

PhD eight-month paper

Towards a Sense of Community:
Citizen Participation and Space in Peri-urban Neighbourhoods



Design by the author using Kerckebosch Zeist's sketch (wUrck) as background.

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1. Introduction

In today's society, there is a widespread increase regarding citizen participation in planning and decision-making processes. Currently, citizen participation is widely accepted as being a requirement of planning in most policies and programs in many countries (Conrad et al., 2011). On the one hand, public and private sector actors want to lead shared urban changes while the ideals of community-based planning appear to be widespread. On the other hand, there is a need for citizens to choose the actions that transform the spaces they live in and to feel part of a supportive community with a collective goal. The literature has long related citizen participation with Sense of Community (SoC). The perception of the environment and social relationships are influenced by SoC and thus, enhances participation (Chavis and Wandersman, 1990). The majority of research has analysed participation as the result of SoC, even though their circular relationship has been widely accepted: SoC enhances participation, which reinforces SoC (Talò et al., 2013). Very little work has focused on SoC as the result of the process of citizen participation.

In addition, the majority of studies has focused on the process of citizen participation, therefore there is still a need for further contributions on the physical dimension of participation in planning theory and practice. Both citizen participation and planning practice influence the lives of citizens who experience that participatory process and live in that designed space. In practice, and despite the widespread use of citizen participation in planning, the results of urban developments in terms of social life in the neighbourhood, are not well known. This underlines a gap in addressing the socio-spatial consequences of a participatory process in planning practice. In planning theory, the tension between the focus on the planning process and the emphasis on desirable social outcomes of the physical space, did not lead to the predominance of one tendency over the other (Fainstein, 2000). The communicative planning approach has mainly focused on the process of a strategic discourse and consensus-building, and has weakly developed a spatial vocabulary (Healey, 2004).

Although the literature varies over the spatial dimension and the role of the neighbourhood in relation to SoC, the relation between the built environment and the SoC has been widely proved (Francis et al., 2012). The context of the neighbourhood as a place-based community, has been investigated by different disciplines but mainly from the perspectives of psychology, sociology and geography (Farahani and Lozanovska, 2014). Despite the numerous studies on the influence of the built environment on the SoC, its physical dimension has not been adequately addressed through a multidisciplinary approach that would aim to relate a planning and design approach with a psychosocial understanding of its outcomes in terms of SoC. While the concept of SoC was not initially introduced in the built environment discipline, it is linked in the literature through spatial pattern and place-based community in the neighbourhood. For example, the doctrine of new urbanism drawn on the social outcomes of physical design and designed the neighbourhoods based on the concept of SoC. This approach though, missed to clarify the meaning of SoC as it relates to physical design (Talen, 1998) and the relation of these physical designs to SoC (Nastaran Pour, 2015). Recent studies have focused on the potential of new urbanism's design to stimulate community involvement and connect people with the environment. The amount of studies on SoC by different disciplines, leads to the necessity of a cross-disciplinary approach including its physical and social dimensions.

The theoretical contribution of this research is to explore SoC as the result of citizen participation and the influence of spatial domain. Furthermore, the definition of SoC, which has been used in the planning and participatory theories, has mainly drawn on the definition of the community psychology. Hence, not only the spatial vocabulary has not been adequately addressed, but an operational definition of SoC is still needed, that will be able to include the psychological, physical and societal dimensions. Recent studies on community psychology and sociology have underlined the dialectic between the SoC and the value of human diversity. The definition itself of SoC implies boundaries between who belongs and who does not, and has a down side; it tends to be higher between similar people and in homogenous communities. This aspect may be in contrast with the objective of common urban policies and planning in cities, which have been focusing on reducing conflict by improving contacts between diverse groups with for example, social-mix residential neighbourhoods (Fincher et al., 2014). Therefore, the contribution of this research will be the development

of an analytical model to explore SoC as the result of citizen participation and space alongside an operational definition of SoC. I will take a multidisciplinary approach to include the psychological, sociological and physical perspectives of SoC, and address the community-diversity dialect (Townley et al., 2011) and the physical dimension of SoC. Furthermore, this PhD will explore not only how SoC emerges through the process of citizen participation and the influence of the space but also how they interact with each other in developing SoC. This will provide empirical relevance within community-based planning practice by interpreting socio-spatial changes and outcomes in cities.

Due to the exploratory goal of this research, the analytical model will be investigated using a case study analysis in peri-urban neighbourhood developments that utilize a participatory approach. Recent studies have shown a need for targeted policies and a specific spatial category for peri-urban areas that are able to address their social and economic complexity. These urban fringes are the result of national urban policies that respond to an increase of housing requests. Subsequent social outcomes in terms of life quality, social cohesion and SoC constitute an underexplored field of research. Citizen participation and urban design can be the roots of activating social ties in these areas, especially in the absence of historical community roots, more typical of core-cities and historical satellite towns. From the point of view of the societal contribution of this research, SoC is important for the quality of life for local communities and provides emotional safety and security, residential satisfaction, a good living situation and health, and general well-being (Farahani, 2016).

The following sections contextualize this research objective within a theoretical framework. Firstly, I will develop the operational definition of SoC, and secondly, I will unravel the relations between citizen participation and space to explore their influence on developing SoC. These operational concepts will enable me to develop an analytical framework connecting their psychological, sociological and physical perspectives and to investigate SoC as the effect of citizen participation and space. Afterwards, I will discuss the ethnographic methods to explore the research questions and the analytical framework. Observations will be conducted using a case study analysis drawing on the difference between institutional models, which strongly influence the participatory policies. Therefore, I will discuss the comparison between two cases, one in the Netherlands and the other in Italy. I will conclude with a pilot case study analysis to discuss the adequacy and usability of various methods in investigating the psychological, sociological and physical perspectives of the analytical model.

2. Theoretical and analytical framework

2.1. Research questions

This research aims to explore the core research question:

- How does Sense of Community (SoC) emerge through the process of citizen participation and the influence of space?

The main research question will address the following four sub-questions:

- How can SoC be defined in order to encompass the psychological definition while addressing the community-diversity dialectic and the spatial vocabulary? What kind of community results when one or two of these dimensions are missing?
- How do citizen participation and space interact with each other in developing SoC? Does one of these two constructs have a stronger influence that allows SoC to emerge?
- What elements of citizen participation and space have a stronger influence on developing SoC? If any element of citizen participation and space is missing, what kinds of SoC or social bonds emerge?
- What are the main characteristics for designing citizen participation and space in order to address current social tensions in peri-urban areas and develop a SoC that is able to include the most vulnerable citizens in these areas?

The theoretical contribution of this research is to explore SoC as the result of citizen participation and space. On the one hand, the majority of studies have investigated the role of SoC in enhancing local participation, while very little work has focused on SoC as emerging from the process of citizen participation

although their circular relation has been widely proved. On the other hand, while creating community has long been a goal of urban planners (Pendola and Gen, 2008), the role of space in creating SoC has not been adequately addressed within a multidisciplinary perspective nor able to develop a physical vocabulary. The core concept of this research is SoC. Firstly, an operational definition of SoC that is able to include the psychological, sociological and physical perspectives will be developed for building the analytical framework. The operational definition of SoC addresses the first research sub-question by exploring its significance and developing the conceptualization of SoC. For example, if SoC is built without including diverse people and groups, SoC can be strong but it defines a community between similar people, which is closed to new and diverse others. Secondly, I will develop the operational definitions of citizen participation and space in order to define elements for exploring their mutual relation and their role in developing SoC. These conceptualizations will analyse their relation in order to provide acknowledgement on the role that they play for SoC to emerge among citizens. This analysis will lead to explore if one of these two constructs has a stronger impact that allow SoC to emerge, and address the second and third sub-questions. For example, a higher level of citizen participation with strong empowerment for citizens may have a stronger influence on SoC compared with an urban design based on physical principles for enhancing social interactions. In the following sections, I will address these theoretical considerations by firstly tackling SoC, and then citizen participation and space. The last chapter will discuss the final question with focus on the socio-spatial characteristics and urban policies in peri-urban areas. These theoretical and analytical conceptualizations will be explored using case study analysis in peri-urban neighbourhoods.

2.2. An operational definition of Sense of Community (SoC)

The core concept of this research is the Sense of Community, which will be investigated as the result of citizen participation and space. Although there are numerous studies regarding SoC in built environment disciplines and sociology, the utilized definition of SoC draws on community psychology theories. This research will develop an operational definition of SoC, which will include not only the psychological theories but also the sociological and physical perspectives. Three main lines of research will be utilized in order to define the elements characterizing these dimensions: firstly, the psychological definition and theory of SoC; secondly, the debate within the community psychology addressing the community-diversity dialectic; and finally, the potentialities and weaknesses of the few studies on the connection between SoC and the built environment. The first part will define what I will call the perceived dimension of SoC, which will be based on the element of shared emotional bonds. The second line of research will lead to what I will call structured dimension, which will draw on the element of social inclusion. The last study will define the physical dimension of SoC, which builds on the element of place attachment. Within these approaches, the developed definition of SoC is as a shared emotional bond to a place-attached group, which promotes social inclusion of diverse people sharing the same physical environment. Figure 1 shows these three elements within the dimensions for investigating SoC and their circular and mutual relationship.

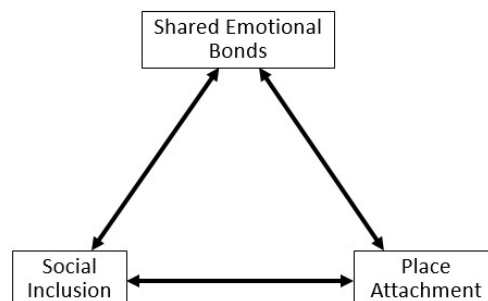


Figure 1: Visual representation of the elements of three dimensions of SoC: shared emotional bonds as perceived dimension; social inclusion as structured dimension; and place attachment as physical dimension. (Source: Author)

The first dimension refers to the psychological literature, which developed the original definition and theory of SoC. In this theoretical perspective, SoC describes that one person is part of a readily available mutually supportive network of relationships (Sarason, 1974). The most utilized and still actual definition of

SoC in community psychology comes from McMillan & Chavis (1986), and is described as a “feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared trust that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986 p.9). Hence, SoC is composed of four elements: membership, influence, needs fulfilment and integration, and emotional connection (McMillan and Chavis, 1986). A further development of this theory named these elements with an emphasis on their circular link and collective memories: spirit, trust, trade and art (McMillan, 1996). Although the first definition has been the basis for further studies in different disciplines, this latter perspective adds a useful approach for exploring SoC as the result of citizen participation and space because of its focus on the collective memories and the circular link of the four elements. In particular, the fourth element of shared emotional connection is based on the interactions between members in “shared events” and together the first three elements of SoC “becomes the community story symbolized by art” (McMillan and Chavis, 1986; McMillan, 1996 p.322). In order to relate SoC with citizen participation, these shared events are part of the definition of citizen participation, which involves people in the decision-making process through different forms of events in order to communicate and make decisions affecting peoples' lives within the space. Hence, the fourth element of shared emotional connection/art represents and encloses the psychological definition of SoC. I will call this psychological perspective of SoC the perceived dimension because of its focus on one's personal perception of feeling part of a community. This perceived dimension is represented by the element of shared emotional bonds, which focuses on the fourth element of the psychological definition of SoC and includes the other three elements within a circular relationship.

