



# PLACE ATTACHMENT IN A NEIGHBOURHOOD WITH PLANNING FAILURE

A HAARLEMMERBUURT - AMSTERDAM CASE STUDY



university of  
groningen

Hellen Uri

[h.uri@student.rug.nl](mailto:h.uri@student.rug.nl)

s3786072

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Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Faculty of Spatial Sciences

Supervisor: K. Bandsma

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## Summary

Place attachment plays an important role in revitalization efforts in the neighbourhood. Whilst place attachment is a widely studied concept, there is a lack of understanding in place attachment with regards to planning failure. Therefore this thesis aims to identify place attachment in a neighbourhood with planning failure. To research this, a case study of unfunctional tramrails in the Haarlemmerbuurt in Amsterdam is examined. This case is unique since the tramrails have never been used and are part of the neighbourhood for over 30 years.

Two dimensions of place attachment (place identity and place dependence) together with three dimensions of place (physical shape, symbolic shape and institutional shape) have been investigated with the help of a questionnaire amongst inhabitants of the Haarlemmerbuurt. Subsequently, four semi-structured interviews were carried out in order to deepen the understandings.

The results have shown that respondents are moderately strong attached to the neighbourhood.

Whereas place identity is moderate to strong, place dependence appeared to be weak to moderate.

Respondents show a relative positive attitude towards the physical and institutional shape of the planning failure. Towards the symbolic shape respondents show a neutral attitude.

It is recommended to conduct further research into the relationship between place attachment and planning failure. This will be helpful in order to clarify whether or not place attachment to a neighbourhood is influenced by planning failure.

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## 1. Introduction

Bridges to nowhere, white elephants, or in French *Grands travaux inutiles*, are unsuccessful infrastructural investment projects that result in negative social outcomes (Robinson & Trovik, 2005), also referred to as planning failure. Whereas especially Belgium is known for these *Grands travaux inutiles*, the Netherlands also owns some. One sector in which this phenomenon is existing in the Netherlands is public transport. Because public transport, especially bus, tram and metro, are mostly used in urban areas (CBS, 2019), Amsterdam is a relevant study area. The municipal public transport operator of Amsterdam (GVB), reports that Amsterdam consists of five metro lines, 43 bus lines and 14 tram lines (GVB, 2021). As a result, planning failures such as unfinished metro tunnels, never used stations and semi-built tram lanes are all part of the city of Amsterdam. This research focusses on one case, namely an unfinished, never used tramrails in the Haarlemmer Houttuinen in the Haarlemmerbuurt in Amsterdam.

### *1.1. Research problem*

While unfinished public transport projects in Amsterdam are often not functional, they are part of the physical, symbolic and institutional shape of the place. Consequently, its users can have a certain positive affective bond with the place (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001). This bond is called place attachment and evolves through emotional connection, meaning and understanding of the place. Place attachment is found to play an important role in revitalization efforts in the neighbourhood (Manzo et al., 2006). Moreover, when citizens do not stay long enough to develop any emotional connection to the place, they are less likely to work with neighbours and local agencies to improve the neighbourhood. In addition, residents with a stronger sense of place attachment are more likely to feel the desire to protect the social and physical characteristics of the neighbourhood (Anton, 2016). For these reasons this thesis focusses on place attachment in a neighbourhood with a planning failure along with how the planning failure is perceived by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

### *1.2. Academic and societal relevance*

Most existing research about planning failure is done in political science, trying to explain the factors contributing to the policy failure. For example Daniel et al. (2019) study the politics and risks in infrastructure projects and the role of private entities in public-private partnerships. And a study by Robinson and Torvik (2015) explains the misallocation of investment as a result of political difficulties. Furthermore there are recent studies into the effects of policy failure. For instance, a study that analyses the effects of public infrastructure investment is done by Leduc and Wilson (2012). They show the dynamic economic effects of successful and unsuccessful investments. However, little is known about the effect of planning failures on people. Moreover, there is little to no research in planning failure in relation to inhabitants of the neighbourhood in which the planning failure is present. For planners it is important to better understand the relationship of people with places with a planning failure. This is mainly because, as explained in paragraph 1.1, the bonds people have with places, play a crucial role in participatory planning processes of the neighbourhood (Manzo et al., 2006). Consequently, this study can provide spatial planners with insights needed for place attachment development.

It should be noted that when planning failure is part of the neighbourhood it can affect people's place attachment. According to Gesler (1991) positive meanings of people attached to places, contribute to sustaining health and well-being. Moreover, factors such as meanings, value, symbolic landscape and experiences in a sense of place are sources for human health and well-being (Williams, 1998).

Therefore, it is socially relevant to study the human relations with a neighbourhood including a planning failure.

### *1.3. Research questions*

Given the need for research into place attachment in relation to planning failure, this research aims to explore inhabitant's place attachment in a neighbourhood with planning failure. To research this, a case study of unfunctional tramrails in the Haarlemmer Houttuinen is examined. The main research question that follows from this is:

What is the relationship between place attachment and planning failure in the Haarlemmerbuurt in Amsterdam?

In order to answer the main research question, four sub-questions have been formulated.

The first two sub-questions will form the theoretical framework and the conceptual model;

- 1) Which factors affect place attachment?
- 2) What is a planning failure?

The third sub-question will be answered through empirical research;

- 3) How are inhabitants of the Haarlemmerbuurt attached to the neighbourhood?
- 4) How do inhabitants of the Haarlemmerbuurt feel about the planning failure in the Haarlemmer Houttuinen?

