured personal interviews covering place related life stories situated at the intersection of four social identity categories, i.e. age, gender, socio-economic background and culture. The analysis illustrates how the benefit of economic migration for these migrant women comes with the sacrifice of social connectedness, a consequence of their 'deduplicated' feeling of belonging.

KEYWORDS

Intersectionality, Turkish migrant women, sense of place, belonging, interpersonal connection

2.1. Introduction

This paper seeks to shed light on first-generation Turkish women's experience and (evolving) attitude regarding sense of place in the 2060 neighbourhood of Antwerp. Documenting and analysing this particular social group in this particular locality responds to a deeply felt sentiment to question the relationship between place and a universal social need to deeply connect with others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). How women born in Turkey relate to a Belgian urban neighbourhood and (not) develop a sense of belonging has been insufficiently researched. This is surprising because local experiences, sense of place and feelings of belonging are key to understanding this generation in this neighbourhood.

The memorable municipal elections of 1988, when the ultra-right wing party Vlaams Blok [Flemish Block] became the third biggest party in Antwerp, revealed major cultural tensions in this neighbourhood (Moulaert & Christiaens, 2010). We can roughly distinguish three historical 'population layers' (Blommaert, 2014). The first population layer consists of 'native' elderly working-class people. Since the 1970s, 2060 Antwerp harbours a resident community of Turkish and Moroccan guest worker migrants and their families. Their communities are the most historical ethnic minorities there and form the second layer. During the 1988 election period they stood for 30 to 40 percent of the 35.000 inhabitants (Divercities, 2013). Meanwhile an influx of people from Eastern Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s has further diversified the ethnical composition of 2060 neighbourhood and created a third population layer. When looking at the last decade, a fourth layer could be added to this stratification: well off and highly educated young native Belgians with a distinctly different profile from the first population layer responded to the low real estate prizes of the neighbourhood and went to live there (Blommaert, 2014). Taken together as many as 146 nationalities reside in the neighbourhood at present; Turkish inhabitants are listed under the statistical denominator 'West Asians' which represent 17 % of a population of 44.000 (Stad Antwerpen, 2018).

In the slipstream of the 1988 elections, inhabitants of diverse ethnic belonging have been interviewed extensively about their experiences with living in this multi-cultural

neighbourhood (Panorama Jambers, 1988). In the 1990s the national, regional and local inner city policies, reinforced by the EU Urban policy, made a clear break with those of the 1980s policies. They actively promoted a reversal of the negative image of this railway station neighbourhood through investing in a diversity of social, cultural and economic activities under the flag of Integrated Area Development (IAD), exploited by the BOM [Buurtontwikkelingsmaatschappij], a laboratory for social innovation involving initiatives like training, participation, housing and the improvement of public space (Moulaert, 2000; Moulaert & Christiaens, 2010). In 2005-2008, the city invested in the urban reconversion project Park Spoor Noord, which turned a large railway yard into a 44 acres multifunctional public park. Here after public investments in the neighbourhood have considerably decreased.

What has been missing throughout, though, is the involvement of initial first-generation Turkish migrant women in public debates. This can be explained by their absence from public place, or their disinclination to enter in conversation in public, or because they have been overlooked by public authorities or researchers. Only recently, at the occasion of 50 years of Turkish migration to Belgium, their experiences have been documented, but mainly through the eyes of their husbands (Decommere, 2014; Erfgoedcel Mijn Erfgoed, 2014). Hence this study focusses on experiences of Turkish women who followed their guest worker husbands in the 1970s to live in the 2060 neighbourhood of Antwerp.

This paper reveals how our sense of place (and such related things as our degrees of mobility) are not only gender specific, but also have a very local character (Massey, 1994). The central question is: how do the women involved in this study craft spaces for meaningful interpersonal interaction and pursue their social lives within public space or in its folds? The scholarly notion ‘sense of place’, defined as a ‘communally held sense of appropriate behaviour, and a context for engaging in and interpreting action’ (Harrison & Dourish, 1996), is used to highlight the meaning that spaces acquire through active and engaged participation in them, turning those spaces into meaningful places. Sense of place is what makes a space specific, it not only relates to the physical characteristics of the environment, it also refers to the affect and meanings (including memories and associations) and the activities afforded by the place, including the social interactions associated with the place. New members of any culture, like new arrivals in a neighbourhood, learn the local culture and the role they play in it by socialisation.

Learning involves time. Although sense of place is essentially a cultural phenomenon, it certainly does not exclude that it is also a very personal thing. It is, concurrently, an individual process of receiving, reconstructing and communicating in a narrative way the unique identity of space which then becomes place (Rose, 1995).

There are four sections in this paper. The first section introduces a classic intracategorical approach to intersectionalism. It goes on to discuss some target group specific particularities that needed attention in order to apply interviews as a research method. It further describes the social location of the selected women, followed by the researcher's situatedness vis-à-vis the involved women. The second section presents a narrative of sense of place of the involved women over three periods in time, before migration, during the extended arrival period and today. Each time period highlights particular intersections between social identity categories that have predominated in creating a sense of place in that specific time period. The third section reflects on the narrative and discusses three issues that play a dominant role in the involved women's attitudes, sentiments and behaviour regarding place: language education, gender and belonging. The final section exposes a deduplicated feeling of belonging as an important factor of keeping public place in this neighbourhood a male dominated realm.

2.2. Setting up a small-scale case study among first-generation Turkish women

By focusing on a particular social group, at neglected dimensions of intersection, I seek to reveal the complexity of lived experience of this group and the diversity and difference within this group. I therefore use a classic intracategorical approach to intersectionalism as introduced by Crenshaw (1991). In this single-group analyses, complexity derives from the analysis of a *social location* at the intersection of four single dimensions of four categories, rather than at the intersection of a full range of dimensions of a full range of categories (intercategorical approach) or none at all (anticategorical complexity) (MacCall, 2005). The considered dimensions are (1.) being female, (2.) living in the 2060 neighbourhood with a particular socio-economic background, and (3.) having been born before migration in the 1970s (4.) in Turkey (see figure 3). Only those dimensions, have been chosen because they sufficiently characterise a target group whose voice does not seem to have been of significance in previous analysis about the use of and design for public place in the given neighbourhood. This study does not determine the complex texture of day-to-day life of the involved individual women nor their individual psychological make-up. The topic of this study is the reality of *the individual experience of a social identity*, because it is this experience that is connected to socio-structural incidences of power that maintain systems of inequity (Lutz, 2002).

However intersectionality and social inequalities should not be reduced only to the classic analysis of oppression and discrimination through the lenses of gender, class and race. They also need to be considered from the perspective of the 'privileged within' a social group (Lutz, 2002). It is these 'privileged within' aspects that can give clues as to how the perceived oppression is managed or could be managed. In order to reveal the voice of the selected social group and perceive its active engagement as an 'identity', this study uses narratives or life stories (Prins, 2006).

This paper operationalises the four mentioned social identity dimensions involved in this case study by

1. reflecting on the particular situatedness and partiality between the people involved in the interviews;
2. focusing on three significant time periods in the life-cycle of the selected women, before migration, in the extended arrival period and today, which highlights an evolving evolution in intersectional relations;
3. identifying the social identity category that is most frequently stressed by interviewees at certain moments in their narration. Then contextually analysing the relevance of this identity category in relation to the other categories.

This case study is predominantly based on semi structured personal interviews of two hours with women inhabitants of 2060 Antwerp. A typical interview consisted of two parts: it started with me rising some pre-conceived questions about the selected dimensions of identity categories. Next, I continued with questions that triggered personal stories regarding experiences with place. How did the women experience public places in their locality of origin and in their current locality? Which social activities did they enjoy most in both places? Where is 'at home' and why? After each interview I took time to visit the neighbourhood places that were mentioned during the interview.

Through the Voluntary Service [Vrijwilligersdienst] of the city of Antwerp, I found the contact details of a translator for the interviews. The women in the research target group have difficulty to express themselves in Dutch, and I do not speak Turkish. Dudu, raised in the 2060 neighbourhood, was listed as a volunteer in educational programs organised by the city of Antwerp and in Vagga cgg (Centre for Mental Healthcare) to inform elderly Turkish migrants on issues as diverse as waste selection and female sexuality. During our first meeting, she agreed on working as a translator for me on a volunteer basis. Her relational skills and natural link with the Turkish community in Antwerp, personally and professionally, proved to be invaluable for this project. According to her estimation a total of thirty women would fit the four social identity criteria. Whenever she found someone willing to give an interview, she called me to set an appointment.

social identity category		gender	age	socio-economic background								culture		
dimensions for selection target group		female	born before migration in 1970s	precarious								born in Turkey		
dimensions for analysis of data		female	physical mobility	year of birth	migration year	proficiency spoken Dutch	formal education	home ownership* in 2060 Belgium	home ownership* in Turkey	marital status	children	family income	practising religion	Koran group/	place of birth
interviewee	1	female	limited	1951	1973	limited/illiterate	primary school	none	NA	married	4	1500-2000	sunni	host	rural Turkey
interviewee	2	female	limited	1949	1979	limited/illiterate	none	none	yes	married	6	1000-1500	sunni	host	rural Turkey
interviewee	3	female		1950	1975	limited/illiterate	none	none	yes	married	4	1500-2000	sunni		rural Turkey
interviewee	4	female		1971	1979	fluent	lower high school	none	none	divorced	2	<1000	sunni	host	rural Turkey
interviewee	5	female		1956	1975	limited/illiterate	primary school	yes	yes	married	2	NA	sunni		rural Turkey
interviewee	6	female	limited	1941	1975	illiterate	none	none	yes	married	7	NA	sunni		rural Turkey
interviewee	7	female		1951	1975	limited/literate	primary school	none	NA	divorced	5	<1000	sunni	host	urban Turkey
interviewee	8	female	limited	1951	1977	limited/illiterate	none	none	yes	widow	4	<1000	sunni	host	rural Turkey
interviewee	9	female		1969	1974	fluent	lower high school	yes	yes	married	5	>4000	sunni		rural Turkey
translator	10	female		1973	1975	fluent	high school	yes	yes	married	3	NA	sunni		rural Turkey
researcher	11	female		1969	non	fluent	doctorate	yes		divorced	2	2000-2500	none		Belgium
			respondents' data comply with the selected criteria												
			respondents' data deviate from the selected criteria												

Figure 3: Social identity criteria for the selection of the research group and the analysis of empirical findings in 2060 study – 2013. Analysis Ruth Segers.

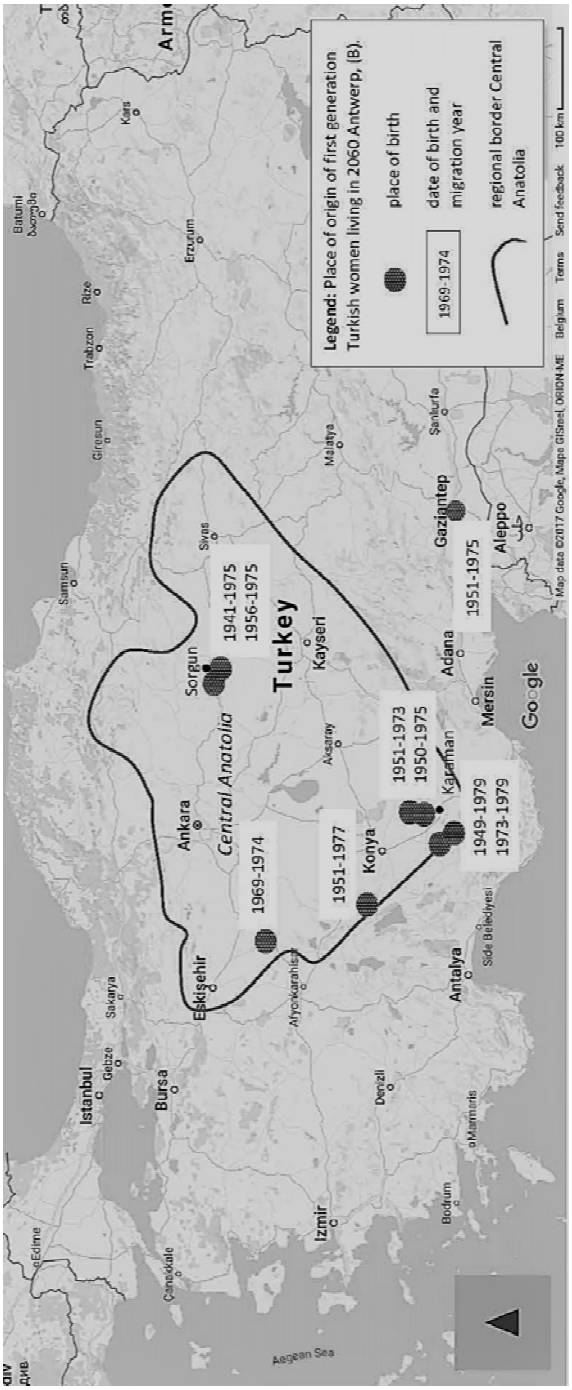

Figure 4: Place of origin of first generation Turkish women in 2060 Antwerp. Map Ruth Segers.

Over a period of six months we retained nine interviews that fully fit the selected social location, as indicated in light grey in figure 3. They had arrived in Belgium between 1973 and 1979 and at the interview moment, their ages ranged from 57 to 72, with two daughters of 42 and 44. Figure 4 shows that eight interviewees have been born in the rural fringes of Central Anatolia. One woman has been born in the urban context of Gaziantep (Southeast Anatolia).

In all cases my first contact with the interviewees was on the doorstep of their home (mapped in figure 5), in an interbellum or after war apartment, in a so-called workers' house. I greeted the tenant, offered to take off my shoes, or put them next to the other shoes at the door entrance. Then I was guided to the sitting room or kitchen where the interview took place. Dudu first introduced me and the research objectives, after which the participants agreed on having the interview recorded. Eight women asked to keep their names confidential. During the interview I observed some guidelines for intercultural scientific interviewing (Bricki & Green, 2007): sitting in a 90 degree angle with respect to the interviewee, not in an opposition; legs next to each other, not crossed; loosely making eye contact, never full eye contact. The two daughters did not veil while telling their stories, nor did Dudu, the other women did. All but Dudu veil outside the home, yet, like all others, she considers herself a practicing Muslim.

After the first interview, Dudu and I organised a feedback session to distinguish between her intentions to helping out the interviewees, my research agenda and the stories I heard through her. Dudu, also a first-generation Turkish woman was raised in the neighbourhood. She had told me she wanted to be of assistance to me in order to improve, in her way and in some way through me, the lives of the involved interviewees. She had moved to the Antwerp suburbs and therefore did not fit the selected social location. We agreed on translating in a literal, transpersonal way during the interviews, e.g. 'I feel …', not 'she says that she feels …'. However, this proved to be not manageable for Dudu. Therefore in this paper, I hardly use personal quotes from interviewees.

Being a woman facilitated this study, not only by convincing women of doing an interview with a same sex person, as Dudu reported, but also by offering me a feeling of being on equal footing with interviewees. At the same time, the interviewees told me that being a single mom puts me in a vulnerable socio-economic position in their particular mind set.

2.3. Sense of place: Turkish women's narrative

There is one crucial decision that links the lives of six interviewed women: at the time they were teenager moms, their young husbands decided to take on chances and explore working abroad to provide for their families. They were attracted by the Belgian invitation to join workforces as 'guest workers'. Initially it was a story of non-permanent economic migration, none of these men had the intention to stay abroad. Yet as the period of work migration extended, this situation became unsustainable for the single adult households in Turkey. Two to eight years after the men's arrival in Belgium, the families sold their animals, food stock and some belongings and vacated their houses. It was too hard for these women to stay in Turkey without partner.

The collected life stories evoke a recollection of past, previous and ongoing sense of place experiences. The current experiences and feelings necessarily follow from what has been experienced before. Interestingly, the timing of changes to the different life phases or to changes in sentiments and attitudes regarding public place in this neighbourhood held by the interviewees run parallel with changes to the neighbourhood population 'layers' explained in the introduction. The first phase of experiencing place is situated in Turkey, the second starts after the migration to Belgium, in the 1970s. In the narratives a change of sentiments about the neighbourhood occurs in the 1990s, the divide is marked with the words: '*when the strangers came to the neighbourhood*' (interview 8).

The narrative is summarised in the following three sub sections, and followed by a map showing mentioned places in the neighbourhood.

<u>The women narrated to me about:</u>

<u>growing up as a young woman in Turkey (1950–1970)</u>

Summer months in Turkey were the hardest. From a very early age the countrywomen were involved in doing chores around the home, making wicker mats, stitching, spinning wool or attending the smallest. Outside chores were group activities including gardening, growing vegetables, attending the grape groves or taking care of small

cattle. It could be really warm outside. They wore small white head scarves and wide Turkish trousers with a longer blouse on top. The city woman recalls making grape molasses in courtyards and processing bulgur in the streets as a social activity. She effectively learned to read and write (so did the involved daughters, yet they mention sisters who did not). Reading or writing was not seen as something that would have contributed in helping out with the chores. So it definitely wasn't a priority for the countrywomen. After all buying small stuff at the local market was based on an oral agreement. It was their responsibility after marriage. Doing the weekly shopping in the nearby town was a man's job.

The countrywomen told me that marriages or celebrations took place on a central open place, nearby the village. These were the occasions to meet boys. All women married when under twenty. One (interviewee 2) was only twelve. The women explained to me their husbands decided to go to Belgium to earn money. The orphaned woman (interview 6) says she begged her husband to come along, she was fourteen when she had her first child and (social) life was hard in the country.

living in 2060 as guest workers' wives (1970–1990)

Going to the 'gavurlar' [unbelievers, a word with pejorative connotation] *in Belgium for the first time was a huge adventure for all women. Although they were reassured to find that Belgians were people just like they were, everything else was 'new': the houses looked strange, so did the wallpaper and even the market was different. They had never seen women in the streets without a scarf. European women seemed so 'naked'. Nevertheless they all started wearing European trousers with a long blouse on top and kept the typical white scarves.*

Three women mention they were closer to their husbands in this period (the recently divorced city woman and the widow tell otherwise) and solidarity among women regarding child raising was bigger. The households visited further away Turkish families together and stayed overnight on a weekly basis. They would have long group talks. When the adult women heard new Turkish people would arrive, they all thoroughly enjoyed going to St-Jansplein for welcoming and helping the newcomers. Through the children they felt they were connected with Flemish neighbours (interview 1, 3, 4, 7, 8

and 9). They would find a package of nicely folded clothes at the door step or find the children get sweets of the neighbours and talk Dutch to them.

For the five illiterate women, experiences with places in Belgium always come with the undertone of being illiterate. One woman recounts about going to a place outside the neighbourhood with directions based on publicity boards. She fully lost her way: the posters on the publicity boards had been changed. Another woman used to bring her children to school, following one particular road stretch. She realised later there was a short cut, but she never dared to try. A third woman told me shopping to her means going to a place, taking prize labels, having them checked by her literate friend and then go back to make a purchase. The orphaned woman tells me she deeply enjoyed a few secret walks to Stadspark, guided by two friends who could read. She regrets her friends have left the neighbourhood long time ago. Speaking Dutch is a problem too, she explains, as she is unable to share her feelings when in hospital. She understands what is being said, but cannot respond. Hence taking her children to the doctor's used to be problematic too. She claims working outside the home would have helped to get connected, but, she says, I have children, I cook and take care. Merely going outside does not help.

living in 2060 as Turkish migrant women (1990-2014)

During an extended period after their arrival all women fully focused on going back to Turkey. Every penny they earned was for investment in Turkey or for saving. They all shared with their families in Turkey too. This ended when their children got married. That is the time it deeply sunk in that they were going to stay in Belgium. Going back was no option anymore. They could never leave their children behind. 'Turkey has come here and the neighbourhood has become home'. (Turkish) people from the neighbourhood now mean more to them than their family in Turkey, even if they come from different regions (interview 1, 2, 3, 4, 9). Still, they cannot miss going to Turkey. The orphaned woman dreams of returning permanently. Six of them have a house there. The neighbourhood offers a social life and connection with their children; Turkey offers time to unwind with work to do in their garden. All have an insurance to be buried in Turkey.

All women and daughters mention feelings of particular unease when facing Turkish men in the streets. Especially when encountering men that are next of kin. Therefore they avoid the Van Kerckhovenstraat [with many Turkish coffee bars, in the middle of the 'Turkish area' of the neighbourhood]. On sunny days the stairs in front of the [St-Amandus) church are packed with Turkish men. That is why these women prefer to take the tram to pass that street. Four countrywomen and the divorced daughter claim they would rather go to Handelsstraat [a major ethnic -Moroccan predominance- shopping street in the 'Moroccan area' of the neighbourhood] or the market [St-Jansplein). All of them wear the headscarf when going outside. The women claim they have been better informed now (to not show their hair), it brings safety. The better off, married daughter maintains it is reclaimed piety that drives her.

Three countrywomen have had knee operations, the widow had serious back operations. The latter says she used to be very thin when she was young … but that has changed. For these women it is hard to walk more than 500 meter. When they need to be somewhere, their children drive them. Still they enjoy shortly going to the park (Park Spoor Noord) or going out. They assert there are not enough benches to sit on, nor are there enough trees to provide shadow. All of them claim the streets have changed since the 1970s. The initial Flemish inhabitants have left and now there are many people from Eastern Europe. Two countrywomen say they feel unease when encountering new Turkish people because they cannot distinguish Kurds from PKK members. It seems there is more poverty, dirt (needles) and noise on the streets now. They all avoid the De Coninckplein [with a concentration of African inhabitants] too. Now five women connect with non-relatives at home, they have a weekly Koran group, where they discuss religion (and many other subjects).

Figure 5 situates the narrative. It locates those places of which the sense of place is highlighted in the interviews: the Turkish and a Moroccan influenced area, the most important shopping locations, and the most favoured park and (market) square. From the locations of former and current interviewee addresses it is clear that for the involved women the 'Turkish area' in particular and the neighbourhood at large is not a transition place (Saunders, 2011) it has become their home.



Figure 5: Sense of place in the 2060 Antwerp neighbourhood for first-generation Turkish women. Map Ruth Segers.

2.4. Analysis of the narrative

Three issues stick out when analysing the narrative. They all recur in social debates in relation to an 'integrating in society' narrative. The first issue is about language skills (a dimension of the category 'being in a precarious social-economic position'), the second issue is about gender tension and the third is about the importance of belonging, a notion that strongly resonates with sense of place.

The first issue, not being able to converse in a prevalent language and not being able to read, are mutually reinforcing inabilities. These inabilities seriously impede social connection outside the household. It not only hampers their ability to ventilate emotions and needs to Dutch talking people, it also makes navigating through public space quite demanding. This inability surfaced as a major problem from the moment the women entered the context of the Belgian society. However, while being in Turkey, being illiterate is not and has never been a pressing problem for them.

Over the three different period we see the emergence of adaptation of small spatial strategies (Yeoh & Huang, 1998) in order to connect on an interpersonal level. Before migration social contact is limited within the household with exceptional encounters in public place at the occasion of major transitional rites. In the period 1970-1990 the need for social connection is expressed in several instances and is met through sleep overs, meetings in the market square, neighbourhood shopping and occasional trips to a further away park. It is the period with a relatively bigger influence of Flemish peers whom they encounter in public spheres. In this period the involved women started wearing 'European trousers' without overly paying attention to fully covering their hair. During the period 1990-2014, the nature of spatial strategies that offer a way out of isolation has altered. In this period respondents rely more on interaction with Muslim peers. There are still parties for anniversaries and marriages, but not in the public sphere. Moreover, women explicitly withdraw from direct interaction in public spheres as can be seen in their wearing a veil and resigning to not being able to read or speak a foreign language. Physical limitations, the appearance of streets, the encounters on the streets and non-accessibility of parks all play a role in this. In this period, the organisation of religiously inspired, weekly get-togethers among women in the private home take on an important position in their social life.

The second issue is about the tensions that are felt whenever Turkish men are encountered in the neighbourhood streets. The interviewed women all explicitly avoid the Van Kerckhovestraat, which is flocked with Turkish coffee houses. Taking a tram through it is an alternative option for many as it mitigates direct contact with the male gaze. At first sight it looks like a gender issue, but when looking closer it becomes clear that location of origin plays a very important role. For it is Turkish men (that are next of kin or reside in the same neighbourhood) that are avoided, not Moroccan men who are Muslim as well.