The developed perceived dimension of SoC emphasises the psychological process of feeling SoC as a personal experience. The purpose of this research is to develop an operational concept of SoC in order to explore SoC within current society. SoC has been utilized in relation to other disciplines because of its broader significance but the concept itself has developed weakly outside the psychological theory thus, leading to the necessity of a deeper understanding of these relationships. Furthermore, the definition of SoC itself implies boundaries between who belongs and who does not leading to a down side that tends to be higher between similar people and in homogenous communities. Thus, contrasting the objective of common urban development policies and planning in cities, such as various types of social mix planning, which have been the solution to reduce conflict by improving contacts between diverse groups (Fincher et al., 2014). Within the community psychology and planning thought, there is a dialectic between the two main goals of SoC and the value of human diversity. Harvey (1997) emphasised communitarianism as a barrier to social change and diversity (Harvey, 1997; Fainstein, 2000). This conflict can be addressed by promoting multiculturalism, fostering contacts between different sub-communities and not only focusing on the macro-community, and incorporating elements of the concept of social capital, which aims at both bridging networks between different groups and binding social ties (Townley et al., 2011). In particular, while SoC has been conceived at an individual level but utilized at societal level, social capital has mainly referred to the civil society with rules, networks, and mutual trust facilitating cooperative action among citizens and institutions (Perkins and Long, 2002). In the neighbourhood context, the community-diversity dialect can be unlocked by drawing on the two principles together: homophily as the tendency to bond with similar others; and proximity as the tendency to associate with nearby others (Neal and Neal, 2014). In line with this approach, segregation based on immutable characteristics such as race can be reduced by similarity on mutable characteristics based on culture and taste (Stivala et al., 2016). As many societies become “super-diverse” (Vertovec, 2007), where people with backgrounds of all nationalities can potentially live in a single city, the reconciliation of human diversity and SoC has a critical importance (Putnam, 2007; Stivala et al., 2016). In addition to this ethnic and cultural diversity, an increasing diversity in terms of lifestyles, attitudes and activities characterizes current society (Tasan-Kok et al., 2014). It is inclusion, not diversity per se, that is the fundamental value for building SoC and therefore brings people together across difference without changing their underlying experiences or inequalities (Brodsky, 2017). Within this theoretical approach, an operational definition of SoC that is able to refer not only to the personal angle but also to the broader context of the present society needs to be inclusive in terms of multiculturalism and of bridging diverse groups. I will call structured the dimension of

SoC that concerns the sociological perspective and the relationship between diverse people. This structured dimension will be based on the element of social inclusion, which describes the potentiality of encompassing within the community a wide range of diverse social individuals and groups.

Furthermore, this structured dimension of SoC based on social inclusion aims to connect with the concept of citizen participation, as it will be developed in the next section. As citizen participation is defined as a democratic and inclusive process, which involves people in the decision-making process, the element of social inclusion will be explored in relation to the characteristics of the participatory process. In the literature, the relation between participation and SoC has been proven but it mainly focuses on the influence of SoC in improving participation. SoC is a catalyst for participation by influencing the perception of the environment, social relations and one's perceived control and empowerment leading the individual to a collective action (Chavis and Wandersman, 1990). Even though their circular relation has been proven, there is still a gap in empirical research analysing SoC as the result of citizen participation. This research aims to fill in this theoretical gap.

The operational definition developed so far includes perceived and structured dimensions. The next paragraphs will discuss the significance of the role of SoC within the spatial context and develop the physical dimension of SoC.

Since McMillan and Chavis's (1986) definition, SoC has been applied in many contexts, and largely in the neighbourhood, as well as their theoretical framework has been addressed by planners and public policies (McMillan and Chavis, 1986). In the past, the concept of community was more limited to the boundaries of neighbourhoods due to mobility restrictions. In contemporary society, other sorts of communities that are not bound to a specific place (non-local or virtual) have been developing. In literature and in practice, the concept of SoC is strongly related to space and mainly at the neighbourhood scale. There is evidence on the role of the built environment in building social life and SoC. The majority of evidence on the link of neighbourhood and SoC has been conducted within the theoretical approach of Sense of Community Index (SCI) (Chavis et al., 1986). This branch of research investigates the major factors that make up SoC and the relationships within the neighbourhood context using a numerical representation of SoC. I will draw on these theoretical considerations in order to develop an operational definition of SoC that is able to connect this concept with citizen participation and space. In this conceptual setting, there is still a need for investigating the significance of this link utilising a multidisciplinary approach that is able to address the spatial and physical perspective of SoC.

Furthermore, the original concept of SoC has been formulated in order to be applicable to different kinds of communities both place-based and not. In the literature, other concepts related to SoC have often been utilized to investigate this link with space. Place attachment, place identity, and sense of place have been adopted within the theories and practices on the development of community and associated with SoC and social capital (Hindalgo and Hernandez, 2001; Manzo and Perkins, 2006). In particular, place attachment is defined as an emotional bond between people and specific places and has been used in association with SoC. In this definition, place attachment is an emotional bond, such as the definition of SoC, but with a specific focus on the spatial factor and its ability to instil a sense of comfort and safety as well as influence SoC. Because of its similarity and association with the SoC definition, I will utilize the concept of place attachment as a way to analyse the physical dimension of SoC exploring the link of SoC with citizen participation and space.

To recap, this PhD draws on three main branch of studies in order to define an operational definition of SoC: first, the psychological theory of McMillan and Chavis' (1986) and McMillan (1996); second, the discussion on the community-diversity dialectic; third, the related concepts on the connection of SoC with space. These three theoretical perspectives aim to develop the three dimensions of SoC within its operational definition for connecting SoC with citizen participation and space. I defined perceived dimension, the one including the psychological theory and describes the element of shared emotional bonds. The structured dimension encloses SoC within a multicultural and diverse society by building on the element of social inclusion. Physical is the dimension including the link of SoC within the space based on the concept of place

attachment. As for the psychological definition of SoC, these three dimensions are connected to each other within a circular relation. This operationalization of SoC leads to the definition at the beginning of this section as a shared emotional bond to a place-attached group, which promotes social inclusion of diverse groups of people sharing the same physical environment. In this section, I developed the conceptual definition of SoC for analysing it as the result of citizen participation and space. Hereafter, I will discuss the conceptual framework of both citizen participation and space in order to explore their connection with the developed three dimensions of SoC.

2.3. Citizen participation and space

As for the concept of SoC, this section will firstly develop the operational definitions of citizen participation and secondly of space with the objective to relate them each other and with SoC. The approach for developing the conceptual framework of both citizen participation and space draws on the three-dimensional definition of SoC. This theoretical and conceptual framework aims to define the elements of both citizen participation and space, which leads to SoC emerging. I will build this analysis on the literature along three main lines of research: the process of citizen participation; the theories on participatory planning in comparison to a design-based planning approach; and the definition of space drawing on the theory of the “production of space”.

The definition of citizen participation for this research will be enclosed by three elements related with the developed dimensions of SoC: perceived control and empowerment for the perceived dimension; communicative modes for the structured dimension; and shared urban vision for the physical dimension. As for SoC, these three elements are linked together as well as with SoC and space in a circular and mutual relation. This approach aims to address the research objective of exploring the effect of citizen participation and space as well as their circular relationship on creating SoC. Within this approach, citizen participation is here defined as a process in which individuals, groups and organisations take part in the decision-making process that modifies their physical and social environments.

In the literature, the majority of studies has focused on the relation between SoC and participation in the direction of SoC influencing one's participation in local actions while my research explores SoC as the result of citizen participation. From this perspective, SoC plays a catalytic role in an individual's participation by mobilizing three elements: perception of the environment; one's social relations; and one's perceived control and empowerment within the community (Chavis and Wenersman, 1990). The first two will be discussed alongside the development of the operational definition of space. The last element of perceived control and empowerment relates to one's perception of the relationship between the actions defined by the participatory process and the outcomes in modifying the space. Within the definition of citizen participation, this dimension describes the personal motivation to participate but also one's satisfaction and frustration during and after the participatory process. If SoC influences one's motivation to participate and the perceived control and empowerment, then how does this element influence SoC as a shared emotional bond, and is there a circular relation between this element and the developed definition of SoC? The inclusion of perceived control and empowerment within the definition of citizen participation aims to explore this relation. To summarize, the element of perceived control and empowerment created the perceived dimension of citizen participation and builds on the theories on its relation to SoC.

In her widely cited article, Arnstein (1969) defined eight ladders of participation, which indicate the degrees of citizen empowerment in the decision-making process from manipulation through citizen control. A similar approach was proposed by Pretty (1995) with seven levels of participation. Any forms of participation can be analysed within three crucial dimensions: who participates; mode of communication and decision-making process between participants; and the link of the process with policy or public action, which differs in the levels of authority and influence (Fung, 2006). The latest dimension relates to the element of the perceived control and empowerment from one's perspective of the effectiveness of the process itself. Related to the question of who participates is what they participate in, in which activities and at which stages in the process (Cornwall, 2008). In this research, the ‘what’ question is the planning and design process. The

mode of communication is the basis for developing the structured dimension of citizen participation and includes the degrees and forms of involvement within the process as defined by Arnstein and Pretty. Furthermore, the literature on participation in planning theory provides insight on the structured dimension of both participation and SoC and their circular relationship. Until the late 1950s, the type of citizen participation in planning disciplines was limited with manipulation and consultation; since then, the involvement of citizens in planning practices has been one of the challenging themes in planning theories (Lane, 2005). Habermas' theory application in collaborative planning (1984) focuses on the concept of communicative rationality as a principle to evaluate the qualities of interactive practices. The main qualities are to be inclusive, well-informed, and come close to building consensus (Innes, 1996, 2015) in order to be to build trust, foster new relationships, and create shared learning. Efforts to ensure that all interests are considered leads the results to benefit the community as a whole (Innes, 1996). High levels of citizen participation are critical to achieve better public decisions in the planning process. While equality and diversity are at the roots of participatory theories, both at neighbourhood and metropolitan scale, it is significantly difficult to organize an inclusive process. The element of social inclusion as the structured dimension within the definition of SoC is from this perspective, related to the participatory process and in particular, with its structured dimension. I will define this element as communicative modes building on the concept of modes of communication with different levels of participation alongside the communicative theory of collaborative planning.

