Playing Gender, Religion, and Ethnicity

Girls’ Football and Public Playgrounds in the Schilderswijk, The Hague, the Netherlands

Kathrine van den Bogert

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Playing Gender, Religion, and Ethnicity:

Girls' Football and Public Playgrounds in the Schilderswijk, The Hague, the Netherlands

Het Spelen van Gender, Religie, en Etniciteit: Meidenvoetbal en Publieke Speelveldjes in de Schilderswijk, Den Haag, Nederland

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Introduction

Girls' football, Gender studies, Anthropology

On Monday 11 December 2017, the Joke Smit encouragement prize was awarded to the OranjeLeeuwinnen (Orange Lionesses), the Dutch national women's football team. They received the most votes out of forty nominees in the online election for the prize. That year, for the first time in history, the football players had won the European Championship, and, as the jury stated on the website, became important role models for girls and boys in the Netherlands. The Joke Smit oeuvre prize was that year awarded to Gloria Wekker, anthropologist and Emeritus Professor of Gender and Ethnicity at Utrecht University. The prize was awarded to Professor Wekker because of her long-term fight to improve the position of black women in the Netherlands. According to the jury, she played a crucial role in academic and societal debates on the topics of gender and ethnicity, and contributed profoundly to educating and stimulating students, journalists, activists, and other people on these topics.[1]

The Joke Smit prize is a bi-annual Dutch government prize for emancipation in the Netherlands and is named after Joke Smit (1933–1981), a famous Dutch feminist who played a prominent role in the women's emancipation movement. Although both winners of the 2017 prizes seem to have little more in common than their critical contributions to women's emancipation in the Netherlands, this dissertation brings them closely together in a study of girls' football within the academic disciplines of gender studies and anthropology. It takes an ethnography of girls' football as its focal point to critically shed light on contemporary dynamics and intersections of gender, race/ethnicity, and religion in Dutch society. Both the successes of the OranjeLeeuwinnen and the work of Gloria Wekker reveal persistent and latent ideas in Dutch society about gender, emancipation, race/ethnicity, national identity, and citizenship. At the same time, through their work and performances in the Dutch public sphere, they challenge these ideas and propose alternatives.

The participation and victory of the OranjeLeeuwinnen in the 2017 Women's European Championship, which took place in the Netherlands, calls for a critical look at the position of women in the male-dominated world of football. They challenge the hegemony of masculinity in sports and dominant perceptions of the men's national football team as the most important representation of the Dutch nation in sports (Prange and Oosterbaan 2017, 16; Claringbould and Knoppers 2017). This takes place against a background of an enormous increase in girls' participation in football, both in official clubs and in other more 'unorganised' sports spaces such as playgrounds and football courts, also called street football. A high increase in football participation takes place especially amongst junior players: girls and young women up to nineteen years old (Romijn and Elling 2017, 10). Furthermore, 'unorganised' football in the streets and playgrounds became particularly popular in urban neighbourhoods (Romijn and Elling 2017, 24) and amongst girls with Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch migrant

backgrounds (Elling 2004, 50; 2015; Elling and Knoppers 2005, 262), who, relatively, are less often members of official clubs (Hoekman et al. 2011b). Although the national team does not have any Moroccan-Dutch or Turkish-Dutch players,[2] Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch girls with Muslim backgrounds increasingly occupy public playgrounds in Dutch cities through playing street football. As such, it are not only the OranjeLeeuwinnen who challenge the dominant idea of football as a men's sport: Muslim girls' increasing football participation is also changing configurations of gender, football, race/ethnicity, and religion in Dutch neighbourhoods.

