Living together in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods

The meaning of public spaces for issues of social integration

Karin Peters

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Preface

I've been interested in cultural and ethnic diversity since I was a young girl. I find the position of minority groups in Western societies very thought-provoking. When I was eighteen, I made a rational decision to study not cultural anthropology but agricultural economy, which I did. However, after graduating from Wageningen University, I decided to study anthropology after all, but as a part-time student.

My interest in cultural diversity was one of the main reasons I started my PhD research. Although I was fortunate enough to be allowed to design my own project, it took me quite some time to narrow down my focus from the rather broad one of 'ethnic diversity'. One of the reasons it took me so long to do so is that I started my PhD project without making sure that I'd have enough time to devote to it. But once I'd started, it soon became clear that many other things were more urgent, or at least had a shorter deadline, than getting a PhD. There were all sorts of reasons not to work on my research, but to spend time on education and other tasks. Then, some two and a half years ago, I determined that I would finish my PhD in 2011.

I should first like to thank all my colleagues with whom I discussed various scientific and everyday issues. We went through quite hectic times in terms of movement: we started at the Hucht, then moved to GAIA, and many colleagues came and went, including a new chair and even a 'new' chair group, at least in name. More specifically, I want to thank Rene for our daily chats, Irena for always giving me positive feedback (especially when I really needed it), the girls in B301 for expressing their critical but joyful thoughts about almost everything, and of course Carla, who helped me a lot with many types of necessary and less necessary things.

Jaap, thank you for both your continuous support and the freedom you gave me (and I really enjoyed our meetings in Zoelen). Henk, I would like to thank you for your constructive way of working, and for thinking with me about possible steps and solutions.

Many more contributed in various ways: I should like to thank Linda Peeters for helping with the fieldwork in Lombok, and Marjolein Kloek for her help in Nijmegen. I also thank the students who helped to transcribe the interviews and, of course, the residents who shared their insights into their everyday lives.

My thanks also go to my family and friends, who remained interested in my research and repeatedly asked (but not *too* often!) when I thought it would be finished. And a special word for Lieve: we've discussed many of the important things in life, and it's nice to know that someone thinks like I do. I'm deeply grateful to my father and mother, who early on taught me to make my own choices, and later on continued to support me – even though they would have made different choices. Thank you Patricia, my sister: we differ in almost every respect, but that doesn't prevent us from having a close relationship. And Maaike and Tim: I'm so thankful to both of you, as you gave me good reasons to stop working and enjoy life from time to time! And last – but *far* from least – Hans-Erik: thank you for your continuous love and support.

Table of contents

Preface 7

PART I. Setting the scene

1. Introduction 13
1.1 Research objectives and questions 15
1.2 Starting points 17
1.3 Outline of the thesis 18

2. Dutch society: issues of migration, social integration, leisure and the neighbourhood 21
2.1 History of migration 21
2.2 Ethnic minority policy in the Netherlands 27
2.3 Discourse of integration and multiculturalism 31
2.4 Dutch neighbourhoods: problems, solutions and issues 33
2.5 Policies on leisure, ethnicity and integration 40

PART II. Theoretical perspective

3. Leisure, identity and social integration 45
3.1 Defining leisure 45
3.2 Leisure and identity construction 47
3.3 Ethnicity in leisure practices 49
3.4 Individual perspective on social integration 59
3.5 Leisure and social integration 60
3.6 Conclusion 67

4. Urban public spaces and social integration 69
4.1 Urban public spaces 70
4.2 Leisure, identity and public spaces 72
4.3 Social integration in public space 73
4.4 Linking leisure, public space and social integration 82

PART III. The research context

5. Methodology and methods 87
5.1 Selection of cases 87
5.2 Methods 88
5.3 Data collection 91
5.4 Analysis 93
5.5 Trustworthiness 94

6. Case study descriptions 97
6.1 Nijmegen 97
6.2 Lombok, Utrecht 101

PART IV. Everyday life in Nijmegen and Utrecht

7. Narratives of public spaces 109
7.1 Goffertpark: a dynamic world of strangers 110
7.2 Thiemepark: an inclusive neighbourhood park 118
7.3 Kanaalstraat: confronting the non-ordinary in a multicultural shopping street 124
7.4 Molenpark: domination leads to exclusion 139
7.5 Bankaplein: a familiar space that leads to interactions 153
7.6 Muntplein: withdrawing into your own bubble 160
7.7 Conclusion 166

8. Connecting being in public space and everyday multicultural life in a neighbourhood 171
8.1 Social life in Lombok: multicultural and mono-cultural 171
8.2 Participation and involvement 182
8.3 Categorizations 190
8.4 Talking about multiculturalism and integration 194
8.5 Conclusion 200

PART V. Discussion and conclusion

9. Connecting space and social integration 205
9.1 Dominant discourse vs. an individual perspective on social integration 205
9.2 The significance of public encounters 207
9.3 Social networks 211
9.4 The everyday language of integration 211
9.5 The future of multi-ethnic neighbourhoods 213

References 215

Summary 237

About the author 251

PART I.

Setting the scene

1. Introduction

Multiculturalism and integration have become hot topics throughout the world. In the Netherlands, where the research for this thesis was carried out, the tone of the debate on integration and multiculturalism has sharpened since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. These events were paralleled by several disturbing incidents in the Netherlands, such as the assassination of the politician Pim Fortuyn and the film director Theo van Gogh. Politicians, policy makers, journalists and researchers are increasingly concerned with the heightened tension between native Dutch and non-native Dutch people, especially Muslims.

In January 2000, Paul Scheffer – a Dutch sociologist, publicist and a prominent member of the political party PvdA (labour party) – published in the Dutch newspaper the *NRC Handelsblad* an article titled 'The multicultural drama' (Logtenberg, 2007), in which he criticized the integration of immigrants and stated that ethnic minority groups were not emancipated enough. He wrote that Islam was to be seen as the main reason for this. Scheffer's article can be considered the start of many critical discussions in both the media and politics. The public debate was dominated on the one hand by Scheffer and Bolkenstein (the former leader of the VVD (liberal party)), who oppose multiculturalism, and on the other hand by those who were in favour of multiculturalism, such as Aboutaleb, Cohen (mayor of Amsterdam) and Prins (a prominent social lecturer and political philosopher). However, those in favour had a marginal voice in the debate, judging by the number of articles published in Dutch newspapers. An even more drastic turning point in the debate on immigrants came in 2001. In the days following 9/11, it was reported that in several Dutch cities teenagers, mostly of Moroccan origin, had cheered on the streets (Moynahan, 2005: 2). This reinforced the public perception that tensions were increasing.

These debates originate from the fact that in recent decades Western societies have become multicultural societies. A number of developments led to various ethnic groups migrating to Western countries. The Netherlands has been transformed into a multi-ethnic society in which people from Morocco, Turkey, Suriname and the Dutch Antilles are the largest minority groups. Since most of the migrants settled in cities, an enormous diversity of ingredients and people are present in urban areas (Merrifield, 1996).

Research (Gijsberts and Dagevos, 2005; Gijsberts and Vervoort, 2007) has shown that many native Dutch people regard the presence of so many non-native Dutch as negative and think that the Muslim way of life does not fit in with the Western way of life. Moreover, more than half of the population believes that the acceptance of immigrants from third world countries was the Netherlands 'biggest post-war mistake, and regards 'Islam' as a significant threat to Dutch identity[1] (Rath, 2009: 674). The lack of support for immigration and ethnic and religious diversity has been amply evinced by the rise of the populist movement headed

[1] See *Elsevier*, 26 March 2008. This figure is based onthe *Geschiedenismonitor*, a survey by the *Historisch Nieuwsblad, Andere Tijden* and *deVolkskrant*.

by politicians such as Pim Fortuyn, Rita Verdonk and Geert Wilders (Rath, 2009: 674). As a result, in the Netherlands and many other Western societies there has been a shift away from thinking about multiculturalism, reflecting a 'generalized state rhetoric of multicultural failure and the necessity to rethink the advantages of national assimilation accompanied by the devolution of responsibility for ethnic integration to the scale of the community and the individual' (Mitchell, 2004: 645). There has been a consequential hardening of the debate on the multicultural society, leading to increased tension between the Islam and the West. This perceived tension originates, at least partly, from the perceived differences between various groups in society.

In response, instead of concentrating on socio-economic integration through better education, more jobs and better housing, the focus shifted towards sociocultural integration (Gijsberts, 2005; Gijsberts and Dagevos, 2007b). Shared values and having one language became the main issues when discussing integration. One way of creating shared values is to meet each other on various occasions. Meeting can potentially lead to greeting and perhaps also to mutual understanding. Therefore, creating opportunities to meet other people became important in local and national policies: people from different ethnic backgrounds should meet each other in schools (mixed schools are the best), in districts (segregation should be combated) and during their leisure time.

The stimulation of contact between different ethnic groups was seen as an important way to integrate non-native Dutch people. As such, it is used as a way to ease the growing tension in Dutch society (Blokland, 2001; RMO, 2005; Snel and Boonstra, 2005). Although multicultural encounters do not happen very often (RMO, 2005), the Scientific Council for the Dutch Government (WRR, 2005) concluded that everyday meeting places are important for a peaceful coexistence. The idea is that using the same spaces will contribute to a better understanding of each other. Since mixed neighbourhoods are common in the Netherlands, various public spaces in these neighbourhoods might create more opportunities for inter-ethnic encounters. Cultural exchange can occur in these spaces and can be furthered by mutual understanding. In an increasingly multi-ethnic society, the challenge for local governments is to support these processes of cultural exchange. Therefore, a better understanding of the role that urban public places can play has been considered valuable. Residents use these public spaces in their everyday lives. The focus on the everyday and the mundane for understanding the meaning of public spaces is vital, because by considering the 'oddness of the ordinary' (Sibley, 1995: xv) and how social differences are experienced and managed on an everyday basis, we can gain insights into social collisions on a larger scale (Smith, 2001).

In the Dutch immigration discourse, the term 'integration' is commonly used to refer to the desirable way in which newcomers should become members of the receiving society. Furthermore, in the academic literature the notion of integration is hardly problematized. Instead, it adopts a narrow empirical framework for studying integration by measuring how non-natives differ from the native population. In addition, scientific minority research in the Netherlands is closely linked to policy and public debates (Ghorashi, 2006; Schinkel, 2007). Moreover, it is dominated by statistical research, which leads to people of non-

Western origin (although migrants from new European member states such as Poland and Hungary are now included in some of these discussions), such as Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch, being labelled 'minorities'. Although such research is important to execute, it does not provide a better insight into the meanings and experiences of different groups of people in the Netherlands (Ghorashi, 2006).

It was against this background of intense societal and political debates, dominated by a discourse of integration that focuses on cultural values, that I started my research. Three key trends, which are global and not just Dutch, informed this research. First, the recent political and social debates related to issues of multiculturalism, migration and social integration. Second, the nature of contemporary society, in which leisure plays an important role not only economically but also for expressing one's social and individual identity, which often occurs in public spaces. While research in formal leisure settings, such as sport clubs, has been done, the meaning of leisure in public spaces for social integration is lacking. Leisure in public spaces is of importance because the meaning of multiculturalism and the negotiation of multiple cultural identities occurs in public spaces (Wood and Gilbert, 2005). Third, the political perception of public spaces as places of encounters through which social integration can be stimulated.

1.1 Research objectives and questions

It is in this context that I decided to focus on the meanings of urban public spaces. My overall research objective was to understand the role of public spaces as a domain for social integration within the context of leisure. The empirical focus was multi-ethnic urban neighbourhoods in the Netherlands, because urban public spaces are where most multicultural encounters occur. Based on this, I formulated my central research question as:

- What is the meaning of public space for people from various ethnic backgrounds in terms of social integration within the context of leisure?

I then formulated the following sub-research questions:

- How do people from different ethnic backgrounds use public spaces for leisure? To what extent is there inter-ethnic interaction in public spaces during leisure activities?
- What is the meaning of different public spaces for people from various ethnic backgrounds?
- To what extent is use and meaning of public spaces an indication of social integration?

Theoretical positioning

In asking this type of questions, this study contributes to the interdisciplinary field of leisure studies and ethnic and migration studies by departing from two key disciplines, namely urban sociology and urban geography. The theoretical framework of the research is underpinned by three key pillars, viz. leisure, social integration and public space. Previous research has focused on those individual concepts without looking at their intersection. Several researchers (e.g. Muller, 2002; Soenen, 2006; Lofland, 1998) have looked at the

various characteristics of public space and related them to different types of behaviour and interactions. Others have studied the significance of public space for leisure activities and investigated the leisure behaviour of different ethnic groups (e.g. Jókövi, 2003; Juniu, 2000; Peleman, 2003; Stodolska and Yi, 2003; Yücesoy. 2006). Research in the field of social integration mainly focuses on socio-economic aspects and the role of 'formal leisure settings' (e.g. sport associations) in processes of social integration (e.g. Gijsberts, 2005; Van der Meulen, 2007).

However, not many researchers have considered the linkages between public spaces and social integration. It is also important to realize that as well as a lack of overall consideration of space, there is also a gap in the literature regarding contact in leisure spaces. Since leisure and leisure space are related to free choice, it seems to be a fertile area in which contact research could improve our understanding of ethnic relations (Philipp, 2000). Besides, Ehrkamp (2005) and Nagel (2002) examined immigrants' perceptions of integration and came to the conclusion that in order to better understand integration, immigrants' relations with particular places and their everyday encounters with and responses to dominant discourses and structures of belonging should be studied. Moreover, as Nagel and Staeheli (2008) state, little research has considered integration from the perspective of non-native residents. In my research, the perspective of non-native Dutch people was as important as that of native Dutch people, and the study therefore adds to the scientific knowledge about the meaning of leisure in public spaces for social integration. By linking these key concepts, this study extends scientific knowledge beyond the disciplinary boundaries of public space, leisure and social integration research. By doing so, it contributes to the academic debates, both theoretically and politically.

As such, my research differs from quantitative research, which tends to focus on the extent to which non-native Dutch people participate in Dutch society in terms of jobs, education, housing, use of media and so on; it also tends to perceive the participation levels of native Dutch people as the norm from which non-native people should not deviate. Although lower participation levels could be useful for showing discrimination in certain sectors, participation levels are also used to show the extent to which non-native Dutch people differ from native Dutch people and, in that sense, they are inevitably judgemental and reproduce stereotypes.

The research also contributes to the debate on social integration. The results add to the understanding of the role of public spaces for processes of social integration. The investigation into the meaning of public spaces provides insight into the extent to which public spaces can play a positive role in processes of social integration, as is currently expected by many policy makers. This could facilitate policy makers when they have to make decisions on integration policy. In more general terms, the research contributes to debates on the relation between the quality of public space and the quality of relations between people. The design of public space for facilitating social relations is related to this.

This study examined the relations between leisure in public space and social integration by examining the experiences and perceptions of people of various ethnic backgrounds,

based on fieldwork (observations and interviews) conducted in the Dutch cities of Nijmegen and Utrecht. Insights into these relations were gained by exploring the use and meaning of leisure in public spaces. This study started from an interpretative paradigm, and by doing so it adds to the existing knowledge because it speaks the language of daily life, and if daily life can be more deeply understood, we will also know the way it is constructed processually.

1.2 Starting points

I begin this section by clarifying the lenses through which the research was executed. As it was interpretative research aimed at a better understanding of the phenomenon under study, it is not my intention to falsify or verify the assumptions behind the theories used in this study. I used theoretical insights in order to better analyse data derived from individual experiences and perceptions. Although the focus is on individual experiences, it is important to realize that the structural context in which these experiences are taking place also have to be taken into account. Social and political structures together with human agency determine and give meaning to social practices (Giddens, 1984). These social practices and structures are produced, reproduced and negotiated in the everyday life of individuals. I give an extended overview of the societal context of this research in Chapter 2.

It is important to be clear about terms used in order to address individuals from various ethnic backgrounds. In the Dutch context, the terms *allochtoon* (allochthon) and *authochtoon* (autochthon) are most often used, while in other European countries the term ‘migrant’ or ’immigrant’ is normally used (Jay *et al.*, unpublished results). Other terms that are used are ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ people, and ‘individuals originating from Morocco’ or ‘citizens of Turkish decent’. I chose to use the terms ‘native Dutch’ and ‘non-native Dutch’ in order to stress the fact that we are all citizens of Dutch society, while making clear the differences in terms of ethnic background. However, I do so while also realizing that no term is neutral and that any term can and will reproduce stereotypes. There is a conceptual paradox between the need to categorize individuals to a certain extent, and the fact that using categories will produce and reproduce these categories. I do not take an essentialist perspective but acknowledge the complexities of using categories and at the same time criticizing the use of these categories.

Related to this, I follow the notion of difference, meaning that I discuss not groups, but individuals and their experiences in their daily lives (Green and Singleton, 2006; Maynard, 2002; Scraton and Watson, 1998). The concept of difference, as used by two key feminist researchers Green and Singleton (2006: 857), aims at a more close examination of differences and of the contexts within which these differences are experienced and reproduced (Scraton and Watson, 1998). It is not meant to return to the position whereby there are no differences in terms of ethnicity or gender. In this vein, this study was not intended to make distinctions between individuals, but to look at how individuals give meaning to their everyday lives and how they perceive others. Since diversity and complexity characterize the ways in which inhabitants construct their perceptions of and ideas about the meaning of public space,

I aimed at grasping this variety and complexity and not trying to generalize in terms of groups.

The final starting point I want to comment on is the relation between policy and this research. Although I take into account the fact that policies are focused on promoting connections and relations between people from various ethnic backgrounds, this does not mean that I agree or disagree with the assumed implications of this policy. Many policy makers state that it is undesirable for people from different ethnic backgrounds to live isolated lives next door to each other, and that it is desirable to stimulate interactions between people of different ethnic origins (Gijsberts and Dagevos, 2007a: 34). It appears that many individuals still agree with the major, and arguably the central goal of the policy to bring groups of people into contact with each other. Or as stated by Uitermark and colleagues (2005), referring to Fraser (1995), to stimulate everyday encounters where differences can be negotiated: 'through interaction on a personal level, mutual prejudices and interpretations can be tested and adjusted' (*ibid.*: 11). Academics also say that a society with no contacts or networks between people of different ethnic origins could be dangerous (Putnam and Feldstein, 2003; Snel and Boonstra, 2005). The idea behind these statements is the assumption that inter-ethnic interactions can have positive effects on the social position of non-native Dutch citizens.

However, others question whether it is in fact harmful for non-native Dutch and native Dutch to spend their leisure time within their own sociocultural or socio-economic networks, as many do. Others state that contacts within specific sociocultural groups can strengthen the position of their members because it can provide them with the necessary social and economic capital. Thus, one can ask whether it is necessary to problematize the fact that there is not much contact between native and non-native Dutch people. It is important to state that I start with the individual evaluation of the everyday life of individuals and the extent to which their experiences in public spaces positively or negatively contribute to integration. As Nagel and Staeheli (2008) argue, integration revolves around the imperative to be involved in the affairs of the place in which one lives. This does not mean that everybody should have the same norms and values: integration is about the willingness to know and to respect each other.

1.3 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is divided into five parts, each consisting of one or two chapters. Part I introduces the study and the aim of the research (Chapter 1), and sets the context in which the study was executed (Chapter 2). I present in Part II a review of the relevant literature regarding issues of leisure and identity, the use and meanings of public spaces, interactions and mutual understanding, tolerance and accepted behaviour (Chapters 3 and 4). In so doing, I develop a theoretical framework on the basis of which I entered the empirical reality in order to understand these multiple realities. Part III presents a detailed description of the methodology used (Chapter 5) and a description of the case study areas (Chapter 6). In Part IV, I analyse and discuss the results in order to reveal the everyday realities of residents in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods. This part consists of Chapter 7 – in which I tell the stories

of the six spaces I examined and show how the residents make use of these spaces, the meanings they attribute to them and how they evaluate specific spaces – and Chapter 8, in which I discuss the extent to which the residents have private multi-ethnic relations and how these relations contribute to a feeling of belonging. I also show the extent to which the residents categorize other residents and how they talk about multiculturalism in more general terms. Part V comprises the conclusion and a discussion (Chapter 9). Here, I answer the main research question and link the main results to broader theoretical issues of today's multi-ethnic societies.

2. Dutch society: issues of migration, social integration, leisure and the neighbourhood

Here, I describe the research context in terms of migration, social integration, leisure and the neighbourhood in order to create a better understanding of the background to and the circumstances under which the research was executed. I present an overview of the debates that are going on in society, and how policy and researchers have responded to certain events.

In order to understand the current discourse, insights into the history of migration and the development in the policies around integration are needed. Therefore, in the first section I provide the historical background to migration to the Netherlands. I describe three periods that can be distinguished in international migration: migration from former colonies, labour migration, and refugee and asylum migration. These migration streams led to the Netherlands becoming a country of immigration rather than of emigration (section 2.1).

The same developments are occurring at the European level. European governments therefore started to develop policies related to two aspects: policy that is meant to control migration, formulated mostly in cooperation on the European level, and minority policy aimed at the integration of migrants in the host societies. I deal with both aspects in this chapter (section 2.2). Thereafter, I argue that the integration discourse supports a dichotomy between native and non-native people in Dutch society. By deconstructing the discourse around integration, I show a consistent image implicating a categorization between two groups of people. This dichotomy clearly shows that native and non-native Dutch continue to have different positions in Dutch society. By drawing on the insights of Schinkel, Gorashi and others, I show how this discourse influences policy implications and processes of stigmatization (section 2.3). In section 2.4, I link these debates to the local level of the neighbourhood and show how Dutch policy makers have dealt with segregation, renewal and integration in neighbourhoods, by describing the policies regarding the restructuring of districts and the current situation regarding segregation in Dutch cities. In that section I also provide a short overview of the current situation regarding ethnic diversity in districts, in order to provide more insight into the real-life situation in Dutch neighbourhoods. At the end of this chapter, I give an overview of leisure policies in the Netherlands (section 2.5). Together, these five sections provide an overview of the broader research setting.

2.1 History of migration

International migration is part of the process of globalization, which is reshaping economic, political and cultural systems. The actual numbers have doubled since 1980, but still represent less than 3% of the world's population (Munck, 2009). However, there is a common belief that the current migrant flows, which are mainly related to labour, are fundamentally different from earlier forms of mass migration (Munck, 2009).

International migration is defined as the movement of persons across national borders with the intention to settle in another country for a period of at least a year. In the second half of the 20th century, Europe underwent a major transformation: what had once been an area of emigration towards the New World, became an area of immigration. Until then, many European countries had never seen themselves as countries of immigration (Bade, 2003). Decolonization, a temporary but massive need for low skilled and unskilled workers, wars and political suppression, the end of the Cold War and the reunification of Germany, led to a variety of migration movements both towards and within Europe (Muus, 2001; Salt, 1998).

International migration to the Netherlands began in the 1960s, mainly in the form of labour migration. The domestic labour force in the Netherlands (and in other Western European countries) could not fulfil the very high demand for manual labour, leading to the first flow of immigrants. From the mid-1960s, most migrant workers came from southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, particularly Spain, Italy, Morocco and Turkey. Since the presence of these 'guest workers' was considered, by both the government and the immigrants themselves, a temporary solution to labour shortages, the immigrants left their families behind, hoping to return to their home countries after a few years (Amersfoort, 1986).

After the economic breakdown resulting from the oil crisis in 1973, recruitment stopped. As a result, most Spanish and Italian guest workers returned to their countries of origin, where positive economic developments were taking place. However, many Turks and Moroccans stayed on in the Netherlands (Wissen and De Beer, 2000). Later in the 1970s and in the 1980s, when the recession really set in, many firms shut down or relocated production to low-wage countries; consequently, numerous workers were laid off. Due to this, there

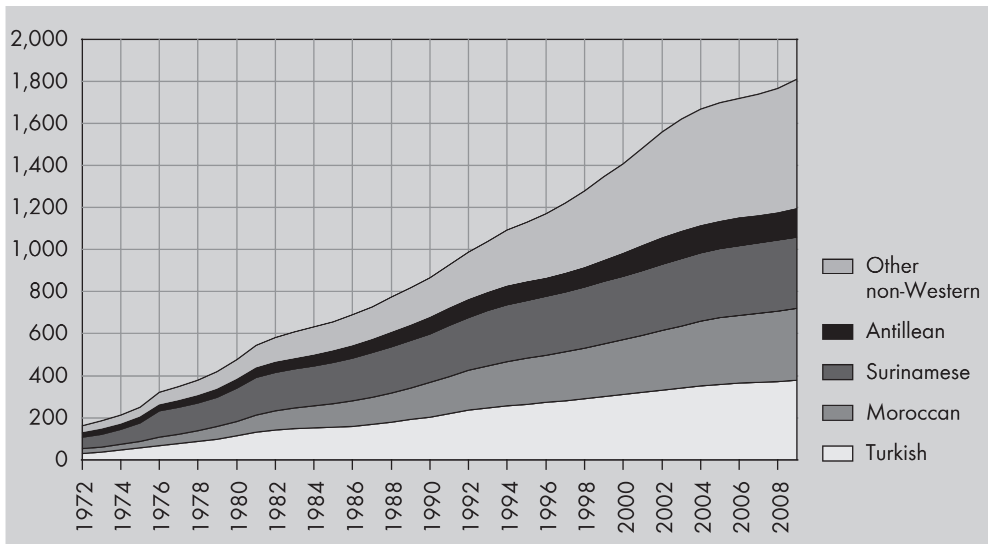

Figure 2.1. Non-Western population of the Netherlands, 1 January 1972-2009 (absolute numbers × 1000) (Netherlands Institute for Social Research, 2009).

was an increase in unemployment among guest workers, and especially among Turks and Moroccans (Kloosterman, 1994). The fact that many labour migrants decided to stay on in the Netherlands led not only to a permanent position of these workers, but also to a stream of migrants through family reunification and family formation.

The second flow comprised the immigration of a large number of people from former colonies, such as Indonesia, the Moluccas (1951-1952), the Dutch Antilles (a group of six islands spread over the Caribbean) and, from the 1970s onwards, from Suriname, a country situated between Guyana and French Guyana on the South American continent. The African-Surinamese working class (Creoles) and the offspring of Indian indentured workers (Hindustanis) decided to go the Netherlands. Their migration took the form of an exodus, as approximately 150,000 migrants, representing one third of the entire Surinamese population, settled in the Netherlands. The Dutch government tried to regulate their settlement process by, for example, pursuing a dispersal policy (Rath, 2009: 676). On 1 January 1990, more than 800,000 of the total Dutch population of about 15 million had come from the former Dutch colonies (Bade, 2003: 222). People migrated from former colonial countries to the respective former colonial powers, because many of these newly independent countries were politically unstable and did not offer many opportunities to increase welfare levels. Migration to the Netherlands was easier than migration to another country because of the shared language and the social networks that were already present.

The third stream of immigrants is composed of asylum seekers. Due to the increase in violent conflicts and in geographical mobility, many asylum seekers come to the Netherlands (see Figure 2.2) and other Western European countries.

Note that it is important to acknowledge that social networks are central to immigration, since they are very significant explanatory factors of migration: many migrants move because

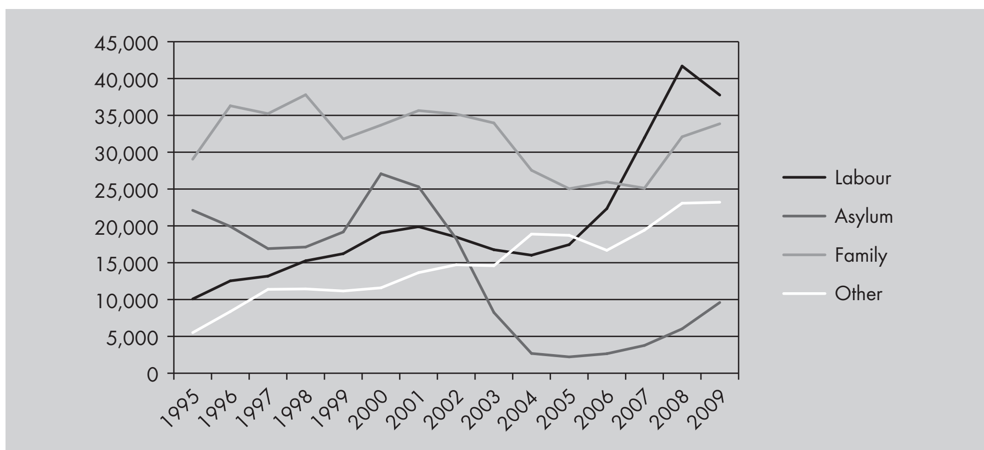

Figure 2.2. Immigration to the Netherlands by type, 1995-2009 (Statline, 2011).

others with whom they are connected have already migrated (Arango, 2000). Although the phenomenon is often underestimated, migration frequently prompts further migration (Van Nimwegen and Beets, 2000). Now, in a world in which circulation is widely restricted, the role that networks play in migration flows is of even more importance: the three flows of immigration that are responsible for direct streams of people also initiate further migration. This is most visible when we look at immigration from Turkey and Morocco.

Immigration from Turkey and Morocco reached a peak in 1980, when 17,500 Turks and 10,400 Moroccans emigrated to the Netherlands. In 1984, only 4,800 Moroccans and 4,100 Turks did so. This was due to the more restrictive labour migration policies that were introduced in the early 1980s, together with the visa requirement that was introduced for Turks and Moroccans and the stricter rules on family reunification. This all resulted in a substantial drop in immigration from Turkey and Morocco (Bruquetas-Callejo *et al.*, 2007; Wissen and de Beer, 2000). But as family reunification and particularly marriage migration (family formation migration) increased in the second half of the 1980s, the flow of immigrants increased again. Although by the early 1990s immigration to the Netherlands had started to decrease, in recent years it has increased again, mainly because of the inflow of Western migrants, such as Poles. In 2008, there was also an increase in non-Western migrants.

In 2011, there are 1.9 million non-Western people living in the Netherlands, representing 11% of the country's total population. Two thirds of these non-Western people belong to one of the four largest minority groups, namely Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans. The second generation of these groups is increasing while the first generation is decreasing (see Table 2.1). Half of the population of these four groups was born in the Netherlands, and so belongs to the second generation (Gijsberts and Huijnk, 2011). These people hold Dutch nationality, while more than 80% of the second generation of Moroccan and Turkish descent hold double nationality.

Table 2.1. Population; generation and country of origin, 1 January 2011 (Statistics Netherlands, 2011).

Country of origin	Total	First generation	Second generation
Total population of the Netherlands	16,655,799	1,735,217	1,691,802
Non-native Dutch	3,427,019	1,735,217	1,691,802
Native Dutch	13,228,780		
Total non-Western	1,899,245	1,069,352	829,893
Total Western	1,527,774	665,865	861,909
Morocco	355,883	167,607	188,276
(Former) Dutch Antilles and Aruba	141,345	81,968	59,377
Suriname	344,734	184,453	160,281
Turkey	388,967	197,042	191,925

Many non-Western people settled in districts where there were already many non-Western people. Between 1995 and 2008, almost 25% of the total number of people from Morocco and Turkey (135,000) settled in districts in which more than half of the population was of non-Western origin. The same patterns can be seen for people from the Dutch Antilles and, to a lesser extent, people from Suriname (Netherlands Institute for Social Research, 2009). The four major groups mostly live in the bigger cities, mainly in the western conurbation, although others live in areas where industries were located, such as Enschede and Eindhoven. But in general, all non-native Dutch people are, compared to the native Dutch, over-represented in the west of the Netherlands, and more specifically, in the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht (see Table 2.2). Since it was difficult for most labour migrants to access social housing, most tried to find a home in the private housing sector. As a result, they mostly settled in 19th-century neighbourhoods in city centres. When these neighbourhoods underwent urban renewal, the labour migrants were given access to social housing.

Table 2.2. Population, country of origin, four biggest cities, 1 January 2010 (Statistics Netherlands, 2011).

Country of origin		**Amsterdam**	**The Hague**	**Rotterdam**	**Utrecht**
Total	Native and non-native Dutch	767,457	488,553	593,049	307,081
Non-native Dutch	First generation	218,251	139,529	159,498	49,551
	Second generation	164,726	95,164	123,361	47,729
Non-Western	Total	268,247	163,945	219,026	65,512
	First generation	154,750	98,900	124,690	35,127
	Second generation	113,497	65,045	94,336	30,385
Western	Total	114,730	70,748	63,833	31,768
	First generation	63,501	40,629	34,808	14,424
	Second generation	51,229	30,119	29,025	17,344
Morocco	Total	69,433	26,861	38,985	27,061
	First generation	34,255	13,373	18,687	13,332
	Second generation	35,178	13,488	20,298	13,729
Dutch Antilles and Aruba	Total	11,707	11,508	21,099	2,571
	First generation	6,983	7,946	13,964	1,318
	Second generation	4,724	3,562	7,135	1,253
Suriname	Total	68,938	46,661	52,654	7,676
	First generation	39,538	27,713	30,229	4,062
	Second generation	29,400	18,948	22,425	3,614
Turkey	Total	40,365	35,684	46,871	13,408
	First generation	21,859	19,967	23,585	6,808
	Second generation	18,506	15,717	23,286	6,600

On 1 January 2008, almost half a million Dutch citizens lived in neighbourhoods in which more than half of the people originated from a non-Western country. One in five non-native Dutch lives in that type of neighbourhood. Those who are over-represented in these neighbourhoods are people of Surinamese, Moroccan and Turkish descent: at the end of the 20th century, the figure was 1 in 7 or 8.

Since 1998, the number of mixed and coloured neighbourhoods has increased. In that year, 75% of all neighbourhoods were white (= more than 95% native Dutch citizens), while in 2008 the figure was 68%. Because of this increase, the statistical chance of non-native Dutch encountering native Dutch people has decreased. Although it is only a statistical measure, other research has indicated that in neighbourhoods that accommodate many non-native Dutch residents, there are fewer real contacts with native Dutch people than in mixed neighbourhoods (Dagevos, 2005; Gijsberts and Dagevos, 2005; Laan Bouma-Doff, 2005).

Socio-economic position non-native Dutch

Although the unemployment rate is not as high as it was in 2005, the signs on the labour market are not good. Unemployment among non-native Dutch has been rising steadily since the third quarter of 2008, reversing the trend that began after 2005 (Table 2.3). The rapid rise in unemployment of non-native Dutch is mainly affecting young people and the low educated. The combination of a high proportion of young people and a high proportion of low-educated people makes non-Western groups exceptionally sensitive to an economic downturn. The high percentage of workers with temporary employment contracts is another factor here: when the economy is weak, flexiworkers lose their jobs en masse (Gijsberts and Huijnk, 2011).

Non-native Dutch pupils are slowly overcoming their disadvantage in education. Non-Western pupils are successful in their primary school careers, but less successful in their secondary school careers. Pupils of Turkish origin most frequently encounter these problems, which most probably relates to their language skills. Since the mid 1990s, more and more students of non-Western origin have been entering higher education. The number of young adults from Turkish and Moroccan backgrounds entering higher education has doubled; the intake of those of Surinamese origin has also increased markedly. Thus, the average education level among non-native Dutch who have left school is slowly but surely rising, although the average level is still below that of native Dutch people.

In sum, more than 10% of the entire Dutch population are now of non-native Dutch descent, and the majority of those making up this 10% live in the big cities. Non-Western people generally have a less favourable position in Dutch society in terms of education and employment. In the following section, I show how the Dutch government has reacted to these streams of immigrants.

Table 2.3. Unemployment rates among the working-age population, gender, percentage (Statistics Netherlands, 2011).

		1996	2000	2005	2010
Native Dutch	Total	6.3	3.0	5.2	4.5
	Men	4.2	1.9	4.2	4.0
	Women	9.6	4.6	6.6	5.0
Western migrants	Total	9.7	5.1	7.9	6.5
	Men	7.8	3.2	6.9	6.1
	Women	12.3	7.6	9.0	7.0
Non-Western migrants	Total	21.6	11.0	16.4	12.6
	Men	21.4	10.1	15.5	12.2
	Women	22.1	12.5	17.7	13.0
Turkish descent	Total	23.9	9.1	14.8	11.3
	Men	22.6	7.9	13.5	9.2
	Women	27.0	12.3	17.3	14.7
Moroccan descent	Total	27.3	13.0	18.8	14.6
	Men	26.3	12.1	18.3	14.8
	Women	.	15.6	19.8	14.3
Surinamese descent	Total	14.2	9.1	13.7	10.4
	Men	12.8	7.1	12.2	11.0
	Women	15.8	11.3	15.3	9.9
Antillean and Aruban descent	Total	21.2	8.7	15.7	12.5
	Men	20.7	8.3	14.3	13.3
	Women	.	9.3	17.4	11.6
Other non-Western migrants	Total	25.2	13.9	18.4	13.8
	Men	25.0	13.6	17.8	13.4
	Women	25.7	14.5	19.4	14.4

2.2 Ethnic minority policy in the Netherlands

Policies on ethnic minorities are centred on the terms 'integration' and 'multicultural society' (Hollands, 2006). These policies aim at the full participation of ethnic minorities in their new host societies: the minorities should adjust themselves to the dominant norms and values of their new society. Integration policies can be divided into three groups: assimilation policies, integration policies and multicultural policies.

Integration policy differs from assimilation policy in that the latter aims at full adjustment to the culture of the majority, while the former leaves some room for the conservation of own identities and culture. Multicultural policies emphasize the acknowledgement of diversity: societies must change in order to accommodate all ethnic and cultural groups that form part of that society (Essed, 1994; Parekh, 1996; Taylor, 1995). The Dutch policy is one of

integration. Although the term 'multicultural society' is used in the Netherlands, it usually only reflects the demographic situation and, in that sense, acknowledges that people from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds live together in the Netherlands.

The Dutch government, like the governments of other European countries, did not have clearly articulated policies towards immigrants until the 1980s (Uitermark *et al.*, 2005). Since the presence of migrants was framed as a temporary phenomenon, the government proposed and implemented tailor-made measures for specific migrant groups. These were 'two-track' policies: they were aimed at integration in the Dutch socio-economic sphere while retaining the cultural identities and group structures in order to facilitate the eventual return (Poppelaars and Scholten, 2008). Since the 1980s, integration policy has gone through three phases.

The first phase started with a plea from the Scientific Council for Government Policy for recognition of the fact that several immigrant groups had effectively settled permanently in the Netherlands and most likely would not return to their countries of origin (Amersfoort, 1986; WRR, 1979). This led to the 'Minderhedennota' (Minority Memorandum, Tweede Kamer, 1983) and the formulation of the first official policy towards these groups. In doing so, the House of Representatives (the main Chamber of Parliament) officially recognized that many immigrants would stay in the Netherlands, and so they were now considered 'ethnic minorities' rather than guest workers or foreigners (Rath, 1991). The Netherlands' ethnic minorities (EM) policy was born in the form of a welfare state policy that was intended to stimulate the equality and equity of vulnerable groups in society (Bruquetas-Callejo *et al.*, 2007).

> The fact that groups of immigrants (were believed to) share certain ethnic attributes was regarded as an opportunity for policies. It was expected that if minorities were enabled to retain their own culture and manage their own institutions they would be better placed to emancipate in Dutch society. In line with the newly established minority policy, the national government increasingly felt the need to establish a dialogue with representatives of ethnic minorities. For this purpose, consultative bodies were created for nationalities, religions (especially Islam) and minorities generally (Uitermark *et al.*, 2005: 13).

The policy during that period focused on the integration of immigrants on a group basis, but did not exclude the maintenance of the immigrants' identities (Ghorashi, 2003). The programmes at that time had a strong focus on the real or alleged ethno-cultural features of the 'ethnic minorities', and in this line of thinking, group-specific measures were popular up to the early 1980s (Rath, 1993).

Towards the end of the 1980s, public and political discourse began to look critically, and less optimistically, at ethnic minority policy. The general opinion was that this policy had failed in important areas like labour and education, and there was much criticism on the fact that there was an overemphasis on cultural aspects (WRR, 1989, in Bruquetas-Callejo *et al.*, 2007). In addition, the public debate on minorities focused on the supposed lack of integration into Dutch society.

In 1989, the Scientific Council for Government Policy published a report titled 'Migrant policy' (WRR, 1989), in which it states that the focus should be shifted towards giving ethnic minorities themselves more responsibilities and obligations to improve their socio-economic position. As a result, at the beginning of the 1990s, a new policy emerged in which members of ethnic minorities were considered less as cultural or religious groups, and more as individuals. In this second phase, the minority policy was renamed 'integration policy', indicating that the target was no longer groups but individuals. The focus shifted towards integration, putting more emphasis on the fact that ethnic minorities should make use of the opportunities that were offered to them. This led to the formulation of further republican integration policies throughout the 1990s, in which the emphasis was on the individual rather than the group, and on the socio-economic rather than the cultural and religious aspects of integration. However, ethnic minorities should still be able to foster their own cultural and religious institutions (Uitermark *et al.*, 2005).

Although in previous policies, education in the language of the immigrants was seen as a way to stimulate a positive self-image, from the 1990s onwards, the focus was on learning Dutch as a way to adapt to the new home society. In the outlines note (*contourennota*) of 1994 it is stated that 'The term integration policy better expresses that social integration of minorities is a reciprocal process of acceptation. Both the ones that have to integrate, as well as the society into which they entered, have to make efforts to let this succeed' (Van der Zwan and Entzinger, 1994: 6). 1994 saw the publication of a controversial recommendation called 'Follow-up policy of debate on minorities', which stressed that own responsibilities and reciprocal rights and duties are important. Integration has to take place by performing paid labour in the first place. The authors' advice is to introduce a compulsory course for newcomers consisting of language and social skills as well as certain skills better to prepare them for a position on the labour market. In 1998, a law on the integration of new citizens was introduced, obliging all new citizens to follow an integration course. Although the term used to address these new Dutch citizens is always highly debated, the general idea was that these people were and remained a problematic category with a derogatory culture (Ghorashi, 2006).

The third phase started at the beginning of the 21st century and was primed for a new shift in policy orientation. The dominant view was that integration processes and policies had fundamentally failed and that the social cohesion of Dutch society was in danger (Bruquetas-Callejo *et al.*, 2007). The right-wing cabinet that was governing at the time introduced policies that were even more strict, leading to an image in which the cultural and religious attributes of ethnic minorities were considered more as a threat than before (Houtum and Naerssen, 2002; Prins and Slijper, 2002). Many have claimed that the multicultural policies are in line with the country's pillarized past and had caused huge social problems in Dutch society (Joppke, 2004; Koopmans, 2007). Because these multicultural policies overemphasize and overvalue cultural differences – although it can be questioned whether the Netherlands really has pursued hard-core multicultural policies for a long time (cf. Duyvendak *et al.*, 2009) – policy makers had neglected the urgent need for newcomers to integrate into Dutch society.

Both the admission policy and the integration policy can currently be characterized as restrictive. The focus is on an intensification of measurements in order to adapt as soon as possible, and not on a voluntary basis, to the Dutch language and Dutch habits. Instead of focusing only on the socio-economic aspects of integration (employment, education, housing), more attention is paid to shared sociocultural values, which meant that learning Dutch and having shared values became important. Integration became a condition for migration because learning Dutch and Dutch habits has to start already in the countries of origin. This restrictive policy has characteristics that can be put under the heading assimilation policy. The protection of the identity and culture of migrants no longer receives much attention. The focus is on Dutch language, history and culture as a way to create solutions to the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity. These policies are legitimized because in Dutch society tensions have increased between ethnic groups (mainly between second-generation immigrants from Turkey and Morocco and the native Dutch). These tensions increased even more after 9/11 and the murder of the film maker Theo van Gogh in 2004. New and stricter ways of dealing with integration problems were introduced. Some even argue that the Netherlands show a turn to assimilation policies stronger than in other Western European countries (Joppke and Morawska, 2004).

Although the national government did not start to develop policies regarding ethnic minorities until the 1980s, the municipalities in which immigrants had settled had started much earlier to think about ways to regulate the relation between newcomers and natives. At the local level, experimentation with new discourses and institutional structures appears to be far more developed, and it may be argued that we are now witnessing a return from the national to the local level as the prime site for the regulation of ethnic diversity. In recent years, the four major cities in the Netherlands (Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht) have reconsidered their approach to ethnic diversity and have restructured the institutions that accommodate ethnic diversity (Uitermark *et al.*, 2005). It seems that local policies have a more pragmatic approach that also involves tailor-made, group-specific programmes (Poppelaars and Scholten, 2008), which is in contrast to policies at a national level, where the liberal response to multiculturalism argues that all people should be defined and treated in individualist terms instead of talking about cultural groups as being relatively homogenous (Barry, 2001). One of the ways to achieve this is to encourage people from different ethnic backgrounds to get to know and understand each other. Such people should meet each other in schools (mixed schools are best), in neighbourhoods (segregation should be tackled) and during their leisure time. Sport and multicultural festivals became vehicles for stimulating integration. Meeting each other became a policy issue.

Thus, although policies have gone under different names, there has always been a strong focus on the individual non-native Dutch person. Policy is now shifting towards one of assimilation. Attention to inter-ethnic encounters as a way to increase the positive values of diversity has been implemented in Dutch integration policy, and a subsidy has been introduced to facilitate inter-ethnic encounters at both the national and the local level.

Blokland and Hondius (2003) criticize the fact that in the discussions on integration in the Netherlands, not enough attention is paid to racism, which can be perceived as a relevant

factor. They therefore plea for more attention to be paid to the new forms of 'cultural racism', defined as the social construction through which, on the basis of static notions about ethnicity and culture, differences between 'us' and 'them' are created (*ibid.*: 77-78). How groups are being produced and reproduced in the Dutch society is discussed in the next section.

2.3 Discourse of integration and multiculturalism

In this section, I show how the discourse on integration and multiculturalism influences policy implications and can also to some extent influence processes of stigmatization. I start by describing the various discourses of integration and argue that all show a consistent image implicating a categorization between two groups of people. This dichotomy clearly shows that native and non-native Dutch continue to have different positions in Dutch society.

In their article on whiteness in the Netherlands, Essed and Trienekens (2008: 56), state that: 'Hardly a day goes by without Dutch politicians or other spokespersons problematizing immigrant ethnic groups. They are seen as a strain on society's resources; as unwilling or culturally and socially incapable of integrating into Dutch society'. What is important in this statement is that integration is often perceived as something connected to the migrants and to division between groups of people. Schinkel (2007) goes a step further and argues in his analytical book on multiculturalism in the Netherlands – *Sociale Hypchondrie* (social hypochondria) – that the opposition between people inside and outside society is reproduced by policy. Others (Ghorashi, 2006; Rath, 1991, 2009; Stolcke, 1995; Sunier, 2000) state that since debates on integration and multiculturalism are dominated by thinking in categories, they stress differences between cultures, and this leads to a dichotomy between native and non-native Dutch. Although several phases in integration policy can be distinguished, the dominant discourse throughout all phases is determined by focusing on the alleged sociocultural differences of non-native Dutch or, to put it differently, the supposed non-conformism of migrants (Rath, 1991: 108). It is also claimed that another important approach of all policies is the *achterstandsbenadering* (Ghorashi, 2006; Rath, 1991), meaning that minorities have been treated as people who have few competences and are not capable of solving their own problems.

The Dutch philosopher Baukje Prins (2002) calls the current discourse 'neo-realism'. She names this a genre because she focuses on its performative effects, that is, not so much on how it describes reality as on how it produces and co-produces reality. Prins characterizes this new realism with four distinct features (*ibid.*: 67-68). First, within this new discourse the author presents himself or herself as someone who dares face the facts, who speaks frankly about the 'truths' that the dominant discourse has supposedly covered up. Second, a new realist sets himself or herself up as the spokesperson of the ordinary people, that is, the native Dutch population. One of the first leaders in this debate – Bolkestein, the then leader of the liberal party – implied that ordinary people deserved to be represented because they were realists par excellence: they knew from day-to-day experience what was really going on, especially in the poor neighbourhoods of big cities, and were not blinded by

politically correct ideas. And also because one should take the complaints of the ordinary people seriously in order to keep their emotions under control and channel them in the right direction. Bolkestein was the first to truly mobilize Dutch public opinion on the issue of ethnic minorities. A third characteristic is the suggestion that realism is a characteristic feature of national Dutch identity: being Dutch means being frank, straightforward and realistic. The fourth feature of new realism is its resistance to the left. New realists think it is high time to break the power of the progressive elite that dominates the public realm with its politically correct sensibilities regarding fascism, racism and intolerance. This supposedly left-wing censorship of public discourse is also criticized because it is accompanied by a highly relativistic approach to the value of different cultures. Altogether, new realists claim that it is possible to talk about the truth, objectiveness and impartiality, and by doing so they are able to determine what is really going on and what should be done to solve the problems. The outcome of this discourse is the fact that the debate was simplified: it talked about us – the representatives of Western civilization – and them, those belonging to the world of Islam, and ignored the injustices and evil perpetrated in the name of the former while ignoring the diversity within the latter.

Schinkel calls the phase in which we are now the culturalist phase, in which 'cultural integration' takes precedence over 'socio-economic integration', and an individual focus is preferred to the former group focus where the meaning of the notion of 'integration' is concerned. Discourse on integration has been largely restricted to cultural issues and, more specifically, to issues relating mainly to 'Islam' (Schinkel, 2007). Although there are differences between the culturalist phase of Schinkel and the discourse of 'new realism', both agree that there is a widespread assumption that immigrants are to be defined primarily in ethnic and religious terms, and that their behaviour is directly linked to ethnocultural or ethno-religious traditions, moral frameworks, loyalties and so forth. Culturalism is de rigueur (cf. Rath 1993, 1999; Schinkel, 2007). Integration is seen as a one-way process whereby immigrants have to change, the problem has to be solved by assimilation and the government is seen as the only institution capable of making integration happen (Rath, 2009).

Thus, although given different names, the discourses used in Dutch policies on integration are characterized by focusing on the differences between native Dutch citizens and non-native Dutch citizens, with an emphasis on the incompatibility of Islam with the basic values of Western culture (Shadid, 2006). By constantly being labelled 'non-native Dutch', groups are constructed and reconstructed and the 'us' versus 'them' distinction is reinforced (Shadid, 2006). In that sense, I agree with those (e.g. Rath, 2009; Schinkel, 2007) who state that this discourse leads to the dichotomization between groups of people, in which the majority native Dutch are the norm. White ethnicity is often neglected (cf. Wekker, 1998), strengthening the inequality between native Dutch and non-native Dutch people. This is similar to what Essed and Trienekens (2008) state, namely that there is a hierarchical division between the 'real Dutch' and the 'not-quite Dutch'.

Now, back to the study. It is important to remember that when one interviews people of various ethnic backgrounds, it always takes place within the above context. Inhabitants' everyday activities take place in their neighbourhoods, but are also framed within national

discourses. At policy level, the neighbourhood is seen as an important element in discussing issues of integration. In the following section, I show how these relations have developed over the last 60 years.

2.4 Dutch neighbourhoods: problems, solutions and issues

The everyday lives of people take place in certain localities, one of which is the neighbourhood. It is therefore important to understand the role of the neighbourhood in various policies. In this section, I provide a brief historical overview of urban housing policies, and then describe the current situation and show more clearly the links with segregation and integration policy at the local level.

Historical overview: urban housing policies in the Netherlands 1945-2007

After liberation from the Nazis in 1945, the Netherlands faced a desperate shortage of housing. The construction industry had been idle for five years and there was nowhere near enough investment capital (Priemus, 2006). At the same time, there was more demand for houses due to smaller households and the growth of the population resulting from the post-war baby boom (Priemus, 2006; Veldboer and Duyvendak, 2004).

In response, the Dutch government stimulated the building of affordable housing. In the 1970s, it started to provide rent subsidies (Veldboer and Duyvendak, 2004). In the meantime, the construction industry got going again and Dutch cities expanded rapidly. The emphasis was on medium- and high-rise housing, on subsidized social housing, and on austerity and uniformity. It is pretty clear that the promoters of housing projects had very little interest in the preferences of the occupants (Priemus, 2006).

Boelhouwer and Van der Heijden (1992) estimated that during the early post-war years, an average of 25% of production costs were subsidized for over 90% of the new supply. The Dutch government mainly used its power under the 1901 Housing Act to provide subsidies for new rental housing managed by municipalities, housing associations or private landlords (Milligan *et al.*, 2006). Later on, the central government stimulated the building of new neighbourhoods outside city centres in order to create areas that can act as 'flood plains' (Veldboer and Duyvendak, 2004). Within city centres, the focus was on renewal through reconstruction and cleaning up. Soon after, there was more focus on the conservation of houses and the rights of inhabitants.

Bolt and Van Kempen (2000: 28) state that the decision to build large amounts of affordable, high quality housing for the social housing market after World War II still determines the distribution and concentration of various groups at different levels. Young people and immigrants, usually with a low income and often dependent on benefits, started moving into the cities. The low-income groups initially tended to concentrate in a number of old, run-down, pre-war urban neighbourhoods that had a relatively high proportion of private rented dwellings.

In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, these neighbourhoods were the main target of urban regeneration projects (Priemus, 2006). In the 1970s and the early 1980s, urban renewal was based on the principle of 'building for the neighbourhood's residents', and residents were given the right to stay in the area. The aim of the urban restructuring policy was to reduce the spatial concentrations of low-income households; however, the right to be rehoused meant that the concentrations were not reduced (Bolt *et al.*, 2009). Because social rented dwellings are mainly concentrated in parts of cities that were built between 1945 and 1975, these areas showed increasing concentrations of low-income households and became concentration areas for ethnic minority groups, especially those of Turkish and Moroccan descent (Bolt *et al.*, 2002, 2008).

At the start of the 1980s, the government was heavily involved financially in the housing sector. The building of new houses was subsidized, and their occupants received rent subsidies. Both houses for rent (mainly in the big cities) and for sale (mainly in villages and small and medium-sized cities) were being built (Veldboer and Duyvendak, 2004). At the end of the 1980s, the need for houses was no longer that urgent, because people could find appropriate housing more easily. From 1987 onwards, the starting point was that the distribution of houses should be equal for all citizens. The government started to rethink its position and role in this housing sector.

In the 1990s, the governments' main focus was to ensure that there was high quality social housing for lower socio-economic groups. The presence of middle-class people in cheap districts was also seen as important for the vitality of those districts (Vermeijden, 1997). The new aim of the policy was to strengthen differentiation of income in those areas where low-income groups were concentrated. One of the ways to stimulate this was to regenerate post-war urban districts. Through demolition, renovation, upgrading and the sell-off of social rented houses, the housing stock would be improved. The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (1993) concluded that improvements in housing stock had advantaged all groups in society, but not equally: Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch had benefited less than the native population. Vreeswijk and colleagues (2002) concluded that at the end of the 20thcentury, about 25% of the inhabitants of big cities were of non-Western origin. In one out of six districts in cities, the majority of the population is non-native Dutch. The structure of the Dutch housing market, with much social housing mainly in cities, has been a determining factor for the location pattern of non-native Dutch people (Veldboer and Duyvendak, 2004). Social housing in cities has to a large extent determined the location pattern of non-native Dutch people; today, many non-native Dutch citizens live in areas that are characterized as low-income.