Regarding the physical dimension, citizen participation applied in planning theories and practices, besides being a process, leads to modifying space. In the planning discussion, there is a gap regarding the nature of the spatial vocabulary (Healey, 2002). The majority of literature focuses on the process of participation and the concepts of space and place remain diffuse, ill-defined but still fundamental to the analysis of social phenomena. Healey defined six criteria (2004) for operationalizing the spatial analysis by comparing the essentialist and non-essentialist perspectives of place and space conception: scale; position; regionalization; materiality and identity; development; and representation. The fourth criterion describes the materiality of spatial relations and the role of spatial images in defining identity (Healey, 2004). The mental abstraction and perception of space defines the visions and iconographic images, which constitute the basis for the physical representation of the spatial planning process in developing future places. In practice, during participation processes in planning future scenarios, citizens improve their ability in envisioning urban changes and moderators turn to these visions for enhancing citizens' perception of possible spaces. In conclusion, the third dimension of citizen participation describes the physical aspect of the planning process into shared urban visions of citizen and stakeholders as shaped by imaginary processes and materialization.

To recap, the three dimensions and their elements for defining citizen participation in relation to SoC are: the perceived dimension represented by the element of perceived control and empowerment; the structured dimension by communicative modes, including the degrees on participation and communicative action theories; and the physical dimension by shared urban visions of citizen and stakeholders for planning future spaces.

In the definitions of both SoC and participation, their physical dimensions are defined and connected with the other dimensions in a mutual relationship. In theories and practices, there is a gap in the connection of citizen participation with SoC in the built environment disciplines. In particular, a multidisciplinary approach, which is able to connect the social and the spatial perspectives, will provide theoretical and practical contributions in the understanding of the outcomes of space and participation in creating SoC. For this reason, the definition of the space is analysed as a concept itself with its own perceived, structured and physical dimensions. This conceptualization aims to go beyond the dichotomy between design-based theories and the sociological definition of space in a multidimensional description, which includes three disciplinary approaches in a mutual relationship: psychological; sociological; and design and planning theories.

I will now describe the operational definition of space related with the developed definition of SoC and citizen participation. Many planning theories conceive action in planning and knowledge about space as being

socially constructed (Wolf-Power, 2014). The production of space is much more than a physical act as space is a unitary construct of three fields: physical; mental; and social (Lefebvre, 1991). This definition of space will build on this principle in order to develop elements for relating space with SoC and citizen participation. To explore this relation, space will be described using three elements: imaginary experience for the perceived dimension; social interaction for the structured dimension; and urban design for the physical dimension.

The utilized perspective of analysis conceives the space as a projection onto a spatial field of elements and moments of social practice, and the design and planning actions code mental and social activity into spaces. In this perspective, the space is produced within an intersection between material, emotive and intellectual expression in three main ways: through spatial practices; as dynamics and experiences; and as representations of space, as in the conceptions of practitioners; representational spaces, which is how spaces are lived through their images and meanings (Lefebvre, 1991; Healey, 2007). From the personal experience of space, individuals define the image and meaning of space around them. Therefore, I will build the perceived dimension of space on the element of imaginary experience describing the spatial experience of social practices and the images and meanings associated with that experience.

Regarding the structured dimension of space, the theoretical approach offered by Jacobs (1961) and Whyte (1980), analysed lively neighbourhoods and public spaces from the perspectives of the way people and space interact with each other. I will draw on this approach for defining the structured dimension represented with the element of social interaction, which describes the space for its intrinsic characteristic of creating social contacts between people and producing social meanings. These social contacts are very diverse and can be spontaneous and passive or more active and intimate. Within these perspectives, specific characteristics of streets, parks, neighbourhoods and urban diversity lead to safe, active and functional urban spaces and influence social interactions between people and between people and space (Jacobs, 1961). For example, the use of buildings and their spatial distribution into blocks influences the life on the streets by enhancing perceived safety because of the presence of inhabitants in buildings facing the street as well as shops and other public spaces frequented by people. Many planning policies in the US and European neighbourhood developments have reflected the tendency of applying Jacobs' principles but often without a critical understanding of the local characteristics of the planning process or the socio-spatial context. Here, this approach is utilized in order to study and relate the physical dimension of space with the experience of living and building spatial and social relationships between people.

In planning theory, the tension between a focus on the planning process and an emphasis on desirable social outcomes did not lead to the predominance of one tendency to the other one (Fainstein, 2000). On the one hand, a spatial consciousness within the planning disciplines informed by physical concepts is scarcely developed towards the predominance of process-oriented strategies (Haeley, 2004). On the other hand, a design-based approach in planning requires relating the physical organization of space with people's life within the designed space. Furthermore, the majority of study into the link between SoC and the built environment has focused on public space (Farahani and Lozanovska, 2014) and an understanding of the mutual relation between SoC and the built environment as a complex and multilevel domain, is missing. The physical dimension of the space will include an element that I will refer to as urban design and relate with the perceived and structured dimensions in order to link space with SoC and citizen participation. The connection between a design-based approach and an understanding of the space as social practice, aims to contribute to analyse the social meanings associated with the physical experience of the space, and thus linking with the development of SoC. The physical dimension of the space is defined as urban design and includes different scales and unit levels from regional areas to the city and down to the neighbourhood, the block and the building. Within this approach, cities include various neighbourhoods all with their own functions, meanings, and architectures. By analysing the space at the neighbourhood level, it is possible to scale this research approach up to the city and regional level. Hence, the space is approached as a multidimensional concept and its physical dimension encloses the urban design in a multilevel perspective of analysis.

While the analysis of SoC and citizen participation utilizes theories and conceptualizations, the analysis of the space as a unitary construct of imaginary experience, social interaction and urban design requires utilizing different approaches in order to include both the textual and visual characteristics of space. In the planning and design practice, a few seminal works provide a useful ground to explore the physical dimension of the space in relation to the imaginary experience, the events linked with it, and how citizens associate memories and meaning to parts of city or neighbourhood. From this perspective, the space has the ability to evoke mental images and thus, responds to people's need for giving structures and illustrating personal relevance to spatial qualities (Lynch, 1960). The relation of the physical approach with the perceived and structured dimensions of space will explore how people understand and create mental maps of different kinds of spaces. This approach of relating the physical dimension of urban design with the perceived dimension of imaginary experience, aims to link the space with the elements of place attachment and shared emotional bonds within the concept of SoC.

The analysis of the urban design builds on the physical distribution of three main types of spaces: public; semi-private; and private. This describes the urban form including streets, public spaces, different uses, blocks, density, and buildings' uses and typologies. Firstly, high-quality public spaces can have a significant role in enhancing SoC by increasing social interaction between neighbours in new housing developments (Francis et al., 2012). The majority of studies focused on public spaces, exploring their qualities and residents' perceptions for enhanced social activities and addressing human needs such as comfort, meaning, passive and active engagement.

Moreover, as the structured dimension of SoC is based on social inclusion of diverse people, not only public spaces but also semi-public spaces have been proved encouraging social interaction between diverse people. For example, libraries, community centres, corner shops, cafes and sports clubs all play an important role in forming new patterns of attachment in a highly diverse neighbourhood (Amin, 2002; Peterson, 2017). These semi-public spaces are open to the public as public spaces but have a private character that create differences in the characteristics of social interaction and imaginary experience.

In addition to these kinds of spaces, this research includes private spaces as well as different typologies and uses of buildings defining different relationships between the private and the public spaces. As developing an inclusive SoC involves fostering contacts between different sub-communities while not only focusing on the macro-community, the smallest level of sub-community from a mere spatial perspective is the building and its composition within the block. Building typologies such as villas, single, duplex, triplex and quadruplex dwellings, courtyard housing, linear and flats effect the development of sub-communities. For example, the distribution of flat buildings around a courtyard might have a different influence on SoC than isolated villas and may involve a different mix of citizens.

According to Lefebvre (1991), the space contains representations of social relations of production and reproduction in the form of buildings, monuments, and works of art; in this process, architecture produces living bodies with distinctive traits and reproduces itself as people use that space within their lived experience (Lefebvre, 1991). In the architectural discipline, the study of the architectural language from the anthropological and sociological points of view at individual and societal scales defined a line of research. Within this perspective, physical elements, besides being defined for their uses and design factors, gain social meanings (Smithsons, 1953). In the American communities, the study of how inhabitants of suburbs associate images and memories into a collective experience of spaces led to a different architectural thought inspired by social meanings and not only by an intellectual creative process (Venturi and Brown, 1953). Few recent studies represent a distinct architectural direction investigating the relations between behaviour and environment rather than a design-based approach (Tsukamoto and Kaijima, 2010). Within this approach, the building's level of analysing the element of urban design relates the physical characteristics with their social production and emotional meanings.

The three developed dimensions of space in relation with the three dimensions of citizen participation define the conceptual frameworks for exploring their role in developing SoC, as figure 2 shows. In addition to the mutual relationship within the elements of citizen participation and space, there is a circular

relationship between them. First, one's imaginary experience and one's perceived control and empowerment refer both to one's influence on the process on both participation and space production. These two perceived elements have a mutual relationship because the influence on the space effects the perceived control through the process, and the perceived control influences the experience within the space by changing one's spatial perception. Second, the communicative modes influence the social relationship between participants within the process therefore effecting social interaction within the space. On the other hand, social interaction within the space effects the participation enhancing the communication between participants. Third, the shared urban visions of people and stakeholders for future urban scenarios influence the urban design by involving inhabitants' expectation of urban changes in the planning process. Furthermore, existing urban patterns influence the ability of describing visions and inhabitants' expectation of urban changes.