Anthropologist Gloria Wekker is known for her work on gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and race in Suriname and the Netherlands. Together with other feminist scholars, she has introduced intersectionality, in Dutch known as *kruispuntdenken*, in the Netherlands. Intersectionality 'is a way of looking at the world that takes as a principled stance that it is not enough merely to take gender as the main analytical tool of a particular phenomenon, but that gender as an important social and symbolical axis of difference is simultaneously operative with others like race, class, sexuality, and religion' (Wekker 2016, 21). Intersectionality, thus, means that categories of difference and power, such as gender and ethnicity, do not function separately, but co-construct and reinforce each other (Botman, Jouwe, and Wekker 2001). In Wekker's recent book *White Innocence* (2016), she discusses gender, race, and ethnicity from the vantage point of white Dutch self-representations and centralises the role of Dutch colonial and imperial history in the construction of a Dutch national self. Wekker challenges dominant perceptions of the Netherlands as 'colour-blind and antiracist, a place of extraordinary hospitality and tolerance' (Wekker 2016, 1) by critically discussing structural forms of power and inequality in Dutch society, along intersecting lines of ethnicity, race, religion, gender, sexuality, and class. She discusses historical and colonial constructions of the ethnic and racial 'other' in Dutch discourses, and how these are gendered and sexualised, and concludes by pointing out the increasing representations of Muslims as religious and racial/ethnic 'others' in Dutch society (Wekker 2016).

Other anthropologists have shown that the increasing visibility of Muslim and ethnic minority citizens in Dutch cities and public spaces, of which the football playgrounds in this research are an example, feeds anxieties about the supposed 'invasion' of Muslims and migrants in the Netherlands, and in Europe more broadly (Modest and De Koning 2016; Oosterbaan 2014). Furthermore, anxieties of and contestations over ethnic diversity, gender, and Islam are often spatialised into specific urban multicultural neighbourhoods that become the iconic sites for racialised politics of integration, emancipation, and control (Modest and De Koning 2016), such as the Schilderswijk in this research. How do girls in the Schilderswijk deal with

and challenge these discourses by playing football in the public playgrounds in their neighbourhood?

In this dissertation, I bring together these developments of girls' football and ethnic and religious diversity in Dutch neighbourhoods within the analytical framework of intersectionality. Specifically, this dissertation shows how power and difference, converged through gender, ethnicity, and religion, play out in girls' football and in public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk, and how girls challenge these power structures and inequalities by playing football.

Research objectives and background

In this study, I critically discuss and give ethnographic insights into intersections of gender, race/ethnicity, and religion in a Dutch neighbourhood, from the perspectives of girls who play street football. As these concepts and categories of difference are not uncontested, I will theoretically and ethnographically unravel the understandings of gender, race/ethnicity, and religion in different spaces.[3] The ethnographic research takes place in the Schilderswijk, an urban multicultural neighbourhood in the city of The Hague. The central research question is formulated as follows:

> *How do girls in the Schilderswijk engage with and construct public playgrounds as gendered, ethnicised, racialised, and religionised by playing football, and what do we learn from this with regard to conceptualisations of race/ethnicity and religion in intersectional feminist and anthropological scholarship?*

The Schilderswijk hosts a popular girls' football competition, Football Girls United (FGU),[4] organised by a Moroccan-Dutch woman from the neighbourhood. Most football players are between ten and twenty years old and have Moroccan-Dutch and Muslim backgrounds. The football competition is not a traditional football club with an official membership, but a 'looser' organisation where football players organise their own trainings, teams, and activities in public playgrounds and sports halls, and only pay a modest contribution of twenty euros a year. Although FGU is a girls' football competition, boys are allowed to volunteer as trainers, referees, or organisers, as long as they subscribe to FGU's aim: organising football primarily for girls. During my fieldwork period in 2014 and 2015, FGU had a relatively permanent group of volunteers of six young women and three young men between fourteen and twenty years old, who gave most of the trainings to the younger girls and helped coordinating. However, they also played football themselves in the competition. On the busiest days, about eighty girls participated in the football trainings and competitions at FGU. The experiences

of the girls – and some of the boys – who play football in and volunteer for the FGU football competition form the core of my ethnography.