### *1.4. Reading guide*

This thesis consist of 6 chapters. Following from this introductory chapter, chapter 2 will explain the relevant theories and concepts of this study. The relationships between the theories and concepts are demonstrated and visualised by the conceptual model. Then, chapter 3 describes which methods are used in order to answer the research questions. In this chapter the selected case is elaborated on as well. Chapter 4 provides the results and a discussion of the results. Thereafter chapter 5 will conclude the research by answering the main-research question and giving future recommendations. Finally, chapter 6 reflects upon the methodological and personal research process.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### *2.1. Place attachment*

Place attachment consist of both a spatial and a human component. However, in previous studies other concepts comprising of a spatial and a human component are used intertwined with place attachment, such as ‘sense of place’ and ‘sense of community’. But from the year 2001 onwards, there seemed to exist a consensus in the use of the concept place attachment (Hidalgo, 2001). Hence, Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) define place attachment as: “a positive affective bond between an individual and a specific place, the main characteristic of which is the tendency of the individual to maintain closeness to such a place”. This definition is partly based on Low (1992) who identifies the cognitive and emotional meaning people give to a certain place. Furthermore, Low argues that place attachment includes a cultural belief that is embedded in a cultural milieu. The other part of the definition of place attachment by Hidalgo holds the natural and main characteristic of attachment studied by Ainsworth and Bell (1970): the desire to maintain closeness to the object of attachment. Most often two dimensions of place attachment are considered.

First, an emotional dimension, often called place identity, and a functional dimension, often called place dependence (Jansen, 2020). Place identity is first defined by Proshansky (1978) as: “those dimensions of self that define the individual’s personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, feelings, values, goals, preferences, skills, and behavioural tendencies relevant to a specific environment”. However, research by Peng et al. (2020) stresses the importance of noticing two types of place identity: peoples place identity and place identity of place. Peoples place identity refers to “individuals’ personalities related to places that are significant in the formation of their identities” and place identity of place is; “the personality of the place. Such personality is, in most occasions, ascribed by people to the place where they live or that they care about” (Peng et al, 2020). According to Moore (1994) the level of place identity is predicted by how long the person is associated with the place, the importance they ascribe to the place and by the level of place dependence.

The functional dimension of place attachment, place dependence, can be viewed as the goal-setting dimension. It has to do with: “the opportunities and the setting affords for fulfilment of specific goals or activity needs” (Williams, 1995). More specific, could be stated that the more a place meets a person’s needed activities and goals, the more the person is dependent on the place (Anton, 2016). Research reveals that the level of place dependence is related to the distance between residents home and the frequency of use of the examined place (Moore, 1994).

### *2.2. Planning failure*

As illustrated in paragraph 1.1 ascertaining a public infrastructure investment as a planning failure is subjective. For example one can view a public infrastructure investment as a bridge to nowhere while others view it as an effective form of government spending either for the short-term or the long-term (Leduc and Wilson, 2012). According to McConnel (2015), policy failure is mostly a political issue because of conflict over what has caused the failure. Yet, planning failure is not just a matter of perception. In the case of this research, the tramrails are present for 35 years. Since the construction, they have never been used. Therefore, the tramrails can be viewed as a disruption to place. A disruption to place evolves as individuals try to make sense of what has happened or what might happen (Brown and Perkins, 1992). Moreover, people perceive place on the basis of three dimensions; the physical shape, the symbolic shape and the institutional shape (Paasi, 2002). The physical shape is the spatial characterisation, such as the shape and the land-use. The symbolic shape is about the name of the place and landmarks, for example whether or not something is seen as the symbol for a place. Lastly, the planning failure may reflect the institutional design of a place, in terms of government,

agreements and responsibilities. Altogether, the process in which individuals attach to a place is symbolized by the qualities of that place (Quazimi, 2014).

2.3. Conceptual model

People can attach to places on various scales. An individual for example can attach to a house, a street, a city or a nation. But, like most studies do, this research studies place attachment on the neighbourhood level. First of all the planning failure studied in this case can be seen as part of the neighbourhood. Secondly, the neighbourhood level is seen as the preferred level of attachment while it shows greater attachment than other spatial scales (Hidalgo, 2001).

The conceptual model in figure 2.1 visualises how the main concepts in this thesis are interrelated. As discussed in paragraph 2.1, place attachment is comprised of two dimensions; an emotional dimensions, place identity, and a functional dimensions, place dependence. Together they form an individual’s place attachment. Place attachment relates to the a certain place. In this research the relationship between place attachment and a neighbourhood with planning failure is investigated. As discussed in paragraph 2.2, people perceive place on the basis of three dimensions; the physical shape, the symbolic shape and the institutional shape. So, the planning failure consequently can also be perceived by the three dimensions identified in the model below.

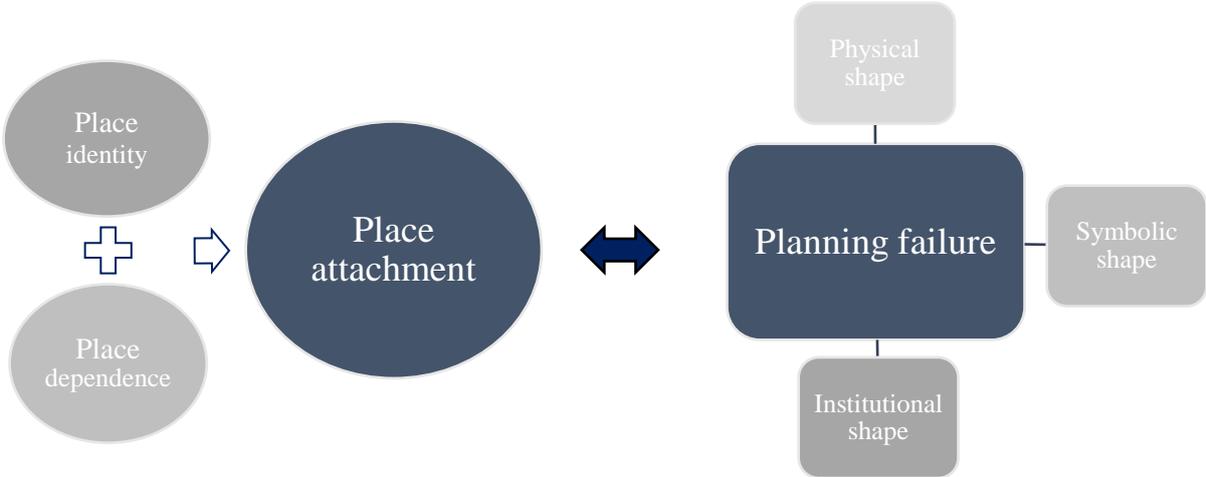


Figure 2.1: Conceptual model (Author, 2021)