The Dutch government fears the development of districts with concentrations of ethnic minorities and tensions between different ethnic groups, as also stated in a report issued by the Dutch Social Planning Bureau on concentration and segregation: 'the ingredients for marginalizing, spatial segregation and the beginning of a culture of poverty are on hand' (Tesser *et al.*, 1995: 47). In line with this, the policy on major cities is dedicated to preventing socio-economic and ethnic segregation, with a problematizing concentration of certain income groups. The minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment

(VROM) is politically accountable for urban renewal, while the minister of the Interior is politically accountable for the Big Cities Policy. In the 1990s, the idea that the homogeneity of poor urban districts and neighbourhoods in terms of the low socio-economic status of the population had to be countered, gradually became more dominant. In 1994, the Big Cities Policy was implemented, concentrating on problematic urban districts in (finally) 31 Dutch cities. This was a broad policy, targeting not only physical issues but also featuring social and economic measures (Bolt and Van Kempen, 2009).

In 1997, the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) (1997) formulated the 'new' urban renewal policy. As Priemus (2006: 7) states:

> Whereas 'traditional' urban renewal targeted pre-war urban neighbourhoods, concentrating mainly on the construction of social rented housing and on the improvement of technical quality, 'new' urban renewal specifically targets post-war neighbourhoods, trying to improve not just the dwellings but the whole living environment and urban structure as well, and aiming particularly at re-differentiation of the housing stock: more owner-occupier property and less social rented housing. In traditional urban renewal social housing was the solution, but in new urban renewal it is considered more and more by national government as the problem.

All physical measures have been referred to as 'urban restructuring' since 1997, when the White Paper on Urban Restructuring (VROM, 1997) was published. This White Paper was meant to decrease the urban concentration of the poor by achieving a mixed population, and to tackle the problems of post-war urban districts. It was assumed by Dutch policy makers that urban restructuring and improving the quality of the housing stock were the key to a stronger social structure and a favourable social climate (Uitermark, 2003; VROM, 1997). The intention was to retain middle-class households by reducing unemployment and increasing liveability, public safety and entrepreneurship in the worst neighbourhoods, and thus promoting the social and economic vitality of the city (Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen, 2003). Interventions in the housing stock that were taken to reduce concentrations comprised the upgrading and sale of social rented dwellings, selective demolition and the construction of more expensive housing (Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen, 2003; VROM, 1997). The neighbourhood layout, public space, services and infrastructure also had to be improved.

The paper stated explicitly that a healthy future for cities could only be guaranteed by a differentiated population composition: homogeneous districts should be transformed into mixed areas, especially through the demolition of some of the social housing stock and building more expensive dwellings (Bolt and Van Kempen, 2009). Although urban restructuring is basically a physical strategy, it is increasingly accompanied by social and economic policy measures (Kleinhans, Priemus and Engbersen, 2007). Districts built in 1945-1965 (the early post-WWII areas) became the particular target areas. This policy is still in place. Demolition and refurbishment projects take a long time, sometimes as much as 8 to 10 years (*ibid.*). In 1998 and in 2002, the government appointed a minister with special responsibility for the Big Cities Policy, which covers the broad domain of improving the

physical, economic and social quality of cities. New urban renewal falls primarily in the category of physical improvement, which also includes the restructuring of industrial sites (with a key responsibility for the Ministry of Economic Affairs) (Priemus, 2006). This policy of creating a social mix within neighbourhoods is also pursued in other Western European countries, the USA and Australia (Kleinhans *et al.*, 2007; Wood, 2003).

The Netherlands was historically a decentralized state, and during the 1990s there was a reduction in state intervention in welfare and housing (including, for example, the promotion of owner-occupation), and a move to give more responsibilities back to local authorities so that they could make decisions and integrate activities at a more local level. As a result, municipalities can implement the policy framework set by the central government in a way that fits local circumstances (Cadell *et al.*, 2008).

It is claimed that the renewal policy aimed at preserving or increasing a social mix is successful in combating social segregation and strengthening social cohesion (Kleinhans *et al.*, 2007; Ostendorf *et al.*, 2001; Uitermark, 2003). The reason for this is that middle- and higher-income households provide role models in behaviour and potentially contribute to the social networks of current, mostly low-income residents (VROM, 1997). Kleinhans (2005) and Priemus (2004) indeed showed that the policy of attracting middle- and higher-income households to restructured post-war areas was successful. 2002 saw a remarkable turnaround from a focus on socio-economic aspects to one on problems associated with the spatial concentrations of minority ethnic groups, as shown in the following quote: 'Policy designed to stimulate equal distribution is mainly aimed at ethnic minority groups in these districts, because nuisance and criminality amongst disadvantaged migrant groups in poor districts is over-represented' (TK, Rapportage Integratiebeleid 2002-2003, 28162, nr. 3:3).

Attempts are made to change the housing stock in order to prevent concentration in certain districts. The role of the government is to facilitate this process. This policy assumes that concentration has many disadvantages because of the effect of districts on the socio-economic position of its inhabitants. However, previous research shows that individual characteristics, such as level of education, ethnicity and gender, have much more influence than a person's social position (Uunk, 2002). What can be said, though, is that in a district that has many problems, it is possible that one has fewer opportunities to improve one's situation.

Another relation found in research is that when the share of non-native Dutch increases in a district, the social and cultural distance from society also increases (Dagevos, 2001: 169). However, other research shows that building mixed housing hardly leads to mixed living, and thus hardly leads to new contacts between native and non-native Dutch people (Kleinhans *et al.*, 2000; Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen, 2003). Throughout the 1990s, the residential segregation of non-native Dutch people was mainly interpreted as an indication that there is ethnic inequality in access to housing (Bolt and Van Kempen, 2002). Thus, the segregation of non-native people mainly became an issue because of the fact that due to the economic transformations, the newly arrived migrants had a hard time finding jobs and many of them became dependent on the state. Many of them also found housing in the social renting sector, and as a consequence clusters of non-native Dutch came into existence.

Since 2001, however, the central point has been that residential segregation has negative consequences for the integration of non-native Dutch people, not only because an accumulation of social problems can occur, but also because ethnic dividing lines become more visible in segregated areas and therefore there are fewer opportunities to meet people from other ethnic backgrounds (Ministry of Justice, 2005). Moreover, policy makers tried to improve the liveability of neighbourhoods with high concentrations of low-income households, which is also expressed in the Yearly Memorandum on Integration Policy (Ministry of Justice, 2005: 19, authors' translation):

> Concentration is especially disadvantageous for integration because it results in an accumulation of social problems that may give rise to a state of affairs that is very hard to handle .... Concentration is also disadvantageous because it makes the ethnic dividing lines more visible .... That harms the image of ethnic minorities .... Finally, concentration is particularly disadvantageous for the opportunities to meet and make contact with persons of different origins ... the diminishing contacts with native Dutch people indirectly influence the social chances of ethnic minorities.

In addition, it became a principal idea that non-native Dutch people themselves are responsible because of their own cultural identity and the fact that they want to cluster (Burgers and Van der Lugt, 2006). However, Burgers and Van der Lugt (2006) did research among Surinamese-Dutch people in order to establish the extent to which socio-economic position or cultural identity is responsible for the housing preferences. Their research showed that economically and socially successful Surinamese-Dutch people have the same patterns of mobility as the native Dutch, and that they also complain about other non-native Dutch people (other than Surinamese) because they are the cause of the decline of parts of the city and in that sense became a reason for them to leave the city. Besides, a more liberal way to look at cities in general became dominant: the city should be a place where highly educated and creative people would want to live (see also Florida, 2002; Uitermark and Duyvendak, 2004). In this perspective, successful people should be attracted and ethnic minorities are usually not part of that group. This all led to a situation in which the concentration of ethnic minorities in certain neighbourhoods was seen as negative and should therefore be combated.

Integration and segregation: policies aimed at mixed neighbourhoods 2005-2010

Since 2005, issues of integration and segregation have played an important role in urban housing policy. It had become clear that spatial segregation occurred mainly in the big cities, and that this situation is not going to change very soon. Research showed that non-native people move less often out of concentration neighbourhoods than native people, and that non-native people more frequently move into concentration neighbourhoods from non-concentration areas (Bolt and Van Kempen, 2009). Many policy makers, not only in the Netherlands but also in the UK and other Western European countries, stated that urban regeneration should improve not only the physical quality of urban neighbourhoods, but

also the social well-being of their residents (see e.g. Flint and Kearns, 2006; Kearns, 2004; Lelieveldt, 2004; Middleton *et al.,* 2005).

The concept of social capital was introduced in order to acknowledge the fact that urban renewal policy is not only about demolition and housing stock, but also about residents and the social networks within neighbourhoods (Kleinhans, 2004). Although it is not an end in itself, Dutch policy makers hope that the social liveability will improve and that a neighbourhood's better reputation will attract other residents and create a more mixed neighbourhood (Dekker and Bolt, 2005). Local authorities, housing associations and care providers try to stimulate neighbourhood involvement, common norms and mutual trust, and to promote the self-help of residents and voluntary work in community groups (Kleinhans *et al.*, 2007; WRR, 2005).

Thus, minority ethnic groups are over-represented in poorer neighbourhoods (Van Kempen and Özuëkren, 1998). Starting from this reality, research also focused on more positive aspects in terms of the dynamics of communities and the significance of clustering for the sense of well-being and identity of the inhabitants of these neighbourhoods (Bolt *et al.,* 1998; Bolt and Van Kempen, 2003; Özuëkren and Van Kempen, 2002). The idea was to establish whether there are also positive aspects of clustering in terms of social support. In that sense, residential segregation can be read in terms not only of social exclusion, but also of community strength and strong bonding social capital (cf. Phillips *et al.*, 2007).

Following this line of reasoning, in 2005 the government launched the 'Social Bonding' Broad Initiative. The government organized two meetings at which organizations and citizens working in the field of bonding could get in touch with each other (Snel and Boonstra, 2005). Also in the Yearly Report on Integration 2007-2011, one of the main issues is to increase and stimulate contact between native and non-native people (VROM, 2007). Stimulating and promoting contact between different groups became important and a way to increase social cohesion (Snel and Boonstra, in: RMO, 2005: 99).

The current policy distinguishes three levels of bonding between groups of people. At the national level, the goal is sociocultural integration, at a local level it is distributing members of ethnic groups across various districts and schools, and at a micro level it is to facilitate local projects and programmes that stimulate encounters between groups in society (RMO, 2005). 2007 therefore saw the launch of the Space for Contact initiative (www.ruimtevoorcontact.nl), which is intended to stimulate informal contacts between different ethnic groups by subsidizing pertinent activities. Many applications for subsidies for leisure projects were submitted and accepted. This shows that leisure is seen by policy makers as one of the ways to stimulate inter-ethnic understanding. In the Dutch context, informal contact between native and non-native people is perceived as part of sociocultural integration. Therefore, stimulating initiatives that promote inter-ethnic encounters is part of integration policies (Snel and Boonstra, 2005: 16).

The government that was installed in 2007 appointed a new minister of Housing, Districts and Integration. This can be seen as an expression of the perceived linkages between

physical aspects, spaces and social issues of integration. In the spring of that year, the minister declared that her policy on district improvement would target only 40 districts in Dutch cities, and was focused on transforming problematic urban districts into areas in which a diversity of people would like to live. In her first White Paper ('From Attention District to Strong District'; VROM, 2007), the new minister stated that the 40 areas selected had an over-representation of deprived households and of non-Western minority ethnic groups. The minister found it important to regenerate these areas into districts with more 'social cement', or social cohesion, where residents have a feeling of being at home (VROM, 2007). Thus, in order to reduce segregation, a mix of policy measures is needed, such as physical interventions, social supplies and an influence on the type of housing that is built. Policy makers have a growing concern that ethnic segregation threatens social cohesion (Bolt *et al.*, 2009). Various measures should lead to more mixed neighbourhoods in terms of household income.

One of the most important programmes is the establishment of 40 *krachtwijken* – districts that need extra attention and that are given additional support for 10 years. For each district, a plan is drawn up that focuses on five areas: housing, labour, education, integration and safety. The programme also stimulates the demolition of old housing and the building of new houses in order to create a mix of different types of houses. This is accompanied by additional financial resources to improve the districts socially, physically and economically. It is important to note that the philosophy behind these plans is that a combination of social and physical measures is needed to help the inhabitants to improve their socio-economic position. In 2009, the national and local governments laid down the Agenda for Integration, in which it is stated that governments have good reasons to act against segregation. The majority of non-native Dutch people live in neighbourhoods and districts that are characterized as places with a monotonous housing stock and limited provisions. Because the inhabitants of these neighbourhoods are often unsatisfied, the government wants to reduce high levels of concentration of households with low incomes and to avoid segregation on the basis of income.

The Netherlands Council of Housing, Spatial, Planning and the Environment (2008) states that for urban regeneration to be successful, the focus should be on social advancement and on creating more opportunities in terms of labour, education, housing and leisure. In the current Dutch urban regeneration process, programmes replace affordable rental dwellings with more expensive, larger owner-occupied dwellings (Blokland and Van Eijk, 2010). Another goal of these urban regeneration programmes is to persuade the middle classes to remain in city centres, which is good for economic reasons as well as for the social advancement of others within their groups. Although this social aspect in urban renewal policies is not new, for a long time the main focus was on the physical effects (Pennen, 2004). However, evaluation studies show that the progress in terms of both physical and social effects is limited. The official documents make it abundantly clear that present urban policy is heavily oriented towards changing the social mix in neighbourhoods by promoting displacement (Bolt *et al.*, 2009). Wittebrood and Van Dijk (2007) evaluated urban restructuring in Dutch cities by assessing the effect of physical interventions on the population composition of neighbourhoods. They compared all neighbourhoods where a physical intervention had

taken place with control neighbourhoods, and found no effect of urban restructuring on the income distribution of neighbourhoods. Thus, urban restructuring is only a minor factor in reducing income segregation and ethnic segregation.

A general election was held in June 2010.The following October saw the swearing in of a new coalition government, comprising the VVD (liberal party) and the CDA (Christian democratic party). The coalition relies on parliamentary support from the PVV (freedom party). The new government made many changes to the structure of the various ministries, and also to their policies. The position of minister for Housing, Districts and Integration no longer exists; it has been partly replaced by the Ministry of Safety and Justice. Integration policy has been largely replaced by safety issues and a stronger focus on immigration policies, with an emphasis on the individual responsibility of non-native Dutch inhabitants.

2.5 Policies on leisure, ethnicity and integration

Until the 1950s, leisure was the domain of private initiatives, one that that received little interference from the national government. Only local governments had some responsibilities in creating, and often also maintaining facilities such as sport courts and urban parks. Having no targeted, structural leisure policy became problematic because of the enormous increase in participation in sport and leisure. Between 1945 and 1958, the number of members of sport organizations tripled, and many new forms of outdoor recreation appeared, such as camping, biking and picnicking. This led to a demand for facilities that could not be met by local governments and private initiatives on their own.

As a result, sport and leisure policy became more important. In 1958, outdoor recreation became a part of national policy. In 1965, the Ministry of Culture, Social Work and Recreation (CRM) was established to deal with the broad spectrum of leisure, including museums, cultural policies, media, child care, sport and recreation. This new ministry was important for both developing policies and executing them. Moreover, CRM paid more serious attention to welfare policy, in which individual development was acknowledged. In this ministry, leisure policies were more integrated and sport and recreation became important issues along with issues related to nature and landscape management. In addition, due to an increase in the number of holidays and a shortening of the labour week, people had more leisure time and they increasingly wanted to spend their free time in nature and recreation areas. CRM created new areas in which to participate in sports and other leisure activities.

In the 1960s, CRM's leisure policy aimed at providing sufficient space for outdoor recreation, improving infrastructure and creating a broader range of recreation facilities. In the 1970s, these policies shifted towards a policy that tried to provide all individuals with opportunities for self-development. These developments followed the trend whereby the former 'labour society' turned into a 'leisure society'. Attention was also paid to facilities close to residential areas, instead of focusing only on nature areas. However, later on the focus switched from welfare policies to those related to spatial planning.

In 1982, the CRM was abolished and its responsibilities were transferred to various other ministries, such as Agriculture and Fisheries (outdoor recreation and nature management), Welfare, Health and Culture (sport), Housing and Spatial Planning (infrastructure) and Education (culture and media). The policy of outdoor recreation of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature conservation and Fisheries (LNV) focused on the availability, accessibility and use of green areas in rural areas and, later on, also in urban areas. The LNV creates green recreation areas, stimulates new green areas and tries to improve the quality of existing green areas in residential places. Attention is also paid to linking existing natural areas and the opening up of agricultural land. In order to attune policies on leisure and tourism, the ministries of LNV and Economic Affairs (which is responsible for tourism policies) jointly published a policy document that makes clear that tourism is seen as a purely economic activity, while outdoor recreation concerns public goods. However, for individuals this distinction is less obvious, and moreover both have to do with the physical environment.

Therefore, these policies should be integrated more tightly. In this, it is important to stimulate a good quality of the living environment in and around urban areas. Regarding the recreational value of rural areas, specific attention will be paid to the demands of certain groups, such as children, the elderly and non-native Dutch inhabitants. In 2001, this policy was followed up by a tourism and recreational action programme aimed at:

- Ensuring the availability of sufficient, high quality recreational facilities for all Dutch citizens.
- Conserving and sustainably strengthening the international competitiveness of the sector.

The programme was intended to lead to economic strengthening, investments in facilities and integrating policy on tourism and recreation (Veer and Van Middelkoop, 2002). One of the initiatives in this programme was to use money from the investment fund for urban renewal to increase the quality of green elements in urban areas.

In 2008 and 2009, the LNV led a strategic discussion about recreation in Dutch society. From this it became clear that society wants leisure facilities both close to residential areas and further away from them. In response, the LNV started focusing on realizing connections between urban and rural areas, establishing networks of paths for cycling, walking and sailing, and opening up nature and landscape areas. The LNV also stated that entrepreneurs could make a large contribution to leisure facilities. In order to encourage entrepreneurs to invest, the LNV provides subsidies for innovative and sustainable combinations of leisure, regional development and space (LNV website). In cooperation with VROM, policy on nature and green development connected to urban development is created in order to keep enough opportunities for recreation close to residential areas. This has resulted in the 'Green in and around cities' policy, in which green areas are created as part of urban development programmes.

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has the mission to ensure that everyone can participate in sport and other active pursuits in a responsible way. The national government uses subsidies in an attempt to create a representative participation in sport among all

Dutch inhabitants. Moreover, the government thinks that sport as well as culture foster social cohesion and that it is therefore important that both be as accessible as possible to all people. For example, 'Cruijff Courts' and 'Krajicek Courts' are being created. These courts are spaces in inner-city areas where youths can play football and meet other youths in a safe environment. As Vermeulen *et al.* (2010) state: these sport courts are the meeting points in the neighbourhood. Through these places children have the feeling that they belong to something, that they deserve respect and that they can create a sense of value for themselves. In addition, differences between people can be overcome by playing sport. As well as giving youths the chance to play, it also gives them the scope to organize their own events and take responsibility for maintaining the courts.

In 2010, after the general elections, the ministries of LNV and of Economic Affairs merged to become the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, while the Ministry of VROM was reshaped into the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment. Nature, green spaces and recreation receive hardly any attention in the policies formulated by the new government.

PART II.

Theoretical perspective

Photo: F. van den Muijsenberg

3. Leisure, identity and social integration

Leisure is a realm in which people can, to a certain extent, choose what to do. It is assumed that leisure can provide positive contributions to the well-being of people. By studying peoples' leisure, information can be obtained about what people find important in their lives. Already in 1947, Huizinga stated that the origins of culture lie in play rather than work (Lengkeek, 1994). The importance of play, and also of leisure, has been the subject of research ever since.

I start this chapter by elaborating on the various definitions of leisure. I then give the definition used in this study, namely that leisure is an experience. In this experience, the relative freedom is important, assuming that to a certain extent people freely choose their company as well as their activities. I argue that leisure provides more opportunity to express and establish identities than formal situations do, because leisure supposes more freedom. What people do during their leisure time, therefore, gives insight into what people think about certain issues, such as the importance of family, the importance of religion, and so on. In so doing, leisure experiences inform about the identity of people and about their norms and values, which is important for understanding issues of social integration. It is, of course, important to acknowledge that people have to deal with constraints: several structural aspects limit the choices people can make regarding their leisure.

For the purpose of this study, it is important to take a closer look at how aspects of ethnicity, gender and religion influence leisure experiences. The focus is on both constraints and the potential contribution of leisure experiences to the quality of life. This contribution has been described in literature in terms of psychological benefits, social benefits and physical benefits. After explaining my perspective on social integration, I argue that there are three aspects relevant to clarifying the relation between leisure and processes of social integration, namely social networks, feelings of comfort and mitigating prejudices. The discussions in the final section show that although there are theoretical assumptions that posit a positive relation between participating in leisure activities and social integration, the empirical evidence for this is weak. It is also important not to overlook the negative benefits that result from leisure, such as strengthened stereotypes and feelings of discrimination.

3.1 Defining leisure

In the 1990s, debates about the flexibilization of work, the commodification of leisure and the fragmentation of time (Green, 1996; Kay, 1996) guided leisure theorists in their thinking about leisure and work. Most definitions contain elements of time and activity, combined with the notion of freedom (cf. Veal, 1989, 1998). When leisure is defined in terms of time, it refers to time spent free of obligation and necessity. Most often it is contrasted with time for work and personal care. However, it is generally acknowledged that leisure defined as time not spent on performing paid work has no meaning for a large portion of the population, namely those who do not engage in paid work (such as unemployed people, and men and

women who have responsibilities at home). Although defining leisure in terms of specific activities is hard given the ambiguity and complexity of meaning that can attach to any given activity, some still define leisure in terms of activities that are distinct from obligations related to work, family and society and to which the individual turns at will for relaxation or diversion, or in order to broaden personal knowledge, spontaneously participate in society or freely exercise creative capacity (Dumazedier, 1974; Kelly, 1983, 1996). Several leisure theorists (Kelly, 1996; Samdahl, 1988; Wearing, 1996) have argued that defining leisure in terms of activities or free time does not acknowledge the complexity and broadness of this concept. It is now accepted that leisure cannot be defined only in terms of time and activity; leisure is considered a state of mind or even a way of life (Kraus, 2001). By defining leisure as such it is claimed that leisure provides opportunities not only for experiential qualities of pleasure, excitement, fun and freedom of choice, but also for self-improvement, cultural and family stability, and interaction (Edginton *et al.*, 1995; Kaplan, 1960). As such, leisure is defined in terms of experience, rather than in more objective terms like time and activity (e.g. Henderson, 1990; Kelly, 1996; Samdahl, 1988; Wearing, 1996).

Leisure theorists have defined leisure as an experience on the basis of two dimensions, namely freedom of choice and intrinsic motivation (e.g. Gunter and Gunter, 1980; Kelly, 1978, 1983; Kiewa, 2001; Neulinger, 1981). Freedom of choice relates to the perception of freedom, instead of a more objectively determined freedom. Although economic, social and cultural conditions constrain leisure choices and free time behaviour, the presence of human agency assumes that people can make choices (Mannell and Kleiber, 1997; Rojek, 2000, 2001). The second dimension – intrinsic motivation – relates to the importance of leisure, because people's leisure can be seen as a medium for personal enhancement and self-development (Kelly, 1990; Murphy, 1974). Defining leisure as an experience allows researchers to view leisure as an expression of the self (cf. Howe and Rancourt, 1990; Kiewa, 2001). However, this concept of the self cannot be seen without taking into account the constraints created by the structures present in a society (Kuentzel, 2000). In that respect, leisure activities can be viewed as social practices through which structures are produced and reproduced. These structures not only constrain people but also enable them to act; individual action and social structure are mutually constitutive (cf. Giddens, 1984). As such, leisure is a phenomenon that is continually negotiated by people within the constraints imposed by historical forces (e.g. capitalism), cultural ideology and politics, and is embedded in social contexts (e.g. race, class, age, gender and ability/disability). Leisure becomes an aspect of life through which people may be repressed or liberated, controlled or empowered (Parr and Lashua, 2004: 4).

From the above, I conclude that leisure is best understood as an experience characterized by freedom of choice and intrinsic motivation and created by human agents during leisure practices. Although it is recognized that freedom is limited by certain structural conditions, it is seen as a central aspect of leisure. Leisure experiences are constructed and reconstructed during practices and have to be analysed in terms of the meaning people give to it while 'doing' leisure. Leisure is a social phenomenon through which it becomes clear what choices people make and what they find important.

Everyday life in public spaces has many similarities to leisure. A lot of activities – such as walking in a park, going to a playground, shopping or just taking a stroll – are performed as leisure activities. According to Banerjee (2001: 15), enjoyment is a key element of public space. Public space offers the chance to relax, to make social contact, to be entertained and to enjoy one's leisure. As a result of the rise of 'consumption spaces' and the rediscovery of the street, entertainment has perhaps become one of the main functions of urban public space. According to Madanipour (2005: 11), 'In many European cities, it seems that leisure is the only major function left for many public spaces'. However, the leisure and entertainment function of public space is not limited to the invented places and themed environments, but is also increasingly recognized as part of ordinary urbanism (see e.g. Gehl, 2010; Shaftoe, 2008). Everyday life in public space is therefore about choosing what to do, where to go and with whom; that is, about the potential to provide the opportunity to express one's identity. As such, leisure is not easy to distinguish from the everyday life in those public spaces. It is assumed that leisure is a differentiated and contested activity in 'which identities are formed, reformed and negotiated' (Green and Singleton, 2006: 857). In the following section, this relation between leisure and identity construction is discussed further.

3.2 Leisure and identity construction

Identities are contextual and relational positionings (Hall, 1992) that are articulated across different spaces and at particular moments. They are constituted relative to socially and historically established categories of class, gender and ethnicity (see also Atencio, 2008; Butler, 1997; Dwyer, 1999). Such identifications are not fixed or completed but always 'in process'; they are dynamic and shaped in interaction with others (Dwyer, 1999). Some use the term 'identity work' to emphasize the fact that identities are constantly changing (cf. Andersson, 2002). Even though we might feel like the same person, we are differently positioned by social expectations and constraints and we represent ourselves to others differently in each context (Walseth, 2006). Given that people are present in different networks, people also have plural identifications, which can lead to identity conflicts (Hollands, 2006; Walseth, 2006). The fact that identities are plural and dynamic implicitly creates the opportunity to establish linkages between different groups. This involves the acknowledgement that it is only through the relation to the 'other', the relation to what it is not, that identity can be constructed. Identity construction is both restricted and created by individuals' characteristics, such as gender and ethnicity, and one's identity is formed and constructed in dialogue with its surroundings (Walseth, 2006). The construction of identities has changed significantly in recent decades. Instead of deriving identities from the productive sphere, social identities are now largely derived from lifestyles and consumption patterns. Leisure has become a realm from which identities are derived.

The link between leisure and one's identity has been well established in leisure studies, and many researchers have suggested that leisure is an important context for identity formation (e.g. Aitchison, 2001; Green and Singleton, 2006; Henderson, 1998; Kelly, 1983). Although people can construct their own identities, context partly determines the degree of freedom to construct one's own identity. At work and in schools, rules and regulations can restrict

this process, while during leisure activities, identities can be negotiated and constructed more consciously.

Much like identity discourses related to race, gender and class, leisure activities reflexively present stories to individuals and to broader society about who they are, or at least wish to appear to be (Patterson *et al.*, 1998). As Williams (2002: 2) affirms, leisure is very much a venue for making and expressing identity. People actively select leisure experiences in support of preferred identities, and participants in leisure activities define and express themselves through those activities based on the identity images they symbolize. Or as Green (1998: 183) asserts, leisure identities are fluid; at times they 'mirror' normative discourses, while at other times they reflect 'contradictory or counter discourses of difference'. People try to improve their self-concept by engaging in recreation activities that represent specific desirable accomplishments (Haggard and Williams, 1991; Ward, 2000).

Thus, there is a dialectical relation between affirming one's identity through leisure contexts and gaining motivation for continued participation as a result of internalizing a leisure identity (Kivel, 2000). Larson (1994, in Kivel, 2000) asserts that the context of leisure can provide opportunities for positive, healthy adolescent development. He argues that participating in leisure activities that match challenges with skills and require commitment, have a significant impact on the course of identity formation. Haggard and Williams (1991) argued that leisure is an important context for identity formation because it is a sphere in which young people not only experiment with identity, but can also affirm and then internalize different aspects of identity. For commitment to identity to occur, individuals must feel free to both experience and commit publicly to particular activities and interests.

Leisure offer opportunities for people to perform their social position by displaying different lifestyle choices (Soenen, 2006). This claim has been explored in a variety of contexts connecting sport/leisure and social/ethnic identity. Farrer (2004) observed that the Chinese dance party she studied celebrated ethnic identity and that individuals were engaged in group networking. In doing so, immigrants, more than affirming a collective identity, were recovering their individual identities and statuses. Kivel and Kleiber (2000) demonstrated in their study on the leisure time of gay and lesbian youngsters that leisure contexts may have explicitly contributed to participants' sense of personal identity, but that these same contexts did not necessarily solidify participants' social identities vis-à-vis leisure. Fullagar (2008) exemplifies how women's leisure experiences are shaped by specific gender discourses about identity, with work/career and motherhood/caring for others being central to the regulation of self and emotions. Leisure enabled women to exercise a sense of entitlement to make use of opportunities to become a feminine self that is defined beyond masculine-oriented subject positions (e.g. wife, mother, daughter) and normalized ideals of superwoman, thereby constructing and reconstructing their own identities. Johnson (2008) shows how gay men construct their own subject position in relation to the social practices and cultural discourses in a gay bar, and how these gay bars provide a context for reproducing and negotiating identity construction. Moreover, Hollands (2004) illustrates how cultural consumption of the media and participation in leisure/sport activities play a role in creating a 'modern' native identity of the Mohawks in Canada.

In the light of this study, it is relevant to note that it is argued that participation in recreation and leisure can be used to enhance self-esteem and create new identities for migrants. Ward (2000), for example, argued that involvement in recreation and leisure activities contributes to positive identity solidification and self-efficacy among immigrant elders who may be isolated and marginalized:

> Since participants of recreation and leisure activities define and express themselves through those activities based on the identity images they symbolize, recreation participants may strive to improve their self-concept by engaging in recreation activities which represent specific desirable accomplishments. Cognitive, affective and motivational dimensions of the self work together in the self-affirmation process. Once identity is strengthened through increased competence, identity images are maintained through a process in which individuals operate on their social realities in order to create validating situations (Ward, 2000: 190).

Ward furthermore states that although there are barriers to getting involved in leisure activities, experiencing leisure can decrease isolation and increase social competence among the visible minority population. In doing so, they can articulate their identities.

Thus, leisure is a realm in which identities are constructed and negotiated. Therefore, analysing leisure informs who we are and who we want to be. People spend leisure time in certain places, and in so doing, express their identities in those places. Both the formation of identities and the formation of spaces into places are processes that are highly negotiated. If we look at the intersection of leisure behaviour in public places, it is obvious that many identities are expressed.

The intersection of leisure, identity and space is further examined in Chapter 4. In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss leisure practices in multicultural societies and relate them to social integration. In the following section, I focus on participation, as leisure scholars have discussed the relations between leisure and ethnicity mainly in terms of participation.

3.3 Ethnicity in leisure practices

Although some argue that the word 'leisure' has comparable meanings in all cultures, others claim that the word does not exist in many languages (including many Indigenous languages) and that the connection between an indigenous concept and a Eurocentric leisure system is far from clear, even when the word does exist (Fox, 2006). There has been recognition in the leisure literature that leisure experiences are produced by constraints that enable these activities and experiences to occur, and that the skills required to competently engage in these activities and experiences require subjection to specific spatial and temporal constraints (Jackson, 1988; Shogan, 2002). Moreover, it is generally claimed that ethnic

identity and gender play a role in the meaning and value of leisure (e.g. Aitchinson, 2001; Green and Singleton, 2006; Shaw, 1999).

Leisure behaviour and participation

In this section, I elaborate on leisure behaviour and describe how ethnicity and leisure participation relate to each other, and show that leisure participation and satisfaction are unique to each person, depending upon such factors as culture, class, gender and religion (Chick, 1998; Godbey, 1999; Iso-Ahola, 1989; Kaplan, 1960; Shannon, 2003; Stebbins, 1997).

Although much research has been done on leisure behaviour and the meaning of leisure for both participants and non-participants, the leisure behaviour of different ethnic groups has only recently been researched (e.g. Martin and Mason, 2004; Stodolska, 2000; Ward, 2000). This research points out that ethnicity is an explaining factor for understanding the use and meaning of public spaces for leisure activities (Jókövi, 2003; Juniu, 2000, Peleman, 2003; Stodolska and Yi, 2003; Yücesoy, 2006).

A few studies have recently been carried out into the leisure patterns of various ethnic groups in the Netherlands (e.g. Jókövi, 2003). These studies looked at the differences in various ways. For example, Van den Broek and Keuzenkamp (2008) show that ethnic groups engage in fewer different leisure activities during their free time than the native Dutch. Especially Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch people engage in leisure activities that are much less varied than those of the native Dutch. Jókövi (2003) showed that Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans less often visit nature areas, recreation areas, urban parks and entertainment parks than the native Dutch. Buijs and colleagues (2006) demonstrated that non-native Dutch people appreciate the existing Dutch landscapes less than the reference group; they visit green areas less often and are more indifferent to the future development of such areas. The researchers explained this by saying that non-native Dutch people have a less 'romantic' image of nature.

Another difference between these four ethnic groups and the native Dutch is that the former go less often to museums and pop concerts; however, they go to parks for picnics more often and pay more visits to their families. According to Yi (2000), Chinese people in the Netherlands also find family-based leisure activities (e.g. visiting friends, or playing tennis or such games as solitaire) the most important of all leisure activities. The same applies to the Pakistanis who live in the Netherlands, for whom the family is the primary source of leisure (Ahmad, 2004). Another difference relates to sedentary and active leisure experiences. It is claimed that some ethnic groups, like Hispanics and Dutch-Moroccans, generally preferred sedentary activities like eating and relaxing, while others (African-Americans, native Dutch) engage more often in active leisure activities, such as walking, jogging or playing football (Burgess *et al.*, 1988; Hutchinson, 1987; Jókövi, 2003; Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995).

For sport activities, the participation rates of Surinamese and Antilleans are lower than those of the native Dutch but higher than those of Turks and Moroccans (Lagendijk and Van der Gugten, 1996). Differences are found by generation, with higher participation rates in sport

activities among the second generation. The trends are unfavourable as well: the percentage of non-native Dutch who are members of sport clubs dropped from 52% in 1995 to only 43% in 1999. The percentage of non-native Dutch who engage in sports on a weekly basis also decreased in the same period, namely from 34% to 24% (Haan and Breedveld, 2000).

Another aspect within this field of research is related to the use of the mass media. Van den Broek and Keuzenkamp (2008) show that there are no major differences in the use of mass media between native and non-native Dutch people. Most non-native people read Dutch newspapers, watch Dutch television and use the internet, albeit less so than native people. At the same time, 70% of the Turkish-Dutch population and 40% of the Moroccan-Dutch population watch Turkish and Moroccan television, respectively, on a daily basis.

Research among Dutch and Canadian people revealed a pattern whereby those who identify themselves as Muslim or as having an 'other religion' have the lowest recreational participation rates (10% and 9%, respectively) in sports, singing and hobby organizations, while those who report no religion have the highest participation rate (29%) (Aizlewood *et al.*, 2005). Duijvendak and colleagues (1998) demonstrate that the lower rates of membership of sports clubs in the city of Rotterdam for Surinamese, Moroccans and Turks compared to the native Dutch, are primarily explained by different levels of participation by women of these minorities relative to native Dutch women. Particularly Moroccan women have very low participation rates. This shows the interrelation between gender and religion in explaining leisure participation.

These studies show that there are differences in leisure participation. The extent to which these differences can be explained by such factors as ethnicity and religion, is subject of the following subsection.

Explaining differences in leisure participation

Two main theories can be applied in order to explain the differences in leisure participation (Livengood and Stodolska, 2003; Thompson, 2002; Jókövi, 2003; Juniu, 2000; Peleman, 2003). The first – the marginality thesis – states that differences can be explained by looking at socio-economic characteristics. Marginality, poverty and unequal access are named as factors that explain differences in leisure participation. The second most prominent theory in the literature – the ethnicity thesis – focuses on 'cultural differences in ethnic leisure styles due to micro-cultural variations in values, norms and socialization patterns that differ considerably from the majority population' (Juniu, 2000: 360). According to this thesis, cultural differences are a critical factor in the interpretation of leisure behaviour among different ethnic groups (Juniu, 2000).

Hofstede's (Hofstede *et al.*, 2002) model of cultural dimensions can be used as a framework to understand how cultural background influences leisure behaviour. The model distinguishes four primary dimensions of differences, or value perspectives, between national cultures, namely power distance, individualism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2003). These dimensions can function as variables for explaining the leisure behaviour of

people from different ethnic backgrounds, especially when dealing with people originating from countries that score differently on those dimensions. In leisure research, the focus is on the dimension of individualism. It is stated that some cultures are more likely to have collectivistic-oriented values while others are more individualistic (Gobster, 2002; Nishida *et al.*, 1998; Taylor, 2001; Tirone and Pedlar, 2000). Hofstede defined this characteristic – individualism – versus its opposite (collectivism) as the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. On the individualist side are societies in which the ties between individuals are loose and everyone is expected to look after themselves and their immediate family. On the collectivist side are societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups and extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents), which continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. These societies exhibit, for example, values towards family orientation and group-oriented behaviour, including the importance of extended family; male dominance, whereby the father and male children exercise authority over the female members of the household; segregation by age group, which involves respect for elders and the subordination of younger persons; segregation of activities by sex, whereby male children generally have more freedom and female children are more protected; and modest dress (Juniu, 2000; Maqsood, 1994). Looking at this dimension could partly explain why some people have a preference for spending leisure time in bigger groups than others. Empirical data confirms this. Research in the Netherlands, for example, showed that citizens of non-Western origin more often spent leisure time in larger groups than native Dutch people (Jókövi, 2003). In the same vein, Irwin *et al.* (1990) found in their research on users of a US Forest Service-managed campground that when camping, Mexican-Americans preferred significantly larger party sizes than Anglos (12.8 persons vs. 6.9 persons). Gobster and Delgado (1993) found that racial groups differed in their use of urban parks along continuum that represented individual versus group (family) uses. Gobster (2002) found in his research that Hispanic park users were likely to visit the park with their extended families or with organizations, and that Asian park users tended to visit the park with much larger immediate and extended family groups, and with much larger groups of friends than African-American and Caucasian park users; they were least likely to visit the park alone. This reflects the fact that Hispanic and Asian culture are regarded as collectivist, because of the greater emphasis given to the family unit in Hispanic culture and the importance of larger social organizations in Asian culture. Furthermore, Hispanic and Asian park users rated exercise and self-enhancement – benefits that are experienced primarily by individuals rather than social groups – as less important than other user groups. These preferences for psychosocial benefits are consistent with the collectivist emphasis of Hispanic and Asian cultures (Gobster, 2002).

However, it is important to be careful not to reproduce stereotypes by using an essentialist definition of culture. Statements like 'Muslim girls are prevented by their parents from participating in sport' can contribute to these stereotypes (Walseth, 2006). These stereotypes can in themselves constrain leisure experiences, because stereotypes about beliefs, customs and traditions can create feelings of difference, leading to significant constraints on opportunities (Fleming, 1994; Gobster, 2002; Taylor, 2001). Fleming (1994) even suggested that leisure may be shaped by the desire of a group to avoid contact with other ethnic groups with which they do not wish to associate.

Jókövi (2000, 2001) discusses the marginality and the ethnicity thesis in her study on the leisure participation of immigrants in the Netherlands. Her research focused on people from different ethnic backgrounds in Rotterdam. She concludes that such socio-economic factors as income, age and education have more influence on the participation of people than does their ethnic-cultural background. Although this conclusion is valid for most leisure activities, she concludes that the ethnic-cultural background is of more importance for the low participation rate in visiting recreation areas, going to the beach/seaside, visiting other landscapes outside the city and going to pavement cafes in cities.

In a later study, Jókövi (2003) explored the leisure patterns of Turks, Moroccan and Surinamese immigrants in the Netherlands. Her findings show that minority immigrants predominantly use city parks and coffee houses, rather than nature areas and commercial recreation centres, such as sport clubs, as their primary venues for recreation participation. This high use of city parks is in contrast to research executed in Chicago by Gobster (1998) who states that parks are underutilized because they are, for example, poorly maintained and because of specific environmental preferences of minority users (see also Floyd *et al.*, 1995). Peleman (2003) noticed that immigrant Moroccan women in Antwerp, Belgium, used only their neighbourhood space as their primary domain for leisure and recreation.

However, Jókövi also concludes that second-generation immigrants participate more in activities such as going to pavement cafes in city centres or recreation areas and other natural areas outside the city than do first-generation immigrants. Nevertheless, the participation level of the second-generation immigrants is lower than that of the native Dutch. For other activities, first- and second-generation immigrants participate at the same level. Thus, ethnic-cultural background has no significant effect on such activities as going to playgrounds or walking around or shopping in inner cities.

Aizlewood and colleagues (2005) demonstrate in their study on immigrants in the Netherlands and Canada, that issues related to education and employment status are more important determinants of participation than those of ethno-cultural minority status, immigrant status or religious affiliation.

Jókövi (2003: 37) asserts that there are two significant constraints on the leisure behaviour of the researched immigrant groups. First, their desire to be accompanied by relatives and friends of their own ethnic group, which can be related to the collective nature as distinguished by Hofstede. Second, the ‘sense that they are being discriminated against in Dutch sport clubs’, which relates to broader issues of discrimination.

In short, the research executed in the Netherlands shows that the two theories mutually explain leisure participation. Both socio-economic and sociocultural aspects partly explain differences in leisure behaviour. While looking for general conclusions that can be drawn from this range of research, it became clear that the leisure patterns of non-Western immigrants differ from those of Western people: they are characterized by less variety, less use of facilities that are located at a greater distance from the home, greater family

orientation, the use of more places close to the home and the spending of leisure time in larger groups.

Another perspective in this field of research pays attention to the constraints on immigrants that are related to perceived discrimination and argues that it is one of the factors responsible for differences in leisure behaviour. It explains differences between a mainstream population and ethnic/racial minorities (Floyd, 1998; Philipp, 1999; West, 1989). In the Netherlands, hardly any research has taken the third perspective – that is, perceived discrimination – as a starting point. The only field in which research has been done is that of pubs and discos (Komen, 2004; Geldrop and Van Heewaarden, 2003). This research showed that some younger members of ethnic groups find that they cannot enter all the clubs and discos they wish to enter. Komen (2004) found that discrimination affects the leisure participation of immigrant youth. Especially Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch boys state that they are refused entry to certain places. Other studies (Bruin, 2006; Peleman, 2003; Yücesoy, 2006) show that non-natives use more spaces of their own in order to be in control. Non-natives organize ethnic parties, soccer events and other activities and decide on the rules for them, for example no drinking alcohol, no mixing of genders and starting early so that the women can return home at a respectable hour.

The role of immigration itself has received limited attention in these three perspectives (Stodolska, 1998). If we look at the constraints on leisure participation, it is clear that immigrants face not only the constraints that are commonly encountered (lack of time, money and transport, etc.), but also those that are related to their minority status and to the fact that they have to adjust to a new environment (Stodolska, 2002). Constraints that hinder leisure participation are problems with language, unfamiliarity with the ways of life in the host country, insufficient access to known and desired forms of recreational activity, and experiences of discrimination. In addition, immigrants may not have social networks or know about the opportunities (Stodolska, 2002).

Stodolska and Alexandris (2004) found that immigrants, whatever their ethno-cultural or socio-demographic background, do not undertake much voluntary physical activity after they have settled in the host country, because 'sport and physical recreation are typically quite low on the priority list of immigrants who struggle to adjust to a new environment, who often hold several low-wage but physically demanding jobs, and who have hardly any free time available' (*ibid.*: 392-393).

Yu and Berryman (1996) analysed the leisure patterns of Chinese immigrants in terms of constraints on leisure, self-esteem and acculturation. They concluded that leisure was used as a way to integrate into their new societies. Stodolska and Yi (2003) found that leisure participation rates and patterns are highly related to the level of acculturation among Mexican-Americans. Stoldolska and Jackson (1998) showed in their study on Polish immigrants in Canada that many of these immigrants sought relief in leisure activities from the discrimination they experienced at work or school. In the Netherlands, the role of immigration in leisure behaviour has not explicitly been a part of research activities.

Although the leisure behaviour of second-generation immigrants differs for certain activities from that of the first generation, not much can be said about the influence of immigration.

These theories fail to understand the leisure behaviour and recreation patterns within a given group (Juniu, 2000), and particularly to understanding the values, beliefs and conceptualizations of leisure among a select group of cross-cultural immigrants. Therefore, research on ethnicity and leisure behaviour focused on acculturation as an explaining factor for leisure participation (Floyd and Gramman, 1993; Shaull and Gramman, 1998; Stodolska, 1998; Yu and Berryman, 1996).

Acculturation theory provides a 'conceptual framework for the analysis of intra-cultural variations and their implications on the recreation behaviour and socialization patterns among ethnic groups' (Juniu, 2000: 362). Assimilation involves the process whereby a minority group gradually adopts the customs and attitudes of the prevailing culture, while acculturation involves the modification of the culture of a group or individual because of contact with a different culture, often resulting in the loss of ancestral cultural traits. Both processes, however, start from hierarchical perspective in which the culture of the host population is the norm to which minority groups should conform. This perspective ignores the fact that cultures are dynamic and reconstructed daily. Moreover, it places minority groups in a disadvantaged position in the sense that this group should adapt the norms and values of the host population. In that sense, these studies reproduce essentialized notions of ethnic identity and minority groups by viewing ethnic groups as culturally homogeneous, thereby ignoring differences and dynamics in behaviour. Although Thompson acknowledges that a 'single nation-state based identity is giving way to a more fragmented and hybridized spectrum of cultural identities' (Thompson, 2002: 417), the focus is still on the behaviour of groups. Thus, it is important to recognize that discussing the behaviour of groups overlooks the variety within groups and can lead to an overestimation of the differences between groups. In order to overcome this, I take an individual perspective and look at the perceptions and experiences of residents in Dutch neighbourhoods.

Since many non-native Dutch people are Muslims, I now take a closer look at the role of Islam in leisure behaviour.

Religion

Within the context of ethnic minorities in Western countries, it is important to gain insight into the role that religion plays because many citizens of non-Western origin in, for example, the Netherlands identify themselves as Muslim. Although some have argued that religion will be less important in the near future (Van Oudenhoven *et al.*, 2008), others state that the religious preferences of second- and third-generation non-Western Muslim citizens are pointing towards a more intense dedication to Islam (Gijsberts and Dagevos, 2007b). The findings of Maliepaard and colleagues (2010: 466) indicate that 'although the vast majority of second-generation Turks and Moroccans living in the Netherlands still refer to themselves as Muslim, they identify less strongly with their ethnic and religious group and engage less in ethno-cultural and religious practices'. However, they also conclude that religious and ethnic

identity are more strongly intertwined for the second generation than for the first, meaning that being Muslim is more strongly related to feeling Turkish or Moroccan for this group.

A special issue of *Contemporary Islam* (2008) presented several cases focusing on relations between Islam, leisure, art and entertainment. These examples show that Islam has an impact on the leisure behaviour of Muslim people:

> Also with regard to the cultural sphere attempts are made to bring art, leisure and entertainment in accordance with religious commitments. Pious sensibilities seem to be a moving but not necessarily dominating force in the creation of new forms of artistic expressions and leisure activities. Secularism, in particular, and 'the grand project of nationalist progress' are still very influential in the field of art. In much of the Arab world, mass culture is still one of the few remaining bastions of secularism. Secularist regimes perceive art and entertainment as important strongholds that are in need of defence. For that reason, religious notions of art, leisure and entertainment are highly contested. Journalists, Islamists, artists and art consumers redefine the relationship between religion, art and leisure activities (Nieuwkerk, 2008: 169).

VandeSchoot (2005) states, based on Thompson (2002), that although there is little literature on the role of Islam in determining leisure behaviour, it has been found that, in general, religion influences leisure participation, sometimes through overt religious practice, and sometimes as a traditional or background element in activity choice. Brooks (2003) concludes that Islam traditionally prioritizes work. But as long as the enjoyment of these activities does not interfere with a person's Islamic obligations, there is nothing against leisure in the form of rest or recreation. According to Muslim scholars (Islam Online, 2004), Muslims are warned that they should not conduct their recreation, leisure or arts participation in ways that contradict the teachings of Islam:

> Islam is a practical religion, it does not float in the stratosphere of imaginary ideals but remains with the human being on the ground of realities and day-to-day concerns. It does not regard people as angels but accepts them as mortals who eat food and walk in the marketplace. Islam does not require of Muslims that their speech should consist entirely of pious utterances, that their silence should be a meditation, that they should listen to nothing except the recitation of the Koran, nor that they should spend all their leisure time in the mosque. Rather, it recognizes that Allah has created human beings with needs and desires, so that, as they need to eat and drink, they also need to relax and to enjoy themselves.

In an article (written in Arabic) titled 'Leisure: its stimulants, its determinants and its applications in the prophetic period,' Al-Sadhan (1999, as translated by Yassiri, 2004), indicates that the benefits of leisure include: fulfilment of the bodily, social and intellectual needs of the individual; it will lead to more stability in the life of the individual and thus result in better mental health; leisure may prove to be useful in shaping the future profession of some individuals by developing their skills and abilities; if the whole family practices leisure

activities, it can lead to stronger bonds and healthier relations between the members of that family; leisure activities may finally result in an increase of the productivity of the person.

Although some scholars agree with this position and argue that Islam holds a very positive view of sport, which encourages Muslims to participate in leisure and recreation, others are even more fundamental and state that leisure in Islam is not only considered legitimate, but that participation is required as one of the demands of the religion as long as it is practised within its legal framework (Al-Sadhan, 1999, as translated by Yassiri, 2004). In this sense, Islam provides the framework for participation and it is important that their participation is in accordance with Islam (Walseth, 2006). Peleman (2003) in her research on Moroccan women in Antwerp shows that some of these women use their religion as a resource to argue their rights to take part in sports because Islam encourages physical exercise. In that sense, Islam also adds weight to women's arguments. However, young Muslim women's sport participation seems to challenge the boundaries of their ethnic identities, because their participation in competitive sport, which is seen as a male activity, is inappropriate for young women and therefore in conflict with hegemonic notions of femininity (*ibid.*: 91). Besides, Pelemans' research also showed that: 'Islam's prescriptions, outlining that men and women should keep sufficient physical distance and should not meet in private, are transformed to support male territoriality, since women should not enter a space in which men are already present' (*ibid.*: 159).

Gender

Gender is an inherent aspect in the complex interplay of religion, class and ethnicity. Most of the relevant studies (Alexandris and Carroll, 1997; Jackson and Henderson, 1995) have concluded that women in general face more severe leisure constraints than men, and that this mainly results from the extra responsibilities that encroach on their time availability. They suggest that women's roles and responsibilities within society often limit their freedom of choice. According to Verma and Darby (1994), South Asian girls in Britain are significantly constrained in their recreational participation, particularly in those activities that take place outside the home and in sports participation. The main reasons for this are lack of parental approval to engage in these activities, parental enforcement of strict dress codes, inadequate availability of single-sex facilities and their own religious beliefs about the 'proper' behaviour of females. These restrictions also have a spatial component, as shown by Deem's (1986) study of women's leisure in Milton Keynes, which highlighted the spatial inequity of leisure opportunities for women and men by showing women's fear of violence and men's control over women's leisure activities as well as men's ideas about where women should and should not go. Moreover, it has been found that women, and especially Muslim women, cover smaller daily distances than men and that they go less far from their homes. Research about the leisure time of women in the Western world confirms that their main leisure activities are related to home, which results in more use of the neighbourhood (De Vos, 2005; Karsten, 1992; Kwan, 1995).

It has been extensively argued that women's leisure experiences and behaviours are greatly influenced by their cultural, racial and ethnic affiliations (Arab-Moghaddam *et al.*, 2007;

Mowl and Towner, 1995). Also for Muslim women, religion and gender are interrelated and collectively constrain leisure participation. Especially Muslim women face multiple constraints that include, among others, limited time, limited social interaction due to prioritizing the needs of other family members (e.g. children and husbands) and limited opportunities (e.g. avoiding some places because they fear for their children's safety) (Yücesoy, 2006: 117). Peleman (2003) showed in her research that both gender and religion partly determine the leisure patterns of Moroccan women in Belgium. Restrictions related to their gender lead to certain leisure choices. Swimming with men may not be allowed, nor may they be in the company of male friends in public spaces. Furthermore, women seek spaces to spend their leisure time that are not controlled by men. The creation of temporary ethnic spaces is used to broaden the opportunities for immigrants to spend their leisure time. The main reasons to seek out these spaces are to escape from restrictions and to be able to be oneself – and not to be questioned about wearing a veil or about other cultural or religious signs. In addition, because women are seen as actors responsible for the transgression of group boundaries, traditional social codes – such as 'honour' and 'women's virtue' – have become more influential than ever (Yücesoy, 2006: 30) and lead to mobility restrictions. However, it is important to avoid seeing women as potential victims in public space, and instead to see them as women who construct and negotiate public space.

Conclusion

Leisure experiences are constructed and negotiated in a complex interplay between ethnicity, religion and gender. Although several studies – some focusing on ethnic minorities in general, others more on specific factors such as gender or religion – contribute to the understanding of the meaning of leisure for ethnic groups, the paradigms present some weaknesses when it comes to understanding the leisure behaviour and recreation patterns within a given group.

Although some argue that looking at the influence of acculturation provides insight into intra-cultural variations, the focus is still on the behaviour of groups. In order to overcome this problem, I use the concept of difference and by doing so confine diversity in experiences without constructing groups of people or essentializing and homogenizing groups (cf. Green and Singleton, 2006; Maynard, 2002: 33). Because 'essentializing involves categorizing and stereotyping and is a way thinking and acting which treats individuals as if they were essentially defined, that is their subjectivity is determined by membership of particular category in this case their cultural/ethnic group' (Grillo, 1998: 196). Using the concept of difference reflects the idea that there is no such thing as one culture for one group taking essentialized notion of culture as a starting point. It is important to deal with both the interplay of categories like gender, ethnicity and class in leisure behaviour, and the way that people experience their everyday lives, including issues of constraints and negotiation. Taking individual experiences as a starting point helps to understand the ways in which people give meaning to their leisure in their everyday lives, whether they are male or female, native or non-native, or religious or non-religious. Before examining the relations between leisure and social integration, I first present my perspective on social integration.

3.4 Individual perspective on social integration

Although the term ‘social integration’ is widely used and debated, it is seldom defined in any specific or explicit way in either academic writing or public discussion (Nagel and Staeheli, 2008). In addition, the term is controversial partly because it lacks criteria for operationalization and measurement. Definitions are often grounded in normative presumptions about what an integrated society looks like (Blokland and Van Eijk, 2010). The academic literature has emphasized both the contested nature of the concept and the complexity that results from the many dimensions that are part of it (see e.g. Entzinger and Biezeveld, 2003; Korac, 2003).