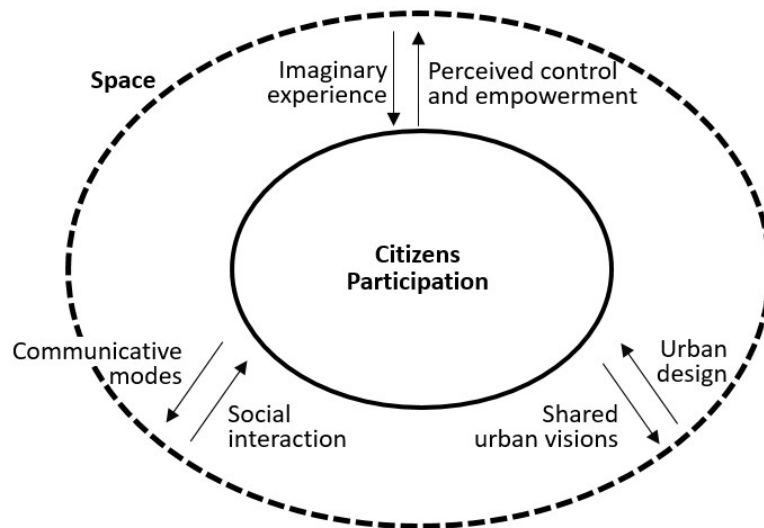


Figure 2: Visual representation of dimensions and casual relations of citizen participation (circle) and space (dashed circle) for exploring their role in developing SoC (Source: Author)

2.4. An analytical model for exploring SoC emerging from citizen participation and space

This PhD explores SoC as the result of the process of citizen participation and the characteristics of space. For this research objective, an operational definition of SoC has been developed in order to address the sociological perspective and the community-diversity dialect, as well as, including the physical dimension of the built environment approach. Therefore, the contribution of this analytical framework is twofold: exploring the SoC as the result of citizen participation and space and not as a source for civic engagement; and designing a multidisciplinary definition for analysing the perceived, structured and physical dimensions of SoC in relation to citizen participation and space. This model aims to contribute to community-based planning theory and practice. Although community-based planning is widely utilized mainly at the neighbourhood level, the majority of findings stemmed either from the psychological and sociological disciplines or from planning theories. A multidisciplinary approach aims to improve the understanding of the socio-spatial outcomes of community-based planning in terms of citizens' life.

Figure 3 shows the circular relation and the three-dimensional conceptualization of SoC, citizen participation and space. This relationship describes the analytical framework for exploring SoC as the result of citizen participation and space. The element of perceived control and empowerment within citizen participation together with the element of imaginary experience as the perceived dimension of space lead to shared emotional bonds. The element of communicative modes as a structured dimension of citizen participation and the element of social interaction within the conceptualization of space effect the formation of social inclusion. The element of shared urban visions as the physical dimension of citizen participation alongside the element of urban design within the analysis of space, influences the formation of place attachment. According to the relation between citizen participation and space discussed in the previous

sections, these three dimensions have a mutual and circular relation in influencing the three dimensional definition of SoC.

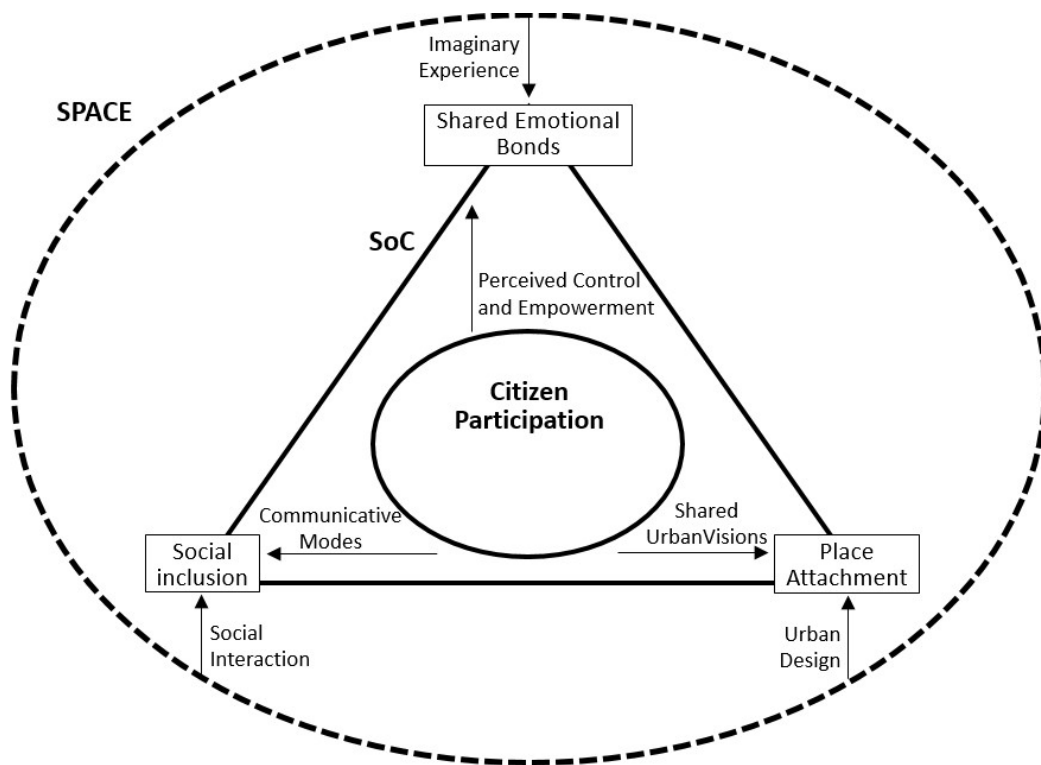


Figure 3: Visual representation of the circular relations of citizen participation (circle) and space (dashed circle) in effecting SoC (triangle). (Source: Author)

The circular and mutual relation between these elements and concepts raises several main reflections and discussions. The process of citizen participation activates new psychosocial dynamics and relationships with the space, thus leading to building SoC. However, the space as an unitary construct of perceived, structured and physical dimensions, influences the social interactions between inhabitants' and within the physical dimension of space, thus leading to the emergence of SoC. The casual relation between both citizen participation and space in developing SoC leads to the question as to what extent they conflict with each other, if one of the two matter more, and in case which one, and under which conditions.

Furthermore, within the elements of citizen participation (communicative modes, perceived control and empowerment, and shared urban visions) influencing SoC, this research will explore if any of the three dimensions have a dominant role in building SoC. The same reflection can be applied to the elements of space influencing SoC (imaginary experience, social interaction, and urban design) in order to explore if, and which one, have a dominant role for SOC to emerge.

In addition, citizen participation and space may lead to build only one or two of the three elements of SoC (e.g. place attachment without shared emotional bonds; shared emotional bonds without social inclusion) thus, not developing SoC as here defined. For example, if SoC is built only on the element of shared emotional bonds without social inclusion, which means bridging and being open to diverse types of inhabitants, SoC can be strong but it defines a community of similar others, which is closed to diverse people.

The developed analytical framework is applicable at different scales for analysing community-building in socio-spatial changes drawing on participatory planning. The defined concepts can be investigated at the regional, city, neighbourhood, blocks, and building levels. At the city level, SoC is the inhabitants' feeling of being part of that city and the participatory planning will be the process of involving them in infrastructural changes, aiming to modify the urban and architectural landscape with emerging areas and focal buildings. Furthermore, at the neighbourhood scale, there are many elements included in the urban design, which can be analysed by themselves and constitute a smaller scale of analysis. For example, parks can be specific objects of a participatory planning and their role in creating SoC can be investigated through their ability to

create social interaction, the imaginary experience of inhabitants and its urban design of paths, constructions and natural elements. Nevertheless, in the next chapter, I will define the contribution and value of focusing this research at the neighbourhood level on analysis.

3. Research method

3.1. Neighbourhoods as socio-spatial representations: the selection of case studies in peri-urban contexts

The definition of space in relation to citizen participation and SoC draws on the theoretical approach of the production of space (Lefebvre, 1991) and encloses the perceived, structured and physical dimensions. The concept of space refers to different scales from regional and city planning to the neighbourhood, and up to the block and the building at an architectural scale. The literature on SoC has mainly focused on the specific context of the neighbourhood. Focusing on the neighbourhood scale helps to understand the different dynamics between citizens within the space as well as analysing their involvement in participatory planning. In addition, focusing at the neighbourhood scale aims to increase the practical usability of the developed analytical framework. Starting from the 90s' until nowadays, many European countries and the US have seen a broad recourse to community-based policies at the neighbourhood level pursuing the goals of enhancing security and reducing social inequality. Besides being the community literature both critical and positive on the role of neighbourhood, its importance in developing and maintaining SoC between inhabitants, and its influence in enhancing the awareness on the presence of a community entity, has been extensively proven (Glynn, 1986; Farahani, 2016). The design approach of new urbanism has followed the task of designing the neighbourhood for creating SoC, even though it did not clarify its meaning of SoC nor the relation of SoC within physical design such as mixed use, pedestrian-friendly design and public space (Talen, 1999; Nastaran Pour, 2015). Differently, this research builds on the development of a conceptual framework of SoC and utilizes the neighbourhood context for operationalizing the developed method and improving the physical dimension of the analysis of space.

The operational definition of SoC includes the discussion of a community-diversity dialectic and adds to the psychological definition, the structural dimension of social inclusion implying the concepts of diversity and bridging with sub-groups. Recently, neighbourhoods have become a spatial testing ground for different planning and policy solutions; one of the most common is the theory of socio-spatial mixing (Fincher et al., 2014). In the early part of the 1900s, mix planning was the solution and theory to reduce conflict and prejudice by improving the interpersonal contact between groups mainly differing in economic class and ethnics. During the 1970s and 1980s, theoretical concepts such as neighbourhood effects and social capital have influenced diverse types of social mix policies. The limitations of the experiences on mix planning are mainly due to planner and design-centric approaches (Fincher et al., 2014). A framework connecting the psychological and sociological perspectives alongside the physical dimension, aims to contribute to the design and planning disciplines with the social outcomes of urban changes, as well as the psychological and sociological theories on SoC and participation with the physical analysis of neighbourhood patterns. Furthermore, for a neighbourhood to be lively and efficient, Jacobs' (1961) suggestions include fostering vital streets, using parks, squares, and public buildings as part of the street, intensifying the pattern's complexity and multiple uses rather than segregating different uses, and distributing the urban space in small blocks at a walking dimension. Within the definition of space, the element of the urban design includes these neighbourhood characteristics, the social mix planning approach, and the building level of analysis.

From both spatial and socio-demographic perspectives, neighbourhoods differ between urban, periphery and peri-urban contexts and thus, influencing the SoC. There is a substantial difference between the social life in villages, small towns and cities (Jacobs, 1961). The peri-urban zones and fringes in Europe are cities built in a short period in order to satisfy increasing housing needs. These urban fringes are the result of national urban policies, and can be built from scratch or as urban renewal and growth developments with newly moved high-income households living next to existing populations. The development of these new

towns have mainly appeared after the second world war, during the 1990s and in recent years following the financial crisis in 2008 because of their relation with economic, demographic and mobility growth. Currently, following the global financial crisis, more people live in European peri-urban areas than in cities. Hence, recent studies and policies have pointed to the need for targeted policies, and a specific spatial category, able to address their social and economic complexity (Ramos et al., 2013). The social outcomes in terms of quality of life, social cohesion and SoC of these phenomena constitute an underexplored ground for investigating the results of urban planning approaches with regard to both the participatory process and the urban design characteristics.

The developed analytical model will be investigated with a case study analysis of peri-urban neighbourhoods. This research will utilize a set of criteria for the definition of the two case studies based on the method of “universalizing comparative analysis with plural causation” (Pickvance, 2001). This method draws on the principle of differences alongside the idea of plurality of causes of Mill (1886) with the goal to demonstrate patterns of relations starting from differences rather than similarities.