The Schilderswijk is a well-known neighbourhood in the Netherlands. In media and politics, it is often framed as a 'problem' neighbourhood (*probleemwijk*) or 'disadvantaged' neighbourhood (*achterstandswijk*), and a 'no-go area' for native (white) Dutch people (Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014, 36).[5] This is fundamentally related to the composition of the population in terms of ethnicity, religion, gender, and age. The Schilderswijk is known for its ethnic and religious diverse population: 91.5 per cent of the inhabitants have a migration background, of which the four biggest ethnic groups are Turkish-Dutch, Moroccan-Dutch, Surinamese-Dutch, and Antillean-Dutch; 8.5 per cent is identified as native Dutch (Buurtmonitor Den Haag 2017).[6] The neighbourhood is also diverse in religious terms: after non-religious people (50.8%), Christians (23%), Muslims (14.1%), and Hindus (5.5%) form the biggest religious groups of The Hague (Schmeets 2014, 2016), of which many live in the Schilderswijk. In addition, the neighbourhood is a 'young' neighbourhood: 29.1 per cent of the inhabitants is below twenty years old, and 46 per cent below thirty, which are much higher numbers than in the rest of The Hague (Buurtmonitor Den Haag 2017).

The Schilderswijk is known as the poorest neighbourhood in the Netherlands (SCP and CBS 2014; Hoff et al. 2016), and, combined with the relatively high percentage of people with ethnic minority and Muslim backgrounds, this contributes to the dominant image of the neighbourhood as 'disadvantaged', 'problematic', and the ultimate 'other' to Dutch society (Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014; Rana 2014, 36; De Koning 2013, 2015a, 2016). The Schilderswijk is used as the example par excellence of the failure of multiculturalism and the failed integration of ethnic minorities, and is, supposedly, a breeding ground for Islamic radicalism. Over the past years, numerous articles in newspapers have been written about the Schilderswijk, almost all about social problems such as unemployment, police violence, youths, riots, radical Islam, and integration.[7] In addition, three books and a theatre play about the Schilderswijk have recently been produced around similar topics: radical Muslims, multiculturalism, criminal youths, and terrorism.[8] Furthermore, the neighbourhood was subject to several urban regeneration policies, both on national and local levels, that aimed to improve the social and economic conditions (Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014; Rana 2014).

These representations of the Schilderswijk are part of broader debates in the Netherlands about migration, integration, ethnic minorities, and the place of Islam in Dutch society, in which issues of gender and sexuality play a central role. A well-known example is the decade-long debate on women's Islamic dress in public spaces, which resulted in the parliament's approval of a ban on the face veil in public areas such

as schools, hospitals, government buildings, and public transport in 2016.[9] Another example is how, in the context of the parliamentary elections in 2017, women's rights and feminism, both portrayed as the results of secular modernity, were taken up to 'warn' for Islamisation and 'newcomers'. A speech by Edith Schippers (2016), minister of Public Health, Welfare and Sports, is a case in point. She argued that Dutch culture is superior to immigrant and Islamic cultures, especially when it comes to gender and sexual equality.[10] These national debates and anxious politics regarding integration, migrants, racialised others (Modest and De Koning 2016, 98), gender and sexuality, criminalisation, and Islamic extremism are enlarged and projected onto specific local urban neighbourhoods with diverse populations (De Koning 2013), such as the Schilderswijk.