The term is often used in a normative way in related discourse on immigration and ethnic diversity in the European Union. In this arena, social integration encompasses a range of targeted strategies for the inclusion of various groups such as migrants as part of the overall aim of developing a more inclusive society, referring to equal citizenship and participation in a society that migrants form a part of. In that sense it is related to the existence of cultural differences. This normative definition is often used by politicians and policy makers and it includes an idea of what an integrated society should look like.

In common usage, the term signifies the incorporation of immigrants into the spaces and realms of life of a host society (Nagel and Staeheli, 2008). Moreover, defining integration relates to a better understanding of the ways in which dominant and subordinate groups discursively construct and negotiate difference and belonging in ‘national society’ (cf. Ehrkamp, 2006; Nagel and Staeheli, 2008). In the Netherlands integration is often defined in terms of orientation towards Dutch society or is related to the societal position of minorities (Sunier, 2000). For many scholars, integration can be observed and measured using a variety of quantitative indicators, including intermarriage, language and labour market position – an understanding that is typified by the American sociological literature on immigrant ‘assimilation’ (e.g. Alba and Nee, 1997).

In academic literature, a distinction is usually made between a micro and a macro perspective on integration. The former sees integration as an individual characteristic (a migrant can be more or less ‘integrated’) and measures it by labour market participation, educational attainment and, at times, adherence to dominant values. The macro perspective is concerned with societal integration (cf. RMO, 2005), defined by a Durkheimian notion of cohesion, and conceptualizes integration as the integration of functional subsystems in a society (Blokland, 2000; Blokland and Van Eijk, 2010; Jay and Schraml, 2009). Already in 1964 Lockwood made a distinction between social integration on a system level and social integration on a individual level: ‘Whereas the problem of social integration focuses upon the orderly or conflictual relationship between actors, the problem of system integration focuses upon the orderly or conflictual relationships between parts of a social system’ (Lockwood, 1964: 245). There is a widespread understanding that both perspectives are related and need to be recognized in order to gain insight into processes of social integration.

It is important to understand the notion of integration as a process of re-socialization, which includes all aspects of the relation between individual migrants and their host society (Esser, 2000, in Jay and Schraml, 2009). Furthermore, in general four dimensions of social integration are distinguished: structural, cultural, interactive and identificational integration. The structural dimension concerns the position of the subject in the host society and its core institutions (e.g. access to economic, educational, health and political systems). The cultural dimension refers to an interactive, mutual process with the host society that changes that society and does not necessarily result in the loss of the migrant's own culture. Interactive integration is understood as the acceptance and inclusion of immigrants and non-immigrants in the primary relations and social networks of the society. Bosswick and Heckmann (2006) state that friendships, partnerships or membership of organizations are indicators of interactive integration. As such, 'integration not only relates to observable, measurable behaviours of minority groups but also to the ways in which majority and minority groups negotiate the terms of membership and belonging in nationally defined polities' (Nagel and Staeheli, 2008: 416). Identificational integration refers to having a sense of belonging and having emotional and spiritual bonds with groups, their values and their language. Not only societal elements of the host country but also places play an important role in the identification process (Kyle *et al.*, 2003).

Another way to grasp the term integration is to look at the division between the functional, moral and expressive dimensions of integration (Engbersen and Gabriëls, 1995). The functional dimension is about the coordination of actions, about the participation of migrants. The moral dimension is related to the norms and values that are needed in order to be able to communicate with each other and to live with each other. This dimension has strong connections with citizenship and equal rights; we are all citizens and we should all have equal rights. It is about differences within one society and not about different societies (Loobuyck, 2002). The reciprocal character is stressed in this dimension. The expressive dimension concerns dealing with the wishes and demands of people who have come from other societies, and strongly relates to issues of identity and identification.

My focus is on the interactive and identificational dimensions and, to a lesser extent, on the cultural dimension, and not on the structural dimension. By taking this individual perspective, I gain insight into the ways native and non-native Dutch residents interact with each other in leisure spaces, and how these interactions are perceived. Furthermore, insight is needed into the sense of belonging of residents, in which not only societal elements but also places play a role (cf. Kyle *et al.*, 2003). It is therefore relevant to look at the dynamic relations between leisure in public spaces and social integration.

3.5 Leisure and social integration

Although research has shown divergent and sometimes conflicting results regarding the importance of leisure to quality of life (Baker and Palmer, 2006; Iwasaki, 2006), leisure is most often valued positively: engaging in leisure activities contributes to the well-being of people and increases life satisfaction (Lloyd and Auld, 2002).

Much research has shown a positive relation between life satisfaction and participation in physical leisure activities such as sports and exercise (Leung and Lee, 2005; Melin *et al.*, 2003; Schnohr *et al.*, 2005; Wankel and Berger, 1990). Also social leisure activities, like visiting friends and family or participating in religious activities, are significantly related to quality of life (Leung and Lee, 2005; Lloyd and Auld, 2002). Kelly and colleagues (1986) found the following types of leisure benefits that tend to be consistent in various age and gender groups: 'companionship in the activity', 'strengthening primary relationships', 'competence and skill-development', 'expression and personal development', 'health and exercise' and 'general enjoyment'. Other studies found related benefits divided into health-related benefits, social benefits and psychological benefits (see e.g. Tinsley and Eldredge, 1995; Tinsley and Tinsley, 1986). There is growing interest in understanding leisure as a context for fostering social change, which reminds us that leisure is not merely a space in which dominant social relations are reproduced, but also a space in which there may be a struggle (Sharpe, 2008; see also Johnson and Samdahl, 2005; Wearing, 1998).

In this section, I deal with the assumed contributions of leisure, focusing on social and psychological benefits, and show that leisure contexts inform processes of integration because of the perceived psychological benefits (feeling comfortable and enjoying) and social benefits (interacting and knowing other people). I show that leisure is of importance because during leisure, social networks can be formed, prejudices can be mitigated and feelings of comfort can be created. I also argue that not only the perceived positive benefits of leisure but also the potential tensions during leisure provide a better understanding of the interrelations between leisure and integration.

Feelings of comfort

Several psychological benefits of leisure have been distinguished, such as pleasure-seeking, helping others and escaping feelings of obligation (see e.g. Tinsley *et al.*, 1987). These benefits can have a positive effect on the emotional well-being of people (Craike and Coleman, 2005; Fullagar, 2008) and can create a feeling of happiness and belonging. It is widely assumed that participating in leisure activities contributes positively to various aspects of well-being. Personal development is one of these aspects: boosting self-esteem and acquiring certain skills can help people to be more aware of themselves, and thus more aware of their identity. In the Netherlands, many non-native Dutch are to a certain extent still connected to the cultural background of their parents, leading to mono-cultural networks. This behaviour of 'sticking together' can strengthen their identities and stimulate feelings of comfort.

However, this behaviour is not always valued positively by other social actors present in the same setting. Hanhörster (2001) concludes from her research in Germany that Turkish youths are particularly prone to loitering in groups in centrally located public spaces in the neighbourhood. Their presence as a group intimidates many German residents. Her research shows that public spaces play a particularly important role in determining the sense of orientation in space, and people's personal feelings of security or insecurity in their neighbourhood. Thus, leisure in public spaces is not necessarily valued positively, but can lead to social conflicts. Moreover, the media in the Netherlands accentuate situations in

which interactions between Moroccan-Dutch and native Dutch youths are tense. Moroccan-Dutch youths loiter in certain neighbourhoods and outside certain shopping malls, and some people feel uncomfortable walking past them. When native people see a group of Moroccan-Dutch youngsters disturbing passers-by, it can lead to them blaming non-native Dutch in general for disturbing behaviour. Also Dwyer (2000) found that young Muslim men are portrayed as dominating the streets, often using aggression and violence, and closely examining the behaviour and conduct of their female counterparts. These examples show that the current discourse tends to stereotype certain groups in society, and this does not engender feelings of comfort.

Leisure in public spaces can create not only feelings of comfort as a direct benefit of leisure, but can also lead to a relation with certain places. Leisure appears to offer people a way to negotiate multiple senses of place, home and identity that enhance their sense of well-being (McIntyre *et al.*, 2006). How this relates more specific to issues of socio-territorial belonging is further elaborated on in Chapter 4.

Social networks

Leisure promotes social skills because a lot of leisure activities involve social interaction. During many leisure activities, the company of others is enjoyed and bonds with friends, relatives and acquaintances are strengthened. Many leisure activities are accompanied by intended or unintended sociability, either as the main goal (e.g. visiting someone) or as a by-product of some other goal (e.g. playing a game of soccer or attending a concert). In both cases, spending time together affects people's social bonds (Van Ingen and Van Eijck, 2009). It is claimed that this is important because it helps in the acquisition of social capital (Putnam, 2002; Van Ingen and Van Eijck, 2009).

Social capital is a popular concept mainly due to the work of Robert Putnam, but also to the work of others (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001; Portes, 1998). It generally refers to resources that are accessible through social interactions and social networks, reciprocity, norms and mutual trust (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 1995, 2000). Putnam is seen as an important person in the field of social capital. His book 'Bowling alone' (2000) led to an enormous growth in the attention paid to the role of various leisure associations in gaining social capital. However, until now there is no definition of social capital that is widely accepted. The term was first mentioned by Bourdieu, who defined social capital as an asset; the 'sum of the resources … that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 119).

Bonding and bridging social capital are most often discerned. Bonding social capital is usually characterized as having dense, multifunctional ties and strong but localized trust. It is the relationship within a homogeneous group. In contrast, bridging social capital is characterized by weak ties, as well as a thin, impersonal trust of strangers. Bridging social capital tends to bring together people across diverse social groups (Granovetter, 1985; Putnam, 2002). Social capital is seen as a prerequisite for social cohesion (Forrest and Kearns, 2001). Beckley (1994)

defines social cohesion as the extent to which a geographical place achieves 'community' in the sense of shared values, cooperation and interaction. In this definition, interaction refers to the notion of close relations in social networks through which social capital is built. Interactions in daily life between people across ethnic divides are one way of creating social cohesion, because they provide the basis for bonds between individuals (Marshall and Stolle, 2004; Potapchuk *et al.*, 1997). Interactions with other people will help them to participate in society and helps to create feelings of acceptance (Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 2000).

The importance of social capital related to leisure has recently re-emerged in the leisure literature (e.g. Glover, 2004; Hemingway, 1999; Van Ingen and Van Eijck, 2009). Glover and Hemingway (2005: 388) note that 'despite this increased attention, however, social capital remains surprisingly under examined in leisure studies'. It is generally acknowledged that leisure activities can help build and maintain the networks and provide the skills that are important for social capital. Meeting other people through shared interests and activities, like spending leisure time in public space, can also lead to the creation of social capital. It is claimed that productive leisure activities (doing things together) are better for social capital than consumptive activities (watching something together). Productive refers to leisure activities that are active, creative and directed towards a common goal, and that often involve cooperation. Consumptive refers to those activities in which participants are often spectators, undergoing certain experiences, or using material or cultural goods (Putnam, 2000; Van Ingen and Van Eijck, 2009).

However, Portes and Landolt (1996) claim that having social capital has not only positive but also negative outcomes. Due to close and tight networks (e.g. within families), other people can be excluded. In this way, no general trust is created; trust is created only between those who know the rules and are member of these close networks. Thus, although leisure can serve as a way to acquire social capital, it can also be a realm from which people are excluded. Moreover, Dixon and Durrheim (2003: 21) conclude in their study of informal segregation on a Natal beachfront, that we should 'pay closer attention to the varieties of informal segregation that shape inter-group relations in everyday life, seeking to uncover the practices, activities and forms of social organization that enable their reproduction'.

But to what extent do people in the Netherlands have inter-ethnic contacts? Brassé and Krijnen (2005) show that non-native Dutch people mainly meet people of their own ethnic group for sports, music and other leisure activities. About a third of Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch people state that they never have any contact with native Dutch people in their free time. More than half of the Surinamese and Antilleans in the Netherlands say that they do have regular contacts with native Dutch persons. For Moroccans, the figure is 37%, and for Turks 29%. Only 15% of native Dutch people do not have regular contact with other native Dutch people (Van den Broek and Keuzenkamp, 2008), but more than 50% never have contacts with members of other ethnic groups (see also Table 3.1). These percentages have hardly changed in the last 15 years (Gijsberts and Dagevos, 2007a). Although these results can be partly explained by the fact that in the areas researched there are more native people than non-native people and that some neighbourhoods are segregated, they do indicate that there is a cultural distance between the groups (Gijsberts and Vervoort, 2007).

Table 3.1. Inter-ethnic contacts during leisure time, the Netherlands, 2006 (in percentages) (Gijsberts and Vervoort, 2007).

	More contacts with members of own ethnic group (in brackets: never have contact with members of other ethnic groups)	As many contacts with own group as with other groups	More contacts with native Dutch
Turks	66 (35)	24	11
Moroccans	54 (30)	30	16
Surinamese	31 (14)	39	30
Antilleans	31 (17)	28	41
Native Dutch	91 (52)	6	3[a]

[a] More contact with immigrants.

Jókövi (2000) also observed that both Turks and Moroccans spend their leisure time with their 'own' people. The Chinese people interviewed in the research by Yi (2000) also spend most of their leisure time with people of their own ethnic group. According to Yucesoy (2006), Turkish women's use and experiences of urban public spaces in Enschede (the Netherlands) are in general not inclusive or facilitative for interacting with others in public, although they are not totally exclusionary, which would turn these public spaces into Turkish spaces. Different ethnic groups can also interact with each other in cafes or discotheques. That these experiences do not stimulate inter-ethnic interactions is shown by Heering and Ter Bekke (2007), who carried out research in two cities in the Netherlands: 'these investments [in inter-ethnic friendships] and ties are not rewarded in the public domain. On the contrary, due to the tense climate and 'bad' experiences with a small group of Moroccans, this ethnic group is in a scapegoat position' (Heering and Ter Bekke, 2007: 112). This lead to the conclusion that people of Moroccan descent are not stimulated to have inter-ethnic interactions.

In the Netherlands, inter-ethnic contacts are also stimulated in several initiatives, for example, Richard Kraijcek's initiative to create sport courts in neighbourhoods. This initiative is based on the fact that both social trust and reciprocity can be generated in sport organizations. Sport is promoted as a way to integrate people from different ethnic backgrounds, and is perceived as contributing to cross-cultural understanding. Although some state that sport can also lead to more conflicts, most studies indicate that sport can help one to come into contact with people from different ethnic backgrounds.

In this study, I focus on the inter-ethnic contacts people have in public spaces and the ways in which these contacts are valued in terms of feeling at home, trust and safety, and related to that, whether inter-ethnic contacts can mitigate prejudices. I use the term 'social networks' when examining relations people have in their neighbourhoods.

Mitigating prejudices

As said, many leisure activities involve social interaction. These interactions are important not only because they can create social networks that are valued positively, but also because it is assumed that contact with others could mitigate prejudices and therefore create more realistic images about the other.

Everyone views the world from his or her own frame of values and norms, and people tend to ascribe their own norms and values to individuals or groups they have contact with (Pinto, 2004: 35). Furthermore, people tend to categorize because they want to understand and control the world around them and create a sense of what is going on. This categorization often takes place on the basis of visible characteristics, such as age, gender and, to a certain extent, ethnic background. Moreover, it is assumed that people categorize others in relation to their own position. In doing so, people compare themselves with others who do not belong to their group, and people often think more positively about people of their own group than about those who are outside it (Hogg and Terry, 2000).

People thus have prejudices about other people. Prejudice can be defined as a preconceived opinion or attitude that is formed without due consideration of the facts (Allport, 1954). Already in 1954, Allport found that having contact with cultural others changes attitudes and mitigates prejudices about those others. More contact between people from various ethnic backgrounds would lead to more mutual understanding. Allport distinguished four forms of contact that influence prejudices in different ways:

1. According to Allport, casual contacts that are very superficial do not mitigate prejudices and can even increase them.
2. Acquaintance is a form of contact that brings knowledge and can moderate beliefs, which can contribute to the mitigation of prejudice.
3. Residential contact that deals with issues of residential segregation, about which Allport states that segregated housing means segregation in every respect. In segregated areas, people feel alienated because they cannot recognize the world around them. People in mixed districts have fewer prejudices towards the other groups because there are more daily contacts in shops, schools and so on.
4. Occupational contact: occupational difference between people is an important factor in creating and maintaining prejudice.

Allport's research (as well as most of the studies that tested this contact hypothesis) was directed at formal situations, such as schools and leisure organizations. He demonstrated that inter-ethnic contact has a positive effect on attitudes towards other ethnic groups: more structural contact leads to less prejudice and less stereotyping. In this reasoning, conditions such as equal status, collective goals (pursuit of common objectives) and the potential to get to know each other and to exchange information seem to be more important than the frequency of these contacts. Aspects of personality, like being open-minded, also play a role in this process (Allport, 1954; Soenen, 2006). Finally, previous experiences in which people have contacts with people from other ethnic backgrounds should be taken into accounts (Brewer and Miller, 1984).

In the Netherlands, most research focuses on the images that native Dutch hold of non-native Dutch people. Research by FORUM (2003, 2008) showed that more than 50% of the native Dutch think that non-native Dutch are not yet sufficiently integrated into Dutch society. Sixty percent of the native Dutch are not positive about economic immigrants, or about the practice of importing partners from the country of origin. Ninety-five per cent of the native Dutch think that non-native Dutch should learn Dutch, and sixty-six per cent that non-native Dutch should not adhere to their own customs and beliefs. Moreover, about 50% of native Dutch people think that there are too many immigrants in the Netherlands.

The majority of Dutch people of Turkish and Moroccan descent (60% and 70%, respectively) state that in the Netherlands the perception people have of Islam is too negative. A majority of the total Dutch population believe that the tensions between different ethnic groups will intensify. Research by Van den Broek and Keuzenkamp (2008) shows that there is an indication that the images that non-natives and natives hold of each other are more positive the more contact they have with each other. However, they are not sure about the cause and effect (does a more positive image lead to more contact, or does more contact lead to a more positive image?). Research by Gijsberts and Dagevos (2004) also supports the contact hypothesis: native Dutch who have more contact with non-native Dutch, are significantly more positive about Moroccans and are less negative about the presence of non-native Dutch in Dutch society. This also applies the other way round: non-native Dutch who have more contact with native Dutch people hold less stereotype images of native Dutch. However, in neighbourhoods that have high levels of segregation, having contacts has less influence on the images that non-native Dutch hold of native Dutch. This could be a signal for the 'scalogramstructure' of Bogardus (Scheepers *et al.*, 2004, in Hollands, 2006), which states that when contacts between an ethnic 'in-group' and various ethnic 'out-groups' become spatially closer or socially more intimate, resistance to these contacts increases especially among the ethnic in-group. This is also shown in a Dutch study by Coenders and colleagues (2004), who concluded that resistance against schools that have concentrations of non-native Dutch children increased among parents when the concentration of non-native Dutch children at the current school increased.

The contact hypothesis assumes a positive relation between interactions and the presence of prejudices and, related to this, being tolerant. Gijswijt-Hofstra (1989, in Soenen, 2006: 333) distinguishes three dimensions of tolerance: freedom of thinking and acting; equal rights and obligations or principles of fairness of treatment; and degree of identification or involvement with people towards others, 'being people as well', having life views or ways of life that, although they are different, are perceived as 'normal'. In this sense, encounters and communications could support a better identification with cultural others, leading to more tolerance. Next to tolerance, whether a person has prejudices provides insight into the way he or she perceives cultural others. Having contact could help to overcome fear and stereotypes on the basis of culture or ethnicity. It could serve as a way to stop ignorance and misinformation leading to certain prejudices. Previous research about contact between native Dutch people and asylum seekers in the Netherlands (Hollands, 2006) showed that encounters with asylum seekers are viewed by native Dutch people as positive, because these encounters could lead to the broadening of their own horizons and stimulate them

to reflect upon their own cultural background. Hollands (*ibid.*: 313) also states that the value of diversity is more visible in informal settings. Contacts in informal settings can lead to less prejudice. At the local level, interactions can help in re-examining the prejudices and beliefs that inhabitants have about each other and about the social climate in their neighbourhoods (Hanhörster, 2001). The stimulation of inter-cultural contact is intended to promote tolerance and acceptance within a multicultural society.

3.6 Conclusion

In this study leisure is defined as an experience. It is not limited to certain activities but is defined by people themselves, taking individual experiences as a starting point. I chose to look at non-organized aspects of leisure that take place in public spaces. As such, leisure is not easy to distinguish from the everyday life in those public spaces.

Social integration is looked at from an individual perspective. By studying individual leisure experiences in public spaces, insight can be gained into the ways native and non-native Dutch residents interact with each other in these spaces and how these interactions are perceived. Looking more closely at the relation between leisure and social integration, I conclude that three aspects are of importance to understand this relation.

First, leisure can stimulate feelings of comfort because it is assumed that during leisure people can more freely choose what they want to do and with whom. In so doing, leisure in public space can create outcomes such as higher levels of self-esteem or pride in a place where people can be themselves and feel comfortable. These positive feelings are of importance because they can lead to social cohesion. The issue is to what extent leisure in public space facilitates these positive feelings and can create a sense of belonging, or whether leisure experiences are negatively related to a sense of belonging because of issues of discrimination or fear.

Second, during their leisure in public spaces people see a variety of people with whom they can build relationships or social networks. Several scholars stress the importance of social capital and networks for creating inter-ethnic understanding. However, people tend to interact with people from their own ethnic background during leisure time. So, the question is to what extent does leisure in public space indeed create a space where inter-ethnic social networks are produced.

Third, leisure in public space involves engagement and exchange among individuals, families and groups, which could be beneficial because it leads to a greater sense of mutual obligation among individuals and towards the larger community. Leisure in public space offers the possibility for interactions among persons from different social and ethnic backgrounds. Such interactions can provide relief from daily routines and can also alleviate tensions in a neighbourhood (Dines and Cattell, 2006: 28). Leisure could help mitigate prejudices because during their leisure, people see and meet cultural others in public space. Allport has shown that contact between people from various ethnic backgrounds mitigates prejudices

and limits stereotypes about cultural others. However, leisure not only makes a positive contribution: tensions can occur during leisure time and people can be excluded. Inter-ethnic situations are not always valued positively and can create tensions and feelings of fear. If so, prejudices are not mitigated; on the contrary, stereotypes can be reproduced and contact between people from various ethnic backgrounds is not stimulated and is therefore limited. An important question is whether leisure in public spaces produces/reproduces stereotypes or helps to counteract them.

Thus, leisure can have positive benefits in terms of feelings of comfort, creating networks and cross-cultural understanding. Leisure settings can be ideal environments for inter-ethnic contact because of such characteristics as free choice and self-determination. However, research shows that leisure spaces are sometimes racially demarcated.

So far, I have discussed the relation between leisure and processes of social integration. However, this study is not about leisure in general but about leisure in public spaces. In order to find out how leisure in public spaces relates to processes of social integration, in the following chapter I discuss how this relation can be conceptualized and elaborate on the concept of the meaning of public space in a multicultural society.

4. Urban public spaces and social integration

The concept of what 'public spaces' are changes over time and relates to the role that is assigned to those spaces. As in many other academic fields, debates about public space are situated within a literature characterized by a host of overlapping and poorly defined terms (Carmona *et al.*, 2008). However, in all definitions, the issue of access is one of the core characteristics. Public spaces have, at least formally, free access in contrast to private spaces, where access is regulated by the owner. I start this chapter by defining the concept, and stressing that the social construction of space is important when defining public space. I argue that urban public spaces can be understood in terms of the production and reproduction of space through the dynamic interconnections between and among places and the people who use these places. In the current debates on public spaces, two main perspectives can be found related to the presence and function of public space. Some authors argue that the significance of public space has diminished in recent decades, while others say that this is not the case and that public spaces still have an important function in society. Although it is not possible to exclude one of these perspectives, I conclude that public spaces are still playing a role in societal processes.

In the second section, my focus is on leisure in public spaces. In order to find out what is specific to leisure in public spaces compared to leisure in general, I give a brief overview of leisure behaviour in public space and how this is connected to identity construction. I show that by exploring leisure in public space, insight can be gained into issues of social integration. The third section in this chapter discusses the relation with social integration explicitly. While in Chapter 3 the relation between leisure and processes of social integration was clarified in terms of the potential benefits of leisure, in this chapter I take a closer look at the specific functions and meanings of leisure in public spaces for understanding this relation. I theorize the relation through three concepts: social space, experiential space and normative space.

To gain an insight into the social space, I discuss the presence and functions of interactions in public spaces. These interactions are important, because they can contribute to mutual understanding, as shown by the contact theory. Some public spaces can facilitate interactions more than others. Factors that can influence this are related to the location and physical structure of the public space, the type of activities the place is suitable for and the people who go there it. Based on the work of Lofland, Blokland and others, I show that interactions in public spaces can have various manifestations and meanings. The use of public space together with these interactions is conceptualized as social space. As such, this concept shows many relations with how leisure is related to social integration, namely in terms of mitigating prejudices and promoting social networks.

Hereafter, I clarify the second aspect – the experiential space – of the meaning of public spaces. I discuss several concepts and, based on these theoretical notions, operationalize the experiential space by using the concepts of place identity and place dependency. In doing so, I show that the relations people have with certain places relate to feelings of belonging

and feeling at home. This relates conceptually to what I defined in the previous chapter as creating feelings of comfort.

Third, since this study is about the meaning of public space for processes of social integration, it was also important to gain insight into the evaluation of cultural others in public space. I used the concept of normative space to find out how users perceive others and their behaviour in public space. I used the concept of categorization to clarify how people perceive others by examining how people speak about others. I argue that insight into the shared expectations of and possible conflicts over the use and meaning of public space is important, as it reveals differences and similarities between people. In so doing, it refers to expectations and views on what is perceived as being 'normal' and acceptable.

I end this chapter by showing and clarifying the conceptual framework of this study in which the complex interplay of relations between the central concepts of leisure, public space and social integration is elucidated.

4.1 Urban public spaces

The final central concept of this study is that of urban public space. Space is viewed as socially constructed and continuously transformed through the dynamic social relations that are formed and contested in those spaces by their various users (cf. Aitchison *et al.*, 2000; Massey, 1992; Scraton and Watson, 1998). Space also provides historical, social and symbolic meaning for its occupants, who construct space 'as a meaningful and dynamic production that constitutes our collective relations and identities' (Dixon, 2001: 587, see also Carter *et al.*, 1993; Green and Singleton, 2006). Massey (1994) argues that spaces have multiple and dynamic identities, given the fact that people who are in these spaces have multiple identities. Furthermore, she states that it is important to understand the notion of space as 'articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings' (*ibid.*: 2). Thus, space is socially constructed by social actors who construct different spatial meanings.

This research concerns public spaces in cities. A city can be defined as a relatively large, dense and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals (Simmel, in: Sennet, 1969). As Simmel stated in 1938 (*ibid.*: 143): 'Cities are not only dwelling places but also the initiating and controlling centres of economic, political and cultural life, and they have drawn the most remote communities of the world into their orbits and woven diverse areas, peoples and activities into a cosmos'. Simmel (1938) further states that cities have historically been seen as the melting-pot of races, peoples and cultures and a most favourable breeding ground for new biological and cultural hybrids. They have not only tolerated but also rewarded individual differences. Over 60 years later, Isin (2002: 283) concluded the same:

> The city is not a container where differences encounter each other; the city generates differences and assembles identities. The city is a difference machine insofar as it is understood as that space which is constituted by the dialogical encounter of groups formed and generated immanently in the process of taking

> up positions, orienting themselves for and against each other, inventing and assembling strategies and technologies, mobilizing various forms of capital, and making claims to that space that is objectified as ´the city´.

Besides, ethnic diversity is most present in cities (see Chapter 2). Thus, when studying public spaces in multicultural societies, it is logical to focus on public spaces in cities. The German sociologist Barhdt (1961) was one of the first to write about urban public spaces. He stated that centrality was the most important characteristic of urban public space, and in line with this he considered the markets (such as theatres, squares and cafes) a city's most important places, because in them there is an exchange of goods, services and information. Furthermore, he considered places of encounters highly essential. Another, very influential author, Jane Jacobs, discussed public spaces in cities by looking at the importance of those places for people. In her famous book *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), Jacobs used the metaphor of 'intricate street ballets' to show the vitality and liveability of public places in cities. In the city, more than elsewhere, people face many unknown or only categorically known others (biographical strangers), many of whom may not share one's values, history or perspective (cultural strangers) (Jacobs, 1961). In the same vein, Lofland (1989: 90) states that in non-private sectors of urban areas individuals are in the co-presence of persons who tend to be personally unknown or only categorically known to one another in terms of occupational or other non-personal identity categories, such as 'bus driver'.

According to Bahrdt (1961), a strict division between private and public spaces is crucial, since people need spaces that are anonymous, spaces in which they can be voluntarily and non-committally, as well as private spaces in which they can withdraw themselves. Private spaces, then, are characterized by ties of intimacy among primary group members who are located within households and personal networks (Lofland, 1998: 10). In between public and private spaces lie parochial spaces. Those spaces are characterized by a sense of communality among acquaintances and neighbours who are involved in interpersonal networks that are located within communities (*ibid.*: 10).

Thinking on public spaces can be divided into two views: the first can be defined as the decline of public space (Sennett, 1974) resulting from privatization and regulation. Privatization is often guided by a wish for order and security and can lead to the exclusion and segregation of social groups. The second view focuses on the opportunity offered by public spaces to encounter diverse groups of people and to display identities (Dines and Cattell, 2006; Merrifeld, 1996). A high degree of social conviviality is assumed, because in urban public spaces very diverse people live in relative harmony and human variety is openly expressed. It is argued that high quality public spaces are a necessary condition for a society to enjoy a high degree of social harmony (Lofland, 1998, 2000; Goffman, 1963, 1971). Young (1995: 268) even states that in public spaces 'one always risks encountering those who are different, those who identify with different groups and have different opinions or different forms of life'. In public spaces people can not only seek out encounters, but also avoid them (Soenen, 2006: 59; cf. Ravenscroft and Markwell, 2000). Looking at these two perspectives, one can argue that a paradox emerges between public spaces as sites where difference is eliminated,

and sites where difference can be celebrated (Sennett, 1974; Sorkin, 1992; Mitchell, 2004; Rogers, 1998, in Garcia-Ramon *et al.*, 2004; Zukin, 1995).

Although there is evidence to support both perspectives, and indeed some public spaces can be characterized as semi-public and open to only specific groups, most cities still have public spaces that are open and accessible to everyone. These spaces can be visited by various ethnic groups. Nevertheless, it is also widely recognized that public spaces can be viewed as exclusionary and sometimes even risky spaces (Green and Singleton, 2006). The question is whether in multicultural urban settings 'public space can function as a place of presence, recognition, participation and citizenship … the means by which difference is negotiated, affirmed or contested' (Wood and Gilbert, 2005: 686). But although diversity is thought to be negotiated in the city's public spaces, in contemporary life, urban public spaces can also be territorialized by particular groups. In this study one of the issues is whether public leisure spaces are indeed spaces where ethnic diversity is expressed and acknowledged.

4.2 Leisure, identity and public spaces

Leisure activities ranging from walking and cycling to sunbathing and picnicking take place in public spaces. Leisure spaces are dynamic settings defined by spatial and social circumstances (Slavin, 2004). Some places are repositories of long histories of visitor interaction with and creation of place (Stedman, 2006). The places where we practice leisure are sometimes chosen because they fulfil our demands; for example, walking in a forest necessarily takes place in a forest. In addition, those places are often not chosen accidentally but because we have a relation with them. Or as Williams (2002: 353) wrote:

> people value their relationships to leisure places just as they might value enduring involvements with certain people or particular 'free time' activities. We choose leisure places not merely because they are useful for leisure, but to convey the very sense of who we are.

Scholars in leisure studies have paid attention to the construction and negotiation of space during leisure activities, and it has become clear that identity construction takes place in places of leisure (Aitchinson, 2001; Skeggs, 1999; Wearing, 1998). Wearing (1998) argued that leisure spaces are important locations where the social control of individuals and strategies for political and social change are prevalent. Based on her own research, Wearing concluded that people from different cultural backgrounds can gain a diverse array of meanings from enriching leisure experiences. Moreover, leisure spaces can provide the context for personal, communal and political growth, particularly in a culturally safe and relevant context (*ibid.*: 23). Many leisure studies have aimed at gaining insight into the relation between leisure, identity construction and space. For example, Johnson (2009) showed how Caribbean identities are constructed and reconstructed by practising salsa in clubs. Furthermore, Atencio (2008) demonstrated how black dance culture in salsa clubs constructed ethnic identities. These examples show that leisure activities in public space offer many opportunities for people to

perform their social position by participating in certain leisure activities, wearing specific clothes or displaying other distinctive appearances (Soenen, 2006: 79).

Thus, public spaces are spaces where identity is created, negotiated and contested. But on the other hand, it is claimed that 'individuals interested in leisure cannot ignore the control of space, the segregation of space, and the effective exclusion of certain social groups from certain leisure spaces and places at particular times' (Henderson and Frelke, 2000: 23). Or as Scraton and Watson (1998: 135) put it: 'They [leisure spaces] can be sites for inclusion and exclusion'. Public spaces, particularly spaces of leisure, are viewed as gendered, sexualized and racialized arenas, rather than as containers wherein actors may perform (e.g. Green and Singleton, 2006; Scraton, 1994; Scraton and Watson, 1998; Skeggs, 1999; Valentine, 1989, 1992). It is claimed (Green and Singleton, 2006) that public spaces in Western societies are dominated by white, heterosexual men, whereby other groups are excluded. It is also argued that other groups, such as women and ethnic minorities, have little access to these public spaces and also tend to consider them risky spaces. Day (1999) showed that fear in public space has been constructed from a white perspective and that women from ethnic minority groups experience higher levels of fear. However, this does not mean that they do not enter those public spaces, but that they have to negotiate them (Green and Singleton, 2006). Thus, public spaces can be contested social arenas, sites of division as well as harmony, of negative as well as positive engagement, and of unequal power relations (Brewer, 2005; Bridge and Watson, 2002; Keith, 2005).

These insights reflect the idea that leisure in public spaces is significant when studying the relations with social integration, because identities are expressed and relations with places are constructed. How these relations can be examined is dealt with in the following section.

4.3 Social integration in public space

The relation between leisure in public space and social integration is central in this study, and as I noted earlier, I take an individual perspective to examine this relation. Dines and Cattell (2006) argue that in order to harness the potential for maintaining and improving inter-ethnic relations, public spaces need to be understood, however 'not simply as sites where people, under the right circumstances or with the necessary encouragement, might come together, but as everyday settings where a range of interests and attachments to place are able to converge and evolve' (*ibid.*: 38). Public spaces are important for understanding issues of social integration for two reasons: they are sites of representation of a multicultural society, and they test the relations between the members of such a society (Kilian, 1998, in Wood and Gilbert, 2005). I describe the meaning of public spaces for social integration in terms of the physical setting and the social, experiential and normative space.

The use of public space and the behaviour of people in public space is not only related to the personal behaviour of people or groups of people, but is also guided by unwritten rules that are almost unconsciously followed by virtually everybody and that also apply to social interaction. In order to understand processes of social integration, informal, everyday

activities and interactions need to be studied. Interactions are vital because it is assumed that they positively relate to the formation of social relations and, as stated in Chapter 3, these interactions can lead to a better understanding of each other and the mitigation of prejudices. Finally, examining leisure behaviour in public spaces can reveal whether people feel comfortable and, if so, why.

As well as the use of public space, I discuss the meaning of leisure in public spaces. By looking at the way people connect to certain places, we can better understand processes of inclusion and exclusion, attitudes towards diversity and ways of expressing one's own identity. In that sense, it provides information about the expected behaviour and the perceptions of public space in terms of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Social space

Urban public spaces can be described as social spaces: people go to these spaces on their own or with others, and are confronted with unknown others who are present in the same space. This co-presence in public space is structured, since behaviour in public spaces is guided by unwritten rules that are almost unconsciously applied by virtually everybody. Goffman referred to this as the interaction order (1971). Goffman (1963) even states that it is the rule that people do not interact in public spaces without an obvious reason to do so. Most of the time we simply follow the social codes of conduct in order to avoid colliding with other people.

One of the most important principles regarding behaviour in public spaces is 'civil inattention', defined by Goffman (1963: 83) as the situation where 'two strangers look at one another until they reach each other at the distance of two and a half metres. Then the staring ends, as a way to express respect for the other'. When practising civil inattention, 'one gives to another enough visual attention to demonstrate that one appreciates that the other is present, while at the next moment withdrawing one's attention from him so as to express that he does not constitute a target of special curiosity or design' (*ibid.*: 84).

In some cases, however, observing each other is socially accepted and a signal of sound interest (Oosterman, 1993). Lofland (1998) distinguishes other principles that guide behaviour in public space, namely: cooperative motility, defined as the way in which individuals cooperate with one another in public environments, mutually allowing each other to move within crowds; audience role prominence, defined as 'inhabitants of the public realm act primarily as audience to the activities that surround them' (*ibid.*: 31); restrained helpfulness, through which individuals in the public realm may approach one another with 'requests for mundane assistance' – such as for the time or a newspaper, or to press a lift button – and generally produce a positive response (*ibid.*: 32); and civility toward diversity, whereby individuals in the public realm treat those who are physically or socially different from them with 'decency' and 'civility'. There is a mutually expected sense of 'freedom from judgement' (*ibid.*: 33). Together these rules create an environment for social learning and push people to behave civilly towards diversity (Lofland, 1989, 1998).

Although these principles provide a strong disincentive to direct and active involvement in other people's business (Amin and Thrift, 2002), Sennett (1999) and others state that public spaces offer people space to interact and to exchange values and norms. Interactions take place and civil inattention can be broken by casual interactions. These interactions are of importance because it is due to interactions that social relations are formed in public spaces. Interactions encompass more than direct verbal communication, and they occur in any social situation in which persons are acting in awareness of others and are continually adjusting their behaviours to the expectations and possible responses of others. In this sense, avoidance is also a form of social interaction.

In public spaces, informal interactions are the most important and visible interactions (Muller, 2002; Soenen, 2006; Ravenscroft and Markwell, 2000). An external stimulus often provides a linkage between people and strangers leading to social interaction. This is called 'triangulation': a process by which an external stimulus – such as the presence of children, dogs or balls – provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to each other as though they were not strangers (Whyte, in Lofland, 1998). Triangulation helps people to strike up casual conversations with unknown people. In a public space, the choice and arrangement of various elements in relation to each other can set the triangulation process in motion.

The presence of an event or amenity can also draw strangers together. As well as being stimulated by an external stimulus, interactions can be the result of people who enjoy making contact with others in public space, passing the time by having a chat, sharing an unexpected experience, obtaining some information about a topic of interest, basking in the momentary glow of 'fellow feeling' or even commencing what might become an intimate relationship (Lofland, 1998: 39).

Doing leisure in public spaces creates different sources of interactional pleasure, such as people-watching or public sociability, and often involves interacting with others. Paravicini (1999, in De Vos, 2005) states that in the intersection and transition zones between relaxation and activity, different forms of unexpected interactions occur between people who do not know each other. Through these encounters people are confronted with differences. Even though these differences can lead to contrast or even to conflict, they can also lead to new ways of looking at things or new social ties (Brunt and Deben, 2001). However, in general people tend to interact more with people they understand and who are just like them than with cultural others. This is also shown by De Vos (2005), who observed that people in three urban parks in Gent made contacts with their own subgroups, but that contacts between different subgroups were not always to be taken for granted. Leisure in public spaces seems to facilitate social interactions between people who know each other, but fewer social interactions between strangers.

However, it is not only verbal interactions that are of importance when discussing the social value of public space for social integration. Blokland (2003) strongly emphasizes the importance of seeing and meeting people if one wants to get acquainted with the place in which one lives. She calls this 'public familiarity' (see also Fischer, 1982), which can be

achieved by making use of certain spaces and by being involved in certain developments in one's neighbourhood. It can stimulate feelings of comfort in people living in certain districts. Leisure in public space offers the opportunity for interactions among persons from different social and ethnic backgrounds (Lofland, 1998; Fainstein, 2005). Such interactions can provide relief from daily routines and can also alleviate tensions in a neighbourhood (Dines and Cattell, 2006: 28). According to Halseth (1998: 43), this process leads to the creation of a social and spatial framework within which individuals experience and conduct most of their day-to-day activities and are bound together by a shared sense of belonging. As such, leisure in public spaces can stimulate feeling at home and feeling comfortable in people living in certain districts.

Several researchers (Gobster, 2002; Ravenscroft and Markwell, 2000; Tinsley *et al.*, 2002) have paid attention to urban public spaces, such as parks and streets, as places were inter-ethnic interactions take place. Urban parks are seen as relevant because they are often accessible to all people, and therefore different identities can be represented in these urban parks. Moreover, they can be seen as favourable spaces for social interaction, because urban parks are used equally by various ethnic groups. This is in contrast to, for example, nature areas, which are visited more by native people (Buijs *et al.*, 2009). Next to urban parks, public spaces in neighbourhoods can be seen as safe places: a space between the safety of home and unknown places further away. It can be seen as a kind of transitional space in which women can walk freely and that is perceived as safe, familiar and comfortable to spend time in. Since restrictions on Muslim women are related to matters of honour, being in certain outdoor spaces is not always allowed unless they are accompanied by a male member of their family. Although these constraints are acknowledged, it is important to avoid the idea of women as potential victims in public space. Public spaces should not be places of fear, but places that allow emancipation (Vacchelli, 2005).

However, certain groups can be excluded from public spaces. Research on natural open spaces shows that cultural disposition and behavioural codes are key factors that discourage minority ethnic communities from using those spaces (Morris, 2003). Other empirical studies also found strong evidence for the presence and relevance of discrimination (e.g. Gobster, 1998; McDonald and McAvoy, 1997). Negative interactions are noted; they often relate to discrimination and make users uncomfortable or incite anger and physical violence (Gobster, 2002; West, 1989). This fear is related not only to perceived discrimination: ethnic minorities have higher levels of fear of dogs, mainly associated with the need for religious cleansing after being in any sort of contact with a dog (Risbeth, 2001). As stated, other studies too have shown that public spaces are also perceived as spaces of fear (Day, 1999; Green and Singleton, 2006; Scraton and Watson, 1998).

From the above, I conclude that public space as a social space can be understood by looking at the use of and behaviour in those places. The activities that people engage in, the persons with whom they visit these places and the interactions that occur with unknown others in these public spaces, together gives an understanding of a specific public space as a social space. Most of the time, interaction is regulated and close contact is avoided. Encounters between strangers in public space have often been characterized as merely brief and

functional (Goffman, 1963; Lofland, 1973). However, the question is whether those brief interactions can be meaningful for people and positively contribute to feelings of comfort. As such, an examination of interactions provides insight into the extent to which being in public space with known or unknown others contributes to feeling comfortable and at home and to what extent prejudices can be mitigated.

Experiential space

By doing leisure in public spaces, people connect to a certain place as well as to the other people using that place. This study aimed at gaining insight into these meanings of places for people, because it is assumed that positive feelings towards a certain place entail a 'feeling of belonging' and 'feeling at home'. Various experiences, both positive and negative, occur in public spaces, and while some experiences will lead to people bonding with these public spaces, other spaces will in future be avoided. Or as Johnson (2009: 12) states: 'It is through the ritualized and repetitious use of space that individuals develop attachment and belonging to space and the creation of territoriality'.

People attach meaning to places not only because they visit places, but also because social interaction generates meanings (Jennings, 2001). A place becomes meaningful when people identify a place as a sign of something beyond itself, for example because of their relations with people living there, such as friends, acquaintances or relatives (Gustafson, 2001; Tuan, 1971). Wiles (2005) shows that the relations between people and places are reciprocal, referring to their dynamic, fluid and changing nature and the range of social interactions that go into constituting 'place as process' over time (Cloutier-Fisher and Harvey, 2009). Experiences and place become intertwined as complex relations with these public spaces are developed (Manzo, 2005). Bonding to certain places is characterized by a dynamic relation involving both socially constructed meanings, based upon lived experiences, and definitions of places that can lead to a change in experiences and meanings. Rather than a collection of universally defined physical attributes, places are symbolic contexts imbued with meaning (Kyle and Chick, 2007). In this section, I clarify the meaning of public spaces as an experiential space by using the concepts of place identity and place dependency.

Thus, just as people construct places, places construct people. This reciprocity between people and place has historically been important in both human geography and environmental psychology, and is now also receiving more attention in leisure literature (e.g. Kyle *et al.*, 2003, 2005; Stedman, 2002). The topic has been dominated by quantitative approaches focused on measuring the strength of relations (e.g. place attachment), while relatively few studies have focused on understanding the dynamic processes of developing place relations over time and across the life course (Brooks *et al.,* 2006; Manzo, 2005). Since it is assumed that people establish an individual or personal relation with specific places, regular involvement with particular leisure places is closely related to expressions of identity (Brooks *et al.*, 2006).

There are several related concepts that describe human-environment interaction through subjective experience of place, such as 'place attachment' (Altman and Low, 1992; Giuliani,

1991; Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001), 'place identity' (Giuliani and Feldman, 1993; Proshansky *et al.*, 1983; Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996), 'place dependency' (Kyle *et al.*, 2003; Williams *et al.*, 1992) and 'sense of place' (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001, 2006; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1980). The diversity of place concepts reflects the multidimensionality of the construct, which researchers have described in emotional, cognitive and behavioural terms (Altman and Low, 1992). Some researchers (Schreyer *et al.*, 1981; Williams and Roggenbuck, 1989) conceptualize human-place bonding in the two aspects place identity and place dependence. Others (Moore, 2000) state that place attachment focuses on evaluations of places, while place identity is more concerned with the way in which places form identity. No matter which concept is used to describe human-place relations, strong emotional ties to place are a central element. These emotions are often the product of repeated place experiences. Moreover, they are related to the social context in which the experiences occur. Meaningful place experiences often occur in the presence of significant others (Kyle and Chick, 2007). I use the concepts of place dependency and place identity to conceptualize human-place relations (cf. Williams and Roggenbuck, 1989).

Place dependence relates to the functional utility attributed to the setting because of its ability to facilitate desired leisure experiences (cf. Kyle and Chick, 2007; Williams *et al.*, 1992). Stokols and Shumaker (1981, in Brooks *et al.*, 2006) suggested that there are two factors that individuals and groups employ to determine place dependency, namely the quality of the current place and the relative quality of comparable alternatives.

Place identity focuses on the emotional and symbolic meanings people ascribe to places. (cf. Kyle and Chick, 2007; Williams *et al.*, 1992). It can be defined as a persons' relation with a place, including cognition, emotion and behaviours. It is used to refer to the bonding of people with a particular place (Altman and Low, 1992; Giuliani, 2003). This bonding is a process in which people 'fall in love' with a place. It is important to note that as this process grows and develops, individuals start to identify with the place in question, both on a larger scale – for example, with respect to nationality, city, etc. – and on a smaller scale, with respect to neighbourhood, homes or lodgings (Bogac, 2009; Giuliani, 2003; Schward *et al.*; 1995). During this process, individuals develop strong emotional attachment to a particular place or environmental setting, which comprises 'clusters of positively and negatively valenced cognitions of physical settings … [that] help to define who and of what value the person is both to himself and in terms of how he thinks others view him' (Proshansky *et al.*, 1983: 74). It relates to the character development of an individual (Bogac, 2009) and is therefore connected with an individual's or a group's identity (Altman and Low, 1992; Jörgensen and Stedman, 2001; Proshansky *et al.*, 1983; Stedman, 2002). This process also serves to strengthen and shape individual and collective identity (Kyle and Chick, 2007). As Proshansky (1978: 155) states:

> Those dimensions of self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideals, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals and behavioural tendencies and skills relevant to this environment.

Thus, place identity is about the personal meanings that are developed in the context of personal experience of place. This personal experience is meaningful because of the ongoing interactions with others and the environment. Place identity can be measured in terms of enjoying a place more than other places, finding a place more important, getting more satisfaction from using a place, identifying with a place and strong connections with a place. These aspects are used to gain insight into the way people relate to places and thus into their place identity.

Kyle and Chick (2007) showed in their research among visitors to a fair that the meanings people associated with the place were largely independent of the physical qualities, and were mostly related to the qualities of the social world, that is, the fact that the fair provided a place where they could celebrate their relationship with those closest to them. This shows that the experiences shared within this space were most prominent. In their research among teenagers, Henderson and King (1999: 39) found that teenagers described teen clubs as places where they 'could find safety, be with their friends and feel less bounded by societal traditions'. Their research also showed that the places were symbolic of their wish to control their own lives and have a certain degree of autonomy. In this sense, these places play a role in the identity formation of these teenagers. Where their research showed that the meaning of place is strongly related to the identity of their users, Stedman and colleagues (2004) conclude that the meaning of place relates to the life experiences shared with relevant others. In their research among residents living in or around a Canadian national park, they found that special places within the community were defined by what had occurred there and with whom, rather than by the physical attributes of the setting.

Place dependency and place identity are linked through the notion of self-efficacy: people use spaces for 'the maintenance of self' (Korpela, 1989). Places facilitate self-efficacy when they are familiar and predicable such that they can provide people with a sense of control and security (Livingston *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that this familiarity can also create more active forms of engagement, leading to more social capital (Graham *et al.,* 2009). In this vein, Dines and Cattell (2006: ix) conclude that 'commitment to the local area and its people often influenced the use and experience of public open spaces, and, so, too, were positive perceptions of spaces and the valued opportunities they afforded for casual social encounters'. De Haan (2005) also shows that the appropriation of public places can lead to more attachment to these places, more opportunities to have contacts and, through this, more social cohesion in those localities. Moreover, research in a residential neighbourhood in the UK showed that the way people attach to public space is positively correlated with the level of social cohesion (Forrest and Kearns, 2001).

This study aimed at identifying the ways people describe, interpret and explain their relation to various public spaces in their neighbourhood. To gain insight into the extent to which leisure in public space can facilitate feelings of belonging, I use the concepts of place identity and place dependency. Especially place identity – which can be described as a positive emotional bond that develops between groups or individuals and their environment – is related to feeling at home. Experiences and perceptions of public space play a role in understanding the sense of belonging and the right to space (Philips *et al.*, 2007). As shown

in Chapter 3, participating in leisure activities creates feelings of comfort too. Together this informs me about the relations between leisure in public spaces and feelings of belonging.

Normative space

The concept of normative space is used in order to understand how people value the behaviour of others. The concept is significant because it gives insight into the shared expectations and possible conflicts of the use and meaning of public space. It refers to expectations regarding and views on what is perceived as 'normal' and acceptable (normative space). Normative space relates to what Pollini (2005) calls cultural conformity: 'the sharing by individuals of value systems and therefore of attitudes of 'consensus' as defined by Weber (1913), and also, though not necessarily, conformism (Parsons, 1959)' (*ibid.*: 498). Or as Misztal (in Blokland, 2008: 98) states:

> Our perception of collective order as normal is sustained by rule-following behaviour that makes our world predictable, reliable and legible. All these rules ensure that actors sustain each other's expectations of 'things as usual', which leads them to judge such a situation as normal.

There are many unwritten rules that partly determine what normal behaviour is. However, some 'unwritten' rules have now been written down in order to prevent problems or conflicts in public space. The many 'Do not ...' signs are examples of this. Another way to prevent these tensions is to create specific spaces for certain groups, for example smokers or dog owners. One way or another, in public spaces different people are confronted with different behaviours and different thoughts about behaviour. The question is how to deal with differences in public space.

Lynn Lofland uses the concept of positive and negative tolerance to describe attitudes towards different behaviour. Positive tolerance is described as 'a permissive or liberal attitude toward beliefs or practices differing from or conflicting with one's own' (Lofland, 2007: 46). Negative tolerance is explained as the capacity to put up with another's difference from self because the different other is simply not perceived and/or because self and other do not intersect. Positive tolerance is the capacity to put up with another's fully recognized differences from self even under conditions of intersection and, perhaps, to sometimes do so with a mild appreciation for or enjoyment of those differences (Lofland, 2000: 146-147). Negative tolerance is generated when people share a larger bounded space but not the smaller pieces of it, or physically share smaller pieces within the larger space but segregate themselves from one another symbolically. Positive tolerance is generated when (Lofland, 2000: 147-149):

1. Diverse people are not segregated into homogenous enclaves and are forced to settle whatever conflicts arise among them without recourse to centrally imposed instruments of order.
2. People have mastered the complexity of the urban environment sufficiently to move through it with a high degree of psychic safety.

3. The levels of community closest to the actor (the home, the immediate neighbourhood) are secure and non-threatening.
4. People are able to control the character and quality of their contact with diverse others.
5. People possess certain demographic characteristics, those characteristics themselves generating a capacity for tolerance like highly educated, high status, single and childless.

Thus positive tolerance is generated when diversity is perceived as safe and controllable; people need to develop a feeling of being at home in streets and squares, and in order to do so they need to be able to read social signs in their place of residence (Blokland, 2008). If they are not able to read their environment, they do not feel comfortable. This creates a distance between self and others, leading to negative tolerance. It is essential to note that diversity in public space can lead to feelings of celebrating this diversity, as well as to feelings of fear and danger.

Conceptualizing normative space in terms of expectations and evaluations of others, and of negative and positive tolerance makes it possible to gain insight into the behaviour of people in public spaces, as well as individuals' perception of their own behaviour and the behaviour of others in public spaces. It is therefore crucial to gain insight not only into the motivations of the users of these places, but also into their evaluation of others and to find out to what extent ideas and beliefs about certain practices in public spaces are shared or conflicting.

In order to understand how others in public spaces are perceived, I use the concept of categorizations. A category is a conceptual unit through which we differentiate between ourselves and others. If our experiences of the world around us were not categorized, we would be engulfed in a chaos of individual impressions, similar to the world that a newborn baby faces (Radden, n.d.: 2-3). Categories are defined on the basis of socially negotiated boundaries and changing relations across those boundaries (Yücesoy, 2006: 41). Boundaries can exist at the intersubjective level (symbolic boundaries) or can group individuals (social boundaries). Symbolic boundaries can turn into social boundaries when these boundaries are shared and established. They work as social identifications and are translated into identifiable categorizations, such as race and gender (Lamont and Molnar, 2002). As such, these categorizations mark inclusion and exclusion. Moreover, they can lead to the production and reproduction of stereotypes.

The negotiation of boundaries also takes place in urban public spaces. This process is often done automatically and naturally in order to understand the world around us better (Van Eijk, 2010). In doing so, we use categories that are visible – such as clothes, manners, behaviour or skin colour –rather than invisible, such as interests or political views (Blokland, 2003; Van Eijk, 2010). Therefore, visibility of others and of their everyday behaviour is crucial to assess others and to become familiar with them (Blokland, 2003). The ways in which categories are constructed, develop over time. Some markers become less important and others become more important. It seems as though in current Dutch society, as well as in other Western societies, consumption, lifestyle as well as ethnicity in relation to religion, have become more important (cf. Blokland, 2003).

It is thus important to gain insight into the way in which people talk about others by categorizing them. The main issue is whether diversity in public space leads to tensions, conflict and exclusion, or to relief, interactions and inclusion.

