IMPROVING PUBLIC SPACES IN THE NETHERLANDS:

DETERMINING BEST PRACTICES IN PLACEMAKING ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

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" PEOPLE COME

WHERE PEOPLE ARE "

COLOPHON

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ABSTRACT

Recent leadership-oriented research has begun to frame a "new" leadership of place, connecting government agendas and cross-boundary works with public services and placemaking, using approaches that integrate public, private and voluntary sectors (Collinge and Gibney, 2010). Sharing power and responsibilities provide a more networked and supportive community, increasing the capacity for adaptability. Reshaping a place together can maximize and strengthen the connection between places and the people that share those places, more than just promoting a better design, but also incentivizing creativity and collaboration, considering the identities that define a place. Placemaking is considered a process aiming at reshaping places using local knowledge and resources, empowering citizens, as an opposition to top-down planning developments, but so far there have not been so many papers addressing this subject. Therefore, the objective of this study is to gain in-depth knowledge about the placemaking movement in the Netherlands, analysing the best practices throughout different processes within these developments, and the consequences for the public spaces and the citizens who use them, based on four case-studies. Collective change becomes more attainable if we look at our cities as something that should be shaped for the human scale, in an affordable way, and considering both short and long-term transformations (PPS, 2015). We argue that placemaking can then be the mechanism to support this change, providing that it is done in a multidisciplinary way, integrating different actors, and critically reflecting about the lessons learned with each experience, in order to create flexible and adaptable places that are liveable, lovable, and that can continue to be sustainably improved for generations to come.

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INTRODUCTION

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1.1 BACKGROUND

Geography highlights place as the connection between geographical locations and human beings, but the concept has been used also in several policy-oriented papers about spatial planning and future changes in the field. This expansion happened particularly through the concept of placemaking, with the idea that leadership can perform a powerful influence in achieving that (Collinge and Gibney, 2010). Healey (1998) also argues that spatial planning should aim at addressing the quality of places in an integrated way, resulting in an improvement in the quality of life of citizens, through managing and promoting placemaking.

Place can be conceptualized as a relational space, but also from a spatial bordered perspective, in a more concrete context, as boundaries may have a strong significance as stimulus for regional, ethnic or territorial movements, as well as for planning strategies (Horlings, 2015). A good public space is beneficial for the development of a sense of place among its users, and this happens when a place is planned for the human scale, providing accessibility, safety, non-motorized paths, and green spaces that are well maintained (Kaw, Lee and Wahba, 2020). Project for Public Spaces (2009) also refers to these benefits, including the support for local economies, attracting investments, tourism and cultural events, encouraging volunteerism, helping to reduce crime, increasing the use of public transport, and improving public health, pedestrian safety and the environment itself. Place, therefore, is the result of a connection between spatial and social dimensions, and placemaking can be the tool to merge them together in order to create meaningful places with recognized values.

Mandipour (2003, p.206) defines public spaces as the "institutional and material common world", comprising spaces of sociability and shared experiences "where social encounter can and does take place", even though these spaces are not always accessible for everyone, such as public spaces in segregated neighbourhoods that create a sort of semi-public environment. There are, therefore, degrees of "public" among public spaces (Zhang and He, 2020; Mandipour, 2003), which may reflect the users and activities taking place there.

The Bryant Park in New York, officially opened in 1934, and is an example of how a public space can be transformed through time, and how changes done through placemaking can be more beneficial for both the place and its users. The park, previously known for being a dangerous place, was redeveloped and reopened in the 90s with its crime rates reduced by 92 percent, a result achieved by integrating both social and spatial interventions, increasing the number of activities, and improving design and maintenance (Bryantpark, 2020).

In the recent past, the evolution of cities has been mainly about expensive infrastructure projects and the one-sided vision of the "expert", with public spaces often being left out of this city-building story, along with the experiences from the people who create and use these spaces. Nowadays, however, a different story is starting to emerge; with less governmental budgets, a millennial-culture of change and a focus on collaboration, public participation is considered the key to drive changes, incentivizing creativity, celebrating different cultures and increasing the shared value of public spaces (PPS, 2015). The hierarchical thinking in spatial planning, ruling until the 1980s, was based on the mobile capital, with functional and space-blind policies (Collinge and Gibney, 2010). Since the 2000s, however, this was replaced by

a more relational way of thinking, with placemaking seen as an ongoing process of making connections, aiming at a collaborative planning with (shared) leadership crossing boundaries, instead of achieving one unified sense of place (Collinge and Gibney, 2010), as summarized in the model below.
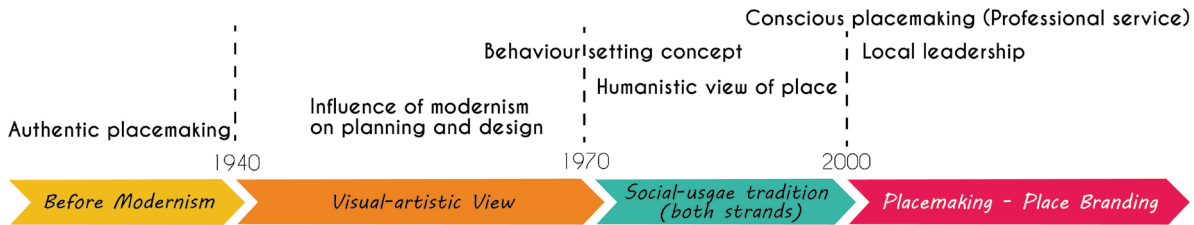
Figure 1: Evolution of Urban Design Thinking (Based on: Ghavampour and Vale, 2019)

Shifting the power and responsibilities from governments to communities provide a more networked and supportive community, with diverse skills and resources, increasing the capacity for adaptability. Citizens and professionals no longer need to have all the solutions, but instead the power to drive change, acting as inspiration and facilitators (PPS, 2015).

Recent focus on global urban policy has given the opportunity to use placemaking as a way towards better and sustainable cities. In 2013 a partnership was created among PPS, UN-HABITAT and the Swedish Ax:Son Johnson Foundation to develop the campaign "Future of Places", with the goal of getting public spaces and the placemaking principles integrated into the New Urban Agenda, which happened a few years later, with the inclusion of 10 mentions of public space, all reflecting the messages from the "Future of Places" campaign (PPS, 2017). According to PPS (2017), after this win the movement-building continues even stronger, increasing the network of people that advocate for better public spaces, and it is growing faster, especially after the Placemaking Week that happened in Amsterdam in 2017, focusing on grassroots initiatives.

For this reason, 2016 is considered the year when placemaking went global. Implemented in the New Urban Agenda, an agreement that guides the growth of cities for the next 20 years, placemaking demonstrated its capacity to inspire and promote changes, together with the growing pressure of citizens, to improve public spaces and support democracy, refocusing culture, economy and governance around place (PPS, 2017).

Strydom, Puren and Drewes (2018) compiled peer-reviewed academic publications about placemaking from 1975 to 2017, and found 59 contributions, mainly from the Global North, with most papers published in 2016, coinciding with the year "placemaking went Global". The conceptualization of placemaking ranges from physical, social and economic dimensions, seen as a way to share knowledge and skills, as well as an enabling tool for citizens who wish to change their own environment, with empowering working as a link between planning and practice. The concept of placemaking is also found in several disciplines, such as social sciences, arts, tourism, design, among others, which also supports its interdisciplinary approach. Strydom, Puren and Drewes (2018) present a shift in the placemaking literature that started in the 1990s, mainly referring to processes of decision-making, which relates De Jong (2016) statement that public participation also became more dominant from the 1990s.

By this period, the amount of stakeholders involved increased, as well as their importance and shared power, and placemaking started to focus more in the process itself, by becoming more democratic, rather than focusing just on the physical space, with a product-oriented view. Literature about placemaking presents another shift from 2010, presenting placemaking as a community practice, with empowered citizens willing to learn and teach new skills (De Jong, 2016).

According to Horlings (2015), a value-oriented approach can provide a deeper awareness regarding what citizens appreciate in their neighbourhood/city, what they feel responsible for, and to what they are willing to commit. Values, especially shared values, and attitudes, are thus relevant because they influence people's perception, appreciation and attachment for places, and their willing to contribute to placemaking processes in these places (Horlings, 2015).

Nevertheless, citizen's initiatives are not standard, which makes it difficult to interpret and predict them, also because they normally do not follow a long-term strategy, as their emergence is path-dependent and contingent, which makes it even inappropriate to come up with a participation framework for them to follow (Van Dam, Salverda and During, 2014). However, community leaders, as a way to engage more people to participate, especially in placemaking developments, have several ways for fostering action, in more smooth and adaptive ways; they may organize information and consultation meetings, send flyers to make people aware of what is happening, or even use informal conversations with friends and neighbours. If more people are involved it is also easier to be perceived as a reliable initiative and consequently easier to get funds and sponsorship.

Boonstra and Boelens (2011) call these initiatives self-organizations, initiatives that autonomously originate in the civil society, within community networks instead of government control, and help shaping the "urban fabric" through socio-spatial interventions. With the current wave of self-organizations, a value-oriented approach in placemaking processes will probably gain more relevance, contributing to co-creation and community engagement, encouraging these projects to raise from bottom-up initiatives, as opposed to the top-down government developments (Horlings, 2015). Therefore, the path towards more sustainable and resilient cities will probably not be led by infrastructure innovations, but by building the capability of communities to chase change, by their shared values, in their own public realm. This collective change becomes more approachable if we look at our cities and public spaces as something that should be shaped for the human scale, in an affordable way, and considering both short and long-term transformations. Placemaking can then be the mechanism to support this change bringing together all the efforts (PPS, 2015).

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Placemaking has been used in a wide range of activities, but its theoretical background remains imprecise, presenting diversity in views, consistency, and variations in approaches (Fincher, Shaw and Pardy, 2016). Placemaking is currently seen as a process aiming at reshaping places using local knowledge and resources, empowering citizens, as an opposition to the top-

down traditional planning developments. However, many placemaking initiatives have been criticized as being exclusive, focusing on beautification and regeneration of public spaces, with the objective of attracting investments that neglect the users and promote inequality, especially through privatizations (Toolis, 2017) and consequently gentrification. Strategies of gentrification, often masked as redevelopment projects, continue to attract wealthier residents and consumers in order to boost economic growth, and tend to leave social interests behind, as a less important topic to be addressed when investing in a neighbourhood. Placemaking in this case is used as a branding strategy, to be an exhibition area, at the cost of those who inhabit there (Fincher, Shaw and Pardy, 2016). Investments and profits are an important part of the bigger network of (re)creating cities and making better places, but it should not be the only goal. The human beings who live and use those places should be seeing as a central part in these (re)developments, as they are the ones who actually have the local knowledge necessary to turn a place around in order for it to become more vibrant, plural and liveable.

Limited capability of local governments, depending on the institutional context, prioritization of top-down solutions, and pressure from private investments to use public areas for private purposes are considered by Kaw, Lee & Wahba (2020, p.6) as some of the main issues that result in poor-quality public spaces. Toolis (2017) mentions the necessity of "a critical evaluation of local public places, mapping the social and spatial dimensions of inequality". There is a also a need for a "greater scientific reporting of successful case studies that demonstrate the increase benefits gained by increasing public participation through drawing in the communal knowledge and intelligence, rather than relying on professional expertise alone" (Dyer, Corsini and Certomà, 2017). Fincher, Shaw and Pardy (2016) argue that even today there is still not a consensus about the real definition of placemaking among academics and practitioners, being a concept with a broad range of utility, but a vague theoretical background.

Therefore, we argue in this study that there is a knowledge gap between the theory and the practice of placemaking developments. This gap relates to both the processes within which these projects happen and the role of the actors involved, and what are the consequences for the public space where this change is happening and for the users of those spaces. The objective of this study, therefore, is to understand how the placemaking movement is being developed in the Netherlands, mainly the Randstad region, where most projects are currently happening. We intend to analyse and determine the best practices that have been applied in Dutch placemaking projects, in order for them to be acknowledged in the theory and pratice of new developments, with the goal of improving the quality of public spaces and the satisfaction of their users.

Boonstra and Boelens (2011) mention the Netherlands in the origins of participatory planning, starting in the 1960s with the "New Left" party criticizing the current structures in place. The Third Report on National Spatial Planning (1972–1983) then replaced the modernistic functional planning by a more adaptive plan facilitating citizen participation, which was a start, but in practice only allowed citizens to reply to proposals presented by the government. Later on public-private partnerships started to emerge, first with businesses stakeholders and then with civil society as well, with shared responsibilities, resulting in the Ducth "polder model" from the 1990s, which again was not really collaborative when put into practice. The next step

was participatory budgeting, a model where citizen's initiatives received economic support from the government, which would still remain an actor in the background and dictate some of the regulations. This shows that public participation has changed enormously in the past decades. These activities, however, are still predominantly played by governments, with planners working under their umbrella, not really focusing on citizens' interests. Boonstra and Boelens (2011) argue that participatory processes tend to face a battle between the powerful and the powerless, with the first determining the ways the second can participate.

Therefore, we also intent to analyse how citizens are included (or not) in placemaking projects developed in the Netherlands, and what are the consequences of the power imbalance in participatory processes for the public spaces and their users, focusing on how these developments can help to adress inequalities and enhance sense of place, instead of just creating a gentrified area. People and place are always related, they work in tandem, but they are not always addressed this way, which can lead to inaccurate/incomplete outcomes, such as lack of social cohesion within a neighbourhood. Case study 1, presented in Chapter 4, exemplifies that. Thus, even though some projects provide a clear product or solution, it is also important to be able to see and understand the results of the other side of placemaking, the social part, or the meaning making, which is currently still blurred, compared to the spatial physical interventions. Thus, the aim of this research is also to understand what the main obstacles for these outcomes are, and how existing projects and their processes could inspire new developments to focus more on the identity of each place and the satisfaction of its inhabitants instead of aiming just at economic profits, neglecting the current residents of these redeveloped areas.

Furthermore, Eggertsen (2019) suggests that more research is needed regarding how to design co-creation strategies for societal interests, such as public spaces. In this sense, co-creation relates to collaboration between planning experts and the more local, cultural knowledge of citizens. But in order to change power and influence in these projects, planners need to become and to be seen as facilitators rather than just experts.

Cities that were able to create well designed and maintained public spaces are doing much better when analysing perceived liveability, economic vibrancy, and quality of life in general (Kaw, Lee & Wahba, 2020, p.2). Hence, the societal relevance of this study is about ways to improve the quality of public spaces and consequently the quality of life of their users. The result of the case studies in this research can then be valuable for future placemaking initiatives aiming at improving participative placemaking and therefore creating quality public spaces in the Netherlands and abroad. Public spaces should be more equitable, accessible, plural, sustainable and liveable, and they should be made for, and together with, the citizens that will use the space. The placemaking movement can then be the mechanism used to provide these benefits to society, improving social participation and empowering citizens to become more active in developments happening in their community, in order to make people aware of their options and power to improve their local environment. Furthermore, placemaking is also considered a powerful tool to be used for achieving sustainability goals (Ghavampour and Vale, 2019), which is something increasingly addressed in current spatial planning policies, especially in the Netherlands.

In order to bridge this gap, the main question for this research is:

"How can we determine the best practices in placemaking according to different processes and outcomes?"

And with the objective of having a deeper understanding of the main question the following sub-questions have been formulated:

1. How do different processes of placemaking happen?
2. How each of the stakeholders is involved and how their participation influence the final socio-spatial outcomes?
3. Is there a current trend in choosing specific places to be revitalized? If so, what are the consequences of that for the public space and its users?
4. What can be learned from existing projects?

1.3 HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis used in this research is that placemaking projects developed with participatory processes, considering local issues and communities ideas, knowledge and needs would have a different outcome than projects done in a more top-down hierarchical way, where the "participation" is focused on accepting expert's ideas. Real participaroty placemaking would focus on improving the social connections within the public space where interventions are being done, rather than just changing physical spatial characteristics.

1.4 STRUCTURE

The background of this study is explained in the introductory part of this thesis, together with the research problem, research questions, its relevance and the hypothesis. In the following chapter the theoretical framework will be presented, followed by the conceptual model. Chapter three explains the methodology used to collect and analyse the data and Chapter four presents the case studies. Results are presented and discussed on Chapter five, as a reflection about the relations between the findings of this research and previous studies in the academic literature about the same topic. Then Chapter six presents the concluding remarks, together with an examination upon the strengths and challenges of this research, recommendations regarding further development, and suggestions to improve the results with continuing studies. Chapter seven comprehends a list compiling the bibliography. The paper ends with an appendix (Chapter 8) containing the Code Occurrence Table and Code Tree (appendix A and B), the Interview guides (appendix C and D), the Informed consent signed by the participants from the semi-structured interviews (appendix E), and the transcripts from the recordings of the interviews (appendix F).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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2.1 PUBLIC SPACE & PLACEMAKING

Planning in an ongoing process of forecasting possible changes in the future, having flexibility to adapt to long-term changes while being prepared to solve short-term problems as well (Cilliers et al, 2015). According to Cilliers et al (2015), the cities of today have to be competitive, lively and sustainable, because these are the conditions that enable our own livelihood; thus, changing the urban spaces consequently change our lives. That is where placemaking arises, being a process of transformation, from the places we inhabit to the places we live (Cilliers et al, 2015).

Cilliers and Timmermans (2014) define place as a portion of a geographical space, with meanings attached to it, and placemaking as a process of transforming these spaces into meaningful places, considering not just the physical environment, but also the social aspect of it. They refer to placemaking as being a bottom-up approach, favoring interventions in the human scale, using different tools in creative participatory processes in order to attract different stakeholders.

Even though the term placemaking started being used only in the 1990s, the reflections about this concept actually started earlier, in the 1960s, with people like Jane Jacobs (1961) and William H. White (1980), presenting revolutionary ideas regarding how to shift the design of cities for people, instead of cars, focusing on the livability of neighborhoods and the quality of vibrant public spaces. Both Jacobs and White argued that small changes could transform entire neighbourhoods, and that the impacts of new urban renewal processes affected not just the built environment but also the social life of those places (Strydom, Puren and Drewes, 2018).

Cities that were able to create well designed and maintained public spaces are doing much better when analysing quality of life and amenities. Parks, water bodies and equipments like public markets and libraries also contribute to that, increasing the chance of social interactions to happen, consequently being beneficial for social cohesion (Kaw, Lee and Wahba, 2020, p.2). But for these investments to be successful it is important to think of and include all users of the public space, including the disabled and people with different special needs, ranging from child to elderly, as well as the less privileged who end up making the public spaces their own home.

Zhang and He (2020) argue that the definition of public space is rather subjective, comprising ideas about what exactly is the space and who is the public, which makes the identity of the public space to be in constant transformation. This also poses difficulties for laws, regulations and maintenance responsibilities to be addressed.