The intersection between the criteria being female, having been born in rural Turkey and thus wearing a scarf is highlighted in the period 1990-2014. Among the involved women a reference to instituted standards of Islamic orthodoxy prevails, yet references to parental and male kin authority are made as well. The body not only needs to be covered 'because of Allah's will', but also because of 'the father's will', 'your parents' will' or, in one occasion, out of piety. So most women involved in this study cope with a fear for an authority figure by covering in places where social connection is possible, in the home as well as outside the home. I consider this fear for authority not as a specific cultural given. To me this is information of a phenomenological nature: it can be observed in any group (Tuan, 1979). However, the way a solution is sought for handling this fear is culturally informed. Wearing a scarf is historically and culturally rooted in the upbringing of the involved women. Taking off the veil would not only imply taking on another relationship with their own body, it would also imply a re-negotiating of their relationship with others, women and men (Fadil, 2011). In other words, it would challenge the involved women's way of handling intrapersonal and, as a consequence, interpersonal interaction in ànd outside the home.

Relationships to places, seen as a life-long process are the third issue. The statement '*Turkey* has come *here*' is meaningful to me. It says '*the place I belong to* has come to *this neighbourhood*'. This does not mean Turkey has disappeared as a meaningful place, Turkey remains 'the place I belong to'. Although eight in ten interviewees do not own a house in Belgium, all but one have a modest or nice property in Turkey. House ownership in Turkey grants these women the ability to reside in Turkey for prolonged vacation periods. Gardening is a very important activity in Turkey, which actively and passively nourishes this feeling of belonging (Tuan, 1975) in them through its connection

with the soil and fruits of their origin. What's more, Turkey is unanimously chosen as their 'ultimate' place of destination.

The expression 'the neighbourhood has become home' can be understood as: 'The neighbourhood is the space that connects me with my children'. For it is this bond with their children that colours the neighbourhood as 'a symbolic space of familiarity, comfort, security, and emotional attachment' (Tuan, 1975). This bond is a stronger basis of belonging to a place or feeling 'at home' than the relationship with a 'domestic(ated) material space'. A domestic space in the neighbourhood was available for them during more than 15 years. Yet only in the 1990s, coinciding with the first marriages of the children, came the realisation that the neighbourhood in fact is a 'home' for them.

Hence, from this moment onwards, I see a deduplication of 'feeling at home' in the interviewed women: they feel truly at home in two places, neither place affords the full sentiment of 'being at home'. It is only by exploring and acknowledging the ways in which the involved women re-enact in a self-owned way what links them to their roots that we can understand the significance of this process. Their desires affect and will has been shaped by non-liberal traditions, as we see in their leaning upon wearing a veil and taking the illiteracy aspect as a given issue. The western world perceives this behaviour as subordination to men. As such the proscription from public place and the means to control their social interactions in the public sphere draw upon structures of inequity located in the home and elsewhere (Yeoh & Huang, 1998). Alternatively and simultaneously this behaviour can also be considered as a desire to express 'belonging', a desire to belong to certain intersectional locations – locations that are manufactured by hegemonic discourses of culture, but also by articulatory practices around family, gender, age, religion, sexuality or socio economic class (Prins, 2006). The 'environmental past' of these women is ingrained in their memories and reproduced in adjusted ways in their everyday life (Manzo, 2005). Through their attachment to two different geographically locatable places, the involved women acquire a sense of belonging and purpose which gives meaning to their lives and informs their actions in dealing with interconnectedness in public spheres.

As Relph (1976, p. 20) points out, 'without exception, the home is considered to be the "place" of greatest personal significance in one's life, in fact "the central reference point of human existence"'. In this instance we see an effective yearly traveling from home to home. The relationship between both places of home can be seen as a reflection of a

'journey' (Manzo, 2005) from the interviewed women which not only reflects their dealing with physical boundaries, but also shows us how their feelings of comfort, belonging and self-affirmation can transcend physical boundaries. This belonging in two places goes hand in hand with a sacrifice of social connectedness: in present time social connection is more important in the neighbourhood, yet this connection is yearly severed for a trip of several months to Turkey. Despite the fixity of their identities as 'women migrants' who, according to dominant discourse, hardly have place in public space, those women do not necessarily accept these representations as immanent. Instead, like other subordinate groups, they are able of working with what Foucault (1982) calls 'little tactics of the habitat'. These women find greater degrees of freedom, in expressing their selves in a way they feel is congruent with whom they feel they are, in impressing their own cultural 'style' on the public landscape – through dressing, speech, behaviour and an inversion of public norms – than in active, deliberate strategies of resistance (Yeoh & Huang, 1998; Mahmood, 2001).

2.5. Where do we go from here?

This case study informs us about first-generation Turkish women's sense of place of the 2060 neighbourhood in Antwerp. What they have come to see as appropriate behaviour in public spheres can only partly be seen as influenced by social interaction with peers or figures of authority. The other part is influenced by a 'duplicated feeling of being at home'. Through their bond with their children, they have come to feel inevitable attracted to the neighbourhood, but the attachment to their country of origin is still very strong. This dual attachment perspective is important for the conception of public space because these women as social actors/agents construct and reconstruct places starting from their own realities, meanings and experiences. What stands out is the very limited claim on traditional public places in the neighbourhood. It is compelling to find that women, in finding individual solutions to collective problems, create situations where they assist in making the causes of a problem invisible and therefore unresolved (Horelli & Vespä, 1994). Traditional public place still is a masculine realm. And to have it more of a space where women are at ease it might need some more social AND spatial adjustments, because spatial patterns do influence our sense of gender (Heynen, 2005) and sense of culture and vice versa.

Word of thanks

In warm appreciation of the hospitality of translator and interviewees and their gratitude for being able to tell their stories. Some of which had never been in the possibility to vent before.

Bir fincan kahve olsan 40 yil kateri olur.

Loosely translated: 'If you drink a cup of coffee together, friendship is tenable for 40 years …'.

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Figure 6: At the cash register of the SPIT dining space at noon: waiting for the customers to come. Photo: Ruth Segers.

3. Cooperation in the Super Diverse SPIT vzw Kitchen: Place and the Role of a Dialogical Work Attitude.

ABSTRACT

This article describes place related aspects, both material and immaterial, that support a small group of people of very diverse (cultural) origin to cooperate in a self-evident way in the SPIT vzw business kitchen. SPIT vzw is a tailor-made social economy company in Leuven that focuses on structural support in providing jobs for people in precarious situations. A month of participatory observation in the SPIT business kitchen and interviews with workers, work leaders and executives gave me some interesting insights about the relationship between the daily experience of this place and its social organisation, the process of identity formation and sense of place and its effect on cooperation. The study uncovered a dialogical work attitude, often based on social cues, between workers and work leaders. This attitude not only promotes recognition of a person but, at the same time, gives a natural and informal feeling to working together in diversity. All this is happening, perhaps surprisingly so, within a larger organisational framework holding on to a Flemish oriented base.

3.1. Introduction

In this article I examine how place related aspects, both material and immaterial, support self-evident cooperation in a small group of people of very diverse (cultural) origin in the SPIT business kitchen. Does ethnic diversity make a weighty and additional difference? Is it true that intercultural tensions, so noticeable in public life, are continued on this work floor? This paper builds on characteristics of 'place' that can influence identity formation. A person's identity is a dynamic and multiple given that evolves through social interactions. All senses play a role in these interactions and are embedded in a physical spatial context. Concurrently, a well-understood form of 'dialogue', based on social cues among workers and work leaders, has a huge influence on self-understanding which in turn can instigate practices of cooperation. This attitude not only promotes recognition of a person but, at the same time, produces a natural and informal positive visceral feeling which stimulates working together. Ultimately, this case study highlights the importance of the recognition of a person's identity through the creation of an 'acknowledging environment'. All this is happening, perhaps surprisingly so, within a larger organisational framework holding on to local cultural values: no religiously inspired publications on the company's notice boards, only Dutch can be spoken, no conversion talk, no stealing.

The SPIT vzw group (Structural starter to Participation and Integration of the Homeless) is known for collecting, sorting, repairing and selling second-hand goods. SPIT vzw offers alternative employment for some 200 workers who are not part of the regular labour market because of a mental or physical disability, a difficult social background or for administrative reasons. The goal of this Leuven (Belgium) based social economy company is to provide people with opportunities to find a place in our society through 'tailor-made work'. Workers in a precarious socio-economic situation can find a job here and half of them can even obtain a permanent employment contract. Still, profit making to reinvest in workers is essential for SPIT vzw. It can only bear the cost of permanent employment contracts by also employing people with subsidised (50%) contracts, which it does in its catering training team.

By opting against the market-based European policy view that the social economy is an intermediate step towards regular employment, this company occupies a rather unique position on the labour market and more specifically within the social economy. On the part of the employer, this requires a constant balancing between the interests of the company, those of the employee and the rules of the labour market.

The international literature on working in a catering kitchen, explains there is a major difference between the working relationships in a social economy kitchen (in case vzw SPIT kitchen) and in otherwise highly hierarchically structured kitchens that employ people through the regular labour market. Working in a for profit kitchen is very demanding on the workers, mentally and physically. Studies on back injuries and burns as well as studies of bullying and sexism in the kitchen are numerous (Bhatt & Sidhu, 2012; Bloisi & Hoel, 2008; Tomita, Muto, Matsuzuki, Haruyama, Ito, Muto, Haratani, Seo, Ayabe , & Katamoto, 2013; Harrison & Kelly, 2009). What is striking is that these studies generally link the material facilities or the immaterial social structure in the kitchen to injuries and discomforts at work, but not to benefits or elements of mental well-being at work. As Matsuzuki et al. (2013) point out the combined effects of material facilities and social structure have not been covered in research.

In public social or social economy restaurants, alternatively, the staff does not need to cope with a work pressure comparable to what is found in for profit kitchens. Public social restaurants explicitly state ‘people work here because they are not [yet] able to catch up with the pace of the ordinary catering industry’. People working there are prepared to move on to the regular catering environments after the training period (Sociale Economie.be, 2015); yet not all of them are capable of making that transition.

Although SPIT vzw is a company restaurant, work pressure here is comparable with working in public social restaurants. The catering team working in the business kitchen of SPIT vzw, consists of three work leaders and about 15 workers. They prepare the daily lunch for three companies located on the social economy site. These workers have specific, but differing, ‘training’ employment contracts that last on average one year. This means that the group composition changes continuously over the course of a year. The name 'training', however, does not cover the work situation, at least not in the traditional sense of the word, which will be explained below. The statutes differ in that

they come with different leave schemes, supplementary language courses, extra-legal allowances, or not. These differences create small tensions that are felt on the work floor. Nevertheless workers respond with a flexible attitude to colleagues who are entitled to take leave on days when they are not allowed to.

3.1.1. Participative observation in the SPIT business kitchen as a research method

During the participative observation fieldwork of one month, in spring of 2014, men and women from Afghanistan, Morocco, Turkey, Nepal, Tibet, Slovakia and China were working in the kitchen. Their individual capacities and ambitions to work were very divers. It is in this team I worked as a regular worker. I did not receive any special introduction and started the job just like the other workers. Consequently, I told the workers in small group conversations that I was a researcher interested in the way the group functioned and that I also liked to talk with them about the work. The workers accepted my presence as a colleague without any problem because, as they said, I worked with them, reaching for the same daily goals. Although the work leaders were aware of the reason of my presence I never noticed any difference in treatment with e.g. the worker who had started working two days before me. Initially observation was about finding myself working in the kitchen. Almost overnight I realised I had seemingly effortlessly become a member of the team. Then, according to the DieGem[2] research framework, I started looking for innovative practices of interpersonal solidarity in culturally diverse settings. Part of this framework required an understanding of place as a stimulating factor for the emergence of such practices. Thus while working in the same work environment and taking on the same tasks as the workers, I observed place related structures and routines: who did what, when and where? Gradually it dawned on me that I had to look for a deeper, to me more hidden, clue as to why becoming part of the team and functioning in this kitchen in particular went so smoothly. I felt the DieGem framework did not provide the necessary tools for determining a fully satisfactory

[2] The interdisciplinary SBO/IWT research project DieGem (2013-2017) focused on solidarity in diversity. The SPIT vzw case study is part of this project.

explanation. Coming across the notion of interpersonal communication via social cues in work shop settings (Sennet, 2012) and its effects was a real eye opener to me and provided a convincing complementary explanation of my experiences in this kitchen. During the participative observation period I used self-observation as a means of verification for the interpretation of observed empirical findings. After the participative observation period, as an additional means of verification, I also interviewed the work leaders (Interview B).

A limitation of this participative observation method was that it was not practically feasible to record the many conversations with the workers on tape. I was busy observing what was going on while cleaning or cutting vegetables. In the evening or a day later I wrote down in a report what I recalled from my work experience and observation and from the conversations with the workers (Interview F). An existing interview with some 20 workers, made a year earlier on behalf of SPIT vzw and processed in a fifty minute documentary (Dusart, Elen, & Crombez, 2013), completed the verbal reactions I missed. The participative observation method was complemented with official company reports, online publications and interviews with SPIT vzw executives (Interview A and C) and professionals having a direct influence on the company's policy, like the director of the welfare office of Leuven (OCMW) (Interview D) and the responsible of the local interim work office introducing new employees to SPIT and following up trajectories of current employees working there through them (Interview E).

This article holds a general introduction and is followed by two large sections and a concisely summarising afterthought. The first section discusses the relationships between place and identity formation from a theoretical point of view. In three successive subsections, the focus is on the formation of identity, recognition and the role of dialogue and sense of place on identity formation. The second section verifies the theoretical underpinnings with results from the fieldwork in the SPIT vzw kitchen in Leuven. Here three consecutive subsections illustrate the policy of SPIT vzw towards its culturally diverse workers and describe how SPIT vzw workers thrive in the provided social and material work context.

3.2. Identity formation, a process in social space

3.2.1. Identity

'Identity' is a rather ambiguous term derived from the Latin root of the word ‘identitas’, idem, with reference to something that is the same *as something else*. This implies two aspects: both absolute resemblance and fundamental difference (Hopkins, 2010). Each individual derives his identity from different identity facets that give her or him a unique meaning and importance. Identity thus consists of different layers. These layers sometimes meet each other, or sometimes conflict (Van der Welle & Mamadouh, 2008). The facet 'former owner of a restaurant' ties in nicely with 'giving guidance behind the stove of the SPIT vzw kitchen', the facet 'being a Muslim' can sometimes give rise to an internal conflict with the aspect 'worker in the SPIT kitchen'. Working with (not halal) meat is not equally obvious to everyone. In the latter case, either ‘worker in the SPIT kitchen’ or ‘refraining from touching meat’ will be the dominant reaction of the worker. The choice will have a social consequence. In this way we touch one of the key characteristics of identity: similarity and difference are dynamic features that evolve over time. They can always be renegotiated and given a new meaning (Clifford, 1997; Lie, 2002; Van der Welle & Mamadouh, 2008; Manzo, 2003). Identity therefore simultaneously concerns the creation, maintenance and protection of specific facets and the rejection, or denial of other facets (Hopkins, 2010). Working and thinking in terms of multiple identities reflect more complex realities. What it means to be an unemployed Afghan man in Belgium cannot be understood in terms of 'unemployed', nor in terms of 'being Afghan', nor in terms of 'being a man in Belgium'. Facets of identity also interact and often reinforce each other. When we think and work with intersections of identity facets we get a richer identity picture (Crenshaw, 1991; MacCall, 2005). This is important if we know that meaningful differences in society are often reduced to single identity facets such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, etc. (Hopkins, 2010). It is also interesting in this context to examine precisely which facet is being addressed (Valentine, 2008). Is it the Afghan man in Belgium? Or is it rather the unemployed man in Belgium? So 'identity' is quite important in a social context as it not only gives an

answer to the questions: 'Who am I? Where do I come from?', but also to the question 'How am I going to behave?' (Van der Welle & Mamadouh, 2008). Of course, the answers to these questions are always context-dependent and subject to continuous change (Clifford, 1997; Lie, 2002).

Furthermore, it is also useful to keep in mind that there is such a thing as an individual and a collective dimension of identity (Van Leeuwen, 2003). Although these two aspects of a personality cannot be separated, they can be distinguished. The collective dimension of individuals can be revealed when working with several intersections of identity facets: unemployed Afghan men working in Belgium do share a collective identity, no matter their individual differences. A distinction between these two dimensions of a person's identity, as entangled as they can be, is therefore necessary in order not to fall into an essentialist attitude towards cultural communities. The interpretation of the facet of being a 'Muslim' in the SPIT kitchen will by no means have the same meaning for every Muslim worker. Being Muslim is also interpreted in an individual way. For a few people working with (not halal) meat is a problem, for others absolutely not, for some fasting during Ramadan is a must, for others this is less important.

Although 'identity' is a personal thing, it does not come about in social isolation. Identity always takes form in a dialogical process (Taylor, 1994; Van Leeuwen, 2003). A lot depends on the relationships with concrete others within a 'language community'. Language should be broadly understood here. It is not just about words, but about all kinds of expressions. The interpretations of social cues, a form of expression through facial expressions and body gestures, for example, play a major role in successfully dealing with social relationships (Pickett, Gardner & Knowles, 2004). The notion of 'dialogic' should also be interpreted more broadly. It includes a wide range of interactions, encounters and even imagined conversations. These interactions or negotiations with others gives shape to individual existence. Interactions with things or animals can also be significant in the design of identity, just like impressions gained with our senses.

3.2.2. Social recognition and identity

In Western Europe till the late 18th century there was no human who thought that difference between people had a moral significance (Taylor, 1994). Until then, identity was largely based on your social position; looking at racial difference was hardly considered since it would involve looking beyond what was happening in Western Europe. General recognition was nested in social identity according to categories that everyone assumed to be true. Your personal identity did not accommodate a priori recognition. Recognition is obtained through interaction, which can also bring about the opposite, misrecognition. Van Leeuwen (2003) states that cultures can be understood as different ways of being human. This means that the misunderstanding of attachment to a certain culture not only causes pain but is also a form of dehumanisation.

According to various contemporary thinkers, the rise of the (super) diverse society challenges the recognition issue (Geldof, 2013). In this context, Taylor (1994) makes a distinction between the application of a *politics of equal dignity* or a *politics of difference*. The first notion refers to the recognition of universal equality in the form of equal rights and exemptions. It is based on the idea that we all deserve equal respect. According to the second principle, we think of recognising the unique identity of an individual or group in their distinctive difference. This principle is based on the idea that cultures deserve equal respect. However, it requires a very sensitive balancing exercise to assign to both notions what they ask for. If one opts for politics of equal dignity, then at first glance this seems to exclude the politics of difference approach and vice versa. The one principle asks to meet people in a different way, the other principle demands not only acknowledging, but nurturing difference.

A ready-made solution to transcend this field of tension does not exist. Taylor (1994) argues that a '*fusion of horizons*' is crucial for bridging. According to him, this requires '*a willingness to actively participate in comparative cultural studies*'. It requires the willingness to expand your own horizon in a broader horizon. This necessarily requires a transformation of one's own horizon, one's own standards. It is a process that requires mutual recognition and trust, but also enables it (Van Leeuwen, 2003). Sennett (2012) sees two paths that lead to recognition of the other. Both approaches forge a certain

bond with the others, even though they do so in different ways. *Embracing* recognises the other through a *sympathetic* approach to dialogue, *encounter* acknowledges the other through an *empathic* way of dialogue. Feeling and expressing sympathy transcends difference by means of an imaginative act of identification, 'I feel what you feel', or 'I can imagine how bad it must feel to prepare this meat (not ritually slaughtered) being a Muslim / vegetarian'. But this stops the dialogue, in fact nothing more has been done but activating your own ego. The empathic response, on the other hand, requires something more than sympathy, it is a listening skill. Instead of making an inward movement, this requires an outward movement, towards the other and towards the situation. What is actually happening at the very moment of interaction? With a seemingly emotionless reaction such as 'you do not touch meat, I do touch meat', you give a sign that you see the difference *and* you leave the solution unresolved. A continuation of the dialogue in the form of a negotiated cooperation then becomes possible. In this case the work leader asked the worker to handle meat with plastic gloves, which was accepted as a solution by the worker. Although both approaches can be useful in a specific context of recognition, it is the empathic approach that can be seen as a necessary intermediate step towards a *'fusion of horizons'*.

3.2.3. Place as a source of identity formation

'Place' evokes very personal feelings. Geographers argue that *sense of place* is linked with and developed through individual's experiences in life. It permeates daily life. A 'place' is therefore permeated by meaning and feeling (Tuan, 1975). Tuan nuances the importance of 'consciousness' in this context. He argues that passive experiences with a place can be felt very deeply, but are very difficult to put into words. Yet it is these 'deeply felt findings' that build identity. If you occupy the spot behind the gas fire or the sandwich bar every day for a year, this very familiar spot will give shape to your identity. The sentiment is there, and you experience how strong it is when another worker occupies 'the focus of your working world' for a day (personal communication with kitchen staff, April 2014). Yet this sentiment rarely breaks through to consciousness. You feel that you belong to the place and vice versa, but in a latently conscious way.

Geographers, sociologists, anthropologists and social psychologists state that the meaning we assign to a place can become that strong that it begins to occupy a central part of our (conscious) identity. Schuermans (2011) refers in this context to the fundamental distinction that Twigger-Ross & Uzzel (1996) make in relationships between identity and place. *Place identification* or 'membership of a group of people defined by location' refers to identification with the people who are in that place. 'I am a member of the SPIT catering team' is such an identification. With *place identity*, Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff (1983) assign significance to a place for the development of the self and personal identity. Even though they recognise the importance of a place as a social environment, for place identity they limit the scope to those dimensions of the self that develop in relation to the physical and material aspects of a place. 'I learn to work in a business kitchen' is such an identification. It is clear that these two relationships between identity and place go together. Smooth cooperation in the SPIT kitchen can only be obtained when workers take on both relationships between their identity and the SPIT kitchen.

Boundaries play a dual role in the creation of sense of place. On the one hand they bring about the creation of insiders, those who belong to a place. On the other hand, they determine who is an outsider, who does not belong. Belonging is therefore a central notion of sense of place. Often there are underlying power structures. Whose sense of place is stronger? Who has to fight to express his sense of place? Not surprisingly sense of place can become more intense if those who feel that they belong to a certain place feel threatened (Rose, 1995). Pickett, Gardner and Knowles (2004) argue that people who have a high need to 'belong' (to belong) are those who are more alert to social cues and can interpret them more accurately.

Sennett (2012) shows that physical work in a 'workshop' environment can bring about cooperation in diversity. Sennett describes, among other things, the following elements that contribute to the balancing of competition and cooperation in a working environment: rituals, symbols, body and facial expression (informal gestures), establishing boundaries and the use of the least resistance (behaving with minimum self-assertiveness). In this article, we devote special attention to informal gestures (the embodiment of physical gestures). When informal gestures such as shrugging, shaking

heads, smiling, but also making sounds such as 'tss', 'hm', are responded to in a proper and positive way this automatically brings about a positive visceral feeling, a feeling of ease. In this way, the well understood communication through gestures provides a profound basis for mutual cooperation. It brings about less (inner) tensions then any oral communication.

3.3. SPIT vzw, identity and place

Every day the catering team prepares a hot lunch, a special salad and a variety of snacks and sandwiches. All morning activities are aimed at achieving these targets. In the afternoon, the team cleans the kitchen, the dining room but also some office spaces.

3.3.1. Recognition as a balancing act

The SPIT vzw management has developed a general framework of flexible guidelines that employees must attend to. There is one overarching and basic rule though: everyone is equal, whether you are a woman or a man, whatever nationality, religion or sexual orientation you have. Theft is the only immediate cause for dismissal. Even in cases of violence, there is not necessarily a dismissal. SPIT vzw workers, despite their different statutes and competences, all receive the same minimum wage negotiated by the management. Dealing with difference on the basis of culture or religion is not addressed in the general company policy. Even more, texts or announcements with references to religious themes, for example on the valves, are not allowed, nor is praying during working hours. In practice, dealing with cultural and other differences falls within the discretion of the work leaders and takes place on an interpersonal basis in the workplace. Although dealing with differences is done under the 'umbrella' of the larger policy framework of the company, it does not coincide with it. The overarching policy framework holds on to a Flemish baseline. Dutch is the language that is expected to be spoken on the work floor. A Flemish music channel sounds on the radio and the weekly menu also has a varied but contemporary Flemish character: halal meat is not on the menu and once a week there is a vegetarian meal. At a company level SPIT vzw strongly works toward a politics of equal dignity. This is also reflected in the equal pay system and equal rights no matter who you are. The work leaders support this policy but, within this larger framework, and on the work floor they give their own interpretation to a politics of difference. They pay attention to individual characteristics and cultural characteristics of the SPIT worker: if religious conviction poses a problem in the performance of a task, the work leaders will look for a solution until the

concerned worker can perform the task unhindered. If two employees are having a problem with each other, they are put out of work for a while until the moods subside. From a spatial point of view, the work leaders are the intermediary between the management level on the 1st floor and the workers' operating on the ground floor level.