### 3. Methodology

The data is collected via a single-case study research in Amsterdam. One public transport failure in Amsterdam is selected on the basis of its physical appearance in the city. This case study approach allows for profound and integral knowledge on a specific object in practice (Clifford, 2016).

#### 3.1. Case description Haarlemmerbuurt and the tramrails

The tramrails are present in the Haarlemmer Houttuinen. The Haarlemmer Houttuinen is a road located west of the central station of Amsterdam and north of the city centre (figure 3.1). The road consists of two car lanes with in the middle a bus lane. On both sides of the car lanes there are bicycle lanes present. Figure 3.2 shows the location of the two tramrails between the two car lanes.



*Figure 3.1 : Location of Haarlemmer Houttuinen in Amsterdam (Author, 2021) & figure 3.2: Haarlemmer Houttuinen*

On the northeast side of the Haarlemmer houttuinen the train rails are located. The train rails are elevated relative to the Haarlemmerbuurt. Except for the part of the road crossing the water. This part of the Haarlemmerhouttuinen is elevated as well (figure 3.3).



*Figure 3.3: Elevated part of the Haarlemmer houttuinen*

The elevated train rails divides the Haarlemmerbuurt into two parts; the westelijke eilanden in the north and Haarlemmerbuurt west and Haarlemmerbuurt oost in the south (see figure 3.4). Because the Haarlemmer houttuinen is adjacent to Haarlemmerbuurt west and Haarlemmerbuurt oost, the focus of this study is on these two neighbourhoods. Figure 3.5 shows the location of the neighbourhoods in relation to the tramrails.



Figure 3.4: Location of the tramrails & Haarlemmerbuurt west & east (Author, 2021) & figure 3.5 Haarlemmerbuurt (left) in relation to the Haarlemmer houttuinen (right)

The elevated road (Brug 95) was constructed around 1971. Thereafter, around 1985, the plan arose to connect the central station with the Haarlemmerplein (on the western end of the Haarlemmer Houttuinen) by a tram (Kruyswijk, 2017). So therefore the tramrails were constructed. The reason why the rails have never been used is unclear. According to a local councillor the elevated road is too angular for a tram to function properly (Kruyswijk, 2017). On online platforms people argue there was not enough subsidy to finish the tramrails with an overhead wire. Nevertheless, until today, the tramrails are present and no tram has ever passed.

### 3.2. Methods

In order to answer the central research question; *“What is the relationship between place attachment and planning failure in the Haarlemmerbuurt in Amsterdam?”* two types of data will be collected. First, to answer the sub-questions; *“Which factors affect place attachment?”* and: *“What is a planning failure?”* scientific literature on place attachment and planning failures is gathered and analysed. The literature study helps to form a theoretical framework and subsequently a conceptual model. The variables derived from the literature study are the basis for the primary data collection. Second, primary data will answer the third and the fourth sub-questions; *“How are inhabitants of the Haarlemmerbuurt attached to the neighbourhood?”* and: *“How do inhabitants of the Haarlemmerbuurt think about the planning failure in the Haarlemmer Houttuinen?”*. This data is collected via questionnaires and interviews. The data of the questionnaires will describe the situation of the inhabitants in relation to the neighbourhood and in relation to the planning failure. Consequently the in-depth interviews will be useful to deepen the questionnaire findings. This is done in order to

explore inhabitants' perceptions, attitudes, experiences, behaviours and spatial interaction with the neighbourhood including the planning failure (Clifford, 2016).

### 3.3. Data collection

Participants of the questionnaire are recruited via letterbox invites. 350 invites (see appendix 1) have been spread out randomly through the neighbourhood of Haarlemmerbuurt west and Haarlemmerbuurt oost. Because this collection method made use of letterboxes, only inhabitants of the assigned neighbourhood are part of the study. The invite includes a QR-code and a link to the questionnaire which is made in Qualtrics. The collected data will be stored in Qualtrics.

The participants for the interviews are inhabitants of the Haarlemmerbuurt west and Haarlemmerbuurt oost as well. Two participants of the interview are recruited via the questionnaire. These two participants used the e-mail address on the questionnaire invite to get in contact. Thereafter, they were invited for a follow-up interview. The other two participants are recruited via social contacts. The interviews are recorded by a voice recorder.

### 3.4. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire follows a within-subject design. The within-subject design allows for testing the individual on place attachment, and place attachment in relation to the planning failure in one questionnaire. Charness et al. (2012) argue; "As long as there is independence of the two exposures, causal estimates can be obtained by examining how individual behaviour changed when the circumstances of the experiment changed". To minimize potential carry-over effect, the order of the two treatments, and questions, will be varied (Bordens, 2011).