Youths, sports, and gender are central aspects of the construction of diverse urban neighbourhoods as 'disadvantaged' or 'problematic'. Young people are often framed by adults as a nuisance and as potentially dangerous or in danger if they hang around in public spaces without adult supervision (De Backer 2016, 22–24; Martineau 2006). Especially youngsters are seen as receptive for Islamic radicalism, and schooling and youth employment are important factors in urban regeneration policies (Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014). Sports is also a central element of urban regeneration policies and projects to 'improve' disadvantaged neighbourhoods and its supposed problematic urban youths. Neighbourhood sports programmes are seen by policy makers and youth professionals as a pre-eminent instrument through which young citizens in diverse urban spaces can be disciplined, integrated, or assimilated into dominant national norms and values (Besnier and Brownell 2012, 453; Silverstein 2000, 2002; Jaffe-Walter 2016, 64; Gagen 2000; Spaaij 2009). In the Netherlands, youth sports are also a space for civic engagement and volunteer work, and a main, 'proper' way of participation and inclusion in Dutch society (Rana 2014, 36). Sports programmes are often specifically targeted at urban ethnic minority youths, as a way of integrating them into Dutch society and as a sphere where the supposed gap between native Dutch and migrant youngsters can be bridged (Rana 2014; Krouwel et al. 2006; Van Sterkenburg 2011). In the Schilderswijk, too, numerous sports and integration programmes have been implemented over the past years.[11] Especially football is popular in youth and neighbourhood sports programmes, because of its popularity amongst youths, but also because of its important role in Dutch nationalism. In Dutch national identity, men's football figures highly and, next to King's Day, it is the biggest space of embodying Dutch nationalist 'orange' pride (Elling, Van Hilvoorde, and Van den Dool 2014).

The phenomenon of 'problematic urban youths' is highly gendered and racialised. Public representations of urban 'problem' neighbourhoods such as the Schilderswijk

are often coupled with images of ethnic minority and Muslim youths, with 'Moroccan' boys as the ultimate embodiment of the 'problematic other' (De Koning 2013, 2016). Masquelier and Soares argue that, especially after 9/11, the presence of recognisable Muslim boys in public spaces in Western liberal societies is often related to a supposed threat or danger, related to potential Islamic radicalism, criminality, or nuisance (2016, 17). A dominant narrative of urban girls in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, however, is that they are 'in danger'; they are seen as oppressed, victims of their supposedly backward Islamic and/or ethnic background, and in need of emancipation (Ramji 2007; Masquelier and Soares 2016, 17; Abu-Lughod 2002, 2013). This dominant narrative is reflected in the gendered and racialised assumptions in many sports programmes: for Muslim and ethnic minority girls, participation in neighbourhood sports is used as tool for their emancipation and empowerment, and, for Muslim and ethnic minority boys, as form of regulating aggression, radicalisation, and criminal behaviour (Rana 2014). Sports programmes that aim at social cohesion and integration in ethnically mixed neighbourhoods in practice thus often reinforce ethnic differences and social divisions (Rana 2014; Van Sterkenburg 2011; Krouwel et al. 2006, 167; Spaaij 2009; Vermeulen and Verweel 2009).

Girls with migrant or Muslim backgrounds are often a specific target group of sports programmes, starting from the assumption that migrant girls lag behind in sports participation, compared with migrant boys and white Dutch girls and boys. The Dutch Royal Football Association engaged in such a project, Time for Sport: Recruit and Retain Migrant Girls (KNVB 2009). Recently, they broadened the project to 'recruit and retain girls' in general, but they still give specific attention to groups of migrant girls (KNVB 2014; Siebelink 2016b). What is evident here is the assumption that migrant girls lag behind in football participation. On the other hand, neighbourhood sports projects sometimes focus on other, more 'feminine' sports activities rather than football, because sports professionals assume that girls prefer other sports above football because of its masculine image. These assumptions are striking since sociological research has pointed out that football is the most popular team sport activity in the Netherlands, amongst women, men, girls, and boys, including ethnic minority girls living in urban neighbourhoods (Romijn and Elling 2017, 19–24; Elling and Knoppers 2005). However, this popularity does not always translate into girls' membership of football clubs, especially not in urban neighbourhoods (Hoekman et al. 2011b). Girls with migrant backgrounds often play 'unorganised' football in urban playgrounds and in the streets. As such, when policy makers and institutions only look at official statistics, it might seem as if this group participates minimally in football. In Dutch youth sports policies, official participation in sports clubs is seen as the 'real' sports participation, and 'unorganised' sports in playgrounds merely as a step