In the attitude of the work leaders towards the workers, a two-way ‘dialoguing’ can be discerned. They can grossly be divided in, on the one hand, communication that is directly related to the performance of tasks and, on the other hand, social interaction at work. In their communication of the first type, an *encounter* mode can be distinguished with the worker. The worker's abilities are observed and held against the light of prevailing kitchen guidelines and standards. Worker A works preferably behind the gas fire and leads the kitchen work. In principle, this task is reserved for the work leaders, but worker A is able to carry out this task with authority and the work leaders take his input with gratitude. Workers C and D speak in a foreign language. Does this have a negative influence on the concrete cooperation for a task at that moment? Yes? Then ask workers or work leaders to switch to Dutch. If there is no negative consequence on functioning in the kitchen talking can continue. Worker E cooks rice in a manner unknown to the work leader. The work leader finds this interesting and introduces this particular method as a standard method of preparation. The worker and the work leader know what the guidelines are, but they also know that negotiation is possible and desirable. Although the worker and the work leader do have the space for making decisions, they both have 'manoeuvering room', which makes working together very inter-active. These negotiation moments stimulate change.

In personal communication with workers, *embrace* or communication of the second type is more likely the dialogue mode. Work leaders consider it a matter of honor to explicitly value the delivered work. Workers are thanked every day for their contribution. Whenever a personal problem occurs the work managers are available for a talk. Personal stories can be shared with the group. Once the work leader asked an Afghan worker during the working hours to show his wedding photographs, and tell about his bride. This released a lot of sympathetic reactions and questions about cultural mores from colleagues. Workers greatly appreciate this form of recognition. The workers indicate that in this work environment, in comparison with work contexts

on the regular labour market, they feel most valued as individuals, even in their cultural identity.

'If someone has a problem, this cannot be overlooked. Sometimes you feel inclined to pretend not having noticed a thing, but that does not work out well: bigger problems loom readily.' (Interview B)

'I can be myself here. I do not have to pretend and do otherwise ... and yes, I feel more like a person in this workplace ... .' (Dusart, Elen, & Crombez, 2013, 38 min)

'I can be more Kurd here than in Turkey, here I am allowed to speak my own language.' (Interview F)

The management recognises and appreciates the autonomous way in which work leaders give substance to a politics of difference in the workplace. Simultaneously they formulate a number of limits to this commitment for the personal support of workers: problems must be solved on the work floor and cannot be taken 'home'. If 'problems' are taken 'home', a work leader places himself in a non-supported position.

3.3.2. Finding one's work-place in the kitchen

In 2009, the SPIT company moved from the old railway warehouses in the suburb of Kessel-Lo to new buildings in Heverlee, across the ring road of Leuven town. Only from this time onwards the catering industry obtained a fully equipped industrial kitchen. For safety and comfort, the kitchen workers depend heavily on the material setting of the kitchen (Joppart, 2010; interview A).

The SPIT vzw kitchen radiates a friendly buzzing atmosphere on the work floor. A long working table is located centrally in the kitchen. At this table, in the morning, the workers cut all the vegetables. Around and over this table it is easy talking to each other, this often happens in a common language, shared by a group of workers. This particular place is a true meeting place where workers deal with each other in an almost familial



Figure 7: Working together in the SPIT vzw kitchen. Centrally located a long working table ... the place for cooperation through communication that is largely based on reacting to gestures. Photo: Ruth Segers.



Figure 8: Finding one's work - place in the kitchen ... some prefer to work together (and work better doing so), others prefer working independently, still others prefer to work in the periphery. Photo: Ruth Segers.

way: workers make jokes, are sometimes silent, cut into serious topics of conversation, and swear … every once in a while. Workers having no need for social interaction or who have other task ambitions retire to the corners of the kitchen to make sandwiches or to wash dishes. The work leaders do not explicitly assign tasks to workers. The workers determine individually which place they pick as work place and consequently what task they perform. This degree of tolerance or freedom with regard to task choices, makes workers select those tasks /places with a good fit with their capacities. If two candidates turn up for making soup, for example, usually the workers themselves will negotiate who will make soup that day. Soon it becomes clear who in the group prefers to make soup, who prefers to bake and who does not mind swapping places. Knowing this brings structure and ease in executing the work load.

Also, despite the fact that this is a 'training', there are no joint formal instruction moments. The training is based on a learning by doing principle. When a worker has finished a job, and there is still something else that has to be done, then he or she takes on what needs to be done. Informal gestures (frowning, raising shoulders, putting hands in the air, shaking the head, taking places) form an important basis for communication. The work leaders answer to questions, but only make a remark when they notice that a task is not going well: it is not allowed to cut potatoes in different sizes; it is allowed to opt for a slicing shape for tomatoes, but the shape must not be mixed with another one; no one berates any one; retiring from the work dynamics is not an option. These labour/work standards are passed on implicitly, while working, with a nod or a shake of heads. Standards are not communicated in advance.

Applying the method of participative observation at this table gave me an insight into the fine-grained nature of learning and cooperation. Learning to work in this large kitchen is done on the basis of showing rather than telling. Of course there is also talking, but when it comes to learning tasks, watching the way someone else cuts vegetables, bakes meat, peels potatoes, including all the physical movements that are necessary for this (specific handling of a knife, posture of the fingers) is much more instructive than words that explain.

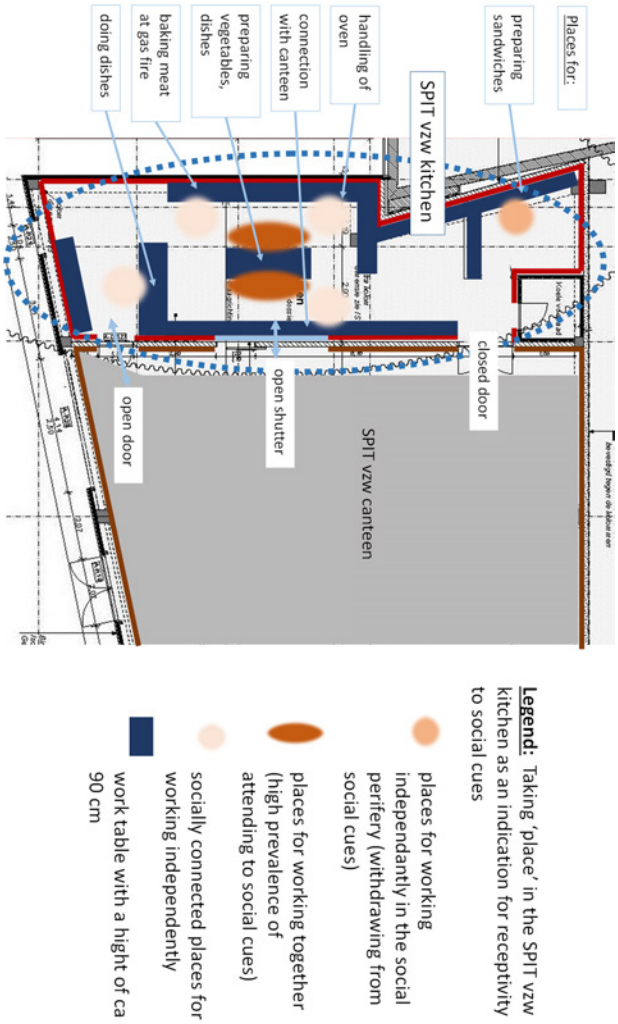

Figure 9: Taking a work spot in the Spit vzw kitchen is a social hint in itself and thus an indication for receptivity to social cues. Map: Ruth Segers.

At the same time, the workers keep an eye on each other and each other's work. Is someone quieter than normal? Does anyone bother to lift the heavy soup pot? How are the cucumbers, potatoes, tomatoes ... cut, which thickness, which shape? Who has finished his work? Workers help each other spontaneously to complete tasks in time. They tell me it is not that important to know Dutch in the workplace. They say that they gesture if they do not understand each other. 'Gesturing' (or being attentive to social cues) makes dialoguing with each other easier. The work leaders on the other hand, sometimes have a hard time with a non-proficiency in Dutch, especially when the gesturing says they understand and the actions show this is far from the truth. Efforts of all workers are needed to get the work done. Workers who only watch, fail efficient cooperation. The group does not accept such antisocial behaviour, it leads to gossiping.

3.3.3. 'The' SPIT vzw kitchen worker

Despite their many cultural differences, the workers of the catering team share a number of 'characteristics' with each other when they are in the SPIT kitchen. They carry out tasks together, know which rules they should stick to, work with the same material in the same room, experience similar sensory stimuli, wear uniform clothing, etc. A certain involvement and identification with the SPIT vzw kitchen is definitely realised. The SPIT vzw worker develops a sense of place that may be *interpreted* differently for each worker (place identification) but he does *share* this identity with his colleagues (place identity).

The physical boundaries of the kitchen indicate an area where only kitchen staff can stay. You belong to this group or you do not, other staff cannot 'walk through' or 'walk in'. Being ‘in’ the kitchen requires different behaviour as being ‘outside’ the kitchen. In the kitchen you are alert, have attention for what is going on. Outside the boundaries of the kitchen and the refectory, even during working hours, there is far less of a 'group' or group behaviour. The boundaries of the SPIT vzw kitchen are marked not only by material boundaries but also by non-verbal communication, rhythm and rituals. Kitchen staff are obliged to wear a uniform, a green or black work apron, with a cap. Every morning the clothes in the changing rooms are exchanged for the uniform, in the

evening the reverse ritual takes place. This ritual and the associated clothing code has a 'uniform' effect on the group, not only toward outsiders, but also among each other. A colleague worker will let you know if something is wrong with your uniform. Another ritual is washing hands when entering the kitchen. The daily ritual and the rhythm of preparing food in the forenoon, brushing in the afternoon provide the day with order and structure. Like informal gestures during the labour process (see 3.2), these rituals contribute to the secure, easy but bounded nature of the work environment (Sennett, 2012):

'After one or two days of work, I thought I could not handle it, the work here. It was too much for me, after my problems with my abdominal surgery. But I tried again, and it's good for me, getting up every morning and going to work. It's good for me and my health.' (Interview E)

The kitchen worker connects with all senses to the kitchen environment. Over time this connection transcends a merely cognitive nature. Hearing the ringing of cups and cutlery in the distance or the hissing of the frying pan, smelling the hot food at noon or cleaning products in the afternoon, feeling the uniform cap on your head, … these are all experiences that appeal to the senses, on a daily basis. Moreover specific scents not only bring about a connection with a place, they also produce a mental process of association/bonding. When the first food smells reach your nose, you are ready for a lunch break, but you have to finish the job before you can sit down and quiet your hunger. Through this passively experiencing the SPIT kitchen and a range of interactions with co-workers and kitchen objects in the kitchen the workers' feeling of belonging and sense of place is deepened.

3.4. AFTERTHOUGHT

This article describes place related aspects of cooperation between workers of very diverse origin on the work floor of the kitchen of SPIT vzw, a social economy company in a Flemish provincial town. Empirical findings are predominantly gathered via participative observation. SPIT vzw business ethics are based on a fairly normative, yet simple and general Flemish working environment: everyone is equal, Flemish is the standard language to be used by everybody; no explicit references to a particular religion or other cultural differences are allowed on the premises. This company policy is clear to everyone concerned. In practice though, the management accepts a flexible interpretation of these general standards. It not only caters for customised administrative needs of its staff but also allows some manoeuvring space for the work leaders as far as cultural aspects of individual workers are concerned. In small informal conversations, everyone can use his own language, or a common language, as long as informal conversations do not hamper the functioning capacity of the workers. During work, informal gestures and rituals are relied on as a means of feedback about the work. Furthermore, the kitchen space design supports work differentiation, allowing workers to manifest their individual skills. Within this fairly protective context, the SPIT vzw workers are allowed to initiate 'liberties' with regard to choosing a particular work spot that relates to a particular type of work. The way in which workers are recognised in their – cultural and work-place related - individuality, together with their daily experiences at work, has a major influence on how they cooperate in diversity. SPIT general business ethics thus sets a strong framework that can be referred to by everyone at any time, but at the same time allows for opening up flexible alternatives for individuals in a work place context. The combination of a framework policy that focuses on a politics of equal dignity and that can be complemented by an individual oriented dialogue as in *politics of difference* creates an opening to what we can describe as a *politics of dignified difference*.

This case study shows that having the same 'ethnicity', a facet of identity, has a minor impact on the development of a shared identity in the working environment of the SPIT vzw kitchen. The company focuses on recognising identity needs that are not specifically aimed at ethnicity, but rather at health, income and social interaction. Because of the

way in which SPIT deals with the social and economic needs of its employees, it fosters a sense of belonging these workers need.

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INTERVIEWS

Financial Director SPIT vzw, 27 June 2014, 3 October 2014 (Interview A)

Work leaders of the SPIT vzw catering training team, 30 June 2014, 30 September 2014 (Interview B)

General Director SPIT vzw, 10 March 2014 (Interview C)

Social office (OCMW Leuven) director (Interview D)

Interim office responsible for SPIT vzw projects, 9 April 2014 (Interview E)

Personal talks with workers on the work floor (Interviews F)

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NOTE

This case study was part of the IWT research project DieGem (2012-2016). It was one of its 32 case studies. DieGem had its focus on interpersonal practices of solidarity in diversity.

'Citizenship practices in the context of forced proximity in daily life are important moments of social learning. New and innovative ways are developed to support cross-border solidarity in diverse societies.' Retrieved from the DieGem website http://www.solidariteitdiversiteit.be/diegem.php



Figure 10: Sketches of park users and ‘wheels’ toys, made in the St. Remi Park. Sketch: Ruth Segers.

4. Building a Haven with and for Youth in the Public Sphere of Molenbeek (Brussels) Involves a Value Issue

ABSTRACT

This paper shows the major importance of a deep and long-standing commitment to invest in interpersonal relations with youth. It is a basis of trust and true listening skills that made up the core of a successfully implemented youth participation process to redevelopment of one of Molenbeek's (Brussels – Belgium) ethnically diverse public places: the small St Remi Park, once a physically and socially dilapidated environment where one youth gang ruled the park to the detriment of other children, youth and locals. Findings were obtained by the use of qualitative research techniques, like interviews, policy documents and a small-scale ethnographic study in the park. They show that the implementation of a particular useful park design for youth involves thinking about time and space in a different way, making experiencing satisfaction of a need for recognition of place related identity of youth, which fosters belonging a primordial target.

KEYWORDS

Youth participation, public place redevelopment, belonging, (place) identity

4.1. Introduction

In this paper I introduce the approach Yota!, a four persons strong shareholding structure of JES stadslabo, a Flemish experimental and government supported 'city lab' for urban youth, pursued in Low Molenbeek, Brussels. Yota! commits itself to involving children and youth in the design of public and semi-public spaces by building a basis of trust. It had a leading role in the social and physical transformation of the small St. Remi park (5.5 are) in the Maritime neighbourhood of Low Molenbeek and its use modes.

The first section outlines the specific socio-economic situation of ethnic diverse youth in and around the St Remi Park of Low Molenbeek over the last decennia and places this context in a larger frame of theories on (place) identity and belonging. A case study timeline, in section two, helps understand why the used research methodology, which started with interviews and document analysis, evolved over time. This section further elaborates on the reactive observation methodology based on drawing that was used to observe children and youth play in the park. Section three expands on the park design participation process with youth. Children and youths (as well as other users of the park) have been asked to formulate their needs and wishes regarding the design of this public space. Subsequently youth's needs and wishes have been recognised and taken into account by the architect and the local authorities. The final section, section four, describes how the changed physical environment of the park has an effect on its use and shows how children now actually play together in this location.

4.2. Molenbeek, youth and public place

Clearly Molenbeek (Belgium), one of Brussels' nineteen municipalities, struggles with 'civil impeachment'. The Brussels terrorist attacks of March 2016 deepened the sentiments that arose after the Paris attacks of November 2015. Arguably this municipality is one of the most challenging locations for youth in Brussels to grow up. However, although its socio-economic problems have already been revealed almost 40 years ago it is not all doom and gloom to live here. Before highlighting the positive sides, a small cut-out in space and time places the finger on the wound. Back in the 1980s social problems in the area started to surface prominently. At this time the Flemish public broadcast cooperation put together a documentary on Low Molenbeek. The documentary shows its dilapidated dwellings and some delinquency problems among the municipality's youths. Two broadcasted statements by locals sum up the then perceived challenges for local youth: '*We live in a community that, to a great extent, doesn't have anything to offer youths*'. And '*You feel the urge to forgive these children because they cannot feel good about themselves, here they are neither Belgian, nor Moroccan. You cannot blame them*' (VRT news, 1987).

Some years before the documentary was made, in 1984, some people had put their shoulders to the wheel and founded a Brussels based organisation for youths: Jeugd en Stad [Youth and City].

The 'language battle' of the 1970s (between the French and Dutch speaking community in Brussels) had had a paralysing effect on the general governance of the 19 Brussels communities, youth policy included. Although Youth and City is a Dutch speaking organisation, the element 'urban' is the overarching and fundamental directive for its functioning, more so than any other affinity with religion, language or political preference. Almost from the start this organisation was located in Molenbeek. Nowadays it is organised around 10 clusters of activities for children and youth, one of which is Yota!. The umbrella organisation's current name is JES stadslabo (Kaesemans, Asselman & Gatz, 2005).

In 2008 Yota! started its activities in the Maritime neighbourhood of Low Molenbeek. Instead of waiting for youth to make contact with the organisation, Yota! approached the youngsters personally. On an almost daily basis the Yota! contact person hung out along the streets and the strongly neglected public spaces of this neighbourhood, using a 'site targeted approach'. In fact it was one of the few options of approaching youngsters available here since there were no other services or organised leisure activities for youth available at that time. It took several years to maintain and deepen the fragile but close contacts with youth and build bonds of trust. Through this longstanding and committed process, still, Yota! gained valuable insights in the actual belonging of youth: a clear picture came about of which faces belonged in which places and which were member of which youth gang. Moreover, the general problems these youth faced and their daily practices in public space came to the fore.

4.2.1. The socio-economic context of (place) identity and belonging

The statements in the documentary mentioned above, refer to two distinct problems: the inadequate (public) services for youths in Molenbeek and the fragile identities related to a migration background. Along with others and in general this study suggests it needs a two-way understanding of the interaction between (individual) attitudes and characteristics of immigrants and the responses of the receiving society to see how identity related issues, like a feeling of belonging, play out in a receiving country (Phinney, 2001; Kibreab, 1999). By definition, immigrants have left behind their country, local friends, and also their homes, schools, neighbourhoods, and arrive in a new setting. When one understands there is a tight, medium like connection between a physical setting and how social relations are produced and reproduced in this setting (Gregory & Urry, 1985), then one also understands how migration leaves a sort of void. Arriving in a new setting will coincide with the need of 'filling' this emptiness, not only by coping with often conflicting cultural and social demands but also and simultaneously through interaction with the new physical surroundings. Also, like Phinney (2001) and Kibreab (1999) point out, migrants' individual and group attitudes will interact with the actual and perceived levels of acceptance of immigrants in the new environment.

Depending on the outcome of this interaction newcomers will downplay or reject their own ethnic identity or may assert their pride in their cultural group and emphasise solidarity as a way of dealing with negative attitudes. Consequently social roles need to be re-enacted, cultural positions need to be renegotiated and new articulations with physical surroundings need to be shaped to ones needs (Heynen, 1998). If the new setting cannot be created to one's needs then people fill the 'emptiness' without making a proper 'fit', which results in a loss of agency and a straddle between 'old style' social interactions that do not plug in very well with the new setting and new social interactions that cannot be ingrained because the new setting hardly supports the learning process. The straddle often prevails and becomes an identity aspect that can be passed on to younger generations (Alde'meh & Stockmans, 2015; Van der Welle & Mamadouh, 2008).

Very often both problems, inadequate services for youth and identity related issues in youth, reinforce each other in a youth population with low socio-economic resources. Decrepit neighbourhoods like the ones in Low Molenbeek are no exception in sustaining these problems. Yet Molenbeek has diverse faces, with a 'High' and a 'Low' Molenbeek side (BISA.brussels, 2016). Although equally diverse as Molenbeek as a whole, Low Molenbeek's inhabitants' *socio- economic status is significantly less wealthy*. This counts not only for the many immigrants from *very diverse ethnic origin*, but is also true for the remaining original and older Belgian population (Vandecandelaere, 2015). 35% of its non-Belgian population are Moroccans, forming the biggest cultural homogeneous community in this municipality (YotaJES vzw, 2012). Low Molenbeek's relative lack of public (green) space or a *high urbanisation factor* can also be considered as a reflection of its deprivation. Furthermore, one in three household units are headed by *matrifocal single parents.* Its youth population's share (all ages under 20) lies 10% higher than in the other 18 Brussels municipalities (BISA.brussels, 2016). Finally, a relatively high *residential mobility,* or a frequent change of residence can be noticed. It even reaches 84% for the Maritime neighbourhood in particular, whereas Brussels has a percentage of 64%. Almost half of this population moves within Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest (Yota!JESvzw, 2012). This dynamic of fast pace changing lives and neighbourhoods brings an extra challenge to efforts to build strong communities. Also noteworthy is Molenbeek's dramatic population increase with no less than 25% from 2000 to 2015. In

2015, Molenbeek had 95.000 inhabitants. The entire century prior to 2000, it had a steady population of 70.000 inhabitants (Vandecandelaere, 2015).

A low socio-economic status; a population of diverse ethnic origin; a high urbanisation factor; many households with single parents; and a high residential mobility rate in a community are very often linked with delinquency (Shader, 2004). Sampson and Groves (1989), however, connect delinquency to social disorganisation. They discern three important mechanisms (or dimensions) of social disorganisation within a community: 1. Impotence of a local community to control local group dynamics (like youth gangs); 2. Lack of mechanisms to form a network of informal local friendships; 3. A low degree of participation in local volunteer and formal organisations. Those mechanisms would be key factors in determining whether a community has the ability to shape a strong 'organisational basis'. In this logic, it is the extent to which a community is 'socially disorganised' that will directly influence the rate of youth delinquency. Social organisation and social disorganisation are situated on the same continuum. Interestingly, through implementing a social service based on building trust with youth by being available in public place, Yota! created a strong basis for strengthening the third dimension of social organisation, i.e. participation in a local project. Quite often youth indeed have only limited roles in community life and local decision-making processes, which is found to be contra productive for their developmental process and hampers the formation of perceiving their selves a meaningful individual (Camino and Zeldin, 2002; Evans, 2007; Jacquez, Vaughn & Wagner, 2012). Obviously this does not imply that any other condition has a weaker influence on normal child development or on development of delinquent behaviour. Research done over the past few decades shows that individual, social and community conditions as well as their interactions influence individual behaviour. This study supports the idea that behaviour, including antisocial and delinquent behaviour, '*is the result of a complex interplay of individual, biological and genetic factors and environmental factors, starting during fetal development and continuing throughout life*' (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2001, p. 66).

At the same time, like Gregory and Urry (1985, p. 3), this study accentuates that the built environment is *'not merely an arena in which social life unfolds, but rather a*

medium through which social relations are produced and reproduced'. The concept of belonging is helpful here as it essentially gives an understanding of the efforts that young people make to be connected to people, places and issues that matter to them. 'Belonging' also brings us to the notion of the development of one's identity (Rose, 1995). Place identity formation, a component of personal identity building (Hernandez et al., 2007), is definitely not merely an intra personal process, it is very much and more so a result of the connection *with* or interaction *between* people *and* the environment (Gielen, 2008; Lentini & Decortis, 2010; Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff, 1983). Through this interaction and in various ways one will find recognition or disregard for his or her identity: meeting a face that turns away from you or smiles at you, living in a derelict street or a fancy one gives quite a different experience. As such, the human need to belong or to be rooted can be considered to be vital. Some say it even outweighs the human need for protection (Gielen, 2008).