The questionnaire is split up in 3 blocks. The first block consist of general questions and is provided to everyone first. The other two blocks are presented in varied orders. Figure 3.6 shows the questions asked in the questionnaire. One block targets the variables of place attachment (divided into place identity and place dependence). The place attachment measuring items are taken from a study by Williams and Vaske (2003). These items are studied several times and have shown strong reliability and internal consistency (Williams, 1995). The items were presented in a 5-points scale ranging from 1: strongly agree to 5: strongly disagree. The other block focuses on the three dimensions of the planning failure. These questions are based on the three dimensions of place by Peng et al. (2020): physical shape, symbolic shape and institutional shape.

|  |
|--|
| <b>Place attachment</b>  |
| <i>Place identity</i>  |
| I feel the neighbourhood I live in is part of me   |
| The neighbourhood I live in is very special to me  |
| I identify strongly with this neighbourhood  |
| I am very attached to this neighbourhood   |
| Visiting this neighbourhood says a lot about who I am  |
| This neighbourhood means a lot to me   |
| <i>Place dependence</i>  |
| This neighbourhood is the best place for what I like to do                                     |
| No other place can compare to this neighbourhood   |
| I get more satisfaction out of visiting this neighbourhood than any other                      |
| Doing what I do in this neighbourhood is more important to me than doing it in any other place |

|  |
|--|
| I wouldn't substitute any other neighbourhood for doing the types of things I do in this neighbourhood |
| The things I do in this neighbourhood I would enjoy doing just as much at a similar neighbourhood      |
| <b>Public transport failures</b>   |
| <i>Physical shape</i>  |
| I know the public transport failure is present in the landscape  |
| Times I see the public transport failure   |
| I can see the public transport failure if I look out of my window                                      |
| <i>Symbolic shape</i>  |
| I feel this neighbourhood is known for the public transport failure                                    |
| I have memories about the (building of) public transport failure                                       |
| I'm getting used to the fact that is present   |
| <i>Institutional shape</i>   |
| I feel like the public transport failure is an addition to the neighbourhood                           |
| I feel like the public transport failure should not have been built                                    |
| I would like to be involved in the future planning for the public transport failure                    |

Figure 3.6: Variables included in the questionnaire

### 3.5. Interview design

The interviews are held in a semi-structured way. This implies that the questions asked are predetermined. But participants are offered the change to explore the issues that they feel are important (Clifford, 2016). This approach allows for in-depth information on the topic. Appendix 2 shows the interview guide including the questions. As well as the questionnaire, the interview questions are divided into; place attachment, containing questions on place identity and place dependence, and the planning failure, containing questions on physical, symbolic and institutional shape. All interviews were held via the phone and in Dutch. Figure 3.7 provides information on the interviews.

| Interviewee ( <i>in text</i> ) | Date of interview | Period of residency | Previous residency |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Interviewee 1 ( <i>I-1</i> )   | 27/04/2021        | 16 years            | Amsterdam Oost     |
| Interviewee 2 ( <i>I-2</i> )   | 28/04/2021        | 16 years            | Amsterdam West     |
| Interviewee 3 ( <i>I-3</i> )   | 03/05/2021        | 21 years            | Amsterdam Zuid     |
| Interviewee 4 ( <i>I-4</i> )   | 03/05/2021        | 25 years            | Amsterdam Centrum  |

Figure 3.7: Interview overview

### 3.6. Data analysis

The aim of the data analysis is to describe the questionnaire data by the use of descriptive statistics. The data collected and stored by Qualtrics is exported into a excel format. First the general data and the data on the planning failure is analysed in excel. Thereafter, the degree of place attachment is analysed by the use of quantitative data analysis in SPSS.

The recordings of the interviews are first being transcribed. Then, the data is exported to the software program 'Atlas.ti' in order to code the data and make a qualitative analysis. Based on the studied literature a deductive coding tree is developed (visualised in figure 3.8) as a means to code and analyse the data.

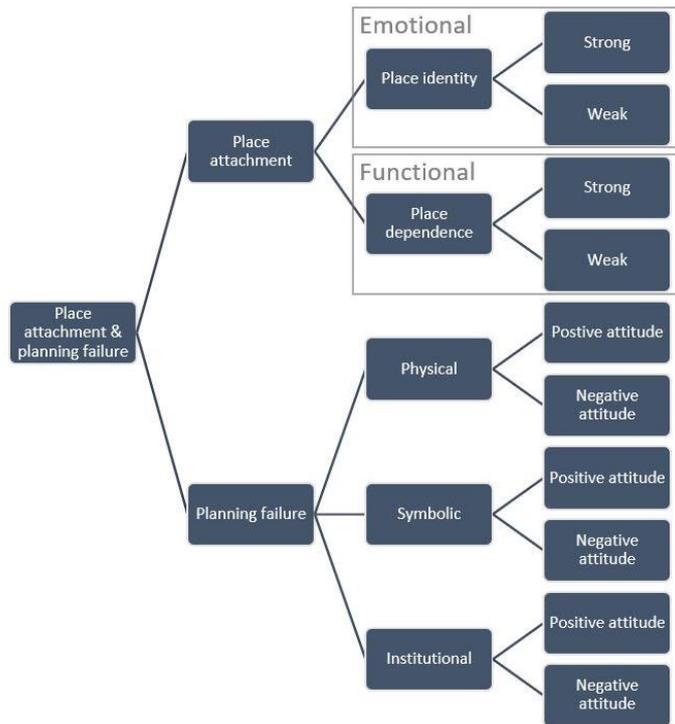


Figure 3.8: Deductive coding tree (Author, 2021)

### 3.7. Ethical considerations

Because the questionnaire invitations are distributed via letterboxes, there has not been any contact between the researcher and the respondents. Moreover, respondents are free to choose whether to participate or not. When respondents choose to participate, they are free to skip questions. With regards to anonymity, the link to the questionnaire on the invitations is anonymous, which implies that names, exact addresses and any other personal information is unknown.

In order to be transparent about the objective of the research, the interviewees are sent an invitation by e-mail in which the reasons for the interview and the subject of the research are explained. At the beginning of the interview the interviewees are asked whether they agree with the conversation being recorded. During the interview no personal identifying questions are asked. Additionally, interviewees are cited in the text by pseudonyms in the form of I and a number. Lastly, all information derived from the interviews is exclusively used in this thesis.