4.4 Linking leisure, public space and social integration

The theoretical perspectives discussed in Chapters 3 and this chapter show that there is a complex interplay of issues that need to be explored in order to gain insight into the dynamic and two-sided relations between leisure in public space and social integration. In this study, social integration is used as a way to interpret the relations and connections between individuals and public spaces. By gaining in-depth information about the perceptions and experiences in public spaces, more insight can be achieved about the role of public spaces. But it is essential to realize that public spaces are never neutral spaces. Neutral public spaces do not exist, and it is therefore more important to discuss whether ethnicity is reflected in public spaces and, if so, how.

Since our multicultural society is most present in the cities, it is there that many issues of social integration are being discussed. The city is the locality where people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds live together for many years. I therefore set out to establish whether in cities feelings of togetherness and belonging are present and, if so, to what extent identification with everyday public places within cities can be used as a way to create solidarity between citizens. The aim was to add to the existing knowledge an analysis on an individual level that will give insight into the everyday experiences of people, showing how they experience their everyday activities in public spaces. The focus is on non-organized forms of leisure in public spaces.

The relation between leisure and social integration is conceptualized in three ways: feelings of comfort, social networks and mitigating prejudices. I then looked at public spaces and how people from different ethnic backgrounds relate to them, and at the extent to which they relate to others who are present in the same public space. This relation is conceptualized through social space, experiential space and normative space. The insights derived from examining the relations between leisure and social integration are taken into account in social space, and to a lesser extent also in experiential and normative space.

The physical setting was my point of entry. In order to provide insight into both the social and the experiential and normative space, I first describe the selected public spaces in order to be able to relate the physical space to the social, experiential and normative space. Starting with the concept of social space, information was needed about those visiting these spaces, the activities carried out there, the group sizes, the composition of groups, and the presence or absence of interactions. I studied whether interactions took place and, if so, what type of interactions they were. As stated, these interactions could be of importance because of the assumed relations between interactions on the one hand, and mitigating prejudices, forming social relationships and feeling comfortable in certain spaces on the other hand. However, also negative interaction can happen in public spaces. Interactions

can not only mitigate prejudices, but also create tensions, strengthen stereotypes, and lead to feelings of fear or exclusion.

Looking at the experiential space, I examined the way people were or were not attached to these public spaces and how they felt about these spaces. Understanding the meaning of public space in terms of place dependency and place identity offers a rationale for the ways in which people feel or do not feel at home in certain areas. It is linked to everyday leisure activities because it is assumed that leisure activities in public space could strengthen a relation with certain places, and in doing so stimulate feelings of comfort and belonging. The normative space looks at expectations regarding and acceptation of activities and behaviour in public space, as well as at the ways in which people talk about others in public spaces (categorizations). The aim was to gain insight into the extent to which stereotyped images are produced and reproduced. I assumed that insight into the normative space is relevant to understanding the relation between leisure in public space and social integration because it provides an understanding about processes of inclusion and exclusion.

After a complete examination of all these aspects, I gained insight into the ways in which individual experiences and perceptions in urban public spaces contribute to social integration in terms of feelings of comfort/belonging and feeling at home in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood.

PART III.

The research context

5. Methodology and methods

I have argued that in order to gain insight into the relations between the meaning of public spaces and social integration, I needed to understand what was happening in certain public spaces and, more importantly, the meaning of these actions. A qualitative research design was therefore the most appropriate.

The underlying epistemology is interpretivism. It involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach that is characterized by the fact that researchers study things in their natural settings, and interpret their findings in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Interpretivism holds that the world can only be understood by investigating the interpretation of that world by its participants (Bryman, 2001: 265), that is, by studying the perspectives and experiences of the people being studied. Interpretivism is based on a constructionist ontology, meaning that the social world and its categories are not external to us, but are constituted in and through interaction (Bryman, 2001: 18). Social constructions are continually constructed and reconstructed, and there are no 'facts' that we can know (Deacon *et al.*, 1999: 7).

My research can be classified as iterative, drawing on methods that involve direct and sustained contact with human agents within the context of their everyday lives. It is iterative because it was fluid and flexible, constantly moving between reading theories, conducting fieldwork and rethinking the research questions. Induction does not mean a blank mind, however, and I therefore started by carrying out an extensive literature study. Central to this research are the relations between the leisure and everyday behaviour of people from different ethnic backgrounds and a certain physical setting. I therefore gathered data on use, motivations and meanings. For each of the three research questions, different methods were appropriate. This chapter provides a detailed insight into how the research was conducted. First, however, I explain the selection of the cases.

5.1 Selection of cases

It was important to choose spatial settings that are principally used as spaces for leisure activities. The selection of the cases was based on the following criteria:

- public space used by different ethnic groups;
- public space that is not dominated by a specific group of visitors; it is open and accessible;
- variety in size of cases in order to gain insight into the possible relevance of scale;
- variety in type of spaces in order to gain insight into the possible relevance of facilities.

These criteria led to the selection of public spaces in Nijmegen and Utrecht. I selected two urban parks in areas of Nijmegen (a medium sized city in the Netherlands) whose residents are from different ethnic backgrounds. The first, Goffertpark (83 ha), is the largest urban park in Nijmegen. The second, Thiemepark, is a small neighbourhood park. Both parks are

visited by people from different ethnic backgrounds. It was expected that use, interactions and the meaning of these places, differ from each other.

I selected four public spaces in Utrecht. All are in the multicultural Lombok district. These spaces are Kanaalstraat (a shopping street), Molenpark (a park), Bankaplein (a playground) and Muntplein (a small square). These places differ in terms of use, facilities and size, and I expected that the meaning of these places and the interactions that take place in them differ from each other.

5.2 Methods

The focus of this research was the complex life worlds of people. The central concepts as well as the relation between the central concepts of this research needed to be further explored since little scientific knowledge has been produced. The explorative character of this study led to the decision to do a qualitative study. Qualitative methods are helpful not only in giving rich explanations of complex phenomena, but also in creating or evolving theories or conceptual bases, and in proposing hypotheses to clarify the phenomena. As noted by Beckstead and Morrow (2004: 654), 'qualitative research methods can more clearly capture the complexity and meaningfulness of human behaviour and experience by permitting more openness to findings and accessing participants' full description of their realities'. Furthermore, qualitative methods have been frequently used to explore new phenomena (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and to my knowledge only a few qualitative studies investigated this field where the context of everyday use and interactions with multi-ethnic other have been examined.

I focused on looking at the world through the eyes of studied objects and on evolving concepts and theories that are grounded in the collected data. This research concentrated on understanding the full multidimensional picture of the subject of investigation. Furthermore, the research was based on the notion that social reality is created and sustained through the subjective experience of people involved in communication.

I chose a multi-method in order to make use of the strength of the different qualitative methods and to strengthen the validity and reliability of the research. Moreover, a combination of different methods – triangulation – gives a much more rounded picture of someone's life and behaviour. Besides observing peoples' behaviour and making notes about it using a form of participant observation, I interviewed people to ask why they do particular things, why they behave in one way rather than another, and so forth. First-hand experience of behaviours and events in their settings (or contexts) enables inductive enquiry rather than necessary reliance or prior conceptualizations.

I also examined policy documents in order to gain insight into the specific context of the places, and how local authorities view public spaces and how they manage them. In addition, I used secondary data to outline the context. Statistical data are available on the leisure behaviour of native and non-native Dutch people, social networks and the use of urban

parks (Statistics Netherlands; Netherlands Institute for Social Research). This secondary data were used for and checked by the results derived from the observations and interviews.

I made observations and held interviews until no new information about the key concepts and relations between the concepts was generated; in other words, when data saturation was obtained. This research is concerned with representativeness of concepts and how concepts vary in their dimensions. Therefore, representativeness in qualitative research is linked to data saturation. I will now describe the methods I used starting with observations.

Observations

I used observation as the main method to study behaviour in concrete settings. It is the most valid method to investigate behaviour, as only systematic observations of public interactions can give information about what is happening in a certain place (see also Low *et al.*, 2005; Whyte, 1980). Observations have become a commonly used method in exploring the actions of individuals in public spaces (Spradley, 1980; Lofland, 1973). Furthermore, observations were needed since there can be discrepancies between what people are doing and what they say they are doing. Through observation it is possible to understand what people may be unwilling or unable to discuss through other, predominantly verbal (interview and survey) methods. Besides, it is hardly possible to ask people to give a detailed reconstruction of their behaviour and interaction. Observations have the potential to reveal the mundane, routine activities that collectively make up those practices of everyday life that may escape the discursive attentions of participants.

These essential aspects of this research imply that observations were the only way to investigate these aspects. By carrying out observations, I was able to directly observe the behaviour of individuals and groups in 'face validity', which ensures that, to a degree, social realities could be simultaneously observed, documented and analysed. Moreover, I was able to document and understand the context within which activities occurred. Low and colleagues (2005) state that observational methodologies can include simple observations of activities, observations of non-verbal behaviour, and behavioural mapping. Observations were used in order to theorize about how people interpret a site. The observations were meant to study behaviour and social interactions in urban public spaces. They were used to collect information relevant to such questions as: Who is present? With whom and where do people spend their time in urban public spaces? Do people interact? And if so, with whom?

By sitting in the two urban parks, I observed what people were doing, how they behaved and whether there were social interactions between different groups.

Semi-structured and in-depth interviews

Because the meaning of social interactions and relations in a certain setting cannot be observed, the observations had to be related to the thoughts and opinions of the people observed. Therefore, interviews were held in order to get more in-depth information about the presence and meaning of interactions. Two categories of questions were discussed: those

in the first category were about people's motives and the meaning of their behaviour in public spaces, including the presence and meaning of social interactions, while those in the second category were intended to elicit insight into place attachment, place identity, cultural conformity and broader issues related to integration and multiculturalism. All interviews were transcribed and analysed with the help of MaxQDA.

The semi-structured interviews were held in the urban public spaces. Open-ended questions were formulated in order to get responses to the above-mentioned issues. Based on these semi-structured interviews, relevant items were traced and then used to formulate statements related to issues of identification, belonging, attitudes towards cultural others and expected behaviour. The semi-structured interviews were used as an elicitation study.

In-depth interviews were not held in the urban public spaces themselves but at other places, preferably in people's houses. These interviews were meant to gain a deeper understanding of the above-mentioned issues. No questions were formulated; instead, the various issues were discussed based on a topic list. Various probing techniques were used in order to gain more accurate, in-depth and rich data.

Statements were presented to the respondents in order to establish a better understanding of the relative importance and the share of the relevant items that came out of the semi-structured interviews. Participants were also asked to answer questions that were designed to provide information about the issues of place attachment and place identity, on the basis of the five-point Likert scale (strongly agree, disagree, undecided, strongly disagree.). The Likert-type scale method was used in this instance because using this type measure in previous place attachment studies proved very successful (see Williams and Vaske, 2003). The Likert scale statements for the different spaces were:

- This space means a lot to me.
- I'm very attached to this space.
- I feel safe in this space.
- I have many nice memories of this space.
- I get more satisfaction by visiting this space than by visiting any other public space in my neighbourhood.
- This space is the best place to do the things I like doing.
- This space is a good place to escape from everyday life.
- This space is a good place to get in touch with other people.
- This space promotes good relations between the inhabitants in this neighbourhood.

During the interviews, I used photographs to encourage the respondents to talk about their thoughts, feelings and ideas about public spaces (cf. Bouwman, 1998). This photo-interviewing (Hurworth, 2003) can help respondents to talk about their ideas. I used photos in order to create a sense of togetherness and to get some first opinions about the various public spaces in their neighbourhood. An advantage of this method is that respondents need little knowledge about the topic. Most respondents liked this way of starting the interview. However, there are also some disadvantages: some respondents tended to evaluate the

quality of the photo rather than the object in the photo. In addition, the order in which the photos were shown influenced the data obtained.

5.3 Data collection

As said, my research is interpretative in the sense that I aim at representing social reality as much as possible as the lived experience of the actors I observed and talked with in order to understand human action and the meanings that people attach to issues in their everyday life contexts. The qualitative data collected during this research have an added value for this field of study. As described, I used observations and interviews to gather information about the experiences in and perceptions of various spatial settings for their users. I conducted my fieldwork in the period March 2007 – September 2008 in Nijmegen and in March 2009 – September 2009 in Utrecht. The respondents were recruited via key persons, a personal network and in the public spaces themselves. Because I was interested in a cross-section of perspectives based on ethnicity and gender, I used stratified purposeful sampling in order 'to capture major variations rather than to identify a common core, although the latter may also emerge in the analysis' (Patton, 1990: 174).

I interviewed 40 people in Nijmegen (see Table 5.1). Each interview lasted 25-70 minutes and was carried out in Dutch. Some interviews were shorter, because the respondents had to leave. Most of the non-native Dutch respondents had mastered the Dutch language. During two interviews, however, daughters helped in translating. In one case, the quality of the interview was low because of language problems. I held 42 interviews in Utrecht; each lasted 30-90 minutes and was held in Dutch. The interviews focused on the meaning of and

Table 5.1. The respondents in Nijmegen and Utrecht.

City	Gender	Ethnicity	Place of interview	Length of time in the Netherlands (NL)	Age
Nijmegen	Female: 22 Male: 18	Native Dutch: 24 Non-native Dutch: 16 Moroccan: 8 Turkish: 5 Antillean: 2 Surinamese: 1	Park: 27 (Goffertpark: 15, Thiemepark: 12) Elsewhere: 13		
Utrecht	Female: 24 Male: 18	Native Dutch: 25 Non-native Dutch: 17 Moroccan: 6 Turkish: 5 Other: 6 (e.g. Israeli, German, Polish)	Home: 30 Elsewhere: 12	Born in NL: 3 25 yrs or less: 5 26-35 yrs: 6 More than 35 yrs: 3	≤30 yrs: 3 31-40 yrs: 14 41-50 yrs: 14 51-60 yrs: 6 ≥ 61 yrs: 5

interactions in public space. In Utrecht I also asked questions about the normative behaviour, personal networks, contacts in the neighbourhood, and opinions about integration and multiculturalism in the Netherlands. I asked such questions as: How often are you in urban public spaces? Do you have any contact with others? What kind of contact? How do you feel about these contacts?

I also conducted interviews with experts who were key persons in their districts (Table 5.2), in order to gain an insight into the general situation in the districts. These experts provided information about the population, the use of the public spaces, and specific characteristics of the neighbourhoods and groups of people. Not all interviews were recorded and transcribed before data analysis. In some cases, tape-recording proved impossible due to the high level of background noise. Thus, detailed note taking also was used during the interviews (i.e. summarizing the content of participants' responses and recording their actual words).

The interviews were complemented by the systematic observation of public space. Between May 2007 and September 2009, I went to streets, parks and squares at various times and on various days throughout the week, in order to get a feel of the atmosphere and to trace everyday interactions, events, social situations, actors and encounters (Spradley, 1980). I also took into account the physical setting, the available facilities and the housing stock, which together form the habitus of everyday use of public space. I paid special attention to the presence of inter-ethnic interactions. During these observations, I took extensive field notes and recorded age group, gender, group size, ethnicity (only tentative, as also done in other studies; Watson and Studdert, 2006) and activities. Furthermore, I made specific notes about interactions in terms of type of interaction and the people involved (with whom, initiated by). These observations, although not unproblematic, were complementary to the interviews and were meant not to determine the ethnic identity of individuals, but to get an idea about who is present in various public spaces and what they are doing there.

Table 5.2. The experts consulted.

1	Youth worker, Goffert
2	Policy maker, Municipality of Nijmegen
3	District manager, Bottendaal
4	District committee, Goffert
5	Welfare organization, Nijmegen
6	Inhabitant organization, Bottendaal
7	President Moroccan Youth Organization Nijmegen
8	District manager, Goffert
9	District manager, Lombok
10	Policy maker, Municipality Utrecht
11	Playground manager, Bankaplein
12	Initiator 'Wishing Well West', Lombok
13	Employee ISKB, Utrecht

5.4 Analysis

In this section, I aim to provide an understanding of the analysis processes. However, I have to stress that this process cannot be fully transparent because it was not a linear process. Theorizing and thinking are continuous and iterative. Strauss and Corbin (1998) distinguish three phases in coding that I also used in my process. The first phase – open coding – consists of reading all data (e.g. field notes, interview transcripts) separately to build a code tree. By doing so, the code tree 'emerges' inductively from the data rather than being imposed on it. In the second phase – axial coding – codes are compared, related and ordered. In this phase, patterns and similarities are found and labelled with categories and concepts. The third phase – selective coding – involves checking these labels and interpreting the findings. In order to structure this process, I used MaxQDA10, a computer program that facilitates coding. MaxQDA supports individuals who are performing qualitative data analysis and helps to systematically evaluate and interpret texts. It is also a tool for developing theories and testing the theoretical conclusions of the analysis.This program managed the large quantity of data and allowed me to be flexible and to retrieve codes within the context from which the segment was retrieved. This process involved many different steps, including theoretical reflections.

I analysed all interview data and field notes to 'obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience' (Moustakas, 1994: 13). The notes were subjected to thematic content analysis to illuminate underlying themes in the conversations. I started coding by labelling all relevant interview segments according to issues that appeared central to the interactions in public spaces. These codes were based both on the theoretical concepts and on the different places that were studied. Examples of labels are 'Bankaplein memories', 'Kanaalstraat attachment', 'categorizations' and 'ethnic identity'. The different places were used because this allowed me to compare places. Later in the coding process, I combined some codes that appeared to be related. Furthermore, I made codes in order to be able to make comparisons on other aspects that appeared to be relevant, such as the number of years residents had lived in a neighbourhood and their ethnic and religious backgrounds.

I then started the phase of axial and selective coding, and was able to see patterns, similarities and differences between places and residents. I examined the symbolic meaning attached to the places and events to which the participants referred. Concepts were not analytically imposed, but retrieved, identified and discovered from the interview data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 101). This analysis was guided by theoretical sensitivity and an iterative process that involved continual interplay between the data and the background literature. The analysis was not guided by prior hypotheses, so the themes emerged from the data. The analytical process involved carefully rereading the data to discover common themes and to differentiate between the accounts provided by the participants in order to acquire an understanding and knowledge of phenomena from the point of view of those who were under study.

This thesis is written in English, but the research was conducted in Dutch. All transcriptions are in Dutch and the analyses are based on the original Dutch material. Translation did not occur until the time of writing because I wanted to 'preserve' original meanings as much as possible and to keep the original source language visible. I translated all quotes as literally as possible. In order to increase the readability, I edited some quotes, although only to a limited extent.

5.5 Trustworthiness

My research does not offer generalizations, but describes the meanings of interactions in public spaces. Whereas in positivistic research, reliability and validity are used in order to discuss the replicability and accuracy of the findings in a specific way, in qualitative research this is less clearly defined. Reliability in terms of replicability is usually not possible in qualitative research (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Lincoln and Guba (1985: 316) state that: 'Since there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former is sufficient to establish the latter'. For validity, qualitative researchers use different strategies and terms. Sandelowski (1993: 2) argued that validity in qualitative studies should be linked not to 'truth' or 'value', as they are for the positivists, but to 'trustworthiness', which 'becomes a matter of persuasion whereby the scientist is viewed as having made those practices visible and, therefore, auditable'.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) distinguish four issues of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility is an evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a 'credible' conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants' original data (*ibid.*: 296). Transferability is the degree to which the findings of this inquiry can apply or be transferred beyond the bounds of the project. Dependability is an assessment of the quality of the integrated processes of data collection, data analysis and theory generation. Confirmability is a measure of how well the inquiry's findings are supported by the data collected (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

In my research, I used various strategies to enhance trustworthiness. To address credibility, I used multiple methods (triangulation), which is a well-known strategy to increase the validity of a study by bringing in more than one source of data that provides richer and more multilayered data. It consists of using multiple methods to more accurately assess what is going on. However, the use of different methods is not a simple tool of validation, but an alternative to validation; it is a strategy that adds rigor, breadth and depth to any investigation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). I used different methods not only to improve the validity but also to create a more in-depth understanding and to see to what extent differences would emerge from the data.

To address transferability, I have described the process of coding and given an insight into how the data was analysed. To address the issues of dependability and confirmability, I used the strategy of peer review: I discussed my interpretations and conclusions with other people, which challenged me to provide solid evidence for any interpretations or conclusions.

Furthermore, my aim was to represent the voices of study participants. Finally, reflexivity is used as a validity procedure to self-disclose assumptions, beliefs and biases. It is the process whereby researchers report on personal beliefs, values and biases that may shape their inquiry (Creswell and Miller, 2000). Since all 'analyses are limited and filtered through the lens of the researcher' (Hutchinson and Samdahl, 2000: 245), any limitations of the findings of these analyses lie in this lens. Researchers can use several options for incorporating this reflexivity. In the following, I situate myself and draw upon some personal experiences relevant to understanding the situatedness of knowledge (Haraway, 1988). By showing my positionality, I hope to increase the transparency of my research.

I was born in the Netherlands and I have lived all my life in this country. Both my parents, as well as my grandparents, were born in the Netherlands. I grew up and still live in a fairly mono-ethnic neighbourhood. Living in the Netherlands, reading newspapers and following the debates on television, I became aware of the various standpoints towards multiculturalism as exposed and discussed in the media. Although when I was young, people would only express themselves positively or, if critically, then much nuanced, about multiculturalism, since the 1990s the debates have been getting more explicit. I remember one day when I was sitting in a bus and I heard a boy of around 12 years old talking about 'shit foreigners'. Although I knew that people think like that, it was the first time that I had heard it expressed so overtly. It did not seem to be a difficult issue to communicate or something to be ashamed of. This also appeared to be the case during the interviews. For me as a researcher, it was good that respondents did not hesitate to give their sometimes harsh opinions. However, it paradoxically made me aware of the problematic and realistic situation that is behind these perceptions. Some residents live in neighbourhoods that have changed a lot since the 1960s, and they sometimes find it hard to cope with these changes.

During my research, I was aware that being a native Dutch woman influenced the interviews, although it is hard to say in which direction or to what extent. At the same time, the dominant discourse around integration had an enormous influence. The following example shows how this discourse continues to work in the everyday language of individuals. During an excursion with Master's students, we visited a mosque and had a talk with one of the board members. He explained several issues we had asked about, for example, the decision to build a new mosque. After finishing his talk, he said that before answering questions he would like to give some answers to general questions that he is often asked. He then talked about equality between men and women, and the issue of separate entrances to and the language used in the mosque. It was striking to see that he felt the need to defend himself and to respond to issues that are debated over and over again in the general discourse. Although in interview settings this influence was less explicit, it was notable in the words being used and the arguments given.

6. Case study descriptions

In this chapter, I introduce and describe in detail the case study areas, namely Goffertpark and Thiemepark in the city of Nijmegen, and Lombok, a neighbourhood in the city of Utrecht. I chose Nijmegen since it is a typical medium-sized Dutch city. It is situated on a range of hills near the Waal river, in the east of the Netherlands. The two urban parks are in areas populated by people from different ethnic backgrounds. I chose the parks because they differ from each other in size, public and design. Goffertpark – the largest park in Nijmegen – is visited not only by residents from nearby neighbourhoods, but also by people from other parts of Nijmegen. Thiemepark is a small neighbourhood park that almost exclusively attracts people from the close vicinity. Both parks are visited by people from different ethnic backgrounds. In Lombok, I studied several public spaces and also discussed them during the interviews. However, most of my observations were made in Molenpark, Bankaplein, Muntplein and Kanaalstraat. In this chapter, I give more information about the cities of Nijmegen and Utrecht, about their policies on integration and public spaces, and about the neighbourhoods in which the research was carried out.

6.1 Nijmegen

The city in brief

Nijmegen is in the province of Gelderland, in the south-east Netherlands. The municipality is run by the mayor and 38 councillors, most of whom are oriented towards the left (they are members of the workers party, the socialist party or the greens).

Nijmegen has about 160,000 inhabitants, and this number is set to grow because, for example, new suburbs are being built in the northern part of the city. It is estimated that in the coming 10 years, Nijmegen will have approximately 187,000 inhabitants. Partly as a result of the presence of Radboud University and Hogeschool Arnhem Nijmegen (an institute for higher vocational education), the city has a relatively high percentage of inhabitants in their twenties (ex-students), a low birth-rate and many smaller households. Most inhabitants (about 120,000) are of Dutch origin. Overall, the other 40,000 people can be divided into groups of thousands of people originating from Turkey, Morocco, the Antilles and Aruba, Suriname, Indonesia, the former Republic of Yugoslavia, Germany and Belgium, and smaller groups of hundreds of people from Greece, Spain, Vietnam, Somalia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, China/Hong Kong, Great Britain, France and Ethiopia. In the last decade, the number of inhabitants from different ethnic backgrounds has increased very rapidly. Until two years ago, there was a constant increase in the number of people with Turkish or Moroccan nationality (second or third generation). The percentage of non-Western inhabitants will increase from 12.4% (2010) to 16% in 2020. Among the group of non-Westerners, there is limited growth in the number of inhabitants originating from Suriname and the Dutch Antilles. Table 6.1 provides more information.

Table 6.1. Demographics of Nijmegen (www.nijmegen.nl).

	Absolute			Percentage		
	Native Dutch	Western migrants	Non-Western migrants	Native Dutch	Western migrants	Non-Western migrants
1995	117,754	17,412	12,395	79.8%	11.8%	8.4%
2000	118,556	17,894	15,826	77.9%	11.8%	10.4%
2005	120,021	19,096	19,098	75.9%	12.1%	12.1%
2010	123,662	20,143	20,406	75.3%	12.3%	12.4%

The inhabitants from non-Western backgrounds are spread throughout the city, although more Turkish/Moroccan residents can be found in some wards (see Figure 6.1). In the western part of Nijmegen, there are more people from ethnic minorities than in the eastern part. The following wards are home to more Turkish and Moroccan residents: Nijeveld, Wolfskuil, Neerbosch Oost, Meijhorst, Aldenhof and Malvert.

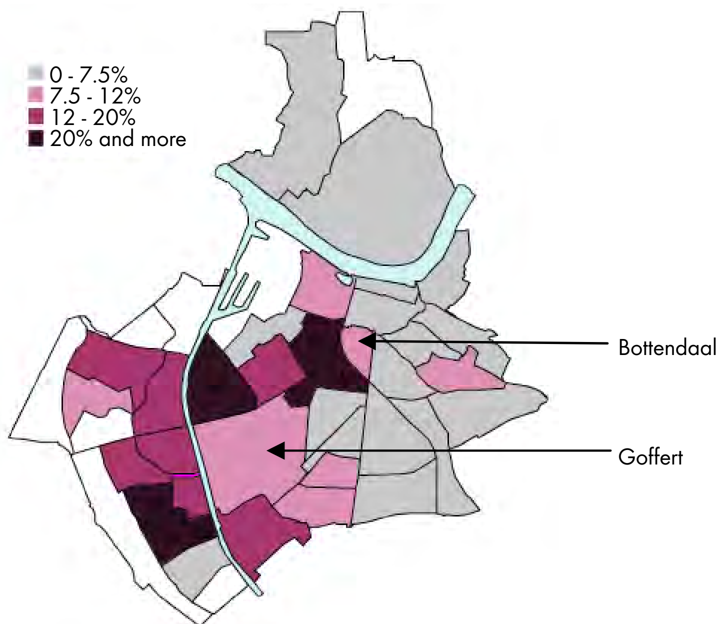

Figure 6.1. City of Nijmegen and percentage of inhabitants from non-Western backgrounds (www.nijmegen.nl).

Diversity and integration policy of the municipality of Nijmegen

The city's integration policy is based on the Multicultural Policy Action Plan, which focuses on four main issues: naturalization, labour market accessibility, education and encounters (in neighbourhoods). Besides combating the deprivation of non-native inhabitants, the policy aims at encouraging participation, stimulating inter-cultural and diversity policies in various organizations, and stressing the reciprocal character of integration. More concrete aims are formulated as follows: to promote the position of non-native inhabitants regarding labour participation, education and social participation; to prevent the process of concentration and segregation increasing any further in primary education and the housing market; to ensure that non-native inhabitants make equal use of public products and services in the domain of care and welfare; and to maintain its tolerant climate by means of sustainable encounters between native and non-native inhabitants and by means of joint contributions from organizations, institutions and the municipality in the field of encounters and integration. In order to achieve the last-mentioned aim, the municipality intends to combat segregated districts and to facilitate an increase in participation in neighbourhood activities. Of course, mixed neighbourhoods cannot be established in the short run, but it is possible to stimulate social mobility and inter-cultural contacts. In order to prevent a situation in which inhabitants of Nijmegen withdraw into their own small networks, the municipality wants to facilitate encounters out of which more structural contact between inhabitants of a neighbourhood can develop.

In Nijmegen, I studied two public spaces: Goffertpark and Thiemepark. Goffertpark is in the relatively mixed neighbourhood of Goffert district; 10% of its population of 2,600 people are non-native Dutch. The main part of the district is occupied by Goffertpark and its surrounding facilities, such as the swimming pool and stadium. It is a large district (340 ha) because it accommodates Goffertpark (80 ha), the stadium, the large Winkelsteeg business area, Kolpingbuurt (a residential area containing around 300 small, cheap rental houses and two blocks of flats, which are mainly occupied by single people), and Jongenbosch park, which was built in the early 1990s and has both owner-occupied houses and rental apartments. In Goffertpark district, 25% of the houses are owner-occupied.

A postal survey (Municipality of Nijmegen, 2005) showed that residents of Goffert district are satisfied with the spatial and social characteristics of their living environment. Their income level is normal, the education level is relatively high, the quality of the public space is satisfying and people have enough social contacts. The Kolpingbuurt neighbourhood is the only ward that does not match these statistics: non-native Dutch comprise 26% of its population. The population of Kolpingbuurt has a lower education level and an increased feeling of insecurity, and many households suffer from unemployment, health problems and addiction. The project '*Onze buurt aan zet*' (Our neighbourhood on the move; OBAZ) was launched a few years ago to activate people in the neighbourhood. The project improved the facilities for youths by creating a youth centre. An evaluation of the programme showed that although people now feel more engaged, a lot of social problems are still present.

The other public space is Thiemepark, which is in Bottendaal. The district covers only 38 ha, it is densely populated and there is not much public space. Only 1% of the area is green. Many homes do not have a private garden and there are not many public green areas. The only green space is the small neighbourhood park, Thiemepark. It only attracts people who live close to it.

Bottendaal was established towards the end of the 19th century, and many of the original houses have since been renovated. The first houses can be typified as the former mansions of the rich. From 1900 onwards, also workers' houses were built. Parts of Bottendaal were built during the city renewal projects in the 1970s and 1980s.This district can be characterized as a multifunctional district in which people both live and work. This district is close to the city centre of Nijmegen and is surrounded by main roads leading into the centre. The residents regard Bottendaal as being 'a village in a city' (www.nijmegen.nl).

The neighbourhood was very multi-ethnic in the 1970s and the 1980s. Since the 1990s, the population has changed due to gentrification. Houses had been bought by project developers and sold to people with high incomes, mainly native Dutch people. Nowadays, the neighbourhood is populated by students, Moroccan-Dutch people and highly educated native Dutch people. Bottendaal has over 4,400 inhabitants, of whom 9% are from non-Western backgrounds. There are relatively many single-person households (42% of all households). Half of the homes are rental properties.

Not many social problems arise in Bottendaal, although there are some complaints about vandalism and the shortage of parking places (Bottendaal is near the city centre and people

Photo: F. van den Muijsenberg

visiting it tend to park there). The overall score that the inhabitants give to their own neighbourhood is 7.9. According to the district monitor, people who live in Bottendaal are satisfied with living there. More than half of the inhabitants of Bottendaal state that they have regular contact with people from other ethnic backgrounds. The majority (71%) also state that living together with people of different ethnic origins is okay (Municipality of Nijmegen, 2009). However, there are signs that while people of various ethnicities live good lives within their own networks, they do not have much contact with members of other ethnic groups in the neighbourhood (Municipality of Nijmegen, 2009).

6.2 Lombok, Utrecht

The city in brief

Utrecht is the fourth largest city in the Netherlands, and is centrally located. It boasts a rich history that goes back to Roman times. The city has an old centre, canals and canal-side cellars, old churches and the Dom cathedral. It has a relatively young population composition and the most highly educated work force in the country.

The Utrecht municipality is run by the mayor and 44 councillors; again, most are oriented towards the left and are members of the workers' party, the socialist party, the greens or the social liberals.

Utrecht has a population of 307,124 (2010); between 2006 (281,011) and 2010, the population increased by 9%. This increase is due to the newly built districts Leidsche Rijn and Vleuten-de Meern, and because of the students who attend various institutes for higher education. It is expected that the population will grow to more than 350,000 in 2019 and to 386,000 in 2030. The total number of non-native Dutch citizens is more than 97,300 (2010), representing 32% of the city's total population. Some 65,500 (21%) are non-Western citizens. In the last four years the percentage of non-native Dutch citizens remained stable. Of this population, Moroccan-Dutch comprise the largest group (9%); almost half of these people are first-

generation non-native Dutch. Among the other non-Western groups, the share of the first generation is much higher (65%) than the share of the second generation (35%).

Diversity and Integration policy of the municipality of Utrecht

Utrecht has a multi-year programme titled Diversity and Integration, which lays down the framework for council policy for the period 2007-2010. The 'Implementation Programme for Diversity and Integration 2007-2010' policy document states that municipal policy is based on the opportunities offered by diversity in Utrecht. The municipality, together with its citizens, businesses and institutions, aims at increasing social cohesion (Utrecht Municipality, 2010: 4). The following three aims are formulated in the policy implementation programme:

1. To develop talent and qualities.
2. To create diverse ('colourful') organizations.
3. To connect residents to one another and to the city.

These three aims have several underlying topics of concern that together should form a balanced and broad commitment in various areas. The third aim is of special relevance to this study. Research carried out by the municipality revealed that two thirds of the residents consider it good for a country if people from different cultural backgrounds and with different religious beliefs live together. At the same time, according to the Utrecht Monitor, 90% of the native Dutch residents do not have contact with non-native Dutch citizens during their free time.

It is hoped that the third aim (to connect residents to one another and to the city) will stimulate exchange and contact, and combat intolerance and discrimination. The first topic of concern is as follows: 'Making connections in the neighbourhood and districts through contact and dialogue'. The second topic is: 'Making the value of diversity evident' through, for instance, architecture, the shops on offer and the establishment of multicultural services and institutions. The intention is also to identify projects that are sustainable and promote natural contact activities, to make these projects visible in the community and to facilitate their expansion into other neighbourhoods and districts. Another issue that gets attention in this programme is the implementation of projects in which the social capital of minority women and the elderly will be established in neighbourhoods and districts.

Specific attention is paid to public spaces. The municipality believes that public spaces can contribute to building social relationships. Spaces must be recognizable and trusted. To promote cohesion, the municipality sees a role for meeting places where people pass by naturally, places that are part of people's everyday lives. Activities could be organized in these places in order to stimulate encounters between people with similar interests, wishes and so on.

Programmes run by the departments of Education, Economic Affairs, Sports and Culture, and Social Security, Employment and Welfare contribute to promoting meetings and dialogues. In addition, many projects aimed at improving social cohesion in neighbourhoods through

meetings and dialogue are executed in different neighbourhoods under the supervision of and/or subsidized by local district authorities.

Lombok

Lombok is a neighbourhood in one of Utrecht's ten districts, namely District West. The district has around 27,000 inhabitants, of whom 8,352 live in Lombok (Utrecht: City in Brief, 2008). Lombok consists of small streets of rental and owner-occupied properties. It is centrally located and near Utrecht Central Station. Lombok is characterized by its multicultural character: it is home to native Dutch people and people originating from Turkey, Morocco, Suriname, Dutch Antilles, Greece and other countries. More than 3% of all residents are unemployed, while 10% live on social security. The average household income is about 25,500 euros, which is lower than the Utrecht average (>30,000 euros). The registered crime rate in Lombok is 85‰ (the majority of the crimes are classified as burglary, theft from vehicles, bicycle theft, violence, drugs, or disturbances caused by youths), and 37% of Lombok residents feel unsafe in their neighbourhood; both figures are higher than those for the city of Utrecht as a whole. The public space comprises a shopping centre on Kanaalstraat, certain other streets, playgrounds, squares and a park (Molenpark).

Lombok has had a multicultural population since the 1960s, when the first non-native Dutch arrived in Lombok to work for one of the local companies, such as Jaffa (machine factory), Douwe Egberts (coffee and tobacco) or Lubro (bread and bakery). These companies were suffering from labour shortages and brought in 'guest workers' from Turkey, Morocco and other Mediterranean countries to fill their vacancies. First came Italians, Spanish and Greeks, and then Turks and Moroccans. Most lived in boarding houses, because it was

assumed that their stay was temporary. When in the 1970s families were reunited, there was more demand for both rental and private housing. The increase in demand led to an increase in prices.

The recession in the 1970s resulted in bankrupt companies, unemployment and the deprivation of Lombok, which became an unattractive area in which to live. At the beginning of the 1980s, Lombok was seen as a degenerated area, with high unemployment and tensions between native and non-native Dutch people. An example of the consequences is the disorder related to the opening of the Turkish mosque in 1979 (Wouters, 1985). Other examples are noise nuisance, wilful damage to cars and gatherings of people. Moreover, some schools were typified as Turkish schools (*ibid.*). Both Wouters (1985) and Kaufman and Verkoren-Hemelaar (1983) conclude that Lombok became a district of tensions and conflict in which native and non-native residents turned away from each other. Native residents were talking negatively about the non-native residents. Wouters (1985) stated that it was mainly the high inflow of non-native residents that led to this negative image of native residents.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the decrease in contact between residents (both between native and non-native as well as within these two groups) became evident. The social network

and social control evaporated (Wouters, 1985). Many residents no longer recognized their neighbourhood. The well-known street events and associations attracted fewer residents. However, many activities aimed at stimulating inter-cultural encounters were organized. These activities were mostly the initiative of higher educated residents who had recently arrived in Lombok. However, not many results were achieved: most people stayed within their own cultural groups. For example, about 500 Turkish residents regularly met each other in the ULU mosque in Kanaalstraat.

The first signs of change appeared at the end of the 1980s. In 1988, the District West office was opened and urban renewal became top priority, resulting in the renovation of some houses and the replacement of others, which led to a gentrification of Lombok. However, this gentrification process was not only evaluated positively, because it led to an increase in prices and thus attracted only higher educated people who did not have connections with Lombok. However, others see this development as positive and state that those who want to live in Lombok finally have the opportunity to do so. Families and the elderly left the neighbourhood, and non-native residents and students flowed in.

Lombok is now a well-developed, multicultural area with a shopping street lined by retailers from all over the world. This neighbourhood has developed into a positive example of a

multicultural neighbourhood, as shown by the headline in *Utrechts Nieuwsblad* (daily newspaper for Utrecht, 1997): ‘People from Utrecht should learn from Lombok’ and the fact that in 1997 Dutch television broadcast the programme ‘Lombok cooks …’. In addition, examples can be given of local successful events in Lombok, like Festival Lombok Different (5 May) and the multicultural Salaam Lombok market.

Today, Lombok is still inhabited by a mixed population in terms of socio-economic classes, age and ethnicity, but it is perceived as a busy, multicultural, cosy, lively, dynamic, sparkling and active neighbourhood. The question is to what extent do these groups interact and to what extent do people feel at home in Lombok in general and in the public spaces in particular.

PART IV.

Everyday life in Nijmegen and Utrecht

Photo: F. van den Muijsenberg

7. Narratives of public spaces

In this chapter, I present the results I derived from my analysis of the empirical data. As noted, I needed to explore a complex interplay of issues in order to gain insight into the dynamic and two-sided relation between leisure in public space and social integration. Public spaces are the everyday spaces of citizens and are used for daily purposes – shopping, playing and wandering around. As I have shown, I use the concepts of social space, experiential space and normative space to understand the meaning of leisure in public spaces.

For social space, I investigated how people from different ethnic backgrounds use these public spaces, what they do there and with whom they visit these spaces. I also look at interactions in public spaces. During their leisure time, people see and meet cultural others in public space, and they may have brief or longer interactions with unknown others. As such, interactions in daily life between people across ethnic divides are one way of creating feelings of comfort, because they provide the basis for bonds between individuals (Marshall and Stolle, 2004; Potapchuk *et al.*, 1997), and because contact with others can mitigate prejudices and therefore create more realistic images about the other. When I discuss the presence and meaning of interactions, I stress that interactions encompass more than direct verbal communication: interactions occur in any social situation in which persons are acting in awareness of others and are continually adjusting their behaviours to the expectations and possible responses of others. In this sense, avoidance is also a form of social interaction.

Informal interactions are the most important interactions in public spaces (Muller, 2002; Ravenscroft and Markwell, 2000; Soenen, 2006). They are important because it is through interactions that social relations are formed in public spaces. They also provide insight into the extent to which people feel connected to places by having interactions with others.

Experiential space is dealt with by discussing the various meanings that people attribute to them and how they evaluate specific places in terms of place attachment. Place attachment is defined as 'a symbolic relationship formed by people giving culturally shared emotional/affective meanings to a particular space or piece of land that provides the basis for the individual's and group's understanding of and relation to the environment' (Low, 1992: 165). In order to provide insight into place attachment, I use the terms 'place dependency' and 'place identity': the former relates to the functional utility attributed to the setting because of its ability to facilitate desired leisure experiences, while the latter term focuses on the emotional and symbolic meanings that people ascribe to certain places. In that respect, I use place identity to refer to the bonding of people to a particular place (Giuliani, 2003). In doing so, I show the extent to which leisure in public space facilitates positive feelings and can create a sense of belonging, or – if leisure experiences have a negative association – a sense of not belonging because of discrimination or fear.

Finally, I discuss the normative space, which deals with the expectations and acceptation of the activities and behaviour of others in public space. This is relevant because it provides

an understanding about processes of inclusion and exclusion (what is perceived as 'normal', and what happens when behaviour is not as expected).

7.1 Goffertpark: a dynamic world of strangers

Goffertpark is a large (80 ha/200 acre) park in the city of Nijmegen (Figure 7.1). It was one of the largest job-creation projects in the crisis years of the 1930s. It was officially opened in 1939 by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands. The park provides space for relaxation and such events as concerts and circuses.

Goffertpark is used by many citizens of Nijmegen for recreational purposes, and is regarded as the environmental heart of the city (insects and small mammals have found niches in the park). The area has a skating arena, a nature garden, a swimming pool, a children's garden an open air theatre, a stadium and various other facilities. However, the focus of my research was the expanse of grass in Goffertpark (see map below).

Goffertpark is very popular among Nijmegen's residents, and it attracts people both from the immediate vicinity and from other parts of Nijmegen. The park is used for social gatherings and for getting together with friends and family, eating and relaxing. People go to

Figure 7.1. Map of Goffertpark, Nijmegen.

Goffertpark because they want to enjoy their leisure time in a relaxing but active way. The park has an open character; there is a large expanse of grass that is very suitable for many kinds of activities. Its open character stimulates active leisure activities: the space is used for playing football, running and skating, while families with small children play with balls and other objects. The atmosphere in Goffertpark can be described as active, quite noisy and rather busy. It is a popular park since it is child-friendly, has plenty of shade and people can picnic in large groups.

People do whatever they want in Goffertpark and express themselves quite overtly, whether they are playing loud music or having family picnics. They create their own places and ‘claim’ certain parts of the park at certain times. However, since the park is large, this does not often lead to conflicts.

Most visitors are couples or families with children, and they have been frequenting the park many years, spending their leisure time mainly with people of their own ethnic groups. The average group size is rather large, although non-native Dutch people seem to visit the park in larger groups (>4 people) than native Dutch people (2-4 people). In line with this, non-native Dutch people more often visit the park with their families (e.g. brothers, sisters), while native Dutch people visit the park mostly with a friend or their partner (and children). Non-native Dutch recreational and leisure time pursuits involve family and friendship roles, and they seem to affirm their ethnic ties by engaging in such activities. Although young non-native Dutch people also participate in leisure activities that are not connected to their

ethnic backgrounds, both youngsters and parents stressed the strong family bonds and the importance of going on family outings to parks.

I observed some differences in the use of the park between native and non-native Dutch users: native Dutch people cycle, run, skate and walk more often than the non-native Dutch. Native Dutch people go to the park quite often; this applies especially to joggers, inline skaters and dog walkers, who go on a daily basis. Non-native Dutch people mainly come on Sundays, and only when the weather is fine; they come to the park with family and friends and spend their time in the shade of the trees. I observed that in all cases they had food and drinks with them. Non-native Dutch people picnic more often than native Dutch people. Moreover, non-native Dutch people often played and listened to music, as is illustrated by the following observation:

> One sunny afternoon, an Antillean-Dutch man and two Antillean-Dutch women arrived at Goffertpark by car. They unloaded the car: chairs, table, food, drinks and a stereo installation – not merely a CD player, but a professional table behind which the man started to play DJ. The music was loud, and the ladies talked and moved about in their chairs. The man chatted with them between songs. At one point, he shouted: 'Hello Goffertpark! Here's your illegal DJ, playing songs for you even though he's not allowed to!' Several people were walking by. None of them complained about the loud music, and some gave the man a smile as they passed.

Residents are positive about the park because they like its open character and the large expanse of grass, which makes it easy for parents to keep an eye on their children. People characterized the park with such expressions as 'seeing other people and being seen' and 'a nice place to be'. A 68-year-old Antillean-Dutch woman reported:

> When I go to Goffertpark, I go with my family or my children. More family members or friends sometimes come too. Goffertpark is nice, open and friendly. You can sit very comfortably over there and watch other people. I find it friendlier than other parks, which I don't go to.

Goffertpark was also described as 'a world of strangers'. This term does not have a negative connotation; on the contrary, visitors said that 'everybody comes to this park, youngsters, elderly people, and there's a lot happening here; people are very active'. People from various ethnic backgrounds – such as Moroccan-Dutch, Turkish-Dutch and native Dutch – visit the park. Users of Goffertpark are recognizable to other users because of the clothes they wear and the language they speak. In that sense, leisure in public spaces such as Goffertpark provides a stage on which to watch others who are living in one's city or neighbourhood.

People feel safe in Goffertpark; they feel at home and comfortable. This also counts for non-native Dutch women, mainly Muslims, who go to the park with their families, friends or neighbours. They like the atmosphere, and the park is perceived by all female visitors as a place where they feel relaxed. As one Turkish-Dutch woman said: 'Goffertpark is a nice, open place. I like to go there with my family and friends. I really feel at ease there'.

While they are in the park, they chat, laugh, gossip and keep an eye on their children. In general, they feel at ease and enjoy their visits to the park, as confirmed by a non-native Dutch female who stated that most of her time was spent on compulsory chores, and that visits to Goffertpark were pleasurable. This place is important to these women, because their mobility is low and sometimes they are unwilling or unable to go to other leisure areas as they are busy running their households or do not have transport. Their leisure activities are limited to going to the local shops and picnicking in Goffertpark. Other social visits are mostly restricted to seeing family and friends. All visitors regard Goffertpark as a nice place to be, especially on a sunny Sunday.

People come to Goffertpark from all over Nijmegen, and not many have seen each other before in other places. Because Goffertpark is designed to facilitate many kinds of active leisure activities, people are very active and mobile, and as a result they often come across other users: they look around, watch other people, make eye contact and nod to each other. People notice each other, and they are aware of the variety of people who use this park: 'It's a great park. All kinds of people come here and do different things'.

A diverse audience shares space in Goffertpark, resulting in a culturally mixed space. This in itself creates a kind of neutral stage for contact. People see other people, and because of the variety of users, society is represented in them. Knowledge seems to be acquired and familiarity promoted not only through conversations and other direct interactions, but also through being together in the same place. A Moroccan-Dutch man told me: 'When the weather's nice, we go to Goffertpark and eat there. Many nationalities go there, which is nice ... I sometimes have chats with others, which I like very much'. This diversity in activities and people contributes to an open, accessible and friendly atmosphere. However, this atmosphere does not lead to many interactions or to close interactions. Most visitors talk

with strangers once in a while, though most conversations are rather brief and relate either to specific issues – such as their children – or to everyday issues, like the weather. Besides, the park functions as a place where especially young people meet each other spontaneously; they come to the park in small groups and play soccer in larger groups. In Goffertpark, interactions are often triggered by, for example, dogs. Dog owners regularly visit this park and they more often have contacts and brief chats with others, many of whom also have dogs. The dogs help people to strike up casual conversations with unknown others. This also applies to children, who act as a stimulus for encounters, some of which are inter-ethnic.

Although people do not go to Goffertpark in order to meet strangers, they do like to engage in small talk with new acquaintances. Interestingly, although people like this chit-chat, they do not strike up conversations themselves. One native Dutch woman said: 'I don't have contact with other people in the park. I go to there with people I know and I'm not looking to make new contacts. For me, the park is not a meeting place'.

Although these interactions can be positive and contribute to a good atmosphere, they can – and do – create tensions between visitors. The following event demonstrates how the appearance of a couple led to a reaction among other visitors, negotiating values and norms about behaviour that is perceived to be normal in public spaces during leisure time:

> It was 26 °C (79 °F) and the sun was shining. A native Dutch couple were lying down in Goffertpark. The woman wore a short skirt and a top; the man only shorts. After reading for some time, they started kissing and hugging each other.
>
> A group of pre-teen Moroccan-Dutch boys were playing soccer nearby; a Moroccan-Dutch man was refereeing. When the game was over, the boys gathered around the referee, who gave them something to drink. After finishing their drinks, the boys ran over to the couple and began to laugh and make remarks about their intimate behaviour. This went on for some minutes; the boys made their comments either while running about or standing still.
>
> The native Dutch couple looked at the boys but did not say anything. After a while, they started to read again. The boys left the park.

Although in other contexts these boys' behaviour could be described as childish, native Dutch female visitors said that they dislike this behaviour, which they typified as 'Moroccan' and 'Muslim': 'You feel uncomfortable when these Moroccan kids stare at you, and sometimes even make sexual remarks. But that's how it is; you'll hear that more often, I suppose' (27-year-old native Dutch woman). In this sense, the image of Moroccan-Dutch youngsters is confirmed and their assumed identities are reproduced – an image based on their behaviour in public space and characterized as hanging around and annoying other users, especially the women.

On another occasion, tension caused by the playing of loud music triggered an inter-ethnic interaction.

> A native Dutch couple were lying on the grass, reading. From time to time, they discussed something one of them had read. Then a Turkish-Dutch family settled down close to them. They had food and drink with them, and soon they were having a lot of fun. The group comprised five women, three men and six children.
>
> At one point, one of them walked to one of their cars and turned on the radio. At first, one could hardly hear the music. But after a few minutes, the music was turned up. The couple became irritated. The man said to the woman: 'I'm going to ask them to turn it down'. The woman looked uncomfortable at this and turned away; she did not look at them while he walked towards the car. He asked the people to turn down the music, and they did. He came back and said to the woman: 'I just asked them to turn it down. Nothing strange about that. And they turned it down'.

Interactions caused by such tensions led to longer interactions than interactions with neutral or positive intentions. There was a reason to start a conversation and something needed to be discussed; as a result, more time was needed.

A main difference between native Dutch people and non-native Dutch people is that some of the latter expressed their wish to have more interactions, while the former did not. However, non-native Dutch residents said that they will not take the initiative. When I discussed this lack of initiative with a group of Turkish women, they referred to schools as places where people can meet each other; however, interactions are mainly mono-ethnic. A Turkish-Dutch woman reported: 'There are always two groups of parents: the native Dutch and the migrants … There is no mixing between the two groups. Children play at each other's houses, but their parents have hardly any contact'.

Some Turkish-Dutch women brought up an important issue, namely that they feel as though native Dutch people are less interested in conversations than Turkish people: 'They're nice people, they say hello then walk away. Elderly people more often say things than youngsters. But in general, Dutch people do not easily strike up conversations'. So, although non-native Dutch people seem to like the interactions when they happen spontaneously, most often they do not start the conversation themselves; they would prefer native Dutch persons to start one with them. However, native Dutch people are happy with the status quo and will not start a conversation.

Another reason why non-native Dutch people feel that starting a conversation is not appreciated, is related to the issue brought up by a 50-year-old Turkish-Dutch woman: 'I'm always nice to people, whether they're Dutch or Turkish. But I sometimes think that we [Muslim non-native Dutch] give more respect to Dutch people than we receive from them. Things were different ten years ago'. The existence of deeper ethnic tensions in Dutch society can be explained by non-native Dutch people not feeling respected as Muslims. Muslim visitors seemed to act as they wished according to their Muslim values. However, they did not always feel respected by the native Dutch, as illustrated by a 56-year-old Turkish-Dutch woman's comment: 'Things in the Netherlands have changed. In the 1980s, everybody was friendly, but they aren't now. Dutch people you don't know are less friendly … I don't feel accepted. Just last week, a boy of 10 insulted me'. It seems these visitors think that the prejudices of native Dutch residents against ethnic minorities are stronger than those of migrants against the native Dutch.

Big events are held in Goffertpark every year, for example on Queen's Day (a national holiday celebrating the queen's official birthday). Residents see these as a good opportunity to meet other people. During these events people have brief interactions with others that would otherwise not happen, because during events people can talk about common interests. Some residents, mainly non-native residents, think that organizing more events would stimulate more contact, and that this would be beneficial.

Everyone feels that Goffertpark is important, but since it is the most 'famous' park in Nijmegen, people do not worry about its future; they take it for granted that the park will remain as it is. There is, however, a difference between people who live near the park and use it frequently and other residents of Nijmegen. The first group feels more connected to the park, in the sense that they express their wishes more clearly and complain to local governmental organizations when they feel that 'their' park is not being taken care of properly. They worry more about the future of the park and, more specifically, about the ways in which it is used. They complain about the pop concerts that are held there, because during concerts the grass is ruined and people cannot access large parts of the park. Local residents try to stay 'connected' with Goffertpark by attempting to keep it as open and accessible as possible. They perceive Goffertpark as a public space, and feel that limiting access does not foster its public character. For people who visit this park less often and who do not live close to it, this type of attachment is not evident.

Discussion

People from various ethnic backgrounds feel the need to use Goffertpark for relaxation. This urban park allows various ethnic groups to enjoy outdoor life in a green and relaxing environment, which is in contrast to some other studies that concluded that it is mostly native people who use urban green spaces (Elmendorf *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, this urban park can be seen as an inclusive place, that is, as a place where people of different ethnicities spend their leisure time (Peters, 2010). This is in contrast to many nature areas outside cities, which are hardly visited by non-native Dutch people. Although Goffertpark is used by a diverse group of people, I observed differences between ethnic groups: 'having a picnic or a barbecue' and 'meeting other people' are much more important to non-native than to native Dutch people. This is in line with the conclusion of Elmendorf and colleagues (2005), who state that social motives are less important to whites than to African-Americans.

Moreover, non-native Dutch people seem to visit Goffertpark in larger groups than native Dutch people, which is in line with other studies (Elmendorf *et al.*, 2005; Gobster, 1998). Since many of the non-native Dutch visitors are Muslim, this can be related to the fact that Muslims' leisure behaviour tends to be collectivistic in nature and focused on strong family ties (Hasan, 2001). Stodolska (2000) also noted that migrants were clear about their ethnic heritage and used leisure as a tool for connecting with their old way of life and for retaining their cultural tradition.