Nevertheless, public spaces always provide a common ground for diverse individuals to interact and exercise their rights, being also associated with psychological well-being (Toolis, 2017). Placemaking, as a "bottom-up, asset-based, person centered process that emphasizes collaboration and community participation in order to improve the livability" (Toolis, 2017) should then help to create places, neighbourhoods and cities that are meaningful for its inhabitants. Public spaces, therefore, can be considered a "behaviour setting" (Ghavampour, Del Aguila and Vale, 2017) as well as a tool for "meaning making" (Toolis, 2017).

The Palestine Ministry of Local Government defines People Places as "places that are shared by a community and valued by them because of the way they are designed, built and

used" (MoLG, 2020). Worldwide examples show that projects initiated by the community have a higher chance to be looked after, besides providing greater benefits for the investments made, therefore also working as an incentive to gain more funding for these types of initiatives. People Places should respect the soul of the place, leaving a positive path for a sustainable future, besides making the best use of the resources available (physical and social), using local materials and themes, as these are more likely to remain over time, and to be reshaped by the local community, if necessary (MoLG, 2020).

Ghavampour and Vale (2019) state that the emphasis on design and physical attributes puts aside the other side of placemaking (the meaning-making), working as a standardized process disregarding the context of the place. Collinge and Gibney (2010) also wrote about placemaking as being initially conceived as a process that suggested to be held in a top-down way, producing different kinds and levels of development in different places, with policies focusing on place management by local governments, rather than its local leadership. And since the term "placemaking" is not used just by communities and organizations committed to grassroots initiatives and public participation, but also by developers that use it as a "branding" system, this end up diminishing the potential value of placemaking (PPS, 2007).

Toolis (2017) presents the term "critical placemaking" as a tool to address this issue and improve social justice by creating places that are plural, inclusive, accessible and participatory. Placemaking and its interventions can be addressed as promoting participatory design approaches, improving the living environment to a wide variety of users, while critical placemaking adds to this discussion a more practical view (Wesener et al., 2020). A great public space must be able to serve its purpose of a vital community resource, and not to be analysed only by its physical characteristics. When a public space provides access for people of all ages, socio-economic status, and different abilities, to not just enjoy, but also identify themselves with that place and furthermore help in its creation and maintenance, that is when true placemaking is happening (PPS, 2007).

Kaw, Lee & Wahba (2020, p.5) argue that if a public space is well designed and well-managed, it can be financially sustainable without the need of constant investments from public budgets. Nevertheless, it is not that simple. Public spaces are currently facing a new wave of bottom-up initiatives wishing to taking action, either bacause of lack of government incentives or as an act of resistance. It is also becoming more common to see partnerships being created by governments, local communities and private actors, providing satisfactory results for all these different parties. This cooperation normally works with the government being the owner of the land, providing the space for such an initiative, while the local communities add the empirical knowledge regarding the space and what is most needed there, and the private sector can then offer the resources needed, in exchange of an opportunity for revenue generation (Kaw, Lee and Wahba, 2020). This outcome does not necessarily mean that a place will be gentrified just because someone is profiting from it, as it is also important to find a way to get funds to support the management and maintenance of the public space. This can happen from a public or private action, or a combination of both, which also depends on the dimensions of the area at stake, the purpose of the project, the role of the stakeholders and the regulations in place. These joint forces together can be considered the current initiators of most of the placemaking

developments worldwide (Kaw, Lee and Wahba, 2020).

Public spaces were considered spaces owned and used by the public, and the most common idea was that there should be a boundary dividing the public from the private area (Kaw, Lee and Wahba, 2020), but this division is becoming more blurred, as mixed ownership and management allow the creation of private spaces that are open to the public as well as public spaces that are privately managed. According to Wesener et al (2020), the current placemaking discourse focuses on the relationship among physical aspects, socio-cultural approaches and collaborative planning, and the role of spatial planners and designers is helping to create meaningful places, and to understand the different enablers and constrains that might be the cause of conflicts among different stakeholders, such as different expectations.

Placemaking does not have a formula that can always be applied, as it can happen in residual spaces such as old bridges, in natural assets such as transforming forests into recreational areas, in disadvantaged neighbourhoods with facilities such as neighbourhoods centers or public toilets. It can also work as a link connecting existing places, such as parks with a bicycle or pedestrian network (Kaw, Lee and Wahba, 2020). That is why it is so difficult to find a common definition for placemaking, because it is really context specific, and it can be adapted to short and long-term interventions, to small and big scales, as long as it is made to, and together with, the residents who are and will be the main users of that place. In this reseach we adopt the definition given by Strydom, Puren and Drewes (2018), which is based in a compilation of different and combined meanings, presenting placemaking as a process refocusing planning from the physical-spatial changes of the environment (project-led) towards being an enabling tool to be used in order to help and facilitate the "making of places" by various citizens/actors also outside the planning profession (place-led).

Fincher, Shaw and Pardy (2016) analysed three places facing urban renewal in Australia to establish a connection between placemaking and social equity, and concluded that basic notions of placemaking and place itself were absent, resulting in dissimilar buildings without a core centre, with little or no public spaces to be really experienced by its users. They argue that placemaking is largely theorized descriptively, as a managerial technique, not really targeting social equity and consequently urban justice. Fincher, Shaw and Pardy (2016) refer to social equity as a normative and political notion addressing "values of freedom, equality, fairness and justice", suggesting how things should be. It does not mean that we should simply follow an egalitarianistic approach, making the outcomes the same for all people and every place, but instead that access and availability to public goods should be equitable. Therefore, placemaking should not focus only on public spaces, but also consider the socio, cultural and economic characteristics of people and places.

2.2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT

Breek et al (2018) consider strategies as top-down interventions, affecting both the physical and social characteristics of a place, while social practices make people appropriate a place, giving meaning to it. The exchange between these two is what forms and defines a place.

Active citizenship implies citizens' involvement participating in public processes, promoting civic initiatives for projects that are social and spatial oriented, serving a community interest, which can also change along the process. These civic initiatives can also be formed by entrepreneurs, artists, and other actors, as long as the goal is aimed to the community and not just business and profits (Boonstra, 2015).

Urban Community Gardens are examples that also provide social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits related to grassroots initiatives and placemaking strategies. They are defined by Wesener et al (2020) as green spaces used for horticultural purposes and managed by local communities, and they relate to placemaking as presenting a way to develop individual and collective meaning between people and places. Besides, urban green spaces (UGSs) can also help with water filtrations, reduce heat islands, and therefore contribute for climate stabilization, while also providing social benefits such as physical and mental health improvements, throughout opportunities for physical activity and relaxation (de Vries et al., 2013; Kabisch and Haase, 2014). Furthermore, UGSs also serve as a meeting place, improving social cohesion and interactions among residents, visitors, and users of the public space in general. They present a good example of how small actions can have great outcomes for the public life in public spaces, with socio, spatial and sustainable changes.

Some of the constraints and enablers that Wesener et al (2020) present in the case of community gardens can also be used to understand placemaking. Distance between residents and a community garden, for instance, may affect individual participation. Access and availability of financial resources and working materials is also seen as a barrier, also related to maintenance and risk of vandalism. The same for access and availability of people, mainly because of lack of time, but also because of lack of knowledge, something that could be overcome by sharing experiences and skills among participants, also increasing social cohesion within the group.

Community gardens, as other placemaking projects, might be dependent on administrative processes of decision-making. Leadership and sense of community are seen as enablers, incentivizing "the community as the expert" (Wesener et al, (2020), which is also highlighted in the placemaking practice, together with the importance of having a common vision. As other placemaking interventions, community gardens also transform public spaces into meaningful places, and the institutional support towards these initiatives are more than a planning act, they are "placemaking in action" (Wesener et al, (2020). This type of intervention might also serve as a bridge and inspiration for future engagement in other kinds of projects.

The concept of Universal Urban Design is also considered a sustainable placemaking practice, which allows everyone to be able to use and enjoy cities, according to Stupar et al (2019). These authors give the example of the "Design for All" project in Serbia, which provides some criteria to be used to map locations, using GIS tools, in order to identify problems and recommendations for public spaces. Stupar et al (2019) use the Universal Urban Design as a framework for improving placemaking developments based on a collaborative model, providing better accessibility and usability for all citizens, including people with disabilities. Using this "user-centered" design, they developed three categories of investment needed, that can be basic, upgraded or premium improvements (such as wider sidewalks, better crossings, etc), according to the amount of pedestrians using the area. This framework serves to guide and

support decision-making in the spatial realm, both in the process of participative placemaking and by directing investments to where it is most needed, taking into consideration vulnerable groups and more underdeveloped contexts.

Kaw, Lee and Wahba (2020, p.20), in a similar way, suggest the use of an inventory regarding the asset information for public spaces (distribution, use, type, size, condition, ownership and management) as the foundation for decisions about investments, design and future changes in those spaces, using mapping technology, surveys and social data. At the same time, they also recognize that there cannot be a single level or scale to be used to measure and then applied as the ideal to all public spaces, since it also strongly depends on the local context. What these findings can offer is a starting point to plan new strategies aiming to improve our public spaces.

Breek et al (2018) present the case studies of two neighbourhood blogs (BoLoBoost and ilovenoord) in communities that have been gentrified in Amsterdam. The blogs offer a new way to drive bottom-up and collective placemaking activities, and to share all kinds of information regarding the neighbourhood. Sense of place, or place attachment, is explained by Breek et al (2018) as the affective link that people have with a specific place, which can be analysed in relation to placemaking according to four different dimensions: the economic attachment (more functional); the social dimension (people's contacts); the political attachment (feeling of responsibility for the local environment); and the cultural sense (experiences that happen in a specific place). When this bond is shared by many people, it then becomes a place identity, which can enhance community building. Breek et al (2018) describe a community as a group of people who share an identity based on given meanings and symbols, and points to social media as a new way of influencing place identity and place meaning, which in turn have consequences for placemaking activities.

Both blog initiatives were started by one individual alone, at first as a way to fight prejudice against their neighbourhoods, presenting only positive aspects and good news regarding what was going on there. The readers then shifted from passive to active participants, through the organization of dinners and outdoor activities, with the blog serving as a link between online and offline activities, but also as a "brand" of the community identity (Breek et al, 2018). These two cases show how motivation can vary among different actors, how they can change through time, and how social media and online tools can work to increase online followed by offline interactions among residents.

Hampton, Livio and Goulet (2010) found that the availability of internet in public spaces supports online activities that result in contributions towards more participation in the public realm, as well as higher social and democratic engagement, helping to re-shape, revitalize and increase safety in these places. These affordances can be a municipal wi-fi (sponsored by the government), wireless community networks (normally provided by non-profit organizations), hotspots (in and around a location, such as an airport), and residential wi-fi. The down-side is that it might also result in more people in public spaces, but less interaction, as each person will be focusing on their own mobile device. From their research, Hampton, Livio and Goulet (2010) concluded that 25% of the people approached had never been in that public space before wi-fi was installed and 70% answered they were visiting it more often because of the available wi-fi.

This is just one view of what can be done to improve public spaces and the satisfaction of users, but of course wi-fi alone will not be able to revitalize an area that is in decay for other physical and social reasons.

These examples of online activities are suitable for the period we are facing right now, related to Covid-19, where social and physical distancing are the current general rule. Online and iterative experiences could be kicked-off as a way to increase social contact within neighbourhoods, which could then move on to offline interactions when we go back to the "old normal" life of closer contacts.

Van Hulst (2012) argued that for a community to become, or continue, to be a vibrant place, it needs a strong leader telling good stories about what they can achieve together, making people believe in themselves and the potential of their local environment, with storytelling playing an essential role in participatory processes dealing with complex and conflicting situations, helping the actors to discover and shape their identity. Van Hulst (2012) differ between stories for planning, functioning as a tool and providing a space for people to tell their stories in a more inclusive and co-creative way, and stories of planning, stories used as a formal model, representing some cases that could be used as a good example. Power relations also influence the way stories "get told, get heard and get weight" (Van Hulst, 2012). Therefore, not all storytelling processes will be democratic and inclusive, and it is important to remain critical about the storytelling process, in order to make it a tool for more democratic and participatory process, instead o a way to divert attention into what decision-makers want people to see and believe.

Social participation in placemaking projects is therefore extremely important, as it creates a strong sense of belonging in the inhabitants of that specific community or neighbourhood, empowering citizens and increasing the bonding and bridging types of social capital among them. Considering the needs and issues of a specific place encourages community engagement and gives meaning to places. People's sense of place and the meanings they attach to places can thus serve to inform and guide stakeholders through processes of placemaking and collective policy and decision-making. And as people are not always aware of their values, these encounters using a communicative approach can also contribute for their own personal understanding.

Arnstein (2019) states that citizen participation is related to citizen power, and it is through the redistribution of power that the less privileged citizens can then become more included in the economic and political processes of society. However, having the power to affect the end-product of a discussion is not the same as simply participating. To explain this process, Arnstein (2019) presents the "ladder of citizen participation", comprised of eight steps. The first two, Manipulation and Therapy, present levels of non-participation, which are not yet inclusionary practices. The next three levels, Informing, Consultation and Placation, climb to what she called "tokenism", a practice that allows citizens to hear and be heard, but their voices are not really implemented into the final projects, as the information is normally placed as a one-way flow, but the authorities can say here that citizens have "participated in participation". Placation (step five) would be the higher of the three levels, given the citizens the power to advice, but in the end the power for decision-making still remains with the power-

holders. The last three steps, Partnership, Delegated Power, and Citizen Control, represent the real empowered citizen, starting with a redistribution of responsibilities and decision-making, concluding with a step where residents would have the power of final decision-making, which would then be implemented by the authorities in charge. It is important to reflect on the fact that nobody has absolute control, and that these different levels of participation represent ways to increase coalitions and co-creation among public, private and volunteers actors, allowing each of them to contribute in their best way to the final outcome, that would be beneficial to all parties involved.

Eggertsen (2019) defines placemaking as a non-hierarchical collaborative process that provides a new sense of place within communities, connecting various actors with their local environment. She presents the Manzini's map and the Arnstein's ladder as a framework to explain different types of community engagement, and how some professional roles affect the involvement of others. Eggertsen (2019) suggests the Design Participation Conference of 1971, aiming at addressing the importance of public participation in social processes, as the starting point for the transformation of the practice of design as "a creative common for ongoing change". She shows the Manzini's map of participant involvement as a less-hierarchical alternative to the Arnstein's ladder, and allocates placemaking in the Co-creating square of Manzini's map and in the 6th step of Arnstein's ladder, Partnership.
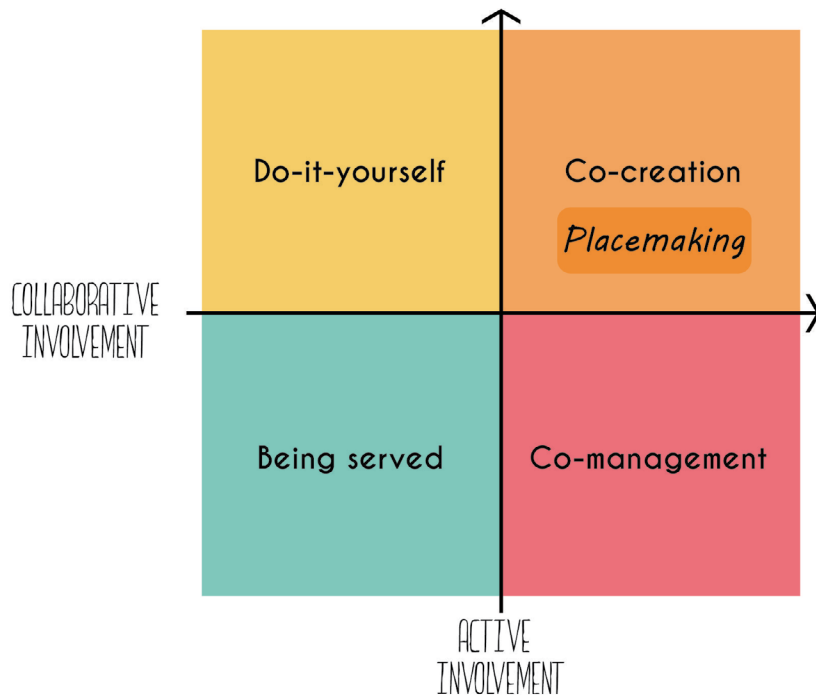
Figure 2: Placemaking integrated to Manzini's map of participant involvement (Based on: Eggertsen, 2019).

We argue here that placemaking is actually moving on from Partnership to Delegated Power (7th step), as professionals in placemaking practice are working more towards the idea of transferring their skills to the local communities, so that after a project is done, in a co-creative way, the local residents can then be in charge of maintaining the place, as placemakers cannot be around every project forever. We also believe that placemaking will not, and perhaps should

not, reach the last step of Arnstein's ladder, since the expert's knowledge is also an important part of creating and recreating better cities and better places, and this knowledge should not be excluded, but instead combined with the local knowledge.
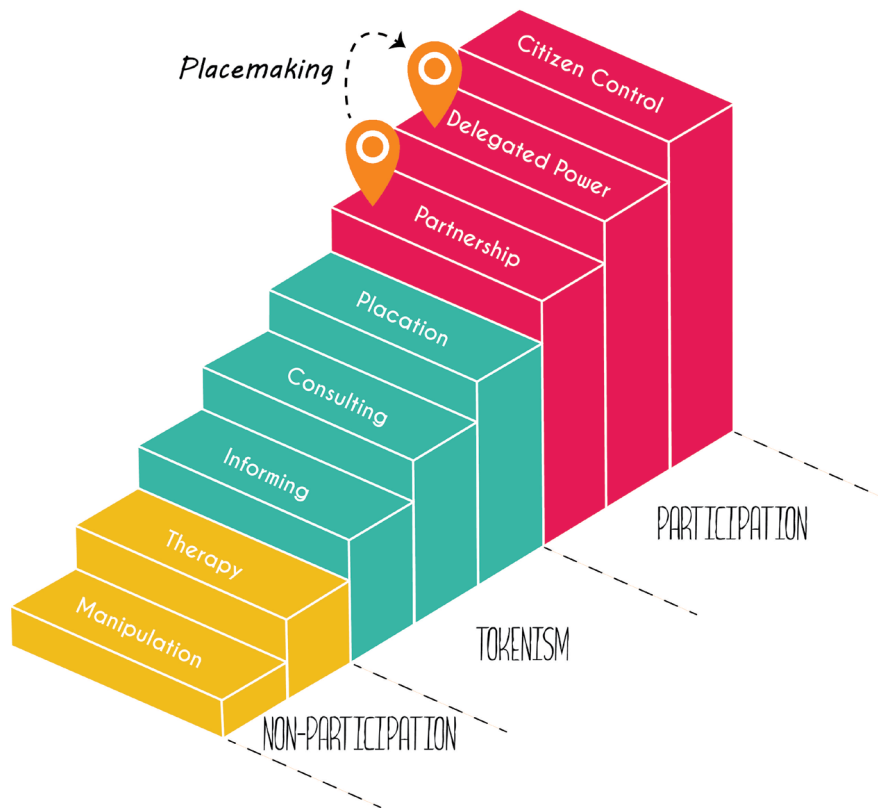
Figure 3: Placemaking integrated to the Arnstein's ladder of participation (Based on: Arnstein, 2019).