## 4. Results

In this chapter the data that has been collected via the questionnaires and the interviews will be analysed and discussed. First the degree of place attachment is presented and discussed with the help of descriptive statistics. Thereafter outcomes of the questionnaire with regards to the planning failure will be analysed by the use of graphs. Then, by following the coding tree, to be seen in the paragraph 3.6, the responses to the interviews are being discussed. At last, a synthesis combines the results.

During the collection period of the questionnaire, 27 responses were recorded. Two of the 27 cases were not entirely completed. Therefore these cases have been deleted. This results in a dataset of 25 cases. After the collection period of the questionnaire, 4 interviews were held. The interviews had a mean duration of 15 minutes. All interviews are used in the results.

### 4.1. Degree of place attachment

The mean age of the respondents is 56, with 26 as the youngest respondent and 80 as the oldest respondent. Figure 4.8 provides a table with the mean and the standard deviation on both dimensions of place attachment.

| <b>Place attachment</b>  |              |                           |
|--|--------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Place identity</b>  | <b>Mean</b>  | <b>Standard deviation</b> |
| <i>Q5: I feel the neighbourhood I live in is part of me</i>  | 1,591        | 0,493                     |
| <i>Q6: The neighbourhood I live in is very special to me</i>   | 1,826        | 0,748                     |
| <i>Q7: I identify strongly with this neighbourhood</i>   | 2,261        | 0,960                     |
| <i>Q8: I am very attached to this neighbourhood</i>  | 2,043        | 0,720                     |
| <i>Q9: Visiting this neighbourhood says a lot about who I am</i>   | 2,913        | 0,935                     |
| <i>Q10: This neighbourhood means a lot to me</i>   | 2,043        | 0,662                     |
| <i>Total</i>   | 2,114        | 0,753                     |
| <b>Place dependence</b>  |              |                           |
| <i>Q11: This neighbourhood is the best place for what I like to do</i>   | 2,870        | 0,711                     |
| <i>Q12: No other place can compare to this neighbourhood</i>   | 2,957        | 0,958                     |
| <i>Q13: I get more satisfaction out of visiting this neighbourhood than any other</i>                              | 2,435        | 0,806                     |
| <i>Q14: Doing what I do in this neighbourhood is more important to me than doing it in any other place</i>         | 2,696        | 0,814                     |
| <i>Q15: I wouldn't substitute any other neighbourhood for doing the types of things I do in this neighbourhood</i> | 3,391        | 0,753                     |
| <i>Q16: The things I do in this neighbourhood I would enjoy doing just as much at a similar neighbourhood</i>      | 2,748        | 0,800                     |
| <i>Total</i>   | 2,849        | 0,807                     |
| <b>Place attachment total</b>  | <b>2,481</b> | <b>0,78</b>               |

Figure 4.8: Table with descriptive statistics on the degree of place attachment (n=25)

The numbers are based on the following measuring scale: 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=disagree and 5=strongly disagree. The value for Q16 is converted in order to equal the scale of the other questions.

The total degree of place attachment is 2,481. For place identity the total calculated mean is 2,114 and the standard deviation 0,753. The total calculated mean for place dependence is 2,849 with a standard deviation of 0,807. So there could be stated that for the sample of n=25 place identity is stronger than place dependence (with a difference of 0,735). In addition, the values for place dependence are more spread out then the values for place identity. Q5 shows the lowest calculated mean (1,591) and the lowest standard deviation (4,93) for place identity. So respondents in general strongly feel that the neighbourhood they live in is part of them. Q9 shows the highest calculated mean (2,913) for place identity with a standard deviation of 0,935. This implies that respondents in general are neutral about the statement “visiting this neighbourhood says a lot about who I am”. But the values for that statements are relatively spread out. For place dependence Q13 shows the lowest calculated mean (2,435) with a standard deviation of 0,806. So respondents relatively feel more satisfied visiting their neighbourhood than visiting any other neighbourhood. Q15 shows the highest calculated mean for place dependence (3,391) with a standard deviation of 0,753. So there could be stated that in general respondents would relatively easily substitute any other neighbourhood for doing the types of things they do in their neighbourhood.

4.2. *Situation description regarding the planning failure*

Figure 4.1 shows the period of residency among respondents. The largest group, 69%, is living in the neighbourhood for more than 9 years.

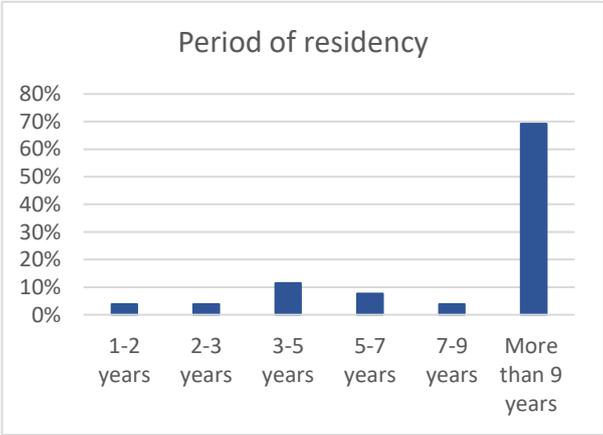


Figure 4.1: Diagram of the period of residency (n=25)

The circle diagram in figure 4.2 shows the percentage of people that know the existence of the tramrails. 74% of the respondents said to strongly agree with knowing the existence. 22% states to agree with knowing the existence and 4% says to not know the tramrails. Subsequently, 39% of the respondents see the tramrails almost every day. And 30% see them more than once a day (figure 4.3).