towards that.[12] In the Schilderswijk, too, several organisations organise sports hours in playgrounds as a bridge to the ultimate goal: membership of official sports clubs. In practice, this narrative means that 'unorganised' forms of sports participation by minoritised groups are valued less than other, 'official' forms of sports participation. To sum up: Muslim and ethnic minority girls are represented as oppressed and as lagging behind in football and sports participation, while their football participation in urban playgrounds is actually high and vastly increasing – these numbers, however, often do not make it into official statistics (Romijn and Elling 2017; Elling and Knoppers 2005).

This dissertation is a direct result of the designated role that sports play in social and youth participation in Dutch society. This research is funded, as part of a broader project on women's football in the Netherlands,[13] by the NWO research programme Sport: Participation and an NWO Alfa-Meerwaarde subsidy for the fieldwork in The Hague. The NWO Sport research programme funds research on sports participation and the meaning of sports participation for society, for example in relation to culture and identity.[14] At the same time, this dissertation poses a challenge to the assumptions on the role of sports in social and youth participation, as it looks at how social and structural dynamics of power, inequality, and difference are reproduced in girls' football, specifically on the axes of gender, race/ethnicity, and religion. To this end, theoretical perspectives from gender studies and anthropology that study power and difference in society are central in this dissertation, rather than sociological theories of sports participation. I take the public playgrounds and girls' football competition in the Schilderswijk as starting points to investigate how the 'targeted' youths of urban regeneration and sports policies themselves engage with and contribute to the construction of public playgrounds by playing football, in relation to intersections of gender, race/ethnicity, and religion in Dutch society.

In the remaining sections of this Introduction, I will introduce the theoretical debates in gender studies and anthropology this dissertation engages with, and provide a discussion of the methodological and epistemological foundations of this research. Lastly, I will present an overview of the chapters of the dissertation.

Studies of gender, religion, race/ethnicity, and public space

The topics of women's emancipation, gender, race/ethnicity, and religion – especially Islam – in the context of Western Europe have been widely discussed in both gender studies and anthropology. Wekker, amongst others, shows that gender equality and sexual freedom are central elements in white Dutch self-representations, and are used to construct ethnic and religious minorities and migrants as 'different' and 'other' to Dutch society, because they, presumably, do not embrace the values of gender and sexual equality (Wekker 2016; Haritaworn 2012; El-Tayeb 2012, 2011; Ghorashi 2010; Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010; Bracke 2011). Postcolonial black migrants were historically framed as racialised 'others', and, nowadays, Muslim citizens are increasingly symbolised as the ultimate 'others' (Wekker 2016, 15). In public and political discussions about migrants, integration, and ethnic minorities, Dutch gender and sexual norms are represented as modern, liberal, and equal, and Islam is seen as antithetical to that: traditional, backward, and sexually and gender oppressive (Wekker 2016; Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010; Scott 2009). Or, in the words of Fatima El-Tayeb: 'The discourses on Europeanness constructed the male Muslim "second-generation migrant" as embodying essentialist positions on gender, sexuality, national and ethnic identity, as presenting a threat both to minority women and to enlightened European masculinity' (El-Tayeb 2011, xliv). This dissertation builds on these strands of feminist scholarship that critically look at how power structures, representations, and dominant discourses are constructed, but it emphasises how young women themselves deal with power structures and difference in their daily life and football practices.