Eggertsen (2019) presents two placemaking projects in Berlin using those two frameworks. The first one, Der Berg, started with an iterative place where people could go and vote for one of the ideas made by architects and designers, and write down suggestions, with the professional placemakers taking several roles in the process. Some residents were involved in the building process, and their main complain was not knowing what their role was and what they should do, which ended up being confusing and exhaustive. The second example, Fassadenrepublik, had a smaller scale, both in size and number or actors, and resulted in a more successful co-creative process, with participants having a better understanding of the process and their roles, consequently feeling more attached to the project.

Ellery and Ellery (2019) also use Arnstein's ladder to express the role of placemaking as a strategy to develop sense of place within communities, as the result of participation in planning and design processes. They argue that when members of the "host-community" are actively involved in these processes, it supports local and shared leadership and empower citizens. But community involvement also depends of the objectives and aspirations about what is needed for certain places, the specific community members involved and standards required. Thus, the level of sense of place resulting from these processes might also vary, getting stronger the higher the level of participation is placed in the ladder (Ellery and Ellery, 2019), as presented in Figure 4.
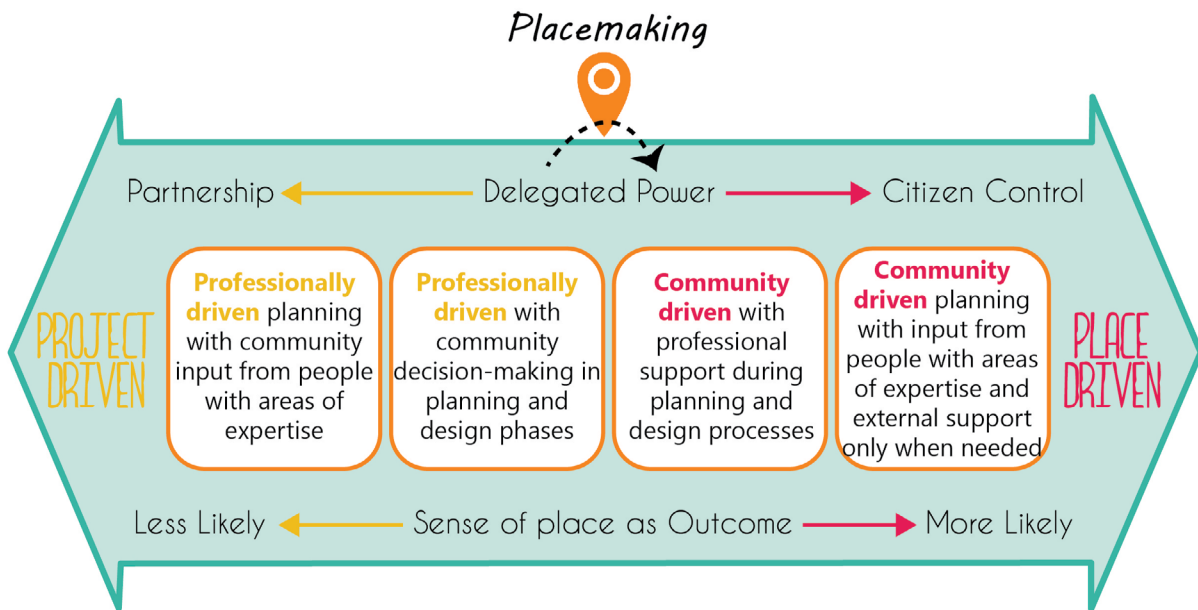
Figure 4: Involvement in placemaking and impact on participant's sense of place (Based on: Ellery and Ellery, 2019).

In the last decades, citizens' participation has changed, going up in the Arnstein's ladder towards more power of decision making. Nonetheless, in most cases, the sharing of power happened because it was actually taken by the citizens, not given by the city authorities (Arnstein, 2019). One example is the Nachtpreventieprojekt (Night Prevention Project) in the Schilderswijk neighbourhood, in The Hague, implemented in the 1990s as a counteraction against the deterioration the neighbourhood had been facing (Wagenaar, 2007). Some residents documented all the physical and social problems of the place and shared with others, soon a group was formed and started to patrol the neighbourhood, being the "eyes and ears" of the street, warning the police when something odd was seen. This project is an example of participatory bottom-up initiatives, and successful cooperation between citizens and governmental agencies. It received a national prize in 2001, as reduction in crime and increased social cohesion resulted from their activities. This successful outcome made possible that currently each neighbourhood has its own team, which formulates an annual plan and receive a budget from the government (Wagenaar, 2007). Ellery and Ellery (2019) provide the example of Portland, where the community engaged together to form the "Friends of Congress Square Park", and raised attention and resources by placing signs saying "I want… in Congress Square", in a way that everyone who wanted could contribute. They did that in three phases, inspiration, ideation and implementation, using the lighter, quicker, cheaper (LQC) placemaking approach.

Although many communities would benefit from moving up in the ladder, not all projects allow, or require, the same amount of participation. In the event of a natural disaster, for instance, governments might have to take the lead without the cooperation of all the parties involved, and this might be enough sometimes, for cases that require immediate actions, because response time is crucial in these situations. What can be done in this case is try to predict possible incidents, and discuss the strategies with the communities beforehand.

2.3 STAKEHOLDERS & COALITIONS

According to the Placemaking Toolkit designed by the Palestine Ministry of Local Government (2020), different actors can help in the co-creation of places, in order to reflect inhabitant's values and nurture a sense of belonging. Architects, urban planners and designers can be placemakers when using their skills to change the built environment, ensuring that their work reflects the needs of the community and improve the quality of their spaces. Education and management experts ensure that the different skills and knowledge are being shared and learned. Government and institutions can participate explaining, and perhaps changing, the legislative landscape, besides providing funding and other resources. Community members provide the local knowledge, experience, and social network that none of the other parties have. Placemakers in general have a history of being facilitators of community participation, and their tools and principles show the possibility to achieve socially equitable project outcomes (Fincher, Shaw and Pardy, 2016).

Fincher, Shaw and Pardy (2016) also stress the power imbalance between professional experts and the community members as having the utmost importance. And the main question regarding urban renewal interventions would then be whether these professionals also consider the existing users, or just the built environment and potential future users. The fact that different people are moving into a neighbourhood do not present an issue in itself, the problem arises when these new incomers take over the place, displacing the existing inhabitants, in a way that otherwise would not naturally happen. The changes resulting from this form of displacement exclude the initial inhabitants and prevent new incomers that do not have such a high status to enter the area (Fincher, Shaw and Pardy, 2016), creating a homogenized neighbourhood. When policy makers propose specific zones for social housing, instead of using a social-mix approach, for instance, the outcomes are the same. Fincher, Shaw and Pardy (2016) concluded that social equity is not often taken into account in the urban design methods used in placemaking projects, and that professional experts in social questions should be more involved in the processes of placemaking.

Cilliers and Timmermans (2014) present a model with the stakeholders involved in planning the urban open space (Figure 5), and explain that a stakeholder can actually be part of more than one group at the same time. Each member has different needs and aspirations regarding the public space, and they should all be placed at the table and reflected upon by all members together.
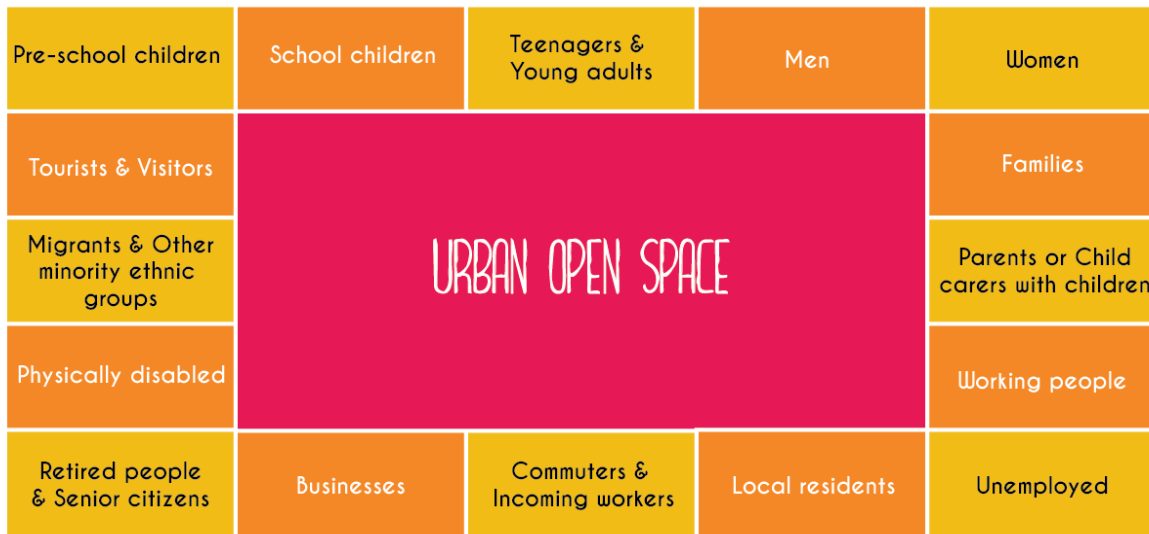
Figure 5: The Urban Open Space (Based on: Cilliers and Timmermans, 2014).

Participatory planning using a bottom-up approach focuses on user input and the success of the end-product, resulting in increased social cohesion and a stronger sense of local ownership. Nonetheless, Cilliers and Timmermans (2014) point out two main issues to consider in participatory planning: the identification and the level of involvement of stakeholders, as the complexity of participatory planning is related to the diversity of stakeholders involved. This diversity is shown in Figure 5, and it can also be understood as being the different needs of the "local community" seat presented in the "Open Space Table" (Figure 6).
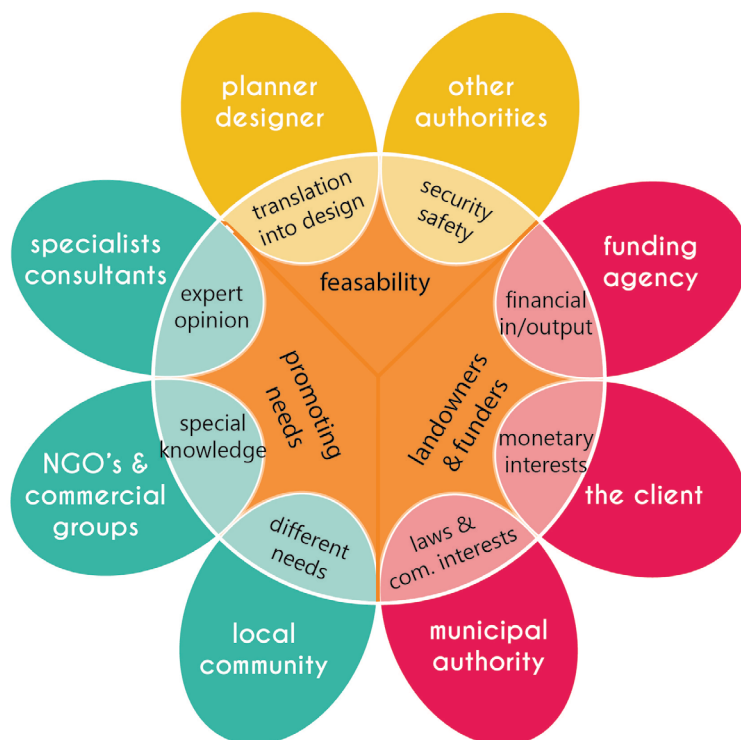
Figure 6: Actors in the Open Space Table (Based on: Cilliers and Timmermans, 2014).

Eggertsen (2019) presents roles of stakeholders involved in placemaking projects, specifically, according to theory, practice, and what is missing in practice, relating to the projects she studied (Figure 7). She argues that placemaking projects should be based on co-creation within different stakeholders with different types and levels of expertise, stressing that a shift in the professional attitude is necessary to achieve that, with planners and architects addressing citizens as a team-member, not just a client. And for that to happen, more systemic changes need to be addressed, starting with educational programs.

ROLES FOUND IN THEORY
Curator - connecting people & opportunities
Metadesigner - preparing for (re)design-in-use
Facilitator - providing / teaching design tools
Negotiator - addressing conflict

ROLES FOUND IN PRACTICE
Traditional designer
Curator - connecting people & opportunities
Facilitator - providing / teaching design tools
Involver - inviting others to take part

ROLES MISSING IN PRACTICE
Metadesigner - preparing for (re)design-in-use
Negotiator - addressing conflict

Figure 7: Roles of stakeholders involved in placemaking projects (Based on Eggersten, 2019).

2.4 THE NETHERLANDS CONTEXT

It has been argued that active citizenship is something desirable and urgent for governments and civil society, expressed in three spheres: social, political and economic (Boonstra, 2015). The social perspective relates to the emergence of the network society, on the one hand suggesting that with network technologies society becomes increasingly complex, especially considering globalization, cultural diversity and neoliberal trends leading to empowerment for some and social exclusion for others. The political perspective is also related to the information society, and how it has changed, with active citizenship seen as an alternative to better integrate government and society, resulting in government organizations gaining more local and human elements, with policies more specifically focused on aggregating local knowledge to meet citizens' needs and aspirations. The third perspective is the economic one, which emphasizes the outcome of a vibrant society on the economic performance of a place. It also relates to the global crisis of 2008, which had a big impact on the Dutch spatial policy, resulting in governmental disengagements and active citizenship arising to counteract some of the developments, as a less costly alternative (Boonstra, 2015).
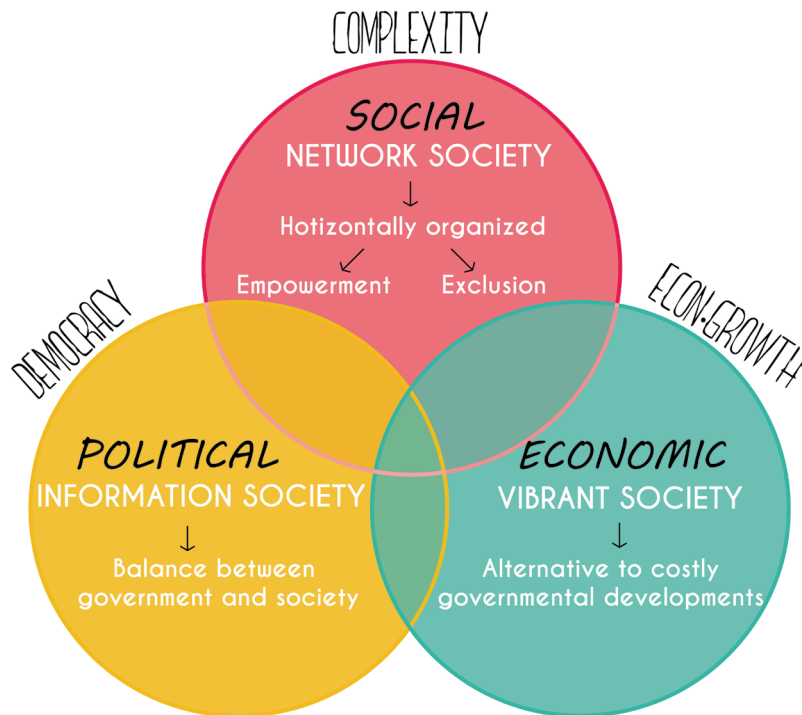
Figure 8: The three spheres of active citizenship (Based on: Boonstra, 2015).

The three spheres are interrelated (Figrure 8), and besides the arguments framing active citizenship as something urgently needed and desirable, it also creates a challenge for governments, wondering where they should still provide and what could be done by the civic initiatives, considering their knowledge and experience, but also the current laws and regulations applied to the public domain (Boonstra, 2015).

Citizens engagement in spatial planning has been growing in the last decades, according to Boonstra (2015), following three generations of participatory planning (Figure 9): The first generation started in the 1960s, under the influence of the increasing dissatisfaction with the technical rationality approach, characterized as top-down blueprint planning, consequence of the necessity of quickly provide housing and jobs after WWII. As reality is much more complex than that, criticisms arose. The emergence of emancipatory movements also had an influence in these changes, as a result of student revolts in Europe and the US. In the Netherlands, the left-wing party Social Democrats incentivized policy focused on empowering people to participate in policy governance, and the Spatial Planning Act, in 1965, also had an influence introducing public participation into the Dutch legislation (Boonstra, 2015). In this phase people could participate in public hearings about planning proposals. However, these public hearings were still considered too rigid, and not able to manage conflict interests, with citizens able to merely agree or disagree to proposed plans. This happened in the Netherlands and worldwide (Boonstra, 2015).

The idea of creating a shared understanding of different beliefs emerged, known as communicative rationality, where planners were working as a mediator, paying closer attention to the multiplicity of stakeholders and their backgrounds. In this second phase, public hearings started to be replaced by more inclusive debates. Nonetheless, in the Netherlands, inspired by

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the USA, public-private partnerships with major stakeholders became popular, turning it into a market-based approach in the 1980s and 90s (Boonstra, 2015). Communicative approaches were mentioned, but in practice they did not really include citizens.

The last generation, known as participatory budgeting, focuses on developing arrangements and providing funds for community self-management and civic initiatives. Many examples can now be found in the Netherlands, such as the "Een Steentje Bijdragen" in Den Haag, or the "Gouda Initiatievenfonds," "the "Rotterdam Idee," and the "Groene Duimen" in Rotterdam. Some are more open, but they mainly concern small interventions at the local level, which makes them also an example of participatory placemaking. This last phase, therefore, provides more power to citizens, but the developments still need to be aligned to governmental goals to be able to receive the funds (Boonstra, 2015). Stupar et al (2019) also argue that in the last decades there has been a recent shift in Europe towards empowering citizens to build the necessary changes in their own neighbourhoods.
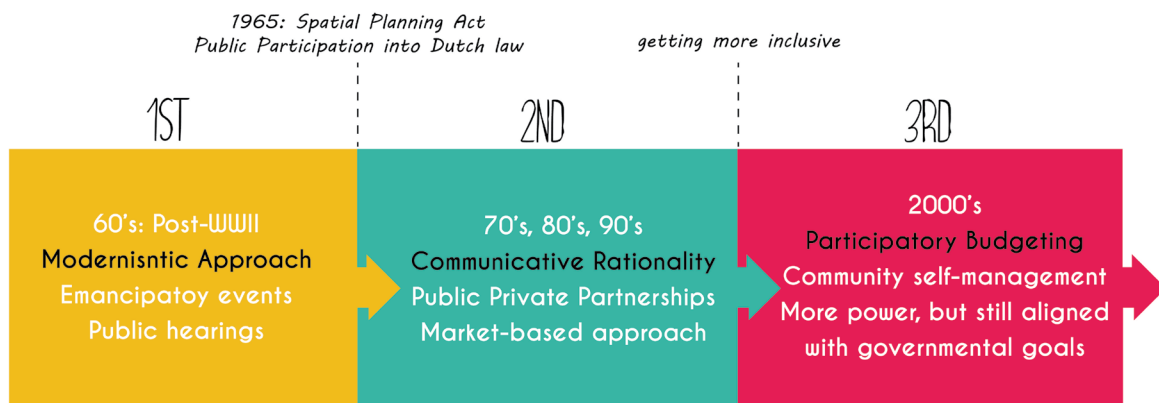
Figure 9: The three generations of participatory planning (Based on: Boonstra, 2015).