Figure 4.2: Circle diagram of knowing the existence of the tramrails & figure 4.3: diagram of seeing the tramrails (n=25)

The largest amount (55%) of the respondents state to agree with getting used to the fact that the tramrails are present and 23% strongly agrees. Whereas 14% disagrees or strongly disagrees with getting used to the fact that the tramrails are present (figure 4.4). 41% of the respondents say to disagree with the statement “the tramrails are an addition to the neighbourhood”. The second largest amount of respondents neither agree nor disagree with the statement. And in total 19% of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the tramrails being an addition to the neighbourhood (figure 4.5).

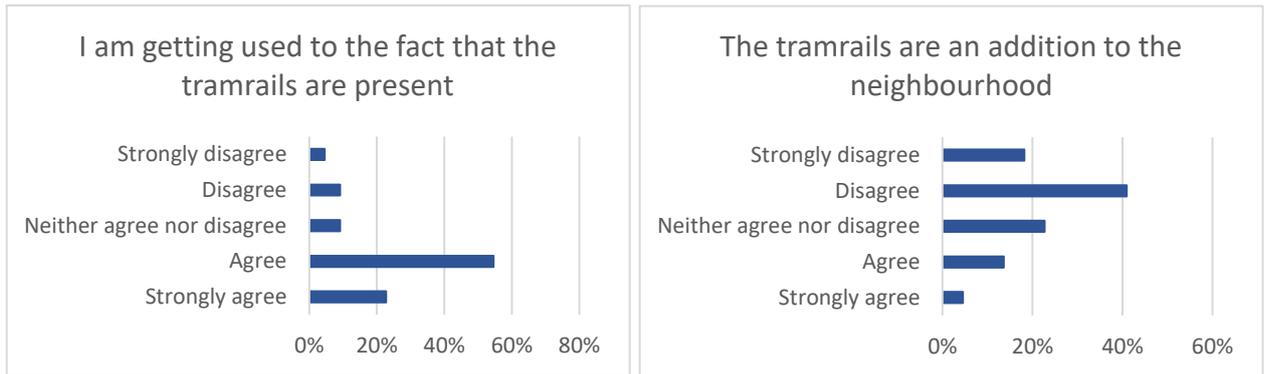


Figure 4.4: Diagram of getting used to the presence of the tramrails & figure 4.5: believing the tramrails are an addition to the neighbourhood (n=25)

Most respondents do not feel like the neighbourhood is known for the tramrails; 36% disagrees and 27% strongly disagrees (see figure 4.6).

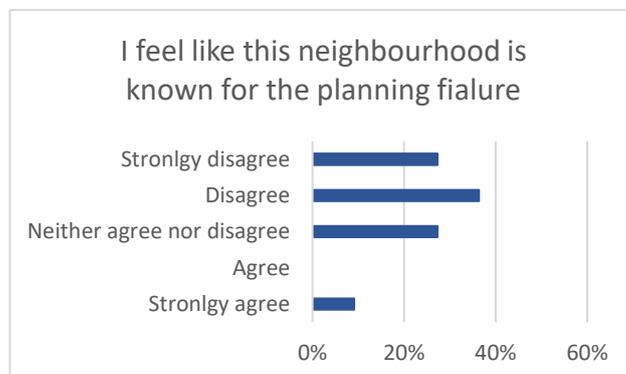


Figure 4.6: Diagram of feeling like the neighbourhood is known for the planning failure (n=25)

For the statement visualised in figure 4.7; “the tramrails should not have been built” the largest part (41%) of the respondents neither agrees nor disagrees. The percentage of people that strongly disagree and strongly agree are equal with 14%. Most respondents (41% strongly agree and 32% agree) would like to be involved in the future planning of the tramrails (figure 4.8).

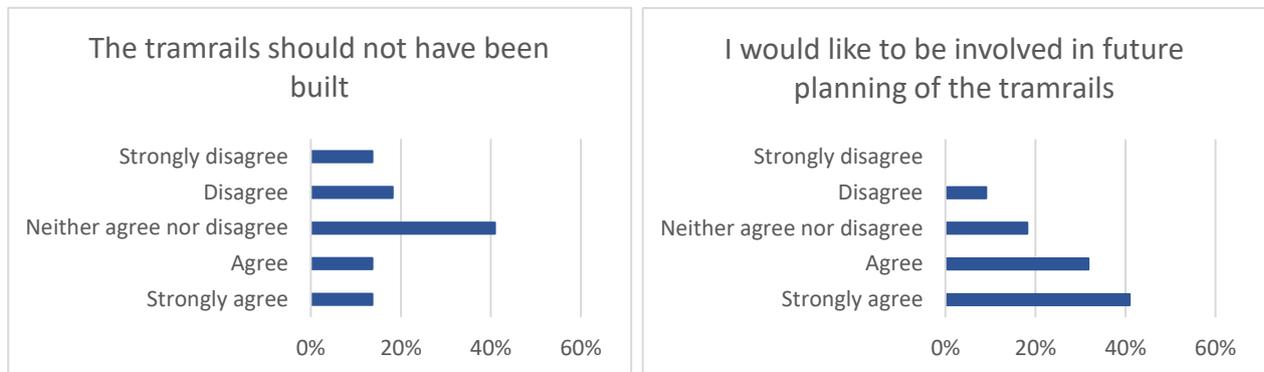


Figure 4.7: Diagram of believing the tramrails should not have been built & figure 4.8: wanting to be involved in future planning (n=25)

### 4.3. Discussion based on the interview responses

#### 4.3.1. Place attachment

Interviewees were asked if they enjoy living in the neighbourhood Haarlemmerbuurt. All interviewees positively responded that they like living in the neighbourhood. The reasons for that differed. I-1 responded on the functionality of the neighbourhood: *“I don’t own a car, so the fact that this neighbourhood is very central and well accessible satisfies me”*. Respondent I-4 also refers to the functionality of the neighbourhood being close to the central station.