The similarity between the case studies is that they will be urban renewal or new development projects in peri-urban neighbourhoods based on citizen participation in the planning process.

The difference between the cases focuses on the approach of the participatory process. Citizen participation in planning process follows the institutional settings, which generate the urban policies and practices guiding the participatory approaches. Because of the exploratory goal of this research, comparing different institutional models will provide advancement on the relation between different approaches of participation and their relation with the development of SoC. The developed definition of citizen participation builds on the perceived control and empowerment of citizens, the utilized communicative modes and the shared urban vision. The institutional models influence these elements and I will explore how they are related with SoC as the result of a participatory process with the influence of space.

I will compare two cases of urban planning development with participatory process in peri-urban neighbourhoods, one in the Netherlands and one in Italy. Participatory approaches vary depending on historically developed politics and relations between municipal governments, third-sector agencies and non-profit organizations (Ranci, 1994; Savini, 2011). According with Ranci (1994), the interdependence between state and private or non-profit organization characterizes the Italian welfare system. In the Netherlands, urban planning issues including a participatory approach are a public sector task. In the Dutch spatial planning system, the central government sets out the guidelines, the provinces draw up regional plans, and the municipalities develop structural plans and local land use plans (*bestemmingsplannen*) (Galle and Modderman, 1997). The local participatory planning starts including citizens from the local land use plans in order to decide their application in neighbourhood context. In 1993, Dutch urban development has been regulated by the Vinex policy document, which became synonymous for large-scale residential neighbourhood development. After the financial crisis in the 2008, the policies were still based on a public system, but have changed to be more decentralized. On the other hand, since the 1990s, the Italian third sector has started a process of including citizens’ needs and utilizing participatory policies according to regional and local differences and the collaboration between the third and the public sectors influence participatory processes (Fazzi, 2009). According to Fazzi (2009), in areas where the third sector has a historically strong tradition, planning offices are directly managed by a third sector practitioner who assigns tasks, while in other zones, cooperation between public and third sectors consists of meetings at the final stages of the plans. In many regions, the urban development of social-mixed neighbourhoods at the municipality level draws on “area plans” (*piani di zona*) and is organized by a type of non-profit organization called social cooperatives (*cooperative sociali*). In conclusion, while in Italy the participatory processes are the result of policies and relations between the third-sector agencies and the public government, in the Netherlands they follow a more unitary approach guided by public government policies. These institutional models influence the stakeholders involved within participatory planning, communicative actions, and the design of the decision-making process. In addition, Italy, unlike the Netherlands, does not have active empowerment strategy policies, which influence the participatory process (Dekker & van Kempen, 2008).

Furthermore, urban renewal development can have the goal of renovating and expanding a consolidated neighbourhood or build a new area from scratch. Hence, the analysis on the case studies will take into account this aspect as it influences the emergence of SoC. In particular, the development of SoC varies whether there is a pre-existing community before a neighbourhood development with existing social fabrics among earlier inhabitants or whether the participatory planning starts building very new social relations from scratch. In conclusion, a comparative case study analysis set in peri-urban neighbourhood developments will investigate how citizen participation influences the emergence of SoC and what is the role of the space in this process.

3.2. Ethnographic and innovative methods for exploring the analytical model

Due to the exploratory goal of the research questions, I will investigate how SoC emerges through the process of citizen participation and the influence of space by using ethnographic methods. The previous chapters described the analytical framework and underlined the three-dimensional perspective for analysing SoC, citizen participation and space: perceived, structured and physical dimensions. In order to explore these dimensions both independently and in their mutual and circular relation, this research will utilize different methods. In this section, I will discuss the usability for this research objective starting from the main ethnographic methods: in-depth interviews; focus group discussions; and participant observations. Beyond these main ethnographic methods, other methods, which combine two or three of them, will be utilized for analysing the three-dimensional perspective. I will explore the usability of two mixed methods within the pilot case study: the walk-along discussion; and the interviews with mental maps. The goal of the pilot case study analysis is to observe how the analytical framework may apply as well as define adequate methods to utilize in the future case studies. At the first stage of analysis on the pilot case study, I will examine the urban design characteristics and strategies and the citizen participation's documents and policies in order to set the participants and the questionnaires for the ethnographic methods. At the second stage, I will utilize: focus group discussions with practitioners drawing on a semi-structured questionnaire; and walk-along discussions with citizens. In the final stage, I will utilize in-depth interviews with citizens based on semi-structured questionnaires and mental maps.

For the research objective, a focus group discussion is useful to underline emergent topics from both practitioners and citizens as well as to analyse the social interaction and social ties between citizens. The semi-structured interviews aim to deepen the perceived dimension of SoC defined with the element of shared emotional bonds alongside one's perceived control and empowerment on the process of citizen participation. The perceived dimension refers to someone's experience of SoC and for whom feeling a part of the community is easy to explain and understand the meaning of community (Sarason, 1974). The participant observations helps analyse people's social interaction and understanding of their relation with the physical and social dimensions of space. The comparison of participant observations with an urban design analysis will help define the relation between the social and physical dimensions of space. The urban design analysis will be based on the physical characteristics of the neighbourhoods such as uses, functions, dimensions and types of streets and public spaces, urban context, typologies of houses and building, urban design approach and strategy.

The first mixed method to be explored is the walk-along discussion, which proposes to talk whilst walking with participants (Anderson, 2004) and combines focus group discussion with participant observation. As people usually do not comment on 'what is going on' while acting in their common environments, it is difficult to access their experiences and interpretations through a purely observational approach (Kusenbach, 2003). This method has the potential to add new layers of understanding about how people comprehend the physical and social environment in everyday life and of exploring the meanings of the "lived environment" (Lefebvre, 1991). Furthermore, walking within spaces produces new meanings from the participants' perception of space. The process of talking while walking invokes personal and cultural memories and meanings of space, moving between social understandings of different events and personal webs of understanding. A similar approach has been utilized in the Mobile Urban Lab for Creating Meaningful

Encounters in Cities of Diversity organized by Tasan-Kok and Ozogul presented as part of the broader project Divercities (Tasan-Kok et al., 2014). This experiment involved different stakeholders in an organized walk in Amsterdam Oost in order to explore different spaces and initiatives and talk to community-based organizations. The exploration of the pilot case study provides insights of the usability of these mixed methods for investigating the analytical model, and helps in setting the analysis for the next two case studies.

The second mixed method to be explored is the interview with mental maps, which combines semi-structured interviews with participant observations. The perceived dimension of space draws on the element of imaginary experience and relates this element with the physical dimension of urban design. In order to explore an adequate method for analysing these dimensions and their mutual relation, I have tested the use of mental maps combined with semi-structured in-depth interviews with two citizens in the pilot case study. Looking at cities, every citizen has different experiences, image associations and meanings with some part of the city or neighbourhood. A positive and clear spatial image gives the possessor a sense of emotional security and this spatial image can be analysed into three main components: identity, structure and meaning (Lynch, 1960). By asking the participant to draw mental maps, it is possible to reconstruct the emergent spatial elements alongside their relations and meanings. A “narrative mapping” provides insights on the small stories, which are the product of social interactions within the space (Verloo, 2017). By combining the semi-structured interviews with the mental maps, it is possible to explore the perceived, structured and physical dimensions and their mutual relations.

Table 1 summarizes these methods and their usability in exploring the perceived, structured and physical dimensions. It shows the elements of SoC, citizen participation and space in relation to the methods for analysing them. As the research explores the relation between SoC, citizen participation and space, the methods that are able to better analyse many elements together are preferable. The urban design analysis is utilized a priori alongside the analysis of the documents of citizen participation in order to define the issues to focus on during the ethnographic methods for analysing the neighbourhoods. These two preliminary analysis will be conducted by the researcher and do not imply the involvement of citizens but only preliminary interviews with the urban designers and urban planners, and the public and/or private actors in charge of the participatory process. This analysis will be the basis for setting the questionnaire and the guidelines of the ethnographic methods, and comparing the researcher’s analysis with citizens’ perceptions.

Table 1. Relation of the elements of the three dimensions with the methods for investigating them: the white box excludes that method for studying that specific element; + are adequate methods; ++ are highly representative.

Elements of the three dimensions	Urban design analysis	Documents’ analysis	Semi-structured interviews	Participant observations	Focus group discussion	Walk-along discussion	Mental maps interviews
SoC							
Shared emotional bonds			++	+	+	+	+
Social inclusion		+	+	+	++	++	
Place attachment			++	++	+	++	++
Citizen Participation							
Communicative modes		++	++		++	+	+
Perceived control and empowerment		+	++		++	+	
Shared urban visions	+	+	++		++	++	++
Space							
Imaginary experience	+		++	+		++	++
Social interaction	+		+	++	++	++	+
Urban design	++	+		++		+	+
Methods’ adequacy	+++++	++++++	++++++ ++++++	++++++ ++	++++++ +++++	++++++ ++++++	++++++ +++

Regarding citizen participation, in a case study with work in progress participatory process, both in-depth interviews and participant observations will provide significant insights on all the three dimensions of citizen participation (perceived control and empowerment, communicative modes, and shared urban visions). In a concluded participatory process, participant observations would focus only on the relation between SoC and space. The understanding of the relation of SoC with the participatory process can be achieved with preliminary document analysis, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

The walk-along discussion is a useful method to explore the collective emergent topics on neighbourhood planning and life, the perception of the environment and the satisfaction and criticism on the participatory process. Hence, this method is fruitful after the preliminary analysis, as it is an initial involvement with the inhabitants. The walk-along discussion of a defined number of citizens is comparable with the focus group for seeking a range of views on research issues, when discussion is desired, and for exploratory research allowing issues to be quickly identified by a group of people (Hennink, 2007). Furthermore, the walk-along discussion includes the analysis of the physical dimension of the relation between people and space and makes it easier for the participants to discuss and understand the questions concerning the environment around them. With systematic observation, it is possible to obtain thick description (Geertz, 1973) of people's behaviours and actions within the space and relate them with the urban design characteristics of the neighbourhood.

For the goal of relating the urban design with the social interaction as part of this research, the walk-along discussion offers useful insights even though it does not provide a deep understanding of the elements of the shared emotional bonds, imaginary experience, and place attachment without combining it with in-depth interviews. In order to evaluate the perceived dimensions, the semi-structured interview offers a more adequate method to explore individual perspectives. Hence, the semi-structured interviews will be used at the last stage of the analysis with the case studies in order to achieve a more complete understanding of SoC and the relation with citizen participation and space. By combining the semi-structured interviews with mental maps, it is possible to analyse the relation of SoC with both citizen participation and space as well as to explore the participants perception and meanings of space.