Although other research has shown that public spaces can be places of fear, especially for women, my findings do not support this. Men and women feel at ease in Goffertpark. Overall, people said that they felt welcome because of the openness to all people and the diverse atmosphere of the park (Peters, 2010). Although some Muslim residents underlined the restrictions imposed by Islam, Muslim women go to Goffertpark on their own or with other, usually non-native Dutch women. It seems that these public spaces function as a transitional space – a space between the safe private space and the unknown public space – to bridge the boundaries between the self and the other (Ellsworth, 2005).

The number and type of interactions relate to, for example, the function of space. The open and accessible character of Goffertpark stimulated some informal and cursory interactions. Moreover, interactions are often sparked by an external stimulus, such as a dog or a child (cf. Lofland, 1998). Dog owners often visit Goffertpark and come across the same people. These people become familiar strangers, persons who are not personally known but are recognizable because of a shared daily path (Lofland, 1998: 60). In Goffertpark, residents refer to several types of events as possible meeting places. Activities and events can stimulate interactions because relations are being formed by 'foci of activities' (Feld, 1997). For the formation of relations, it is important to create opportunities to meet others.

Looking at the differences between people, while native Dutch people do not want more interactions, some non-native Dutch do; however, the latter do not take the initiative, partly because they think that this will not be appreciated. As a result, non-native Dutch people are hesitant to start conversations with native Dutch people. This can relate to what Dekker and Bolt (2005) stated, namely that the prejudices of native Dutch residents against ethnic minorities are possibly stronger than those of non-native Dutch against native Dutch peoples, leading to a situation in which non-native Dutch people do not feel invited to interact.

People are attached to Goffertpark. People like to be in this urban park and they enjoy meeting and seeing other people, which appears to lead to feelings of connection to the place (Peters, 2010). Residents who live near Goffertpark are more attached to the park and are therefore more concerned about its future accessibility.

Although the behaviour of others is sometimes discussed, in general people have a similar idea of what 'normal' behaviour is.

In short, Goffertpark functions as a 'dynamic world of strangers', a world in which people from different ethnic backgrounds are together. People feel welcome because this space is open and accessible. People enjoy people-watching because of the diversity of people in these places. People from ethnic backgrounds are co-present in the park, and they seem familiar and comfortable in this atmosphere, although this did not lead to many interactions. Goffertpark consequently provides a vital locality where everyday experiences are shared and negotiated with a variety of people.

7.2 Thiemepark: an inclusive neighbourhood park

Thiemepark is an intimate, very small neighbourhood park in Bottendaal, a district close to Nijmegen city centre. The district covers only 38 ha and is densely populated. Many houses do not have private gardens and the only green space in the district is Thiemepark (Figure 7.2).

Thiemepark only attracts people who live near it. The park is mostly visited by couples and groups of friends. However, non-native Dutch people rarely visit the park in couples, leading to a difference in average group size between native and non-native Dutch people: non-native Dutch people visit Thiemepark in larger groups than native Dutch people.

Figure 7.2. Map of Thiemepark area, Nijmegen.

As was the case with Goffertpark, most people said that they usually go to the park with people from similar ethnic backgrounds. In general, mainly native Dutch students, couples and non-native Dutch youngsters use the park. On sunny days, more families with children go there. For them, the park is a good place to kick or throw balls around and to teach their children to ride a bike.

People sit on the grass, relax, eat or read, and do not pay much attention to others, which leads to a quiet atmosphere. Thiemepark is perceived as a relaxing place, a place where locals have a chat and drink a glass of wine; they like being there. Residents often go to Thiemepark and many visitors know each other from other places in their neighbourhood, leading to an atmosphere in which it is easy for residents to say hello and greet each other:

> I like being in this park. I go when there's an event on, or just to walk around. I don't really have contact with people I don't know, except during events, then I talk about common interests, like the tango event. That's enough for me (60-year-old native Dutch woman).

> I like living in this neighbourhood, and I often go to Thiemepark, mostly on my own. I meet other people, many of whom I've known all my life. I like to have contact with them in the park (26-year-old Moroccan-Dutch man).

People felt comfortable sitting very close to other people; they are at ease in 'their' park. The direct link with and the closeness to the neighbourhood created this familiar atmosphere.

Residents tend to establish relations with places of proximity such as Thiemepark. The park can be characterized as the users' back garden and as an ordinary everyday place. Many people go to the park because they do not have gardens and therefore use the park as a kind of extended home. Many of them live near the park; they often left the park and came back a short while later with something to drink. Quite a few people eat dinner in the park, although this is a rather specific group, namely native Dutch students.

Although the small size of Thiemepark combined with the familiar atmosphere would seem to allow more accidental interactions, not many intensive interactions occurred, although people greeted each other quite often, probably because they had seen each other before. Residents tend to inhabit their own space focusing on their own group and activities, not wanting to disturb others. Even though residents are quite intimate with each other, they act as though they are in a private space. They do not want to interact with others, but to socialize with their own group: 'People like to be on their own' (Dutch male). Residents enjoy the relaxing atmosphere of Thiemepark mainly by interacting with known others. This results in a feeling of togetherness without interacting closely during their visits. Most of the interactions are between known others and there are not many conversations between strangers mainly because residents and other people visit these public spaces for other reasons than trying to meet or interact with strangers. As stated by a middle-class native Dutch woman who lives close to Thiemepark: 'I spend time in the public spaces in my neighbourhood, but I don't engage with strangers'.

An example of the type of interaction that can lead to tension is when women lie down on the grass and are stared at by Moroccan-Dutch youngsters. This type of behaviour, which I also observed in Goffertpark, is displayed by Moroccan-Dutch teenagers who are trying

to get women's attention. This happened quite often in Thiemepark. While the place was used as a place to enjoy the sun by many native Dutch female students, non-native Dutch teenagers watched these women, and sometimes also made remarks about and to them.

Thiemepark has an intimate atmosphere. The residents said that they like living in the neighbourhood and the idea that most of those who use Thiemepark also live in the neighbourhood. Moreover, most of the visitors underlined the importance of this green space in a neighbourhood in which most space is used for houses and infrastructure. Residents feel very much at home in this park. The fact that they know quite a number of people when they visit the park gives them a sense of familiarity. They feel comfortable and relaxed. Although residents stated that this place could be used to get in touch with other people, not many examples were given that show that this indeed happened. Residents living near Thiemepark valued living in a multicultural neighbourhood, but the various ethnic groups did not interact closely with each other either in or outside the park.

When Thiemepark was designed, one of the clear objectives was to create a meeting place. Local residents were involved in every phase of the park's design process, and they said they wanted a green place where they could sit, relax and meet each other. The design reflects many of these wishes. For example, the grassy area is gently sloped in order to discourage the playing of football and thus minimize possible conflicts over its use. Rest and gathering are supposed to be the main functions of this park. In addition, the wish to have water in the park was expressed mainly by Moroccan-Dutch people, and water was included in the design. Furthermore, the multicultural character of the neighbourhood was explicitly acknowledged by, for example, including Arabic elements, such as a sculpture by an Arab artist.

The multicultural character of the neighbourhood was acknowledged by many people, who referred to the residents themselves, the children at the schools and to festivals in Thiemepark. An example of one of these festivals is the Mundial festival, a multicultural event attended by many performing artists from all over the world. During this event many different cultural groups are present in the park. However, the programme showed that this diversity mainly relates to the various artists from Ghana, Ecuador and India, and much less to the non-native Dutch residents of Bottendaal, who are mainly Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch people. While some of them did go to the festival, few participated in the organized activities. And although these types of events are mentioned as a way to stimulate inter-ethnic interactions, there were not many inter-ethnic encounters during the event.

Discussion

Thiemepark is a small neighbourhood park that is mainly used by people who live close to it. They value the park positively and feel at ease there partly because of the familiar atmosphere. Residents mainly have interactions with known others. The small size of Thiemepark does not stimulate interactions that much. But residents have positive experiences in the park because of the brief interactions and because they like the park itself. This is in line with what Goffman (1971) described as 'norms of civil inattention', the normal interaction between strangers in public involves a ritual of acknowledgement via eye contact that eventually ends in the two parties politely ignoring one another. It is a way to show that you have noticed others' presence in public space, but that you do not pay special attention to them. In that way, you show that you do not have feelings of fear. This order in public space is maintained by the shared preferences and habits of visitors (cf. Lofland, 1973).

Respectful interactions enable citizens to have rewarding social interactions and to develop social networks that are sustained by trust. These in turn support a wider social sphere that is characterized by peaceful coexistence, prosperity and inclusion (Goffman, 1971). In Thiemepark this norm of civil inattention was clearly visible; everybody took notice of others in the park, but quickly focused on their own group.

The park attracts a diverse group of people and can be described as an inclusive place; however, in contrast to Goffertpark, people take little notice of each other. This relates to what Lofland (1998: 31) calls 'mind your own business', which is an integral element of the

behavioural code in the public realm. In Thiemepark, people acted more as though they were in a private place, while at the same time they did notice the presence of others. It is a place where residents see a lot of known others.

The fact that the design of Thiemepark was made in cooperation with the local residents has strengthened the familiarity with and use of it, and has also increased the opportunities for social interactions between different ethnic groups (Peters *et al.*, 2010; cf. Rishbeth, 2001).

In general, people like to be there together with known others. A combination of knowing other people and having informal and cursory interactions leads to feelings of comfort and makes people feel at ease and at home. Residents feel attached to the park. This is in line with Dines and Cattell (2006), who conclude in their research in south-east London that these cursory interactions facilitate feeling at ease in certain public places. Although the behaviour of others in Thiemepark is sometimes discussed, in general people have a similar idea of what 'normal' behaviour is, as is the case in Goffertpark.

Thus, Thiemepark functions as a small neighbourhood place that can easily be entered as a familiar place. Residents feel welcome in this inclusive neighbourhood park. The park functions as an everyday place in which people feel at home. Although this does not mean that there are many interactions, it does stimulate feelings of comfort, public familiarity and attachment.

7.3 Kanaalstraat: confronting the non-ordinary in a multicultural shopping street

Kanaalstraat is the central axis in Lombok, a district close to Utrecht city centre (see Figure 7.3). The street has an important infrastructural function both in terms of connecting the area to the city centre and in relation to the flow of traffic within and to Lombok. Furthermore, shops and other services are concentrated in this street, in which people also live. During the 1970s and 1980s, mainly non-native Dutch entrepreneurs opened shops in Kanaalstraat. The ULU mosque and a Catholic church are also in this street. Together, these functions generate a busy, lively street and a lot of traffic. Most of the houses were built at the end of the 19th century, and this is reflected in the architecture, which is fairly uniform and richly ornamented and is representative of 'worker districts' at that time.

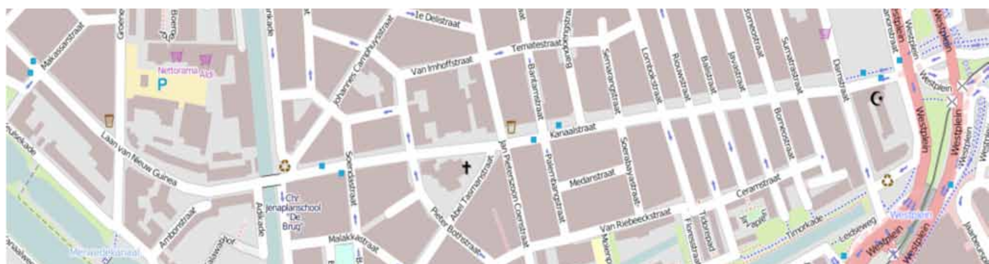

Figure 7.3. Map of Kanaalstraat, Utrecht.

As you walk along Kanaalstraat, you see many non-native Dutch shops. The street view is determined by Turkish, Indian and Surinamese shops and restaurants, as well as by vegetable shops and Islamic butchers. Kanaalstraat has been ‘world famous’ for many years not only in Lombok but also throughout the Netherlands. Residents who have lived in Lombok for over 35 years (who are referred to as the ‘original’ residents (cf. Reijndorp, 2004) talk about the history of the street with much enthusiasm.

Everyone knows Kanaalstraat and characterizes it as lively, busy, foreign and chaotic. The street is the centre of Lombok. It is the most noticeable example of a public space in Lombok that attracts a lot of people from all walks of life. Most local residents visit the street at least a couple of times a week, and they come across a big variety of people when they do so. Kanaalstraat is designed as a shopping street: the main activity is shopping and people enjoy shopping here. They combine the functional and the relaxing when they go to Kanaalstraat. People can go to the greengrocer’s and buy the things they need, but at the same time be in a pleasant and exciting place – a place that is described as ‘like being at a market’. Residents can find almost everything in this street, which is handy as it is close to their homes. As a result, they spend a lot of time in Kanaalstraat, mainly shopping or strolling around.

Kanaalstraat is highly appreciated and enjoyable, but going there is strongly connected to the functional aspect of shopping: ‘It’s just a street with many shops and restaurants where people eat’. People go there to do their shopping; if they want, there are other public places that are more relaxing to visit. In that sense it is perceived by some more as a space to pass through and use, than as a space to enjoy. People go there to do their shopping, and

not for enjoyment or pleasure only. As well as shopping, people wander up and down and sometimes even parade in the street. Moreover, Kanaalstraat is a nice street to cycle along on your way to work or the city centre. Residents like to cycle along Kanaalstraat, even when it is not the shortest route to wherever they are going; it is nice to bike there because they see people they know and they sometimes stop for a chat or to 'drink some tea at the butcher's'.

Kanaalstraat attracts an ethnically diverse group of people. The overwhelming multicultural character of the street is recognized by most users. A Turkish-Dutch woman described the street as a place where you find many different nationalities. She even stated that she had heard that there are 64 nationalities present in Kanaalstraat, though most people are Turkish, Moroccan, Iranian, Sudanese, Surinamese, Bosnian or native Dutch. A native Dutch woman said she was thrilled by the street scene and, like the Turkish-Dutch woman (23 years old), was most impressed by the diversity:

> I cycle along Kanaalstraat every day. I just like to cycle there, even though it's sometimes unbearably busy. I buy my vegetables and fruit, which is very easy for me, since I live nearby. I think Kanaalstraat is fantastic; I really am a fan! I'd describe the street as a street that always lives, no matter what time of the day you're there. People of different ages are always awake, in a strange way. But mainly there are many foreigners. I say that because, well, that's just how it is.

The multicultural character of this street is strongly related to the foreign character of the street, meaning the visibility of ethnic diversity exposed through the many shops that are present in this street: from Turkish bakeries to a florist, from pizza restaurants to an off-license, from a Surinamese restaurant to a butcher who sells horse meat, and from a Moroccan restaurant to a drug store. An Israeli-Dutch woman portrayed the street as almost 'Middle Eastern'. This multicultural character is perceived as pleasant and enjoyable: a 'piece of a foreign country' in the city of Utrecht where you can 'smell many different spices'.

Residents encounter ethnic diversity in Kanaalstraat because they see diversity when they look at the shops, or smell, buy or taste a range of products in which diversity is reflected. Some residents think that there is a difference between the use of this street by native Dutch and non-native Dutch people: the latter see Kanaalstraat as a place to encounter others, a place where they can have long chats with others in the street, whereas native Dutch residents mainly use the street for shopping, and while doing their shopping they sometimes have chats with known others. As a result, non-native Dutch people are more visible in this street when standing around in groups, which is recognized by most residents and is seen as part of the multicultural character of Kanaalstraat.

One native Dutch female resident went so far in stressing the multicultural character of Kanaalstraat that she tried to convince me that 75% of all visitors are non-native Dutch people. Other people even said that it is a non-Dutch street mainly visited by people of Moroccan, Turkish or Surinamese descent. A native Dutch woman who goes there twice a day stated that people have to get used to the fact that 'there are many foreigners in Kanaalstraat. The residents are used to it, but non-residents probably aren't'. A Turkish-Dutch shopkeeper

even said that although Kanaalstraat is enjoyable and cheap and it is possible to bargain over things, it frightens native Dutch people because 'there are many Turkish and Moroccan people'. For the majority of residents, the street confirms the multicultural character of the neighbourhood, and they feel that they are part of it and that they contribute to shaping that character. A Moroccan-Dutch shopkeeper:

> Well, there's more of a social atmosphere here, like in the Mediterranean. People are more open with each other; even when they don't really know each other, they just have a chat. Like in my shop, I see people getting to know one another and chatting away. So it's, let's say, more social … Some kind of joy rules here, especially when it's very busy and people are talking and laughing; people of various nationalities. So, probably more Turks and Moroccans live here, but there are also other nationalities. Yes, you see here in Kanaalstraat every nationality that's present in the Netherlands or Utrecht.

In line with this, most residents value Kanaalstraat extremely positively because of its multicultural and lively atmosphere; it is an important place. In general, people feel attached to Kanaalstraat and it means a lot to them; they feel welcome there. Residents have good memories of Kanaalstraat, referring to the many activities that are organized, such as the market on Liberation Day, which features music, food and a fair. Many memories are

associated with the social character of the street and relate to the fact that people feel at home there. This is partly because people grew up in Kanaalstraat or have had shops in this street.

Thus, residents regard Kanaalstraat as unique and 'something different'. They talk about this street as something non-ordinary, exotic or foreign. Residents said that being in Kanaalstraat gives you 'a kind of feeling like you are on a holiday', referring to all the stalls with fruits and vegetables, or 'a feeling as though you're in a different world'. But residents also experience Kanaalstraat on a regular basis as part of their everyday lives. They encounter daily life in Kanaalstraat, and one cannot escape that while being in Kanaalstraat.

The type of people who visit Kanaalstraat varies a bit depending on the time and the day. During the day, more families and mothers, both native and non-native Dutch, are shopping. Many non-native Dutch men are also present, mainly going to the restaurants or snack bars. On Saturdays, a more culturally diverse mass of people visit Kanaalstraat, not only from Lombok but also from other parts of and areas outside Utrecht. On weekdays, Kanaalstraat is busy but cosy, but on Saturdays it is thronged with people, most of whom are Turkish-Dutch, as stated by the Lombok district manager. Many people, mainly Turkish-Dutch, from outside Utrecht visit Kanaalstraat: 'Turkish-Dutch people from Gouda', 'tourists', 'white young families that buy a Turkish pizza and Turkish bread', 'people who come especially to buy horse meat', or 'people who want to get meat from the Islamic butcher because he "slaughters his meat in a special way"'. Because of the large numbers it is very busy and chaotic, and many people do not act ´according to the rules´: people park their cars where they are not allowed to or block the road while they pop into a shop. For some native Dutch residents, the overcrowding on Saturdays is a reason not to go there.

In Kanaalstraat people can have a good chat with locals and shopkeepers. Because of the number of people present in Kanaalstraat, it is easy to meet others. Although many interactions occur, most of them are brief and fleeting encounters and do not lead to closer contact. There is a lively atmosphere: people talk with other people in shops, because for example they want to know the name of an exotic fruit, as well as in cafes and restaurants and on the street, where people walk and pass by and where shopkeepers and their friends sit out in front of their shops. Residents have good memories of this, like 'having a short conversation with the Surinamese man in his shop' or talking with people you normally would not talk with:

> I like all those small social things that happen in everyday life. Having a conversation with a Moroccan man with whom you normally would not speak. He's about 60, and he told me a whole story, half in Moroccan and half in Dutch. I like that. Not that you understand each other, but it's a nice thing (23-year-old native Dutch woman).

In the everyday life of residents, the brief chats are valued and they think that Kanaalstraat is a good place to meet other people. People come across many strangers, including cultural others, which is perceived as a characteristic of city life in general and of Lombok in particular, and also as a good situation: 'a pleasant anonymity'. It is a busy street and

especially on Saturdays, you are among strangers when walking there, as a native Dutch woman said: 'There are many unknown people, especially in the first part of Kanaalstraat, because it's a place that attracts a diverse group of people'. Residents said how much they appreciate the fact that strangers talk and laugh together in a relaxed atmosphere, and that everybody, independent of ethnicity, seems to be taken by the openness and inclusiveness of street life.

In addition to the many unknown faces, residents encounter persons they do not know that well, but with whom they are familiar because they have lived in Lombok for many years: 'I've got many acquaintances and I know many people there'. They see and greet quite a lot of people that they know from Lombok; a native Dutch woman called this a 'greeting relationship'. One Turkish-Dutch woman said that she knows quite a lot of people and that when she walks along Kanaalstraat she greets many people. 'But that's all, just saying hello'. Although those residents who have not lived in Lombok for very long do not know that many people, they have chats in Kanaalstraat and they get to know some people because, for example, they go to the same shops every week. Residents who visit the same shops regularly, more often have a chat with the shopkeepers or with people who are standing outside: 'I always go to the same greengrocer's. He's a foreigner, but he's always very friendly, and that's why I always go there' (62-year-old native Dutch woman). One resident told me that if I ever got lonely, 'you could go to Kanaalstraat, stand somewhere and it wouldn't take long before someone talked to you' (40-year-old German-Dutch man). Most residents feel at ease in Kanaalstraat, and feel that this street is an important part of the social life of Lombok, partly because it is also a place where residents meet their neighbours who are shopping there as well. Thus, it is about seeing each other and saying hello:

> Everybody who lives in Lombok visits Kanaalstraat, and everybody uses it positively. They like the shops and they like to be there; that's one of the reasons why people want to live in Lombok. The fact that everybody goes to Kanaalstraat with a positive feeling, contributes to good relations between people in Lombok (33-year-old native Dutch woman).

A native Dutch woman who has lived in Lombok for over 30 years said she enjoys being in Kanaalstraat because she meets friends and acquaintances from the past there. She goes to 'Stompie' (the tobacconist's) every week. In the winter, she goes there at around 11.00, and she gets home again at about 13.30, explaining that shopping in Kanaalstraat is a nice and social thing to do. Because the residents are always friendly and faces become more familiar over time, people greet each other in Kanaalstraat, which leads to chats in shops and in the street, either with people not familiar to them or with someone they know from Lombok.

Encounters most often occur between people from similar ethnic backgrounds; there is less interaction between people from different ethnic backgrounds. However, there is quite some inter-ethnic interaction in shops and with shopkeepers, although some say that Moroccan-Dutch people only go to the Moroccan shops, while others go to other shops too:

> As you walk along Kanaalstraat, you'll see in front of every shop a group of people originating from the same country as the shopkeeper. They sit outside and drink tea and have a chat, and that's fun. You get to know many people (41-year-old Turkish-Dutch man).

Others stated that having more inter-ethnic contacts would be nice: 'It would be fun to have a chat with Moroccan women, if they spoke Dutch' (33-year-old native Dutch woman). Others again affirmed that it is important to interact with ethnic others:

> It's easy, and I'd say more natural, to have contact with people of the same nationality, with Turkish people. You have your own language, you can talk easily; with traditions and such issues we understand each other more easily. I also find it easy to talk with people of my own nationality. But because I live here, I'm conscious that I need to interact with different individuals and be more social. Well, actually, I don't think I have a choice (37-year-old Turkish-Dutch woman).

Shopkeepers play an important role in the street. Some residents mentioned the differences between the various shopkeepers. Some of them they find really nice people and they have a chat almost every time they enter their shops. Others, however, are seen as less friendly, mainly because they are perceived as less able to communicate. Some women do not feel at ease in shops as a result of the shopkeepers' remarks:

> I avoid some Moroccan shops, because I always got sexist remarks. I made it clear that I didn't like it, but they didn't stop. And so – I'm very strict about it – I won't go to that shop again. I show them that if they won't listen to me, well, feel it. But further down Kanaalstraat there are some Iranians, very friendly people with a

> well arranged shop and very specific goods. I really like it there, because they're very friendly – but don't make passes at me (41-year-old native Dutch woman).

People feel safe in Kanaalstraat, although some differentiate between Kanaalstraat during the day and Kanaalstraat at night, stating that at night Kanaalstraat is less safe. They do not think that Kanaalstraat is a place to be at night if you are a woman, because there are groups of loutish youngsters hanging around. But in general, residents feel comfortable and safe in Kanaalstraat. This feeling of safety is strongly related to the feeling of being at home and knowing the people. A native Dutch woman (47 years old) stated:

> Sometimes people are afraid, but I don't get it; I don't know why they hug their bags close to them. But well, if you walk like that, you're going to provoke a bit. However, I feel very safe here. But that's also because I've known these boys since they were little; I saw all these boys growing up here … I have a bond with them. If you drop someone into the middle of Kanaalstraat just like that, then I can imagine that he or she will think there are many of them. But if you grew up with it, it's totally different.

And although residents do not know each other by name, there is strict social control and the residents know who belongs in Lombok. This social control strengthens the feelings of safety:

> I recently went to a Moroccan hairdresser, because I live in Lombok, so I have to. And this man said: 'I know you, you've lived in Lombok for a long time'. And that's typical of Lombok: people don't really know each other, but there is a lot of social control (23-year-old native Dutch woman).

However, other residents explicitly referred to the presence of men in public spaces, such as Kanaalstraat, and being fearful of them. One native Dutch woman mentioned the shopkeepers as a reason for feeling less comfortable in Kanaalstraat, because she does not feel at ease with the fact that mainly non-native Dutch men are present in Kanaalstraat and dominate the public life:

> Yes, because of the activities. You see many, many men in the streets. Being a woman, you don't feel very comfortable with that. The men from the shops, they live more outside than women do. I don't have bad experiences, and I just walk by when I go to the station and that's fine. I'm never scared. But it's just … Well, I'm glad I don't live in Kanaalstraat (45-year-old native Dutch woman).

When discussing the behaviour of others in Kanaalstraat, residents said that in some parts youngsters sometimes loiter, although not that many youngsters hang around in Kanaalstraat. They are sometimes seen there driving backwards and forwards on their scooters, or standing in front of the snack bar at the beginning of Kanaalstraat. Youngsters stand outside mainly because they want to eat something. The Lombok district manager thinks that this behaviour and the reactions to it are related to the different ways in which this behaviour is perceived by people: 'A group of Turkish-Dutch boys standing in front of

the supermarket leads to more negative feelings than when native Dutch youngsters do the same'. Others said that sometimes they were whistles at, but that does not bother them; they just ignore it. In general, residents notice the presence of youngsters, mainly Moroccan-Dutch boys, loitering around, which they see as normal behaviour for youngsters.

Residents complain about the rubbish and the traffic, which sometimes makes them feel unsafe. The following statement by a native Dutch woman (71 years old) who has lived in Lombok for over 30 years shows that this rubbish and the consequences of the behaviour of others are of concern to residents:

> It's often a mess in Kanaalstraat, because they drop all kinds of things in the streets … People from the shops and the youngsters do that. Once I was upstairs in my house and I opened my window and looked down, and a foreign boy came into the street, eating pizza out of a box. He saw me standing over here, looked at me and threw a piece of pizza into my neighbours' garden. And a bit further along he dropped the box on the pavement. And I didn't say anything, because if I did he might have smashed my windows, you know. We're becoming afraid of those youngsters, it's a shame. Yes, that I find very pitiful and I don't dare to say anything.

As a result, drinks cans and other rubbish can be seen almost everywhere in the street. This behaviour is most often linked to non-native Dutch residents. A native Dutch woman said the following about this behaviour:

> It's not the Dutch who drop things; it's the people from other countries. I'm pretty sure that it's the result of cultural differences. I don't know exactly which countries they come from, but Dutch people more often put their stuff in dustbins than people from other cultures, like Morocco. I once went to Egypt and Morocco, and people there are used to dropping things in the street. I think it has to do with that. I often see this in Lombok and I often make a remark about it. But they don't change their behaviour. Many Dutch people find it annoying, and I think that we should act more firmly about this behaviour. Because I find it a pity when people spend money on beautiful flower planters and things, and then it looks as though other people do not appreciate it. It's just is not respectful of them (41-year-old native Dutch woman).

The busy traffic and the parked cars are also perceived as problematic. It is increasingly unsafe for pedestrians, and residents complain about cars blocking the street and people driving too fast. This behaviour is perceived as very irritating because of the arrogance of the men who do it. A native Dutch woman said that these types of situations are most often caused by the 'shit Moroccans'. This situation is most unsafe for children, of course, but also for adults. It is hard to cross the street because people drive too fast:

> It's sometimes very busy and the kids on scooters and mopeds like to drive way too fast around here. That sometimes annoys me. It's dangerous as well. It really amazes me that nobody gets killed. I mean, there are buses, and trucks loading and unloading. It's just very hectic (51-year-old native Dutch man).

On the other hand, busy traffic is also seen as something that is part of living in a city, and thus also part of life in Lombok. Nevertheless, residents think that being a bit more considerate to other road users would make everyday life in Lombok, and especially in Kanaalstraat, safer. Residents do not like people who double-park, drive too fast or do not pay attention to other cars, cyclists and pedestrians. It is busy, but that in itself is not problematic; it is the behaviour of people, mainly youngsters, that makes it problematic:

> Traffic is very bad, which has to do with people. People who drive here in their cars don't drive on through. They stop somewhere, get out of their cars, turn on their emergency lights, leave the doors open, double-parked and then they meet someone they have to say hi to. So the car becomes more of an easy place to sit for a while, whereas they are actually in public space. That behaviour really annoys me; it irritates me. And some people take up the whole street, for example Dutch students who cycle along next to each other. They're saying that the street is theirs, and that annoys me (33-year-old native Dutch woman).

Thus, residents complain about unsafe situations caused by drivers who display 'cheeky and dangerous behaviour'. They furthermore said that the ones doing this are mainly youngsters and non-native Dutch men. But although the traffic is an issue, few accidents happen.

In the last couple of decades, there have been many changes in Kanaalstraat, partly because of the inflow of non-native Dutch residents. The original residents, some of whom have lived all their lives in Lombok, refer to changes that have to do with the type of shops and the events that were organized in the past. Most of them rate these changes not completely positively; some said that it was better in the past than it is today. They talk passionately about the Kanaalstraat of long ago, like about the time when there was an annual 'shopping week' instead of 'only a day market':

> We used to have these shopping weeks. It was beautiful, fun, but they're no longer held. Now we have a day market. But you see, it's different now, because for example there are twenty stalls selling collars and glowing things. All cheap foreign clothes. I don't like that. Lombok used to be so beautiful. The shopping week was so beautiful (69-year-old native Dutch woman).

Furthermore, original residents refer to the time when there was a wide variety of shops, high quality goods in the shops, stylishness and many shop windows to look into. Comparing this situation with the present day, they regard negatively the changes that have resulted in a street with 'thirteen vegetable shops' and many hairdressers, almost all of foreign origin. The fact that many 'Dutch' shops have become 'foreign' shops reinforces the idea that they are living in a neighbourhood where they are different from many of the other residents: 'At the moment they're all non-Dutch shops, and I miss the Dutch shops'. Most residents like a

variety of shops, and some think that variety is slowly disappearing. Many Dutch shops have already closed their doors, leading to less variety:

> There used to be a Dutch butcher here who had the best liver sausage and the best German sausage. I have memories of that. And in the past when you needed a button, there used to be a haberdashery. Nowadays, you can't find things like that in Kanaalstraat. But, Kanaalstraat went on, adjusted itself to a different age and culture. It's just … Well, it belongs to this era, and it's logical (47-year-old native Dutch woman).

Most of the residents also see the advantages of these changes, namely that different types of food are on sale in Kanaalstraat. As one resident said: 'I try everything that is exotic. I want to taste those things, which is fun to do. … I do like all the colourful cultures'. But also some negative aspects are related to this development. Residents stated that the quality has suffered and 'many people put their stuff out on the pavement, because they want to sell it', resulting in a more messy street. What bothers the original residents most is the idea that the new shopkeepers care less about maintaining the street and their shops: 'Everything is maintained less. That also applies to the shops. We paint and maintain everything, but they [non-native Dutch shopkeepers] don't do that in the same way' (71-year-old native Dutch woman). It is annoying that people drop rubbish in the streets and in the flower planters.

In the last couple of years, many improvements have been made in Kanaalstraat. A lot has been done to create a cleaner and safer street. A native Dutch man who has lived in Lombok for over 30 years said that CCTV cameras and other forms of surveillance have led to fewer groups loitering in the streets or riding too fast along Kanaalstraat on their scooters; according to him, these people were mostly Moroccan youths. There is also less rubbish in the streets, because a couple of years ago the municipality started cleaning them every morning. Both improvements have created a safer street, but they do not undermine the chaotic character of the street, which for residents is and should stay part of its nature, a character that is linked to disorder. Without throngs of people and boarded-up shops, the atmosphere would be different and, for some, 'a bit weird'. The normal commotion is how Kanaalstraat should be. This is also recognized by the municipality, whose policy is to keep this street 'alive' and not to introduce the strict rules that apply to the inner city of Utrecht:

> This street is messy and busy, but with a multicultural aura. When I first came here, I was given the task of maintaining this aura. Because if we were to maintain things according to the general rules, this place would be like the inner city of Utrecht – austere, with a lot of dos and dont's (Lombok district manager, Fred van Eyt).

A spatial development that is discussed extensively by residents is the building of a new mosque. At the moment the ULU mosque is in an old bath house at the beginning of Kanaalstraat. The mosque is owned by the Netherlands Islamic Foundation and is mainly used by members of the Turkish-Dutch community in Lombok. Even when it opened in 1983, it was obvious that this was only a temporary place for the mosque, and it soon became

too small for the increasing number of people who go there. At the turn of the new century, the board of the mosque started to develop ideas for building a new one. In 2009, the first stone of the new mosque was laid. It is being built opposite the old mosque, and is due to be completed in 2012. The mosque will be a place not only for prayer, but also for various cultural facilities, like a library and a congress hall.

The mosque has, and will continue to have an important social function as a meeting place for many Turkish-Dutch Muslims in Lombok. The new design incorporates two 44-metre high minarets and a 24-metre high cupola. Some residents do not like the height of the minarets and think that the building will dominate the public space too much. Furthermore, the new mosque has led to discussions in which the Muslim inhabitants of Lombok are portrayed in a derogatory way by some local residents, showing that differences are perceived between Muslim and non-Muslim residents and their behaviour. For many residents, however, the mosque is no cause for concern, because it is part of today's society: Islamic people are living in the Netherlands, and they want and are entitled to a mosque; after all, there are churches in the Netherlands. These residents are happy about the new mosque and see the development as a good example of their multicultural neighbourhood – a neighbourhood that is different from other neighbourhoods, and where people accept each other:

> Everybody moans about this, and in many cities this is not a good thing. That's the nice thing about Lombok: here in Lombok the inhabitants ensured that the new mosque will be in a prominent place … Native and non-native Dutch inhabitants did this together. That is really nice (40-year-old German-Dutch man).

This is also reflected in the process that led to both the design and the location of the new mosque. To begin with, the idea was to situate the mosque in such a way that it was as invisible as possible. There was even going to be a kind of wall around it. Now, though, it is being built at the beginning of Kanaalstraat, at the 'entrance' to Lombok. If one stands there, one can see the church that is located in the very heart of Lombok. This plan was decided upon with the help of many residents. According to one of the mosque's board members, this reflects how Lombok residents are involved in each other's lives and accept each other:

> A while ago we, the board of the mosque, protested against the proposed location of the new mosque. The residents of Lombok helped us. They said: 'We live in Lombok, we're used to living with a mosque, with the people. Why are you going to hide such a beautiful new mosque? That's not what we want' (52-year-old Turkish-Dutch man).

However, some residents think that a new mosque is not needed; they perceive this development as 'unpleasant', 'not desirable' and 'not really terrific'. Others complain that the new building is 'too big, a bit overdone'. As people approach Lombok, the first thing they see will be the minarets, which will not form a good gateway to the neighbourhood. One resident said that it was the intention of the municipality to make Lombok less multicultural and that the building of a new mosque goes against this. Thus, there are opposing opinions about the new mosque, but it appears that most residents accept the development.

Thus, although quite a few original residents referred to the features of Kanaalstraat that are less attractive, several initiatives undertaken in Kanaalstraat have improved it a lot. Residents acknowledge these improvements and are happy to be in this multicultural shopping street. This is also reflected in the fact that although there are some doubts about the new mosque, in general it is accepted by residents as being part of multicultural life in Kanaalstraat.

Discussion

Kanaalstraat is a multicultural shopping street that Lombok residents visit frequently. It can be described more as a world of strangers than as a familiar place, although residents also come across known others quite often. Ethnic diversity is represented in Kanaalstraat in various ways: in the shops and the products on sale, and in the people who go there regularly. Residents share this culturally mixed space and enjoy being in it. This in itself creates a kind of neutral setting for contact. Residents see each other and in doing so experience ethnic diversity (Madanipour, 1999). It is important to see other people both in order to get acquainted with the place in which you live and to create public familiarity (cf. Blokland, 2003). Knowledge seemed to be acquired and familiarity promoted not only through conversations and other direct interactions, but also through being together in the same place. Kanaalstraat functions as an everyday space that forms the connective tissue that binds daily life together and serves as primary intersections between the individual and the city (Chase *et al.*, 1999).

People have many interactions in Kanaalstraat, but these are not very intimate ones. Many are facilitated by the fact that shopping is the main function in this street: people need to interact with shopkeepers. Kanaalstraat contributes to good relations between the inhabitants of Lombok, not only because many interactions occur, but also because a broad variety of people use Kanaalstraat and see one another there. People do not really meet each other, but seeing the same things and the same shops also creates a relation: it is a common 'anchor point'. Besides, although Kanaalstraat is perceived as a social street where many brief interactions occur, many of the interactions are mono-ethnic. The inter-ethnic interactions that I observed were not very close and most often quite brief. Kanaalstraat attracts a diverse group of people, which leads to inter-ethnic encounters but not automatically to more enduring inter-ethnic contacts. At the same time, many residents acknowledge that talking to ethnic others could also be 'funny' and they appreciate the inter-ethnic encounters that do happen (Peters and De Haan, 2011).

Thus, although not many intensive inter-ethnic encounters happen, residents appreciate the multicultural character of this shopping street. They positively value this street, which is both part of the everyday lives of Lombok residents and characterized as extraordinary and, as such, as a non-ordinary space. It is a public space that gives residents a feeling of being abroad and having escaped everyday life, while at the same time this street is part of their life world.

The positive feelings, strongly related to the multicultural character, predominate the talk about Kanaalstraat. Residents from different ethnic backgrounds do not vary much in their positive ideas about this street: all residents perceive Kanaalstraat as an attractive place to be. In general, the expectations of and view on what is perceived as normal and acceptable behaviour is quite similar among the residents. People think that behaviour like dropping rubbish in the street is not acceptable, and also that having somewhat more chaos and noise in Kanaalstraat is acceptable. Negative aspects related to traffic and rubbish were mentioned independent of ethnic background – although the ones who are to be 'blamed' for this behaviour are more often Moroccan-Dutch men than other people. Cultural differences are often involved in cases where other people's behaviour is problematic or annoying (Peters and De Haan, 2011). People of various ethnic origins think that ethnic others have a different 'culture' and thus a different way of life, leading to behaviour that is not in line with their own (cf. Van Eijk, 2010). In addition, some native Dutch original residents are more critical about Kanaalstraat, referring to, for example, the changes in the type of shops in recent decades. The building of the new mosque also generates critical remarks from non-Muslim residents, mostly native Dutch residents but also non-native Dutch residents.

Although there are some disturbances once in a while, and people sometimes get angry at one another, overall, not many 'bad' things happen in Kanaalstraat. Moreover, problems related to traffic and rubbish are seen as things more of the past than of the present day. When it comes down to it, Kanaalstraat is a highly valued multicultural shopping street where residents are exposed to ethnic diversity. This ethnic diversity is non-ordinary and at the same time trusted and comfortable. It is a world of strangers where people feel comfortable.

7.4 Molenpark: domination leads to exclusion

Molenpark is on the north bank of the Leidse Rijn river, in Lombok. It is a small urban park with various functions (Figure 7.4). Until the 1980s, the De Wit wood trading company was located there, so the area was not accessible to the public. There had been a windmill on the De Wit site until its demolition in 1911. In response to a huge demand for green space and playground facilities in Lombok, the 1980s saw this park developed. Molenpark still is the only green area in Lombok. A participatory evening was organized and the majority of the participants opted for renovation of the buildings on the De Wit site. People in the direct surroundings preferred the rebuilding of the old sawmill, instead of an artwork. Sponsorships were needed to make it financially possible, and new functions for the rebuilt sawmill were chosen. The 'Sawmill' now comprises a museum, a space for social and cultural activities (theatre) and a space for commercial activities (weddings, meetings and/or workshops). This was all developed around 1999. The area now has a children's nursery, a petting farm, a playground, two workshop areas and a rehearsal room for musicians. The Sawmill is a very important part of Molenpark: it is perceived as beautiful and unique to Utrecht and Lombok. It has become a marker of Lombok, although it has been there for only ten years. However, the Sawmill is totally separate from the park, both in design and in the perception of the residents. Molenpark consists of two parts: the Sawmill – which is fenced off, and includes the children's farm and daycare centre – and the public park, which has a football cage, a playground and a grassy area. At the end of 2006, the public part of Molenpark was rearranged and modernized according to the wishes of the people involved. It is because of the participation of the neighbourhood that Molenpark exists as it is now, otherwise it could easily have been transformed into a place for dwellings.

Molenpark is not used very intensively, although many Lombok residents go there once in a while to relax, walk, read, meet friends or visit the Sawmill; those who take their children

Figure 7.4. Map of Molenpark area, Utrecht.

there, keep an eye on them while they chat with other parents. Another reason to go there is to attend one of the many events that are held throughout the year either in the park or at the Sawmill. These events attract many people from various ethnic backgrounds and give Lombok residents who would otherwise not visit the park a reason to do so. In general, residents know and visit Molenpark. However, many just walk through it and hardly linger there. For some, having a garden of their own is a reason not to go to the park more often, while others simply do not find the park attractive. Residents vary in when and how often they visit Molenpark.

There is a big difference between residents who have dogs and/or have children at Parkschool (a school in Molenpark that is mainly attended by non-native Dutch children) and those who do not. Mothers and fathers who pick their children up from Parkschool often take a little walk through the park. And many dog owners walk in the park several times a day. Most other residents go to Molenpark more often in the summer than in the winter.

There is also a difference in use between the native Dutch and non-native Dutch people. The former mostly visit the park in smaller groups than non-native Dutch people. In addition, most native Dutch residents said that they often use the park on Wednesday afternoons, just after the schools are let out, or throughout the day to walk their dogs. Quite a few non-native Dutch women said that they mostly use the park in the late afternoon. They go to Molenpark with their friends who live in the vicinity, and watch their children and 'eat sunflower seeds'. In the summer, they stay in the park till around 21:00, while in wintertime they tend to leave at about 17:00. Finally, youngsters from diverse ethnic backgrounds, but mainly Moroccan-Dutch, use the football cage at the end of the day and in the evening.

Together this leads to an image of the park characterized as being selective in the users it attracts. People tend to associate the park with specific ethnic identities and subcultures. Apart from the regular dog-walkers, the park mainly attracts non-native Dutch mothers with children, as well as groups of youngsters:

> In one part of Molenpark, you have the Sawmill and the children's farm and some small playgrounds. I often see young families and grandmothers and grandfathers with their grandchildren there. The daycare centre, close-by the Sawmill, is really a resting place for the neighbourhood. A bit further along, but still in Molenpark, it's busier with the football cage, and a place to take your dog; there it's lively and busy. In that area, many Moroccan mothers sit on the benches while their little ones play around them (Lombok district manager, Fred Van Eyt).

A Dutch-Moroccan woman said that there are often youngsters playing football in Molenpark:

> But when these kids see a couple of women entering Molenpark, they get off the benches to let the women sit there, then they go and look for a spot to sit in the football cage. I think those boys know that they won't like all our talking! [laughs].

A native Dutch woman who has lived in Lombok for over 30 years gave a similar description of the park. She said that it is used mainly by non-native Dutch people and that only a few native Dutch people go there:

> When you enter Molenpark, you see a bunch of foreigners, and then you can't sit on a bench while your grandchild plays on the slide, because there are too many women sitting over there. Well, as long as they sit. And the cage is full of young men (62-year-old native Dutch woman).

Whereas Molenpark itself is frequented by a more ethnically diverse group of people, the Sawmill mainly attracts highly educated native Dutch people. The formal activities are attended primarily by this group, which is interested in choir singing and concerts. A native Dutch man commented the following: 'Well, you may not say it, but it's elite – well perhaps not elite, but not exciting enough, not challenging enough to attract others than this specific group of white people'.

Local residents characterize the park as beautiful but small. On the one hand, it is valued as being a green place, an oasis, in the middle of the city. It is a place to relax and to rest, an almost rural place within the urban area, and very close to the city centre of Utrecht. The Sawmill, which is seen as a kind of enclave or monument, the little bridges and the waterfront, all contribute to this perception of a relaxing, picturesque and peaceful place, where a few sheep graze and chickens and cockerels peck the ground. It gives residents an almost 'rural traditional feeling while being pretty much in the centre of Utrecht'. On the other hand, residents refer to Molenpark as a place where many Lombok events and other activities take place. They portray a much livelier picture of the park, referring to all the things that happen there: 'It's a kind of mini city park, a relatively small place, but a place where more things happen than in other, bigger urban parks'.

The various groups use the park in different ways, and as a result there are not many interactions between these groups; people do 'their own thing'. Most verbal exchanges concern specific, everyday matters, such 'Do you have a lighter?' or 'Nice weather today'. The interactions are defined by visitors as 'small talk' and 'having a chat about a common interest', as illustrated by the words of a Turkish-Dutch woman: 'Well, when I'm in Molenpark I have a chat, and that's nice. The children play, and you say hello to strangers who are there with their children. It doesn't bother me; that's all I want'.

The residents enjoyed this small talk but did not try to turn it into conversation. Molenpark was designed to attract a wide range of people, and this is seen as a reason why there are not many interactions. People focus on their own activities and are not really willing to spend time with other, unknown people, because they are there for a different reason or at least are not looking for contact. Some said that it would be better to create more opportunities to meet other people by, for example, providing more facilities. One native Dutch woman said that she finds the park not very inviting for social activities:

> Well, how can I describe Molenpark? It's a place where young and old hang out. People play a lot of football in the football cage, and there's childcare for the little ones. It's a place to hang out for young and old. I think the place is okay, but I'd rather go to Bankaplein, because it's much more sociable there. Molenpark is just not that attractive, you know; it's just a park, and it's not a place where you can meet each other. I have some contact with people that you just meet outside, and I say hello. It's only a 'hello,' but that's enough.

The other forms of interaction I observed were eye contact with and nodding to each other. There were many interactions triggered by dogs, balls and children (triangulation). Dog owners spent more time in the park and stated that they have quite a lot of interaction with others, not only with adults but also with children. This stimulates contact between people in the park. Although most dog owners are native Dutch people, children of all ethnicities seem to be interested in playing with the dogs: 'The kids – Dutch, Moroccan and so on – all stand in a row, waiting their turn to throw the stick. That's how you get to know these children and sometimes their parents as well'. Dog owners said that sometimes children with Moroccan-Dutch or Turkish-Dutch parents are afraid of dogs. However, by coming to the park regularly, they become familiar with dogs and their owners, which leads to more interactions; for example, children ask to take a dog for a walk or to play with it. Thus although dogs may mainly lead to contacts between native Dutch people, through children they also lead to contacts with non-native Dutch people.

Children also facilitated interactions. Mothers, both native and non-native Dutch people, stated that when their children play together for some time, they chat with other parents and return balls when needed. Mothers stressed that it is easier to talk with other residents when you are with children: 'When your children are playing in one of the small playgrounds

in the park, it's easy to have a chat with the other mothers'. The small talk with those others is not only about everyday issues; people also talk about things that happen in their neighbourhood or activities that are being organized.

Although in general not many interactions occur, residents think that Molenpark is a good place to get in touch with other people and, related to this, that it stimulates good relations between the inhabitants of Lombok. This view is mainly substantiated by stating that people see and meet other Lombok people when they are in Molenpark. Most residents see this park as a neighbourhood park used by Lombok residents only:

> I see many local residents in this park, mainly women. I think they have good contact with one another. You see that as well with the children. Children like it when they see their mothers talking to other mothers. They feel safer, perhaps (37-year-old Turkish-Dutch woman).

For Moroccan-Dutch women, Molenpark is an important place for interaction and contact with other people. One Moroccan-Dutch woman explicitly stated that she likes to talk with Dutch people in the park, because it helps her to improve her Dutch. However, although many residents believe that it is possible to get in contact with people from other cultural backgrounds and think that they can learn from each other when they are interacting with people they do not know, many others think that those interactions do not happen that much. A native Dutch woman:

> You learn from each other, and that's important, but I don't think that Molenpark leads to more understanding of each other. I notice that the ethnic minorities also do not integrate. The Turkish women sit together in a group and the Moroccan women sit together somewhere else.

It was suggested that inter-ethnic interaction could be further stimulated by organizing activities in the park to which children and parents from various ethnic backgrounds should be invited.

The judgements about Molenpark are less positive and less consistent than about the other public spaces in Lombok. Many residents do not find it an attractive place to stay because of its design, which is too open. They feel that the place is not really special or inviting. They also regard the park as unattractive because there are too many things to do for a small park, and as a result the park is too diverse. Although this variety is appreciated, it was also mentioned as a less positive aspect that leads to a segmentation of groups of visitors. This does not mean that the park is not an important place for Lombok residents. Although residents do not feel strongly attached to the park, they do think that the place is important for Lombok and that the park should stay in Lombok because Lombok needs a green area. Molenpark means a lot to them, but it is not the best place to be or the best place to do the things they like. Thus, although it does not invite many people to stay long in the park, people do like the place and some are even proud of the park. Residents have valuable memories of being in this park, many of which refer to the activities organized in the park

and the cultural events organized at the Sawmill on Sunday afternoons. Others referred to memories being shaped while in the park with their children/grandchildren: watching them, going to see the sheep or just sitting on the waterfront. The park is perceived both as a good place to escape everyday life, and as an idyllic place where you feel like you are not in town, or a place that is part of the everyday life of residents.

Molenpark is recognized as a safe place, although many (mainly female) residents stated that they do not go to the park late in the evening or at night. People said that the light in the park is quite minimal and that the municipality should do something about it in order to create an even safer place. But in general, people feel at ease in the park. However, another aspect residents referred to when discussing issues of safety is related to the drowning of a 4-year-old in the Leidse Rijn. This led to heated discussions about the unsafe waterfront. Residents talked with sadness and anger about the incident. It is a small neighbourhood and many had heard about or even knew the child. Therefore, residents, especially those with small children, find the place rather unsafe. A fence along the waterfront would make it safer for children. Something has to be done in order to prevent another terrible accident like this, and residents have asked the municipality to make the place safer.

Other problematic issues related to Molenpark were also mentioned. When residents talked about things they do not like, they often referred to the behaviour of or interactions with people from other ethnic backgrounds. For example, one Moroccan-Dutch woman (50 years old) said that although she really likes Molenpark, it is very annoying that there is dog faeces in the park:

> When we women are sitting in the park, there's sometimes dog poop here. Once, we said to a woman with a dog that the municipality has special places for dogs,

> not next to us. Then she shouted and argued, and said 'Go back to your own country'. Then I said you have to go back to *your* own country. I live here, my children were born here, I have a Dutch passport; I'm not going back, *you* are going back. Then she became angry. But I don't think it is normal when our children always come home with dirty shoes, with poop and everything all over them. I like to sit on the beautiful grass with bread, coffee, tea and fruit. But when the grass is full of dog mess, I don't like it. I really find it nasty. If people take a plastic bag to take the poop away with them, that is good. But some people just leave it there. Real dirty.

The presence of youths hanging around was also mentioned as something disturbing. Negative remarks were made about young people staying in the park until late, as stated by a 49-year-old Moroccan-Dutch man who lives near the park: 'Kids of 12, 13, 14 come from the railway station to Molenpark and sometimes stay until two in the morning. They make a lot of noise and are a nuisance'. Both my observations and the interviews made it clear that non-native Dutch youngsters – who were mainly referred to as 'Moroccan boys' – often meet in public space. For them, public spaces are important places to encounter one another. For some, the presence of a group of ethnic minority youths hanging around contributes to a lack of safety. Some residents even stated that parts of Molenpark are 'territorialized' by youth. Although these residents are not really bothered in the park, they do not feel comfortable sitting on a bench or staying in the park longer than necessary. Especially the part where the cage is located is perceived by many as a place for 'youths only'.

Some residents avoid the park because of the 'Moroccan and Turkish and Islamic youths hanging around' and the fact that 'they smoke joints and use drugs'. One native Dutch woman who has lived in Lombok for only a short time said that she does not like to stay in Molenpark because of youngsters of about 20 who play soccer in the 'cage'. Since the benches are exactly opposite the cage, she thinks that as a woman sitting there 'you would more or less be asking for trouble. That is not clever'. Although she likes the park, the presence of these youngsters is a reason not to linger in Molenpark. She will not sit there because she feels that she does not belong there. Another resident, an Israeli-Dutch woman, commented: 'I hate it. I can't stand it. Sometimes in the night I hear them. I find it annoying'. In addition, they drop cigarette ends on the ground, and children might pick them up and put them in their mouths.

However, many other residents do not have any problems with the youths' presence. For them, these youngsters are 'just' adolescents who get together in the park. They look at their presence neutrally: 'They're nice boys; they don't fight. They just watch, and they always say goodbye. There are many of them, but it's not a problem. They're quiet, and they always smile at me' (Moroccan-Dutch woman). Most residents do not consider the youths a problem, but merely as part of society. A native Dutch woman said that it is good that they hang around only at certain places; it does not bother her at all. Others said that there are not that many youngsters hanging around. As was the case for the Kanaalstraat, the Lombok district manager thinks that this behaviour and the reactions to it are related to the different ways in which this behaviour is perceived by residents:

> When there are four adolescents standing next to a bench and talking with each other, that in itself can intimidate or annoy people. Whereas as far as the kids are concerned, they're just talking excitedly. When there are four Dutch boys, there's no problem, but when there are four Turkish boys … Well, they're just more active and make more noise – which can be perceived as annoying.

Thus, residents are aware that youths hang around in Molenpark, but only a few of them dislike it and talk negatively about it. Besides, the presence of these youngsters has become less in the last couple of years. The police pay more attention to them and try to move them along. The municipality pays attention to youngsters hanging around, especially in Molenpark. They acknowledge that their behaviour is not appreciated by all inhabitants and they would like to reduce the inconvenience caused by this behaviour (see also Textbox 7.1).

Another issue that residents talked about is drug addicts sleeping in the park. However, in the past it was far more problematic than nowadays; the number of drug addicts has dropped because of measures taken by the municipality. As a result, although mentioned, this was not perceived as very problematic.

Since Parkschool is in Molenpark, parents whose children go to this school are present in this park more regularly, which leads to more inter-ethnic interaction. While waiting for their children to leave school or bringing their children to school, parents and grandparents see and meet other parents and grandparents. Some residents think that were the school not there, the park would only be a place to cut through on your way to somewhere else, and then even fewer interactions would occur.

Having a mixed school is seen as a good thing because it creates more crossovers and thus more contact between people. Brief encounters in the park and standing next to each other in the school playground result in interactions between residents of different ethnic origins. In the past, native Dutch children went to another school outside Lombok, or at least did not attend Parkschool, which non-native children attended. Since some native Dutch

Textbox 7.1. Nuisance caused by youths in the summer.