Tuan (1975) argues that belonging to a place or 'feeling at home' does not refer to a relationship with the 'domestic(ated) material space' but rather to a phenomenological approach to 'home' that reveals 'a symbolic space of familiarity, comfort, security, and emotional attachment'. In fact any place, regardless of size or physical character, can become a center of meaning to individuals and to groups' (Tuan, 1975). In this, Tuan emphasises the importance of *experiencing* the environment. Very often though experience is something invisible, hidden from the public eye. What's more, experience easily can occur unobserved by the experiencing individual. *'Very common, passive experiences of life are often felt very deeply, but are difficult to articulate. It is the small pleasures and irritations of day to day living, the barely registered but omnipresent ambience of sound and smell, the feel of air, soft soil, and hard ground, the happy accidents and occasional blows of fate'* (Tuan, 1975, p. 161). Moreover, experiencing an environment requires ***time***. Merely letting time pass by is not constitutive in forming a sense of place: *'to remain a place it has to be lived in'* (Tuan, 1975, p. 164).

4.2.2. The St Remi Park in Molenbeek and its youthful users

In personal conversations, local youth told the Yota! youth worker they had a strong feeling the Molenbeek community, especially those people in charge, did not care about them at all, as they concluded from experiencing the fully neglected tiny playground in the neighbourhood and the quality of local public space in general (personal communication Yota!, May 25, 2015). Experience of place can go many ways: taking on a positive or negative sense of place … and basically every position in between. Research on how youth perceive and experience physical and social disorder in their neighbourhoods and other neighbourhood factors brings out problematic experiences (Tita, Cohen & Engberg, 2005; Yonas et al., 2006; Coulton, Korbin & Su, 1996). Although the St Remi Park in Low Molenbeek had been newly developed only in the late 1990s, the park and its surroundings were, ten years later, known to be in a bad state of maintenance and had severe (and related) security issues (Yota!JESvzw, 2012). Not only the material and social neglect of the place, but also the overall design of the park attracted particular antagonistic interactions. Huge steel fences enclosing the lot, with two big entrance gates literally meant that this park was not 'open' or 'freely accessible'. There was no other way than entering the park in a 'one by one' manner. More than two persons could not enter simultaneously. The gate had a sifting effect on accessibility, representing a divide with an obvious 'in' and 'out'. Hence one particular gang was 'in' and claimed the territory while others, often other gangs from the neighbourhood, could only make attempts to contest this claim. Hopkins (2010) suggests it is especially youths in socio-economic precarious situations who have a bigger inclination or need to exhibit this claiming behaviour in public spaces. Sack (1986) argues it is territoriality as the appropriation of territory that provides youth gang with a means of reifying its power by delimiting and asserting control, here over a park. In St Remi Park this behaviour was even aggravated by the division of the park in compartments: concrete walls and a hedge made the space suitable for gang 'meetings' behind 'closed doors'. As a consequence, small children in this neighbourhood were downright frightened of passing by the park, let alone enter it. Because of social (threats of the gang) and material (used needles and dog shit) reasons, using this park was indeed especially challenging for the youngest. Tita, Cohen and Engberg (2005) argue

that signs of physical disorder in public space demonstrate diminished social control over particular spaces on the part of neighbourhood residents, and that these are the kinds of spaces where gangs congregate.

The particular youth gang that claimed the St Remi Park was hierarchically structured, no doubt about who was in charge here. Nevertheless this social structure surely provided some sort of emotional support and physical security for its members. The highest in rank would be served on his tips by the lower in rank, and the latter could rely on physical protection from assault as they 'belonged' to the group (personal communication Yota!, March 28, 2015). Acts of aggression between rivalling gangs were a given in the neighbourhood. As such, this aggression in public place certainly made becoming a member of the gang an appealing way to overcome this sort of aggression for many youth in Low Molenbeek as it is shown that such membership reduces fear in them. For youth, the risk of known or controllable gang violence, like victimisation, is more acceptable than the unknown, uncontrollable violence that could come from non-members (Melde, Taylor & Esbensen, 2009).

Being a gang member is a part of one's identity, although only in a limiting way. Particular youth gangs appropriated certain areas, excluding other youth. In the streets youth would literally mark distinct parts of public spaces by putting personal signs on small electricity street cabins. Both actions are 'claiming acts' (Hopkins, 2010): this is where I belong, is part of '*me*'. After all it is an especially important challenge for disenfranchised people to craft constructive identities. They consistently seek to create meaningful identities in response to stereotypes that are imposed from above (Hill Collens & Bilge, 2016). As argued above, youths with a migration background will likely find that the need for self-definition can be very complex as it needs finding an 'intersection' between many conditions.

Typically youth associate crime with features of urban places like places poorly monitored by adults, high-rise buildings, vacant buildings and lots, poorly lit public spaces, public parks and schools and areas that lack legitimate businesses and with display of uncollected trash. This case study acknowledges those findings and shows a point of alteration from a negative sense of place towards a positive one by recognising public place related needs of youth. When a municipality considers tackling the

appearances of its physical spaces, like a park, to make it a safer place, this strategy can be a special opportunity for making 'proper fits' with local needs. Steering away from a limited, physicalist conception of urban development is essential here. '*Downplaying the importance of interaction with the urban communities is a dangerously mechanical link between urban development … and architectural creations to beautify and restore cities and neighbourhoods'* (Moulaert, 2004). A public space that reflects a recognition of users' values and needs can support self-awareness in its users (Ikäheimo, 2014; Taylor, 1994). Children who feel invited to use particular park features for cycling e.g. develop their identity through the actual act of cycling here. An (internal) dialogue with what is felt through the cycling act, e.g. 'rolling down the slope feels good' or 'I manage to cycle up the slope in lowest gear' will contribute to how they evaluate themselves. Likewise, if an upgrading of public space occurs with visible and sensitive inputs of and for actual users it has more chances of becoming viable and durable.

4.3. About the research methodology

The initial research set up was to make a comparison between interpersonal interactions of cooperation between youth prior to and after the park refurbishment. Ideally this set up would have been complemented with an action research methodology with an artistic turn to investigate closer the aspect of belonging in youth relation to the use of the park. This set up failed. The participative observation with youth (10 +) after refurbishment and the interviews with youth about their experiences prior to refurbishment did not materialise. There are two main reasons for alteration of this research methodology: 1. the Yota! youth worker left the St Remy site as a working environment after the refurbishment was finished; and 2. an atmosphere of terror around Molenbeek put pressure on JES stadslabo coordinators of the polyvalent sports facility adjacent to the park and made them shield off any non-local contacts to the children using the park. This pressure only augmented after the *terrorist attack of March 22, 2016* (see figure 11, the St Remi Park case study timeline). In fact it was Yota! who had invited and agreed on research cooperation and not the JES stadslabo coordinators of the polyvalent sports hall. For these reasons the research focus has altered. The alternative creative methodology has been applied later on in another case study project named 'Welcome (W)all-MURO' for youth, in the socio-economic disadvantaged neighbourhood of Cruz Vermelha in Lisbon.

Both the use of the park and surroundings by youth prior to refurbishment and the interactions in the participation process that accompanied the negotiation of the design of the park are documented with information received through interviews with the directly involved professionals, the Yota! contact person, the planning administration of the municipality of Molenbeek and the architect, not with youth. The information for documenting the context of this case comes from a group interview with the JES stadslabo coordination team of the sports facility at St Remy Park and through reading policy documents and information and documents provided by JES stadslabo. Because the alternative creative methodology, which would have taken place before summer 2016, after the observation period, did not take place, it had become impossible to learn

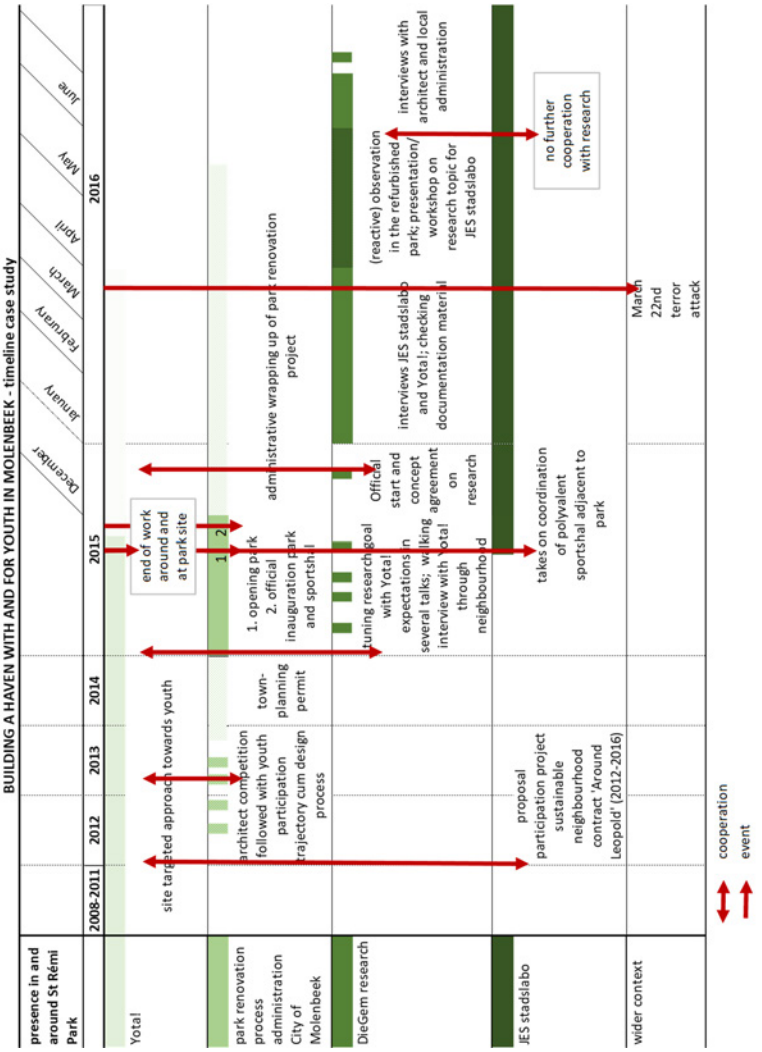

Figure 11: Timeline case study St Remi Park, Molenbeek. Ruth Segers.

directly from interpersonal interactions between the children based on action research. This is why the empirical findings about interpersonal interaction of youth in the newly refurbished park stem purely from (reactive) observation. The outcome of this observation has been checked afterwards in interviews with members of the municipality and the architect (who still checks the place on a weekly basis).

During two consecutive months, *April and May 2016* (see figure 11), I visited the park 10 times. Each time I spent about 2 hours in the park, after school hours and during weekends. Every time, there were a lot of children in the park. Initially I observed the interactions between the children from a small distance. I sat on a bench, a step or a fitness device, places with different viewpoints. Meanwhile I dug up my note book and started sketching and taking notes. The sketches illustrate the things that 'caught my eye' or fascinated me, such as a particular organisation of space or a particular action by one or more persons. I was in particular interested in the ways youths interact through social cues, i.e. the signals people send through body language, facial expressions, pitch, the taking of personal space … followed by a reaction to these cues. Since the human body can be considered to be a very important 'location' which offers possibilities in discovering otherwise overlooked complexities of young people (Van der Welle & Mamadouh, 2008; Hopkins, 2010).

Sketching or drawing an action (e.g. between persons) immerses one in the situation in which the persons appear. It is different from describing or narrating a situation after having seen it. Sketching has an extra dimension: it demands a mode of 'doing together'. While sketching you make an active connection with the observed person(s), meanwhile distilling a shape from a movement. Ingold (2011) considers this method of observation a mode of participation. According to Ingold (2011, p. 223) it is '*the intimate coupling of the movement of the observer 's attention with currents of activity in the environment. To observe with a drawing purpose is not so much to see what is 'out there' as to watch what is going on. Its aim is thus not to represent the observed, but to participate with it in the same generative movement.'* The methodology allows for interacting with 'young people's bodies', seen as locations where they express their identities through clothing choice, ways of expression, gestures and behaviour, etc. (Hopkins, 2010).

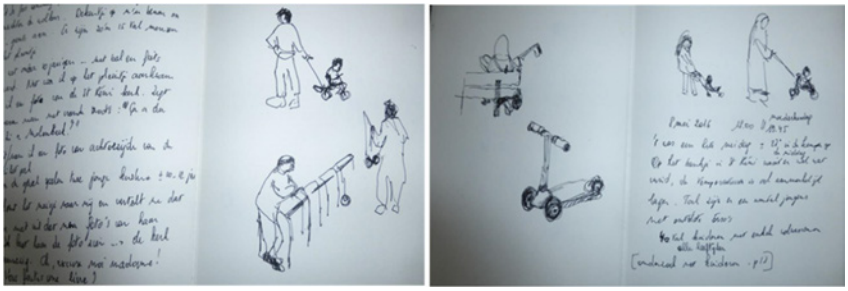

Figure 12: Sketches illustrating new (inter)actions in the re-developed park: like mother, like daughter; mothers and babies, fathers and toddlers; if only it has wheels to it…., balustrades for leaning on. Sketch: Ruth Segers.

So, in a way, while sitting and observing, I was participating in interactions in the St Remi Park as well. Concurrently, this observation experience became a 'reactive' experience: children are very inquisitive, if they see someone is doing something that attracts their attention and they will want to know what is happening. Without having the need to reach out, while drawing I attracted several children, alone or with some siblings or friends. Then they started a conversation: 'Are you making a book?' or started playing together next to me while observing me ... The age group I did not reach with this technique is the over 10 year olds. In the park I found under 10 year old children mostly in the company of siblings whereas the over 10 year olds were often accompanied by friends and did not come closer.

4.4. Youth participation in park design (2012-2013)

During 2012-2013, Yota! built on its site targeted approach to co-create together with youth, community and architect the design and redevelopment process of the small St Remi Park. Together with the leader of the youth gang and its members, and in particular with their explicit support '*On va laisser l'espace aux enfants'* [We will leave this park for children], Yota!, as integral part of JES stadslabo, took measures to investigate whether 'their' park could be transformed into a 'shared' space, a place that can support youth's identity forming process in a positive way. To this purpose the initiative was framed as part of a 'durable neighbourhood contract called 'Rond Leopold II' [Around Leopold II] (2012-2016). The contract also included other initiatives, like building a space with multi-functional sports facilities on the empty plot adjacent to the St Remi Park. The municipality launched an alternative design competition for the park (TV-Artgineering-Urban Platform, 2012). It was looking for an architecture office that could help make the place accessible for a large public, meanwhile enhancing security in the place and its surroundings significantly, with a small budget. Instead of launching an open design competition, the municipality invited four offices to take part in the competition by letting their interested architects describe their personal feeling about the place. The architecture office K2A, located in Brussels, won the competition. Its most important design instrument was to listen to the users of the place and make it 'usable' for a large and diverse public.

Designing a public space as well as doing a participatory design process were new for the architecture office. According to the winning architect of office K2A it was thanks to 'the enthusiasm of every single participant' that a creative participation process unfolded (personal communication architect, May 26, 2016): *'Something very magical happened, it was not the proposal of an architect, it was a project of a group: an architect, a project leader*, *people and Yota!, very dynamic.*' During the first *general* participation meeting in the park, in *October 2012*, a welcoming tent was installed and tea and cakes were served. The architect opted for presenting five alternative park characteristics in an abstract way, complemented by corresponding reference images: 1. the park boundary (an open one instead of the existing closed one); 2. slopes (several

distinct ones instead of one general); 3. green space; 4. a mineral carpet; and finally 5. a football field. These characteristics respond to what the architect felt was necessary to open up the park to a wide public. The characteristics coincided with certain important park features that posed a challenge in some respect, and that were in need of an alternative solution. In a preceding participation event with youth, 'bandaging problematic spots', the issue with the massive iron gate and fencing was highlighted. Likewise in the workshop that implemented the MAP-it technique, a tool for participatory cartography and conversation, visualising a process in space and time, in a low-tech, open and flexible manner (Dreessen et al., 2012) other problematic park features came to the fore. This is why the architect slid forward the five above mentioned characteristics during the first general participation meeting, including the issue with the park boundary.

The Map-it technique for participation, the use of reference images and the 'bandaging workshop' are all methods for participation to bridge the gap between professionals' and 'commoner's' language skills about desired features of spatial quality. These tools propose a language that is visual or tactile and suggestive, rather than verbal and textual. Giving attention to differences in communication abilities is essential here, because *'in participative planning and design, an explicit or implicit desire to use 'one's own language' is often not materialised, which may lead to painful misunderstandings on the desired features of spatial quality.* Moreover, *'commoners' can have a much deeper sense of how places should be organised, but cannot express this in proper planning or design terms'* (Moulaert et al., 2016). After all, if inclusive participation is a goal, all participants need to be granted operative and legitimate opportunities to influence decisions concerning the identification, leveraging, and mobilisation of whatever resources are to be re-evaluated (Zeldin, Christens & Powers, 2002; Freeman, Nairn & Sligo, 2003).

During the general participation workshop, the main question to be addressed was: what is your opinion on this alternative park characteristic? Can you see this characteristic as a valuable alternative? To her surprise, the architect found it very insightful that people understood her *'feelings'* about the park (as put forward in the

reference images initiative) very well. They were able to grasp the possibilities of the space and were capable of showing her their insights.

The architect made an overview of the first general participation workshop results. It showed the following items for inclusion in the design: 1. more vegetation; 2. a football field (very important); 3. space for children and mothers; 4. a playground; 5. the ground used as a place to play on; 6. a space for elderly (benches and a lawn bowling track) and 7. colours. The overview was presented and discussed during the second general participation event which took place in *March 2013*. From then onwards the conviction grew that the park would become a space for all, but with children and youth as a prime target group.

4.4.1.Listening skills

The committed listening skills of the architect, the related skill to distinguish important park characteristic from less important characteristics, and the willingness to implement the participants' proposals resulted in some important amendments of the architect's initial design proposition. Initially the architect only planned the construction of several slopes (in green and in 'carpet like' mineral), for budgetary, but also for safety reasons. It was believed that playground constructions in space possibly invite for aggressive interaction. Ultimately, the park got several functions: a small playground, a fitness emplacement, a drinking water tap, several mineral slopes, a green space (also with slopes), benches, a place for dogs, and … a football field! On top of this, the whole area is visible at a glance from every viewpoint.

Let us focus on two illustrations of *the design process in 2013*: the implementation of the football field and the creation of the green space. Although the architect was not immediately positive about implementing a football field, *'as it does not really look (aesthetically) "nice" in a park',* the participation exercises made very clear that this was of prime importance for many youths. A 'big one' was requested. Eventually it was decided to have (and thus keep) a football field and equip it with a semi-professional grass field with stainless steel goals and frames at both ends to keep the ball inside the

football field. This field turned out to be the most expensive expenditure for the park. Youths were thrilled about it though. In the end the field turned out not as big as the previous one, but it surely has better materials, it even measures up to a professional one! A sign of recognition of the values of the football loving youth. For them, the distinction between quality vs. cheap material is surely recognisable.

A similar trajectory was followed for the design of the green space. A substantial part of the park had to become green. Therefore the existing trees were to be removed and new ones to be planted in another location. There was a clear reaction of users to this: we want our trees! Then the architect argued that the existing trees were not so nice and would be replaced with new ones. But the public said 'no, we want *our* trees'. In the final plan most existing trees were kept in place and some new ones inserted as extra. No young trees were ever vandalised. So indeed, like the architect put it: '*You have to be a "psychologist" to do this, you have to discuss with the users and you have to understand what is important for them. So,* ***their*** *trees were important, ok, we keep those trees'* (personal communication architect, May 26, 2016).

Listening to the users does not only require executing according to users' desires. Skate boarding facilities, for instance, were also on the users' wish list. But these facilities can only be found in the park in a creative alternative form: the slopes in mineral 'carpet' deliver what ramps and rails would normally do. As a result, pure skate boarding lovers are scarcely found in the park, yet it does attract a much broader 'wheel using' public, to the extent that it seems to have become the prevalent feature of this new park: children and youths using whatever wheels driven 'vehicle'. Listening, in this case also implied redistributing assets. A lawn bowling track was requested by some elderly. In defence of the choice for a lawn bowling track, one older man claimed it was better to invest in elderly than in youths. Youths would vandalise the park as soon it was open, so no need to invest in them, he argued … The architect then decided that investment in equipment for youth would get priority. Not to exclude elderly, but to redistribute the available opportunities on a bigger scale, there are benches which were also on the request list and the grass field can be used for playing lawn bowling.

During the *actual redevelopment phase in 2015*, the local youths were very eagerly looking forward to the results. Only once the transformation process of this park was

disturbed and police was called: towards the end of the actual redevelopment, youths had entered the park, found out that the tap was not working and kicked the tap pole down. During the redevelopment period, it happened more often that youths were found playing along the machines. The architect found this an unsafe situation so she decided to have the place opened for use earlier than planned. It had become an almost flawless, yet compressed, redevelopment trajectory in this neighbourhood! It also encouraged the municipality to implement planned but not executed above-the-budget extra's in reaction to the users' disillusioned reactions about these extra's at the official inaugural event of the park early *October 2015*: *'later? … ah, never!'*. In *November 2015* a brand new small playground with stainless steel toys was ready for use!

4.5. The St Remi Park after redevelopment (spring 2016)

Half a year after the official opening of the park, and after school hours, the park's public consists for 80% of non-accompanied children between the ages of 4 and 16. Children of predominantly North African origin, but also from Congo and Romania, etc. play football together, cycle and talk in small groups. In general and during after school hours a lively but easy atmosphere is noticeable in the park. Several children tell me: *'J'aime ce parc parce-que ici on peut cycler…dans l'autre parc on ne le peut pas'* [I like this park because here you are allowed to cycle…in the other park you cannot.] (personal communication 10 year old girl of African origin, April 20, 2016). But also a father confirms: The park is *'… beaucoup mieux que avant: plus propre et moins d'hazard, le sécurité des enfants est garantie'* (personal communication with the father of a seven year old girl of North African origin, May 8, 2016). Clearly not everybody plays together with everybody, yet the park itself can be considered as a shared space. The members of the youth gang are no longer around, or only as brief visitors. There are always some adults present who pay attention, but never more than a few, some elderly sit on the benches and watch the scene. Mothers with their babies and fathers with toddlers are common visitors (see figure 12). Apart from the few elderly, sitting on the benches at the edges of the park, there are hardly any white people in the park.

Obviously, football stimulates the children most to play together across quite differing ages. Nevertheless, as stated before, 'cycling' or better still 'using wheels' turns out to be the most characteristic feature of the new St Remi Park (see figure 13). Anything that 'rolls' can be found here. Youthful copycat behaviour is omnipresent: the whole group alternately uses a particular cycle, one by one they prove their ability to cycle on one wheel. In another instance the limited availability of bikes (three toddlers and two mini cycles, see figure 14) makes usage deliberation necessary. After deliberation bikes are swapped. One week you see a senior skate boarder is checking the possibilities of the mineral surface. A week later small children are carrying around skate boards. Children learn through play. Through play, children learn, they discover possibilities in the physical world and through this they develop their identity and social skills (Gielen, 2008).



Figure 13: Obviously, football stimulates the children most to play together across quite differing ages. Nevertheless, 'cycling' or better still 'using wheels' turns out to be the most characteristic feature of the new St Remi Park. Photo Ruth Segers.



Figure 14: Three toddlers and two cycles makes usage deliberation necessary before swapping bikes. Photo: Ruth Segers.

For Yota!, this particular participation process and the wider responsibility as a social worker and contact point for youth in this specific location in the neighbourhood ended with the completion of the redevelopment of the St. Remi park. On *October 10th 2015* both the park and the sports hall were officially opened. Yota! however continues working within the wider neighbourhood. Meanwhile JES stadslabo, the umbrella organisation is appointed by the Molenbeek municipality as coordinator of the multifunctional sports hall and thus stands in immediate contact with what happens in the park. Concurrently JES stadslabo takes on the responsibility as contact point for youth in and around the park. At the moment the biggest challenge for JES stadslabo is to find a balance between leaving the place to its users and actively guiding its use and users. There still is quite a way to go in the development of support for youth in Low Molenbeeks' Maritime neighbourhood. Although being able and being allowed to effectively use a place does give a strong positive impulse to social capacities and a sense of self-esteem – and even more so if the concerning setting is a result of co creation – the consequences of interpersonal relations taking place beyond this park clearly also do play a role in mutual interactions happening in this park. An incident in the park between two small children, a 4 year old boy of Congolese origin, and an 6 (?) year old boy of Moroccan descent, can illustrate this. What was observed is described below followed by a possible interpretation of what happened.