3.3. Lesson learned from the pilot case study

The analysis on the pilot case study aims to explore the usability of the analytical model and the adequacy of the ethnographic methods for this research. This section will introduce the pilot case study Kerckebosch Zeist and describe the utilized ethnographic methods of the walk-along discussion with citizens, the focus group discussion with practitioners and the test of two interviews with mental maps. Appendix D will discuss the outcomes and the usability of the analytical framework through its application in the pilot case study.

Kerckebosch Zeist is a public entity and funder of the first year of this PhD programme. This pilot case is a residential neighbourhood development project. For this neighbourhood development, the municipality of Zeist and the housing corporation Woongood Zeist founded Wijkontwikkelingsmaatschappij (WOM) Kerckebosch. During the development of the neighbourhood, WOM adopted a communicative approach with a participatory process from the initial decision stages in 2005. Before the urban development project, there were 1,265 apartments in multi-storey buildings including 706 social housing apartments from the 1960s, which were organized around the boundaries of the neighbourhood. In the centre of, and outside the neighbourhood, the presence of the forest was scattered. The main decision for the urban planning development project was to demolish these buildings and build a new neighbourhood drawing on a participatory process and social-mix planning. The physical construction of the neighbourhood started in 2014 and will be complete in 2021. The focus of the participatory decision-making process has been on the neighbourhood's masterplan, the public spaces and the housing typologies. Regarding the public spaces, Kerckebosch Zeist won a prize for the best public space in the Netherlands in 2016 during the National Conference on Public Space in Leeuwarden.

Due to the explorative goal of this research, the analysis of the relation of citizen participation, space and SoC within the case studies will utilize ethnographic methods. The analysis of the element of urban design as

the physical dimension of space will be preliminarily explored by identifying identity, structure and meaning (Lynch, 1960) in the neighbourhood pattern of Kerckebosch Zeist.

Appendix A on the urban design analysis shows sketches of the urban form at different levels from the city to the neighbourhood down to the blocks and the buildings' typologies, thus constituting the basis for exploring space in relation to citizen participation and SoC through its three dimensions: imaginary experience, social interaction and urban design. This analysis helps in defining the exploration of citizens' experience and the meaning of places at different scales. The first sketch describes the city from the perspective of its urban design and imaginary experience as a complex system of neighbourhoods and emerging areas, which leads to different kinds of social interactions. The second sketch applied the same analysis at the neighbourhood scale by representing the distribution of blocks, private, semi-private and public spaces, and emerging areas. This sketch has also been utilized as the basis for the interviews with mental maps. The third sketch shows the three dimensions of space at building level through their typologies and uses alongside their relationships to each other and with the semi-private and public spaces.

Furthermore, because Kerckebosch Zeist is now being developed after a long process of top-down involvement of citizens in the planning development, I analysed the documents on the participatory process. From this analysis, it emerged that the urban plan is based on the *bestemmingplan* and draws on a social-mix planning approach. The involvement of the inhabitants has focused on defining the masterplan and the public spaces with different types of communicative modes in different blocks. Alongside the physical analysis of the case study, I examined the main documents and reports on the participatory process starting from 2005 until now in order to underline the main topic, the communicative modes and techniques, and the urban design visions, which have been discussed in the decision-making process of the urban development. These two preliminary analysis are the basis for setting the walk-along discussion.

After these preliminary analyses, I explored the validity of the analytical framework with ethnographic methods: a walk-along discussion with citizens; a focus group discussion with practitioners; two semi-structured interviews with mental maps.

The walk-along discussion took place drawing on a semi-structured questionnaire for developing the discussion between citizens on specific places and topics. The participants have been recruited from the six different blocks and from different housing typologies in order to investigate how different types of citizens living in different typologies of houses and blocks and experiencing different stages and types of participatory process, interpret space, take part in the participatory process and feel part of the community. Thirteen citizens from different building typologies and blocks participated: two from the first block; two from the second block; two from the third block; two from the fifth block; five from the sixth block. Eight of them completed the guiding form with the questionnaire, thus integrating the results with a perceived perspective on the discussed topics. The urban design of the neighbourhood is composed of six blocks of differing housing typologies, socio-spatial mix, urban design, and levels and characteristics of the participatory process. Furthermore, the recruitment process has utilized different methods such as newsletters, Facebook pages, citizens' online platforms, official websites, and voice-to-voice calls. The walk-along discussion has explored: citizens' perception of the space, their imaginary experience and social interaction within specific places in relation to both the urban design and the participatory process; citizens' satisfaction and frustration on the participatory process; and citizens' emotional bonds, place attachment and social contacts, and their own definition and meaning of community.

Appendix B shows the map of the trajectory with five places to stop and the guiding questionnaire that I was utilizing for sparking the discussion. Participants had a copy of them during the walk-along discussion. The video recording, voice recording and completed questionnaires have been transcribed and analysed with some main issues and concepts emerging from the walk-along discussion. Consequently, these emerging topics have been related to the elements of the analytical model.

After the walk-along discussion, a focus group discussion with practitioners took place. The focus group has explored the practitioners' perceptions about citizen participation, urban design and social outcomes in terms of community life alongside citizens' needs, expectations, frustrations and satisfaction on both the

urban design and the participatory process. The emerging topics of the focus group discussions have been compared with the emerging topics of the walk-along discussion in order to define similarities and divergences. The focus group discussion aims to underline emerging issues of the participatory process and the urban design strategies in order to compare them with the elements of the analytical framework that identify citizen participation and space.

At the last stage of analysis, a test of two semi-structured interviews with the use of mental maps has investigated this method for exploring the analytical model. The objective of this method is to improve the understanding of citizens' spatial experience and meaning of the physical characteristics of the neighbourhood alongside the relation with place attachment and SoC. The testing interviews with the mental map utilized the questionnaire of the walk-along discussion and drew on its outcomes and reflections. The interview has explored the possibility of recollecting specific spaces and paths and their associations with meanings and experiences by utilizing words and sketches. The results of the interview have been compared with the elements of the analytical framework and the preliminary analysis of the urban design in order to reflect on their usability as well as the validity of the results. Appendix C shows the mental maps resulting from the interviews.

Appendix D discusses the results of the walk-along discussion, the focus groups discussion, and the semi-structured interviews with mental maps. The discussion on the outcomes has the objective of: exploring the usability of the analytical framework; reflecting on the validity of the elements of the analytical model and relating them with the emerging topics and issues of the discussion; establishing the adequacy of the ethnographic methods for exploring the research questions and relating SoC with citizen participation and space. In conclusion, the analysis on the pilot case study has been utilized to revise the analytical model and improve the methods of analysing the following two case studies. After the analysis of the collected data, the reflections on the usability of the analytical model have been used to improve the research design. The research design, including the research questions, theoretical and analytical frameworks and the methodological approach, has been the basis for developing the ethnographic methods.

3.4. Time-plan and chapter division

Schedule for four years PhD Trajectory:

Month	Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
1	Hand in PhD Trajectory Plan	15/11/18			
8	Hand in 8-Month Paper	15/06/19			
9	<i>Go-No-Go/Annual Thesis Progress Evaluation & update of Trajectory Plan</i>	15/07/19			
12	<i>Dutch fieldwork start</i>		01/10/19		
18	Hand in Fieldwork Report		01/01/20		
(24)*	<i>Return from the field</i>		01/10/20		
24	<i>Annual Thesis Progress Evaluation & update of Trajectory Plan</i>			01/10/20	
(28)*	Draft 1 st chapter finished			01/02/21	
28	<i>Foreign fieldwork start</i>				
(32)*	Draft 2 nd chapter finished			01/06/21	
(36)*	Draft 3 rd chapter finished			01/10/21	
36	<i>Annual Thesis Progress Evaluation & update of Trajectory Plan</i>				01/10/21
(40)*	Draft 4 th chapter finished				01/02/22
44	Draft dissertation finished				01/06/22
48	Dissertation finished/Exit meeting				01/10/22

During the first year, the following courses have been attended:

- AISSR Methodology Clinic B / Mixed Methods by B. Burgoon and A. Freyberg-Inan;

- Nethur CC1 Urban and Regional Research;
- Nethur CC6 Qualitative Research Method.

In the meantime, I took part in the following activities:

- Exploration of the pilot case study Kerckebosch Zeist on the contribution and concrete application of the analytical method and improvement of the methods for investigating next case studies;
- Moderation of the event Urban Movies with the Centre of Urban Studies and the Pakhuis de Zijger;
- Accepted abstract of the present research at AESOP 2019 Annual Congress in Venice;
- Finalisation of a paper titled "Citizens' Involvement and Spatial Characteristics of Urban Streets in enhancing Sense of Community: developing an Analytical Method" for *Environment and Behaviour*.

The dissertation will comprise four chapters.

The first chapter will be the introduction and will draw on this eight-month paper. It aims to develop the theoretical and analytical framework, and discuss the fieldwork explorative methods and the lessons learned from the pilot case study.

During the second year, I will explore the analytical framework within the first case study in the Netherlands and I will discuss the results and the theoretical improvements on the second chapter of the dissertation.

The third chapter will be written during the third year and it will discuss the case study in Italy, the similarities and differences of results in comparison with the Dutch case study as well as the theoretical and analytical improvements.

During the fourth year, I will discuss the conclusion on the analytical framework and further applications in different contexts and scales.

The project will work in cooperation with the funding agencies upon their strategies and practices with the goal of exploring, developing, and improving their social outcomes according to principles of action-based research and experimental methodology. The research will actively participate in community actions, whilst simultaneously conducting research with continuous communication between research and practice.