This summer we are again receiving regular reports of nuisance caused by youngsters in Molenpark. They are there, making noise, until late in the evening and driving their mopeds through the park and the adjacent streets. The police, supervisors and youth workers visit the park on a regular basis to address this behavior and, if necessary, to send the youngsters away. However, permanent supervision is not possible. Luckily there are also residents who address the youngsters' behavior. This happens with mixed success. One group is more reachable than another. In general, making contact with youngsters works pretty well in the case of nuisance. If you experience nuisance, you can report it to the West district office on 030 - 286 00 00 or west@utrecht.nl or to the police (0900-8844; emergency *112)*.
(District News, 20 August 2010)

parents started an initiative to attract more native Dutch children to Parkschool, the school has a more ethnically diverse population (see also Textbox 7.2). One native Dutch mother said that now her children go to Parkschool, she has more contact with people from other ethnic backgrounds. Before then, she had not had any interactions with them. She also said that even if the people do not speak Dutch, they still manage to talk to each other. In this situation, more or less natural contact between children stimulates more interactions between their parents, for example when children play at each other's houses:

> You see quite a few native Dutch and non-native Dutch parents chatting with each other in the school playground when they pick up their children from school. School is an important place to encounter other residents. Of course, the aim of this school is not only to increase the language level of non-native Dutch children: we'd like the school to be a reflection of the neighbourhood. And the contact hypothesis, that's also happening with the children at my school. You have JP Coenstraat, which is the chic street of Lombok. And close to where I

Textbox 7.2. Parkschool parents' initiative

In 2004, a parent's initiative was started at Parkschool by a couple of native Dutch parents who had chosen to send their children there. In the folder, one reads stories of enthusiastic parents with children at Parkschool and from parents who have registered their children for the coming years.

At the end of 2003, Elle Petit visited Parkschool; a black school in her neighborhood. She immediately had a positive feeling about the school. In consultation with the director, she invited 'white' parents to an information evening, with the aim of persuading them to send their children to Parkschool. With the help of information evenings, a folder for parents (parents talk about why they chose the school) and conversations with parents in the playground, parents try to convince other parents to have a look at the school. When this barrier has been taken down, parents are pleasantly surprised about the education and atmosphere in the school. Parents who have decided to register their children are enthusiastic about the school. At the moment, about eight children are in groups 1 and 2 at the school. More 'white' parents have registered their children for Parkschool for next year.

'If you live in a mixed neighborhood, it's nice when your child attends school in your neighborhood. Children make friends with other neighborhood children and the parents make more connections with their direct surroundings via the school. And it is of course very practical to bring your child to school by foot or bike'.

'We moved to Utrecht last year and we wanted to have a school close by so that the children could play in the street with their friends from school. Parkschool was the first and closest school that we had a look at, and immediately it was clear! The location in the park and the mixed population of the school was really attractive. We love the ' multi-culti' of the school. A good exercise for real life in our present day society. And the most important thing, the kids really like it'.

(Parkschool folder)

> live, some white people with children at another school [a 'white' school] won't let their children play in Molenpark, because the parents think it's scary. And if you look at the white children at my school, they walk everywhere, through Molenpark, Kanaalstraat, and because they are at Parkschool it is, like they belong to us, we belong to each other, so these children don't have problems with anything. So the contact hypothesis of knowing leads to loving, it is very beautiful to see that happen (Director of Parkschool).

However, this rather rosy story is not shared by everyone. Some said that it is still pretty difficult to create inter-ethnic encounters between parents at school. Most of the time, it is difficult to involve non-native Dutch parents with things like the parent council. Although native Dutch residents said that it is easy to make contact with some non-native Dutch parents, with many others it is difficult, for example because of the language. But also when language is not an issue, you have to make an effort to establish contact. One native Dutch woman made a list of all the names of the children and their parents, along with their addresses and telephone numbers. This seems important because: 'All those Muhammeds, and you can't always remember those names, you don't know who belongs with which child. It's all veils. So you can't tell who's who'. The idea is to make it a bit easier to get inter-ethnic encounters with the help of children. It seems that this is possible, but not always naturally happening.

It is also assumed that organizing events can facilitate inter-ethnic encounters. Events are often organized in order to bring different ethnic groups into contact with one another. Without events, the park is mainly seen as a place to pass through, while during events people stay longer in the park and 'you come across people you didn't know before'. These events create solidarity among local residents. The importance of organized activities in Molenpark was emphasized by a native Dutch man:

> I only have contact with others when there is a performance at the Sawmill or an event in the park … It's not a meeting place; it's too big. Molenpark is a place that is about the Sawmill. It's got a grassy area and the grounds around it, but there's nowhere to sit, no place to hang around. It's not inviting.

The Colourful Lombok festival is one such event. It was held in Molenpark in 2009. A native Dutch couple had taken the initiative two years earlier to organize a festival in Molenpark. This idea was born when the man met a couple of youngsters in the park who told him that there was not that much to do for boys in the 12-18 age group. He agreed with that and thought that organizing something could also help reduce the level of vandalism in the park. Together with these youngsters, he tried to organize some sport activities in the sport hall, but the youngsters pulled out. However, the man still thought that organizing something would be a good idea. Lombok is a multicultural neighbourhood and the couple want to see more people involved with and in this neighbourhood. They started to think about a multicultural festivity meant to involve more people and to bring people together; by talking and partying together, they hoped for more involvement.

He approached other Lombok inhabitants to help with the organization. In the end, a group of people that was mixed in terms of age, gender and ethnicity got together to organize the festival. The cooperation went well: everyone knew what to expect from each other and understood that people differ in their abilities – some were better at organizing cultural activities, while others were better at promoting the event. They were nearly ready to hold the festival in 2008; however, there were some problems with the subsidy and the budget. On top of that, the festival would have coincided with Ramadan, which means that they would have missed an important part of their target group. They therefore postponed the festival for a year, in order to better prepare for it, get more people involved and source more money.

In the end, the festival was held in May 2009. Colourful Lombok was to be a festival that celebrates diversity. All the inhabitants of Lombok were invited (5,000 households), and about 1,200 people attended. They tried to keep the costs as low as possible, because they really wanted the residents to feel that it was their party, a festival for Lombok residents, and that 'everyone could spend the day eating and drinking, even if they did not have much money to spend'. Everybody worked really hard and were happy on the day. According to the organizers, enough people turned up and there were no bad incidents; 'it was just fun'. The initiators were happy with the results and look back on a successful event with a good atmosphere. They have good thoughts about the exchange during the festival:

> To be honest, I can't say whether people really mixed, but I imagine they did because they will have seen people they know from Lombok, or at least people whose faces they recognized from Lombok. And during the evaluation we had it became clear that people did see the people mixing during the event.

They got many nice responses afterwards and they think that it really was a festival of and for Lombok residents.

Most residents knew about the festival and a lot of them had been to it. They liked the festival and enjoyed themselves at the event. However, most were pretty sceptical about people mixing. Some said that 'the original residents, the white newcomers and the Turkish and Moroccans sat in groups and didn't really integrate'. They did 'taste' each other's food and that led to some interaction, but that was all. People 'touched each other' and then went back to their 'own people'. Others had a more positive view on the inter-ethnic encounters during this festival, expressing their positive ideas of events as a means to create inter-cultural understanding. This event was meant for all Lombok residents and Lombok residents came together, making it a really multicultural festival in terms of people, food,

and music. A diverse group of residents came because the festival was accessible to a broad audience. Overall, most residents liked the event although they differed over whether it had stimulated inter-ethnic encounters.

Discussion

Molenpark is used mostly by local residents. They use the park mainly to pass through on their way to somewhere, to walk their dogs or to pick up their children from school. As in Goffertpark, non-native Dutch residents visited the park mainly in groups, which can be interpreted as a result of their collectivistic cultural background. Regarding gender and religion, it was obvious that Molenpark plays a big role in the daily lives of Muslim women. These women feel at home and at ease there. An aspect associated with the religious background of female Muslim residents relates to restrictions imposed by Islam on females travelling unaccompanied (Stodolska and Livengood, 2006). Although Muslim residents underlined this aspect and many of them found some restrictions as well, Muslim women stayed in this park, which was close to their homes and connected to their daily routines of going to the school. And as such, like Goffertpark, this park functions as a transitional space (Elsworth, 2005).

The evaluations of Molenpark are not only positive, resulting in the fact that not many residents linger in Molenpark. Many do not really regard it as a special space. Those who find it a special place refer to the cultural activities in the Sawmill and the events held in the park. Because Molenpark is used by specific groups of people like youngsters, dog owners and Moroccan-Dutch women, many of them do not know each other and they do not interact much. The users are diverse and segregated. As in Goffertpark, the interactions that occurred were often a result of triangulation, that is, a third party (e.g. a child) or an object (e.g. a ball) served as a reason to chat with others.

Not all residents feel at ease in Molenpark. They referred to issues such as dog faeces, the domination by certain groups of people (i.e. non-native Dutch women) sitting in groups on the benches, and youths (mainly Moroccan-Dutch) hanging around. In many Dutch cities, youths of ethnic origin loitering in groups in public space have become the focus of interest. In these cities, for many people the presence of a group of young ethnic minorities hanging around is associated with criminal activities and contributes to feelings of a lack of safety (Binken, 2010: 7). Concerning the loitering of youths in Molenpark, most residents, whether native or non-native, do not think that it is problematic or that it relates to feelings of discomfort in the public sphere (Peters and De Haan, 2011). It shows that people are tolerating other and different behaviour in public space. This is based on what Lofland (2000: 146) calls positive tolerance: 'a permissive or liberal attitude toward beliefs or practices differing from or conflicting with one's own'. The residents perceive the different other and, to a certain extent, also intersect with the other. In Molenpark, residents recognize and also appreciate the differences. As Lofland (*ibid.*) states, positive tolerance is possible if people have mastered the complexity of the urban environment sufficiently to move through it with a high degree of psychic safety, which indeed is the case in Lombok. In that sense, people are usually able to control the character and quality of their contacts with diverse others in public spaces.

In general, in Molenpark the domination by certain groups leads to the exclusion of others, residents who feel less comfortable. For them, this park is not an attractive place to be. For others, this is a nice place to interact with known others.

7.5 Bankaplein: a familiar space that leads to interactions

Bankaplein playground was built by the municipality of Utrecht in 1932 (Figure 7.5). It was the first playground established by the municipality. In 1994, it was taken over by Portes, Stichting Welzijn West (welfare foundation West). The playground is open all year round and there is no entrance fee. The participation of children and good relations with the neighbourhood are important aspects of this playground. In the beginning there was only the playground, but later on a small building was built to accommodate indoor activities,

Figure 7.5. Map of Bankaplein area, Utrecht.

such as Sinterklaas (when the Dutch 'Father Christmas' distributes presents) and activity afternoons on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The manager of Bankaplein – Rene – has worked there for almost 30 years and is well known by all the users. He is aided by volunteers (around 20 of them) and interns.

The playground is intended for children between the ages of 4 and 12. It is mainly used by Lombok residents and their children/grandchildren, and by unaccompanied children. Residents from various ethnic backgrounds use the playground: around 30% are Moroccan, 30% are Turkish, 30% are Dutch and 10% are of another origin (interview manager Bankaplein). Most people who use Bankaplein do so more than once a week. Since children can stay there during lunch break and some parents (mainly mothers) assist the children with their lunch, a considerable number go to Bankaplein four times a week. Native Dutch women as well as non-native Dutch women usually go there on Wednesday afternoons, when their children are free from school. Most residents like the fact that there is always a lot of activity and children can play with each other quite easily. One Dutch-Moroccan woman said that: 'the playing facilities at Bankaplein are more focused on older children and not only on the younger children as is the case in Molenpark, which makes it very attractive'. Which is similar to the comment made by a Turkish-Dutch woman: 'Bankaplein is focused on a specific target group: people with children up till the age of about 10 or 12. There are many playthings and children can enjoy themselves'.

The playground is well organized: children can play, activities are arranged and the children are taken care of. If the children are older than six, they can (and do) play there without being under the supervision of their parents or grandparents. The main reason that parents prefer Bankaplein to, for example, Molenpark is that the children are supervised and the playground is fenced off. In other words, it is a safe place, in contrast to Molenpark, where in recent years several children have fallen into the water. However, one resident explicitly mentioned the fence when discussing reasons for disliking Bankaplein. She said that the fence gave her a nasty feeling; it made her feel excluded, and so the playground is not at all inviting. But most parents feel more comfortable about their children playing there:

> I really like the fact that there is supervision, especially for the children. It's organized, and if some of the boys start acting up, they're sent away. And I like that, because there are little children playing there as well. I just like that (69-year-old native Dutch woman).

The evaluations of Bankaplein are positive not only because of the qualities of Bankaplein itself, but also because it is the only place where children can play safely in a cosy atmosphere. If there was no Bankaplein, parents 'wouldn't know where their children could play'. Many other public spaces in Lombok are very busy and thus unsuitable for children to play.

Residents feel safe at Bankaplein; this feeling is strengthened by the people who work there and by the presence of fences. However, some remarks were made about youngsters who play in the football cage and make a lot of noise. These youngsters are a nuisance, especially in the evening and at night:

> The playground closes at 5 but the soccer cage stays open. Well, that cage becomes a place where youngsters hang out. It's no longer a playground: there is more macho behaviour and curse words fly around. You don't want to hear these words. There are small children. It's mainly non-native Dutch kids at night (46-year-old native Dutch man).

Some people said that it is mostly children from non-native Dutch backgrounds who use Bankaplein:

> I think it is beneficial for the children that there is surveillance and control. But there are many foreign children. Sometimes you have to search for a Dutch child. … Not that these children don't enjoy themselves, but sometimes I think, where are the Dutch children? (69-year-old native Dutch woman).

These people said that they do not like this situation and that they would prefer the playground to have a more mixed use, which according to them would better reflect the composition of Lombok. However, the manager of the playground tries to be as inclusive as possible (see Textbox 7.3).

Textbox 7.3. Context Bankaplein.

Well, we always say that our target group is people aged from 1 to 180. The playground really has a function for the entire neighbourhood. Because, well, if children come with their parents, the parents visit the playground as well. Or when they visit with their brothers and sisters, they're our visitors too. And this also goes for younger brothers and sisters. Also policy-wise, the municipality states that Bankaplein has an important function for the neighbourhood. But when you read the financial part, it's clear that the target group is children aged between 4 and 12. When I started discussing the opening hours, like in the mornings, and mentioned that I have an important function for children younger than 4, the response was that these children should go somewhere else; Bankaplein is not for these children. That's black and white, but there are different views within the municipality. The others – kids between 6 and 12 – are more or less evenly divided. And also native Dutch and non-native Dutch people. But it is strange, though, to speak about 'black' and 'white'. Sometimes you have a mix, sometimes it is totally black, sometimes it is totally white. It is very diverse. Many children visit the playground alone; but especially the children who come regularly, those are the children who are seeking attention, or are latchkey kids. Both parents have jobs and they know that their children are safe here and will be looked after. And besides, we have a rule that children younger than 6 must be supervised by an adult. But children do come alone from when they're 7, 8 years old. So really young. And there was a time when we needed to be more strict: when after-school care became more expensive, we just about became a place where parents could dump their kids. Mostly non-native Dutch kids, but also native Dutch kids. (Rene, manager of Bankaplein)

Moreover, in contrast to Kanaalstraat, this playground is less all-inclusive in its use by local residents. Some residents say that primarily non-native Dutch children visit Bankaplein without their parents. While native Dutch children went to Bankaplein mostly with their parents/grandparents, the non-native Dutch children more often went alone or with their brothers and/or sisters. They do not have parents to watch over them but come by themselves, as described by a native Dutch woman: 'They come with some money, chips and cola and amuse themselves the whole afternoon. I understand that things are a bit different in their culture, but I don't think the supervisors always have time to watch them'. I noted that non-native Dutch parents came to the playground only infrequently.

It is of course obvious how children use this playground, but also adults spend quite a bit of time at Bankaplein because they really like being there. On a sunny day, many parents go to Bankaplein and they interact with each other: chatting with other parents and with the volunteers, drinking coffee, and sometimes helping with the activities. People think that this place is valuable and is different compared to society in general, where people withdraw:

> Bankaplein is sociable. My grandchildren always ask me, granny, are we going to Bankaplein? And then I go because it's nice for the children to play there. I see a lot of acquaintances, and I talk with them. It's just fun, also to see the people who work there. They come to you and have a chat. And the place is well organized. (62-year-old native Dutch woman).

At Bankaplein there is a different, more social atmosphere. Parents sit around, chatting with each other and keeping an eye on their children/grandchildren. Mainly native Dutch parents and grandparents find this a quiet place of sociability. Residents talk with passion about the social character of Bankaplein and the opportunities it gives children in Lombok. A native Dutch woman told me:

> Well, it's just a meeting point. Even when my children are not around, I go to Bankaplein … I'm not going to sit at home all day, and I'm not going to drink a coffee at a neighbour's: for coffee, I go to Bankaplein.

Bankaplein is a place where everyone can and does speak to everyone else. As one resident said: 'You can play anywhere, but here it's like being with your family; you trust one another'. A 62-year-old native Dutch woman emphasized the calm, social and familiar character of the playground: you see people you know, you can trust people.

Although most residents who do not have children or grandchildren to look after hardly ever go to Bankaplein, some of those who grew up in Lombok go there to socialize. These residents used to play there as children, and they have good memories of Bankaplein, which shows that even though they are no longer regular visitors, a form of attachment and identification is still present in them. These memories refer either to their own childhood or to their children's or grandchildren's joy. For some, these good memories are uncountable and stretch back over 30 years. One resident told me that she used to go to the playground with a friend, who later became her husband. Another said that he had played with toys that still are used by many children today.

In mono-functional places such as Bankaplein, encounters happen spontaneously because they are facilitated by the simple presence of playing opportunities, which shows that it is possible to bring people together if they can see some practical affordances. In contrast to, for example, Kanaalstraat – which is busy, thriving and in many cases also much more anonymous – the playground is a sort of home ground for familiarity, as is shown by the following conversation with a native Dutch woman: 'Yes, many people from this neighbourhood and from the school come to Bankaplein'. When asked if she knew them: 'Not all, but a lot of them'. One Turkish-Dutch woman said she regards the playground as a multicultural meeting place (although my observations did not fully confirm its multiculturality):

> I go with other mothers and sit in the sun when the weather's okay. When the weather is not okay, we go inside. The children play and we chat. Many nationalities go to Bankaplein. You say hello to each other, or the children play together and you sit and watch them.

Children and adults from various ethnic backgrounds spend their leisure time at Bankaplein and many interactions occur, most often between residents who know each other. Because at Bankaplein mainly native Dutch parents are present, many interactions between adults are mono-ethnic. Children played an essential role in establishing contacts between adults without any embarrassment or reluctance, something that was mentioned by a native Dutch woman:

> Well, Bankaplein, that really is a meeting place – for children, but also for adults, because of the children. You have contact with their parents because the children play together.

Lombok residents like the fact that at Bankaplein they can meet people they know from their children's school. They talk more with familiar people at Bankaplein than in, for example, Molenpark because of this. As a Dutch-Moroccan woman put it:

> There must be a certain occasion to talk with somebody. At Bankaplein the people are 'more the same': children and a lot of women I know from Parkschool. Then you easily start talking about the children or the school. In Molenpark there are a lot of different people doing very different things. That doesn't stimulate me to try to make contact, because it would be more difficult to keep in contact.

But at Bankaplein parents with children at the various schools in the neighbourhood mostly sit separately: parents with children at Parkschool sit together and parents with their children at Jan Nieuwenhuyzenschool sit together. The reason for this is that most people prefer to talk with people they already know by face.

Residents think that Bankaplein stimulates good relations between Lombok residents; it is a good place to have contact with other people. Most contacts are through the children or related to the fact that people have lived in Lombok for decades and spent time in the playground themselves. One native Dutch woman told me that she has 'Bankaplein girlfriends' whom she meets regularly at a specific bench at Bankaplein. Another woman who has been living in Lombok for over 30 years said that she thinks that when people are new to Lombok, Bankaplein is the best place to go to because this enables residents to get in touch with one another easier and quicker.

Some said that the social character is linked only to the children and the fact that children enjoy themselves and interact with kids in their neighbourhood: 'If my children have a good time, I feel good myself'. Additionally, residents stressed that it is very important to offer children a place where they can play with children from various ethnic backgrounds. For these children, Bankaplein becomes a place where they learn social skills and learn about Dutch society. When these children get to know the volunteers and the other children, they feel at home at Bankaplein, they feel socially safe and, an aspect that is considered important, they can be addressed about their behaviour.

Thus, Bankaplein is a very important place for Lombok. However, residents made some remarks about the inter-ethnic contacts at Bankaplein. Although children from different ethnic backgrounds play together, the parents do not interact that much. As mentioned earlier, this can be a result of the fact that it is mainly native Dutch parents or grandparents with children who use the playground. Another remark that was made is that pre-teen children from various ethnic backgrounds play together, but that 'Moroccan and Turkish people form their own groups when they become older'.

The atmosphere is very good and locals go to Bankaplein to meet other residents. Many residents described being at Bankaplein as 'a good feeling', and said that they experience 'positive things that are not easy to describe'. Bankaplein means a lot to them and they feel very attached to the place. Residents mentioned the manager, Rene, and the social character

of Bankaplein as reasons for this. For those who see Bankaplein as a familiar social place, they experience everyday life there. For those who find Bankaplein a more unique place where children enjoy themselves, it is a good place to escape everyday life. But both groups highly value Bankaplein. However, it is notable that the Lombok district manager sees things differently and links the playground to the problems in the streets around it:

> Well, it has become very nice; it was once very bad and old. But now it's 300% better than it was. … Well, the children can play, but for the rest it's not that special. Shops are empty, windows are broken, which won't make the image of this area any better. I continuously hear about the vandalism of shops, windows that are broken. Well, and then glass is lying on the street for a couple of days; that's not good for the image.

Moreover, while the Lombok district manager thinks that people do not feel attached to Bankaplein, most of the residents stated that they are very attached to Bankaplein.

Despite all those good memories, it is not a place that gives people more satisfaction than other places, or that people find the best place to do the things they enjoy doing, mostly because Bankaplein is a children's playground and the residents find other activities more interesting to do. But the many positive evaluations reflect the function of Bankaplein as a small leisure space for a selective group.

Discussion

Bankaplein is an important public space in Lombok. It is an essential place for children and their parents. It is regarded as a place where all children play together in a very spontaneous way and where their parents (most of whom are native Dutch people) are also involved. It is a place that is typical of Lombok.

For some, an important part of their social lives takes place at Bankaplein. It is where they meet friends, or as one resident put it: 'it's just family'. In this place, which attracts mainly local residents, visitors see people from their own neighbourhood and acquire knowledge about their daily environment. In that sense, people get acquainted with their neighbourhood by using Bankaplein.

Most native Dutch people who live in Lombok go to Bankaplein with their children, in contrast to non-native Dutch residents whose children more often go there alone. It is a vital place for learning about each other and for meeting each other. Bankaplein represents another identity of the neighbourhood; that is, not only as a vibrant multi-ethnic space, but also as a space of temporary escape and being among known others. For it visitors, it is a truly valuable place to be and to meet known others, mainly other local residents. It is a place where the rule of civil inattention is often broken and where people are involved with each other instead of minding their own business (Lofland, 1998). As a result, familiarity is created through which residents feel comfortable.

I observed many interactions in Bankaplein. It is a place where children can play and where parents and grandparents can socialize with other parents and grandparents. The place is a very important to those who live in Lombok. Residents feel attached to this place and they speak positively about the behaviour of other visitors, and especially about that of René and the volunteers.

Thus, it is a place where people find themselves less among strangers and more among family. It is a familiar space that facilitates interactions.

7.6 Muntplein: withdrawing into your own bubble

Muntplein is a small square in Lombok. It is situated on the Leidsekade waterfront in an area of the neighbourhood that is highly popular among young middle-class professionals and students (Figure 7.6). It is right opposite the Royal Dutch Mint, which has been striking Dutch coinage since 1811 (and is why the square is called Muntplein: '*munt*' is Dutch for 'mint'). Muntplein was designed in cooperation with local residents. In the square there is a *jeu de boule* pitch and a giant chess board. The former house of the bridge guard has been renovated; the residents' committee manages the house and the giant chess pieces are kept inside it. A board provides information about what was there in the past. People can go down some steps to a wooden pontoon on the river, where they can sit. The square is managed by the local residents, who have set up a management group.

Figure 7.6. Map of the Muntplein area, Utrecht.

Because Muntplein is a very small place, its usage is limited. People go there to relax and hang out; they appreciate the comforting atmosphere, in which they can enjoy an evening with friends, have a chat and a glass of wine, eat a pasta salad, or lie in the sun on their towels: 'Just hanging out, studying a bit, drinking wine with friends, just chilling; it's cosy'. Residents highly value this place because it is on the waterfront, and they actively use the water: they float (and in the winter, skate) on it and they swim in it. They often referred to the waterfront, which for them makes this place really attractive and special. A native Dutch man talked about summertime, when people swim in or float about in small boats on the river, and about wintertime when people ice skate:

> We're sitting on the terrace on the waterfront, on a kind of landing place. It's not really a terrace, it's just a pontoon, a landing place. All the students come here; it's a really nice place to be, and it catches the sun. And in winter, we skate over there; it's fantastic, we really have fun! It looks like one of those pictures from a very old picture book. It's very nice, all the kids sitting on the steps, putting on their skates. Many people are here then.

It is a cosy, communicative little square with a kind of museum value. Residents find this place unique and beautiful, referring to the original bridge and the mint. Some stay there for some time; others pass by while walking or biking around. One native Dutch woman was passing by and saw children sitting in a boat in the middle of the river, while others dived from the bridge. She said she was surprised and could not remember seeing that before.

The square means a lot to those who go there. They feel attached to Muntplein because it gives them the opportunity to sit down and 'come to my senses' or to be with friends in a nice place. However, it is less a marker of Lombok than, for example, Kanaalstraat, and therefore it contributes less to the neighbourhood's identity. Nevertheless, people have many good memories of being in Muntplein, and these have to do with 'the nice and relaxed atmosphere on a sunny day and being part of this and sharing these feelings'. A native Dutch man who spends time in Muntplein with his friends said that:

> I organize game days with my friends. We sit at home playing games. But when the weather's nice, we don't stay at home but go to Muntplein. When we play these games outside, things tend to become hilarious, because we always do crazy things, you know, making hints and all that. You always get nice responses and some people join in. These are good things, I think!

Muntplein functions as a small neighbourhood place that could easily be entered as a familiar place, a place where people feel at home; almost all its visitors live nearby. Residents go to other places in Lombok that satisfy them more. As such, Muntplein is not the best place to visit. It is a good place to escape from everyday life, and this square is apparently more a place to withdraw and not so much part of everyday life than, for example, Kanaalstraat is. Residents feel safe in Muntplein, although some refer to alcoholics who sit there.

Muntplein stands in contrast to the other public spaces in Lombok, all of which reflect to a certain extent an identity of diversity. This small square is mainly frequented by native Dutch people, who are perhaps best characterized as gentrifiers. Residents who regularly visit Muntplein are native Dutch or from a Western European background. The image of an exclusively white space was confirmed by the Lombok district manager, who said that Muntplein was mainly visited by those who live nearby, are aged between 15 and 35 and are mostly native Dutch people. He explained this by saying that the houses are almost all owner-occupied and expensive, resulting in more native Dutch people living there. A 23-year-old native Dutch woman described the square as follows:

> Well, really everybody visits Muntplein. But it's mainly Dutch people who hang out there. That's something you notice; well, people from various ethnic backgrounds pass through, people who live around here. Sometimes you see a group of Moroccan boys or something. But no, not very much that typical

> youngster behaviour of hanging around, say with that negative image; you don't see that often. I think it's very relaxed.

More native Dutch people visit Muntplein, and because of the students who live there and the presence of a university, also more young people go there. Although other residents do pass by and find it a nice place, most of them do not stay very long and not many non-native residents are seen in this place. This place not only does not attract non-native Dutch people; also some native Dutch people do not feel at ease in Muntplein, as expressed by a native Dutch man: 'It's mainly yuppies – and they're not my kind of people. I didn't grow up with that'.

Thus, this place is different from other public spaces in Lombok because it attracts a more specific group of users. However, not one resident felt excluded by this per definition. Most of them described Muntplein as a place that indeed attracts this 'target group'. In doing so, many residents do not see this place as something they feel attracted to. Furthermore, quite a few residents said that Muntplein does not characterize what Lombok is all about:

> Well, it's a nice place; quiet. There are more students in this place … But when you compare Lombok as a whole with a specific place like Muntplein, no, Lombok is different from that place. More, let's say, Dutch people, older people, go there (Owner of a shop on Kanaalstraat).

One resident said that he feels as though this place is part of a small neighbourhood, and thus he does not find it attractive. It is not so much about the type of people who go there, as about it being too intimate, and that keeps him away from Muntplein. It is a local square that is inhabited by local residents. As stated by a native Dutch woman: ‘If you don’t live there, you’re just a passer-by, although it may be inviting because of the benches you can sit on if you’re tired’.

So Muntplein is visited mostly by local residents. Most of them go there regularly and they always see many people they know as well as people they do not know. This leads to an atmosphere in which it is easy for residents to say hello and greet each other. The direct link with and the closeness to the neighbourhood creates this familiar atmosphere. Residents establish relations with places of proximity such as Muntplein. Although the small size of Muntplein combined with the familiar atmosphere would seem to allow for more accidental interactions, not many interactions occur. Residents enjoy the relaxing atmosphere of Muntplein mainly by interacting with known others; they socialize with friends. Residents had a feeling of togetherness, but stated that they do not have many interactions with unknown others; people are more on their own. Muntplein is perceived as a relaxing place, a place where locals have a chat and drink a glass of wine. Although residents think that Muntplein could be good place to get in touch with other people, not many examples were given that show that this indeed happened. It is more a kind of assumption: ‘During warm summer nights, many residents sit in this square, and if you want to you can come into contact with others. Yes, that could be the case’.

Since the activities people do in Muntplein are pretty similar, this could stimulate interactions. But because most people focus mainly on their own group, this was not the case. Some small talk and brief chats with known and unknown others happen, but these do not really lead to more and/or longer conversations. Some residents think that Muntplein has more potential than Kanaalstraat in terms of interactions, because there are fewer people in Muntplein and those who are there, are there to relax; thus people are not on the move or in a hurry, but have time to socialize with others. It is a breeding ground for encounters – people are open to contact – but whether an encounter happens depends on the individual:

> I think Muntplein is a place where people could interact. The opportunity to interact is there because everyone is sitting, just because it is a nice place to be, and people are open to encountering others. But, of course, in the end it depends totally on your own response and behaviour whether any interactions do happen (33-year-old native Dutch woman).

As only a specific group of native Dutch people frequent Muntplein, hardly any interactions are inter-ethnic. Most residents do not think that this is problematic, but simply mentioned it as a fact of life. Only a few residents explicitly want more mixing in public places that at the moment are more white and elite, like Muntplein. These residents discussed these issues because they think that it is important that public spaces reflect the multiculturality present in Lombok.

The picture is thus a bit ambiguous: residents enjoy being in Muntplein because of the atmosphere and think that this is a social place; however, few interactions occur. It has the potential for more, but at the moment this is not being stimulated. Although residents think that being in Muntplein can stimulate contacts between Lombok inhabitants, this most probably concerns only people who live in the immediate vicinity of Muntplein, as for example is the case with the local residents and the management group that organizes activities in Muntplein. In that sense, this small square does not really function as a place where contacts between inhabitants of Lombok are stimulated. Residents often referred to opportunities to make contacts during one of the events that are held there. The example of ice skating was given, although while children like the ice skating, fewer native Dutch adults and hardly any non-native Dutch adults went skating.

Discussion

In Muntplein, native Dutch local residents relax and chat with native Dutch friends, sometimes while drinking a glass of wine or eating pasta. Enjoying oneself in this small square leads to feelings of connection to the place. The square is closely connected to the neighbourhood because, for example, the square was designed and is managed by the local residents themselves. Feelings of attachment are strengthened because people are involved with these places. The meanings people associated with a place also depend on the physical qualities of the place; in the case of Muntplein, people highly value its location, namely on the waterfront (cf. Van Marwijk *et al.*, 2007).

Altogether, this square is used and appreciated by native Dutch local residents. This is in line with Dines and Cattell (2006), who used the term 'public space consciousness' in their study in East London to demonstrate that people may discuss their relations with spaces in connection with valued aspects of their lives, such as attachment to the neighbourhood, everyday activities in the locality and relations with other people. It underlines the need for a greater awareness of the contexts in which public spaces are experienced and valued (Dines and Cattell, 2006: 37). Muntplein is a place where hardly any negative things can be mentioned.

Since Muntplein attracts mainly native Dutch people, hardly any inter-ethnic interactions take place there. However, interactions between the native Dutch are also minimal.

In general, when native Dutch residents of Lombok go to Muntplein, they like to withdraw into their own bubbles, feeling comfortable in a familiar place where the principle 'mind your own business' (Lofland, 1998: 31) is an important part of the behavioural code.

7.7 Conclusion

Thus, the six public spaces in Nijmegen and Utrecht allow people from various ethnic backgrounds to relax and enjoy their leisure time. The places are important to residents and they are used quite intensively. Residents participate in different leisure activities depending

on their cultural background, the design of public spaces and, of course, their motivations, age and life phase. The meanings people associate with the places partly depend on the physical qualities of the place, such as Muntplein's waterfront, Goffertpark's large expanse of grass, Kanaalstraat's shops and, negatively, Molenpark's openness.

Using and enjoying these public spaces results in residents feeling at ease and comfortable in these spaces, some of which have a mixed use while others are dominated by specific groups. Furthermore, Lombok residents said that they feel safe in public spaces because they get the feeling that they live in a small village, a place where you know relatively many people. There are always people to start a conversation with, which makes it nice to be around even without knowing many people. This results in a situation characterized as 'everyone does his or her own thing but is aware of the presence of others'. Thus, although most residents do not know each other by name, there is strict social control and the residents know who belongs in Lombok, which contributes to feelings of safety. Residents feel comfortable, but bonding is a process that grows and develops over time when individuals start to identify themselves with a specific place – meaning that in general people who have lived in the neighbourhood for several years feel more connected to certain places than people who have lived there for just a few years.

From familiar places to world of strangers

In general terms, the six public spaces can be divided in two types. The first type function as small neighbourhood places that can easily be entered as a familiar place; almost all their visitors live nearby. People can easily connect to the place and to other people, because many will already be familiar with each other from the neighbourhood. This stimulates feelings of comfort, public familiarity and attachment. Thiemepark, Muntplein, Bankaplein and to a lesser extent Molenpark, are of this type. In addition, in Thiemepark and, to a lesser degree, Muntplein, people act more as though they were in a private place and they do not notice the presence of others very consciously. In Bankaplein and Molenpark, people often see and meet well-known others, and private behaviour is not really present.

The second type of spaces are those that function more as a 'world of strangers'. People feel welcome because these spaces are open and accessible. They enjoy watching other people because of the diversity of people in these places. Because these places attract a variety of people from different ethnic backgrounds, these public spaces can bring together groups of people regardless of their class, ethnic origin, gender or age, which makes intermingling possible. These places consequently provide a vital locality where everyday experiences are shared and exchanged with a variety of people. Kanaalstraat and Goffertpark can be typified as such.

Furthermore, Goffertpark, Thiemepark, Kanaalstraat and Bankaplein are spaces that attract a diverse audience. Muntplein, and to a lesser extent, Molenpark are dominated by specific groups of users. Looking at the group size, non-native Dutch people visit the various public spaces in larger groups than native Dutch people. Regarding gender and religion, the public spaces in the neighbourhood play a big role in the daily lives of Muslim women. In those

places these women felt at home and at ease. From that I conclude that public spaces in the neighbourhood function as a transitional space – a space between the safe private space and the unknown public space – to bridge the boundaries between the self and the other (Ellsworth, 2005). These spaces are important, as they allow women to get acquainted with the neighbourhood in which they live.

Thus, the public spaces are open and accessible spaces. Although some spaces attract a more diverse group of people than others, in general public spaces function as meeting spaces for the residents. The public spaces are to a large extent lively and dynamic. These spaces `frame encounters that are both intimate and intrusive' within cities (Zukin, 1995: 44). Because places are different in terms of facilities, size and other physical characteristics, residents use and experience these places differently and in doing so they form social relations during their everyday lives. Furthermore, routines that are part of everyday lives facilitate these social relations and serve as a source from which residents gain knowledge about the places they live in. People come across others and have to relate to these others one way or another. They use the same streets, parks and playgrounds over and over again, which provides residents with a sense of what is going on and, as a result, a sense of belonging.

Facilitation of fleeting encounters

Residents of Nijmegen and Lombok do not have many close social interactions with unknown others in public spaces: most people feel comfortable within their own social group and do not feel the need to closely interact with others. However, residents enjoy the fleeting contacts (having a chat or asking for some information) with others in public space. Knowing many people, at least by face, the availability of facilities, and an external stimulus appeared to be important aspects that facilitate interactions. I observed the most interactions in Bankaplein and Kanaalstraat. Residents refer to Bankaplein as a place where they know many people with whom they have short conversations. A combination of knowing other visitors, at least by face, and having cursory interactions leads to feelings of comfort and makes people feel at ease. In Kanaalstraat, many casual interactions were facilitated by the availability of facilities that give purpose to a space and enhance its social vitality. The owners of the many shops play an important role in facilitating interactions. These interactions are highly valued and residents felt at ease in this street.

In Goffertpark and Molenpark, an external stimulus often provided the first step towards an interaction between unknown people. These places are used regularly by dog owners, who more often have contacts and little chats with others, many of whom also have dogs. These people become familiar strangers, persons who are not personally known but because of a shared daily path are recognizable. Activities and events organized in these places also stimulate interactions because people find it easier to contact someone else when activities are organized around the same focus. However, at initiatives aimed at creating more inter-ethnic understanding by 'celebrating diversity', some original Lombok residents, paradoxically, feel that they were mainly for non-native Dutch residents.

I had expected that there would be more interactions in places that many people visit on a more regular basis. This is indeed the case for Kanaalstraat and Bankaplein, but not for Thiemepark and Muntplein. Moreover, the small size of spaces, such as Muntplein and Thiemepark, did not stimulate interactions that much. The fact that Thiemepark and Muntplein were designed in cooperation with local residents strengthens the familiarity with and use of it, and I expected that this would increase the potential for social interactions. This is, to a limited extent, the case only for interactions with familiar others. In Goffertpark, there is a more open and diverse atmosphere. People feel welcome there because of its openness to all. This only stimulates some informal and cursory interactions. In Molenpark a more ambiguous picture is present. Interactions do occur but overall residents thought of Molenpark as a park dominated by certain groups, resulting in not many interactions between these groups.

Interactions and diversity

Residents of Nijmegen and Lombok enjoy being in public spaces also because of the interactions with known or unknown others. Residents appreciate the small interactions in shops and other public spaces, and are satisfied with the way things are, that is, people understand and tolerate each other and the otherness. Special places are defined by unique experiences involving known others. Residents like places where they can create meaningful experiences through interactions with others and with the environment. However, not all residents think only positively about opportunities to interact with unknown others, and not everyone is convinced that public spaces are potential meeting places. They feel that it is not that easy to strike up a conversation with unknown others or with people who do not speak Dutch, although they would like to have such conversations.

When residents encounter their fellow residents in public spaces, they are confronted with diversity. Many brief interactions happen while shopping, doing leisure activities or moving from one place to another. Although leisure activities take place with friends and family, it is during these enjoyable activities that people face the environment they live in. Residents acknowledge and positively value the fact that they come across a variety of people while in public spaces, because it gives them a sense of what is going on; it facilitates connections between places and people. Respectful interactions create interactional pleasure and public sociability, and enable residents to have fleeting but rewarding social interactions and to feel comfortable and safe. As such, positive tolerance is generated and people develop a feeling of being at home in streets and squares by being able to read social signs in their place of residence.

Although diversity in public spaces is highly appreciated, in general more mono-ethnic interactions than inter-ethnic interactions take place, which is logical in places that attract mainly native Dutch people, like Muntplein. Kanaalstraat, however, attracts a diverse group of people and although this leads to more inter-ethnic encounters, it does not automatically lead to many or to closer inter-ethnic contacts. Residents tend to interact more with people from their own ethnic backgrounds. Residents emphasized the importance of spending their leisure time with people who understand them, and they prefer spending time with people

of their own ethnic groups as they are familiar with them. Most residents felt comfortable with this situation because it is more pleasant to have contact with people who are more like you, since this is relaxing and comforting. Although many residents do not have many inter-ethnic contacts, this was usually not seen as a negative thing in itself. While some said that they would like to have more inter-ethnic encounters, at the same time residents are satisfied with the contacts they have at the moment. A main difference between native Dutch people and non-native Dutch people is that some of the latter expressed their wish to have more interactions, while the former did not. However, non-native Dutch residents stated that they will not take the initiative: they are hesitant to start conversations with native Dutch people.

Most behaviour as expected; differences accepted

Expectations and views about what is perceived as normal and acceptable behaviour are quite similar among all Lombok residents. Residents agree that most people living in Lombok exhibit behaviour that is fairly similar to the behaviour that they and others expect that is, having short conversations in streets, taking care of your own environment and just doing your thing. People think that behaviour like dropping rubbish in the street is unacceptable, but also that having somewhat more chaos and noise in Kanaalstraat is acceptable. Of course, there are some problems in public space. For example, the dog faeces in Molenpark is not acceptable to some residents, while others (especially dog owners, of course) do not perceive this as a problem. When discussing the loitering of youths in Lombok, most residents, both native and non-native, said they do not think that this is problematic or that it relates to feelings of discomfort in the public sphere. Regarding discussions about the new mosque, the residents were more divided: some acknowledged the need for it and were happy that it could be built in Lombok, while others said they thought that the new building will be too dominant, which they do not appreciate.

Despite these issues, residents had few complaints about the behaviour of others in Lombok. In general, they like living in Lombok among others because they are satisfied with the way in which the other residents behave. It is important for them to be in public spaces, to visit several places, and to see and meet other people, because that is how they get acquainted with their neighbourhood and get to know others who are living there. This stimulates a feeling of safety, trust and comfort. Moreover, people tolerate other and different behaviour in public space. Where in other Dutch cities youths loitering around is seen as problematic, in Lombok this is not the case, most probably because people have developed a sense of home in streets, parks and other public spaces by being able to read social signs in these places. Residents are confronted with diversity in the public sphere and like this confrontation. They positively value multicultural public life. In the following chapter, I show the extent to which this diversity in the public domain is translated into the private sphere, and how residents talk about diversity in more general terms.

8. Connecting being in public space and everyday multicultural life in a neighbourhood

This chapter concerns the ways in which residents in a multicultural neighbourhood live their everyday lives. Here, my focus is on Lombok residents. I look at their private contacts and the extent to which they have private multi-ethnic relations and how these relations contribute to a feeling of belonging. I then look at the ways in which residents participate in the social life of Lombok. Furthermore, I examine the extent to which residents categorize other residents and how they talk about multiculturalism in more general terms.

8.1 Social life in Lombok: multicultural and mono-cultural

In contrast to public spaces, where encounters happen incidentally, contacts in the private sphere happen more consciously. Private relations are based on trust and feelings of safety, and inform how residents are confronted with multiculturalism in their private lives. I looked at the choices residents made when they established relations with neighbours and other residents, how they evaluated their private relations in their neighbourhood, and whether the ethnically diverse population of Lombok led to more inter-ethnic contacts in the private sphere. This enabled me to determine the extent to which the residents of multicultural Lombok have satisfactory or unsatisfactory contacts in their daily lives.

Networks of residents

Lombok residents have diverse contacts with their direct neighbours. Some have close relations while others hardly know their neighbours at all. In general, residents said that their contacts with neighbours are pretty 'normal' and they perceive those contacts as generally good. They commented that most relations are mono-ethnic, non-intimate and involve minor services like borrowing tools or daily necessities, holding spare keys, watering plants or taking care of pets:

> We're not always popping in and out of each other's houses, but I do hold keys for three neighbours and they have mine. And when a parcel is delivered, I keep it for them in the corridor. And there is social control. We don't often see each other, except in the summer when we're outside or when I celebrate my birthday. But we're not always popping in and out. Not at all (60-year-old native Dutch man).

Residents also have contacts with other residents that they characterized as 'normal and nothing special'. They link the contacts they have or do not have in their neighbourhood to their phase of life. When residents start building their families, more time is spent in Lombok. They then start to make use of a school, several playgrounds and Molenpark. These residents are also more focused on the streets they live in, and especially on other residents who also have children. As such, having children is an important reason to focus

more on one's direct surroundings. In contrast, the main focus of students in their everyday lives is not on Lombok.

The residents' idea of a 'normal' relationship consists of saying hello and doing small favours, and it leads to a friendly and pleasant situation in which neighbours can leave their houses knowing that 'they are taking care of my house'. Social control in the form of neighbours keeping an eye on houses creates a safe environment in which residents know that other residents will help them in times of need. Residents can count on their neighbours if they need help. These contacts with neighbours and other residents can be typified mainly as 'support ties' (cf. Briggs, 1998), that is, ties that create social support and help individuals to deal with the demands of everyday life. Most ties can be characterized as everyday contacts in the neighbourhood. People expect their neighbours and other residents to support them in emergency situations, and they expect greetings and brief chats. Most inhabitants have everyday contacts with each other, and confirm that most relations are non-intimate and involve minor services like borrowing tools or daily necessities and holding keys. These services involve less emotional support and are low in cost and time (cf. Plickert *et al.,* 2007; Völker and Verhoef, 1999).

Looking at these networks in terms of strong and weak ties, most residents have both type of relations in Lombok: relations that bind people together around a common interest, leading to support and sometimes to shared resources (strong ties), and ties that serve mainly to ease relations between groups or to share information (weak ties). This can be partly explained by the fact that relations can be characterized both in terms of function and in terms of form. Measured by function, contacts with neighbours are mostly characterized as strong, meaning that people give each other support. However in terms of form, most relations within Lombok are almost always defined as weak and non-intimate (Van Eijk, 2010). Weak ties are defined as 'unpretentious everyday contacts in the neighbourhood' (Henning and Lieberg, 1996: 6), which range from nodding hello to occasionally offering a little assistance. Weak ties are important for support, and contribute to a feeling of home and security (Crawford, 2006; Henning and Lieberg, 1996). According to Bridge (2002), what we can reasonably expect from other residents is neighbourliness. This is the exchange of small services or support in an emergency against a background of routine convivial exchanges, such as greetings and brief chats over the garden fence or in the street (*ibid.*: 15). This creates mutual dependency, which leads to residents living peacefully alongside each other (cf. Kleinhans, 2007). It can be argued that 'the less robust and less deep-rooted are neighbourhood networks, the more stable and conflict-free may be the social order in which they sit' (Forrest and Kearns, 2001: 2134). These weak ties are vital in establishing and maintaining a liveable neighbourhood.

Closer and more intimate contacts also take place between neighbours and other residents: people you have dinner with and residents who became friends. Some pop into each other's houses on a daily basis and have tight connections with their neighbours; they even refer to them as being 'like family'.

In some streets of Lombok, people have known each other for a very long time (and some of the residents were actually born in the neighbourhood), and this has resulted in closer relations. For example, I spoke to a native Dutch woman who has lived in Lombok for 28 years, and she relies on long-term acquaintances in the neighbourhood and has contact with all the residents in her street, and especially with her very close friend. Another native Dutch woman, who has lived in Lombok for over 60 years, said that she is very happy with the social character of her street and the contact she has with all her neighbours. Some she just greets, while with others she has a more close relationship. The following quote illustrates the social character of her street:

> Some time ago I came back from the hairdresser's at a quarter to seven and I saw all these young people having a barbecue in front of our houses. They said to me: 'Hey, you have to join us'. I said, 'No thanks, you're all youngsters and I shouldn't join you'. But no, they grabbed me and gave me a plate right away. I came home just before midnight! And that's how it goes around here.

Other residents do not have any contact with their neighbours. These residents said that they just do not like their neighbours. I was given several reasons for this, for example, someone was really bothered by the behaviour of the neighbours, who drank and smoked pot; another had problems with her neighbour because she wanted to chop down a certain tree but her neighbour was not willing to do so. Another resident – a native Dutch woman who had arrived in the neighbourhood two years previously – said that she finds it is very strange that she does not have any contact with some of her neighbours:

> I don't have any contact with my neighbours. No, I think that's strange. I know that on one side there's a house of students, but I have no idea who these people are. And we have a neighbour downstairs, a woman; we have contact with her once in a while, but not, let's say, direct personal contact; we just say hello and goodbye. My other neighbours, well, I know that a foreign family lives there, but I don't know where they come from, I haven't a clue. I do have more general contacts with people in Lombok. I say hello to some people on the street and have little chats. I don't know them that much, but I do like it.

She said she would like to have more contact with other residents, but as she does not take the initiative to make this happen, the lack of contact cannot bother her too much. It does not lead to a non-social neighbourhood since there is a difference between knowing people and having a friendly attitude in the public domain. People can greet each other in the street without having many close contacts.

The elderly residents have seen many changes in Lombok in recent decades. These changes concern both the composition of their neighbourhoods and the contacts they have or had with specific neighbours. Many elderly residents are sad that other residents and neighbours with whom they were close have now left the area. Although they have contacts with their new neighbours, it is different from how 'it used to be when we just popped round for a cup of coffee'. These residents have seen their street change from one in which they

knew everybody, to one in which they are familiar with only some residents. In general, these changes are perceived as negative, especially because many students and other young people have come to Lombok, and 'such people tend to invest less in their neighbourhood and in social relations'. This can be illustrated by what a student told me: 'I don't feel the need to have contacts with other residents in Lombok. I have my own things and most of the people I know live outside Lombok'. Original residents think that students are not focused on Lombok for their daily lives and thus do not invest time or energy in Lombok:

> First, there were more Islamic people. I liked that better than when all the yuppies came to live in Lombok; the houses became much too expensive. And Islamic people, you could talk to them, they're open to reason, while yuppies are not; you don't even see them. They want to have big houses in which in earlier days 14 children would live, and now they need an extra floor! Then I think, hey come on, keep it a bit nice? Islamic people went away and the yuppies took their place. For me, that wasn't needed (47-year-old native Dutch woman).

Thus, Lombok residents have private bonds, such as friendships, with people who live in the same neighbourhood. Although neighbours and other residents usually represent only a small proportion of the average person's social network (Bridge, 2002: 25; Wellman, 1979), there is at least the opportunity to meet neighbours and other residents in such public spaces as playgrounds, parks and streets. Overall, residents are satisfied with the contacts they have, both with direct neighbours and with other inhabitants of Lombok. The neighbourhood is important for the social network of both non-native and native people who have lived for many years in Lombok. Newcomers, like the students, in contrast, have their social networks mainly outside the neighbourhood. Some even hardly know their neighbours.

In short, many residents mainly have ties that create social support, which helps them to deal with the demands of everyday life. As regards contacts with neighbours, direct neighbours regularly meet each other, especially if they have shared entrances. Moreover, residents who have a similar everyday routine have more opportunities to encounter each other. As for established social relations in terms of strong and weak ties, most residents have both types of relations in Lombok: relations that bind people together around a common interest, leading to support and sometimes to shared resources, and relations that serve mainly to ease relations between groups or share information. The behaviour of greeting and being greeted is very much appreciated. Some even speak about 'a little village' and 'the most sociable village in town' where everyone knows everybody. However, most ties can be characterized as everyday contacts in the neighbourhood, for example, nodding to your neighbours, watching their houses while they are on holiday, and so on. People expect their neighbours and other residents to provide support in emergency situations, and to greet them and have brief chats. Nothing more, nothing less.

Inter-ethnic networks and the importance of language

Although the residents have everyday contacts in their neighbourhood, these contacts are mainly mono-ethnic:

> Yes, we do have good contacts in this housing block. Most of those who live here are young and higher educated, though we do have one woman of about 50, 60, though she's also white and one of the old traditional kind. That we have, but no non-native Dutch families or families with older children. They do live here, but in another block, so I don't have contact with them (28-year-old native Dutch woman).

This is mainly because Lombok is residentially segregated: some areas or streets are mainly inhabited by native Dutch or by higher educated native Dutch youngsters, while others are mainly inhabited by non-native Dutch people. Other areas that largely consist of rental houses are more ethnically mixed. I spoke with Janine, a native Dutch woman who works as a volunteer for ISKB (an organization that stimulates cooperation between different cultures in Utrecht by organizing various projects), and she told me that there is more contact between residents in such areas. She lives on the border between these two areas and sees that there is quite a lot of contact between residents: 'I was once invited to a sacrificial ceremony, but I've also been invited by traditional residents – *Utrechters* – to have a *bakkie* [a colloquialism for 'cup of coffee']'. In one particular housing block there is only one non-native Dutch family. The native Dutch residents have contact with each other, but not with this family:

> One Turkish family lives there, but they don't mix with us, which is a pity. I don't even know who they are, which people live there. I really don't know them, although they live just behind my house. We really have little contact with them (39-year-old native Dutch woman).

This adds to the understanding that people prefer and accordingly choose to socialize with people who are much like themselves. However, it is also clear that the composition of the neighbourhood in which we live influences with whom we socialize, because the composition structures the meeting opportunities (Van Eijk, 2010). Simply put, if there are no opportunities to meet certain people, we will not have interactions with them. However, if people choose to spend time with similar others, they will look for these people either inside or outside the neighbourhood. In Lombok the more enduring relations that people have in the neighbourhood do not reflect the diversity of encounters and contacts in public space. And although diversity in public space is valued, it does not lead to cross-ethnic bonds in the private sphere. Only some have built up extensive neighbourhood networks that cross ethnic boundaries. The more recent residents, who celebrate diversity and the liveliness of the neighbourhood, have less contacts in the neighbourhood, and if they do have them, they are mostly within the same ethnic group. Native Dutch people who have lived in Lombok for many years – 'original residents' – have hardly any inter-ethnic contacts. They have seen their neighbourhood transform into a 'multicultural' neighbourhood, which could make them feel alienated from Lombok or encourage them to make an effort to get in touch with other

people. However, although these original residents are confronted with changes that they sometimes characterize as negative, generally speaking they still feel at home in Lombok.

By and large residents claim that they have enough social contacts both in and outside their neighbourhood. Many stated that their networks consists of a variety of people; however, more close ties, such as firm friendships, appeared to be less diverse. Some do have diverse networks and seem to look for it, while others just had to 'admit' that their networks are pretty mono-cultural, be they 'higher educated white male guys' or 'only Moroccan women'.

> I know people of all ages, but not many foreign people. Yes, it's strange. I used to have contacts with, for example, a Turkish family that lived on the other side of the street. They used to drop in when their sewing machine was broken or some forms had to be filled in. They invited me to a circumcision once; I wanted to see how that went. But now the family has moved. So, at the moment I only know Dutch people (69-year-old native Dutch woman).