The youngest boy and by far the smallest is playing on the slider toy construction, by himself. He is guarded from a small distance by his sister of 10 year, she is not playing on the toy. Then the older boy approaches the toy, wanting to climb the ladder to the slider platform. This is obviously not what is accepted by the younger toddler, standing on top of this platform. He starts screaming 'bima! bima! ' [leave! leave!], trying to take the hands of the older boy off the ladder. No question of playing together on the slider here. The Moroccan child undergoes the screaming and the pushing away, he does not strike back in any way, yet does not leave either. The African toddler bullies the Moroccan child for about a quarter of an hour. The whole incident is suddenly stopped when the mother of the two siblings of African origin suddenly appears in the background and, from far, summons her children home.

Of course quarrelling happens, yet this quarrel fell out of pitch as compared to other interactions observed in the park. Playing together does not always need to be taken literally, but sharing this place can be taken literally if we look at the overall use of the park. Moreover, this quarrel did not have the air of being an argument based on something happening 'here and now'. I would argue that if the latter were the case than surely the older, watchful observing sister to the African boy would have taken some responsibility and defended her brother? I had experienced before she was not exactly shy. So something else must have played between those two children. The incident begs for paying attention to the undercurrents of interactions going on in the park. Like the planning administration officers mentioned in the interview (personal communication of June 8, 2016) very often hostile feelings between people of non-Belgian descent is fiercer than between Belgians and people from other ethnic origin. Wouldn't it be plausible to locate this passing on of sentiments through family interactions and see it coming to the surface through children's interactions in the park?

4.6. Conclusion

Although youth participation in public place design is not a very widespread practice, this case study shows it can have deeply rewarding results for all involved. Youth took up the opportunity to participate in design decision making for the St Remi Park of Molenbeek, Brussels. Because this particular participation process was rooted in a *longstanding commitment to persistent interest and involvement with youth* of the social worker of Yota! in youth's place related opinions and concerns and a skilled listening ear of the architect, this process resulted in a very useful new park design. The St Remi park now attracts youths of various ages and origin, it does not single out members of one particular youth gang only anymore. Anybody, also non accompanied children and youth can freely walk in and out the park and are invited to test the physical layout of the space in all its possibilities. Quite an important park transformation. Before refurbishment, the park invoked negative feelings of worthlessness in youth related to belonging to a place which was experienced to be in such a bad condition. The design of the park now recognisably reflects youth's needs and opinions, which in turn, fosters interpersonal relations of cooperation as observed amongst youth. Through this participation process, its outcome, and the vigilant presence of the JES stadslabo coordination team of the sports hall adjacent to the park, children and youth in interaction with adults and elderly people, find a place with which they can identify and thus are able to create a positive sense of place or belonging . After all a well rooted feeling of belonging positively feeds identity. Understood in this way, involving youth in design for public places can be a decisive and integrative gesture towards youth in precarious socio economic conditions and from diverse cultural background. This is why Tuan (1975) argues that successful architecture generates a strong sense of place in two ways. In the new development of the St Remi Park both ways can be discerned: 1. an accumulation of lived experience is supported by the park design, youth like to play here on an almost daily basis. 2. concurrently communal experience is made into a tangible and commanding presence: the park supports an image of communal life and values.

NOTE

This case study was part of the IWT research project DieGem (2012-2016). It was one of its 32 case studies. DieGem had its focus on interpersonal practices of solidarity in diversity.

'Citizenship practices in the context of forced proximity in daily life are important moments of social learning. New and innovative ways are developed to support cross-border solidarity in diverse societies.' Retrieved from the DieGem website http://www.solidariteitdiversiteit.be/diegem.php

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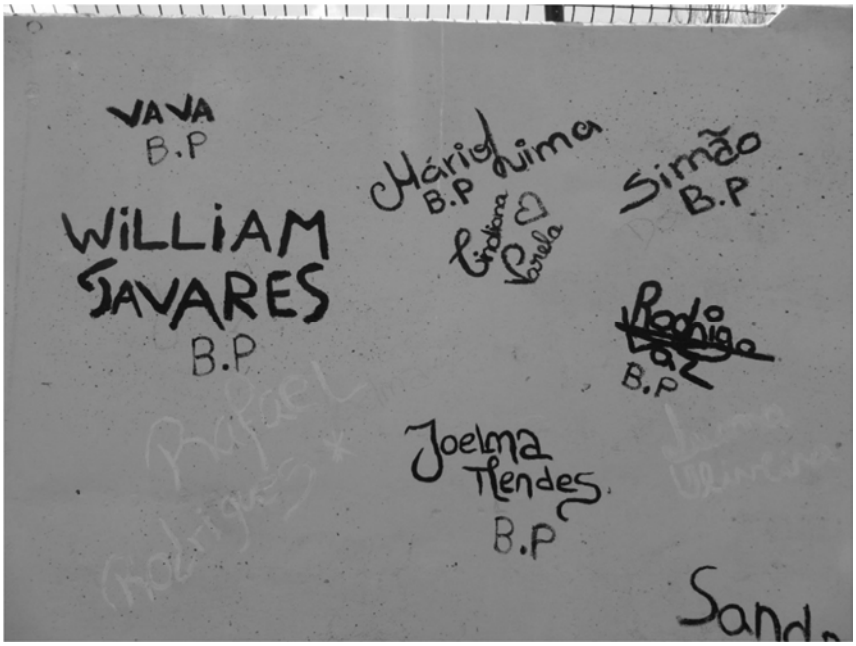

Figure 15: Signatures of Escola Básica 2,3 youth on the WELCOME (W)all - MURO. ‘B.P’ stands for ‘Black Power’. Photo: Ruth Segers.

5. Action Research with an Artistic Turn: The 'Welcome (W)all – MURO' Project for Youth in Lisbon

ABSTRACT

The 'mural making experience' of Welcome (W)all - MURO is a context sensitive participatory art project, an action research that took place in the socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhood of Cruz Vermelha in Lisbon. A researcher, a youth organisation, a school and part of its pupils together with the local public administration, were the principal partners of the project. The (place) negotiation between the partners was central to the project and also supports the community building process. The process consisted of a series of participatory artistic workshops preceded by a 'place inquiry' and shows how a conventional action research can be taken to a 'deeper' level of interpersonal interaction through the mediation of the human body as it becomes a factor of visual creativity. The article makes use of an ethnographic analysis to communicate the findings of the research.

KEYWORDS

Mural making, embodiment, arts and crafts workshop, action research, place negotiation

'Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.'

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)

5.1. Introduction

In this article I describe in a critical ethnographic way how the mural making experience of Welcome (W)all-MURO generated a powerful collaborative process in which youth of the socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhood of Cruz Vermelha, in Lumiar (Lisbon), Portugal were principal actors. In this eight months art participation project, I have been working closely with the local youth organisation Centro Social da Musgueira (CSM) and Escola Básica 2,3 do Lumiar. Youths involved in the project were often at the same time member of the CSM and pupil at the Escola Básica 2,3. I have been using a radical empirical approach in which I 'sought to be open to the phenomenon (of collaboratively mural making) and to allow it to show its intensity and complexity through my own direct involvement and understanding' (Seamon, 2000, p. 163). By seeking out what is obvious in human relations in everyday life, unquestioned and thereby questioning it, I took on an essential phenomenological position. It sounds logical that participative mural making can be a rewarding initiative; but what engages participants and what is it that connects them with each other and the project? Concurrently participative mural making is a type of action research in that 'its purpose is not primarily or solely to understand social arrangements, but also to effect desired change as a path to generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders'. (Bradbury Huang, 2010, p. 93). This research organises a process that practitioners wish to make practical use of.

For me it is natural to express myself through painting, I wanted to explore the possibilities of this medium in an arts and crafts workshop setting for youth. At the same time I would investigate whether this setting could generate similar results on cooperation as those afforded through gestures in a craftsmen's workshop setting as described in Sennett's book 'Together' (2012). I will further explain this when addressing 'Negotiation and co-creation in the mural project'. I realised, though, I would have to

establish a social meaning to my role as a painter. Instead of expressing something very personal I wanted to investigate the possibilities of supporting youth in revealing their neighbourhood related needs and attachments (Moulaert, Demuynck & Nussbaumer, 2004), and making their expressions public through mural making. Here I keep in mind that: '… needs satisfaction and assets for development approaches cannot be separated …' (Moulaert, 2009, p. 17) and that endogenous institutional participation in processes about the location, design and actual accomplishment will improve the … urban identity-building process (Moulaert & Mehmood, 2011; Moulaert, Demuynck & Nussbaumer, 2004). Thus, I would be working as an artistic, needs revealing medium for others while engaging with local institutions to assure their participation and support. Yet, how viable is such a role positioning? And is such a position helpful to stimulate participation in youngsters? Of course, though I had to combine and alternate roles, I remained a pictorial artist. At times I felt I was the 'conventional' ethnographic researcher, inquiring, making photographs and drawings of the process and putting down empirical findings. At the same time, I took on coordinating and mediating roles in the co-creation process, roles I shared with the CSM coordinator and the teachers. But I was also an equal among the involved others, experientially living what it is to be fully part of the group. Then there were those times I was trying to make sense of the experience, through personal reflection and through regular exchanges with insiders of the project, like the coordinator of CSM, but also with people not directly involved with the project.

While writing this, I also became aware of how not only my painting skills, but also my growing up in my family has influenced me affinity to 'workshop settings', especially with people from 'diverse and precarious background'. I grew up the eldest of seven siblings. From the age of eleven, after my parents had divorced, our household was headed by my mother, which was a very rare situation in the early West-European 1980s. Insurmountable cultural differences played a role in this divorce. My mother's line brought in Polish-German roots and an adherence to Protestantism, my father's line of the family came from traditional Catholic Flemish roots in the Antwerp region who likely mingled with some Spanish conquistadores blood. I have siblings with Scandinavian looks and others who look Mediterranean. Due to the turmoil after my parents' separation, much of my teenager years I withdrew from interacting with the

family and refrained from sharing chores. I stayed in my room and read. We had shifted from being a modal (and model) family to a household in a precarious socioeconomic situation, explicitly let down by the Catholic circle of locals, the very people that had once embraced our family. To me this personal life history helps explaining why today, investing and experiencing cooperative interacting beyond the private space, especially among people of diverse origin in precarious socio-economic situations, is a very intriguing and appealing process to me.

Section two of this article summarises the project trajectory. It starts with a brief description of the outcome of a conventional 'pre-inquiry' of the neighbourhood which feeds into the two subsequent research phases: the 'research practice' and the 'collaborative action'. This pre-inquiry enabled me to set the action approach tone for this particular research. My purpose was to acquire a general picture of the 'colour and feel' of the neighbourhood, especially how it is perceived by non-residents. This context sensitive information was obtained through a guided neighbourhood walk with a local colleague, readings on the history of the neighbourhood and meeting up with local authority members. I found that the elevated typical 1970s style neighbourhood nucleus of Cruz Vermelha, partly run-down, partly repainted in typical yellow, lends its character to its wider environment. This area is a 'no go' zone for non-residents, yet academics and urban planners take interest in it and local authorities are willing to support some local socio-cultural initiatives.

The pre-inquiry is followed by the 'research practice' preparing directly for the accomplishment of the mural. In this practice, the 'outsider' context information from the pre-inquiry was complemented with insights in the local youth's specific place related needs and attachments. The latter information came through informal talks with the CSM staff and informal translation aided talks with the youths, but foremost from a group walk in the neighbourhood and two design workshops, both in the CSM building and the school, as those activities resulted in designs for the mural. The organisation and implementation of the walk and workshops drew heavily on the involved actors' pedagogical skills and knowledge on local power relations. This phase also included some artistic practices whereby the obtained information and (artistic) data have been selected and combined to create a design for the wall.

In the ‘collaborative action’, the mural took shape and was finalised. In this phase I gave special attention to the pupils’ gestures as a mode of embodiment. Both phases had a participative backbone. In both phases I have been scanning and testing the boundaries of participation through negotiation with the involved partners: I gauged the power relations of involved actors to understand the possibilities for cooperation for the collaborative project. On the one hand, I had a clear idea about where to go: making a mural, or better still, providing a setting in which youths could create a design for the mural that fits their painting capacities and at the same time reflects their place related attachments in a personal way. To this purpose the workshop methods and techniques for creative participation were collaboratively organised or devised. On the other hand, from the very beginning, being a participatory project, the process and method creation kept unfolding, offering room for new suggestions, listening to each other for alternative options, deciding on choices concerning the next step or even an occasional but necessary step back.

But first, in section one, I will give an account of the theoretical inspirations of the project’s artistic and participative character.

5.2. Synergising art and participation?

As an action researcher, I 'take knowledge production beyond the gate-keeping of professional knowledge makers' (Bradbury Huang, 2012). Hence the importance as a researcher and an artist of being a fully equal member of a non-academic group. In light of this, I reveal my role in the constitutive history of the process, and that I clarify the scientific positioning of the method I use.

For me, participatory art is an imaginative creating-through-form process performed in a collective, bodily involved way embedded in a phenomenological methodology. In the present case the underlying intention is inclusion of disadvantaged youths in a co-creation process, thus transcending the 'elitist art enclave' (André, 2013). 'Art' and 'participation' as two drivers of co-creation are put together. I want to show that they can mutually enrich each other through their specific ways of accounting for emotions; such synergies mean more than just a 'broadening' or 'deepening' of either creation or participation.

Painting can induce an awareness of place by holding a mirror to our own experiences; what had been felt can now be seen, what was formless and vacillating is now framed and stilled; bodily involvement in creating together can induce an implicit but acute awareness of the other, stimulating cooperative behaviour and good feelings. Although paint workshops are also used in the research practice, it is foremost in the collaborative action phase, with the actual making of the mural, that art and participation are seen to fully enrich each other: going public positively catalyses mutual enrichment of bodily group involvement and visual expression.

5.2.1. The nature of imaginative creation

As for the first driver, I support the idea that making 'art' e.g. through painting, designing, making music, crafting, structures life and releases aspects of individual and collective emotional life (Lima, 1995, p. 420). I will not elaborate here on the question

whether everybody is able of creating 'Grand Art', nor on what distinguishes art from any other artistically creative activity. This question goes beyond the scope of this contribution. What is important to me here is the observation that art or the product of imaginative creation is not merely about form and content (e.g. Russian formalism), but that 'it is the transformation of form through content that is necessarily emotional and vice versa that explains the artistic process' (Veroff, 2012, p. 1276). It is exactly the release of emotions that gives art its power, because it bestows both the maker and the recipient of art with the power to envision the future and its organisation. Veroff (2012), like Greaney (2002) takes this point further: they consider imagination as the motor of human development, and thus of social change or transformation. Every time we creatively envision any aspect of the future this transformation mechanism is triggered. Art probes change in personal and social positioning by imposing new forms. Here we can trace the dialectical connection between a very intimate and personal aspect of our being and the circle of social life. Through art we light up the social circle by bringing in a spark of our inner (emotional) being. Concurrently inner psyches are imbued with collective emotions transmitted through artistic technique and form. In this shared experience, as an artist-researcher, I examine how individual participants (including myself) act and re-act in group when being involved in a process of creative imagination that goes public.

5.2.2. Negotiation and co-creation in the mural project.

How to bring about a spark of inner being in collaborative action? To ensure this personal element of creativity was brought to the fore, negotiation and co-creation with project partners proved to be of prime importance. The action research in the Cruz Vermelha neighbourhood of Lisbon learned from negotiation in action research as defined in two out of three types of action research case studies of the SPINDUS project for Spatial Quality as an inspirational lead (Segers et al. 2016; Moulaert et al., 2016): the 'negotiated action research cases' and the 'commissioned case studies'. In the 'negotiated action research cases' of SPINDUS the researchers and their direct partners (fieldworkers, local leaders, concerned citizens or users of space, artists, various

stakeholders, …) were fully free to set the agenda and decide on the methods to be used. They were able to incorporate some 'distancing time' from the case commissioner, but they never interrupted negotiation. Although in the 'commissioned case studies' the relationship between commissioning stakeholders, other stakeholders, end users and researcher also had an interactive basis, it was not the researchers that set the agenda. In the 'commissioned case studies' all actions fit official planning procedures. This is why political changes and the relationship between the public and private partners often resulted in a limited impact on the actual planning process (Moulaert et al., 2016). The Welcome (W)all-MURO project incorporated elements of both types of case studies: There was a mutual agreement between researcher and the most prominent involved partner, the coordinator to the youth organisation, on full transparency about project ideas. This meant non interrupted negotiation, but with shared agenda setting and shared decision taking on actions to be taken. Soon enough it became clear that only fully fitting in actions in organisational procedures, available infrastructure and logistics would give way to shared appropriation of the project and would, at the same time, stimulate the youth participation.

Furthermore, the arts and crafts workshop setting, a particular participation setting (Sennett, 2012), was embedded in the negotiated trajectory of the participation process and its different steps. The arts and crafts workshop method allows for physically creating 'things' with a group. This shared experience opens up the possibility of creating a 'place' (Tuan, 1975) where opportunity of dialogue or interaction between agents (including the interaction with space itself) can occur (Manzo, 2003). Sennett (2012, p. 204 ff) describes how physical labour or technical skill can instill dialogical social behaviour in skilled craftsmen. He does so by illuminating embodiment, the scientific notion that makes the link between the physical and the social. The mediating body is indeed mostly intertwined with place (Seamon, 2000). It plays a key role in meeting our need to belong, i.e., the desire for interpersonal attachment and has important consequences for social functioning (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). In general, it sounds quite trivial to claim that individuals need to be sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of others in order to allow for cooperative interaction between themselves and others. Yet, how is such an interaction effectuated in an arts and crafts workshop?

Picket et al. (2004) argue that especially those individuals that are high in the need to 'belong' are concerned with social connectedness. They are characterised by strong needs for acceptance and the physical presence of others and react strongly to negative affective reactions to real or anticipated (physical) exclusion. They are particularly attentive to and accurate in decoding social cues. 'Cues to social approval and disapproval may be subtly expressed through fleeting facial displays, warm or cold vocal tones, or being sought out or mildly snubbed at a gathering. Individuals who are better able to detect and decode these cues should be advantaged in both deflecting further rejection and regaining inclusion by engaging in behaviours that receive warmer responses' (Pickett et al., 2004, p. 2096).

Sennett (2012) distinguishes three ways in which gestures or social cues can be seen as a mode of embodiment and I wanted to verify its occurrence and influence in the group when working together.

1. Gestures, like movement, facial expression and sound are a way of enacting social relationships, endowing them with sensate life. They can convey mutual recognition (Taylor, 1994) and as such incorporate a particular mode of reciprocity (Maiter, et al., 2008), as they take the place of words in establishing authority (socially legitimised power), trust and cooperation.
2. Gestures are learned behaviour, often transmitted through visual display. Especially in crafts workshops this 'show rather than tell' way of learning is more important than explaining;
3. Also, physical acts (and the setup of a place) can convey a message that cannot be passed on aptly with words. They leave the meaning of the message without imposing strict interpretation. The better we appreciate a cue, the more visceral informality becomes.

This very aspect of research was shared with all partners in an official mail from the local administration. I did not come back to this aspect later in the project as I feared it would constraint natural communication. Neuroscientist Kandel (2016), found that capturing abstract art and appreciating a gesture, a facial expression etc. is done in the very same way. It is linked with our 'bottom up' thinking, a process of perception that is ingrained

over centuries and is connected with this part of the brain that regulates our emotions and most of our bodily functions. In this process stimuli spark an immediate response in the emotional brain. Understanding social cues thus requires tapping in on unconsciously making sense of phenomena. There is no need to impose a rational explanation. Consequently and according to Servan-Schreiber (2013) it is much more effective to use methods that stimulate the emotional brain directly (e.g. in this case to instill positive visceral feelings like belonging and trust), foremost because these methods have a full impact on this brain part. This is in contrast to traditional psychotherapy conviction that urges to become aware of thoughts and ideas and through this tries to heal emotions (McRae et al., 2011), Moreover, simple sensory experiencing which is about registering sensation provoked by external stimuli is regarded to be a similar 'form of thought'. It is those (passive) experiences that can also instill visceral feelings of belonging (Tuan, 1975).

Let us now return to the analysis of the project. What do these theoretical insights mean for the project?

5.3. Welcome (W)all-MURO in Bairro da Cruz Vermelha

During eight months the collaborative project Welcome (W)all-MURO engaged with youth organisation Centro Social da Musgueira (CSM), and Escola Básica 2,3 do Lumiar, and its youths in the socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhood of Cruz Vermelha, in the civic parish Lumiar (in the north of Lisbon), Portugal.

Beforehand, I had been exploring opportunities to apply a socio-artistic methodology. My aim was to realise a mural in a profoundly interactive way, expressing the place related sentiments and ambitions. Through a professional contact within my research team I ended up talking to colleagues in Lisbon who pointed out the unique opportunity of the area of Alta de Lisboa in Lumiar. The local youth organisation and the civic parish might be interested in re-doing a participative mural project. I was told the previously attracted mural artist got stuck in her 'art enclave' and miscalculated the importance of the social embedding of such a project.

5.3.1. The place Bairro da Cruz Vermelha

Cruz Vermelha is a fairly recent neighbourhood. Its first buildings, a group of 21 three to five storey social housing apartments, date from the mid-1970s. In the subsequent years more housing units were built by the Lisbon County in order to accommodate nearby slum inhabitants of a.o. Musgueira Norte (Soczka et al., 1988). In 1981, the community of Musgueira Norte, a mix of internal and external migrants who had arrived to this place from the 1960s onwards and had built own handedly their dwellings, had about 5219 residents, i.e. approximately 1364 households with 33% adolescents and children (Soczka et al., 1988). In the late 1990s Musgueira Norte was completely erased to make space for the buildings planned by the social mix agenda of the major 'Urbanisation Plan of Alto do Lumiar' (PUAL) (Antunes, 2015). The plan aimed at upgrading the area, including Cruz Vermelha, providing diverse housing opportunities: 'The living, planned and dynamic conclusion of a modern capital looking towards the future… '. The area was branded with a new, commercial name … Alta de Lisboa (Alta

de Lisboa, 2017). However, the significant improvement of the housing conditions came with the relocation of people who knew each other to quarters where they did not know their new neighbours; this led to the loosening of neighbourhood relations. Where life used to take place outside the houses and youth played on the streets, social support was not far off, nor was the deep feeling of belonging to a community (Carlos, 2013). Partly due to the displacement and the limited attraction of outdoor space, youth now have a tenacious connection with the indoor, with computer related activities in physically separated households with disconnected life stories. There is a tendency to communicate virtually rather than in actual (public) space (Rodrigues, 2017).

In general Alta de Lisboa still has specific social problems related to poverty and social exclusion. It shows a low level of education and professional training; unemployment rates in 2007 reached 23.3% (in that year the overall Portuguese unemployment rate was 7%). In 2007 one in four inhabitants were children aged between 0-14 years, often living in one parent families (Antunes, 2015). Furthermore the neighbourhood is known for its drug dealing areas (Centro Social da Musgueira, 2017).

In 1967 a local Jesuit priest, along with a group of volunteers, started a Social Centre in the Musgueira Norte community, providing among other things a nursery, pre-school care and youth leisure activities. Over time Centro Social da Musgueira (CSM) widened its target population to all residents of Alta de Lisboa, taking their social and human development and integration in the neighbourhood as its prime mission. Today the CSM offers different services reaching children from as early as 3 years to 25 years. Its service TPC Media hosts young people aged between 10 to 14, mainly providing after school care and organising cultural and social activities for them; for children from 6 to 10 years it organises leisure activities, etc. Its ‘O meu Bairro é a minha Cara’ [‘My neighbourhood is my face’] initiative is a side activity in partnership with the Alta de Lisboa Community Group to engage local inhabitants in taking care of and appreciating their neighbourhood. It promotes ways for owning the neighbourhood (Centro Social da Musgueira, 2017). In 2015, the initiative had tried to make a mural together with youths of the neighbourhood. The invited artist had accomplished a beautiful mural under the highway overpass, adjacent to the neighbourhood. But the youths had no role in it, neither in its design creation, nor in its accomplishment.