The neighbourhood is considered to be quite busy, partly due to tourists. Respondent I-3 points out to like the *“buzz of the people living in the neighbourhood”*. However, every interviewee feels like the inhabitants of the Haarlemmerbuurt are not socially involved with each other. Respondent I-2 declares this by saying: *“There are quite a lot of young people living in this neighbourhood, those people do not stay long enough to be or to get involved”*.

The reason why the interviewees moved to the Haarlemmerbuurt was for everyone the same. This was mainly because of the house fulfilling their needs. Not particular because of the neighbourhood. Respondent I-1 clarifies: *“If this house was located in another neighbourhood, I would move there”*.

The interviewees were asked about their activities in the neighbourhood and in other neighbourhoods. All respondents do their groceries in the Haarlemmerbuurt because it is the most nearby. But respondents I-2 and I-4 specifically go to other neighbourhoods for special needs and groceries. I-2 because: *“Many shops in this neighbourhood are focussed on tourists and therefore have high prices”*.

Lastly, interviewees were asked if they would ever consider moving somewhere else. The responses differed. I-1 and I-4 would consider moving somewhere else. But in that case, it would be outside the city, not in another neighbourhood in the city. I-2 would only move if the house price went up, not because of the neighbourhood. Respondent I-4 would move because: *“...there are a lot of other beautiful neighbourhoods”*.

#### 4.3.2. Planning failure

The tramrails in the Haarlemmer Houttuinen are known by every interviewee. Additionally, all interviewees know that the tramrails are not used properly. However, I-3 thought the rails have been used in the past and I-4 thought the rails: “... are meant as an emergency line for when another tramline would malfunction.”

Overall the interviewees show a relatively positive response to the physical appearance of the tramrails. Interviewees are not bothered by the fact that the tramrails are present in the road. Moreover, it is not a topic of conversation in the neighbourhood. Partly because they are not seen quite often. If the tramrails are seen I-1 thinks they are ugly whereas I-2 does not think they are ugly.

About the functionality of the tramrails the interviewees vary in meaning. Respondent I-1 and I-2 do not see the tramrails to become functional in the future and therefore think they have to be removed. I-2 argues: “Nobody really asked for the tramrails in the first place, it has not been thought through well enough”. Respondent I-3 and I-4 think the tramrails could be useful in the future and therefore do not see the tramrails as a failure.

If there is need for a functional tramline in the Haarlemmer Houttuinen, the interviewees would not mind it. But I-1 stresses: “...rather not, because of potential noise nuisance. More ideal would be a smaller road and prioritization for bicycles”. I-4 ends with: “I don’t think it is up to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood to be involved in the future planning”.

#### 4.4. Overview of the results

To summarize the previous discussed results of the interviews, figure 4.9. gives an overview of the main findings.

| Concept                    | Identifying responses   | Main finding       |
|----------------------------|---|--------------------|
| <b>Place attachment</b>    |   |                    |
| <i>Place identity</i>      | Appreciating the aesthetics of the neighbourhood<br>Appreciating the buzz<br>No social involvement                      | Moderate to strong |
| <i>Place dependence</i>    | Appreciating the central location<br>Appreciating the house<br>Close to the shops<br>Would substitute the neighbourhood | Weak to moderate   |
| <b>Planning failure</b>    |   |                    |
| <i>Physical shape</i>      | Not bothered<br>Not seen often  | Positive attitude  |
| <i>Symbolic shape</i>      | Not a topic of conversation<br>It raises questions  | Neutral attitude   |
| <i>Institutional shape</i> | Could be functional<br>Future planning up to the municipality   | Positive attitude  |

Figure 4.9: Overview of the interview results

#### 4.5. *Synthesis*

The questionnaire results reveal a moderate to strong place attachment. According to Manzo et al. (2006) a high degree of place attachment lead to the desire for participatory planning. Following that, figure 4.8 shows that overall, inhabitants of the Haarlemmerbuurt would like to be involved in the future planning of the tramrails. Place identity is predicted by how long a person is associated with a place (Moore, 1994). Questionnaire respondents, as well as interview respondents generally live in the neighbourhood for over 9 years (see figure 3.7 & 4.1) . This might be the explanation for the appreciation and the meaning inhabitants have for the neighbourhood. Lastly the questionnaire results show a weak to moderate place dependence. Respondents do not strongly prefer the Haarlemmerbuurt over any other neighbourhood. This is backed up by interview responses saying they would substitute the neighbourhood for any other. In addition, the tramrails are seen quite often (figure 4.3). Interviewees state that the rails are not pleasant to see and moreover, not pleasant to drive over by car. Together this could have an effect on place attachment since the frequency of use is related to place dependence (Moore, 1994).

## 5. Conclusion

Place attachment is a widely used and studied concept in the recent years. This attachment people have to places is important in participatory planning processes of the neighbourhood (Manzo et al., 2006). Moreover, positive meanings of people attached to places, contribute to sustaining health and well-being (Gesler, 1991). Subsequently, a planning failure, part of place, can influence peoples place attachment, especially on the neighbourhood level. Therefore this study explored the following research question: *What is the relationship between place attachment and planning failure in the Haarlemmerbuurt in Amsterdam?*

The results of the questionnaire show that, among respondents of the Haarlemmerbuurt, place attachment is moderate. In particular, the functional dimension of place attachment, place dependence is moderate to weak. Following Williams (1995) we therefore could conclude that the neighbourhood Haarlemmerbuurt does not fully fulfil inhabitants goals and needs. Results from the interviews show contradicting and supporting evidence for this statement. Interviewees appreciate the centrality of the neighbourhood in relation to the city and the central station. However, interviewees would substitute the neighbourhood for any other neighbourhood. The emotional dimension, place identity, is, according to the questionnaire results, relatively stronger. According to Moore (1994) this can be declared by the period of time the individual is associated with the place. In this case, the reason for the relatively strong place identity can be due to the period of residency of the inhabitants; 69% of the respondents lives in the neighbourhood for over 9 years. In addition, all the interviewees live in the neighbourhood for over 16 years. They all agree with enjoying living in the Haarlemmerbuurt. Reasons for this are the aesthetics of the neighbourhood.