De Jong (2016) presents the programs NederlandBovenWater, from 2012, and Platform31, from 2014, as examples of the shift in the planning process in the Netherlands, from a top-down to a bottom-up and more flexible approach. De Jong (2016) introduces the term "coalition planners", or "neo-experts", to refer to planners that work in a multilevel stage and are able to understand and combine conflicted interests in order to reach a final product, incentivizing citizens to think for themselves, coming up with their own ideas, and helping them by transferring skills and knowledge, instead of just presenting them with choices like in the traditional modernistic planning and the first two generations presented by Boonstra (2015). De Jong (2016) also suggests the use of social media as one of the ways to increase this type of coalition planning.

The complexity of social systems is accounted for as one of the reasons why the traditional hierarchical, expert-oriented, policy making is no longer sufficient when dealing with real life situations, with participatory governance being the more effective option to overcome these barriers, as they increase diversity and creativity (Wagenaar, 2007). Wagenaar (2007) analysed public participation in deprived neighbourhoods in the Netherlands, and concluded that neighbourhoods should be seen as complex systems and that citizens' participation can be effective to deal with this complexity in various ways.

In theory, having the governed participating in their government decisions is the essence of democracy (Arnstein, 2019). However, cooperation between the parties does not necessarily mean that a democratic process is happening. It is necessary to overcome the structures that privilege the often more educated citizens who know how to make a discourse that articulate their interests. This also shows that even though complexity cannot be controlled, due to its unpredictability, it can at least be understood and malleable, and citizen participation can then be the link to overcome the faults in representative democracy, as well as a way to increase their autonomy, increasing their critical judgment, reflecting upon the common interests rather than just their own (Wagenaar, 2007).

Wagenaar (2007) argues that some public servants believe they can connect citizens and governments by just organizing a game, which could be seeing as "childish", and in turn might discourage trust among citizens. There are, however, several examples of games resulting in positive experiences for local citizens, such as the "Place Game", commonly applied in placemaking projects, where citizens, divided by groups, reflect upon different places within their neighbourhood, and then come together to present their ideas to improve them, like the ones from the case studies later presented in this research.

Participatory processes can be a way of bringing people together to discuss important facts happening in their surrounding environment, either physically, or even online, as proximity foster interaction among agents, and interaction is essential to generate creative ideas when dealing with social problems. This interaction is also productive for the public administrators, as they do not really have the situational knowledge and experience that the local residents have, which can provide a different narrative instead of the usual technical-analytical process of policy making. This can be seen as "progressing from professionals engaging with communities to communities engaging with professionals" (Ellery and Ellery, 2019).

2.5 PROJECT DRIVEN & PLACE DRIVEN APPROACHES

Fincher, Shaw and Pardy (2016) argue that even though placemakers acknowledge the existence of inequalities, these are not really addressed in practice, except in some small scale projects, which are able to provide more social equity in the local scale, but even those, because they are still rooted in a project-based way of thinking, lack a greater aim in dealing with inequalities. They also say that placemaking focus only on public space, missing the part about how that space include or exclude people. They explain the project-driven approach as following three simple steps: defining the problem at hand, resolving this problem, and then considering it successful. To result in social equity, placemaking needs to include more than just designers and planners, but also professionals and citizens that emphasize the social part of places, combining the hardware (built environment) and the software (social interactions and experiences happening on that environment).

Cilliers and Timmermans (2014) explain sense of place as a feeling of belonging, or attachment, to a certain physical environment, such as a neighbourhood, and the identity that originate from this attachment. With the aim of creating liveable places, traditional planning has

shifted to a more social and place-oriented approach, including groups that had not received the necessary attention before, such as refugees, homeless and disabled people.

It is unrealistic to think that an entire community will participate in a planning process, either because they cannot or because they do not want to. However, it is of the utmost importance to try to gather the more insights as possible, and Cilliers and Timmermans (2014) present some innovative and creative tools to help with this engagement. They present the "workbench method", an interactive method that focuses on community visions, identifying values to create quality public spaces. This method was developed by the Dutch government in 2005 and first applied in the Habiforum programme. Nonetheless, there is no one single formula for successful public spaces and participatory processes, as each place has its own context, its own strengths and challenges, and its own actors to be considered. Thus, to be successful, placemaking should be able to integrate the social dynamics of a place, and creative methods for public participation are a tool to help achieving that.

Boonstra and Boelens (2011) argued that one of the reasons why attempts to increase participatory processes has fail is that incentives remain controlled by the government, which do not seem so adaptable to the new self-initiatives that have been rising, therefore not really capable of dealing with the complexity that it poses to the current structured systems. Also according to Boonstra and Boelens (2011), in the Netherlands, since the 1960s, there has been a pursuit for more citizen's involvement in spatial planning, and four arguments have been used to provide that: 1. Social (with participation leading to increased social cohesion, through empowerment, followed by the inclusion of minority groups); 2. Spatial (increase place attachment to the local environment and sense of belonging); 3. Economic (benefits in the long-term, resulting from the willing to invest locally); and 4. Political (as the Dutch government intends to make the welfare state more supportive for new self-initiatives, with new public policies, which also requires more democratic interactions between citizens and public authorities).

Boonstra and Boelens (2011) give the example of the Ducth Crooswijk neighbourhood, which was advertised as collaborative planning, but instead it neglected the resident's opinions. This resulted in protests instead of support. They present an approach to understand citizen's motivations to participate in urban developments, considering a shift "to the outside-in, instead of the inside-out". Boonstra and Boelens (2011) define the difference between participation, which focuses on objectives set by the government, allowing some extent of influence by citizens under governmental procedures, and self-organization, in which the driven forces are the goals of the community itself, outside public policies, at least at the beginning. Self-organization is also related to complexity theory and adaptive systems, known for their non-linearity and co-evolution, with cities and neighbourhoods being spatial examples of this concept. When society self-organizes, a new dynamic is created, and this alternative can have unpredicted results, but is also presents a new way of seeing the system and its multiple layers and relations.

Examples of self-organizations found in Dutch cities range from informal settlements of artists, self-employed worker's cooperatives, and housing communities (Boonstra and Boelens, 2011). In Almere, for instance, collective housing developments are stimulated, but only in zones pre-defined by the government (Boonstra and Boelens, 2011), which raises the question

if this can indeed be considered a self-organized community. Boonstra and Boelens (2011) argued that self-organization might be a "way out" of the dilemma faced by governments to leave path-dependent structures and increase citizens initiatives instead, as collaboration, participatory budget and similar approaches have proven not sufficient to fulfil the aim of shared responsibility within society, government and market. This could contribute to social, spatial, economic and political aims of public involvement, without the complete withdrawal of the government. But for this to happen, an institutional shift in planning is needed, discontinuing past and current modernistic structures and being open to a multi-level integration of actors.

To summarize, we can consider traditional modernistic planning as being project-driven, focusing on the hardware, while most placemaking projects are place-driven, or community driven, focusing on the software. However, reality is not so black and white, and the processes taken and the stakeholders involved must be considered as well when addressing these two approaches.

Project-driven expects the perfect solution for the end-product, independently of the process, therefore not being able to apply all the local knowledge and resources that are available, while the place-driven approach aims at the opposite, with the process being as important, or perhaps weighting even more then the final product itself. Figure 10 presents the evolution path from project to place-driven developments, with placemaking being part of the last end. Community driven allows more freedom and creativity to be placed in the process, which might result in unexpected outcomes that can in turn be a good and beneficial surprise for the stakeholders involved. If the outcome is not so satisfactory, it can always be seen as a learning process, an experiment, because of its flexibility, and another idea might be implemented to start a new cycle, therefore allowing both short and long-term applications.

EVOLVING DEVELOPMENT

PLACE CAPITAL

PLACE-DRIVEN

Placemaking

PROJECT-DRIVEN

EVOLUTION OF DEVELOPMENT

*Place Capital: the shared value of the public space
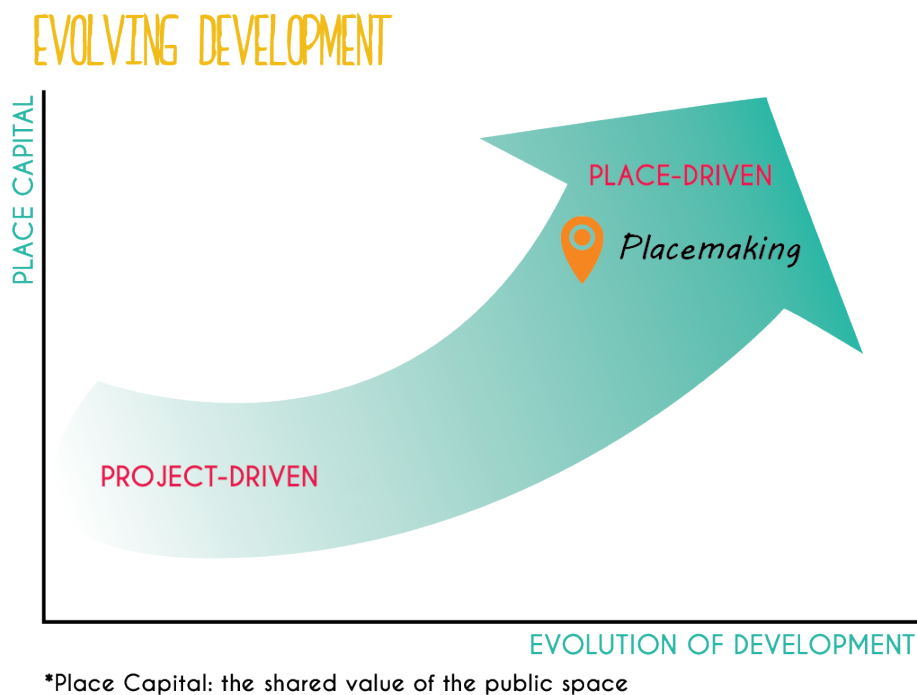
Figure 10: Toward Place Governance (Based on: PPS, 2013).

2.6 CONCEPTUAL MODEL: HOW IT ALL COMES TOGETHER

The following conceptual model (Figure 11) combines the previously presented theories about the concept of placemaking. The model addresses placemaking functioning as a cyclical process of creating and recreating places, together with and for the people who will use those places, as placemaking is also a process that aims to refocus planning from the physical-spatial changes of the environment towards enabling the "making of places" by various actors also outside the planning profession (Strydom, Puren and Drewes, 2018). After aggregating the concerned place and people, the model continues the cycle addressing the importance of focusing on the process itself, meaning the steps taken during the transformation of those places, which can be different every time, depending on the local context and the acotrs involved. This process should enhance sense of place among the participants of the placemaking project, and consequently sense of belonging and responsibility, which would then make them more attached and more willing to continue taking care of their environment (Breek et al, 2018). By doing that, a successful product, or outcome, could then be achieved. Product here does not mean necessarily a spatial physical intervention, it also refers to social improvements. The combination of both would be the creation of People Places (MoLg, 2020). The place in question could later on acquire different meanings and needs, and then the cycle starts again.

Figure 11: Conceptual Model (Author, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

3

3.1 RESEARCH STRATEGY

In order to determine the methodology of a research it is essential to consider the research questions and what are their purposes. Based on that, this study can be classified as evaluation and diagnosis, since the aim is to diagnose the processes that can influence placemaking developments, and to evaluate the outcomes of these processes, by also analysing four real cases, in order to identify best practices. This research will use a literature review to establish the background context for the empirical research, which will be done in the form of qualitative data, collected through case study analysis, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and online documentation. Although some authors criticize case studies as lacking scientific rigour and not allowing generalization, it is also agreed that they are indeed appropriate and used in a variety of disciplines, especially in the social sciences, and particularly when dealing with complex real life situations that require a more in-depth understanding of the analysed phenomena (Noor, 2008), which is the case of this research.

The unit of analysis of this research is placemaking projects where public participation is encouraged and included and the spatial boundary is the Netherlands, with a re-scaling afterwards focusing on four specific projects in the southern part of the country, in three different cities (Amsterdam, Haarlem and Nijmegen). The theoretical scope is mainly based on academic literature review, but also contemporary web sources, emphasizing the key-concepts previously mentioned (Placemaking, Public space, Public participation, Urban planning, Sense of place, Community engagement). The timeframe of this research happens from 11/2019 until 07/2020 and the data was collected from 03/2020 until 06/2020.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH: MIXED METHODS

Since the concept of placemaking is relatively new, it gives space for different approaches to be studied, as it is a "field of possibilities" (Volont, 2019). Therefore, this study has a mixed-methods approach, using different types of qualitative data.

The collected data was analyzed through methodological triangulation, which refers to the use of two or more different methods of data collection within one single study. Besides increasing validity, methodological triangulation is considered beneficial also in providing confirmation of results and more comprehensive data, strengthen the understanding and interpretation of the unit of analysis (Bekhet and Zauszniewski, 2012). It can be done using across-method (combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection), or within-method (using two or more data collection techniques, but either quantitative or qualitative). For the purpose of this research, the within-method of triangulation was used. Triangulation also allows overcoming the weaknesses of a single method, as long as the correct methods are chosen and it can, therefore, suggest conclusions that other methods alone would not be able to.

After and during the data collection process, the next step was to analyse each type of data separately, according to the most suitable option for each one, then converging the findings relating them to the theoretical background. Bekhet and Zauszniewski (2012) also

suggest that each method should first be analysed independently.

By applying mixed methods to a research, it can enlarge the scope of the study and provide more precise and holistic perspectives of human experiences, besides increasing the validity of results and the consistency of the methodology (Pinto 2010).

3.3 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

The period from 1970 to 1985 is considered the "qualitative revolution", when criticisms regarding plain quantitative methods started to arise, giving way to qualitative approaches as well as the use of mixed methods, which can better assist the understanding of the complexities of the social systems and improve the frameworks of new studies in the social sciences (Pinto 2010). Qualitative methods help to generate insights (or even new theories) from the collected data, using inductive reasoning approach, analysing them with a theoretical lens.

Qualitative research is a broader term that includes several different research methods used in order to provide more in-depth insights for the analysed situation. It is often used to analyse social processes, including people's behaviours, experiences, and the meanings given to them. Different from quantitative research, considered value-neutral and context-free, in which the goal is usually to generalize the findings, qualitative research takes an holistic approach, acknowledging the meanings people attach to their actions, being a more suitable method when dealing with the complexity of social phenomena (Staller, 2010), as the one presented in this study.

Social life, happening in a certain space and time, is something that presents a complex research challenge. Kotus and Rzeszewski (2015) compared this with the description of a mountain, where each individual description would be too simplified, while with a variety of viewpoints, from different distances and directions, an actual model of the mountain with all its dimensions could be created. In-depth interviews, therefore, are a good tool to investigate and explore opinions, motives and personal judgments (Kotus and Rzeszewski, 2015), helping the researcher to understand and analyse a social situation from different point of views. Longhurst (2010) also argues that different from quantitative surveys, in which the goal is to be representative, having a minimum sample, interviews aim at understanding people's experiences and behaviours. And even though semi-structured interviews do not provide the one and only "truth", they give us meaningful insights regarding social thoughts, and therefore are an appropriate method to analyse complex behaviours, including opinions and experiences (Longhurst, 2010).

Purposive sampling strategy was used to select the interviewees for this research, which then turned into a snowball sampling. The participants and the case studies were chosen in order to explore and interpret different placemaking developments, as a way to understand meanings rather than just a presentation of facts.

To answer the main research question and its sub-questions, and covering all major topics from the theoretical framework, two different interview guides have been formulated to collect primary data, in order to understand the processes guiding placemaking developments

and its effects for the socio-spatial final outcome. Both interview guides consist of open-ended questions, one was to be applied to experts who work with placemaking, and the other to interview citizens who have participated in placemaking projects. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 circumstances, the "Place Game" and the participatory meetings, which would be a good opportunity to contact citizens, were either postponed or cancelled. Therefore, the researcher was not able to talk to any citizen-participant, as the few contacts provided by the other interviewees were not willing to participate in this study. Considering the feasibility of this paper, the time and resources available, around 10 interviews were expected to be collected, divided between experts and citizens. However, due to the explained circumstances, the amount of data gathered was lower, comprising 5 interviews, all of them with experts, which may have introduced some bias to the results.

It is advisable to start an interview with more neutral questions in order to make the participant more comfortable, leaving more specific and perhaps sensible questions for the final part, where the interviewee is more acquainted with the researcher and the topic discussed (Longhurst, 2010). For this reason, the interview guides were both divided into six categories, each of them with follow-up questions, starting with some introductory questions about the interviewee and her or his career background. For the second block of questions the processes were the focus, including different steps and tools applied, for both short-term and long-term developments. The third round was about the stakeholders involved, who they are, what their roles are, and what sort of power for decision-making they have. After that the questions focused on past experiences, placemaking strengths, challenges and forms of evaluation. The fifth block was shorter, with questions about current trends of placemaking projects, and a link with gentrification. The two concluding questions were added later on and were about the implications of Covid-19 for placemaking, also considering the consequences for participatory approaches. The full interview guides can be found on Appendix C and D.

Semi-structured interviews are known to be one of the most used methods in qualitative research (Longhurst, 2010). Even though the researcher has a list of questions to follow, semi-structured interviews tend to happen in an informal and conversational tone, allowing the participants to better express themselves and the subjects they feel important (Longhurst, 2010). Besides creating the questions, the researcher also needs to find ways to select and contact possible interviewees, to choose a suitable location for the interview, transcribe and store the data, while also paying attention to ethical issues. Confidentiality and anonymity are therefore two important ethical considerations when conducting interviews (Longhurst, 2010). Furthermore, as well as for face-to-face interviews, online ones also need an informed consent, explaining to the participants the purpose of the study and all their rights. For this research, since all interviews happened online, the informed consents were sent to the participants beforehand, also asking consent to record the interviews, allowing full transcriptions. All interviewees agreed.

It is important to create a welcoming environment for the interviews, where both researcher and participant feel comfortable to talk. For this research, interviews had to be done without physical contact, so they were all done online, using videoconference software (Zoom), with both the researcher and the participant talking from their own house. Something similar

happened with the selected case studies, which were first planned to be analysed also on-site, through observations and informal talks with users of the space. However, since in the period of data collection it was not advisable to travel and to gather in indoor or outdoor spaces, this analysis had to be done online as well, by researching digital material, such as newspapers, social media, reports and other pieces of information provided by the interviewees.