The Welcome (W)all – MURO project started in the summer of 2016.

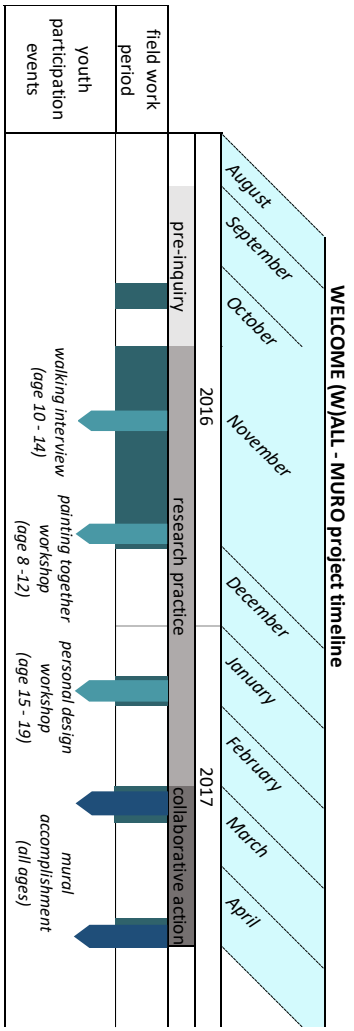

Figure 16: Welcome (W)all – MURO: project timeline. Ruth Segers.

5.3.2. The research practice

Negotiation and mediation in the project

What I felt to be the most decisive moment during the pre-inquiry, was the encounter with the coordinator to the local youth organisation during a meeting with the Junta de Freguesia de Lumiar, the local administration. During the research practice, which started in November 2016, his full support, precious knowledge and fine-tuned insights to handle local power relations would play a pivotal role in paving the way to a successful project. Our very first encounter came with a warm embrace, followed by a mutual expression of the ambition to fully involve youths (and thus the participating organisation) throughout the process of making a public mural.

Immediately after this meeting, the coordinator suggested three suitable locations for the mural in the neighbourhood. The 2015 mural project in which he was involved through the 'O meu Bairro é a minha Cara' initiative, was located at the fringe of the neighbourhood adjacent to a large empty plot used for drug use and trafficking and with no spatial connection with the neighbourhood inhabitants. To avoid a similar disconnection I explained him I would compare the suggested locations according to some location assessment criteria (see figure 17):

Bairro da Cruz Vermelha: mural location requirements

		local exposure	*safe working environment*	*scale*	*quality of wall*
Largo 6 Marias, site 1a		very high	good	good	good
Av D. Mourao-Ferreira, site 1b		very high	good	bad	bad
Back yard wall of CSM, site 2		low	bad (scaffolding needed)	bad	good
Rua Maria Carlotta, site 3		medium	bad (traffic)	good	good

Figure 17: Assessment criteria for the mural location. Ruth Segers.

The wall at the rear of the Escola Básica 2,3 do Alto do Lumiar measured up to all requirements in a promising way. The wide space, along this wall is used as the main pedestrian entrance to the neighbourhood. This elects it as a place which can potentially foster a positive sense of community attachment and belonging (Tuan, 1975).

In the course of November 2016, I visited the youth organisation CSM on an almost daily basis. The facilities of the 'art room' became my working base: I could co-use it with youth walking in and out. During the first two weeks of my stay I focused on finding ways to connect with those youth and introduce them to the project. Because I am not proficient in Portuguese I started writing small texts to introduce myself and the project, and had the texts translated by a colleague at the University of Lisbon or the supervisors of CSM. I also asked the supervisors to mention the photo project to the youth. I hoped this would stimulate the youth in participating by sending me photographs of 'touching spots' of the neighbourhood. When present in the CSM building I made modest attempts of small conversations in English. Soon enough children would know I speak English, so google translate readily helped us out. They also wrote small messages in English, translated by the supervisors. 'I don't speak English, but I need to know if you have [a] place for [me in] this project? Can I participate? Can you write your answer here in this paper?' I learned this sort of communication did not guarantee these youngsters would eventually effectively participate in the project. The CSM coordinator's prediction would prove to become truth: 'You will have to see, I cannot guarantee anything. It is the youth who decide whether they will cooperate or not. It goes via rumours, if they like the idea and like the action, they will join in. It all depends on some who take the lead in this, then others will follow.' Therefore we made an agreement that I would keep him updated about whatever ideas ahead that needed organisation. An informal mode of communication developed: I consistently informed about intended/possible (or failed) steps: e.g. my question for photographs of 'touching spots' in the neighbourhood did not receive effective acclaim, only promises were made. Hence the coordinator reacted by having TPC Media (CSM) organise a 'walking interview' in group to take pictures. The successful re-organising of this action led to a smooth integration of another co-supported action in the CSM program: the 'painting together' workshop. Both events are explained in the 'youth participation events' section below. Integration of actions in the CSM program (and later in the school

program) implicated changes in time management. In theory, I had calculated the mural experience could be accomplished in one month (without pre-inquiry), in practice the research practice and the collaborative action would prove to need six months.

Another step to be taken was naming the project. The coordinator expressed the wish to give it an English and Portuguese component, it also had to incorporate an invitation. We mutually agreed on 'Welcome (W)all – MURO'.

Thanks to the coordinator's detailed knowledge of the power relations in the neighbourhood, the Escola Básica 2, 3 do Alto do Lumiar institution, owner of the wall, was successfully integrated into the project process. Halfway November the local administration of Lumiar contacted the school and sent a shared invitation to launch a collaborative project with the school to make a mural and situated this initiative within the research context: 'Junta de Freguesia do Lumiar, Centro Social da Musgueira and researcher Ruth Segers are developing a youth-oriented urban intervention, which intends to, in a participated approach, question de body language, the "gesture", and the sense of belonging in their intimate relation with the concepts of (place) identity' (personal communication, translated from Portuguese, November 8, 2016). The CSM coordinator suggested he would arrange a visit to the school for the both of us, to explain the project in greater detail and see how participation in the project would appreciated by the school coordinator. In the conversation during the ensuing meeting it would prove necessary to accommodate the school coordinator's wish to adjust my initial idea to engage the youth in making very personal designs featuring items like hairstyle, shoes, accessories, etc. She said she was afraid that I would expose the neighbourhood and the school (and the youth's emotions) in a too negative way. She suggested to rather focus on 'something related to school, like books or something friendly and positive, like birds'. On the whole the participation was agreed upon and the arts and crafts teacher was assigned as the main contact person. The pupils belonging to his class would be invited to take part in the project, as described in the 'mandala workshop'.

Only one item was never put on the 'negotiation table', but was inspired by the pre-inquiry outcome: the palette to be used for the mural. I opted for seven colours that

reflected the facade colours of this Portuguese neighbourhood (see figure 18). Although the arts and crafts teacher explicitly endorsed the palette choice, I acknowledge that this choice limited personal emotional expression in youth, since the use of particular colours always also reflects sentiments. For me, this basic option simplified the mural making process enormously, as a preselection of paint made the paint purchase process easier, more cost effective and would lend the mural a 'coherent' outlook. Only the youngest group of participants in the 'painting together' workshop naturally mixed blue and yellow, because 'trees needed to be green', as shown in figure 25.

The final wrapping up conversation with the CSM coordinator made clear that the level of negotiation about the project was sometimes felt as demanding, but ultimately extremely valuable. He explicitly appreciated the mentioning of CSM firstly as a fully contributing partner in the words of thanks on the mural.

Youth participation events during the research practice

Eventually three consecutive participation events were organised to uncover place related needs and attachments among the local youth: 1. a walking interview to make photographs of 'touching spots' in the neighbourhood and 2. a painting workshop in with TPC Media (CSM) both in November 2016, and 3. a design workshop with the arts and crafts class of Escola Básica 2,3 in January 2017. The eventual selection of designs that was used for the mural making was fully based on the results of these three events. The wall design was finalised only after consultation with the arts and crafts teacher.

Walking interview

During the first week of my stay at CSM, I expressed the wish to the youth organisation coordinator to involve youths in the project by having them make photographs of 'touching spots' in the neighbourhood. Taking photographs is a quick and efficient way to visualise particular spots that trigger a personal emotion. The photographs could give all participants and especially me, originally the outsider, an insight in place related emotions and needs of local youth. So I started asking youngsters for cooperation. Yet the visual request and small dialogues proved to be not working as I explained above. Then came the coordinators proposal: Shall I ask the supervisors to organise a group event? On November 11th 2016, TPC Media (CSM) organised a walking interview for local youngsters to facilitate taking pictures of places. I had proposed the route and in light of security it was slightly adjusted by the coordinator. The TPC Media supervisors fully briefed the youths in advance and in my presence: they invited youths on a jointly walk to take photos from spots that were of particular (emotional) importance to them, be it in a positive or a negative way (see figure 19).



Figure 18: Walking interview through the neighbourhood to take pictures of 'touching spots'; Building facades in the nucleus area are typically pink or yellow, colours also used in the mural design. Photo: Ruth Segers.

Twenty kids, aged 10-14, pictured 15 different spots. Each photograph/spot came with a story. Figures 20 to 23 on p 134-135 show four photographs by four children (left) accompanied with its design for the mural by Ruth Segers (right).



Figure 19: Map of Bairro da Cruz Vermelha showing the neighbourhood walk with 15 'touching spots'. Map: Ruth Segers on the basis of participants' inputs.

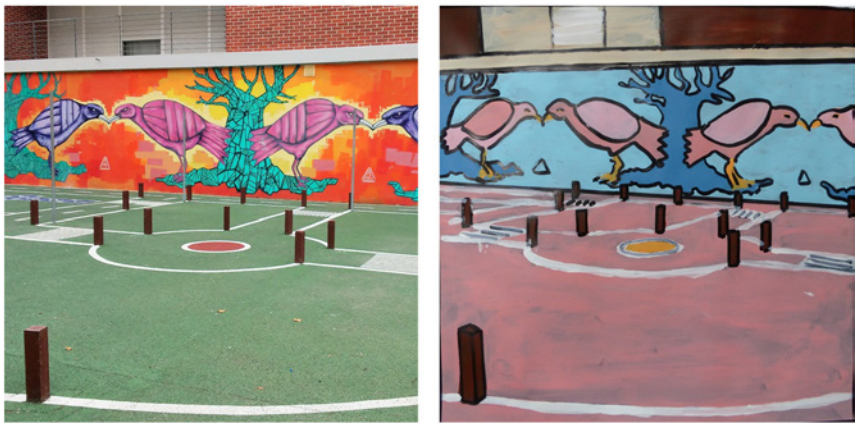

Figure 20: ‘I wish I could play in this traffic park, but I cannot use it, the scale is too small for my cycle.’ Thomas.



Figure 21: ‘This is the entrance to my apartment, I feel bad it is so dirty.’ Andre.

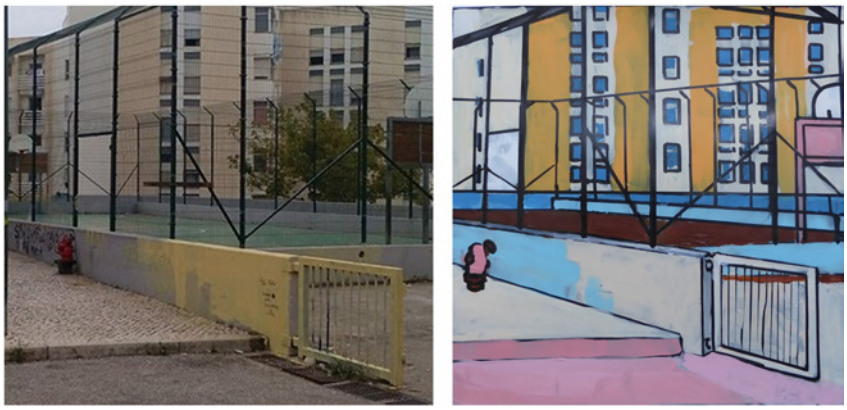

Figure 22: 'I live adjacent this playground, I meet my friends here. We started painting the wall … with pilfered paint.' Guilherme.



Figure 23: 'I am so proud, this is where my mom works.' Marta.

Painting workshop

During the last week of November I used the arts room of CSM to make paintings of the spots photographed during the neighbourhood walk. This way I became a medium between the pictured 'touching spots' and easy reproducible, stylised yet still recognisable designs for the mural (see figure 20 to 23). This painting activity attracted children running in and out the room. 'O que está fazendo?' [What are you doing?] I showed them and what was reassuring to me is that they recognised all neighbourhood spots in the paintings I made. And, they wanted to paint too. So I gave them paper, some paint and a brush. This typical 'copycat' behaviour, a result of 'showing rather than telling', gave me the idea to organise a painting workshop with the smallest. Again, the CSM coordinator was informed and it was him who asked the supervisors to plan a day. On November 30, eight children aged eight to twelve years voluntarily participated in the painting activity (see figure 24). I had divided a black and white picture with an overall view of the neighbourhood in eight sections. Each section of this picture measured 30 cm x 30 cm and could be painted like in a colouring book image. The result of all parts put together was surprisingly beautiful, it had resulted in a finished creative product (see figure 25). It should be kept in mind that CSM is not a school, children are invited for activities, but do not need to sit through them if they do not wish to. Much depends on their willingness to cooperate. Also, the work setting was quite noisy, with a lot of options for distraction. Still the workshop had been a fruitful collective accomplishment and it was decided to use the art products of this workshop as major design inputs for the mural.



Figure 24: Painting workshop at Centro Social da Musgueira (CSM) with children aged from eight to twelve. Photo: Ruth Segers.



Figure 25: Result of the painting workshop: the three upper squares, depicting the first row of social housing in the neighbourhood, have been selected as major design for the mural. Photo: Ruth Segers.

Design workshop

Getting acquainted with the arts and craft class of Escola Básica 2,3 went very smoothly. In the morning of January 23rd 2016, an open-minded teacher welcomed me in his class/ workshop space with the words. 'Welcome in the class, I am willing to participate, but there are only three pupils right now.' Only one hour later, after some brainstorming about the design topic with the teacher, these first pupils had started creating their personal mandalas using geometry. The mandala topic turned out to be a perfectly integrated answer to the concerns of the school coordinator (see above): using geometry is related to school activity and mandalas have a 'friendly' and 'positive' connotation. At the same time, it was a continuation of a recently finished project by the arts and crafts teacher whereby his pupils had made a huge 3D dome with triangles and hexagons. And finally, my stake in the topic was that making a personal mandala always reflects an individual identity… .

Over three days 12 mandalas were made by 11 pupils aged from 15 to 19 years, even though the class has an entry age of 14. The group was focused and dedicated with amicable cooperation in duo's. It even involved a literal design cooperation between a left-handed and a right-handed pupil. The workshop started with three participants in the morning, continued with six in the afternoon and the next day there were nine participants. A third workshop day was organised to allow two other pupils to finish their individual mandala. Eventually, four creators of mandalas were invited to paint their own designs on the wall.



Figure 26: A mandala making workshop … even involving a literal design cooperation between a left-handed and a right-handed pupil. Photo: Ruth Segers.



Figure 27: Making mandala's with geometrical figures, circles, triangles, squares and pentagons: selection of mandala's made by students aged 15 to 19 years at Escola Básica 2,3 do Lumiar. Joelma (19), Claudia (15), Mario (17) and Rodrigo (16) have been selected for painting their design on the wall, they showed the greatest dedication in making a design, either by working extra hours and/or by creating original work related to the topic. Photo: Ruth Segers.

5.3.3. The accomplishment of the mural

In March 2017, the actual 'collaborative action' started: nine effective working days involving youths and one full day of work by myself allowed to cover a wall of two meters high by 38 meters length. In April 2017, two more days of painting, one with youth, one without, and some wrapping up meetings were necessary to finalise the project. Figure 21 gives a visual overview of the work progress.

As a result of the preceding participation processes, the actual implementation of the mural could take a flying start. The local administration had cleaned up the space in front of the wall and demossed the wall and we could count on the CSM coordinator for logistical support, like drinks and biscuits. The school staff was helpful throughout the activities: the responsible for the copy machine, the concierge and several reception ladies made my coming and going to school/ the wall site easy, during and after school hours. The arts and crafts teacher was always available seeking solutions to every small or bigger technical or artistic challenge. On top of that the urbanism teacher and the computer science teacher freely offered their teaching hours to assist with the mural making activity. The three teachers made mutual agreements as to who would be present during school hours while painting was going on. They followed through till the end of the work. And finally, not the least, the pupils of the arts and crafts class were ready for action. One month had passed since we had seen each other and it was nice to be greeted so warmly on my return.

Participation dynamics in mural making

On an almost a daily basis, about 15 girls and boys, aged from 15 to 19 years and of mixed origin, formed the core group involved in the implementation of the mural. Most of them were pupils of the arts and crafts class. However, on two Wednesday

Figure 28 on p 141: In total 50 youth have been involved in painting the mural during nine working days in March 2017 and one finishing and 'signature' day in April 2017. About 80% of this work was carried out by 15 students of Escola Básica 2, 3. Photo's: Ruth Segers.

Day 1



Day 2



Day 3



Day 4



Day 5



Day 6



Day 7



Day 8



Day 9



Day 10



afternoons a big group of 20 CSM boys and girls aged from 10 to 14 years came along, eager for helping out with painting. And on working days eight and nine, about ten youths, aged from 10 to 14 year, from the local Community Centre for Arts and Education (CAF) came along to assist the painting process.

I witnessed and learned from teachers that youth participation in the final three years of basic education (entry age 12-14) is not as obvious. During my first visits I experienced how drop outs from classes sometimes just sat outside, in the schoolyard. They were present at school, yet not in class. During the collaborative action, it became very obvious that the nature of the actual actions substantially influenced pupil participation and that it was not merely a matter of age. It was the appeal of actions to personal sensitivities and competences of the involved pupils that triggered cooperation. Some were eager to design, but were apprehensive about the paint and thus painting, others would love to paint, but did not mind the design at all. The project incorporated several elements of a home decorator's craftsmanship. The arts and craft teacher and me learned the youths where to tape, how to apply a layer of paint without dripping and how to blow up a design by involving them.

About authority, trust and cooperation through bodily expression

A pattern of embodiment of cooperation or an exchange in which the participants benefit from the encounter (Sennett, 2012, p. 5) was often observed among the youth at the wall site, when they were painting while standing very closely together. Typically one youth would pick a particular spot in front of the wall, then two others would follow suit. It allowed for chatting and meanwhile following each other's brush moves: a nonverbal 'if you go that way, I take this part' dialogue. Incorporating a particular mode of reciprocity creates good feelings. If three youths were working at the wall, they would never do so in three disconnected spots. Of course, working solo happened as well. Often the solo worker would emit a serene tranquillity to the place showing a pupil fully immersed in his or her activity. Another common pattern of cooperation could be observed whenever someone spilled some paint. Very often this led to a collective sound expression like 'oh', and temporary retreating from the activity and checking the

damage. These gestures concurrently attract attention of others. Pupils would stop working and check what is happening: is water needed? or is showing some empathy sufficient to reassure the peer? Conveying recognition is a rewarding gesture.



Figure 29: A workshop setting that allows for chatting while following each other's gestures and for working solo. From left to right: Isa, Claudia, Simão, William, Vava and Rivaldo. Photo: Ruth Segers.

In this case youth's eagerness or commitment for cooperation also had a cooperative effect on a teacher. During the final working day pupils had to attend sports class in the morning and were unable to come to the wall site. Because pupils had mentioned their commitment, the sports teacher came to me and told me he thought his sports class was very important too. I felt the attentive eyes of on looking pupils. I said: of course, I understand, no problem it is your decision, but it is the final project day. He reflected, he had been at the wall site the previous evening with some pupils and had shown his interest in the project. in the end he said: is it ok if four students help you out? I thought that was perfect. When I arrived at the wall site I saw he had set up his class in the space

in front of the wall. This way all of his pupils could physically (visually and auditory) experience what was happening at the wall and vice versa (Tuan, 1975). A gesture that rewarded him with authority (Sennett, 2012).

About learning behaviour: showing rather than telling

Initially, the same pupils who were involved in the actions at the wall were the same ones who would turn up in class and collaborate there. But that changed over time. Not only some drop outs would participate, also some 'difficult to manage' pupils from other classes made their appearance. One particular pupil went through a significant learning process. From the start he was present at the site, a true model of hip hop dress culture, watching others work. He had not been involved in the design workshop, nor had he contributed to painting the base layer of the wall. The teacher had told me before he was completely uninvolved in class, having too much trouble using drugs. Gradually however, whenever I invited him, he became involved in the painting process. I would hold up a painting brush, while nodding my head and lifting my brows: how about painting? Followed by showing what was expected to be done. During the last two days it amazed onlooker pupils to see him holding up his right hand while asking in English 'paint?'. I did no longer need to repeat my inviting gesture.

During the finishing off days in April, I had invited the Escola Básica 2,3 pupils to write their names on the wall. I found the name of this particular pupil was missing. So I asked one of his teachers where I could find him. She was truly surprised: 'Him? Did he collaborate??' It made me smile: he did collaborate… and I found him willingly sign the mural.

About informality

Participation during the implementation of the mural was fluctuating. On some days, when fifteen or more pupils were present, the place was filled with laughter, shouting and youth running around. Waving arms from all sides tried to attract my attention: 'Ruth, stôra, teacher… is this the right colour, can I paint, is this correct, …?' But on other

days, with smaller groups, the place emitted a dedicated and relaxed atmosphere. The sheer fact that while working all painting material and personal belongings were hanging in the nearby olive trees or standing on the grass in front of the wall gave the setting an informal touch, infusing it with an easy visceral character (Sennett, 2012). Youth could freely move around, opt for a particular task or take a break when needed (see figure 28).

Imaginative creation, sensory experience and place

The Welcome (W)all-MURO project offered youth a possibility to communicate in public their identity (Hopkins, 2010) in relation to the school (mandala's) and to the neighbourhood (emotionally touching spots; view of neighbourhood houses) (Proshansky et al., 1983) in a visual way (see figure 30). The process covered several project specific sensory experiences (Tuan, 1975): feeling the texture of the concrete wall, the view of the two olive trees in the project site, the smell of grass and paint, the heaviness of a soaked painting roller, the joyous sensation of creating together, etc. …These experiences can be considered 'forms of thought', capable of instilling visceral feelings of belonging. The wall as such, a painted reality, communicates in a tangible way something intangible (Monnet, 2010). It was a visual expression of youths' mix of emotions regarding particular spots or an expression of a personal aesthetic creation. When signing the wall with his name, one pupil added the abbreviation 'B.P' (Black Power) (see figure 28, day 10). His facial expression while explaining this action conveyed to me a deep feeling of his proudness of having painted his design in this place and of belonging to the black community (Hopkins, 2010; Rose, 1995). Another pupil, on seeing me painting the words of thanks, not aware of the actual contribution of CAF, indignantly pointed out to me that it was their project so I could not mention 'CAF' on the wall. The school coordinator promised me the school would take up responsibility for the mural. Many passersby expressed their gratitude for the project taking place, by showing their thumbs up or by personally communicating their sentiments. All of these examples transformed the wall site into a centre filled with symbolic meaning for the makers and for the community. The site had been constructed by personal experiences

with form, content and process (Tuan, 1975), turning it from a space into a place (Relph, 1976), appropriating local space and turning it into symbolic power (Monnet, 2011).

Figure 30 on p 147: The Welcome (W)all-MURO in Bairro da Cruz Vermelha, Lisbon, with a word of thanks, signatures of the involved students of Escola Básica 2,3, mandala's, touching spots and a view of the first social housing row of the neighbourhood. Photo: Ruth Segers.