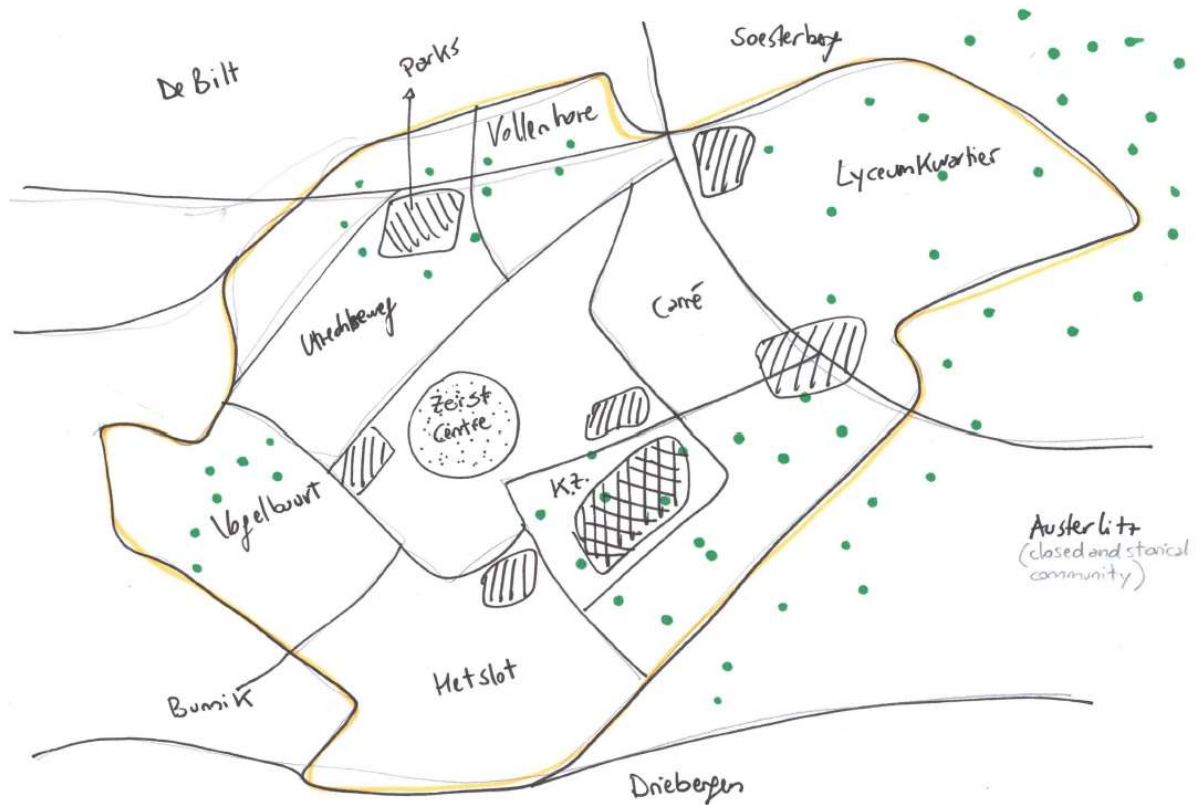
Besides the textual methods, I will explore other narrative forms in order to reach a wider public and involve citizens, who are the actors in the production and life within the space. For example, experiments could include making a documentary, staging an exhibition or other visual and artistic laboratories involving inhabitants with the aim of discovering and representing meanings in relation to places and memories of participatory planning.

Appendices

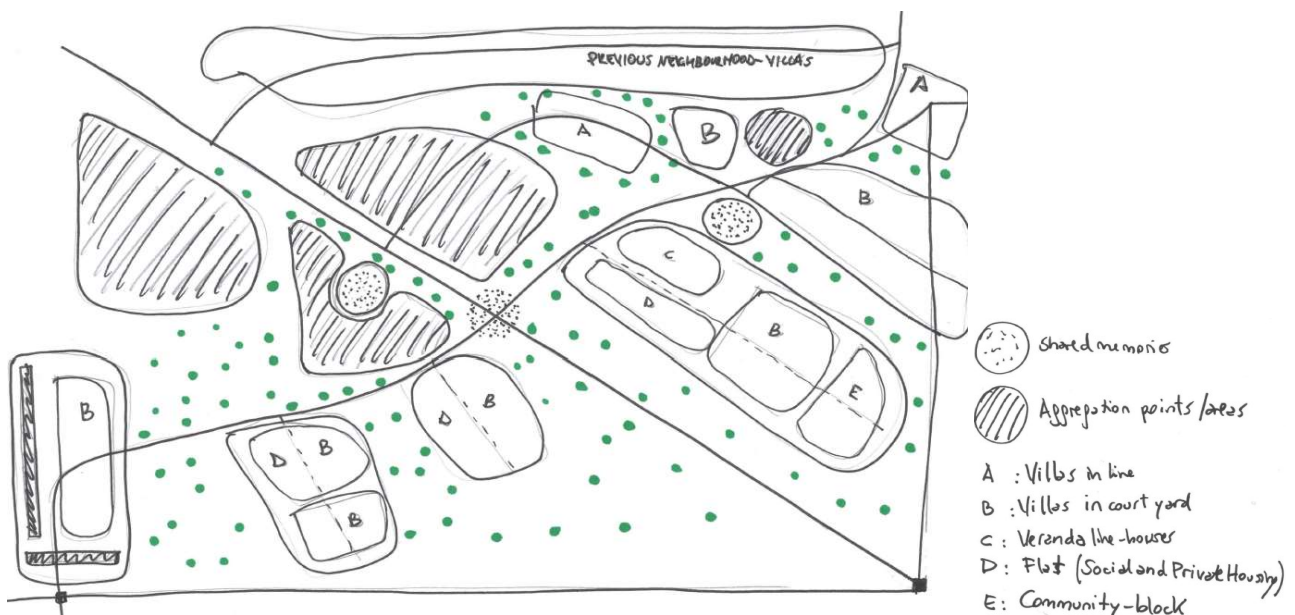
A. Urban design analysis

The preliminary analysis of the urban design of the pilot case study Kerckebosch Zeist for setting the walk-along discussion and the interviews with mental maps.

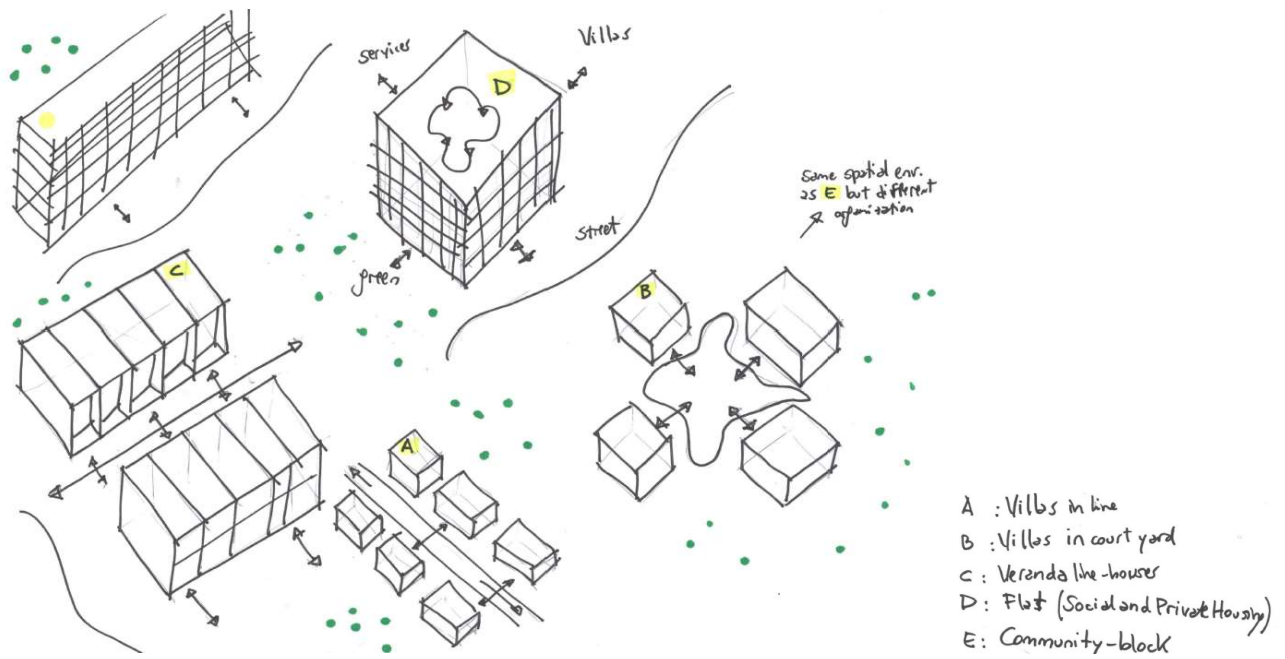
The three sketches represent different level of exploration: first, the city level; second, the neighbourhood level; third, the building level. I utilized them to reflect on identity, structure and meaning (Lynch, 1960).



City level of analysis, example of Zeist.
City image, neighbourhoods, streets, natural areas



Neighbourhood level of analysis, example on Kerckebosch Zeist.
Boundaries, structure, physical sub-communities, streets, natural environment, building typologies, aggregation points



The buildings' typologies in Kerckebosch Zeist for investigating the relation of their physical characteristics with the social interactions.

B. The walk-along discussion: trajectory, guiding questionnaire, and pictures



A: De Voorzieningen Zone; B: De Herinnering Plaats; C: De Heide/Zee; D: Grijs vs Groen; E: Bos vs Park

Flyer with the trajectory of the walk-along discussion and the definition of places where to stop during the walk

Questions concerning the five defined places:

1. What do you know about how this space was built? Was it part of a joint decision with you or your neighbours?
2. Would you change anything about this and would you make another place or project like this?
3. What is your experience of this place? Do you come here often, or not, and why or why not? Do you meet your neighbours here or elsewhere?

Questions concerning general topics:

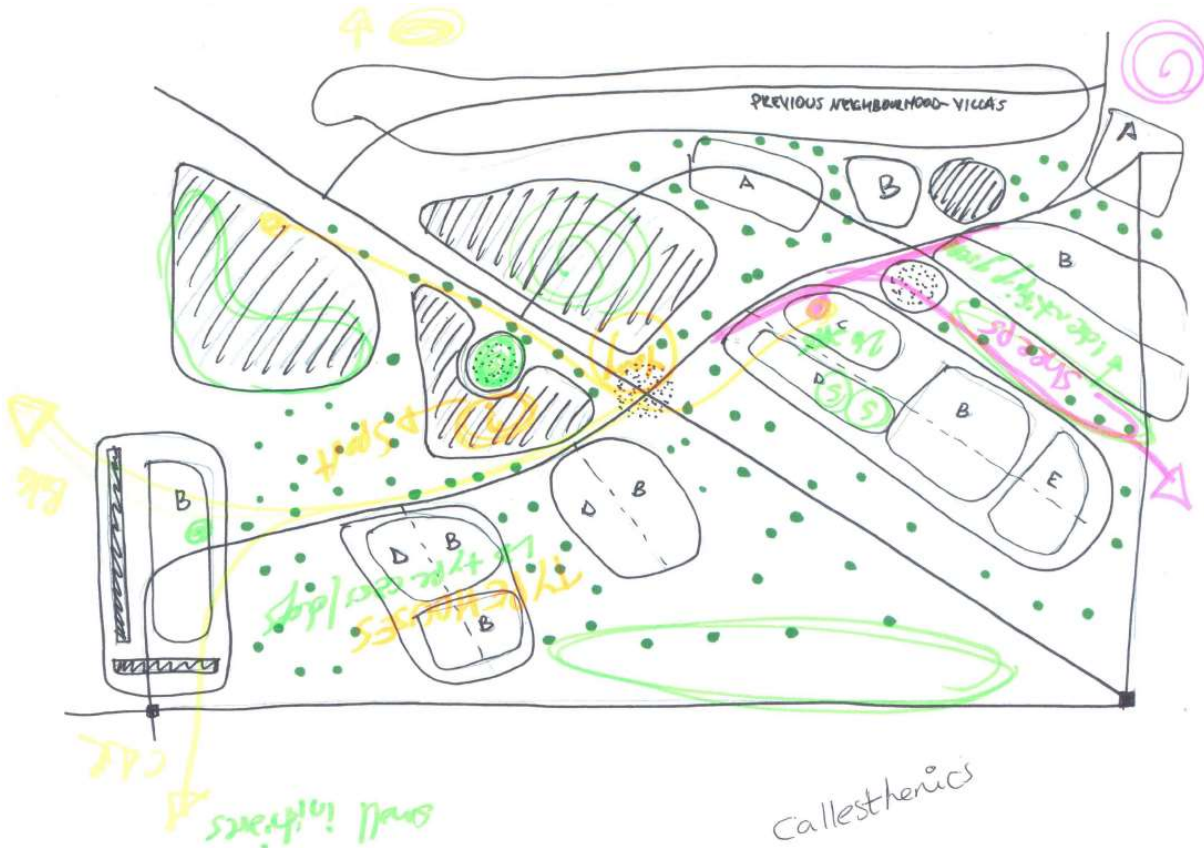
4. What was your first experience in Kerckebosch Zeist and how is a typical day or moment in this neighbourhood?
5. What do you think about the participatory process in Kerckebosch Zeist and how would you do it?
6. What do you think community is? Within your own definition, do you feel part of a community?