To sum up, all data collection techniques for this research had to be adjusted to be performed online. Online research methods (ORM) are methods managed via internet, and can be called internet mediated research (IMR) or online research practice (ORP) (Madge, 2010). For the purpose of this study the IMR method was used, including online interviews and other virtual sources. Madge (2010) argued that it was not likely that IMR would replace face-to-face research. However, the year 2020 and its pandemic is showing us otherwise. As social distancing is now the rule, online options are now the "new normal". And this is something to be considered for future studies as well, as even in a non-pandemic world these online methods help to overcome geographical barriers, besides saving costs and time, especially communing time, for both parties.

Virtual interviews can then be either synchronous or asynchronous, with the first one being known for greater interaction and spontaneity, as the interviews are performed in "real time" (Madge, 2010). For this research the software Zoom was used, which is an example of synchronous interview.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGIES

To analyse the collected data, the software Atlas.ti was used as the main tool. This software is known as one of the Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). CAQDAS enables the researcher to code, search, and retrieve coded data easily, besides facilitating storing and organizing data. It is relevant to mention that, unlike statistical softwares, programs used in qualitative research are not created to "analyse" the data by itself, as they just help the researcher in the interpretative and analytic processes (Staller, 2010). Therefore, softwares such as Atlas.ti cannot really replace the human aspect of the analysis, but they can assist.

Silver and Lewins (2014) argue that the effective use of softwares for qualitative analysis, combined with the efficient management of the material resulted from that, can provide more rigour to the research. Softwares facilitate a cyclical and iterative analysis of the data, allowing codes to change purposes and uses along the way, according to the different strategies chosen for the analysis, but they still require transparency about how and why they are applied in a certain way (Silver and Lewins, 2014).

Codes also help the researcher to manage and organize large amount of qualitative data, such as long transcripts from interviews (Staller, 2010). Cope (2010) define coding as assigning interpretative tags to text based on categories relevant for certain study, according to identified patterns, as a way to organize and evaluate data, with the goal of understanding the deep meanings within the texts. Coding should be done together with the process of

data collection, as it might present new connections, produce new codes, and even research questions, in a circular process, which might lead to more rigorous conclusions (Cope, 2010).

Setting clear objectives and the necessary analysis tasks to achieve them is the starting point for coding and analyzing qualitative data (Silver and Lewins, 2014). However, each study has specific needs, and therefore the process of coding and analysis will also differ and be related to the context of each research. For this study a first list of codes were created based on both the concepts from the theoretical framework, in a more inductive and descriptive way, and the transcribed interviews, using a more deductive and analytical form; they were then put together combined into themes, connecting them according to their relations, resulting in a network of codes (Appendix A and B, Figures 33 and 34), which then worked assisting the researcher in the analysis in order to answer the research questions. Silver and Lewins, (2014) argue that working with both inductive and deductive codes can be a powerful tool to take advantage of the strengths of both practices while alleviating their disadvantages, calling this combination "abduction". Codes can help managing and organizing differences and similarities, patterns and relationships, but the researcher is the one responsible for making these link visible, arranging the codes with enough clarity (Silver and Lewins, 2014).

3.5 CASE STUDY

Case studies are defined as a method, an approach, a research design and an outcome. They can be considered an inquiry or an evaluation method of a bounded system, and can be used as a single case or as part of a bigger study, but in either way they provide a very detailed analysis of an entity (Putney, 2010). Because of the in-depth analysis required for these cases, it is important to consider the amount of cases chosen. For this reason, this research will look into four different cases, all in the Netherlands: one in the city of Nijmegen, one in Haarlem, and two in Amsterdam.

Case studies can be selected for being a unique and unusual unit, an extreme case in need of explanation, or a typical case as a form of understanding a frequent situation. A case study can also serve for descriptive, explanatory or explorative purposes (Putney, 2010). They are considered a good choice when the aim is to understand processes, as it allows the researcher to get close to the participants and their local contexts, helping in the awareness of the complexity, implementation and effects on the participants (Putney, 2010). This research will look at the chosen case studies with explorative and explanatory lens, as we are looking into what can be learned from the presented cases, but we also want to understand how and why these processes happened in a certain way. Putney (2010) states that it is common to use also interviews, observations and documents together with case studies, which is something integrated in this study as well.

Based on the information found online and the discussions with the interviewees, four placemaking projects were selected as case studies to be analysed in this research, applying a comparative approach. They were chosen for having some similarities, such as the performance of the Place Game, while at the same time having some unique characteristics, such as different

scales and purposes. The four cases were compared through three variables: why and how they were initiated, which and how stakeholders were involved, and which evaluation procedures were used, or not. These variables were chosen with the aim of gaining a deeper knowledge about the processes and stakeholders involved, and how they impacted the final outcome for the public spaces and their users.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Qualitative methods introduce social interactions in the research-participant status, therefore the ethics is especially important in this type of studies, as the privacy of the participants and the level of influence that the researcher might have over them might influence the results (Kotus and Rzeszewski, 2015).

To preserve the identity of the interviewees, only the personal information required for this study was asked, considering confidentiality, privacy, debriefing, netiquette and informed consent, which according to Madge (2007) are the main ethical questions to be addressed in such cases. The principles of both the Dutch code of conduct for research integrity, adressing honesty, responsibility, transparency, scrupulousness and independence (NWO, 2018), and the code of ethics for social and behavioural research, which highlights the importance of informent consents (Nethics, 2018) were also followed.

Nevertheless, this research and interview questions are not really invasive, so the main ethical issues were related to the storage and later sharing of the data. Therefore, all the participants of the interview were informed about their rights and options, that their answers would be anonymous, they could withdrawal at any moment, and the information would only be used for academic purposes. They all signed an informed consent stating they understood these agreements, also giving permission for the interviews to be recorded, with the condition that it would only be listen and transcribed by the researcher with the aim of analysing the qualitative data, to be deleted after this thesis is finished.

CASE STUDY

4

One of the shared characteristics of placemaking projects, adressed in the following description of the case studies, is the performance of the Place Game. It consists of a tool used to evaluate public spaces, and it is also known as a way to make the community the expert (PPS, 2016). The local residents who are participating in the Place Game are split into small groups, each one of them making observations at different areas and analysing what is working well and what could be improved there. Later on every group present their findings to the others and then a shared discussion happens, regarding the next steps to be taken towards those places. The evaluation of the areas is based on the PPS diagram "What makes a Great Place?" (Figure 12), considering Access & Linkages, Comfort & Image, Uses & Activities, and Sociability. Nevertheless, sometimes placemakers also make some adaptations to this framework when applying it in practice.

Figure 12: PPS diagram "What makes a Great Place?" - the foundation of the Place Game (PPS, 2016).

4.1   HET VLAAMS KWARTIER – NIJMEGEN

Figures 13, 14 & 15: Paintings, coffee shops and new plants (Nijmegen, 2019).

The company Stipo was approached by the municipality of Nijmegen in 2017 at first to develop a Vision Plan for the area known as the Vlaams Kwartier, a neighbourhood in the center of the city, which was by then considered an unpleasant and unsafe neighbourhood, facing problems such as decaying empty buildings and drug dealing, especially in the alleys where the "Dutch" coffee shops were located. The main ambitions for the Area Vision were: reduce nuisance, increase safety, improve mobility, exploit economic potential and improve the quality of buildings and public spaces (Nijmegen, 2019). Because of its size, the neighbourhood was then divided into three sub-areas, in order to improve the management of the entire place, focusing on the more local characteristics of each of them. Stipo was mainly responsible for one of these sub-areas.

The placemaking process started with the Place Game, gathering different stakeholders, such as residents, entrepreneurs, police, and the municipality. Together they exchanged reflections and ideas for short and long-term interventions in the neighbourhood.

The Kwartier has now its own website, where information regarding initiatives, events, and what people can see and do can be found. According to Into Nijmegen (2020), the Vlaams Kwartier is a place where "quirky concepts are located and entrepreneurs with passion have gathered" (translated by the researcher). It is a very mixed place, where luxury clothing and vintage shops are found, together with some family businesses and several restaurants. They advertise themselves as entrepreneurs who are proud of their neighbourhood (Into Nijmegen, 2020). The Vlaams Kwartier also has a map (Figure 16), locally made and printed, with texts and visuals designed by the residents from the neighbourhood. This map is also used to brand the area and attract new visitors and tourists. Besides this one, an online interactive map is also available, as well as videos and booklets about the neighbourhood, the place itself and the people who live there. Future plans aim at making the Vlaams Kwartier increasingly green, the public spaces but also the buildings, which are being renovated to become more sustainable (Into Nijmegen, 2020).
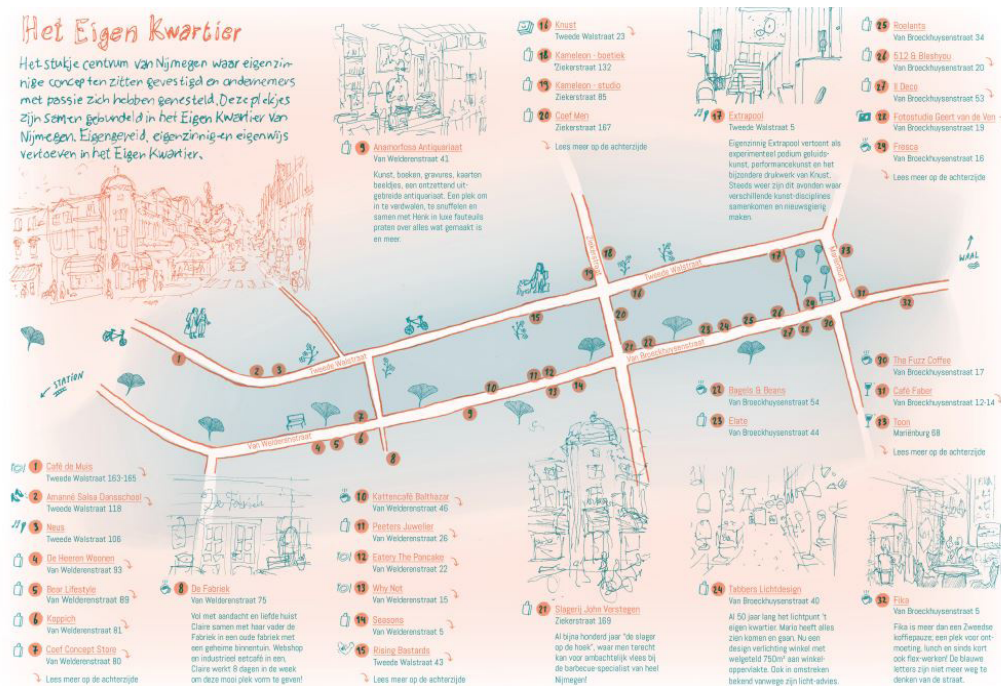
Figure 16: Co-created map of the neighbourhood (Into Nijmegen, 2020).

After one year the Area Vision was ready and it had some nice inputs regarding how to improve the liveability of the neighbourhood, such as incentivizing a mix of residents (mainly low-income youth and students), spread the coffee shops, which were close together and considered one of the main reasons for nuisance, also increasing motorized traffic in those streets. It was also proposed to encourage new businesses making use of the empty ground floors of several buildings, which would then result in more social surveillance during different times of the day, resulting from the combination of living and working. Adding more colors, greenery and activities into the streets was also in the plan. After the first year, the practical interventions started to take place, in 2019, focusing on changing the design of the public spaces and the façades of the privately owned buildings.

4.2 SCHALKWIJK CENTRUM – HAARLEM

Figures 17 & 18: Dak and OnderDak (PM+, 2019).

In the Schalkwijk Centrum, placemaking was applied to redevelop the area inside and around a Shopping Center in the Dutch city of Haarlem. The project started in 2015, and continues until this day. Back in 2015 the Shopping Center was facing some difficulties, with many shops closing. The building did not have any recreational activity, therefore, when the shops started to close, there was no reason for people to continue going there (PM+, 2019), as online shopping was becoming more common and the Shopping Center no longer served the function of a meeting place. The company PlacemakingPlus was contacted, with the goal of reversing this situation.

In the end of 2015 PlacemakingPlus took charge of the placemaking project, and started to contact local residents and shop owners to get to know the place and the current situation. In February 2016 the first Place Game took place. After the Place Game report, a placemaking management team was formed, with active citizens taking charge of the next steps to be taken.

On April 2018 a second Place Game took place, in order to increase the quality of the surrounding public spaces, as many buildings around the Shopping Center were going to be built or rebuilt. Again, after the Place Game, a Place Management Team (PMT) was created, in order to continue the changes in the coming years. The team meets once a month to reflect about was has already been done, discuss the next steps and options to get funding. Residents, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders are also welcomed to the discussions.

Figures 19 & 20: Dak and OnderDak (PM+, 2019).

4.3 DE CEUVEL – AMSTERDAM

Figures 21 & 22: De Ceuvel and its transformed houseboats (De Ceuvel, n/a).

       De Ceuvel is a unique example as it actually started as a sustainable co-working environment, located on a former shipyard in Amsterdam North, where seventeen refurbished old houseboats were placed on a polluted soil that could not be used in different ways (Figures 21 & 22). Energy and waste are also produced and processed there in sustainable and innovative ways (De Ceuvel, n/a).

       The land was secured by the municipality of Amsterdam, in 2012, for a 10-year lease, on which the association built the place together, leveling the ground, refurbishing the boats and planting. The official opening was in 2014. The members host volunteering days when the public is invited to help developing De Ceuvel and make it even more sustainable, as they say the place "is never really finished" (De Ceuvel, n/a). The previously industrial land is now a workplace for a creative group of entrepreneurs and artists, but it also offers open pulic spaces, a sustainable café, boats to rent and a floating bread & breakfast, while plants around the boats help cleaning the polluted soil.
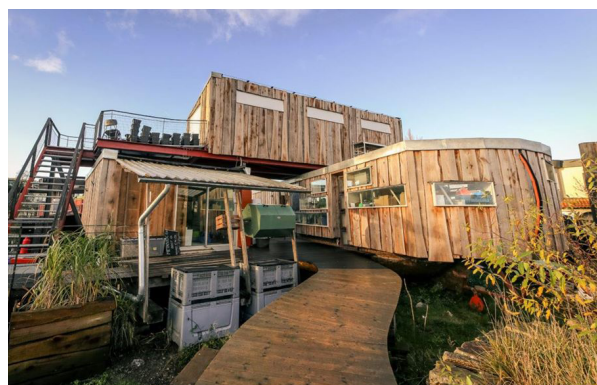
Figures 23 & 24: The sustainable café and paths among houseboats (De Ceuvel, n/a).

4.4 DE BUURTCAMPING – AMSTERDAM

Figure 25: Entrance of a Buurtcamping (De Buurtcamping, 2016).

De Buurtcamping (or The Neighborhood Camping) started as a campsite in a city park of Amsterdam. The company PlaceMakers was the co-initiator of this project, where everyone living in the neighbourhoods surrounding the park was invited to participate and to help organize the activities. The Buurtcamping is organized by residents and entrepreneurs from the neighbourhood, together with many volunteers and other organizations. The Buurtcamping aims to achieve three main objectives: provide a nice holiday for everyone (including the ones who cannot always afford that), increase social cohesion within the neighbourhood, and create awareness of the assets that are close by (nature, culture, and economy) (De Buurtcamping, 2014). One third of the places are reserved for low-income citizens, one third for volunteers and one third for paying campers.

De Buurtcamping project was initiated in 2013, where 250 residents camped together in the Oosterpark, Amsterdam. In 2015 more than one thousand campers participated in the Buurtcamping, spread around seven parks, five in Amsterdam and two in Utrecht, and the amount of campers continues to grow year by year. Until 2019 De Buurtamping had already hosted 35 campsites, also happening in other parks of Amsterdam and in other Dutch cities, such as Almere, The Hague, and Groningen (Placemakers, n/a). On their website anyone can apply to organize such an event in their own neighbourhood, occupying their public spaces.

Figures 26 & 27: De Buurtcamping (2016, 2015).

ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION
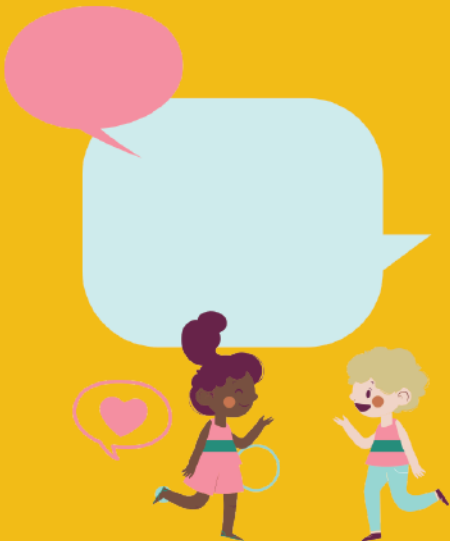
5

The qualitative results from the interviews and case studies were analysed and hereby the most relevant findings are presented. According to the main research question and its sub-questions, qualitative data was considered the best approach to be able to answer them.

With the results from the interviews it was possible to understand what should be the focus on the case studies. The four case studies were analysed based on three main variables (why and how they were initiated, which and how stakeholders were involved, and which evaluation procedures were used) in order to identify the best practices among placemaking projects. The analysis focusing on the case studies is presented in the first part of this chapter.

A total of five online semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts in spatial planning. Four of them work in an office specialized in placemaking projects, two of them in Amsterdam and two in Rotterdam. And one of the interviewees works for the municipality of Utrecht, as shown below in Figure 28. The interviews provided in-depth insights about the processes happening within the case studies, and how they impacted the final project, considering the socio-spatial outcomes. The results from the interviews were then critically reflected upon, relating and comparing them with the case studies and the theoretical framework, providing the necessary input to answer the research questions, as presented in this chapter.

INTERVIEWEE	EDUCATION	COMPANY	DATE	TIME
1	Urban Planning	Stipo - Rotterdam	09/04/2020	1h8min
2	Urban and Cultural Sociology, City Design and Social Science	PlaceMakers - Amsterdam	20/04/2020	54min
3	Business, Self taught	PlacemakingPlus - Amsterdam	06/05/2020	1h33min
4	Urban Planning	Gemeente Utrecht	10/06/2020 11/06/2020	43min 30min
5	Urban Anthropology	Stipo - Rotterdam	12/06/2020	51min

Figure 28: Table Interviewees (Author, 2020).