O Welcome Wall MURO é um projecto participativo que
junta grupos de Jovens da Alta de Lisboa
com o Centro Social da Mangueira.
Escola Basica 2/3 do Alto do Lumiar e
a Junta de Freguesia do Lumiar e CAF,
e também duas universidades: o departamento de
Planeamento e Desenvolvimento da KULeuven na Belgica
Instituto de Geografia e Ordenamento
do Territorio da universidade de Lisboa.
O projecto foi idealizado pela investigadora da KUL
Ruth Siegers
Muito carregado ali
WILLIAM
SAVARES

5.4. AFTERTHOUGHT

The Welcome (W)all – MURO project is an artistic endeavour based on craft initiation and co-action. As a full partaker of the whole process, I can say that the intermediate and final results of this co-action process have evoked individual and social feelings of (aesthetically) rewarding accomplishments through painting. Feelings that are not reducible to logic, reason or even morality, but that contributed to strengthening a sense of belonging which in turn ameliorated interpersonal connectedness and cooperation among youths and vice versa during the project. The outdoor arts and crafts workshop or the mural accomplishment was a full collaborative act. Both the well understood gestures and the sheer experience of living this arts and crafts workshop setting, opened up possibilities to share working experiences and skills. By transcending differences in attitudes towards participation in work of a specific nature and thereby stimulating cooperative behaviour, painting participants were infused with visceral feelings of well-being that came from interpersonal appreciation. Shared painting brought in the vital power of embodied emotion into a group process. Pupils claimed their work; involved participants (representing local institutions) were grateful for the public recognition of their contribution.

I learned that creating visual art enriched and locally embedded the whole participative project by inducing an awareness of place by holding a mirror to youth's individual experiences by inviting them to take pictures of the spots that touch their emotions or to design their personal mandala's. Neighbourhood and school related emotions have become visible, what was formless and vacillating is now visible for the public eye. This way the mural also effects and affects the wider community, substantially, since its prominent location cannot be overlooked. By means of this visual communication youth clearly appropriated this space in a symbolic way. This positive outcome was facilitated by both the preparatory participative processes to create a place related design, uncovering local youth's place related needs and attachments as well as sustained openness for negotiating (power) relations between involved partners which created a synergistic effect between the organising skills of the CSM coordinator and the creative skills of the art and crafts teacher. And finally, I personally experienced that a leading and mediating role as an artist-researcher in a workshop setting is pivotal in realising a

strong final product. It does take some sensitivities for visual creativity that are mostly not alluded to in conventional non-arts based action research. In using the proposed interview walk and painting workshop methods it is possible to transcend this limitation. For artists I see a wide scope of possibilities for further involvement with collaborative methods incorporating visual creativity to support the transformation of a space to a place, embodied interaction and community building. Overall though, it does not take a visual artist to be aware of the power of well understood gestured based creative interaction. Any action researcher gifted with craft skills can make use of them to deepen interpersonal interaction and sense of belonging in a wide variety of workshop settings.

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PART 3

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

6. General conclusions

Making this doctorate has been an intense, sometimes frustrating, sometimes exhilarating, but overall very rewarding journey. The first part of this journey evolved hesitantly, scanning topics and methods and basically following up on what came my way: a diverse collection of case studies. The latter part of this journey was dedicated to holding on to what truly appealed to me. The chosen analytical focus does just that: the multi layered concept of place appeals to me on several levels. Striking a balance between discovering place, what to me feels like 'getting acquainted with new "space"', exploring place and deepening a sense of belonging or finding one's 'place' is an intriguing life time 'occupation'. Indeed 'place' 'holds' the intricate relationship between the social and the world including the material and the biological in which I live.

This conclusion comprises four sections. In the first section I give an overview of the particular findings that stood out in each case study, both with regard to the research question as to the applied methodology. These findings became critical elements that were corners stones of this work. In section two I proceed with elaborating further on findings with regard to spatial strategies on differing scales that foster a need for social interaction and belonging, using the concepts social location, sense of place and social cues. In the third section I reflect on the research framework of this thesis. Here I start with putting place, sense of place and social cues in perspective. In the next point I relate this doctoral research topic and methodology to the research topic and methodology that were discussed in the IWT/SBO project SPINDUS, namely transdisciplinary research in the field of the socio-spatial, power relations and the action research methodology. In the concluding section, I advance the importance of social cues as embodied knowledge and relate this with spatial strategies that individuals use to negotiate interaction with others in public place. I end with a proposal for future action research valorising the corner stones flagged up in the first section as stepping stones for further investigation.

6.1. Lessons learned during this PhD journey

My doctoral research question, how do spatial configurations, or actions afforded by particular spatial set ups, influence interpersonal cooperation, reaped a collection of insights in the nature of socio-spatial interaction and methodology (see figure 31). Each case study brought in particular elements that contributed to understanding this relationship. Case study 1 shows a deep connection between memory and sense of place. First-generation Turkish women bring in spatial and social practices from their place/time of origin in their Antwerp neighbourhood and in doing so nurture their sense of the neighbourhood. Memory and sense of place concurrently play a role in creating a 'deduplicated' feeling of belonging in these women. The involved women truly feel at home in two places, yet neither place affords the full sentiment of 'being at home'. This case study further gives a clear example of how gender relations leave deep traces in (public) space. Gender power relations are represented through social cues in public places, like male gazing and wearing veils, and are further responded to by creating places for interpersonal interaction for women in private places. Case study 2 brought a revelation with it. I discovered that the general felt sense of ease of working together in the SPIT vzw kitchen can be attributed to a material and social context that allows for 1. following up on social and material cues, as seen in the learning by doing attitude of the work leader and in the kitchen design and its use 2. incorporating ritual in the work process, and 3. working with resistance via dialogical communication. Case study 3 brought a learning process regarding conflict and cooperation, on two levels: 1. taking time and genuinely listening to space related issues in youth by professionals proved to result in a nice playground for youth in Molenbeek, 2. an initial mismatch between what was asked for by the involved stakeholders (action research) and what was promised (a retrospective evaluation) in this case study, complemented with a tense socio-spatial context made way for an uneasy completion of this case study. Case study 4, finally, proved that 1. working *with* resistance as seen in the demands of the school partner in research, 2. allowing for a context where social cues can be manifested in a creative workshop setting, and 3. nurturing sense of place which fosters belonging, as seen in the Welcome (W)all-MURO project with youth in Lisbon paved a way to a successful project.

	HOW DO SPATIAL CONFIGURATIONS, OR ACTIONS AFFORDED BY PARTICULAR SPATIAL SET UPS, INFLUENCE INTERPERSONAL COOPERATION?				
FOUR CASE STUDIES	FINDINGS REGARDING RESEARCH QUESTION		**RESEARCH METHODS**	FINDINGS REGARDING METHODOLOGY	
	CASE STUDY LINKED	SUMMARISED		CASE STUDY LINKED	SUMMARISED
1. First generation Turkish women in the 2060 neighborhood of Antwerp	(personal and social) memory nurtures sense of place; deduplicated feeling of belonging; gender (power) relations have spatial consequences	well understood social and material cues in creative workshop settings 1. generates positive visceral feelings, 2. creates a sense of place that fosters belonging and 3. initiates social and/or spatial adjustments	semi structures interviews; participative observation in social events and observation of neighborhood places (with guided walk)	methodology should strike a balance between what is asked for and what is received from interviewees	place based research that fosters interpersonal cooperation works best when taking on action research characteristics: 1. (a degree of) CO-PRODUCTION, 2. REFLEXIVITY (taking in a personal, involved and self critical stance), 3. SIGNIFICANCE (meaning and relevance beyond immediate context in which the research takes place), 4. ACTION IN RESPONSE TO NEED AND include embodied creative workshop settings
2. Cooperation in the super diverse SPIT vzw kitchen	socio-spatial conditions that allow for 1. following up on social (and material) cues, 2. incorporating ritual and 3. working with resistance, stimulate cooperative interaction		participative observation; talks and semistructured interviews	participative observation feeds understanding of sense of place	
3. Building a haven with and for youth in the public sphere of Molenbeek (Brussels)	genuine involvement of stakeholders in spatial redevelopment demands time and listening skills (working with resistance)		reactive observation (through sketching); open interviews with involved professionels	methodology should be fully agreed upon by all research partners	
4. Action research with an artistic turn, the Welcome (W)all - MURO in Lisbon	cooperation demands working with resistance; creative workshop settings promote informal interaction and creates a sense of place that fosters belonging		action research (with embodied creative elements)	action research can only be pursued with full cooperation of all involved parties; creative workshop settings in public place foster belonging	

Figure 31: Overview of critical lessons regarding research question and methodology in each of the four case studies and in summary. Ruth Segers.

Taken together these insights all show an embodied and mutual connection between the social and the spatial in interpersonal interaction. As a result I conclude that following up on well understood social and material cues in creative workshop settings 1. generates positive visceral feelings, 2. creates a sense of place that fosters belonging and 3. initiates social and/or spatial adjustments.

Gathering data that fit a phenomenological approach can be done with diverse methods. In general (but not always) qualitative methods are applied with a phenomenological approach. So did I, however without sticking to a particular (combination of) method(s). In each case study I applied a different set of research methods, the choice of which depended on the full research context and my own evolving experience in working with methods. Applying research methods was a learning process on two levels: I gradually got acquainted with a methodology that fitted me and I learned that I am particularly open to information and topics that are real, but ephemeral.

In case study 1 the emphasis was on semi structured interviews with a group of first-generation Turkish women, which were represented in a narrative. This case study taught me that a balanced 'give and receive' mechanism also applies for research relations. What is received through interviews from interviewees should not be taken for granted. Case study 2 proved to give me the most interesting insights following participative observation, complemented by e.g. two check-my-findings interviews with the kitchen work leaders after the participation period. Here I learned that participative observation (and an open attitude to what is sensed) can feed our understanding of (sense of) place in a profound way. Case study 3 largely depended on open interviews with professionals guiding the redevelopment process of the St Rémi park in Molenbeek, with some attempts of reaching out to a research group via reactive observation in the form of drawing. This research process taught me the importance of a mutual and wholeheartedly agreement regarding the choice of research methods among all involved partners.

The lessons learned in these three sequential case studies made way for using an action research methodology in case study 4. More in particular and in order to take

conventional action research to a 'deeper' level of interpersonal interaction, the human body became my central mediation focus through place based visual creativity, in the involved youth and myself. All project partners working together allowed for creating the Welcome (W)all – MURO. This methodology turned out to work well for me. It combines an (embodied) action-oriented engagement in partnership with practitioners, with a research oriented engagement including data gathering and analysis. In general, and methodology wise, I conclude that place based research that fosters interpersonal cooperation works best when taking on action research characteristics like:

1. fostering co-production developed on basis of reiteratively deciding on next steps by all involved;
2. incorporating reflexivity (or taking in a personal, involved and self-critical stance);
3. being significant (the action research should have meaning and relevance beyond immediate context in which the research takes place, thus in support of the flourishing of community or wider ecology);
4. the actual implemented action should be a response to a need, and lastly yet importantly it should include workshop settings working with embodied creativity.

6.2. Spatial strategies on differing scales that foster a need for social interaction and belonging

That the significance of place in human experience goes far deeper than sheer being a 'location' is shown in the behaviour of individuals and groups, protecting their places against outside forces of destruction through (re-)appropriation. Its deeper significance is known to anyone who has experienced homesickness and nostalgia of particular places. Personal and relational experiences are interrelated, as interactions with others intervene in the experience of significant life moments. By and large it is 'other' people who help to create space - literally and metaphorically - in people's lives. Relationships open doors to new places on both physical and emotional levels. In this way, we can see how 'interpersonal relationships impact place meaning and use as well as personal development' (Manzo, 2005) and vice versa. In the papers constituting this PhD thesis we see how fine grained 'real' people are connected with places. They carry out spatial adjustments to foster spaces as places for interpersonal cooperation. Through this process they concurrently feed a sense of place and deepen a feeling of belonging to this place and its people. Ultimately we all –somehow- feel a need to belong. How superficial life would be without the existence of this sentiment.

Figure 32 gives an overview of four different ways, as reflected in the case studies, in which sense of place and social cues stimulate people, that pertain to particular intersections of social categories, to deploy spatial strategies on differing scales, responding to a need for social interaction and belonging.

In the first paper of this thesis the attitude towards and behaviour in public place is explored in first-generation Turkish migrant women. The interviewed women's behaviour is not only influenced by social interaction with peers or figures of authority, it is simultaneously deeply influenced by their attachment to their place of origin. For Turkey is not only the place they return to, each year again during one to several months, it is also their place of birth. Childhood's socio spatial customs that are

	SPATIAL STRATEGIES ON DIFFERING SCALES THAT FOSTER A NEED FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION AND BELONGING USING THE CONCEPTS SOCIAL LOCATION, SENSE OF PLACE AND (SOCIAL) CUES			
FOUR CASE STUDIES	**SOCIAL LOCATION**	**SENSE OF PLACE**	**(SOCIAL) CUES**	**SPATIAL ADJUSTMENTS/SCALES**
1. First generation Turkish women in the 2060 neighborhood of Antwerp	first generation Turkish women in the 2060 neighborhood of Antwerp, with precarious socio-economic background (2013)	changes over time: pullback from public place used by Turkish men and around De Coninckplein, inversion of public norms in dressing and speech; deduplicated feeling of belonging (2060 neighbourhood and Turkey village)	male gazing, veiling; unreadable / dirty public place; lack of trees & seats in public place	adjust living room to a social space for a public beyond family: affording koran group meetings; transcend physical boundaries by living in two places, in Antwerp neighbourhood and in Turkey village
2. Cooperation in the super diverse SPIT vzw kitchen	migrant workers from various places of origin in the SPIT vzw kitchen, Leuven, with precarious socio-economic background (2014)	take up working space in a particular kitchen work/place of own choice and related to personal characteristis; general dress code; general feeling of ease at work/in place	gesturing (facial and body expressions in conversation, taking in particular position, hand positions in work,...)	SPIT vzw work leaders (co) designed kitchen to afford diverse work activities in differing places in the industrial kitchen of the company
3. Building a haven with and for youth in the public sphere of Molenbeek (Brussels)	youth with external migration background in the in the public sphere of St Rémi park, Molenbeek; involved institution YOTA! (2016)	before re-design: youth gang took over the park, feeling of worthlessness, 'the people in power do not care about our places'; after re-design: free entry to the park 'this is the only park I can use my cycle in'	cues fascilitating playing together as supported by 1. involvement in design, 2. material context of playground	re-design of a small urban park/playground on the basis of 1. a long term involvement in youth activities on the streets/park 2. youth participation in design
4. Action research with an artistic turn, the Welcome (W)all - MURO in Lisbon	youth in precarious socio-economic situation, with internal or external migration background in the public sphere of Cruz Vermelha, Lisbon (PT); involved institution youth centre CSM and Escola Basica 2,3 (2017)	positive and negative neighbourhood sensitivities expressed in pictures of touching spots by youth; school related sensitivity expressed in mandala drawings	mural site: creative workshop setting fascilitating good understanding of cues in an informal environment	reviving the overall view of the entrance to the neighbourhood by co-producing a major mural

Figure 32: Overview of four different ways / case studies in which sense of place and social cues stimulate people (that pertain to particular intersections of social categories) to deploy spatial strategies on differing scales to foster a need for social interaction and belonging, including research methods to gather empirical findings. Ruth Segers.

ingrained in their memories can be seen to re-occur in their wearing a veil, albeit a different one than the original and typical Turkish white scarf and in the strict gender divide, reflected in the spatial approach of place. It can even be seen in their acceptance of not being able to read, no matter how much they would have liked to be literate. The bond they have with their children is an important factor in making them feel inevitably attracted to this Antwerp neighbourhood they call 'home, like Turkey'. The latter dual attachment perspective is important for their sense of place because these women as social actors/agents construct and reconstruct (public) spaces starting from their own realities and meanings and experiences. In using their living rooms as 'public' meeting places, they reenact childhood customs where the women stayed within the boundaries of the homestead. Growing up in the private sphere, separated from acquainted men, they do not feel safe from the gaze of acquainted Turkish men in the streets. Consequently, and also because of physical limitations, traditional public place, for them, is an underused space. From these women's stories it is clear that the intersection of being 1. a woman, 2. having migrated and 3. having roots in post WWII rural Turkey or their social location, is more revealing for their sense of public place than e.g. being 'a woman', 'a migrant' or 'having roots in post WWII rural Turkey' as separate characteristics. The first-generation Turkish women in the first case study are not a member of an institution that advocates their needs with regard to public place, possibly because this would include too much change for them. It would simultaneously demand a fully different approach towards public space and towards their own body. From a Western point of view, it is compelling to find that these women, in finding individual solutions to a collective problem, create situations where they assist in making the causes of a problem invisible and therefore unresolved: traditional public place, for this social location, still is a masculine realm.

In paper two the ways in which material and immaterial place related elements have an influence on interpersonal cooperation are explored. The industrial kitchen of the social economy enterprise SPIT vzw is a setting where people of very diverse origin and capacities cook and clean together in an easygoing atmosphere. SPIT vzw general business ethics sets a strong framework that can be referred to by all involved at any time, but at the same time allows for opening up flexible alternatives for individuals in the particular work place context. It allows for some maneuvering space for the work

leaders with respect to individual workers. In general we see that positively following up on social cues is stimulated by the organisation these people are working for and more in particular by the involved work leaders. This can be seen in two ways: 1. In designing the kitchen (in the newly built building) the knowledge of work leaders regarding preferable lay outs for 'cooking together' has been taken into consideration. The kitchen space design supports work differentiation, allowing workers to manifest their individual skills; 2. Furthermore the work leaders' approach of 'learning by doing' rather than teaching, stimulates an atmosphere of informal co-working. 'Learning by doing' includes SPIT's flexible approach towards letting workers choose their work spot, which relates to a particular type of work and the work leaders' willingness to allow alternative languages in the kitchen, including informal gestures. It also includes sticking to particular rituals (like sticking to a dress code, hand washing, etc.) and handling resistance dialogically. The latter means getting to understand the problem rather than trying to get rid of it. In understanding what is going on, a possible creative compromise can be found. Muslim workers e.g. can wear plastic gloves to prepare meat. Because of the way in which the work leaders of the SPIT kitchen deal with ethnic difference they foster a basic sense of place that feeds a feeling of belonging these workers need. It is clear though that work leaders only have maneuvering space as far as allowed by the overall institutional power.

In the third case study we see the support of the institution YOTA! in the form of an engaged youth worker in the streets of Molenbeek. Over a prolonged period she kept her finger on the pulse of sense of place of local youth. This support had, beyond doubt, a major impact on how sense of place in local youth is approached and given direction. By having the participative process in re-designing of the local park integrated in the overall redevelopment of this park site, sense of place in youth has altered from a feeling of abandonment due to among others badly kept youth spots and streets and exclusive appropriation of the park by gang members, to belonging to a place which is especially appreciated because of the spatial materiality that affords playing together, be it with wheels or with a football. In this park children and youth in interaction with adults and elderly people, now find a place they can identify with and where they are able to create a positive sense of place fostering belonging which in turn can positively feed identity. This is why Tuan (1975) argues that successful architecture generates a

strong sense of place in two ways. In the new development of the St Remi Park both ways can be discerned: 1. an accumulation of lived experience is supported by the park design, youth like to play here on an almost daily basis. 2. concurrently communal experience is made into a tangible and commanding presence: the park supports an image of communal life and values. In this case study we see power positions at play in two directions. Both the involved umbrella youth institution JES vzw and in its wake YOTA! really made different protective gestures towards the concerned youth. Firstly, the request of the stakeholder, Yota!, was overruled by the researcher project DieGem. On a research level, YOTA! had applied as a candidate for action research with the IWT/SBO project DieGem and was quite insistent on having co-production opportunities with an academic institution in order to investigate wider empowering opportunities for the local youth. DieGem only allowed for doing a retrospective case study in this particular instance, thus without inserting a co-productive action into the research process. This was reluctantly agreed upon by YOTA!. By the time the YOTA! responsible had finished her contribution in the redesign of the park and had passed along her tasks to JES vzw, a major disruption occurred in the socio-spatial context of the case study (the Brussels airport bombing of March 22nd, 2016). The disruption happened in the same period as the start of the research observation in the new designed park. This time, the local coordinator of JES vzw institution, blocked any further cooperation between researcher and involved youth 'to protect youth from any wider public attention'.

In the final case study two engaged institutions, the youth organization CSM and the Escola Básica, 1,2 do Lumiar, supported a group of youth who often simultaneously are pupils at the school and members of the youth organization, to appropriate a strategically located site in their neighbourhood, through a process of co-creative mural making. The artistic action research project 'Welcome (W)all – MURO' was co-designed by all involved partners, youth were involved on the basis of workshop settings and the institutional actors were involved on a full-fledged participative basis of reiterative negotiation that transcended differences on the way. The project evoked individual and social feelings of (aesthetically) rewarding accomplishments. Feelings that are not reducible to logic, reason or even morality, but contributed to strengthening a sense of belonging which in turn ameliorated interpersonal connectedness and cooperation and

vice versa. Especially the outdoor arts and crafts workshop or turning the mural making creation process into a collaborative act, brought in the vital power of embodied emotion into a group process. Both the well understood gestures and the sheer experience of living this arts and crafts workshop setting opened up possibilities to share working experiences and skills, transcend differences, stimulate cooperative behaviour and, through this, infused youth with visceral feelings of well-being that came from interpersonal appreciation. Creating visual art together with youth enriched the whole participative project by inducing an awareness of local place by holding a mirror to youth's individual experiences.

A remarkable difference can be noticed in the way sense of place is lived and social cues are followed in the different withheld social locations of the four case studies. Two distinct aspects to this difference can be discerned: the membership of the involved people to an institution that supports their interests in the researched public sphere and the spatial setting in which interaction occurs. Since all social locations in this research include the 'in a socio-economic precarious situation' dimension (see figure 32), it can be argued that for these people it is a supportive asset to be involved in a place mediating institution (which is not to be understood as a place imposing institution) in order to be able to wholeheartedly express their sense of belonging in the public sphere, through any gesture of appropriating. Case study 1 and 3 show that, in absence of place mediating institution, people can withdraw from public place or can create a place that is perceived as thoroughly antagonistic to all involved. In case study 1, the first-generation Turkish women do not have any relationship with institutions mediating place with them and neither did the local youth of Molenbeek, of case study 3, prior to the park redevelopment. In both case studies social cues are followed, but apparently, merely attending to social cues on the streets does not easily result in positive interaction in the spatial setting of the street by the considered social locations. It does result in alternative creations of settings were cooperative interaction is possible, though. In case study 1 this would be in the private sphere of the living room; in case study 3 this would be in a secluded spot in the park, dominated by one youth gang.

This leads us to the second differing aspect, the characteristics of the spatial setting in which interaction occurs. This research shows that it is especially workshop settings, as seen in case study 2 and 4, where creativity has a place and that involves working manually, that attending to social cues can lead to positive or cooperative results. In case study 3 we see an alternative to the workshop setting configuration. Here a long term following up on local youth' sense of place and their involvement in the redesign of a local park leads to a positively evaluated sense of place. Thus, I take the position that (urban) public space needs to structurally include public place for anybody. This implicates a continuous time investment in mediating (conflicting) sense of place, especially in social locations holding the 'being in a socio-economic precarious situation' characteristic.

6.3. Some reflections on the research framework

6.3.1. Putting place, sense of place and social cues in perspective

Through this research I came to see social cues as particular (sensory) experiences of spatial objects and bodily gestures including spatial positioning in a specific context that are recorded in our system. Decoding of social cues informs our sense of place via visceral feelings that, in turn, directly inform our 'emotional' brain (see figure 33). Our social need to belong, which varies in different social locations, stimulates a good understanding of social cues in cooperative interaction and gives off positive feelings which in turn foster our need to belong. Especially the particular setting of working manually and creatively in a workshop, and with an informal division of labour, affords cooperative interaction. Attending to social cues can simultaneously be an important instigator for people to make adjustments to their socio-spatial positioning and/ or to spatial configuration.

The process of the transmission of social cues is embedded in the complex and flexible experience of place in place and grid cells (place cells were discovered in the 1970s, but only recently evidence of grid cells was found including their relationship with place cells) (Relph, 2015), as was mentioned in the introduction. What goes on in the world and what goes on in our brain is profoundly interconnected (Moser, Rowland & Moser, 2015). The relationship between the geographical world and our place and grid cells is dynamic and two-directional, and continually changing both as things in the world change and as memories are accumulated (Relph, 2015). Sense of place and the ability to navigate are some of the most fundamental brain functions: they provides a perception of the position of the body in the environment and in relation to surrounding. Thus far the particular importance of the sensory system in experiencing place (in a real world situation vs state of the art virtual reality) is shown in experiments in rats (Ravassard et al., 2013).