Some think that it is because they just do not meet cultural others at the places they visit. They meet them in the streets, but not in a situation where they really have to deal with cultural others:

> I mainly have contacts with people of my own kind. In my professional life, it's more a man's world, the world of ICT. They're not really my type; they're higher educated, white males, and there are very few migrants, and I find that a pity. But I don't see how I can change it. I suppose I don't really miss it so much that I join a hobby club or something so as to meet new people. My time is too precious for that; I rather spend time on myself than on meeting new people. And my hobbies all involve getting out in nature, and very few non-native Dutch people do that. They don't seem to like nature – you know, walking or watching birds – that much. It would be nice if our hobbies and lifestyles corresponded, because in that context only the cultural aspects would differ and then you could meet each other. … Festivals and other cultural activities in the neighbourhood would be something to share, but that's the only thing I can think of right now (28-year-old native Dutch woman).

Many native Dutch residents said that it was not their intention to have a mono-cultural network, but it is just how it appeared to be: 'I guess I have of more or less normal network, pretty many contacts in this neighbourhood. You should not have exaggerated expectations about contact across groups'. Similarly, a 21-year-old Moroccan-Dutch man stated, 'At school I spent time with people from other cultural backgrounds. I play soccer in my neighbourhood, but mostly with Moroccan guys'.

Native Dutch residents that have non-native Dutch friends often stress that these are 'just Western foreigners, English, American and European people' or 'an Antillean bosom friend who is amazingly Westernized'. Or as a 23-year-old native Dutch man said, 'I don't spend my leisure time with non-Dutch people …. Oh, wait, I do have a Spanish friend and one from the

UK. But that's all'. For a few respondents, living in Lombok changes their personal networks into a more diverse one:

> When I lived in the city centre in a student house, I mostly had contact with higher educated white people. And nowadays I know Surinamese, Moroccan people. A good friend of mine is in a relationship with a Surinamese guy. And I have a Moroccan colleague. This is because of Lombok; some dog owners I know are from totally different backgrounds than me in terms of educations and interests, and some of them are Moroccan or Turkish (native Dutch woman).

Residents get pleasure from the contacts they have with known others, because of the common background: 'You understand each other and it is fun to talk to people who get what you mean'. Without sharing activities or others things, residents 'only' pass by these other residents. Thus, residents do have more contacts with people from the same ethnic backgrounds than with others, resulting in 'a kind of living apart together'. And this is satisfactory for most Lombok residents, as also expressed by the neighbourhood manager:

> At the ministry people say that we have to drink coffee at each other's houses, but that's not how it works. Residents don't want this, they have their own lives, and some contact is important and is present, such as contact with your neighbour to borrow sugar or greeting each other on the street. That is positive! … Saying hello and greeting is adequate. You're not going to talk with strangers in the park. You don't do that with other native Dutch people either.

A Turkish-Dutch man, who has lived in Lombok for 35 years, said that he has a lot of contact with other Turkish-Dutch people. Coming to Utrecht from all different parts of Turkey, be it from the European or Asian part, or close to the Russian border, 'we perceive each other as one; we see each other on a daily basis while we only go to Turkey once in a while'. It seems as though they have lived in Turkey in the same street. A Moroccan-Dutch woman said that she only has contact with other Moroccan-Dutch women because her husband would not allow her to have contact with other women or men.

Contacts with neighbours are not inter-ethnic because Lombok is segregated at street level. Residential segregation makes is hard to translate the diversity experienced in the public sphere into multi-ethnic private contacts. Only some streets are really mixed. In these streets, contact between neighbours is not always easy. This is in line with earlier research (Curley, 2009), which found that people with immediate neighbours of different ethnic origins are less likely to socialize with their neighbours. Other studies have also showed that people mostly socialize with people who are in several respects similar to them, thus in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, life stage, and so on (see e.g. Völker and Verhoef, 1999). This pattern is referred to as the 'homophily principle' (Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1954: 23), meaning 'a tendency for friendships to form between those who are alike in some designated respect'.

In ethnically mixed streets, contact between neighbours is not always easy for various reasons, one of which is language. People living in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood like Lombok encounter difficulties in communicating with each other because of language problems. Some native Dutch residents perceive contact with people of other ethnic origins as difficult because of this. One native Dutch woman illustrated how inter-ethnic interactions occur and the difficulties that may arise:

> What I don't like is that Turkish and Moroccan people … Well, when they're very young it's not a problem, the children play with each other. But when they grow older, they form groups. And I think that their parents play a big role in that, because they don't learn Dutch. Yes, I'd like to see that a bit more, a bit more mixed. Because we live together in Lombok.

When spending time with people from other cultural backgrounds, understanding each other is harder and some things need explanation. A number of native Dutch residents stated that because non-native Dutch neighbours did not speak Dutch, contact was almost impossible or at least not stimulated. They would like to 'drink a cup of tea together', but as they are not able to communicate with them, 'what can you do?' A native Dutch man said the following about speaking Dutch:

> I think that Lombok is a good example for the city of Utrecht. I like the contacts and I think it's a safe district. It is mixed and synoptic. But the language is an issue. There's a kind of barrier, because normally you start with a short conservation and then you get to know people.

A Turkish-Dutch woman, for instance, said she is well aware of existing prejudices, but she thinks that language is the main barrier to integration: 'I think language is very important. That's why I think everybody should learn Dutch'. Residents gave examples of contacts that made clear that it is difficult to interact, and they complained that 'some people have lived here for 20 or 30 years and *still* don't speak Dutch'. Some native Dutch residents try to stimulate their non-native Dutch neighbours: 'I say to her, you have to talk more Dutch with your husband. But she's afraid to say something incorrect. Then I say that when I'm abroad, I also make mistakes'. Another native Dutch resident stressed that it is not necessary to speak Dutch, but that it is easy when non-native Dutch residents are able to make short informal conversations about the weekend and the weather. If it is not possible to exchange this information, then it is even harder to get to know each other. One native Dutch resident said that it is a choice not to speak Dutch. She says that Moroccan-Dutch residents do speak Dutch, but prefer to speak Moroccan, 'they are too miserable to say so'. Non-native Dutch residents also agree that it is important to speak Dutch, although many of them know a lot of people who do not speak it: 'Many women don't speak Dutch. I don't think that's good. I say to them, take a Dutch course'. This Moroccan-Dutch woman said that she thinks that more Turkish than Moroccan women do not speak Dutch. The explanation she gave is that some women do not have 'easy' husbands – husbands that won't allow them to go out and make them stay at home most of the time.

Knowing each other starts with understanding each other; consequently, having a common language is very important, but it is not the only thing. For some the willingness to interact with cultural others is even more important. It seems that most people 'have their own people' and do not feel the need for inter-ethnic encounters: 'Turkish-Dutch women tend to interact with other Turkish people, because Turkish people have real conversations, instead of just saying hello'. A Turkish-Dutch woman said that although she has contact with her Dutch neighbour, chatting with Dutch people is not as easy as it is with Turkish people. It is more a matter of preference. Another reason why residents do not have many inter-ethnic contacts is because it is less easy to do so. There is a 'kind of distance that has to do with the judgement of each other and maybe even about having prejudices about cultural others' (41-year-old native Dutch woman). Residents appreciate the multicultural character but, as one native Dutch resident said: 'I don't do anything with the people themselves'.

Diversity is appreciated

Although residents regret having mono-cultural networks, they do not see a way to change the situation – and most residents do not actively try to do so. They are not looking for new friends and acquaintances, and therefore their networks in Lombok remain mono-ethnic. Nevertheless, the diversity present in Lombok leads to an atmosphere that causes the residents to feel that they know one another. The residents like this mix of people:

> What I like about Lombok is that it is mixed, not only multiculturally – which it is, you have Moroccan, Turks, Nigerian, Surinamese, etc. – but also age-wise, you know, young and old. For example, in my street a number of women have lived there since, I don't know, 1900. Well, that is very old, real grandfathers and grandmothers. Then you have Moroccan families, Turkish families, and there are student houses, and then there is a group of people in their early thirties who are moving into Lombok, because Lombok has become more attractive for young people. The yuppies, as they're called by the original inhabitants. You see them as well, so it's a nice mixture. Thus you have poor, rich, young, old, black, yellow, white – everything (34-year-old native Dutch woman).

Lombok residents acknowledge and like the multicultural character of Lombok; in fact, they find it one of the most attractive features. When describing her neighbourhood, the first thing a native Dutch woman remarked is: 'Well, very first, multicultural … despite the fact that foreign people often have a negative connotation, I don't have that at all in this place. So, no, I really find this a nice district to live in'. This relates to the fact that in the Netherlands, non-native Dutch people are increasingly portrayed as problematic. However, most people in Lombok emphasized that this diversity of people is valued positively and is not related to problematic issues. Residents from various ethnic backgrounds live together in Lombok, but at a private level they do not interact very closely. Generally, people do not find this a problematic issue and describe this just as the situation is. Diversity is present, but people are not really involved in each other's lives. Everybody is doing their own thing:

> You see many groups in Lombok. You have the old Utrechters, and you have the new white inflow – that's us, we're not really rich, but we have some money and are white – and then you have the Turks and Moroccans. And well, the groups all just sit next to each other; they don't really integrate … I mean, you'll have to make an effort to have contacts (54-year-old native Dutch man).

> Most of the people are really tolerant, I mean, no problem. But of course there are residents who are less tolerant. You see that everywhere. Someone who thinks more in the line of those who vote for Wilders [a right-wing politician]. You have to give them a name. You'll undoubtedly have them here too. But in Lombok, it's not that this neighbourhood is totally integrated; it's just that everybody has found a way to live together in this neighbourhood. You could ignore each other, and that also goes fine. There are different ideas on that and I think that these are right, partly. I mean my neighbour six doors along, I never speak to hear. I don't ignore her, but I don't know her. Perhaps she has very radical ideas; I don't have a clue, I never talk to her. You tolerate each other. And you don't make a big deal of it. That's how it works over here (51-year-old native Dutch man).

Thus, private social life in Lombok is to a large extent segregated. Like when discussing the ULU mosque, a place mostly visited by Turkish-Dutch people and highly appreciated by the Turkish-Dutch residents. Residents mostly agree upon the value of this mosque and said that they are doing a good job not only related to their religion but also in terms of activities they organize for youths, although they mainly attracts Turkish-Dutch Muslims. This is also visible when looking at the audience at organized activities in Muntplein and the Sawmill. It is obvious that residents do not see this as a favourable situation, but as a fact of life:

> The Sawmill tries to attract non-native Dutch people by organizing specific activities – and I find it wonderful that they do that. But it doesn't work. The same can be said about the wooden pontoon [at Muntplein], but well, it just stays a sort of floating board. You have to organize things to get people to mix; it doesn't happen automatically. Skating was nice, but I didn't see any mothers ice skating. I don't know which activities would work (46-year-old native Dutch man).

> At the Sawmill there's a nursery with only white children. These children live in Lombok, but it's totally full. There was no place for my child, which is a pity because it would be really practical. And many of those things, people say Lombok is multicultural, but these things are not being mixed. It just doesn't mix. In the street it does, with each other and with the shopkeepers, it does. But not while spending your leisure time elsewhere (38-year-old native Dutch woman).

Others said that residents accept each other without having many inter-ethnic relations. The fact that residents acknowledge and accept diversity contributes to a nice atmosphere:

> The nice thing about Lombok is that integration succeeded here 100%. All those groups of different people, that all accept each other. It's not that Turks and

> Moroccans and Greeks and Egyptians drink coffee together, that just doesn't happen. Everybody lives his own life, but we all live next to each other, and we all greet each other, everybody in his or her own way and language. We do accept each other, and that's the nice thing about Lombok. Everyone has their own values, and we respect that. Moroccans mostly have contact with other Moroccans, and Turkish people associate with other Turkish people, but they accept each other (Lombok district manager, Fred Van Eyt).

Residents enjoy living in Lombok because of the social networks they have here and because they like the multicultural atmosphere. At the moment, housing corporations want to demolish some housing blocks and hardly any investments are being made. People who live there stay for a rather short period of time and do not really connect to their houses or to Lombok in general. As a result, there are fewer opportunities to establish contact with neighbours, because there is no time to get to know each other. Residents stated that the housing corporations should change their policies to maintain this mixed population, which would also preserve the unique atmosphere.

> Lombok is a district with big contrasts both in architecture and in the people who live here … I like it when these contrasts stay big and also when the population shows a big variety, but I do see that this is slowly changing a bit. Yes, and that has to do with the fact that old and young easily can live here, and that will be like that for a while. What also can stay in Lombok are the poor and the rich, but then they have to keep those Bo-Ex [housing association] flats the way they are – and not renovate them in such a way that there only will be more expensive houses, as they also try to mix in more recently built areas, which have two types of houses. That's quite artificial, but if social housing is not accepted or not renovated, then you'll lose it. And that's something you have to look at, at what needs to be done, how to develop those social rented apartments too and support the people who live there (52-year-old native Dutch woman).

Thus although being characterized as enrichment, this enrichment does not necessarily lead, or have to lead to more contact between various people. People find it important to acknowledge that people from different ethnic backgrounds live together in Lombok and perceive this as a valuable situation, but this does not have to lead to inter-ethnic contacts or friendships:

> I like diversity. I find it really important that different groups of people have contact with each other. But you also notice here that, well, that the Moroccan community keeps to itself a bit, and the Turkish community does the same. It is a bit organized in groups, and the language, well, you notice that many people speak Moroccan and Turkish. But when I go into a shop, they also speak Dutch as well. So, I do like it. It's a big issue with Geert Wilders and all that. And I don't agree with it. I find it horrible what he says. But I do understand that people say at one point, that's enough. Because there are many foreigners living in this neighbourhood, and I really like that, and things are going well here. At least, I

> think it is going alright. But in other neighbourhoods, it's a different situation. They're sort of turning into ghettos. And that's really bad (23-year-old native Dutch woman).

> On the one hand, the media pays a lot of attention to integration and multiculturalism, I think a bit too much attention using too many Dutch terms, because when you look at this neighbourhood, it is nice to live here, for many people, just because people pay attention to physical aspects. Such as the maintenance of green areas. For me integration is ... Well, I sometimes have the idea that Dutch people really would like to put everybody in a pot and shake it really hard to mix everyone up. While I always immediately think of soccer fans, there are many Dutch men that find it great to go to soccer matches, and really identify with being a soccer fan. I will not be friends with them. So, I think it is all very artificial that it is necessary to become friends. Like an old neighbour, unemployed and shouting all week, just a Dutch man. I don't want anything to do with him (38-year-old native Dutch woman).

Residents think that this diversity makes life nicer and sometimes even easier because it is more relaxed, less organized and therefore easy to live in and have fleeting contacts with each other. There is a bit of chaos, but this is seen as something positive. Although perhaps in other residential areas this lively and chaotic atmosphere leads to some tensions, this in general is not the case in Lombok. Besides, although relations are more mono-ethnic than multi-ethnic, the multi-ethnic encounters are not related to feeling of discomfort, as concluded by Putnam (2007). It gives people the chance to deal with ethnic others and become more familiar with the 'other'. This feeling is related to issues of trust, safety and comfort, meaning that by knowing and seeing others, public familiarity develops. This is consistent with Blokland (2003) and Binken (2010: 18), who state that repeated and obvious encounters could lead to the appraisals we make of each other being based on something more than shallow images and prejudices. This does not necessarily have to lead to actual relations of support and social capital or the immediate inclusion of cultural others into your own networks, but could contribute to a feeling of trust and security. As Blokland (2008) argues, these feelings are based not on whether you like people, but on the capacity to assess other people and their behaviour. This feeling is thus not necessarily linked to friendship or close contacts with other residents in Lombok, but is linked with trusting the other and being able to judge the other in public spaces. Or as stated by Lofland (1998: 60), knowing and being able to assess other people in public spaces is important because of the social-psychological meanings of this public familiarity that relates to issues of social control and feeling of safety.

8.2 Participation and involvement

In this section, I discuss participation and involvement in organized activities as a way to see to what extent these activities stimulate inter-ethnic private contacts and how they relate to issues of trust, safety and belonging. Lombok has many residents who are actively involved

with and in their neighbourhood by participating in volunteer projects, organizing activities or going to events. By involving themselves and participating to a certain extent in the social life, residents express an attitude that can be characterized as committed to their neighbourhood.

The various events organized in Lombok are examples of localized social networks, as they provide important service and economic spin-offs and indicate the extent to which social networks can be mobilized and show the diversity of involvement from across the community. Cultural activities and events in the neighbourhood could be a way to meet others because relations are formed by 'foci of activities' (Feld, 1997). Residents, native more than non-native Dutch, talk with great enthusiasm about such initiatives as Colourful Lombok, Queens Day, soccer tournaments and street parties, and about the more specific activities of Wishing Well West or local initiatives undertaken in Muntplein (repairing the quayside).

> There are many people active in this neighbourhood, trying to really make something out of it. Take, for example, Kanaalstraat. A building was empty and started to degenerate, so a couple of artists asked if they could make it more beautiful, by for instance decorating a window in such a way that it looked more attractive. And there are many initiatives in this neighbourhood. And that is very nice. That's one of the reasons we came to live here (native Dutch man).

These activities are valued positively because 'things are being created *together* with other residents'. Residents refer to this active social life in order to explain why Lombok is a good neighbourhood to live in. They find this active involvement and participation important because it connects them to the place they live in, as well as to other residents. It thus results in a comfortable feeling, a feeling of being home. This feeling is related to issues of trust, safety and comfort; thus, public familiarity is developed not only by knowing and seeing others, but also by being actively involved in Lombok. This active involvement is important because of the socio-psychological meanings of this public familiarity that relates to issues of social control and feeling of safety. Thus, it is seen as the strength of Lombok that active citizens organize events and are involved in their neighbourhood:

> That is typical Lombok, people with each other. Because you have to do it with each other, don't you? I've stood for over 20 years selling my stones at the Liberation Day market. On the fifth of May, I stand in my street with my stones, because that's my hobby. People know that I am standing here, and all those children come to me and for about three euros they buy something, with crystals. They love it. And then you also have contacts with a lot of people. Often you meet the same people every year, because they know you're standing there. And then I made jewels … And all those street events, that was also typical Lombok. Also in my street. That really is fun, because you have so many nice contacts with all the people (71-year-old native Dutch woman).

Residents perceive these organized activities as a sign of the involvement of the inhabitants with their neighbourhood. These events belong to Lombok and are part of its character. Residents mentioned that many artists live in Lombok and see this partly as an explanation

for the great involvement of residents in general. The artists are initiators of and involved in many initiatives, like the initiative to paint an image on the wall of an empty building and decorate it in such a way that it looks more attractive. The following quote shows how an artist becomes involved in initiating such activities:

> In 2004, after Theo van Gogh (the Dutch film director) was murdered, it became very scary for a while. I was already doing something with art in this neighbourhood, but not that much, like once every two or three years. Most often for nothing and in my free time. I earned my money by doing other artworks. And then when this happened to Theo van Gogh, I thought we really need to act right away. I didn't mention that it was about that, but I started. In spring, Lombok would exist for 100 years, so there was going to be a big party and the renovation of some streets was finished. And then I thought ... Well, to celebrate all this I asked 1,700 people from Lombok to paint a piece and we assembled them on a tower, or to put it more correctly, on four towers with really worthless or cheap material stuck to them. It could only stay there for about six weeks, but it really was a positive sign. And it's people of around my age who were the initiators. I'm over fifty, and I'm still vital, even more vital than young women. Because the children have left home, you have so much energy. But also the younger generation, they have new impulses for this neighbourhood. But not the students, they do something once in a while, but that's all (52-year-old native Dutch woman).

This woman's work – the 'Gate of Lombok' (see Figure 8.1) – was the first of the 13 artworks that have already been completed; more will be made until the initiative (the 'Slinger voor

Figure 8.1. The 'Gate of Lombok' (Photo: Lawrence Matthews).

Lombok', or Festoon for Lombok) comes to an end in 2018. Maandzaad, the organization that is coordinating and initiating the project, comprises a diverse group of people, including architects, writers, designers and painters, who work together with local non-profit and for-profit organizations. The aim of Slinger voor Lombok is to work with the residents to 'give form' to Lombok. The 'Tower of Dreams' (Figure 8.2) was painted by a local artist as part of the project.

Another foundation that organizes activities in Lombok is Wishing Well West. Its mission is to organize and support encounters between artists and the inhabitants of various living complexes in Lombok. The projects they execute are very diverse, from a big theatre project to a small project aimed at getting flowers planted in the neighbourhood. The initiator of Wishing Well West was surprised about the positive results of this last project, because it became clear when the plants were being handed out that neighbours did not knew each other. They saw each other and discovered who else lived in their street: 'We are neighbours and we are meeting each other now, but later on more encounters will take place. Sometimes it is that small; let people get to know each other'. Wishing Well West tries to incorporate non-native Dutch inhabitants as well. So far, non-native Dutch children are participating, but non-native Dutch adults still are very much under-represented. However, this also applies to the student population; they too are also less involved in the projects.

Figure 8.2. The 'Tower of dreams'.

Another organized activity that residents referred to is the 'week of shopping'. Especially original residents talk with great enthusiasm about the 'week of shopping', although it is no longer held. Many native Dutch residents would visit the shops and the fairground during this week:

> Well, Lombok used to have the 'week of shopping', in Kanaalstraat and Damstraat. It was organized by the shopkeepers, and all the shops were Dutch. One week long. And on every corner of the street there were fairground attractions. There were bumper cars and all sorts of fun things to do. For us as children, it really was a big event. And it happened every year (60-year-old native Dutch man).

> In the past there used to be an annual market and a fair. My mother would give me 10 guilders, and at the end of the week I'd still have a few guilders left. But, unfortunately that is no longer here. I think things became too wild, and there were too many fights. But it used to be a really nice time! (39-year-old native Dutch woman).

The ULU Mosque also plays an active role in Lombok's social life:

> There are many things that are being organized in Lombok, especially by ULU. There is a group of ULU youngsters. They are very active: they organize activity evenings and events for the neighbourhood (37-year-old Moroccan-Dutch man).

Janine – the volunteer who organizes some of the activities for ISKB (the organization that stimulates contacts and cooperation between various cultures in Utrecht) – said that she believes that these types of activities work well. However, other residents, mainly elderly, think that she is naive and idealistic; they don't believe it will work like that. But Janine is convinced that facilitating encounters is very important:

> Because of these projects people understand each other more; people think less black-white. All the projects aim at bringing people together. You visit people in their homes, and that in itself is already a difference. Many people just don't visit people with another culture. For both parties this is very instructive, you learn from each other. I see for example that the world of youngster becomes a bit bigger. Youngsters today hardly leave their houses; they don't know much about museums and so on … It's just nice to have these contacts.

Residents think of the activities and events in a positive way, although some think that multicultural events have seen better days: they have become repetitive and attract a steady group of people who are active all the time:

> I hate it a bit, because I feel that I'm forced to integrate and in the end it does not work because people walk past each other and everybody is doing his or her own thing with his or her own people. In Lombok, this is how it works: nobody thinks we should integrate. We have all different kinds of shops, of different origins –

> Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq; I don't know where they all come from. But on Saturdays, many foreign people come, and they are not forced to: they just come because they want to be there (33-year-old native Dutch woman).

Although residents acknowledge that the number of residents that actively initiate these projects is limited, it is clear that many more residents are actively or passively involved. By being involved, residents achieve many things in and for their neighbourhood. Involvement is important not only because it shows commitment to Lombok, but also because it can create linkages between inhabitants within Lombok, as stated by the following resident:

> People get in contact with each other by *participating* in certain activities, not by just attending them. Through participating in projects, you are often together with other people, so you have to talk with them, and that really can lead to something (41-year-old native Dutch woman).

It is very often native Dutch inhabitants of Lombok who take the initiative and are involved in organizing various events and projects: 'It's mainly whites who organizes activities in Lombok. I wouldn't say elite, but higher educated, better earners; yes, white. There's nothing wrong with that'. This is in line with what was found in previous research, namely that non-native Dutch people do less voluntary work than native Dutch people (Gijsberts and Schmeets, 2008). In 2006-2009, on average 27% of the native Dutch participated, while only 11% of the Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch and 14% of the Surinamese-Dutch or Antillean-Dutch did such work. Generally, non-native Dutch people are mainly active in organizations such as schools and community centres (Coumans and Te Riele, 2010).

The initiative to plant various bushes and other vegetation and maintain a piece of land together with local residents only involves native Dutch residents. Twelve native Dutch residents are actively involved in this project, but many more take part in it once in a while. A more diverse group of residents are involved in other initiatives, for example Colourful Lombok and the soccer tournament:

> You notice that many activities are organized and many people are taking part in them. Events like the soccer tournament for youngsters, Colourful Lombok, activities organized in the Sawmill. I have a dog, and therefore I meet many people and you can't help notice this active involvement. Someone works at voluntary organization Spirit, another one gives Dutch language courses to women in Lombok. Everybody is involved. Or someone who is part of this committee that maintains green areas, or a group of residents who plant flowers on a piece of land every year, that type of thing. There are quite a lot of private initiatives in Lombok, undertaken by people who live in Lombok (34-year-old native Dutch woman).

The initiators of the Colourful Lombok festival said that they work together with both native and non-native Dutch inhabitants, although the latter are under-represented. In general they do not see this as something bad, but is perceived as logical because 'they have the

enthusiasm, energy, time and money'. For some, this is logical because in more mixed neighbourhoods like Lombok many initiatives are taken because of these active native Dutch residents, while in 'real deprived neighbourhoods' people would not do so. This is one of the aspects that make Lombok a nice place to live. But it would be good if non-native Dutch inhabitants were also to participate:

> I miss the non-native Dutch parents. More of a mix would be better. But non-native Dutch parents do not participate often. I think more information should be provided about the opportunities. But people should also be more involved and try to find each other. I do not see that happen often; people are not looking for each other (37-year-old Moroccan-Dutch man).

Residents think that involvement and participation also takes place in specific spaces in Lombok where people meet each other, such as in the community centres.

> The community centres organize many activities. I always go. It's mainly women who go to these centres, all kinds of women. Once there was an Indian activity, and then many Indian people turned up. Another time a Turkish afternoon was organized, with dancing. There are often many things to do (71-year-old native Dutch woman).

These community centres are important because they provide activities for youths as well as for the elderly or other target groups. Some non-native Dutch residents 'use' these community centres to practice their Dutch:

> I go to Rosa, a community centre, once a week. We talk, mainly Dutch. Just talking and drinking coffee. There are many women, Surinamese, Chinese, Pakistani and Dutch. Everyone together. Talking once a week is good (35-year-old Moroccan-Dutch woman).

In the past these community centres played an important role especially for youngsters. Because in the last decades, some of these community centres closed while others have limited opening hours, their role has become less important.

The involvement of residents in the social life of Lombok is stimulated by the fact that many investments have recently been made in the various public spaces of Lombok as well as in the quality of houses: the renovation of Molenpark, investments in Kanaalstraat and the renovation of housing complex 507 are some examples. These investments are important not only because they increase the liveability of Lombok, but also – and perhaps even more importantly – these investments result in more involvement of the inhabitants, which leads to their feeling more at ease in Lombok. Residents highly appreciate the investments made by the municipality and by the residents themselves. They see the investments and initiatives as a sign that they are interested in their neighbourhood and are trying to create a better neighbourhood.

> First of all, because I can sit there, sit on the pontoon [in Muntplein], just because of the sun and the nice view. And because it is maintained by the residents living behind Muntplein, it feels a safe place. It feels as though it is taken care of and as a result people also have the tendency to take care of it. That really feels good (33-year-old native Dutch woman).

The investments show that Lombok, and its residents, are worth investing in, as explained by the Lombok district manager:

> I think that these investments can make an important contribution because the appearance of the streets can indicate deterioration, and then it can become negative very quickly, leading to drug dealing, pollution and so on. And if you clean the streets, people find that positive, and they feel more positive. And then you are also more open to contacts, I guess.

Residents are aware of the changes and positively value the investments; they like, for example, the way in which Kanaalstraat was improved by cleaning the street at different times. The municipality, together with the residents, has made many efforts to make improvements. That leads to another image, a more positive one. New pavements, new roads and a new sewage system are only a few of the recent investments. This also results, according to the Lombok district manager, in changes in private places:

> You also see that old apartments are suddenly being renovated and sold. Two-income families and one-income families are returning. Those are people who keep their balconies clean and cosy. Instead of buying cheap stuff, they put up nice hanging baskets. This looks fresher. Cleaning the windows, having bright curtains; it just all looks nicer. Slowly you see things changing. And that in the end also gives public spaces a more positive image.

Thus, the active involvement in social life is stimulated by the fact that many residents really care about Lombok. In addition, various institutions are investing in the district, which for residents is a sign that they and Lombok do matter (cf. St. Jean, 2007, in Blokland, 2008). Investments and initiatives led to a more positive feeling about Lombok because it is a place worth living in. Places become less anonymous if people feel that these places are important enough to invest money in. As stated already in 1973 by Newman (see also St. Jean, 2007, in Blokland, 2008), if a place is dirty and badly maintained, people do not feel connected to it and thus do not take care of it. This can be shown by stating that the place is not theirs, or that throwing away rubbish is not bad, since the place is dirty anyway. In Lombok, the investments and the active social life jointly contribute to a positive evaluation of Lombok and make residents feel that they belong to Lombok.

8.3 Categorizations

In this section, I examine how confrontations with diversity relate to the way residents talk about people from different ethnic backgrounds. According to the contact hypothesis, interethnic interactions are positively related to less prejudices, but only when several conditions are met, such as structural contact and common aims. If these conditions are not met, as is the case with informal interactions in public space, what does this mean for the way people talk about cultural others?

The residents of Lombok mainly use stereotypical categorizations based on the visual characteristics of people. When people use public spaces, they see many other unknown people. In order to create a sense of comfort, people tend to categorize people and try to find out to which categories the others belong. The residents do not rely on invisible aspects (e.g. political views) but on visible aspects (e.g. skin colour, clothes, language) to categorize people. The most mentioned words were foreigners, non-natives, natives, Dutch and Hollanders. Very often these terms are used to talk about a group of people and discuss the type of inhabitants or shopkeepers:

> In JP Coenstraat, the houses were mainly bought by higher educated, white people. And in another street there were still many foreign families living there. But that decreases as well. But, luckily they are living in the social rented houses. I think it is very important that those people keep living over there. (52-year-old native Dutch woman)

> There aren't many foreigners in this street. Three or four? Yeah, including the blacks. But the other part is almost full of them (62-year-old native Dutch woman).

At times native Dutch residents categorize non-native residents by attributing to them certain characteristics, such as when discussing the events organized in Lombok: 'Mainly non-native Dutch people go to those events where you can buy cheap things. They attract more non-native Dutch residents'. Or when an Israeli-Dutch woman (66 years old) categorized women wearing headscarves:

> You see everyone in Kanaalstraat – different cultures, different ages, different religions. Men and women, sometimes women in burkas. I don't like that, but it's not often, just once in a while. I think it should be prohibited. I think it is terrible. Look, I'm actually against headscarves, because for me they symbolize oppression. And I understand that women need to manifest their own identity, but I think it is a pity they do it like that. Not thinking about that it is actually a symbol of oppression. I'm radically opposed to the oppression of women. And here, I think it's sad, you know, that you see these women, they're all like that and the children hardly have a life of their own. I find it painful to see.

A native Dutch woman talked about people from other ethnic backgrounds:

> Listen, they always talk about ageing. I can imagine they do. I've always paid my pension contributions. I've always had a job since I was 14 years old. So, I say you have to look at the scroungers. Because listen. Foreign guy, pitiful it is, he takes a wife away from there, she doesn't speak a word of Dutch, she can't leave the house, she can't do anything. They behave as though everything is allowed, but that's not how it is. Because all men do the shopping over here … And that's how it is: we have our things, and they have theirs, and if they don't like it, they just have to leave. Because we don't have to adapt ourselves. And that's how I see it (69-year-old native Dutch woman).

Residents also make 'positive' stereotypical categorizations, talking about the 'attractive shops of the Turks', or saying that the 'foreigners are friendly to each other'. It is obvious that visible characteristics are used to group people. In all those cases, these groups – be they made up of non-native Dutch, Moroccan or foreign residents – are portrayed as homogeneous and the groups are labelled with certain characteristics:

> I like that, all these nationalities, every country has its own character and type of persons, and I just like it to deal with that. A Turkish entrepreneur is just a better business man. And a Moroccan, he promises everything, but doesn't deliver anything. They swear on their mother and the next morning they just do it the other way around. In contrast to, for example, a Surinamese or Indonesian person, when you tell him something once, he will ensure that whatever happened will never happen again – and then it really doesn't happen again. Vietnamese people are almost subservient (native Dutch man).

When residents discussed the unacceptable behaviour of others, they sometimes linked it to non-native Dutch residents. In doing so they used terms like 'their own country' and said things like 'people doing things like that [criminal behaviour], let them do that in their own country. And then see how they respond over there'. And: 'it's not Dutch people doing it [dropping rubbish everywhere]. Those who do it are from other countries'.

Thus, people quite often referred to ethnic people as being a homogeneous group. In many cases, residents explicitly talked about Moroccan-Dutch men; such terms as 'foreign people' or 'Muslim women' are used to categorize people. In the following examples, these categories of people are the ones that cause trouble:

> Yes, those shit Moroccans [*kutmarokkaantjes*] passing by. They hang around on their scooters and they don't care about others trying to walk there. But on the other hand, there are also people who say goodbye in a friendly way or making room for you when you enter a shop. Both are present (41-year-old native Dutch woman).

> There are kids who just drop everything on the ground. I once looked outside, and a foreign boy was passing by and tossing his pizza box into a garden … They do it on purpose, to provoke, I guess, I don´t know. I think it's a pity that this

> kind of thing happens. Often, it's groups, boys ... It's foreigners, really Moroccan boys, I guess. You may not, er ..., but okay ... Of course, there are also nice boys among them; it's only a few that act like that (71-year-old native Dutch woman).

> When you are at the beginning of Molenpark, then you see a whole bunch of those foreigners. And you can't sit on a bench when your grandchild wants to play, because there's a whole gaggle of women sitting there (62-year-old native Dutch woman).

Another thing that came to the fore is that people mentioned problematic issues while simultaneously saying that they are not discriminating or that they are not against certain people. By using this mechanism of 'I don't discriminate, but ...', people said that they themselves do not discriminate but that they see certain things that have to be mentioned and talked about. This relates to the discourse of neo-realism (Prins, 2000), in which people present themselves as someone who is able to see what the facts of life are and talks about the truths that in earlier times were concealed. This sometimes happened rather explicitly, while other times it was less visible. People often also started to make excuses before making their points. It is clear that residents understand the context of the categories used, but are still situated in the new realist discourse, using categories to which you either do or do not belong.

> I think it's an important issue, but then I do have an opinion on that. That I have. But I'm not at all a Wilders-man. Because, I don't know that man either. I think the biggest mistake they've made in the Netherlands is to allow family reunions. Sorry, but I really think that's the truth ... That's the biggest mistake that's been made all over Western Europe. And that is where the revenues are coming from today. Sorry, I don't discriminate but they are, especially the boys, I do not want to generalize, but mainly the Moroccans. Jesus Christ, that does annoy me. Not the Turks; they take care of their own, you never have any trouble from them ... I think that they have kept out certain groups ... Well, sorry, but these were mainly the Moros [Moroccans] (60-year-old native Dutch man).

> I mean, I'm not against people who wear a veil or whatever. But people who wear a burka ... I've seen them in Lombok, and I sometimes think, you're in the Netherlands, adjust yourself a little bit. To completely cover yourself, I think that goes too far. Everyone has his religion, fine but ... (35-year-old Polish-Dutch man).

By using phrases like 'he [the owner of the vegetable shop] is also a foreigner, but he helps you really nicely', residents refer to the common sense notion of 'foreigners' as a problematic group. In doing so, problematic behaviour is connected to the responsibility on the side of non-native Dutch population. Some residents even link the quality of this neighbourhood to the ethnicity of its inhabitants, stating that the arrival of the guest workers in the 1960s resulted in Lombok becoming a kind of slum. In doing so, the cultural others in Lombok are portrayed as the ones who are to be blamed for this:

> It's all foreigners in Kanaalstraat it. When a shop closes down, a foreigner comes in. In the past there were many very beautiful, distinguished shops. Really beautiful. But now it's much more messy (71-year-old native Dutch woman).

One resident tended to categorize cultural others all the time and use many stereotypical images. She posited the idea that 'foreigners' are treated better than native Dutch people, for example when it comes to finding a house:

> The Dutch [*Hollanders*] can't get a house in Lombok, but when a foreigner asks, they're given one straight away. We have to work ourselves to death to get some money. Yeah, but they just have to call and they get a house (62-year-old native Dutch woman).

This can be related to what Essed (1991) calls 'culturalist racism', a discourse that classifies others into hierarchies not on the basis of biological traits, but on essentialist cultural aspects and stereotypes, and in doing so often using the dichotomy of 'us' and 'them'.

Not only non-native Dutch residents were talked about in stereotypes. The native Dutch or original Utrechters (*Utros*) – people who have lived in Lombok all or almost all their lives and portraying them as people who sit outside, drinking beer and watching football – were also stereotyped:

> Bandoengstraat, that's also really Lombok, but old Lombok. It's got a street association that's been organizing events for, oh, I don't know how many years. Everything is orange when the Dutch soccer team is going to play. These are the original streets, if I may say so. There're many native Dutch people who, hup, put a fence across the entrance to the street, get the beer out, and ... (51-year-old native Dutch man).

But by and large, most categorizations and stereotypical images were used when talking about Moroccan-Dutch youngsters and non-native Dutch people in general. Thus, Lombok residents categorize other people mainly along ethnic lines. Other residents are grouped on the basis of their visible characteristics. This is in line with Van Eijk (2010: 149), who states:

> People rely on all sorts of cues – bodily appearance, clothes, speech, posture – to decipher what to think of others and to assess whether they are 'people like us' or not ... Through people's sign-reading, ethnicity – or ethnic appearance, as sometimes people know little more than that – can become an essential aspect of who other people are – in the perception of the people who do the sign-reading, that is.

Lombok residents use these categorizations because they lack other frames to interpret the cultural codes of other people in public spaces (cf. Blokland, 2008). This is necessary in order to assess others and become familiar with them.

Categories also emerge from political processes that create categories within societies. Categorization of certain ethnic groups is used as a policy tool, and although they also used to be able to tackle discrimination and unequal opportunities, ethnic categorizations reflect dominant opinions and discourse about who is 'in' and who is 'out', and as such ethnic categories has added to the process of the racialization of society (Jacobs *et al.*, 2006). These ethnic categories are then often imposed on individuals, not only by governments but also in everyday situations (Tilly, 2005: 112).

This is also what happened in Lombok. Residents discuss certain developments and policies and use categorizations to make themselves clear. This reflects the current debates in the Netherlands, whereby the same categorizations are used in political debates, daily newspapers and so on. These categorizations are most often used in Lombok as a way to discuss and talk about others, and much less as a way to exclude or blame others. People experience and use different social categorizations in everyday life; because categorization is used to simplify information about different people we encounter (Oakes *et al.*, 1994). Even those who do not belong to social groups that are considered disadvantaged can and do experience that others (unjustly) derive expectations about them based on their social category membership (Ellemers and Barreto, 2006). Any social category can yield positive as well as negative expectations, depending on the comparative dimension that is relevant and the comparative context that is salient (e.g. Oakes *et al.*, 1994).

In Lombok, although I found some generalizations and stereotyping, residents mostly talked in positive terms about diversity in their neighbourhood. They referred to cultural others because they come across each other in the several public spaces in their neighbourhood. When discussing their daily life, cultural others are talked about because they are part of the everyday life of residents. Positive aspects regarding living in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood prevail above negative issues, but at the same time Lombok residents use categorizations to assess cultural others. I should like to stress that any type of categorization that involves a dichotomy between 'us' and 'them' and in which 'us' is the norm, potentially leads to discrimination and as such should be carefully dealt with. To see to what extent this indeed is happening, in the following section I look at the ways in which residents talked about integration and multiculturalism in more general terms.

8.4 Talking about multiculturalism and integration

The residents frequently talked about issues of multiculturalism and social integration, and it was clear that for them it is an important theme. In this section, I use many quotes to show the way in which people discussed multiculturalism and integration.

Residents were predominantly positive about the multicultural society in general and in Lombok more specifically. They stated that they think that the multicultural society enriches Dutch society because it has an added value in terms of liveliness:

> The place I come from – a really very Dutch village – was very boring. In general I think that the Netherlands, real Dutch places, I can like, but it is really boring. I find it difficult to explain what exactly it is. I just don't know, you hear other sounds, different types of energy, that's what I think. You feel there are several layers and maybe also a kind of tension. … This tension, I like it to have it around. Something happens in the street, somewhat more noise, things that don't seem to be right, things that are different and you don't understand (40-year-old native Dutch woman).

> Well, I think that only the problems are being discussed, and that's a disadvantage, because all I notice is how nice it is, like let's say, I wouldn't want to live in a new white neighbourhood. I like the fact that we live next to each other, and even though we don't talk to each other, you become aware of each other, you see each other on a daily basis, and sometimes an old granny sits on the pavement – which I won't do, because I think this street is not suitable for that, but she does. And therefore I'm able to greet her. We hardly speak the same language, but we can greet each other and I really like that. I think the media don't show that enough. It's part of the media to show bad things: it isn't news when people live together peacefully. Besides, I think that it would be better if there was a bit more contact and then understand each other better. But I don't know how. I know it's possible here, but it doesn't happen (28-year-old native Dutch woman).

Residents most often used nuanced terms when discussing how they deal with multiculturalism. Although the positive attitude towards diversity is not translated into closer private inter-ethnic contacts, it do go beyond appreciating that there are shops run by people who come from different parts of the world and sell exotic goods.

Talking about integration in Dutch society, residents perceive integration as a responsibility for society as a whole and they referred to the fact that it is about everybody feeling at home, not only about socio-economic positions or only about non-native Dutch. In that sense, residents view integration as a two-sided process in which both native and non-native Dutch have their responsibilities. They disagree with what they call the general ideas about integration as presented in the media and by right-wing politicians. This view is too negative and does not lead to fruitful solutions or to more acceptance of each other. It leads to categorizing people in such a way that it evokes negative expectations about the individual. Since these category memberships are readily visible, these categories can even be inferred when there is no face-to-face interaction and tend to determine people's responses even in situations where they are clearly irrelevant (Ellemers and Barreto, 2006).

> I become totally nuts from all the messages in the media about integration in the Netherlands. I hate it; I really, really, really find that terrible. I'm ashamed of that Wilders [the right-wing politician]. I think it's just such a horrible development. Honestly, I've got no clue what people are frightened of. If I were Moroccan, I'd be so angry. When I start to talk about this, I almost have to cry. It's just criminal. In every culture there is a group that doesn't fit in, for whatever reason. It can be

> the guys in Heerlen [a city in the south of the Netherlands] close to the border and whose mothers and fathers are unemployed. You have a whole group of white criminals over there. That just doesn't appear in the newspaper. And here, when I came to live here, there were big groups of families. They were out-and-out crooks. And now there's a group of Moroccans, and some of them end up as criminals. But if the newspapers keep portraying them as a group, then it hurts these people more than anything else. These youngsters, they want to show their strength and they identify with this group. So it results in so many stupid things (52-year-old native Dutch woman).

> Too many people support Wilders. I still think that the welcoming treatment aimed at meeting, is the most fruitful one. And also that diversity, just like diversity with the Catholic or ex-Catholics, is also present with Muslims, or Christian or Lebanese or whatever. At a certain moment I also started to become active in the neighbourhood, just because I noticed that anti-Muslim views really hardened relations. And I feel very dissatisfied about that. And I also feel very dissatisfied with having that less counter-perspectives on these Wilders'-like voices. I also think – but it already says something that I feel the need to say this – that we never closed our eyes in this neighbourhood to the negative aspects of boys that are annoying … And the building here was set on fire by white, middle-class boys from another neighbourhood, not by Moroccans … As far as that's concerned, it's just putting energy into the wrong direction. It's a pity (64-year-old native Dutch man).

> Well, like for example with Wilders these days, how many people vote for him? That's something I'm scared about. And what I also notice, to make a link to Lombok, especially the old Utrechters, they can have a kind of bitterness or frustration, or they really can talk about 'those blacks' like the city is theirs. Like in a way based on fear, if people during this economic crisis are more fearful of losing their jobs or being scared of Islam. Mm. I find it pitiful that you see a trend like that, but I also do believe, and luckily I also see that around me and daily in my work, that a lot of people do believe in communication and contact and the liveability of being all together in a society and learning from each other. As long as you keep on communicating and stay open and have respect for one another … But I also realize that we have to be honest and sometimes it just helps if you get in touch with someone you are afraid of or you have certain ideas about. That's often the case, many prejudices (34-year-old native Dutch woman).

Residents said that they are worried about certain developments they see in their own environment, for example many people voted for right-wing politicians and people do not care that much about other people. These examples all refer to situations in which native Dutch inhabitants are frightened of or frustrated about the fact that non-native Dutch people live in Lombok. This relates to what Gruijter and colleagues (2010) found, namely that a lot of native Dutch people feel like a stranger in the Netherlands.

Another issue that popped up frequently when discussing integration, was the extent to which non-native Dutch people should adapt themselves to Dutch rules, norms and values, and what these Dutch rules, values and norms looked like. The residents think that there is not really such a thing as Dutch values or norms. However, other residents think, without being very explicit, that the Dutch system is not strict enough. Becoming stricter would lead to fewer problems, as is stated in the following quotes:

> I think that sometimes we are going too far to make everybody happy. I think that at one point, love should come from both sides. I think that learning Dutch is compulsory when coming to the Netherlands. In America, for example, you also have to learn English. That's what I like. Sometimes we are too tolerant. You should not draw a discreet veil over everything. We should become a bit harder, I think. If you want to enjoy, if you want to participate in Dutch society, you will have to partake 100 percent in it (60-year-old native Dutch man).

> You do not have to fight for yourself. There are judges here. The people that act like that just let them do that in their own country. Look to how they will respond over there, what type of punishment they will get over there. They would not do that, I guess. They would not steal in the streets. They will have to go to prison, starting with 5, 6 years, even for stealing a candy bar. Try it over there. And the people that come from those places, they behave like this because they have more freedom … The biggest problem is that the sentences are too lenient. They have to hit them harder – whoever it is, even my own children (41-year-old Turkish-Dutch man).

In relation to this, speaking Dutch was seen as a very important aspect when living and participating in the Netherlands.

> I know that there are many prejudices, also against foreigners. But on the other hand I can imagine that there arise certain issues when you do not adapt yourself to the laws of the Netherlands. Every country has its laws, and you must adapt to them. And I think that language is very important. That's why I think that everybody should learn Dutch. And my mother-in-law, she's lived here for 30 years and doesn't speak Dutch. I don't know, you feel blind when you can't speak Dutch. They really are right when they have been doing an integration course. But on the other hand, I do not want to judge people and say the Dutch are like this and foreigners are like that, but both sides have prejudices against each other. They don't know them that well, so everybody has an image, like 'Oh the Dutch, you have to keep your distance from them', or 'Those bloody foreigners'. So, that I don't like. And the media is doing that as well (37-year-old Turkish-Dutch woman).

> Look, when we're abroad, the Dutch adjust themselves easier. We learn more languages. That's something I find pitiful. People live here for 20, 30 years and *still* don't know how to speak Dutch! That's a pity (40-year-old native Dutch woman).

> Well, what I think, I really hate it when I'm at work, or taking a break, and they speak in their own language. Why don't they just speak Dutch and stop moaning about it? That [speaking their own language] is really annoying. And just like their conversations, I prefer them to speak Dutch, and if they can't speak Dutch, then speak English. But then it stops. I'm *not* going to learn Turkish or Moroccan or Arabic (31-year-old Polish-Dutch man).

> Well, how to define integration? What I do find important in that is, well you have an economic part if it; does someone have a job and that kind of thing. But next to that, integration is also whether or not you feel at home, if you're socially integrated in the neighbourhood and stuff like that … For everyone it is that you have good contacts and that you feel at home. Yes, and I think that it is also important that people speak the language well. That they also get the opportunities to do so. There are just so many people who never got that opportunity, or to put it even stronger, we all know, of course, how people in the sixties came to the Netherlands, they were selected on the basis of their appearances only, how their teeth looked, and their Dutch was not of any importance. I don't think that was the right thing to do. But that, well it goes too far to blame those people personally for that (45-year-old native Dutch woman).

The difference between the first and second generation was stressed more often when discussing issues of integration and what integration means for different individuals. A Moroccan-Dutch man explained why he thinks that certain people of the first generation can no longer be changed:

> Look, if you plant a tree, a young one, you can bend it anyway you want. But once you have a big tree, you can no longer bend it. If you try to bend it, you'll break it.

However, other residents did talk negatively about people from other ethnic backgrounds, and mention that it is the responsibility of non-native Dutch to feel at home in the Netherlands. These residents have a very strong we-image, and to a certain extent feel threatened by non-native Dutch people. As shown, people talk most negatively about the Moroccan-Dutch in terms of integration, and more specifically about not having jobs, although national statistics regarding socio-economic situations of various groups show that this is not the case.

> In the beginning it was as though we had to adapt ourselves to the foreigners, and that still is the case – but it should be the other way around. They have to adapt themselves to us, but they don't. That's bad. They should be glad that they can come to this place. That's what I think. It is the mentality of people. There are nice foreigners, really, but half of them, their mentality … And especially during Ramadan, you really notice it. They have bad moods, and well, they are not allowed to eat, so that makes them grouchy. But for the rest, a lot of people would like to live in this neighbourhood (62-year-old native Dutch woman).

> What everybody thinks, what I think, is that these young Moroccans behave very rudely. I have nothing against them, perhaps everybody's like this, but around here you notice that it is these young boys. Unfortunately. It's not the elderly, or for example the Greeks or Spaniards who came in the past; they don't annoy me that much. But it really is the … Well, you'll see for yourself. It's a pity. And why is it like this? Trouble, whatever (31-year-old Polish-Dutch man).

> I have nothing against anyone. As long as they work. But when I see on television things about integration, the costs that come along with that, and bringing these brides, then I think, well, what the hell are we busy with, it looks like thus is the promised land. That's when I say, if someone is not really a refugee, they can do anything they want, but not the ones, not those scroungers, because when I see that sometimes, when I sit here, a boy of 18, 19 with a car. How did he get it? We never got a car like that, and we didn't need one either, but how do they manage it? That's why, I see those things happen, also those drugs carriers. Then I think, they didn't finish their school, but they've got all those things? And if another child resists, I can imagine that that's happening. That's why you are a child. They say that contrition comes after the sins. That's just how it is. But that's why I say, I do not agree with a lot of things (69-year-old native Dutch woman).

Residents were not explicitly negative about Turkish-Dutch people in the Netherlands or in Lombok. Although some people discussed the building of the new mosque, most agreed that a new mosque should be built.

Non-native Dutch residents perceive changes in recent decades. In the past they were accepted by other inhabitants, but nowadays it is harder to be accepted. At the same time, some non-native Dutch residents said that they also receive less respect than they used to get.

> The point is, I don't notice it because I go to places where, I don't know, where they help me. And you hear people say you won't be accepted, I was not helped, why? I don't know, maybe because I am not a foreigner. Well, I'd say that, in the past, things went perfect, you rang somewhere, they helped you. And nowadays you ring, but the door won't open. That kind of thing. That's what I hear from my family. It was not an issue where you were from; you were helped. But now, you are Moroccan, oh I have to look out. That kind of thing. It's becoming more explicit: they stamp you 'Moroccan: watch out' (37-year-old Moroccan-Dutch man).

Other non-native Dutch residents said that they notice some general changes in the ways in which they are perceived and what is asked of them in terms of integration.

> Look, I've been here for 30 years, I've been educated, I have had my own company. If you come with me to my house, I can show you a letter about an integration course. Why do I need an integration course? What should I integrate? And then I will call them, I show them my papers. But no, I have to do this integration course. Why? That's the law of Rita Verdonk. Why? It will cost me time, and also

> money, I have to pay for this course. But I was raised here, why should I do this? Only because I don't have a Dutch passport! I don't have a Dutch passport due to all the fuss about it. You have a Moroccan passport and so on. My son has a Dutch passport, my wife has a Dutch passport. But because of all this shit, I don't want to apply for one (33-year-old Moroccan-Dutch man).

These experiences most often relate to issues that take place outside of Lombok, or at least, to issues that are not explicitly related to Lombok. Most people emphasized that the diversity of Lombok is valued positively and is not related to problematic issues. It is certainly not based on problems they perceive in their neighbourhood on a daily basis. On the contrary, their positive evaluations of diversity in Lombok lead to a positive view of multiculturalism in the Netherlands. A Moroccan-Dutch man said he is fully aware of the differences between his own experiences in his own neighbourhood and the continuing problems that ethnic groups encounter in general in regards to being accepted without prejudice: 'But the strange thing is, in Bankaplein or Molenpark, you don't notice it. It's truly multicultural. Why is that?' A Moroccan-Dutch shopkeeper said:

> Well, look, the neighbours, the neighbourhood, they know you, and they accept you. But people from elsewhere, they think, well a foreigner, that foreigner. I also noticed that in Morocco, people say 'There he is, the cheese-head'. That's what we are called over there.

In Lombok the multicultural society works pretty well and does not lead to many problems. Residents mostly talked in positive terms about diversity in their neighbourhood. Although I found some generalizations and stereotypes, residents usually discussed how they deal with integration and multiculturalism in very nuanced terms. Besides, although living in Lombok gives residents valuable experiences in dealing with diversity, it does not make them blind to problems that exist in both Lombok and elsewhere in the Netherlands.

8.5 Conclusion

Lombok residents by and large are satisfied with the contacts they have in Lombok. These contacts can be mainly characterized as non-intimate and supporting ties that enable residents to live their everyday lives in Lombok more easily and more joyfully. Residents mainly have contacts with people from the same ethnic background, although also inter-ethnic relations are formed. It appears that confrontations with diversity in public spaces did not often lead to inter-ethnic private bonding. Although the public life is multicultural and ethnic diversity is visible in the various places, these short encounters do not often lead to more endurable friendships.

Although some would be more satisfied were their social networks more diverse, reality shows that this is most often not the case. There are various reasons for this: residential segregation within Lombok makes it less likely to have inter-ethnic interactions with neighbours, and residents often chose their friendships based on the homophily principle.

Although neighbourhood institutions such as the various foundations in Lombok are of importance for the networks of residents and could provide more diverse networks, many Lombok residents admit that they are not really looking for these opportunities because it would take too much time and energy, and most residents are happy with the way things are, that is, with having contacts with people who are similar to themselves in terms of hobbies and background. Moreover, residents see language as an important barrier to having more inter-ethnic contacts, and they stated that it is a matter of character whether people from various ethnic backgrounds interact with each other. In general, the social contacts within Lombok are appreciated and residents are satisfied with the way things are. Residents' networks contribute to a positive feeling about living in Lombok. Besides, private relations are described as pleasant and enjoyable and support a favourable social climate that is characterized by trust, safety and social control, because the behaviour of other residents is predictable and based on mutual everyday support.