Several scholars have shown how the increasing presence of Muslim citizens and Islam in public spaces in European cities fuels discussion about the place of Islam in Europe, often exercised over women's bodies (Oosterbaan 2014; Tamimi Arab 2014; Sunier 2009; Moors and Salih 2009). In addition to the Dutch face veil ban, France regulated the presence of Islam in public spaces by regulating women's bodies and dress: a 'burkini' ban was installed on French beaches in the summer of 2016. This burkini ban points to a specific aspect of public life: leisure and sports. Often, studies on Islam, public space, and the European city focus on explicitly visible religious manifestations in public spaces, such as halal food, Islamic sounds and buildings (Tamimi Arab 2014), Islamic bodies and clothing (Moors and Salih 2009), or Islamic practices such as praying (Chiodelli 2015). Leisure and sports are, apart from the religious dress and headscarf debate, much less studied in gender studies and anthropology as a domain where issues of Islam, public space, and gender are being played out. Public football playgrounds are not explicitly or primarily Islamic or religious, but nevertheless a popular space for Muslim girls and boys to exercise. It therefore provides an innovative perspective to study how intersections of religion, gender, and race/ethnicity are constructed in urban public spaces.

I will now shortly introduce the three scholarly fields this dissertation engages with, and which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter: feminist intersectionality scholarship, feminist studies of religion and gender, and feminist studies of gender and public space. Intersectionality is the overarching theoretical framework in this dissertation, in which mainly intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender are central.

After that, I specifically zoom in on studies that focus on the intersections of religion and gender, and studies that focus on the intersections of gender and public space. In this research on girls' football and public playgrounds, several categories of difference are continuously in play: gender, ethnicity, race, and religion are the central categories in this dissertation, but age, citizenship, space, sexuality, and class play a role as well. Intersectionality is the main approach in feminist scholarship that conceptualises categories of difference in relation to each other. As stated before, intersectionality poses that categories of difference cannot be seen as separate or as being subsumed under, but are simultaneously in play and reinforce each other. I will specifically pay attention to the conceptualisations and intersections of race and ethnicity in Dutch and European scholarship, using the work of, amongst others, Gloria Wekker and Stuart Hall. Second, I engage with the feminist study of religion and gender. This scholarly field deals specifically with intersections of religion and gender and could therefore, on the one hand, be seen as part of intersectionality studies. On the other hand, it is a field with different genealogies and functions as quite separate from intersectionality studies, as Singh (2015) and Weber (2015) have observed. The engagements and disengagements of intersectionality and the study of religion and gender in feminist scholarship will be studied in relation to studies on Muslim women and sports, in which intersections of gender and religion are central as well. Third, as intersectional categories of difference are profoundly spatialised, I also engage with feminist studies of gender and public space, and look at how difference, power, and inequalities operate in and through the construction of space. In particular, I want to shed light on how the practices of young residents in public spaces, such as the playing of street football, can be forms of resistance to dominant gendered and racialised narratives of Muslim girls as oppressed and inactive, and can create alternative constructions of ethnic, religious, and gendered belonging in urban public football spaces.

The three scholarly fields of feminist intersectionality scholarship, feminist studies of religion and gender, and feminist studies of gender and public space provide the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological tools for this study. All engage with the study of power, inequality, and difference, yet with different focus points, subjects, and objects of study. This dissertation brings these three scholarly fields in dialogue with each other, and contributes to understandings of gender, race/ethnicity, religion, and public space from an empirical angle: girls' football in public playgrounds in an urban neighbourhood in the Netherlands. It brings in the realm of sports, a domain that has been relatively understudied in feminist and anthropological intersectionality scholarship. On the other hand, sports sociologists and other sports scholars who study gender, ethnicity, and Muslim girls have not yet fully integrated intersectional perspectives in their scholarship, and have not critically deconstructed the categories

of gender, race/ethnicity, and religion. By taking these categories for granted, many sports sociologists reproduce discourses of othering and difference, as I will show in the first chapter. I see sports as an important domain where intersections of gender, religion, race/ethnicity, emancipation, and public space can be studied from a performative and embodied critical perspective (Butler 1998).