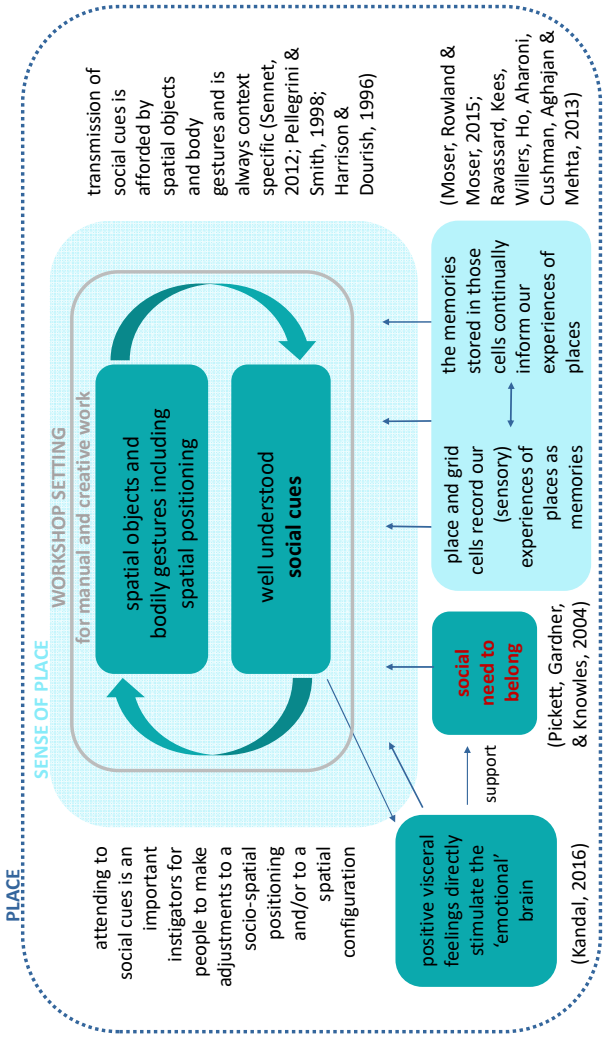

Figure 33: Social cues as drivers for change. Ruth Segers.

6.3.2. Transdisciplinarity and the socio-spatial, power relations and action research, the subcurrent of IWT/SBO SPINDUS

Although initially not intentionally meant to be so, this work moved further into the field that the IWT/SBO project SPINDUS opened: making the socio-spatial more concrete. In focusing on the microscale and looking at the relations between the bodily experience, social interactions and materiality as mediated by social and material cues, the concept of sense of place and the related concept of belonging took on tangible forms. The knowledge I gained through participating in the SPINDUS project (and editing a book about it) became a subcurrent driving force. The IWT/ SBO project SPINDUS was about a relational approach towards space and spatial quality in diverse socio-spatial contexts in Flanders, England, Italy and Kenya: cities, neighbourhoods, small communities, spatially functional areas (such as agricultural land and open space, etc.). In pulling together the disciplines of strategic spatial planning, urban design and social innovation in territorial development and the knowledge of local users, SPINDUS developed, in a transdisciplinary way, a practical and pedagogical planning and design methodological frame work able to (help) read, assess and improve spatial quality (Moulaert et al., 2016). The SPINDUS methodological frame highlights the role of power relations in the socio-spatial sphere and advocates action research.

This thesis explicitly focusses on elements that contribute to an understanding of cooperative interaction in the relationship between the material and the social. Cooperation can come in many forms, informal as well as formal, and can even be found to produce destructive result, as human 'tribalism' makes clear, shown in the youth gang of case study 3. While cooperation could be defined as an exchange in which the participants benefit from the encounter (Sennet, 2012), collusion does the opposite. This antagonistic dynamic is also omni prevalent in socio-spatial relationships. Physical structures and norms and values supporting institutions and regulations, do have the power to hinder, exclude, influence in some negative way, …, either element in these relationships as well. Spatial features of public place, like streets covered with litter from drug abuse, dogs waste and household waste, non-porous enclosures as well as social features of public place, like male gazing, rivaling youth gangs, dress code … do just that. As such the workshop setting as described above could also be further

considered as a way to work out how the division of (power relations in) labour could be made more thoroughly interactive, and creatively fulfilling. But analyzing this is beyond the scope of this work.

What makes action research potentially a very valuable methodology is its inherent goal to attribute empowering 'functionings' to all involved in the research. All partners should become equal partners in research, bringing in findings from diverse and mutually enriching backgrounds that are tested in an iterative action process (Moulaert et al., 2016). Moreover, meaning and relevance of action research should extend beyond the immediate context of the research. It should bear some significance in supporting the flourishing of persons, communities, and the wider ecology, … (Bradbury Huang, 2012).

6.4. What to take 'home' from this 'journey'

6.4.1. The role of senses, cues and personal strategies in making places.

The universal human need to belong and be involved in positive interpersonal interaction, as seen in cooperative action, proved to become the central theme around which all papers of this thesis evolved. The first three papers show how people, in very diverse situations, create niches (read 'a place where people can thrive', like a biotope for organisms) to meet their need of belonging. The final paper describes a self-designed experiment, building on the knowledge generated in the previous three, that created such a niche by means of participative mural making. Putting place, sense of place and social cues in the spotlight is a way of my dealing with the relationship between person and world. I felt something substantial was missing in either perspective of the opposition between the idealist or realist view. In the idealist view, the world is a function of a person who acts on the world through consciousness and, therefore, actively knows and shapes his or her world. In contrast, a realist view sees the person as a function of the world, in that the world acts on the person and he or she reacts' (Seamon, 2000). In light of my findings, and without considering any nuances in the concerned opposition, the one view misses out on the ingrained knowledge, acquired through our senses, that is not always consciously recognised and thus taken into account in creating his or her world. The other view misses out on our creative powers to shape and 'give coulour' to our world. Instead, a profoundly intricate relationship between both exists. Heidegger (1962) called this situation 'Dasein' or literally 'being-present-here'[3] [hier-aanwezig-zijn]. According to Heidegger things are always present for us within determinations and forms of temporality. People can only reason about 'being' as far as it appears and is understood within the limits of human temporality. Massey (1994, p. 168) picks up this view and goes on to say that 'social relations always have a spatial form and spatial content. They exist, necessarily, both in space (i.e., in a

[3]In English the concept Dasein is often translated as 'being-in-the world', indicating the coinciding of people and world, one cannot exist without the other. For me the nuance between the two translations is important. The 'world' seems to be a quite broad description of 'present-here'. 'Present-here' represents 'experienced place' much better.

locational relation to other social phenomena) and across space', as was mentioned in the introduction. Given this conception of space, she says, 'a "place" is formed out of the particular set of social relations which interact at a particular location. And the singularity of any individual place is formed in part out of the specificity of the interactions which occur at that location (nowhere else does this precise mixture occur) and in part out of the fact that the meeting of those social relations at that location will in turn produce new social effects'. I see following up on social cues, using our senses, and allowing them to have a prominent position in our lives as a way of cooperative interaction as a particular manifestation of 'the meeting of social relations at a location that will in turn produce new social effects' (Massey, 1994, p. 168). Especially the well understood social cues as experienced in workshop settings that generate positive visceral feeling through cooperation are an important way of honouring the 'being-present-here' position as an individual. It shows simultaneously an instance of being present at a location being and shows a way to overcome the abstractness of 'Dasein' through a well understood activity. Being an abstract concept, 'Dasein' does not pay attention to the concreteness of individuality, which I belief coincides with our being social. For me, 'Dasein' will always also be 'my-being-present-here'. Because I have been born in a particular place, have particular siblings and have particular parents, and will, eventually, die (Oevermans, 2001). Honouring 'my-being present-here' in turn can lead to an evolving (re-)interpretation of enacting and negotiating (which is action oriented) socio-spatial interaction which can release positive emotions. As such, it creates an opening to conceptualising more optimistic sentiments than the fear 'moods', mentioned by Heidegger. It is remarkably though that Heidegger also acknowledges a capability of 'understanding', which to him is a conception of activity. Heidegger sees 'Dasein' not just as being 'thrown into the world', 'because we are capable of understanding and throw off our thrown condition. It is understanding how to do something or how to operate something. Understanding is the possession of an ability (etwas können) and the authentic human is characterised by the ability or potentiality to be (Seinkönnen)' (Critchley, 2009).

Of course the workshop setting as I described in this thesis, is not the only setting in which social cues can produce positive visceral feelings. What especially appealed to me in this doctoral process, is detecting the resemblance between decoding social cues and

appreciating (abstract) art (Kandal, 2016). There is no need to understand nonfigurative art on a reasoned level. Understanding means appreciating the immediately felt bodily feedback after having experienced or sensed the art work. I know, from experience, that the reverse is equally valid. There is no need of using conscience reasoning to make art. When the first movement is seen as a ‘decoding’ of (material) cues, the latter would be a ‘coding’ of cues. Both ‘movements’ subscribe the importance of emotions, as bodily embedded motivations that can be activated for creating change in creative ways. Expressing these motivations can lead to the development of a sense of place that fosters belonging in people.

The ultimate lesson I learned in the unfolding process of this doctorate is that, in the end, that what makes that you belong, starts in yourself and is contained in these small steps that lead to accepting yourself, who you are, what you feel, and how you behave. In the end most people have a ‘migrant’ aspect, if not literally than certainly figuratively. The reflexive first step in accepting this is quite important. Truly connecting with your surroundings and others demands a reflexive basis. It is a valid starting point on several levels, including research settings, but especially so in those settings in which social aspects are investigated or where transdisciplinary approaches are used. As such the need to belong as seen in behaviour of re-enacting places as ingrained in memory after ‘migration’ can be generalised. The need to belong can be related with a need of ‘being’ or feeling the intricate connection between the inner person and the outer ‘space’. It includes accepting the universal fear humans have that their identity would 'change', especially when exposed to 'others' of not anticipated different backgrounds (Tuan, 1979). Because one’s 'identity' and thus ‘place’ are constantly changing, evolving, and shape-shifting, triggered by a diversity of factors, from the inside as well as the outside, the mind as well as the body, I am inclined to consider this ‘fear’ is not really about the 'other' but as much about the acute awareness of pending personal 'identity' change which, in fact, is a natural and embodied given. ‘Being’ and, simultaneously, ‘becoming’ is not a self-evident way of approaching life, for it not only includes accepting ‘beginnings’, but also ‘endings’.

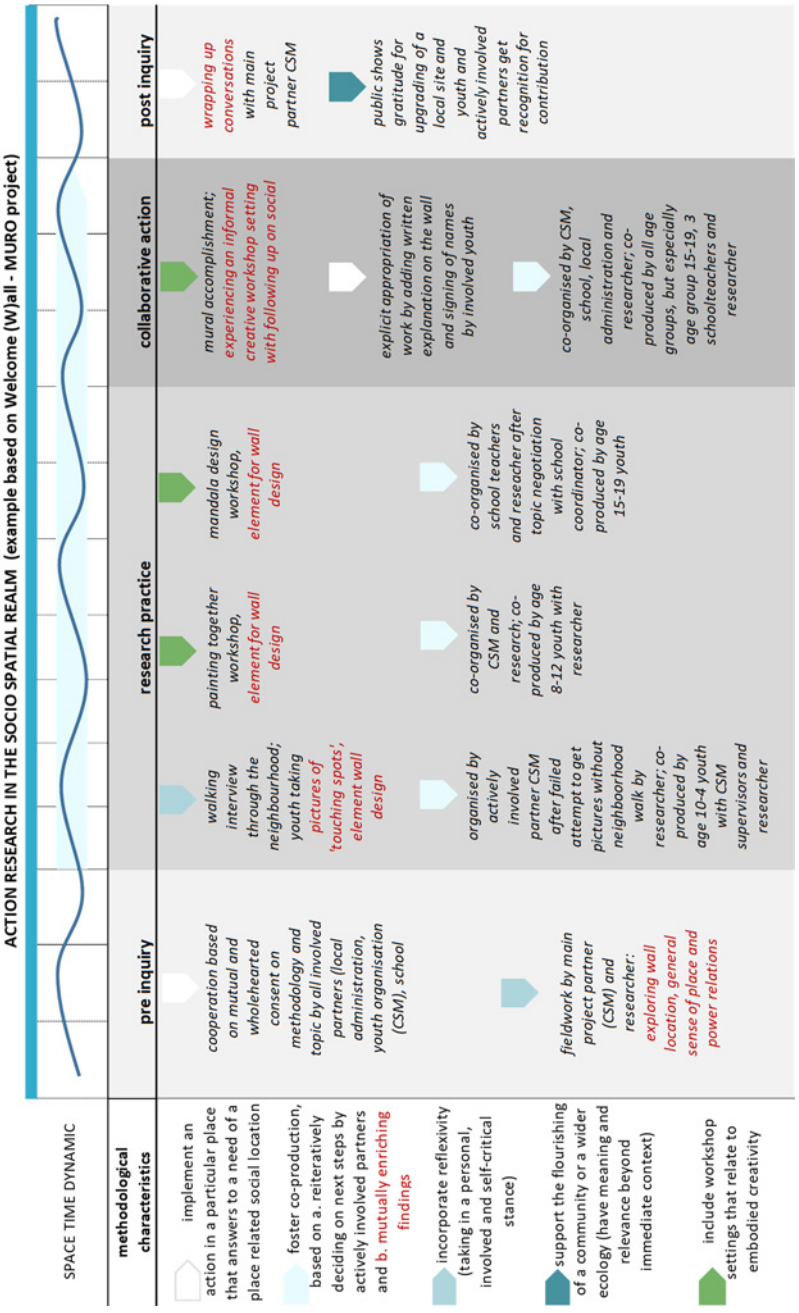

Figure 34: A proposal for future working with action research, based on the example of the Welcome (W)all – MURO project in Lisbon. Ruth Segers.

6.4.2. A proposal for future working with action research

Looking for a methodology that takes into account the context and substance of a case study, including the body, seems to me a natural starting point of research about interacting subjects in public place. This thesis proved to be about the unfolding process of finding such a methodology: action research.

As such bodily engagement in contents is not a requirement for doing action research. Yet, in socio-spatial research, involving 'the body' proves to be an element one cannot ignore, the body is the socio-spatial site through which we relate with our world. Moreover (bodily) learning by doing runs deep. It can lead to a lifetime holding on to what has become 'ingrained knowledge' and it can trigger major changes since this process 'ingrains' new knowledge. What gets the upper hand largely depends on one's social location. Which power relations are at work, at the intersection of which dimensions of socio-spatial characteristics?

I am taking up the summarised lessons from this work, as mentioned in section 1 of this conclusion, and use them as stepping stones to give shape to my future endeavours. Following up on getting more acquainted with art and the neuroscience of socio-spatial relationships, creativity and resiliency (Hass-Cohen et al., 2015) in relation to social action (Kaplan & Liebman, 2007) will be my direction to follow. Hereby I will be using a 'deepened' form of action research (see figure 34) that not only 1. implements an action in a particular place that answers to a need of a place related social location; 2. fosters co-production developed on a basis of reiteratively deciding on next steps by all involved; 3. incorporates reflexivity (or taking in a personal, involved and self-critical stance); 4. supports the flourishing of community or wider ecology (the action research should have meaning and relevance beyond immediate context in which the research takes place); but also 5. includes workshop settings that relate to embodied creativity. The leading and mediating role of an artist-researcher in such a workshop setting is pivotal in realising a strong final product. It does take some sensitivities for visual creativity that are mostly not alluded to in conventional non-arts based action research. In using the interview walk and painting workshop methods, as proposed in paper 4, it is possible to transcend this limitation. For artist-researchers I see a wide scope of

possibilities for further involvement with collaborative methods incorporating visual creativity to support the transformation of a space to a place, embodied interaction and community building. Overall though, it does not take a visual artist to be aware of the power of well understood gestured based creative interaction. Any action researcher gifted with craft skills can make use of them to deepen interpersonal interaction and sense of belonging in a wide variety of workshop settings.

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APPENDIX

1. Semi structured interview form, case study 1

DATA 2060 - Doctoraat Ruth Segers

DEEL 1: Demografische gegevens

Voornaam:.....

NAAM:.....

Eerste adres in België:……

Huidig adres:……

Verhuisintentie? Ja/neen Aantal verhuizingen tot nog toe:……

Migratiejaar:……familielid dat migreerde:……

Geboorteplaats/datum:……

Nationaliteit:……..

Burgerlijke staat:……

Aantal kinderen:……..

Religieuze overtuiging:……...

Religieuze praktijk:……

Inkomenscategorie gezin:

< 1000 euro/maand

1000 – 1500 euro

1500 – 2000euro

2000 – 2500 euro

2500 – 3000 euro

3000 -3500 euro

3500– 4000 euro

>4000 euro/maand

Opleiding:……..

Eigenaar/huurder

DEEL 2: Semi – gestructureerde interview vragen

1. **Ervaringen in de publieke ruimte uit het verleden, in het algemeen en in 2060**

   Als je terugdenkt aan je kindertijd, welke was de eerste plaats in de publieke ruimte die heel belangrijk voor je was?

   Zijn er in 2060 bepaalde plaatsen die herinneringen oproepen bij jou? Goede/ slechte ervaringen, verdriet/ geluk op deze plaatsen

2. **Ervaringen over het leven zoals het nu is in en rond de plaats waar men nu woont**

   Hoe voel je je in de buurt waar je nu leeft?

   Van welke aspecten hou je? Welke aspecten vind je vreselijk? Waarom? Wie ontmoet je daar?

   Welke buurt vond je in je leven de allerleukste?

   Welke was de minst goede buurt waarin je ooit woonde?

   Kan je me vertellen over plaatsen in de publieke ruimte die speciaal belangrijk zijn voor je of die een speciale betekenis hebben voor je?

   Zijn er plaatsen waar je je in het bijzonder ontspannen en op je gemak voelt? Is er een speciale klederdracht die je hebt als je hier naartoe gaat?

3. **Aanwijzingen naar sociale signalen (2060)**

   Zijn er specifieke plaatsen waar je naartoe gaat om andere mensen op te zoeken?

   Zijn er bepaalde plaatsen waar je naartoe gaat om alleen te zijn? Om met je eigen gedachten bezig te kunnen zijn?

   Kan je me vertellen over plaatsen in de publieke ruimte die speciaal belangrijk zijn voor je of die een speciale betekenis hebben voor je?

   Zijn er plaatsen waar je je in het bijzonder ontspannen en op je gemak voelt?

   Zijn er specifieke plaatsen waar je naartoe gaat om andere mensen op te zoeken?

   Zijn er bepaalde plaatsen uit je verleden die belangrijk voor je zijn, waar je niet onlangs was, maar waar je graag terug naartoe zou gaan?

   Heb je ooit een plaats verloren die speciaal voor je was op de één of andere wijze?

   Zijn er ook plaatsen waar je nog altijd naartoe gaat die eens belangrijk waren maar die nu hun betekenis verloren hebben?

   Wat betekent het voor je om 'thuis' te zijn?

2. Communication with CSM youth, case study 4



Abaixo-assinado ..... pais

filho / filha .....

auriza filho / filha para contribuir no projecto **nosso mural do bairro** ea caminhada

na sexta-feira 11 de novembro 2016.

pais de assinatura

3. Official communication with administration of LUMIAR, Lisbon

case study 4: project proposal ppt

Place co-creation with youths in LUMIAR, Lisbon – 11/2016

A cooperation between:

Lumiar youths
Junta de Freguesia do Lumiar,
Centro Social da Musgueira,
University of Lisbon (IGOT) and
KULeuven (Planning and Development).

LOCATION PROPOSAL

PhD Ruth Segers – supervisor Prof. Frank Moulaert

Context and planning

1. Theory (PhD)
2. Methodology
   - -in my other case studies
   - -specific goals for the Lumiar project
3. Logistics - budget
4. Planning
5. LUMIAR location proposal



The interactive subject in space (PhD)

Hypotheses

The material set up of public space has an impact on interpersonal interactions of cooperation and can support or inhibit identity (re)building.

Main research question

How does space or the physical reality of a public place, support or inhibit cooperation between people?

Theory concepts

1. *sense of place*
   - *-material aspect*
   - *-social aspect (importance of social cues)*

   When someone feels strongly and consciencly involved in a particular place or if one is on a daily basis involved in activities in a particular place, then this denotes 'sense of place' (Lentini & Decortis, 2010)

2. ***identity and recognition***

"The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being [...] Misrecognition shows not just a lack of due respect. It can inflict a grievous wound, saddling its victims with a crippling self-hatred. Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need."(Taylor, 1994, p. 25)

Case study 3: Youths finding a place in Molenbeek , Brussels.

Methodology

In my other PhD cases

Through participative observation

In Lumiar

Creative co creation in public space with youths

Theoretical underpinning of this methodology is based on the literature of the body as a key location in understanding the complexities of young people, place and identity. The methodology allows for observing and interacting with young peoples' bodies, seen as locations where they express their identities through clothing choice, ways of expression, gestures and behaviour, etc.

(Butler, 1999; Kenworthy-Teather's, 1999; Hopkins, 2010)

Goals: - observation of gestures (social cues) among youths while in the creation process
- youths will be asked to design and paint an image depicting personally perceived important identity features that relate to Lumiar on a wall
- organise a design that supports circa 10 entries on a wall

Logistics – budget KULeuven

- during weekends: food and drink provision while working: KUL budget 1000 euro
  cook? (mom of youths?)
- paint or painting tools: KUL budget 1000 euro.
- logo's of participants
- naming the project
- project flyer? Communication?
- selecting youths?

Preferably youths who are attracted to the idea of creating with paint

Do they have smart phones to take selfies or pictures?

Planning 1 to 30 November 2016

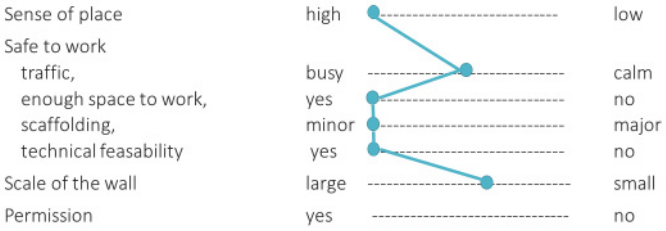
Week 1: 1/11 to 4/11: a project flyer? / first presentation of design idea/ preparations of the location
Weekend 1: **5 and 6/11: preparation of images with youths**

Week 2: 7/11 to 11/11: implementation of work after school
Weekend 2: **12 and 13/11: implementation of work with youths**

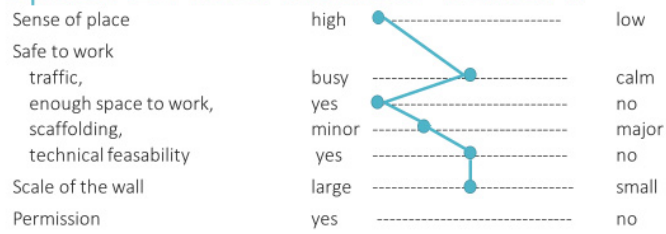
Week 3: 14/11 to 18 /11: in Belgium
Weekend 3: **19 and 20/11: implementation of work with youths**

Week 4: 21/11 to 25/11: implementation of work after school
Weekend 4: **26 and 27/11: completion of work**

Location Escola Basica do Alto do Lumiar option 1: Largo 6 Marias



Location Escola Basica do Alto do Lumiar option 2: AV. D. Mauroa - Ferreira







Location: Option 1





Location option 2





4. Link to 5 min. film presentation (by local youth organisation) of the Welcome (W)all – MURO project – on public Facebook, case study 4

https://www.facebook.com/ruth.segers.5/videos/1301654583278496/UzpfSTM1NDI3NzM3NDk0NjkxODo0NjQzOTA2NDA2MDIyNTc/

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS (peer reviewed)

Segers, R., Van den Broeck, P., Khan, A. Z., Moulaert, F., Schreurs, J., De Meulder, B., Miciukiewicz, K., Vigar, G., & Madanipour, A. (Eds.). (2016). *The SPINDUS Handbook for Spatial Quality. A Relational Approach*. Brussels: ASP.

Segers, R. (2018). First-generation Turkish women in the 2060 neighbourhood of Antwerp. Creating places for interpersonal connection. *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies*, 21(4), (forthcoming).