All this led me to the conclusion that Lombok residents are confronted with multiculturalism in their daily lives when meeting other residents and when they organize and attend events. This does not lead to many more inter-ethnic friendships, but it leads to a safe, comfortable and multicultural atmosphere. A pleasant mix of people that is appreciated. Confrontation with diversity in the everyday lives was no more and no less than the real-life situation of Lombok residents, a situation in which they felt comfortable and that did not lead to an unpleasant living environment, although some original residents have difficulties with the many changes that occurred, resulting in having fewer friends and acquaintances in Lombok. But the positive experience with and appreciation of multicultural life in public space, does not generate the creation of a more ethnically diverse personal network. Public and private lives are separate domains. Although the public spaces do not really act as platforms for the creation of enduring social relations between different ethnic groups, it is important to realize that Lombok is just a small neighbourhood, which means that many inhabitants share the same public spaces and meet each other only in those spaces. The positive attitude towards diversity was not translated into closer, private inter-ethnic contacts. However, it goes beyond the fact that there are shops run by people from different parts of the world who sell goods from different parts of the world. The diversity present in Lombok is a marker in a positive sense. This is not completely consistent with studies that found that expressing a liking for diversity is little more than social wallpaper (cf. Butler, 2003); it is partaking but not participating (cf. Blokland and Van Eijk, 2010).

Most residents participate actively in the social life in Lombok: they attend events and they know what is going on; in addition, quite a lot of residents are involved organizing activities. However, more native than non-native Dutch people participate actively in organizing activities. Residents appreciate this lively situation and for them this active involvement is an important characteristic of Lombok. This results in a situation in which inhabitants feel connected to their neighbourhood, expressing that Lombok is worthwhile to live in and to spend your time in. It creates a social atmosphere and leads to interactions between residents; in doing so, it positively contributes to the liveability of Lombok. These feelings are stimulated by the investments that have been made in the recent past (Peters and De Haan, 2011).

It is important to emphasize that multi-ethnic encounters in public spaces are not related to feelings of discomfort. They give people the chance to deal with ethnic others and to become more familiar with the 'other'. The normalized contacts with neighbours and other residents as well as the active social life helps people to feel at home in Lombok.

When meeting and seeing other people, residents categorize others in public spaces. They use these categorizations to interpret the cultural codes of other people in public spaces. Lombok residents categorize other people mainly along ethnic lines, on the basis of visible characteristics. This process of categorizing and dealing with cultural others takes place in the context of the everyday environment of Lombok. Residents use it either as a way to discuss and talk about others, or as a way to exclude or blame others. Some residents feel threatened by cultural others and spoke negatively about them, using categorizations to do so. They convey a very strong we-image resulting in talking about 'them' and 'us'. Although categorizations reflect the daily practices of people more than trying to exclude cultural others, we need to be aware that structurally using categorizations leads to stigmatizing individuals and evaluating individuals on the basis of group characteristics. However, this was not perceived or mentioned by non-native Dutch residents, and was sometimes even explicitly mentioned as something that did not occur in Lombok.

Residents mostly spoke positively about the diverse character of Lombok. An important issue is the extent to which these positive experiences with diversity in the immediate living environment coincide with a tolerant and positive attitude towards multiculturalism as a general phenomenon. It was clear that many of the residents have a positive opinion about today's multicultural society, but do not deny all the problems that come with it. There are also doubts. The fact that people in Lombok enjoy most aspects of multiculturalism, and that there are no major problems in the area, does not mean that people think that such a situation is possible everywhere. The positive opinions most often relate to their own experiences, but in more general terms native Dutch residents also talk more negatively about multiculturalism.

PART V.

Discussion and conclusion

9. Connecting space and social integration

In Western societies such as the Netherlands, people from various ethnic backgrounds live together in urban neighbourhoods. Especially in the last decade, more pressure has been put on non-native Dutch people to adapt to Dutch culture, while there is no clear definition of what exactly Dutch culture is. This Dutch context does not stand alone. A public discourse on anti-multiculturalism has developed in many Western countries, especially since 9/11. This discourse claims that multiculturalism contributes to segregation and the fragmentation of societies, and does not lead to minority integration. In line with this, much research has looked at the ways in which non-native people differ from native people in terms of jobs, housing and education. Few studies have focused on people's non-organized lives, and little research has taken an individual perspective and considered the perspectives of both native and non-native people.

My study addressed this research gap, by focusing on everyday life in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods and on how native and non-native people live. The empirical focus was on two multi-ethnic urban cities in the Netherlands, namely Nijmegen and Utrecht. I studied six public spaces: Goffertpark and Thiemepark in Nijmegen, and Kanaalstraat, Bankaplein, Molenpark and Muntplein in the Lombok district of Utrecht. In the previous chapters, I showed how people from various ethnic backgrounds use, perceive and interact in urban public spaces in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods. I also demonstrated how this can be linked to expectations about and evaluations of the behaviour of others, which sometimes take the form of categorizations and stereotypes. This provided an understanding of how people evaluate their everyday lives in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood. My research shows that positive evaluations of experiences in public spaces contribute to feeling at home in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood. Residents feel attached to the public spaces and feel that they belong in their neighbourhood. Fleeting interactions in public spaces add to this feeling of belonging.

In this final chapter, I reflect upon the main objective of my research, which was to gain insight into the meaning of urban public spaces for social integration. I want to emphasize that the concepts of social integration and meaning of urban public spaces keep informing each other and cannot be treated in isolation from each other; their relation is not linear but consists of complex and multilayered process. I will therefore start to present my perspective on social integration and how this relates to the dominant discourse on social integration.

9.1 Dominant discourse vs. an individual perspective on social integration

In the dominant discourse, integration refers to the desirable way in which newcomers should become members of the receiving society. Integration is used to describe the extent to which non-native inhabitants have adapted to the majority population. As a result, the focus is on problems related to 'not being integrated'. Although it is emphasized that integration is a two-sided process, the dominant discourse is often about the non-native population,

and not about either the native population or society as a whole. As such, the focus is on the 'problematic other' and divides societies into 'we' and 'they'. The fear of Islam plays a major role in this division, as reflected in the discussion of such issues as some Muslims refusing to shake hands or the prohibition on wearing headscarves in public functions or at schools. Although not always mentioned explicitly, the discussions in the Netherlands are mainly about the failure of Turkish or Moroccan residents to integrate into Dutch society. Moreover, in the dominant integration discourse, the emphasis is on the so-called shared norms and values through which a common and unified identity is promoted. Although the term 'assimilation' is often not used, or is even mentioned as something that people want to distance themselves from, these discussions tend to focus on adaptation to common norms and values, and as such this resembles assimilation.

This dominant discourse creates further issues. First, it maintains the dichotomy between native and non-native Dutch people. It continues to distinguish between people who were and those who were not born here, and between people whose parents were born in the Netherlands and those whose parents were born elsewhere. In the Netherlands, a division is made between *autochtonen* (autochthons) and *allochtonen* (allochthons). In doing so, there is a constant reproduction of 'us' and 'them', a division that reproduces the idea that there is a difference between the individuals in these two groups, and that you belong to either one group or the other. However, it is important to acknowledge that ethnicity is still a factor that matters, and as such it is sometimes necessary to show how, for example, policies have different effects on different people. Although it can be a useful instrument in documenting discriminatory practices and the social exclusion of ethnic groups, one must be aware that the differentiation between groups adds to the process of the racialization of society (Jacobs *et al.*, 2006). Every system of ethnic categorization holds the risk of essentializing groups. This leads to a paradoxical situation in which both researchers and policy makers need to balance between the need for analytical categories and the need to treat them with strong reservations. Or as Jacobs and colleagues (*ibid.*: 16) state: 'The classification of ethnic groups in our view, however, constitutes a necessary evil in the construction of an efficient policy aiming at equal opportunities and in the struggle against racism'.

Second, this dominant discourse neglects intra-group differences. By speaking about groups, groups are produced and reproduced. And although it can be useful in research to categorize data at certain moments, it is important to acknowledge intra-group differences. Instead of generalizing individuals, as is done in the dominant discourse, it should be emphasized that individual characteristics are important, and that although some characteristics are equal, others can and will be different.

Third, the dominant discourse focuses mainly on the ways in which non-native Dutch people adapt themselves. Less attention is paid to the ways in which native Dutch people perceive certain issues and how they deal with a changing population in their everyday lives. How non-native Dutch people view their own situation in terms of feeling at home and belonging in their neighbourhoods is also often ignored.

These conceptual paradoxes must be acknowledged. In order to deal with these issues and gaps, I chose to focus on the individual experiences and perceptions of people – men and women, young and old, native and non-native Dutch – in order to capture the complexity of those paradoxes and to expose its political and cultural underpinnings. My focus was on the everyday social life in urban public spaces and the relations that are formed in these spaces. Relations are inter-subjective and involve other human beings, but while having relations, people make distinctions between themselves and others. Thus, through relations people are both connected to and disconnected from each other, a process that takes place in the everyday lives of people. By looking at attachment to places, interactions, networks, participation and categorizations, I gained an insight into the character of individual relations and how these contribute to feeling at home. In contrast to most research, which focuses on organized aspects of life, my research focused on non-organized forms. When looking at the individual experiences and perceptions, it was not always possible to distinguish leisure from other everyday activities. Therefore, although my initial focus was on leisure in urban public spaces, it soon evolved into a focus on everyday life in public spaces, as leisure is part of everyday life and they have many similar features.

My research is in line with that by Blokland, Van Eijk and others, who emphasize the need to look at individual stories and experiences and to focus on the interpretation of multiple everyday realities. I want to stress that I struggled with my need for analytical but essentialist categorization in order to expose certain issues, knowing that it would inevitably reproduce 'us' and 'them' divides. I therefore developed a different approach to integration by looking at the individual level of everyday life in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood.

9.2 The significance of public encounters

Being in public spaces

It is claimed that by welcoming everyone, public spaces can bring together groups of people regardless of their class, ethnic origin, gender or age, which makes intermingling possible (Madanipour, 1999). That is what I found to be the case in my study areas. The public spaces I researched are used by a variety of residents, in terms of gender, age and ethnicity, for leisure purposes, such as relaxing, spending time with friends and family, picnicking or shopping. Residents use the public spaces in their neighbourhood on a regular basis during their free time, and even if it is linked with doing chores, such as shopping or taking care of the children, people perceive this as enjoyment and pleasure.

Many of those spaces function as contact zones and everyday places where people like to be and where they 'consume' diversity, and by doing so become aware of cultural others. Public spaces are highly valued and residents feel connected both to these places and, in general terms, to the people who are present in them. Being in public spaces positively relates to feeling comfortable in a neighbourhood. While being there, people were mostly accompanied by people from their own ethnic background. This corresponds with the trend over the last few decades in the Netherlands, whereby spending leisure time with other

cultural groups is decreasing (Gijsberts, 2004). Leisure tends to strengthen already known relations rather than create new ones. One of the theoretical starting points is that the realm of leisure assumes that people have a certain freedom to choose with whom they spend their free time and, related to that, they also have the freedom to freely express their identity. It became clear that this freedom leads to a preference for spending leisure time with people from the same ethnic background. Inhabitants enjoy their leisure time with known others in public spaces. They tend to describe their behaviour in terms of activities and being together with family and friends, rather than focusing on interactions with others. For most residents, the various spaces provide opportunities to retreat and to escape from domestic chores.

By being in public space during their leisure time, people create and form identities. People show who they are through their dress code, actions, language and behaviour; at the same time, however, people's identities are influenced by others. The opinions and behaviour of others are crucial in the formation and identification of ethnic groups. My research showed that people identify other residents mainly on the basis of visual characteristics. In this process, ethnicity is important because of its salience for constituting social identities. Even though people belong to different social categories based on gender, occupation, religion, ethnicity and so on, it appears that ethnicity is a factor that matters. It is important to stress that ethnic diversity is clearly observable in public spaces in Lombok and Nijmegen, and that spaces are perceived mainly as multi-ethnic spaces: they are constructed in everyday life and not on the basis of conscious ethnic inclusion or exclusion.

Interactions and prejudices

Public spaces in Lombok and Nijmegen function as spaces where people meet each other repeatedly, resulting in attachment to spaces and feeling at ease with the other people who are present in those spaces. It is in these urban public spaces that multi-ethnic encounters occur. Organized activities facilitate interactions and contribute to the development of positive sentiments about each other, which increases the possibility that people will form relationships. Although the intensity of interaction differs in the six places, residents generally provided positive reasons for their interactions in public space and tended not to elaborate on the absence of negative elements, as Dines and Cattell (2006) also found in their research in south-east London.

Residents highly value the short and informal interactions, because these interactions give them a sense of what is going on; they facilitate connections between places and people. Residents develop a sense of being at home in streets, parks and other public spaces by being able to understand what is going on in these places. Although the presence of inter-ethnic contact in public spaces should not be overestimated, the public visibility of multiculturalism in urban public spaces is important for sharing and exposing cultural values.

Interactions are important because by meeting other people, people can become more familiar and may create a more realistic image of other people, which leads them to talk and think less in stereotypes and not to judge on the basis of assumed group characteristics. This argument is known as the contact hypothesis. The original idea behind this hypothesis

was that inter-group contact facilitates learning about the out-group, and that this new knowledge reduces prejudice. However, it later appeared that mediation by empathy and anxiety reductions are more important for reducing stereotypes (Pettigrew *et al.*, 2007).

My research demonstrated that by having fleeting encounters, people become familiar with cultural others, resulting in a situation in which residents become aware of diversity, and acknowledge and accept diversity as something that is part of their everyday lives. Especially by enjoying diversity and having positive emotions during brief interactions, people appreciate their everyday multi-ethnic lives. At the same time, residents to a certain extent also categorize others on the basis of visible ethnic characteristics. Moroccan-Dutch youngsters and Muslims are often named and stereotyped on the basis of assumed group characteristics. Residents define certain behaviour as typically 'Moroccan youth'.

But although group characteristics are used when talking about others, such talk is usually not related to a negative evaluation of certain behaviours, but is used to indicate the person one is talking about. Residents use categories to explain things that happen in their neighbourhood and to get a sense of what is going on. Although one can perceive this as unproblematic, it is not: any type of categorizing holds the risk of essentializing groups. At the same time, residents also refer to individuals from different ethnic backgrounds ('A Moroccan man with a nice shop where I always buy my fruit'). As such, in Lombok 'inter-categorical' interactions are transformed into interpersonal interactions, meaning that residents, once they have met other people, relate to other individuals in terms of individual characteristics, interests and values. They do that instead of assessing individuals in terms of the characteristics of the category (group) one is thought to belong to.

This can be illustrated by explaining the discourse around youths loitering in public spaces. In many Dutch cities, groups of youths of ethnic origin hanging around in public space have become the centre of interest. In general, for many people the presence of such groups is associated with criminal activities and contributes to feelings of a lack of safety (Binken, 2010: 7). In other places, these young men, who are mainly perceived as Muslim youths, are regarded as dominating the street and often using aggression, and as being members of a male-dominated and highly macho street culture (Dwyer, 2000; Hopkins, 2009). In Lombok, however, the fact that young men, apparently Moroccan-Dutch youngsters, hang around is perceived as something that is simply a part of being young. It is seen not seen problematic but as 'normal' behaviour, because what is perceived as normal behaviour relates to everyday experiences and the extent to which people are able to understand what is going on. In Lombok, multicultural life and youngsters hanging around is part of the everyday 'normal' life of residents. As such, this research is not in line with studies that conclude that ethnic diversity in neighbourhoods decreases trust and leads to less social participation (Putnam, 2007). The everyday life ensures the presence of people who would otherwise not intersect. This intersection leads to more realistic images of the other, images that are based on real everyday life experiences in such multicultural neighbourhoods as Lombok.

I thus acquired evidence that interactions have a positive effect on the evaluation of diversity. Residents have positive emotions during fleeting encounters and when they encounter

cultural diversity in everyday life. As such, it appears that the contact hypothesis also applies to public spaces, although it relates more to the affective component of acknowledging and being aware of diversity, than to the more cognitive aspect of getting to know the other. Although it is only a first step towards inter-cultural understanding, facilitating this step may create open and accessible meeting places where inter-ethnic encounters can take place. These meeting places should be created in residential areas, since the neighbourhood is a meaningful place not only for practical reasons but also because it has symbolic meaning (cf. Blokland, 2003). Neighbourhoods, such as Lombok, are of significance for processes of categorization and social identification.

Feeling at home

It is important for people to visit multiple places and to see and meet other people, because this creates the awareness that society needs and enables people to become acquainted with their neighbourhood. My results show that not only intensive and durable contacts, but also fleeting interactions contribute to feeling at home. Residents value these encounters and do not try to avoid other residents. The places that the residents like most are those that create meaningful experiences through interactions with others and with the environment. Special places were defined by what had occurred there and with whom. Fleeting interactions in public spaces stimulate positive feelings between residents and places and among residents, especially in Kanaalstraat – where residents have many interactions with unknown others, such as shopkeepers and other visitors – and in Bankaplein, where residents have many interactions with familiar others (parents meet other parents). A combination of knowing other visitors and having cursory interactions leads to feelings of comfort and makes people feel at ease in public spaces. However, bonding is a process that grows and develops over time as individuals start to identify with specific places, and in general, people who have lived in a neighbourhood for several years feel more connected to certain places than those who have lived there for only a few years.

Interactions create pleasure and public sociability, and enable citizens to develop social networks that are sustained by trust. By seeing each other in public spaces, residents become more familiar with the rules and models of engagement that are used in certain public spaces. This relates not only to interactions per se, but also to what Blokland (2003) has called public familiarity, which arises when independent, anonymous people keep encountering each other: the more time spent in public, the more public familiarity arises. Not all exchange has to take place through practical activities. For example, people-watching provides a flow of information about one's fellow citizens – who they are, what they are doing, what they look like. In the public spaces in Lombok and Nijmegen, people enjoy watching others because of the diversity. Residents from various ethnic backgrounds are present in the same public spaces, and they seem familiar and comfortable in this atmosphere. Diversity is perceived as safe and controllable; positive tolerance is created through which people develop a feeling of being at home.

Visiting urban spaces that are open and accessible and where people from various ethnic backgrounds come together is important because cultural changes can occur in places where

ideologies coincide. Therefore, these spaces – places where people can meet and interact with each other in a more or less natural way – are important in all cities.

9.3 Social networks

Thus, public inter-ethnic interactions occur in public spaces and are highly valued. Brief conversations, interactions with shopkeepers in Kanaalstraat, chatting with other parents at Bankaplein – all this contributes to an atmosphere in which diversity is respected and cherished. But it also leads to an atmosphere in which people live more next to each other than with each other. In this respect, public spaces are often leisure space: people go to them for enjoyment, they show their identity and enjoy the confrontation with other identities; they meet and mix, but after that they withdraw into the familiarity of personal lives. This is because we live in times of 'cultures of consumption', in which integrating with the 'other' does not necessarily lead to close relationships, but does lead to the appreciation of diversity.

Lombok residents appreciate cultural diversity and acknowledge that it is one of the main characteristics that make Lombok a great place to live, but this appreciation of diversity does not lead to multicultural interactions that go beyond small talk in shops. This confirms what was found by earlier research, namely that multiculturalism is considered a kind of multicoloured landscape that people see as a pleasant setting to live in, look at and enjoy. Although there are lots of opportunities to meet and interact, the building of acquaintances – that is, progressing from public familiarity and a greeting or a nod to others on the street, to more durable ties – does not happen. This was also found by Blokland and Van Eijk (2010), who concluded in their research on the city of Rotterdam, that while 'diversity seekers' consume the local facilities more than other residents, they show little engagement with local, social neighbourhood affairs. In general terms, my results show that residents appear to have mainly mono-ethnic networks that tend to be rather homogeneous. They behave according to the principle of homophily, that is, they mostly have friends who are more like them, also in terms of ethnicity. In fact, in private life, or when it comes to more enduring personal relationships and networks, the everyday norm seems to be remarkably mono-cultural. Many native and non-native Dutch people like living in Lombok because of its multicultural character, but they have no inclination to become part of a multicultural community. Of course, since social life in Lombok is lively and dynamic, many inhabitants are involved in the local community and many of them attend events or even organize them. During this social life, relations are formed. Although my research clearly shows that the dynamic social life contributes to feeling at home, and that residents highly appreciate this because for them it is a signal that Lombok is a worthwhile place in which to live, it does not often lead to private bonding.

9.4 The everyday language of integration

By examining everyday practices in public spaces, I showed that residents cherish diversity and are proud to live in a neighbourhood that does not have the problems that characterize

some neighbourhoods that have an ethnically diverse population. It is clear that these positive feelings about and experience with diversity have a significant impact on peoples' attitudes. It also has several linkages with the way in which residents talk about integration and multiculturalism.

First, my research demonstrated that residents perceive integration as a commitment to and participation in the place they live in, without referring to assimilation, mixing or inter-ethnic friendships. Because they gave a sense on what is going on in the everyday environment, residents feel responsible for their neighbourhood. As such, integration relates to issues of belonging and participation, rather than to adaptation or assimilation. This perspective is constructed on the basis of the everyday lives of residents, who are committed to and actively involved in their neighbourhood. Although Hanhörster (2001: 337) stated that 'the emphasis that the current policies place on ethnic and cultural diversity and difference could even strengthen and reinforce the polarized opinions held by the general public in the neighbourhood', my research indicates the opposite: residents are proud to live in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood. This positive attitude towards diversity and the daily encounters with diversity in public space, may make people more open to developing private relations with people from other ethnic backgrounds.

Second, I obtained strong evidence that experience with diversity contributes to a realistic view of multiculturalism. This view is neither optimistic nor pessimistic: it is based on everyday experiences, with all the positive and negative implications. Residents mentioned problems that accompany multiculturalism, and especially native Dutch residents talked more negatively about multiculturalism in the Netherlands. They nuance their outlook, which is basically positive, by mentioning conditions (e.g. speaking Dutch) that would simplify inter-ethnic living. The views people have are based more on reality than on prejudices, stereotypes or media-induced forms of stigmatization. This, however, does not mean that Lombok residents do not use stereotypes or categorizations. They do, especially when they talk about youngsters who are labelled 'Moroccan youths'. But it is necessary to acknowledge that categories are used in order to assess and deal with the real-life situation. Categories become meaningful in interactions with others. Everyday experiences with diversity lead to 'realistic' views about others. As such, there is a major difference between the public discourse – which focuses on differences and problems – and everyday encounters, which are perceived as a way to experience and enjoy diversity.

Furthermore, my research demonstrates that individuals who do not have close friends from other ethnic backgrounds are equally in favour of multiculturalism, which is not in line with research by Verkuyten and Martinovic (2006), who conclude that Dutch participants with more close friends from other ethnic backgrounds tended to be more in favour of multiculturalism. However, while my research indicates that a positive attitude towards diversity and having mainly mono-ethnic networks can function next to each other, one must take into account that individuals may not see their friends and acquaintances as being ethnically different persons. It is also important to stress that perceptions of ethnic differences relate to dominant categorizations in which the 'problematic other' is defined,

which in the Dutch context mainly refers to people who originate from Turkey or Morocco and/or are Muslim. Although my research found no evidence for this, it cannot be excluded.

9.5 The future of multi-ethnic neighbourhoods

Finally, I want to reflect upon why Lombok is as it is today and what we can learn from this. For decades, Lombok was regarded as an unattractive, and even a deprived neighbourhood; now, though, it is seen as a nice neighbourhood – one that is gentrified and has a mixed socio-economic and ethnic composition – and many people would like to live there. Residents do not want to leave, although they may have to if they cannot afford a bigger house elsewhere in Lombok. We should of course take into account that the inhabitants of Lombok are not only ethnically but also socio-economically diverse. In that sense, this situation is not comparable with multi-ethnic neighbourhoods that largely consist of residents from lower socio-economic classes, as there can be multiple problems in these neighbourhoods, such as high unemployment and higher criminality figures. This, however, is not the case in Lombok. It is a mixed neighbourhood in many respects, and it is not dominated by a particular group. As Joost Mangnus (2010) wrote in one of his columns on Lombok: 'Lombok is a colourful neighbourhood, where no colour dominates, not even orange' (translated from the Dutch). As such, I want to stress that ethnic diversity is not problematic. But by linking problems to ethnic diversity, which is often done in the dominant discourse, the division between 'us ' and 'them' is produced and reproduced.

Related to this ethnic and socio-economic diversity, my research reveals that both residents and various organizations (such as the municipality) are actively involved in Lombok. This has led to a situation in which public spaces are well maintained, social events are organized and residents participate in various local initiatives, such as the development of the new mosque and the organization of many social and cultural events. Although this does not lead to agreement on all fronts, it does lead to the acceptance of everyday life as it is. People are familiar with each other and come across each other when moving around in Lombok. If we wish to foster a positive attitude towards socio-economic and cultural diversity, it is crucial that residents meet each other in public spaces. Public spaces are highly valued because there is a pleasant atmosphere and there are sufficient opportunities to relax and enjoy leisure time. The atmosphere and the physical appearance of a public space are of central importance in this. The visible presence of diversity is vital, because it can lead to recognition of cultural diversity. This is shown by the liveliness of Kanaalstraat, where there are many facilities and people feel safe and comfortable.

It is important to think about design issues, not only in terms of good physical access and welcoming spaces, but also in terms of paying attention to the choreography of spaces by means of smart, discreet management, whilst leaving room for self-organization and moving beyond mono-cultures by encouraging diverse groups and activities to share common spaces. However, as Worpole and Knox (2007) state, the success of a particular public space is not solely in the hands of the architect, urban designer or town planner; it also depends on

people adopting, using and managing the space. It is a dialectical relation between people making places and places making people.

Thus, experiencing diversity in everyday life is positively valued, and the fact that a diverse group of people use public spaces contributes to the attractiveness of a neighbourhood. By being in public spaces, relations are formed with them and with other people; residents thus feel at home and, as such, integration has occurred. I therefore want to emphasize that politicians should look at the everyday realities in neighbourhoods like Lombok when discussing issues related to multi-ethnic societies. Repeatedly stressing the dichotomy between native and non-native Dutch citizens and focusing on problems, has a negative effect on the everyday lives of people because it produces and reproduces stereotyped images. I believe that integration is not only about non-native Dutch residents adapting themselves to Dutch society: it is also about the extent to which people from various backgrounds live together and feel at home in their neighbourhood.

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Summary

Part I Setting the scene

In Western countries, the tone of the debate on integration and multiculturalism has sharpened since the beginning of the century, partly as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The debate arose because in recent decades Western societies have become multicultural. The Netherlands, for example, has been transformed into a multi-ethnic society in which people from Morocco, Turkey, Suriname and the Dutch Antilles are the largest minority groups.

In the Dutch immigration discourse, the term 'integration' is commonly used to refer to the desirable way in which newcomers should become members of the receiving society. Furthermore, in the academic literature the notion of integration is hardly problematized; instead, it adopts a narrow empirical framework for studying integration by measuring how non-native people differ from the native population.

Discussions on integration in the Netherlands are focused on shared values and having one language. In this line of thought, the stimulation of contact between different ethnic groups is seen as an important way to integrate non-native Dutch people. Encounters in public spaces can lead to cultural exchange and can be furthered by mutual understanding. In an increasingly multi-ethnic society, the challenge for local governments is to support these processes of cultural exchange. Therefore, a better understanding of the role that urban public places can play has been considered valuable.

It is in this context that I decided to focus on the meanings of urban public spaces. My overall research objective was to understand the role of public spaces as a domain for social integration within the context of leisure. The empirical focus was multi-ethnic urban neighbourhoods in the Netherlands, because urban public spaces are where most multicultural encounters occur. Based on this, I formulated my central research question and three sub-questions, namely:

- What is the meaning of public space for people from various ethnic backgrounds in terms of social integration within the context of leisure?
  - How do people from different ethnic backgrounds use public spaces for leisure? To what extent is there inter-ethnic interaction in public spaces during leisure activities?
  - What is the meaning of different public spaces for people from various ethnic backgrounds?
  - To what extent is use and meaning of public spaces an indication of social integration?

This study examined the relations between leisure in public space and social integration by examining the experiences and perceptions of people from various ethnic backgrounds, based on fieldwork (observations and interviews) conducted in the Dutch cities of Nijmegen and Utrecht. Insights into these relations were gained by exploring the use and meaning

of leisure in public spaces. As my research was interpretative and aimed at a better understanding of the phenomenon under study, it is not my intention to either falsify or verify the assumptions behind the theories I applied. I used theoretical insights in order to better analyse data derived from individual experiences and perceptions. This study adds to the existing knowledge because it speaks the language of daily life, and if daily life can be more deeply understood, we will also know the way it is constructed processually. By linking key concepts of leisure, public space and social integration, this study extends scientific knowledge beyond the disciplinary boundaries of these three domains. It therefore contributes to the academic debates, both theoretically and politically.

Since our multicultural society is most present in cities, it is in cities that many issues of social integration are being discussed. The city is the locality where people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds live together for many years. I therefore set out to establish whether in cities feelings of togetherness and belonging are present and, if so, to what extent identification with everyday public places within cities can be used as a way to create solidarity between citizens. The aim was to add to the existing knowledge an analysis on an individual level that would provide insight into the everyday experiences of people, showing how they experience their everyday activities in public spaces.

Furthermore, in my research, the perspective of non-native Dutch people was as important as that of native Dutch people. I chose to use the terms 'native Dutch' and 'non-native Dutch' in order to stress the fact that we are all citizens of Dutch society, while making clear the differences in terms of ethnic background. However, I fully realize that no term is neutral and that any term can and will reproduce stereotypes. There is a conceptual paradox between the need to categorize individuals to a certain extent, and the fact that using categories will produce and reproduce these categories. I do not take an essentialist perspective, but acknowledge the complexity of using categories and at the same time criticizing the use of these categories.

The research also contributes to the debate on social integration. The investigation into the meaning of public spaces provides insight into the extent to which these spaces can play a positive role in processes of social integration, as is currently expected by many policy makers. This could facilitate policy makers when making decisions on integration policy. In more general terms, the research contributes to debates on the relation between the quality of public space and the quality of relations between people. The design of public space for facilitating social relations is related to this.

Although the focus is on individual experiences and perceptions, it is important to realize that the structural context in which these experiences and perceptions take place also has to be taken into account. Social and political structures together with human agency determine and give meaning to social practices (Giddens, 1984). These social practices and structures are produced, reproduced and negotiated in the everyday life of individuals. Therefore, in Chapter 2, I describe the research context in terms of migration, social integration, leisure and the neighbourhood in order to create a better understanding of the background to and the circumstances under which the research was executed. I present an overview of the

debates that are going on in society, and how policy and researchers have responded to certain events.

I describe the historical background to migration to the Netherlands in three periods: migration from former colonies, labour migration, and refugee and asylum migration. These migration streams led to the Netherlands becoming a country of immigration rather than of emigration. Dutch and other European governments started to develop policies related to two aspects of migration: policy that is meant to control migration, formulated mostly in cooperation at the European level, and minority policy aimed at the integration of migrants in the host societies.

This integration discourse supports a dichotomy between native and non-native people in Dutch society. Although given different names, the discourses used in Dutch policies on integration are characterized by focusing on the differences between native Dutch citizens and non-native Dutch citizens, with an emphasis on the incompatibility of Islam with the basic values of Western culture.

Furthermore, issues of integration and segregation have played an important role in urban housing policy. Urban renewal is not only about demolition and housing stock, but also about residents and the social networks within neighbourhoods. The government that was installed in 2007 appointed a new minister of Housing, Districts and Integration. This can be seen as an expression of the perceived linkages between physical aspects, spaces and social issues of integration. In the spring of that year, the minister declared that her policy on district improvement would target only 40 districts in Dutch cities, and was focused on transforming problematic urban districts into areas in which a diversity of people would like to live. Although it is not an end in itself, Dutch policy makers hope that the social liveability will improve and that a neighbourhood's better reputation will attract other residents and create a more mixed neighbourhood.

The current policy on integration distinguishes three levels of bonding between groups of people. At the national level, the goal is sociocultural integration, while at a local level the aim is to distribute members of ethnic groups across various districts and schools, and at a micro level the objective is to facilitate local projects and programmes that stimulate encounters between groups in society. Leisure is seen by policy makers as one of the ways to stimulate inter-ethnic understanding. In the Dutch context, informal contact between native and non-native people is perceived as part of sociocultural integration. Therefore, stimulating initiatives that promote inter-ethnic encounters is part of integration policies.

Part II Theoretical perspective

There is a complex interplay of issues that needed to be explored in order to gain insight into the dynamic and two-sided relations between leisure in public space and social integration. In two theoretical chapters the concepts of leisure, social integration and public space are discussed and interlinked, starting with leisure. Leisure is a realm in which people can, to a

certain extent, choose what to do. It is assumed that leisure can provide positive contributions to the well-being of people. I have defined leisure as an experience, not limited to certain activities but defined by people themselves, thus taking individual experiences as a starting point. I chose to look at non-organized aspects of leisure that take place in public spaces. As such, leisure is not easy to distinguish from the everyday life in those public spaces.

I looked at social integration from an individual perspective. By studying individual leisure experiences in public spaces, insight can be gained into the ways native and non-native Dutch residents interact with each other in these spaces and how these interactions are perceived. Looking more closely at the relation between leisure and social integration, I conclude that three aspects are of importance to understand this relation.

First, leisure can stimulate feelings of comfort, because it is assumed that during leisure people can more freely choose what they want to do and with whom. Second, during their leisure in public spaces people see a variety of people with whom they can build relationships or social networks. Third, leisure in public space involves engagement and exchange among individuals, families and groups, which could be beneficial because it leads to a greater sense of mutual obligation among individuals and towards the larger community. As such, leisure could help mitigate prejudices, because during their leisure, people see and meet cultural others in public space. Allport (1954) has shown that contact between people from various ethnic backgrounds mitigates prejudices and limits stereotypes about cultural others.

Leisure settings can be ideal environments for inter-ethnic contact. However, it is also important not to overlook the negative outcomes of leisure: tensions can arise during leisure time and people can be excluded, which can strengthen stereotypes and feelings of discrimination. An important question is whether leisure in public spaces produces/reproduces stereotypes or helps to counteract them.

My focus then shifts to public spaces, which in principle are freely accessible, in contrast to private spaces, to which access is regulated by the owner. Urban public spaces can be understood in terms of the production and reproduction of space through the dynamic interconnections between and among places and the people who use them. The relation between public space and social integration is theorized through three concepts: social space, experiential space and normative space.

Starting with the concept of social space, information was needed about those visiting these spaces, the activities carried out there, the group sizes, the composition of groups, and the presence or absence of interactions. These interactions are important, because they can contribute to mutual understanding, as shown by contact theory (Allport, 1954). However, also negative interaction can occur in public spaces. Interactions can not only mitigate prejudices, but also create tensions, strengthen stereotypes, and lead to feelings of fear or exclusion. Some public spaces can facilitate interactions more than others. Factors that influence this are related to the location and physical structure of the public space, the type of activities for which the place is suitable and the people who go there. Based on the work of Lofland, Blokland and others, I show that interactions in public spaces can have various

manifestations and meanings. The use of public space together with these interactions is conceptualized as social space. As such, this concept has many relations with how leisure is related to social integration, namely in terms of mitigating prejudices and promoting social networks.

I then clarify the second aspect – the experiential space – of the meaning of public spaces. I discuss several concepts and, based on these theoretical notions, operationalize the experiential space by using the concepts of place identity and place dependency. In doing so, I show that the relations people have with certain places relate to feelings of belonging and feeling at home. This relates conceptually to what I defined in the previous chapter as creating feelings of comfort. Understanding the meaning of public space in terms of place dependency and place identity offers a rationale for the ways in which people feel or do not feel at home in certain areas. It is linked to everyday leisure activities because it is assumed that leisure activities in public space could strengthen a relation with certain places, and in doing so stimulate feelings of comfort and belonging.

Third, since this study is about the meaning of public space for processes of social integration, it was also important to gain insight into the evaluation of cultural others in public space. I used the concept of normative space to find out how users perceive others and their behaviour in public space. The aim was to gain insight into the extent to which stereotyped images are produced and reproduced. I assumed that insight into normative space is relevant to understanding the relation between leisure in public space and social integration, because it provides an understanding about processes of inclusion and exclusion. I used the concept of categorization to clarify how people perceive others by examining how people speak about others. I argue that insight into the shared expectations of and possible conflicts over the use and meaning of public space is important, as it reveals differences and similarities between people and their expectations of and views on what is 'normal' and acceptable.

An examination of all these aspects provides insight into the ways in which individual experiences and perceptions in urban public spaces contribute to social integration in terms of feelings of comfort/belonging and feeling at home in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood.

PART III The research context

In order to gain insight into the relations between the meaning of public spaces and social integration, I needed to understand what was happening in certain public spaces and, more importantly, the meaning of these actions. A qualitative research design was therefore the most appropriate. The underlying epistemology is interpretivism, which is based on a constructionist ontology, meaning that the social world and its categories are not external to us, but are constituted in and through interaction. My research can be classified as iterative, drawing on methods that involve direct and sustained contact with human agents within the context of their everyday lives. It is iterative because it was fluid and flexible, constantly moving between studying theories, conducting fieldwork and rethinking the research questions. Induction does not mean a blank mind, however, and I therefore

started by carrying out an extensive literature study. The selection of the cases was based on several criteria, such as variety in size and variety in type of spaces. These criteria led to the selection of six public spaces in the Dutch cities of Nijmegen and Utrecht:

- Goffertpark, Nijmegen: a large urban park that attracts people from all over the city; it is an open park with no facilities.
- Thiemepark, Bottendaal district, Nijmegen: a small neighbourhood park that has drinking water but no other facilities. It mainly attracts Bottendaal residents.
- Kanaalstraat, Lombok district, Utrecht: a multicultural shopping street that attracts many people from both Lombok and elsewhere.
- Bankaplein, Lombok, Utrecht: a playground for 4- to 12-year-olds. It attracts people from Lombok, as well as a few from other local districts.
- Molenpark, Lombok, Utrecht: a small urban park with many facilities (playground, panna cage, children's farm, wind-driven sawmill). It mainly attracts people from Lombok. The entrance to a primary school is located in the park.
- Muntplein, Lombok, Utrecht: a small urban square on the waterfront. It has few facilities and is frequented only by Lombok residents.

My research concentrated on understanding the full multidimensional picture of the subject of investigation. Furthermore, it was based on the notion that social reality is created and sustained through the subjective experience of people who are involved in communication. I used three research methods, namely observations, semi-structured interviews and in-depth interviews. I also examined policy documents in order to gain insight into the specific context of the places, and how local authorities view public spaces and how they manage them. In addition, I used secondary data to outline the context. I chose a multi-method in order to make use of the strengths of the various qualitative methods and to increase the validity and reliability of the research. Moreover, a combination of different methods – triangulation – gives a much more rounded picture of someone's life and behaviour.

I analysed all interview data and field notes to obtain comprehensive descriptions. The notes were subjected to thematic content analysis to illuminate underlying themes in the conversations. The analysis was guided by theoretical sensitivity and an iterative process that involved continual interplay between the data and the background literature. The analysis was not guided by prior hypotheses, so the themes emerged from the data. The analytical process involved carefully rereading the data to discover common themes and to differentiate between the accounts provided by the participants in order to acquire an understanding and knowledge of phenomena from the point of view of those who were under study. My research does not offer generalizations, but describes the meanings of interactions in public spaces. I used various strategies to enhance trustworthiness, such as applying triangulation, describing the coding process and providing an insight into how the data were analysed.

PART IV Everyday life in Nijmegen and Utrecht

In Part IV (Chapters 7 and 8), I present my results, which are based on the analysis of my empirical data. My focus is on the everyday social life in urban public spaces and the relations that are formed in these spaces. Relations are inter-subjective and involve other human beings, and while having relations, people make distinctions between themselves and others. Thus, through relations people are both connected to and disconnected from each other, a process that takes place in the everyday lives of people. By looking at use, interactions, attachment to places, networks, participation and categorizations, I gained an insight into the character of individual relations and how these contribute to feeling at home. While most research focuses on organized aspects of life, I focused on non-organized forms.

The six public spaces in Nijmegen and Utrecht allow people from various ethnic backgrounds to relax and enjoy their leisure time. The places are important to residents and are used quite intensively. While there, people were mostly accompanied by other people from their own ethnic background. The meanings people associate with the places partly depend on the physical qualities of the place, such as Muntplein's waterfront, Goffertpark's large expanse of grass, Kanaalstraat's shops and, negatively, Molenpark's openness. The public spaces are highly valued and residents feel connected both to these places and, in general terms, to the people who are present in them. Using and enjoying these public spaces results in residents feeling at ease and comfortable in these spaces, some of which have a mixed use while others are dominated by specific groups. Goffertpark, Thiemepark, Kanaalstraat and Bankaplein are spaces that attract a diverse audience. Muntplein and, to a lesser extent, Molenpark are dominated by specific groups of users.

Routines that are part of everyday lives facilitate these social relations and serve as a source from which residents gain knowledge about the places they live in. People come across others and have to relate to these others one way or another. They use the same streets, parks and playgrounds over and over again, which provides them with a sense of what is going on and, as a result, a sense of belonging. Thus, being in public spaces positively relates to feeling comfortable in a neighbourhood.

In general terms, the six public spaces can be divided into two types. The first type function as small neighbourhood places that can easily be entered as a familiar place; almost all their visitors live nearby. People can easily connect to the place and to other people, because many are already familiar with each other from the neighbourhood. This stimulates feelings of comfort, public familiarity and attachment. Thiemepark, Muntplein, Bankaplein and to a lesser extent Molenpark, are of this type. In addition, in Thiemepark and, to a lesser degree, Muntplein, people act more as though they are in a private place and they do not notice the presence of others very consciously. In Bankaplein and Molenpark, people often see and meet well-known others, and private behaviour is mostly absent.

The second type of spaces are those that function more as a 'world of strangers'. People feel welcome as these spaces are open and accessible. They enjoy watching other people

because of the diversity of people in these places. These places attract a variety of people from different ethnic backgrounds, and can thus bring together groups of people regardless of their class, ethnic origin, gender or age, which facilitates intermingling. These places consequently provide a vital locality where everyday experiences are shared and exchanged with a variety of people. Kanaalstraat and Goffertpark can be typified as such.

Residents of Nijmegen and Lombok enjoy being in public spaces also because of the interactions with known or unknown others. Residents appreciate the small interactions while shopping, doing leisure activities or moving from one place to another and are satisfied with the way things are, that is, people understand and tolerate each other and the otherness. When residents encounter their fellow residents in public spaces, they are confronted with diversity. Respectful interactions create interactional pleasure and public sociability, and enable residents to have fleeting but rewarding social interactions and to feel comfortable and safe. Although diversity in public spaces is highly appreciated, in general more mono-ethnic interactions than inter-ethnic interactions take place. In this respect, public spaces are often leisure space: people go to them for enjoyment, they show their identity and enjoy the confrontation with other identities; they meet and mix, but after that they withdraw into the familiarity of personal lives. This is because we live in times of 'cultures of consumption', in which integrating with the 'other' does not necessarily lead to close relationships, although it does lead to the appreciation of diversity.

My research demonstrated that by having fleeting encounters, people become familiar with cultural others, which results in residents becoming aware of diversity, and acknowledging and accepting diversity as something that is part of their everyday lives. Especially by enjoying diversity and having positive emotions during brief interactions, people appreciate their everyday multi-ethnic lives.

Expectations and views about what is perceived as normal and acceptable behaviour are quite similar among all Lombok residents. Residents agree that most people living in Lombok exhibit behaviour that is fairly similar to the behaviour that they and others expect, that is, having brief conversations in streets, taking care of your own environment and just doing your thing. In general, they like living in Lombok because, for example, they are satisfied with the way in which the other residents behave. It is important for them to be in public spaces, to visit several places, and to see and meet other people, because that is how they get acquainted with their neighbourhood and get to know others who are living there. This stimulates a feeling of safety, trust and comfort. Moreover, people tolerate other and different behaviour in public space.

In Chapter 8, I looked at the private contacts between residents and the extent to which they have private multi-ethnic relations and how these relations contribute to a feeling of belonging. In contrast to public spaces, where encounters happen incidentally, contacts in the private sphere happen more consciously. Private relations are based on trust and feelings of safety, and inform how residents are confronted with multiculturalism in their private lives. I looked at the choices residents made when they established relations with neighbours and other residents, how they evaluated their private relations in their

neighbourhood, and whether the ethnically diverse population of Lombok led to more inter-ethnic contacts in the private sphere. This enabled me to determine the extent to which the residents of multicultural Lombok have satisfactory or unsatisfactory contacts in their daily lives.

Lombok residents are generally satisfied with the contacts they have in their neighbourhood. Residents' networks contribute to a positive feeling about living in Lombok. Private relations are described as pleasant and enjoyable, and they support a favourable social climate that is characterized by trust, safety and social control, because the behaviour of other residents is predictable and based on mutual everyday support. Confrontations with diversity in public spaces do not often lead to inter-ethnic private bonding. Although public life is multicultural and ethnic diversity is visible in the various places, these brief encounters do not often lead to more endurable friendships. Although some would be more satisfied were their social networks more diverse, reality shows that this is most often not the case. There are various reasons for this: residential segregation within Lombok makes it less likely that people will have inter-ethnic interactions with neighbours, and residents often choose their friendships based on the homophily principle.

Lombok residents are confronted with multiculturalism in their daily lives when they meet other residents, or organize or attend events. Although this does not lead to many inter-ethnic friendships, it does create a safe, comfortable and multicultural atmosphere; there is a pleasant mix of people, and that is appreciated. Everyday confrontation with diversity is the real-life situation of Lombok residents. They are comfortable about this and the situation does not lead to an unpleasant living environment, although some of the original residents have difficulties with the many changes that have occurred; for example, they now have fewer friends and acquaintances in Lombok. But the positive experience with and appreciation of multicultural life in public space, does not generate the creation of a more ethnically diverse personal network. Public and private lives are separate domains. Although the public spaces do not really act as platforms for the creation of enduring social relations between different ethnic groups, it is important to realize that Lombok is a small neighbourhood, which means that many inhabitants share the same public spaces and meet each other only in those spaces. Although the positive attitude towards diversity is not translated into closer private inter-ethnic contacts, it does go beyond appreciating that there are shops run by people who come from different parts of the world and sell exotic goods. The diversity present in Lombok is a marker in a positive sense.

I then looked at the ways in which residents participate in the social life of Lombok as a way to see the extent to which these activities stimulate inter-ethnic private contacts and how they relate to issues of trust, safety and belonging. Many Lombok residents are actively involved with and in their neighbourhood by participating in volunteer projects, organizing activities or attending events. By involving themselves and participating to a certain extent in the social life, residents express an attitude that can be characterized as committed to their neighbourhood: they are connected to and enjoy living and spending their time in Lombok. This creates a social atmosphere and leads to interactions between

residents. Together with the normalized contacts with neighbours and other residents, the active social life helps people to feel at home in Lombok.

Furthermore, I examined how confrontations with diversity relate to the way residents talk about people from different ethnic backgrounds. They use these categorizations to interpret the cultural codes of other people in public spaces. Lombok residents categorize other people mainly along ethnic lines, on the basis of visible characteristics. This process of categorizing and dealing with cultural others takes place in the context of the everyday environment of Lombok.

Although categorizations reflect the daily practices of people rather than reflecting that they are trying to exclude cultural others, we need to be aware that structurally using categorizations leads to stigmatizing individuals and evaluating individuals on the basis of group characteristics. Any type of categorizing holds the risk of essentializing groups. However, this was not perceived or mentioned by non-native Dutch residents, and was sometimes even explicitly mentioned as something that did not occur in Lombok. The everyday life ensures the presence of people who would otherwise not intersect. This intersection leads to more realistic images of the other, images that are based on everyday life experiences in a multicultural neighbourhood.

Residents mostly spoke positively about the diverse character of Lombok. An important issue is the extent to which these positive experiences with diversity in the immediate living environment coincide with a tolerant and positive attitude towards multiculturalism as a general phenomenon. It was clear that many of the residents have a positive opinion of today's multicultural society, but do not deny all the problems that come with it. There are also doubts. The fact that people in Lombok enjoy most aspects of multiculturalism, and that there are no major problems in the area, does not mean that people think that such a situation is possible everywhere. The positive opinions mostly relate to their own experiences, but in more general terms native Dutch residents also talk more negatively about multiculturalism.

PART V Discussion and conclusion

In Western societies such as the Netherlands, people from various ethnic backgrounds live together in urban neighbourhoods. So far, few studies have focused on people's non-organized lives, and little research has taken an individual perspective and considered the perspectives of both native and non-native people. My study addressed this research gap by focusing on everyday life in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods, and on how native and non-native people live there. My research shows that positive evaluations of experiences in public spaces contribute to feeling at home in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood. In the final chapter, I reflect upon the main objective of my research, namely to gain insight into the meaning of urban public spaces for social integration.

Dominant discourse vs. an individual perspective on social integration

In the dominant discourse, integration refers to the desirable way in which newcomers should become members of the receiving society. The focus is on problems related to 'not being integrated' and on the 'problematic other'. This dominant discourse creates further issues. First, it maintains the dichotomy between native and non-native Dutch people. It continues to distinguish between people who were and those who were not born here, and between people whose parents were born in the Netherlands and those whose parents were born elsewhere. In doing so, there is a constant reproduction of 'us' and 'them', a division that reproduces the idea that there is a difference between the individuals in these two groups, and that you belong to either one group or the other. However, it is important to acknowledge that ethnicity is still a factor that matters, and as such it is sometimes necessary to show how, for example, policies have different effects on different people. This leads to a paradoxical situation in which both researchers and policy makers need to balance between the need for analytical categories and the need to treat them with strong reservations.

Second, this dominant discourse neglects intra-group differences. By speaking about groups, groups are produced and reproduced. Third, the dominant discourse focuses mainly on the ways in which non-native Dutch people adapt themselves; less attention is paid to the ways in which native Dutch people perceive certain issues and how they deal with a changing population in their everyday lives. How non-native Dutch people view their own situation in terms of feeling at home and belonging in their neighbourhoods is also often ignored.

These conceptual paradoxes must be acknowledged. In order to deal with these issues and gaps, I chose to focus on the individual experiences and perceptions of people – men and women, young and old, native and non-native Dutch – in order to capture the complexity of those paradoxes and to expose their political and cultural underpinnings. I want to stress that I struggled with my need for analytical but essentialist categorization in order to expose certain issues, knowing that it would inevitably reproduce 'us' and 'them' divides. I therefore developed a different approach to integration by looking at the individual level of everyday life in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood.

The significance of public encounters

I acquired evidence that interactions have a positive effect on the evaluation of diversity. Residents have positive emotions during fleeting encounters and when they encounter cultural diversity in everyday life. As such, it appears that the contact hypothesis also applies to public spaces, although it relates more to the affective component of acknowledging and being aware of diversity, than to the more cognitive aspect of getting to know the other. Although it is only a first step towards inter-cultural understanding, facilitating this step may create open and accessible meeting places where inter-ethnic encounters can occur. These meeting places should be created in residential areas, since the neighbourhood is a meaningful place not only for practical reasons but also because it has symbolic meaning. It is important for people to visit multiple places and to see and meet other people, because

this creates the awareness that society needs and enables people to become acquainted with their neighbourhood.

My results show that not only intensive and durable contacts, but also fleeting interactions contribute to feeling at home. Interactions create pleasure and public sociability, and enable citizens to develop social networks that are sustained by trust. By seeing each other in public spaces, residents become more familiar with the rules and models of engagement that are used in certain public spaces. Visiting urban spaces that are open and accessible and where people from various ethnic backgrounds come together is important because cultural changes can occur in places where ideologies coincide. Therefore, these spaces – places where people can meet and interact with each other in a more or less natural way – are important in all cities.

Many residents like living in Lombok because of its multicultural character, but they have no inclination to become part of a multicultural community. Since social life in Lombok is lively and dynamic, many inhabitants are involved in the local community and many of them attend events or even organize them. During this social life, relations are formed. Although my research clearly shows that the dynamic social life contributes to feeling at home, and that residents highly appreciate this because for them it is a signal that Lombok is a worthwhile place in which to live, it does not often lead to private bonding.

The everyday language of integration

However, positive feelings about and experience with diversity have a significant impact on peoples' attitudes, and also have several linkages with the way in which residents talk about integration and multiculturalism. First, my research demonstrated that residents perceive integration as a commitment to and participation in the place they live in, without referring to assimilation, mixing or inter-ethnic friendships. Integration relates to issues of belonging and participation, rather than to adaptation or assimilation. This perspective is constructed on the basis of the everyday lives of residents who are committed to and actively involved in their neighbourhood.

Second, I obtained evidence that experience with diversity contributes to a realistic view of multiculturalism, a view that is based on everyday experiences, with all the positive and negative implications. This, however, does not mean that Lombok residents do not use stereotypes or categorizations. However, there is a major difference between the public discourse – which focuses on differences and problems – and everyday encounters, which are perceived as a way to experience and enjoy diversity.

The future of multi-ethnic neighbourhoods

Finally, I reflect upon why Lombok is as it is today and what we can learn from this. For decades, Lombok was regarded as an unattractive, and even a deprived neighbourhood; now, though, it is seen as a nice neighbourhood and many people would like to live there. It is a mixed neighbourhood in many respects, and it is not dominated by a particular group. In

that sense, Lombok is not comparable with multi-ethnic neighbourhoods that largely consist of residents from lower socio-economic classes, as there can be multiple problems in these neighbourhoods, such as high unemployment and higher crime rates. This, however, is not the case in Lombok. As such, I want to stress that ethnic diversity is not problematic. But by linking problems to ethnic diversity, which is often done in the dominant discourse, the division between 'us' and 'them' is produced and reproduced.

Related to this ethnic and socio-economic diversity, my research reveals that both residents and various organizations (such as the municipality) are actively involved in Lombok. As a result, public spaces are well maintained, social events are organized and residents participate in various local initiatives, such as the development of a new mosque and the organization of many social and cultural events. Although this does not lead to agreement on all fronts, it does lead to the acceptance of everyday life as it is. People are familiar with each other and come across each other when moving around in Lombok. If we wish to foster a positive attitude towards socio-economic and cultural diversity, it is crucial that residents meet each other in public spaces.

Thus, experiencing diversity in everyday life is positively valued, and the fact that a diverse group of people use public spaces contributes to the attractiveness of a neighbourhood. By being in public spaces, relations are formed with these spaces and with other people; residents thus feel at home and, as such, integration has occurred. I therefore want to emphasize that politicians should look at the everyday realities in neighbourhoods like Lombok when discussing issues related to multi-ethnic societies. Repeatedly stressing the dichotomy between native and non-native Dutch citizens and focusing on problems, has a negative effect on the everyday lives of people because it produces and reproduces stereotyped images. I believe that integration is not only about non-native Dutch residents adapting themselves to Dutch society: it is also about the extent to which people from various backgrounds live together and feel at home in their neighbourhood.

About the author

Karin Bernadette Maria Peters (b. 24 May 1970, Nijmegen) completed her pre-university secondary education in 1988, after which she did a Master's in Economy of Agriculture at Wageningen University, where her focus was on leisure and tourism. After graduating, she worked at the Knowledge Centre for Recreation in The Hague while pursuing a Master's in Cultural Anthropology, which she completed in 2004. After five years she went to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery and Food quality where she worked for about 3 years. Since 2002, she has been an assistant professor at the Cultural Geography Group of Wageningen University.