5.1 CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

HET VLAAMS KWARTIER – NIJMEGEN: LEARNING

The placemaking project done in Het Vlaams Kwartier started with the municipality of Nijmegen contacting a placemaking office with the aim of developing a Vision Plan to make the area more vibrant and safe. The project was possible due to the coalition built among the entrepreneurs and residents of the neighbourhood, the municipality of Nijmegen, and the company Stipo, who joined forces to co-create a better place. According to the Area Vision (Nijmegen, 2019), the area is now well equipped to receive visitors to spend day and night there, with food, entertainment and accommodation being provided. However, according to Interviewee 5, who was part of the project team, even after two years of creating a vision and implementing it, the area still needs a lot of improvements, as it is still facing some of the same problems. Besides, the residents are still not really connected, which makes it difficult to have a "team" taking more responsibility for the transformations needed. Looking back to the project now, she says that this might be because herself and other placemakers involved in the project did not spent enough time there:

"*For this project we were there only one day a week. So you can imagine that you need the local people to really take over and make it more continuous, because these are things that are not a once-a-week sort of project [...] and we can't be around for forever, so, personally, I would like to be involved in these projects a lot more intense*" (Interviewee 5).

Nevertheless, it was a lesson learned, because reflecting about the long process of this project, she was able to identity what could be improved and why the outcome, especially the social outcome, did not have the expected impact: "*even if I would have just taken all those days in one goal, it would have been so much better. And that to me is a big lesson, like, if you're present, be present*" (Interviewee 5).

Better street lightning, painted murals, more greenery and a small street market gave the neighbourhood a friendlier look. Nonetheless, the project still did not reach its full potential, as the area is still a bit segregated from its surroundings, and social cohesion is still not very representative. Furthermore, because of the lack of spontaneous social control, camera surveillance and more police force were placed on the streets considered unsafe, but this only partly solved the problem, since the nuisance improved, but what actually happened was that it just moved to another place in the neighbourhood.

By the time of the interview (June, 2020), the project was in pause because of Covid-19, to be continued when the circumstances allow. According to Interviewee 5, this break is also serving as a time to evaluate, reflect and re-think what can be done differently later on, in order to bridge the gaps that were left behind. Placemaking is a continuous learning process, it is flexible and cyclical, and because of that it allows us to transform weaknesses into opportunities, by taking advantage of different tools and collaborating with different people with all kinds of knowledge, in order to keep learning and improving, until people and place are well integrated. But for that to happen placemakers also need to be humble enough to acknowledge their faults and be willing to adapt, as shown in this example from Nijmegen.

SCHALKWIJK CENTRUM – HAARLEM: INTEGRATION

The municipality of Haarlem and the owners of the Schalkwijk Shopping Center contacted the company PlacemakingPlus with the goal of making the Shopping and its surrounding public spaces more vibrant, in order to receive more visitors and consequently more clients. But apparently the social and economic decline were not the only issues there, as racism was also present, and some people were not really "welcomed" in the Shopping Center: "... *the butcher was a very sensitive guy and he said to me "one of the big problems with our Shopping Center is that it's all white... my colleagues won't accept any colored shopkeepers in the shopping center"... This was Haarlem, the Netherlands, in 2015... racism."* (Interviewee 3).

After spending some time in the neghbourhood to get acquainted with the place, and discussing with residents what should be improved, the Place Game took place and the project started in July of 2016, as a collaboration of many stakeholders, including PlacemakingPlus, the Center Schalkwijk, the Shopkeepers Association, The municipality of Haarlem, and the Triple Threat local community, in which volunteers offer accessible activities for the youth, including basketball lessons.

After less than a year the place was considered to be "turned around" from space to place (PM+, 2019). And the Triple Threat group reached out thousands of people: *"The basketball club that Okra founded ten years ago, had only two teams, three teams, five years ago. Now they have 20, they have 20 teams!"* (Interviewee 3). This happened because people from outside the community also started to joined the activities.

The DAK area was created, as shown in Figure 18, using the roof of a parking garage to host activities, having also a basketball court, and soon became a lively and vibrant public space. After an evaluation, it was concluded that when there were events happening in the DAK, the Shopping Center also received more clients, so the owners of the Shopping Center got inspired and asked to have a similar place inside their building (Interviewee 3). Then, in March of 2017 the OnderDAK happened (Figure 19), it was the DAK spirit happening inside the Shopping Center, as a multipurpose and multicultural area.

The second edition of DAK happened in July of 2017, as a five-week event happening in the vacant parking lot, this time with even more activities, including sports, a debate club, concerts, etc. DAK is considered "a meeting place, for and by Schalkwijkers", made for everyone, including children. And because of the work of the placemaking management team, both DAK and OnderDAK were able to continue in the next years, lasting until this day (PM+, 2019).

The Schalkwijk Shopping Center is now called Schalkwijk Center, as its function is no longer just to shop, it has become the center of the community, where many activities happen and everyone is invited to participate, independently of gender, race, age or believes. Schalkwijk can be considered an example of how the community has taken charge, inspiring integration at different levels as well as more systematic changes both in the public spaces and in the sociability of the area, changes that were possible because of the placemaking applied there.

DE CEUVEL – AMSTERDAM: FLEXIBILITY

De Ceuvel itself was not a usual placemaking project, as it started by an association of community entrepreneurs and artists wishing to create a sustainable co-working environment, but the socio-spatial ideas behind it go along with the basic principles of placemaking. The management team of De Ceuvel aims to be seen as a "symbol of the social transition to a contemporary circular lifestyle", and they try to achieve that by hosting technological, cultural and artistic programmes in order to inspire people to join the movement towards a more innovative and sustainable world (De Ceuvel, n/a). The programmes include lectures, workshops, concerts, art exhibitions, and many more, and they are open to anyone who wishes to participate.

This year (2020), with the outbreak of Covid-19, there are empty boats which are not being used or rented, so De Ceuvel became shelter for homeless people and refugees, who are staying there and in a parking garage (Interviewee 5). This presents us the non-linearity of the placemaking movement, as an example of the flexibility that it allows to happen. Just as explained with the Conceptual Model of this research, placemaking here is working as a cyclical process, according to the context and the current circumstances. We cannot completely predict what will happen after Covid-19, the same way we cannot completely predict what will happen with this unique place. It depends on the place itself and the people involved, and the ambition to continue improving the quality of the place in order to improve the quality of life of its users.

DE BUURTCAMPING – AMSTERDAM: ADAPTABILITY

This project was developed as a way to increase social capital and social cohesion in the neighbourhood, using the available public space to create a welcoming, inclusive and accessible environment (Placemakers, n/a).

On the Buurtcamping website there is a session where interviews (from 2019) can be found, where participants talk about their experience with the Buurtcamping. The following three stories are from there:

One participant got to know to De Buurtcamping in Assendelft because of a neighbour, and as she already had contact with some local residents and entrepreneurs, she then helped to spread the word and raise funds, as she believes "it is important that you look outside your own street" (translated by the researcher) (De Buurtcamping, 2019).

In the Buurtcamping in Maastricht, an 81 years old woman was the most involved volunteer: "I enjoy interacting with people. To be serious, but also to take a piece of baloney" (translated by the researcher) (De Buurtcamping, 2019). She surely gives an example that with good will we can always make things happen.

Another participant stresses the level of intimacy created, with neighbours and people that did not know each other before: "When you come out of the tent in your pajamas in the morning, you suddenly see your neighbors in a situation where you would otherwise never see […] that creates a bond" (translated by the researcher) (De Buurtcamping, 2019).

The memories gained from the campsite can also serve as a tool to create a sense of place and responsibility towards the park and the neighbourhood. Local businesses owners also participate and visit the campsite, and as a result gain more visibility, as more residents get to know what the neighbourhood has to offer, as one camper said "By sitting side by side for three days camping you get to know each other better than living next to each other for three years" (De Buurtcamping, 2014). Therefore, this sort of project helps to improve socio, spatial, cultural and economic aspects of a place, and what is most astonishing about it is that it only happens three days a year. Its adaptability capacity is also remarkable, since every city has a public park, even if a small one, where this project can be adapted and reproduced. It is also an example of how a short-term intervention can become a long-term event, as the Buurtcamping was supposed to last for one weekend, but has been happening for eight years already, reaching more and more places and people:

"And so there is a... continuity... in the people involved as well. So they are gaining a sort of experience and skills over the years. So where a resident used to be a visitor to one of the campsites, just the camper, right? And then the next year they would be a volunteer, and the year after they would organize it, and the year after they can organize... a different event in their own neighborhood, right?" (Interviewee 2).

In 2014, 2015 and 2016 evaluation surveys were conducted combined with on-site observations, then followed by an official report. In the first one, from 2014, 85% of the respondents answered that they would return in the next year, and the average score for the Buurtcamping was 8,4. After a month a second survey was send by mail to the respondents, to analyse the long-term effects of the Buurtcamping, and many of them were still maintaining contact with people they met in the campsite (De Buurtcamping, 2014).

And even if participants do not talk to everyone, they create a bond just by seeing each other more frequently in the three days of the camping, a bond that has a big chance to continue afterwards, increasing social cohesion and place attachment among the neighbours, and strengthening public familiarity. Strangers are not "scary" as they usually were perceived, not even the homeless people, who were also invited to the camp, as according to a participant they feel safe because everyone is paying attention to everyone (De Buurtcamping, 2014). The report from 2015 (De Buurtcamping, 2015) also shows that after a month 31% of the campers still had contact with people they met during the Buurtcamping.

In the three evaluation reports analysed, recommendations for future campings are also made, such as recruiting people from ethnic organizations in order to have a higher variety of campers, and to create silent spaces for people who value a good night sleep (De Buurtcamping, 2015).

In 2016 the Buurtcampings became independent entities, arranging their own annual budget and planning. This can be seen as an example of the seventh step of Arnstein's ladder of participation, Delegated Power, since it all started with different people from different backgrounds sharing knowledge and skills, to then allow the citizens who are willing to take action into their neighbourhood to have the experience, the knowledge and the means to continue to do so by themselves, organizing an event that transforms the public space for a few days, but and impacts its social life for years to come.

5.2 PLACEMAKING & PUBLIC SPACES: CREATING PEOPLE PLACES

RQ: How can we determine the best practices in placemaking according to different processes and outcomes?

Project for Public Spaces is nowadays the world hub of placemaking. They are a non-profit organization well known in the field of placemaking and spatial planning, and which ideas and frameworks are being applied worldwide, including in the Netherlands. Interviewees 1 and 3 mentioned meeting one of the founders of PPS, Fred Kent, as being the starting point to get acquainted with placemaking. Both of them met Fred Kent in person in the beginning of the 2000s and that meeting was an important event towards the work they do today.

This brings back the fact that placemaking is a recent concept, and this might also be the reason why even though the idea behind it can be narrowed into a common agreement, when asked, everyone has her or his own version of what placemaking means:

"We call it a method and the philosophy for Urban Development [...] and I think placemaking is organizing your own luck. It's looking for the things you don't know, is looking to... for the unexpected initiatives." (Interviewee 1).

"In practice it is a... a method to include local stakeholders in Urban Development, primarily public spaces. I think that's the most simple way of putting it." (Interviewee 2).

"Well, it's to me... the best method I have found, in my lifetime anyway, to connect communities to their dreams. So... and dreams can become reality, in nine times out of ten they become reality." (Interviewee 3).

"[placemaking]... it's really about this... yeah, rebuilding a relationship with the land that we live on." (Interviewee 5).

Interviewee 2 also explains placemaking as being understood in two primary ways, the first one referring to the idea of transforming a space into a place *"where you use placemaking to turn a space that has no social value [...] And so that is certainly placemaking"*. The other approach is when the focus is much more in the process, and the participatory developments, rather than in the final "place" outcome: *"and it looks like placemaking is a little bit of both and sometimes it's more of one and sometimes is more the other"* (Interviewee 2).

Nevertheless, there are also several forms and levels of participation, which could be simplified as the difference between "just" participation and "good" participation (Cilliers and Timmermans, 2014), and the roots of placemaking guide us towards the second one, in order to really understand the place which is being transformed and the people who are part of the social life there, as explained by Interviewee 1:

"... it's super important to really first be present, become a part of the community, to understand and find the informal leaders... to observe what people do in public space, to really sit down and watch different times of the day, different moments of the week... to become a part of the place, really."

By taking this approach, of really becoming part of the community, instead of just inviting residents to a public meeting at the city hall, it provides the opportunity to find the voices that are usually more difficult to reach, because of different kinds of barriers, such as

immigrants or refugees who do not speak the same language, or citizens from lower social classes that sometimes are not really approached to take part in the changes the city is facing, and when they are approached, they do not really participate because of the pre-conceived idea that "the system" cannot be trusted.

In the Netherlands, which is a small country with a small portion of land still available for construction, a big part of the current developments is being done in areas with already existing urban structures. This means that there is already an existing local economy, local culture, local bonds and socio-spatial networks which need to be taken into consideration when making changes in those places. Placemaking provides the methods and tools to do that, using local knowledge in order to understand what is really needed there and why, the kind of information that cannot be gathered by doing just technical measurements and surveys. We should dig deeper than that, also because *"there is no Silver Bullet in placemaking [...] it's not a one-size-fits-all type of process"* (Interviewee 1), the same way as every place and every group of people has its own particular characteristics that should be accounted for:

"...we're trying to be the experts, but in placemaking we say there's a lot of other experts as well. So you do bring your profession, of course, but... because there's a lot of knowledge behind it. But there is the expertise of the local residents." (Interviewee 1).

Interviewee 4 is the only one who is not working in a placemaking company, he works in the mobility department of a Dutch municipality, and it was interesting to observe and compare these two worlds, who are working in tandem, but at the same time still separated from each other. His projects tend to be done as bigger scale developments, requiring more time and money, even if the interventions are planned just as "pilot projects". When asked about the option of more short-term, tactical urbanism type of interventions, he says that in his department *"... we hardly use it, and I don't know why. It sometimes confuses me, it sometimes makes me angry... Why we are not trying to use temporary short-term, cheap solutions as real pilots"*. Transit-related projects are much more specific and standardized than regular placemaking projects that could happen basically everywhere, so it is understandable that public departments are still a bit "behind" in this process. Nevertheless, it is inspiring to know that there are some social leaders within the public institutions as well, recognizing the importance of the social life of public spaces.

Furthermore, in order to determine the best practices in placemaking, it is also important to consider all levels, scales and opinions which will be part of the project. Placemaking is really context specific, and this might seem to be a barrier when trying to understand what works best and what does not work so well. But it is not so simple. There are many examples of placemaking projects which can provide us with lessons that can indeed be applied further on, such as the ones presented with the case studies of this research. The most important message to take away, from all of them, is that placemaking should indeed pay attention to the physical side of public spaces, but always together with their social, cultural and economic background, which is what is lacking in the traditional planning.

Taking this approach, we can conclude that doing placemaking for the human scale, considering the needs of a place and people's capability to learn, integrating the whole community, being also flexible through time and adaptable according to the presented

circumstances, it would result in more "People Places", which are defined by MoLg (2020) as "places that are shared by a community and valued by them because of the way they are designed, built and used". And by creating this bond between people and places, we believe that the usually less visible parts of placemaking, such as social cohesion and social capital, would also become more perceived and valued.

5.3 THE PROCESS: TO WHERE IT TAKES US

SQ 1: How do different processes of placemaking happen?

One of the characteristics of placemaking is that it is planned to be a very democratic process, open to anyone interested in taking part of it. However, being democratic *"doesn't necessarily mean that... that's not how democracy works as well. It doesn't necessarily mean that everybody says "This is what I want", and then that is what happens"* (Interviewee 1), because people have different ideas, different meanings and interpretations for the same situation. Therefore, it is not always possible to please everyone every time, and that is why the Negotiator role (Eggersten, 2019) of the placemaker is so important, guiding stakeholders to listen to each other and to understand every thought that is placed on the table, to then together decide the ones that are more appropriate for the situation at hand: *"So you are starting with a hundred ideas in the beginning, and then select... combine... and build your work on that, and then placemaking has the process to do that, to involve the community"* (Interviewee 1).

That is why the very local residents should always be addressed, as they are the ones who already know what is happening there, and why some attributes of the neighbourhood do not work very well. As Interviewee 3 argued, in placemaking *"the community is the expert and we are the tools"*. Placemakers can link their expertise with funding, with the incentives and courage necessary to take action, so that dreams can become reality. Placemaking teaches us to be *"with our feet on the ground and I our head on the clouds"* (Interviewee 1), combining thinking and doing, reflection and action, in order to bring together those two worlds.

Because of its unpredictability and spontaneity, and because *"it's always very hard to know what your result is going to be after a year... even after a month you don't really know..."* (Interviewee 5), placemaking is usually done step by step. Based on a long-term idea, or expectation, regarding where we are going to, short-term processes are combined based on testing, experiments, pilot projects, and its consequent learning processes. This freedom allows creativity to shape and re-shape the ideas that are working best at the moment towards the long-term goal. But because it can be so flexible, unpredictability is also present: *"... well, yeah sometimes it's like a trojan horse, like, we don't really know what we are bringing, but we are bringing it in anyways and we will see what happens"* (Interviewee 5).

Interviewee 2 expresses her mixed feelings about this freedom, since according to her on the one hand placemaking *"can be done fairly quickly and very low cost etc, and still have an impact"*, but on the other hand, in reality it is not as quickly and straightforward as it seems, as

actually a lot of time is needed to get stakeholders involved, especially if you want them to take over afterwards, and this might pass the wrong idea that placemakers are actually overrating the projects.

And even thought placemaking projects are very context specific, every interviewee (or their companies) has its own framework regarding how to proceed. Some are more simplified, some are more structured, but they all follow the basic notions presented by Fred Kent and the principles from Project for Public Spaces. Two of them are presented here (Figures 29 and 30):

Figures 29 & 30: The Participation Ladder by PlacemakingPlus and the Cycle Method by PlaceMakers.

From the interviews it was possible to understand that the last steps, especially the transferring of skills, and further evaluation procedures, are the most difficult ones. Interviewee 2 explains that *"we are a project studio that... moves... from one project to the next, and we don't stay in the area forever. So we have to find ways to sort of transfer our skills and make sure that the local... actors are able and willing [emphasized] to continue on, for the sustainability of the project"*. So the co-creation actually does not stop when the project is finished, this is a relationship that continues afterwards, with less contact according to the experience and confidence that active citizens grow along the time, but nevertheless still working together, also because a public space is never finished, it is in constant transformation.

A bit of a different process happens in the public sectors of planning, which is still a very technical, engineering type of design. Interviewee 4, who works for a municipality, expresses how he and (a few) of his colleagues have been trying to change this mentality and this way of working with the public space and its users: *"I can give you an interesting example of what happened, and what actually is showing is how we try to change, in how... we think... not citizens participation, but participation from the city towards the citizens should be [...] it's about having fun with citizens in creating a nice public space"* (Interviewee 4).