With regards to the planning failure, the questionnaire and the interview responses mostly show similarities. Overall could be concluded that respondents are not bothered by the physical and the institutional shape of the tramrails in the Haarlemmerbuurt. The interviews can explain the positive attitude with regards to the physical shape by the fact that the tramrails are not seen often. However the questionnaires show that 39% of the respondents sees the tramrails every day. The positive attitude regarding the institutional shape can be explained by the fact that there is haziness on the functionality of the tramrails. Interviewee's think the tramrails could be functional in the future and most questionnaire respondents do not have an opinion on the statement: "The tramrails should not have been built". Lastly, the respondents show a positive to neutral attitude towards the symbolic shape of the tramrails. Inhabitants of the Haarlemmerbuurt are used to the presence of the tramrails. Moreover, they feel like the neighbourhood is not known for the tramrails. In addition, interviewees argue that the tramrails are not a topic of conversation amongst inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

Overall could be concluded that despite the presence of the planning failure in the neighbourhood place attachment in the Haarlemmerbuurt is moderate to high. Spatial planners can take the findings of this research into account when new policy plans for the tramrails are to be made.

In order to make general statements on the extent to which a planning failure influences the place attachment of inhabitants of a neighbourhood, further research is necessary. Place attachment in this research is neighbourhood specific. Thus, since place attachment is embedded in the cultural milieu of a place (Low, 1992) no generalizations can be made. Therefore, quantitative research could add understanding in the relationships between the different aspects of planning failure and the degree of place attachment.

## **6. Reflection**

The initial research aim was to explore to what extent place attachment is influenced by planning failure. A quantitative, multiple case study research design was set out to try and find relationships between the two concepts. However, only one case appeared to be suitable for the research.

Unfortunately, the amount of data that was collected via the questionnaire did not suffice. When the decision was made to back up the collected data by interviews, it was, due to COVID-19, difficult to find enough participants. Besides, during the research, the main-research question have been adjusted multiple times. This could have affected the focus and the structure of the thesis.

The questions asked in the questionnaire were translated from English in to Dutch. Some respondents consulted that a few questions were vague and difficult to understand. Besides the translation, the questions could have been worded differently in order to increase the validity of the research.

Moreover, the set of questions asked in the questionnaire were quite steering. Consequently this may have led to a lower internal validity. To increase the reliability of any further research, a bigger data set is required.

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## Appendices

### *Appendix 1: Questionnaire invitation*

Beste buurt bewoner,

U bent uitgenodigd om deel te nemen aan een enquête over de buurt waarin U woont. Deze enquête is gemaakt door een student van de faculteit ruimtelijke wetenschappen aan de Rijksuniversiteit van Groningen. De uitkomsten van de enquête zullen worden gebruikt in een bachelor scriptie. Het invullen van de enquête kost slechts 5 minuten.

U wordt gevraagd naar uw mening en gevoelens over de buurt. Uw antwoorden zijn anoniem en worden vertrouwelijk behandeld.

Met het invullen van de enquête helpt u het onderzoek enorm, alvast bedankt!

M.v.g.,

Hellen Uri

Mocht U vragen hebben, stuur gerust een mail;  
[h.uri@student.rug.nl](mailto:h.uri@student.rug.nl)

Link naar de enquête:

[https://rug.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_eghy1Bg7h9MxXTM](https://rug.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eghy1Bg7h9MxXTM)



*Scan met Uw mobiel om de enquête te openen*

### **In-depth, semi-structured interviews with inhabitants**

Thank you for taking the time for this interview. It will last about 15 minutes. The outcomes of this interview will help me with my research which tries to understand the place attachment of inhabitants in a neighbourhood with a planning failure.

The interview will be recorded in order to keep the attention to the interview and to make sure that the data is handled correctly. All personal information will be deleted.

You are free to withdraw from the interview at any time. Recordings and transcripts of the interview can be made available upon request.

For my research I am interested in this neighbourhood because of the unfunctional tramrails that is part of the neighbourhood. As a result I would like to study how inhabitants of the neighbourhood are attached to the neighbourhood. In terms of identification with and dependence of the neighbourhood.

#### General & place attachment

1. How long have you been living in this neighbourhood?
  - a. Where did you use to live before?
2. Do you like living here?
  - a. Why? Why not?
3. What is it like to live here?
  - a. The lifestyle
  - b. The people
  - c. The street
4. Why did you move here?
5. What things do you do in this neighbourhood?
  - a. Work/school
  - b. Social activities
6. What things do you not do in this neighbourhood?
7. Would you consider moving somewhere else?
  - a. Why? Why not?

#### Planning failure

8. Do you know the tramrails in the Haarlemmerhouttuinen?
  - a. If no: explain what it is and skip to 11
  - b. If yes: what do you know about it? How did it come to be?
9. How do you feel about it?
  - a. Do you think it is ugly? Why? Why not?
  - b. Do you think it is useful? Why? Why not?
10. Does it affect your living in the neighbourhood in any way?
  - a. Why? Why Not?
  - b. Do people in the neighbourhood talk about it?
11. Do you think it was a mistake to built the tramrails?

- a. Why? Why not?
- 12. Would you like to see a future planning design for the tramrails?
  - a. Why? Why not?
  - b. What would you suggest?
    - i. Remove it? Make it functional?
      - 1. Why? Why not?