Semi-structured interview guideline for the walk-along discussion

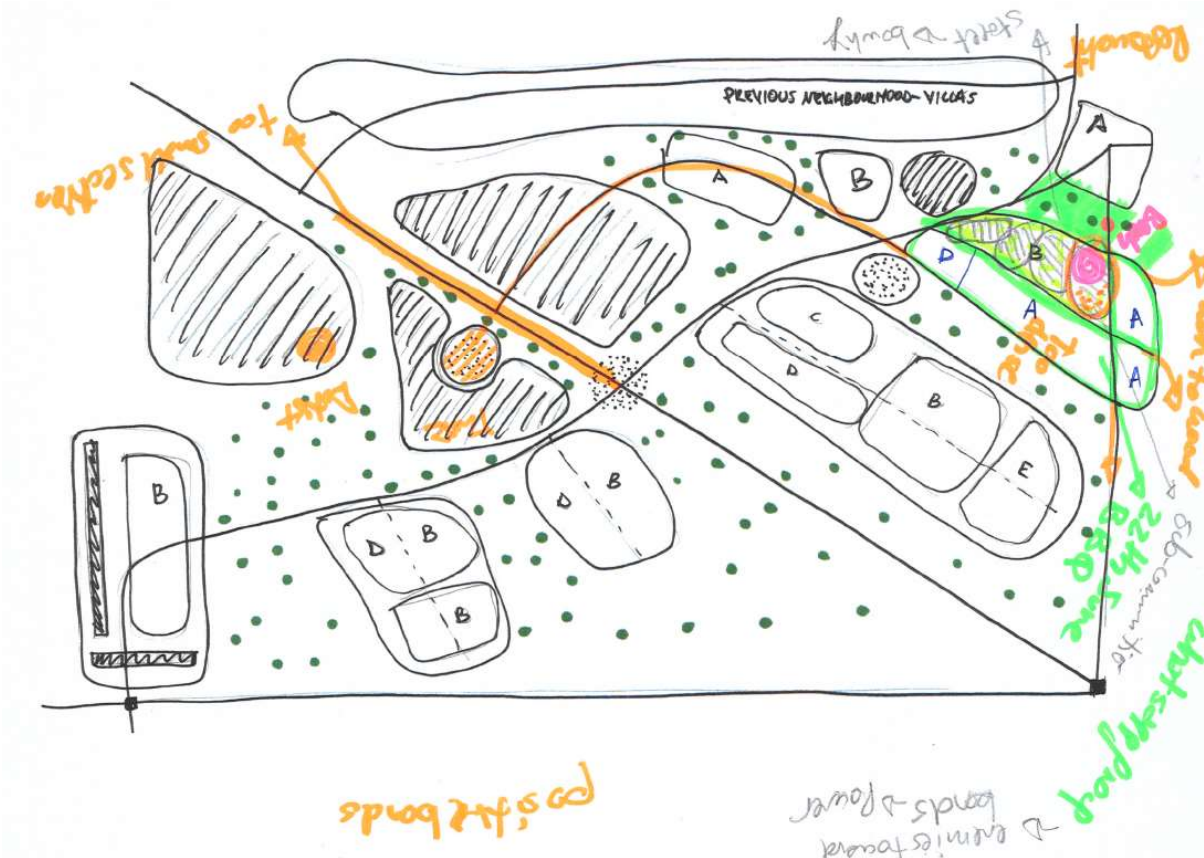


Pictures during the walk-along discussion

C. Sketches from the two interviews with mental maps



First mental maps interview. In red, home and favoured places. In green, places for social interaction and imaginary experience. In orange, perception on the urban design (positive and negative aspects, routes and social-mix).



Second mental maps interview. In red, home and favoured places. In green, places for social interaction (focused around the residence). In orange, perception on the urban design (positive and negative aspects, and social-mix).

D. Brief report and discussion on the pilot case study Kerckebosch Zeist

Originally, Kerckebosch Zeist was a neighbourhood built during the 1960s with 1,265 apartments in multi-storey buildings including 706 social housing apartments. In 2005, the municipality decided to demolish the old building and develop a new social-mixed neighbourhood. From both the focus group discussion and the walk-along discussion, one of the emerging topics was the social conflict between new and old inhabitants from different social classes. This conflict builds on the concept that the identity of the neighbourhood and its distinct quality is the forest. The previous multi-storey bar buildings were surrounded by green. The forest is still an essential and predominant part of the neighbourhood. Nonetheless, the social housing aspect is now surrounded by different types of green space but mostly by new buildings, which are mainly villas on the border of the forest. This social conflict between new and old inhabitants has a strong influence on the three dimensions of SoC based on the elements of shared emotional bonds, social inclusion, and shared urban visions. The first element of shared emotional bonds includes the four factors defined respectively by McMillan and Chavis (1986) and McMillan (1996): membership as spirit; influence as trust; needs fulfilment and integration as trade; and emotional connection as art. Both the process of citizen participation and the development of the space influence these elements. The new and old inhabitants can delineate two main sub-communities and the relation between them is the result of the main characteristics of the participatory process and space. First, I will discuss the elements of citizen participation, and second, the elements of space, both in relation with SoC.

The walk-along discussion underlined the importance of the communicative modes for developing the element of trust leading to SoC as well as social inclusion between new and old inhabitants. Citizens emphasized the need of a clear and transparent communication concerning the decision-making process. In the Netherlands, the public institutions make the *bestemmingplan*, which is the basis for the planning development, and citizens are involved after the main decision has been taken, which in this case means the demolition of the previous multi-storey buildings and the construction of a new neighbourhood. After this decision, they could discuss and decide together about the new urban vision and the urban design drawing on the main precondition of a social-mix planning. For example, in some blocks, the process utilized survey in order to take a decision on the design of the public spaces and thus, the decision-making process was clear and citizens were satisfied. In some other blocks, the communication was fragmented and the decision-making process lacked clarity, and therefore fostered existing social conflicts within those blocks. When the participatory process was transparent and clear, and where the urban design facilitates social interaction such as in the third block, these aspects have enhanced social interaction between different types of inhabitants leading to the building of social networks and ties between them. In fragmented and ambiguous communicative approaches, and in the fifth and sixth blocks, which were the first ones to be built, the social conflicts have evidently emerged. From the focus group discussion, it emerged that there was difficulty concerning the process of consensus building and attention to find a meeting point on the design principles and citizens' needs. In addition to the involvement within the planning process, the participatory process also includes the activities, events and neighbours' platform, which have been built with a top-down process by the public institution WOM, thus enhancing the social interaction between inhabitants within specific designed places.

According to both the walk-along discussion and mental maps interviews, all the participants feel the element of place attachment. The time that they have been living in the neighbourhood is a key component influencing the element of social interaction. The inhabitants living in Kerckebosch before or after the renewal plan have shared different types of events and memories, and established social bonds according to their stories within the neighbourhood and their diverse needs. The role of specific places in developing the elements of the imaginary experience, social interaction and urban design have emerged from the walk-along discussion and the mental maps interviews. In-depth interviews helped explore more clearly the imaginary experience as well as the relation of the urban design with the participants' behaviour and uses of the places. In the first place, which is a multifunctional area, every participant in the walk-along discussion agreed on the importance of having a place for different kinds of activities and people. The other

places that we discussed helped the participants understanding, and discussing the main research topics of citizen participation and feeling part of a community, therefore underlining the association of the physical domain with its social meaning and imaginary experience. With the interviews with mental maps, the participants recollected their routes and the places where they used to take part in neighbourhood activities or events and reflect on their meanings. The main difference emerging from a first sight of the two mental maps (Appendix C) is that: the first citizen living in a terraced house since five years uses different areas within the neighbourhood and has social contacts with different type of inhabitants; the second citizen living in a villa for one year mainly uses the places within his block. In these cases, the relation emerges between the housing typology, the time living within the neighbourhood, the social class and the use and perception of different places within the neighbourhood. With more interviews, many aspects and relationships between SoC, citizen participation and space can be explored. Many participants on the walk-along discussion and the mental maps interviews mentioned that they appreciated the details on the urban design such as the homogeneity of materials of the buildings and the fences. According to them, this aspect is a sign of urban quality, and it represents a clear limit between private and public as well as social equality. Although the latter is weaker in some areas where the architecture of some villas prevails, thus influencing the feeling within those public spaces, which are perceived as semi-private.

In conclusion, the walk-along and the focus group discussions helped in defining emerging topics and relating them to the elements of the analytical model, thus providing an overview of the dynamics of citizen participation and space in developing SoC. The role on some elements emerged as key components among the inhabitants' feelings and perceptions: communicative modes and perceived control in relation to citizen participation; social inclusion of diverse people; the quality of urban design; and place attachment in relation to the identity of the neighbourhood. After these methods, a representative number of semi-structured interviews with mental maps would provide a deeper understanding of citizens' perception and emotions above the three dimensions of SoC in relation to their involvement within the participatory process and their uses and behaviour within the perceived, structured and physical dimensions of space. The selection process of participants produced an adequate overview of different perceptions, involvements and SoC. In the next case studies, I will utilize a similar approach to the participants' recruitment, which is based on the diversity of buildings' typologies and blocks of the neighbourhood as well as recruitment methods.

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