When discussing about the evaluation of the projects, its forms and necessity, in general the interviewees agree that this is an important step of the process. However, it is not always

applied, for various reasons, the most common being the lack of funding for integrating this part into the workload and budget. Interviewee 1, for instance, explains that it in the *"ideal world"* there should always be before and after evaluations, impact measurements, parallel to the placemaking process, because these are important to identify good practices to recreate, but also mistakes that should be avoided. And when these are not possible, because of different reasons, one simple option is just to go to the project and talk to the people who are using the place, and just listening to this informal feedback can already teach us a lot.

Interviewee 4, the only one who does not work in a placemaking company, have a slightly different opinion about the reason why evaluation processes are not usually done, even though he also agrees that *"of course, it should be a good idea".* Nevertheless, according to him, *"on the other hand, if we really would need it, we would do so [...] So we are not challenged in... "oh, we should evaluate, and we should collect data or ideas". We are doing a pretty good job, actually, which makes you become lazy in evaluate".* Another point brought forward by this interviewee is that evaluation forms are to be applied for the more technical, *"laboratory world",* because placemaking is much more about feelings and we cannot completely put feelings into an evaluation form.

We argue that this is partly true, since placemaking projects really integrate people's behaviours and intentions, which are more subjective and will not always be easy to measure. Nevertheless, as it was shown for instance with case study 4 and its evaluation reports, a combination of methods can be used to help increasing the validity of the results. Quantitative methods can help gathering data about the demographic information of stakeholders in a project, as well as spatial characteristics, while qualitative data, done through interviews and observations, for example, provide the more subject insights that would not be possible to analyse otherwise. The integration of both can provide a useful way of learning and applying knowledge towards future placemaking developments, regarding what works best, but also what could be improved.

Nonetheless, Interviewee 4 also recognizes that participating in this research and discussing the questions from the interview makes him start to think again about topics that sometimes become "too mainstream" and are done in a sort of automatic mode. By bringing these discussions into the table again, it makes him *"start to think again. What did we do? And why did we do it? So it... Actually, your questions make me evaluate my work, our projects. So it's always fun".*

It is this open environment of constant sharing and learning provided by placemaking, from the different stakeholders and experiences, that makes it to be considered the future of planning, prioritizing place-led developments (Fincher, Shaw and Pardy, 2016) that focus on the meaning-making rather than the usual city-making, and on the software rather than just the hardware.

5.4 PARTICIPATION OR CO-CREATION: STAKEHOLDERS & THEIR ROLES

SQ 2: How each of the stakeholders is involved and how their participation influence the final socio-spatial outcomes?

Interviewee 1 explains that his work with placemaking is about being open to different inputs, then being able to select the best ones, based on the interests in the area where the project is to happen: *"So you have to be very... you have to have a moral compass to do this, really, because it can be abused as well, right? You have to be very inclusive and... not everybody participates easily. So you need to involve certain groups more actively than others".* And according to him one of the biggest responsibilities of a placemaker is to assure that the stakeholder's table is complete, aggregating all the affected parties.

This difficulty in being able to include as many voices as possible is a real challenge for placemakers, because different groups prefer to be contacted in different ways. And this applies not just to underprivileged groups, such as refugees, but also children and elderly, men and woman. It is part of the job to find creative ways to address all these stakeholders, as they all have a piece of the puzzle to add to the discussion, according to how they see and perceive their surrounding environment. According to Interviewee 1, in order to achieve that, it is very important to build a network of informal leaders within each of these groups, to work as a link, while at the same time increasing trust among the different parties. These community leaders are what Eggersten (2019) presents as the Curator, working connecting people and opportunities, as well as the Involver, inviting others to take part in the process. For Interviewee 3, the best way to achieve that, to reach all these groups, is by making sincere contact:

"So to me, this is crucial that in every placemaking project you need to make sincere contact with the people you're doing it with, the people you are doing it for, but they're doing it themselves and we're guiding them, and we're coaching them. So it's... it's always... is their project, and we're helping them."

Interviewee 4 also suggests a similar approach, as some people have this pre-conception that the "system", or institutions, are not to be trusted. So for him, working for a municipality, what helps is trying to make it clear from the beginning that he is just another citizen of that same city: *"... and I'm working here because I love the city. So I'm not evil. I'm not the enemy... "Hey, let's make something great about it!" But taking people seriously, actually, maybe that's the... first step."*

These last two statements both present placemakers as having a role in the process as Facilitators (Eggersten, 2019), providing and teaching the required skills to be able to co-create a place with citizens.

Interviewee 2 expressed some concerns about it, presenting the placemaker as working also as a Negotiator, addressing possible conflicts that may arise. Eggersten (2019) presented this role as one not found in practice, but we disagree:

"I don't think that residents, if you put a resident at the table with the municipality with an idea straight one to one, I don't think their ideas will be accepted as quickly, unfortunately, simply because they missed the experience. And so I think that what our role is, mostly, to... I

guess… create a sort of equal level of professionalism, I guess, on the table."

Interviewee 1 talked about how things have changed in the spatial planning field since the 1980s, when he founded his company and started to work with public space, saying that by that time the Dutch municipalities were still very siloed, and people from different departments would be sitting in different rooms without talking to each other, perhaps not even meeting each other. Interviewee 4, who currently works for a Dutch municipality, also acknowledge that this situation has been changing in the past years: *"…what also helped is that since six years we are, as a city council, we are organized in just one building. The urban planners, the landscape architects and the traffic engineers are all in the same floor, and we don't have… we have this new type of office, where you don't have your own desk. So we're all mixed together. So suddenly it's much more interesting to listen to your colleagues."*

But he also explains that moving on towards a more integrated and interdisciplinary way of working was not an easy task, because *"… doing projects from a point of view of "let's do some placemaking", instead of "let's do it in the old traditional way", in making a more technical design, was a hell of a job, to be honest, and the most complicated issue on it was not to convince people in the streets, but to convince colleagues! Because what you have to do is… what you did already for 10 or 20 years, you just have to let it go and start from a different mindset"* (Interviewee 4). This presents us an idea of how much we have already achieved, in terms of inclusivity and planning for the human scale, but at the same time the work is far from being done.

Boonstra and Boelens (2011) argued that one of the reasons why attempts to increase participatory processes has failed is that incentives remain controlled by the government, which do not seem so adaptable to the new self-initiatives that have been rising, therefore not really capable of dealing with the complexity that it poses to the current structured systems. Nonetheless, if even the transport and mobility department of a Dutch municipality, which has a lot of money, and in this case consequently power for decision-making, is slowly transiting towards a more humanistic approach, this presents us a big motivation to keep putting pressure on the institutional systems that are still not used to applying placemaking methods:

"I'm still really, really happy that most of my traffic engineering colleagues thought "he is… he's stupid", "let him go", but now, I'm all the time the guy who is invited to participate and think ahead, so…" (Interviewee 4).

Interviewees 1 and 3 also touch upon this subject, suggesting that just getting angry about this more traditional way of thinking will not bring us anywhere, so the first step to overcome this barrier is trying to bridge the gap, acknowledging that the real state world also needs to make profits, but at the same time they do not need to be the only ones, as part of this profit could and should be brought back to the community where the project is happening. Working together with these different professionals is also a way to have more influence on them, working as a Negotiator, being a model presenting options that perhaps they are still not aware of.

Interviewees 1 and 3 also mentioned the term "zealous nuts" (or seller nuts), which both of them learned with Fred Kent, from Project for Public Spaces. It refers to the informal leaders of the community, who are always positive, optimistic and trying to do the best for their

neighbourhood, they are the *"people who are doing the extraordinary things"* (Interviewee 1):

"... and you are at a place and you look around and you go "Jesus Christ, what a mess". These people haven't, you know [...] and I understand why some people, in those neighbourhoods, feel proud and happy that that is their name. These are the people you need to talk to!" (Interviewee 3).

But of course some conflicts may arise from all these different opinions, believes and backgrounds. One example was given by Interviewee 5, when discussing about the project in Nijmegen (Case Study 1). During the Place Game, people were grouped together to analyse the public spaces of the neighbourhood, when *"... at some point there was like the coffee shop owner and another person, and they were just like "how could you invite this coffee shop owner, you can't do that!", but he's actually a really lovely guy, and really willing to invest in a lot of things that some of the other business owners are not even thinking about."* (Interviewee 5). In these cases the placemaker also needs to step up as a Negotiator, in order to provide a pleasant working environment among the different actors.

According to Interviewee 4, a new method that he has being using and that has been working pretty well is to have "pilot projects", which according to him should be the first step when transforming public spaces, instead of just presenting an abstract idea, or drawings in a piece of paper. One of the reasons is that in this way you have a real reference to present to people, where you can take them to see and understand what you are proposing. The other reason is just the psychological effect that the word "pilot" itself has, because *"if you say "it's a pilot project" people don't feel that uncomfortable, because if it fails, we will just get rid of it. But there was... there was something in the small letters... you get this?"*. This can be seen as an act of manipulation, since the way these stories are told, heard and weight might differ, therefore influencing decision-making. Also because these particular projects usually cost thousands of Euros, so once they are done it would be difficult to convince people to spend even more public money just to go back to the old situation. Van Hulst (2012) argues that we should be critical about storytelling processes, in order to assure they are democratic and inclusive. In this case we see it as a form of influence and persuasion, rather than a tool for participatory processes, and even though they are used to change the traditional planning mentality into ideas based on placemaking, we still do not completely agree with this methodology, which could be more sincere and transparent.

To conclude, the amount of stakeholders involved in a placemaking project can vary, but it is always high and involves mainly three groups: experts (placemakers, architects, planners), citizens (who provide the local knowledge), and institutions (regulations to be followed and funding when necessary). As presented by Eggersten (2019) and confirmed with the interviews and case studies, one actor can also play different roles depending on the situation, influencing differently the resulting socio-spatial outcome. A new stakeholder was presented by Interviewee 2, which was not found in the literature. She says that this stakeholder has not always been listened to, but is usually present in the public spaces. They are the "non-human" actors, mainly animals, who do not really have a voice in decisions, so they should be represented by someone with this ability. This could be a new placemaker role to be added: the Representative.

5.5 THEORIES & TRENDS

SQ 3: Is there a current trend in choosing specific places to be revitalized? If so, what are the consequences of that for the public space and its users?

Interviewee 1 recalls that he started his company in the end of the 1980s because he *"got very angry with the poor way that solutions have been developed at that moment... very poor quality of both the buildings and the public spaces [...] So yeah, already 25 years ago we were doing a lot of research on... how to get the better quality of the public spaces"*. And he is still very critical regarding the current developments that have been happening in the public realm, saying that creating sustainable places for the human scale and a vibrant social life is still *"not the normal thing"*, because considering the majority of what has been built, and rebuilt, they are still very globalized developments *"that basically could be anywhere"*, as they do not really dig into the context where they are, the local characteristics.

A big consequence of these standardized developments is that it might lead to gentrification, where new inhabitants move in to a neighbourhood, which then adapts for these incomers with new activities, new shops, perhaps higher rents, and consequently send away the citizens who live there. Interviewee 1 refers to this process as *"place washing"*, rather than placemaking, because in this case placemaking is used just to beautify an area, or to brand it, but just for the interest of the few people with enough money and power, which will then earn more money and power with that kind of intervention. This is done in many placemaking projects in the Netherlands, but also elsewhere, such as in the United States, with projects that are also *"totally white [...] and they come, and they start to do what they call "city making" or "stadmaken", and then they say... well this is a fantastic example of placemaking, whereas it's absolutely not true. It's whitewashing of a neighborhood!"* (Interviewee 3).

Of course improvements should be made, also because if people feel more responsible having a nice place to live, they will feel more comfortable with their own neighborhood and invest in it. Not only by money, but by taking care of it (Interviewee 4), which would then improve the spatial and also the social environment of that area.

Interviewee 3 explains that he is actually aware and feels part of the gentrification happening in his neighbourhood, but together with this process, there is also a lot of social housing being built, providing also a social mix. He says he is *"learning from the inside"*. So gentrification actually can have two sides, it is not completely favorable, but it is not simply bad and unacceptable, as there are lessons that can be taken from it. If a place is being targeted to become more sustainable, for instance, using new technologies that provide climate improvements and better quality of life for its residents, without disrupting the social structures, then *"it shouldn't be such a bad thing if places are targeted"* (Interviewee 5), for instance.

Interviewee 2 added that one way to measure a successful placemaking project is its durability, how long it lasts. She also presents the Theory of Change as a method she recently started to use to analyse placemaking projects, its processes and outcomes: *"it's sort of a way of thinking about what your goals are, what your target groups are, longer-term goals, shorter term goals, what are your tools and strategies to reach those goals, and how we're going to*

monitor and evaluate those goals".

The interviewees also mentioned more recent theories that they have been using throughout the various steps of the projects, for instance the Creativity theory, which assumes that creative people do not necessarily have better ideas, *"they have more ideas, and they have a better selection mechanism to select the winning ideas from the multitude of ideas they have."* (Interviewee 1). But also anthropology, and the notion that we need to become part of the "tribe", keeping the outsider's perspective at the same time (Interviewee 1), in order to be able to understand the needs and wishes of the community we are working for, and with, while at the same time using our expertise to complement what they are teaching us.

In the Netherlands, the focus of this study, we acknowledge places being targeted for interventions, but regarding placemaking projects, they tend to prioritize the human values and existing social characteristics. Project-driven projects are still common in the more corporative world of big construction companies as well as with public institutions. The goal now is finding ways to bridge these worlds, starting by working together exchanging knowledge and experiences.

5.6 TAKE AWAY MESSAGES: STRENGTHS & CHALLENGES

SQ 4: What can be learned from existing projects?

Placemaking is seen as a great method to transform places, but projects can also fail, and according to the data collected with the interviews and case studies, this might happen for several reasons, such as being done thinking only about the short-term immediate results, not considering long-term effects, or when projects are not inclusive and are done considering only one interest, such as a private investor (Interviewee 1). Failures could also happen when there are not enough funds to complete a project, and only the Place Game is completed, for instance (Interviewee 5). This last example can actually be even worse than doing nothing, because in this case you are getting people's hopes high, then cutting them off. The result would probably backfire, as these people will not easily trust again when someone comes promising to improve their neighbourhood. Therefore it is also important to built trust with the community we are working for, and together with, "*and trust comes by doing, not by talking*" (Interviewee 1).

All interviewees, even when not directly asked, also reflected about the lack of academic knowledge regarding placemaking. This can be, in part, because the concept itself is relatively new, as explained in the theoretical framework. But at the same time, it has being used for around 30 years, and there are still students of spatial planning and similar disciplines which graduate without never having heard about it. This missing link is then reflected in the public spaces and in the urban social life of the places being (re)developed by people lacking this kind of knowledge. What also happens is that *"... we keep falling back to the same research in the 80s, by William White, the whole time, because there is hardly any new research"* (Interviewee 1), and this is a gap that this study by itself will not be able to bridge, but it does serve as a

reminder that we have been moving forwards, paying more attention to the social part of public spaces, but we still have a long way to go.

Interviewee 4, for instance, who has a degree in Urban Planning, sent us a presentation with some projects in which he was part of the team, where one page had books about technical designs, in which he drew a cross on it, and then explained that *"that shouldn't be the starting point anymore. So, to be honest, when I studied urban planning, no one told me about what placemaking is. I think I'm part of a thing you can call placemaking, without knowing that I'm involved in placemaking"* (Interviewee 4). This is something to reflect about, since even the professionals who work close and together with placemakers and the placemaking movement are not aware of it. Furthermore, because of its interdisciplinary approach, placemaking is not something that only spatial planning students should be learning, but other professions which deal with public spaces and its social life as well, such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, architecture, urbanism and many others, because the challenges that our cities face are also multidisciplinary.

Another side of placemaking which is lacking attention is its sustainable function, which should not be mistaken with simply adding some greenery, as a sustainable environment is much more complex than that. The true sustainable projects are the ones that have been lasting for decades, even centuries, and there is where we might find the answers about the mechanisms that provide the means to that (Interviewee 1), to create long-lasting sustainable places that also have good impacts climate-related.

Another characteristic pointed out as a weakness of placemaking is its reputation, being known as a branding tool, or "quick and cheap", even though having sometimes a greater impact than bigger, expansive interventions. Besides, Interviewee 2 says that it is difficult for placemakers to be part of this sort of *"investment cycle"* present in the real state world: *"you're part of that cycle and you're being put in the cycle towards a goal that you don't necessarily support "*. She also referred to the fact that placemakers, even though they are an important stakeholder in placemaking projects, do not really have the final word on them: *"So you're always working for a client, and you're always there to sort of represent what you think the city should be like, but then again, yeah, you don't have the actual authority to make that happened."* (Interviewee 2), which might be a bit frustrating, and again is something that could be improved only with more deep institutional changes.

That is why it is also important to work together, and not against, the institutional partners, as Interviewee 1 explains, placemakers should work closer to them, in order to change those worlds from the inside out, and then approach the design community as well: *"So, I think that's where right now is still... the failure is "*, because there are still a lot of mechanisms present in the institutional frameworks that go against the idea of the human scale and the importance of the social life in public spaces. And citizens, by their right to vote, for instance, also have some kind of power here, to demand changes.

Interviewee 5 refers to the hidden parts of the process: *"... sometimes the invisibility of placemaking processes can be the most important ones"*, referring to the social aspects of the project, the bonds created, the increased social cohesion in the neighbourhood, for instance, or the sense of place and sense of responsibility that the residents acquire after a

placemaking intervention in their street. Every step has its importance and its own meaning, especially for the ones who are closely involved. For an outsider, for instance, *"it can be seen as sort of "oh, what are you doing here? Throwing a party in the street?"* (Interviewee 5), but behind the scenes something much bigger is happening. And this is also a challenge, how to make this side of placemaking more visible as well, because if it is not really visible then people tend to look over it, and if they do not see it, they cannot really value it, *"because it's not there"* (Interviewee 5). We argue that this is partly true, as we also believe that when we are in a place it is possible to feel its atmosphere and recognize if the place is liveable and lovable, even if not completely visible at first sight.

5.7 THE WORLD POST COVID-19

The events of 2020 related to Covid-19 came as a surprise for everyone, independently of age, race, nationality or economic power. It completely changed our personal and professional lives. In placemaking, specifically, it provided some insights about actions that we could already have been taking, but were not, perhaps because we are already too accommodated with standard procedures. Both interviewee 4, who works for a municipality, and Interviewee 1, who owns a placemaking company, say that Covid-19 is providing the chance to try out new things that would not be possible before, or at least would be much more difficult to be accepted. A project that would normally take 10 years to convince people to accept is now being done as a temporary solution, for instance (Interviewee4). And it does not mean that it cannot become something permanent, it is just the starting process that suddenly became easier to accomplish.

Besides, many cities were not capable of providing shelter for the homeless, and now because of Covid-19 these same cities show they are actually capable of doing that (Interviewee 1), so we are learning something, because if this is possible under such severe circumstances, we should be able to do it later on as well.

Nevertheless, disruptions have already happened in our history, such as wars or other kinds of pandemic diseases. They were also very destructive, but at the same time they provided opportunities for us to learn and to grow. Interviewee 4 compared the current Covid-19 situation with the Second World War, saying that in the end it brought also a lot of good, such as the beginning of the European Union, and the awareness that it is better to work together instead of fight with each other, so perhaps Covid-19 might also bring something good in the end.

We are already observing the creativity of regular citizens in dealing with this crisis, by painting circles or squares respecting the minimum distance, shop owners and merchants developing bubble-shape spaces, neighbours helping each other doing groceries for the ones in the risk groups. It is inspiring to see how local communities managed to self-organize. And this also highlights the importance of local networks, having someone to rely on, as well as the importance of having nice public spaces in a close distance, where kids can safely play, and where people can take some time off, without risking themselves.

But the future is still unpredictable and unknown, and this uncertainty might be as destructive as the events themselves. Interviewee 3, also referring back to WWII, argued that

back then at least there was an idea about where we were heading to, there would be an end, while now we have this 1,5 meter society which we have no idea how long it will stay with us.

Therefore, this 1,5m society should not be considered and advertised as the "new normal", but instead as the "temporary abnormal", in order to keep people's hopes and dreams alive, to believe that there will be a world and a life to go back to after we win this battle, together. Moreover, at least now we have the awareness that something similar might happen, a new virus, or a different natural disaster, and how big the impact can be to all levels of society. One of the main lessons we can take from this is that, like during WWII, it is better to work together and support each other in order to achieve the greater good, in this case our own survival.

CONCLUSION

6

6.1 CONCLUSION

Placemaking can be on the one hand a very practical way of working, approaching the city and its citizens, but on the other hand it also has a lot of theories and values underneath it. The motto from Project for Public Spaces (n/a) "it takes a place to create a community and a community to create a place" summarizes that, and brings out the idea that cities should be made for everyone, and by everyone, as places are experienced differently by different people, and this should be accounted for in planning.

Currently many governments, the Dutch government included, are incentivizing active citizenship, giving more weight to the role of individual responsibility and citizens' initiatives, aiming at making a stronger society by getting people to work together with more power and responsibilities. This trend can be seen as a transition process, as a "shift from government to governance" (Van Dam, Salverda and During, 2014). Placemaking can then function as a tool for people to collectively reinvent public spaces as the heart of their community or neighbourhood. Reshaping a place together can maximize and strengthen the connection between places and the people that share those places, more than just promoting a better design, but also incentivizing creativity and collaboration, considering the identities that define the place, its path-dependency and possible evolutions.

In this way, placemaking can be seen the same way as meditation. When a person is meditating, it does not really matter if she is done, what really matters is how the process of meditating happened, if it was truly mindful. One needs to be completely immersed into it, with all her senses, at the same time being aware of what is happening around. It is the same with placemaking, as sometimes a public space is redeveloped and the physical part of the project is concluded, but all the other layers attached to it do not really change, so people are not able to enjoy and perceive the real impact that process could have had.

According to Dyer, Corsini and Certomà (2017), one of the main obstacles in increasing public participation in projects of urban design has been the practicality of finding enough citizens willing to participate. Cilliers and Timmermans (2014) highlight that the level of participation of each stakeholder should be made clear in the beginning of the process, and this would then differentiate what is just participation and what is good participation. Both the case studies and the interviews analysed in this research provide valuable information regarding how to address community groups in order to increase public participation. Citizens need to be sincerely approached as equals, making it clear from the beginning that we, planners and placemakers, are working for and learning from them. Assuring that both the expertise of spatial planners and the local knowledge of citizens are applied together, and that knowledge and skills are shared, as previously presented in the Arnstein's ladder with placemaking moving on from Partnership towards Delegated Power, can then be a first step towards improving the quality of public spaces and consequently the quality of life of their users.

Kaw, Lee & Wahba (2020) present tactical urbanism as a way to start small changes as a low-cost and temporary intervention, using simpler transformations. These changes, if well managed, can then become a permanent intervention, and then function as a stimulus to broader strategies, that are usually used for bigger developments. Short and long-term

approaches are therefore not mutually exclusive (Kaw, Lee & Wahba, 2020). Covid-19 presented us some opportunities to start working more in this way, developing short-term solutions that can then become permanent, many of them self-initiated by citizens, serving a lesson that can and should continue to be applied afterwards, since if it is possible to do it within the chaos of a pandemic, it should not be a problem to continue applying this method in the usual circumstances.

More systemic institutional changes need to happen as well, as public sectors, in the Netherlands and abroad, still tend to see themselves as being above citizens and planners, and the result of such power, or feeling of power, contributes to top-down solutions that are presented in one way and done in another, creating and increasing inequalities, such as housing affordability and the consequent access of nearby public spaces. Targeting the upgrade of low-income neighbourhoods using social mix and economic growth to mask what most of the time is actually gentrification and commercial development hides the true story, which is the displacement of lower-income residents, and exclusion of potential lower-income citizens. As an alternative to this, Fincher, Shaw and Pardy (2016) propose to use placemaking to provide equitable access for residents and for businesses, together with developments that consider the existing inhabitants of a specific community as well as their local needs and values, since "placemaking for social equity involves strengthening the inside, while inviting the outside in".

Besides straightening the connection between placemakers and institutions, other professions should also take part in the process more often. In order to address the multitude of issues present in cities, a multitude of actors and knowledge is needed, including spatial planners, psychologists, designers, engineers, and many more. And this embodiment should start at schools and universities, teaching and working in a more multidisciplinary way, reflecting about existing theories that provide great insights, without forgetting to link them with practical experiences in the public realm.

Furthermore, we also argue that more often and more complete evaluations should be done regarding placemaking projects. And placemaking processes should go through an evaluation as well, during and after completion, just like the end-product, as they are interconnected and one might reflect the success (or failure) of the other. This is something that for different reasons is not usually done, but the analysed evaluation reports confirmed that projects that went thought it, such as case studies 2 and 4, managed to be more conscious about the steps taken, as well as the ones to make, and coincidently or not both of them last until today, in a continuous cycle of improvements and adaptations.

A good public space is also beneficial for the development of a sense of place among its users, and this happens when a place is planned for the human scale, transforming a place where people do not want to go, and when they go immediately want to leave, into a place where people look forward to go and once they are there, do not want to leave.

Placemaking can then be the mechanism to assit all these changes, supporting the creation of People Places, providing that it is done **in a multidisciplinary way, integrating different actors, and critically reflecting about the lessons learned with each experience, in order to create flexible and adaptable places** that are liveable, lovable, and that can continue to be sustainably improved for generations to come.

To conclude, the main contribution of this research for the planning discipline was identifying some of the best practices currently being applied in placemaking projects, in order for them to be acknowledged in new developments aiming at improving the quality of public spaces and consequently the satisfaction of their users. Nevertheless, because of the spontaneity of placemaking, this study could still benefit from further research in order to bridge the current gap between placemaking theory and practice.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study complements the academic research in the field of socio-spatial planning, specifically regarding the relatively new subject of placemaking, which still remains with some gaps open between its theory and practice. The aim was to provide a comparative study among placemaking projects in order to identify what are the best practices being developed and why some of them work better than others. These findings were presented in the previous chapters, but improvements could still be done.

Because of the implicatoins caused by Covid-19 and the impossibility to interview citizens, this study had to take a shift from a focus on participatory processes towards a broader subject, related to the best practices in placemaking, as the researcher understood that maintaining the same line of reasoning interviewing just experts would result in biased conclusions. But in order to provide more depth to the findings of this research, data could be collected for a longer period of time, interviewing more participants and not only experts, with the aim of having a better understanding of the impressions regarding the participatory processes within placemaking projects. Joining a Place Game and participatory meetings could help with that.

Furthermore, to complement the information from the case studies, combined with the evaluation reports and the interviews, on-site observations should also be done, together with formal interviews or even informal conversations with the users of the public space where the project took place. The qualitative results could be combined with spatial GIS data, applying mixed methods to analyse before and after situations. This would provide a better insight not only about the public space where the project took place, but also the demographic changes and effects happening considering entire neighbourhoods.

We believe that the four case studies presented here already provide a good load of information regarding differences, similarities, strenghts and challenges within placemaking projects. However, because of the unpredictability and non-standardized nature of placemaking, more case studies could be analysed and compared as well.

To conclude, most of the case studies and the interviews are from the Randstad region, and this choice was made because currently the majority of the placemaking companies and projects are there. However, other regions of the country could also be analysed, as well as a comparison between placemaking done in the Netherlands and other countries.

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APPENDIX

8

8.1 APPENDIX A: CODE OCCURRENCE TABLE

CODE GROUP	CODE	OCCURRENCE	REPRESENTATIVE QUOTE
Placemaking & Public Spaces	Neighbourhood	14	"it's a method to include local stakehodlers in urban development, primarily public spaces" (Interviewee 2)
	Place	18	
	Placemaking	59	
	Public Space	7	
	Sense of Place	8	
	Values	13	
Placemaking Processes	Collaboration	30	"the community is the expert and we are the tools" (Interviewee 3)
	Context	22	
	Evaluation	28	
	Forms of Participation	28	
	Management	11	
	Steps	12	
Participatory Placemaking	Coalitions	27	"is crucial that in every placemaking project you need to make sincere contact with the people you're doing it with, the people you're doing it for" (Interviewee 3)
	Experiences	31	
	Leadership	5	
	Power relations	13	
	Roles	25	
	Seller-nuts	6	
	Stakeholders	6	
	Trust	11	
Trends	Research	7	"we try to change how... we think... not citizens participation, but participation from the city towards the citizens should be" (Interviewee 4)
	Social Equity	3	
	Targets	8	
	Theories	10	
Lessons	Academia	4	"sometimes the invisibility of placemaking processes can be the most important ones" (Interviewee 5)
	Challenges	35	
	Empowerment	8	
	Gentrification	21	
	Inequality	7	
	Strengths	20	
	Sustainability	7	
Covid-19	Covid-19	30	"we are becoming aware of the importance of great neighbourhood places" (Interwiewee 1)

Figure 31: Code Occurrence Table (Author, 2020).
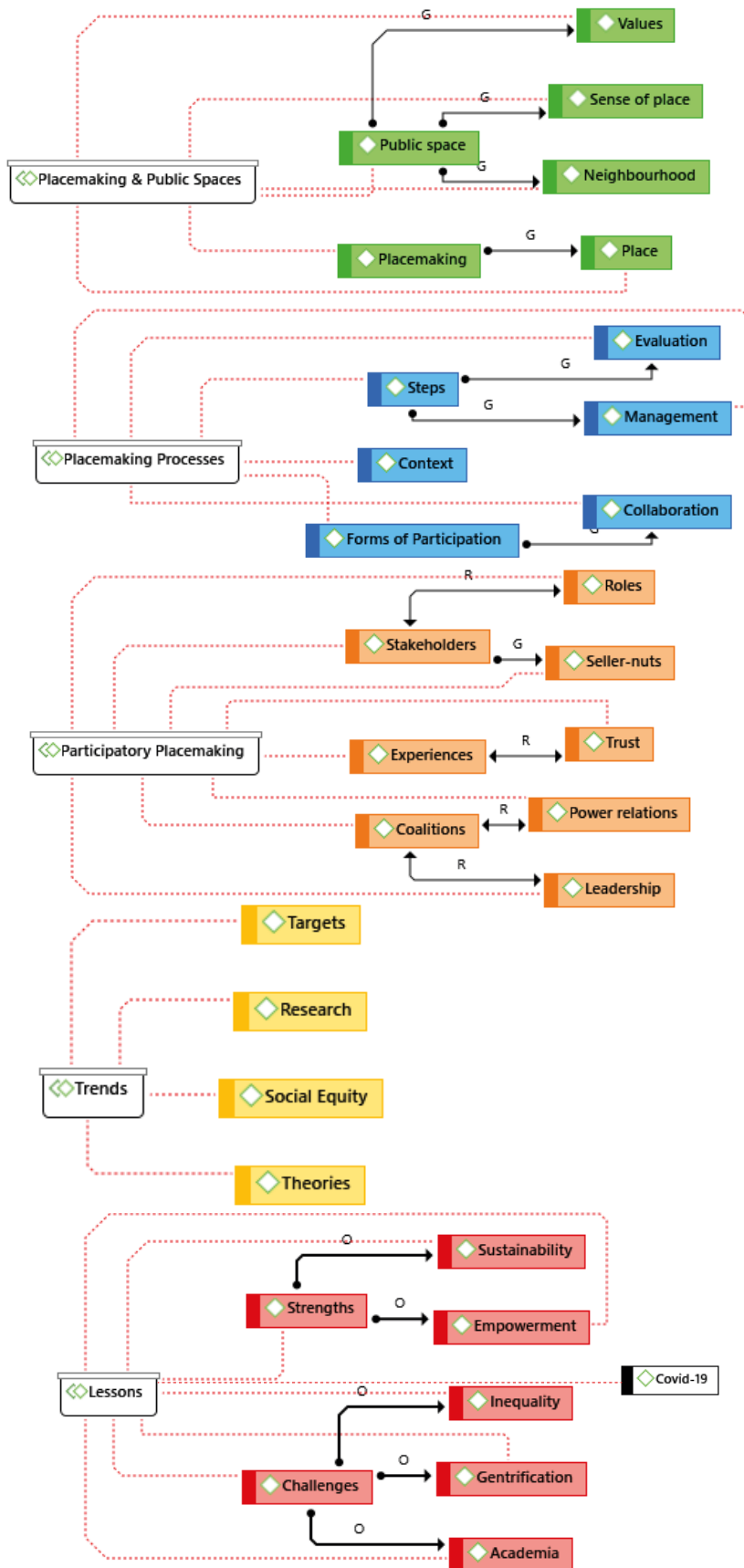
8.2 APPENDIX B: CODE TREE

Figure 32: Code Tree retrieved from Atlas.ti (Author, 2020). Legend: G: is part of, R: is associated with, O: is a.

8.3 APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE EXPERTS

Introductory questions

1. What is your degree? Which was your field of study?

2. Do the people that work with you share similar backgrounds?

3. For how long have you being working in this company/office?

4. For how long have you being working with placemaking?

5. What is exactly your role, as a professional, in these projects?

6. What made you choose this field to focus your career on?

7. In your opinion, what is placemaking?

8. How is placemaking different from other kinds of projects happening in the public realm?

How do different processes of placemaking happen?

9. How does a placemaking development start?

Who are the initiators? Public x private, TD x BU

What is the first step taken?

10. Do you have a certain protocol to follow or is the process different for each case?

11. On average, how long does it take to complete each step of the process?

12. Which kind of tools do you use when developing a placemaking project?

How each of the stakeholders is involved? What are their roles?

13. Which stakeholders are involved in a placemaking project?

14. What is the role of each of them? (not just your company, everybody involved)

Who decides that?

And after? Maintenance responsibility

15. Do they all have the same power for suggestions and for decision making?

16. Do you identify a leader in the projects? Is your company one of them?

17. Do you think that the aspirations of all stakeholders are/can be achieved by the end of the process?

Why? Or why not? What could be done differently then?

18. Placemaking is about creating plural, accessible and participatory places. How can we increase public participation in placemaking?

What are the criteria to choose specific public places to be revitalized?

19. Which areas are currently the main targets for placemaking projects?

Abandoned, empty, in decay, rich x deprived neighbourhoods...

20. Do you think placemaking could backfire and just create a process of gentrification?

What could be done to avoid that?

What can be learned from existing projects?

21. What are the main strengths of placemaking?

22. What are the main challenges for placemaking?

23. What makes the outcome of a placemaking project successful?

How can we evaluate that?

Is it possible to generalize this for future plans?

Do you have examples of "good" and "bad" placemaking projects?

24. Do you think placemaking is just a trend or is it something that is here to stay and actually compete with traditional planning?

Implications related to Covid-19

25. How the social distancing regulations will affect (or are already affecting) participatory placemaking?

Cancelled? Online alternatives?

26. How can we, planners and designers of public spaces, help to deal with this Corona outbreak? Considering the physical public space, but also the people that use it (the ones who do not have a home to stay, for instance)?

Do you have anything to add? Something that we did not discuss so far that you think could be relevant?

Thank you!

8.4 APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE CITIZENS

(this one was not used)

Introductory questions
1. How old are you?
2. What is your degree?
3. When did you first hear about placemaking?
4. Have you participated in other projects?

Were you invited to participate or did you ask to be included?

Where did they happen? City, neighbourhood

Which similarities and differences did you observe among them?

5. In your opinion, what is placemaking?

How do different processes of placemaking happen?
6. What would you say is your role in the process?

Do you participate since the beginning?

Do you share responsibilities?

7. What made you choose to participate in this (and previous) projects?

How did you get to know about it?

Did you invite your friends, family to participate also?

8. Which kind of tools do you use when participating in a placemaking project?

How each of the stakeholders is involved? What are their roles?
9. Do you have specific roles or each one can participate the way he/she thinks fits best?
10. Do you all have the same power for suggestions and for decision making?

Do you believe you have the authority/skills to develop your own initiative?

11. Do you think that the aspirations of all stakeholders are/can be achieved by the end of the process?

Why? Or why not? What could be done differently then?

12. Placemaking is about creating plural, accessible and participatory places. How can we increase public participation in placemaking?

What are the criteria to choose specific public places to be revitalized?
13. Do you think placemaking could backfire and just create a process of gentrification? (explain what it is)

What could be done to avoid that?

What can be learned from existing projects?

14. What are the main strengths of placemaking?
15. What are the main challenges for placemaking?
16. What makes the outcome of a placemaking project successful?

How can we evaluate that?

Do you have examples of "good" and "bad" placemaking projects?

17. After participating in this project(s), would you say you gained enough knowledge to start a placemaking project by our own?

18. Would you like to participate in more projects in the future? Why?

Do you have anything to add? Something that we did not discuss so far that you think could be relevant?

Thank you!

8.5 APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT

Concerns: Master Thesis | Improving public spaces in the Randstad: the outcomes of placemaking developments according to different participatory processes.

Hereby I declare to have been informed clearly about the nature, method and aim of the research project.

I understand that:
• I can stop my cooperation to this research at any moment and without giving a reason.
• Data will be processed anonymously, without being traceable to the person.
• The video/voice-recording will be destroyed after the transcription of the interview.

I declare that I:
• Join this research project completely voluntary.
• Allow the results of this interview to be used in a report or scientific publication.
• Grant permission to record this online interview by way of a video/voice-record.

Signature: ....

Name: ....

Date: ....

Researcher: I gave explanation about the nature, method and aim of the research project.
I declare myself as being prepared to answer up-and-coming questions properly.

Signature: ....

Name: ....

Date: ....

8.6 APPENDIX F: TRANSCRIPTIONS

The transcriptions of the interviews can be found through the following link, after asking the researcher's approval for access:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MObn2FU7gTggfKLkFSsCU2r2at_ovA-v/view?usp=sharing