Furthermore, next to bringing in the realm of sports, this dissertation also contributes to existing feminist scholarship by specifically focusing on children's practices and experiences. There is little feminist and anthropological research on gender, race/ethnicity, religion, and public space that takes children or teenagers at its centre. Although (too) much research on Muslim women focuses on *young* Muslim women (Van Es 2018), seldom women or girls under eighteen years old are taken into account, let alone girls in their early teenage years. In the context of this research, a focus on children allows me to see playing football as a specific form of children's spatial and performative engagement with gender, race/ethnicity, and religion as categories of difference. Scholars who study children have conceptualised play in relation to gender theories: Gagen (2000) connects play with gender performativity (Butler 1990, 1993) in the context of the American playground movement, and Thorne (1993) focuses on children's play as performance and as a form of 'doing gender' (West and Zimmermann 1987). Play is an important component of Judith Butler's conceptualisation of performativity: through reiterative acts or performances that are recognised as masculine or feminine, norms become 'naturalised' and gender and sexed bodies come into being. Yet, performativity is not simply the repetition of a norm: there is also always a moment of transgression, critique, or resistance of gender norms within the reiteration (Butler 1990, 1993).

Butler's well-known example of a performative act is drag or cross-dressing, which is a 'parodic proliferation and subversive play of gendered meanings' (Butler 1990, 33). McClintock (1995) and Smith (2014, 220–21, 233) discuss cross-dressing and play as performative moments that can both affirm and subvert racial and ethnic roles, cultural traditions, social norms, and national identity and belonging (see also Hall 2017, 72–73). Play, like performativity, thus points to both inhabiting gender, racial/ethnic, and sexual norms and discourses, and to possibilities to transgress these norms. Play and sports provide space for undermining hegemonic gender roles, especially through women's athletic performances that provide alternative meanings of athletic bodies, gender ideals, femininity, and masculinity (Thorne 1993, 5; Butler 1998). In the Netherlands, it is especially through the national sport football where women's and girls' athletic performances can create new meanings of gendered national belonging, as the girls in public playgrounds in this research will show. Children's play

thus not only refers to leisure or recreation, but also to playful and performative acts of gender, race/ethnicity, religion, and national belonging (Sawyer 2002).

By playing football, Muslim girls in the public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk also performatively play with the categories of gender, ethnicity, and religion in a playful but critical manner – hence the title of this dissertation.[15] With that, they not only challenge and deconstruct these categories of difference, but also reconstruct them. Feminist scholarship cannot only be about deconstructing categories, it is also about reconstructing categories more equally: 'To agree that differences – of gender, sexuality, and disability as much as race or culture – have been constructed in oppressive ways that delimit human freedom is to take a stance in which the whole point of *de*constructing such iniquitous structures is to create alternatives in which it becomes possible to *re*articulate difference equitably' (Mercer 2017, 12; see also Haraway 1988, 585; Collins 2000, 269). The girls in this research are the ones who provide the innovative lens for deconstructing categories of difference, but also for rearticulating difference differently by their performative football play.

Methodology and epistemology

In this part, I will discuss the methodologies and methods through which I have gained access to the girls' experiences and perspectives that are central in this research. To talk about methodology, however, is fundamentally to talk about epistemology. To ask how knowledge and data are produced, is to ask what is regarded as knowledge in the first place. Therefore, I will not only discuss the specific methods I have used, but also the methodological and epistemological foundations of this research. Both feminist scholarship and anthropology engage with knowledge in a constructivist sense: 'facts' or data are not 'out there' to be discovered by researchers but are rather constructed through research practices and interactions with the world (Fonow and Cook 2005; Abu-Lughod 1990; Brooks and Hesse-Biber 2007) – in the case of this research, with young football players from the Schilderswijk. The qualitative data that forms the basis of this dissertation is therefore more the result of the interactions and processes of data collection than of positivistic objective or neutral results and facts (Fonow and Cook 2005).

Feminist epistemologists have redefined objectivity and strongly theorised a situated and reflexive rather than a universal approach to knowledge. Well-known examples are Donna Haraway's 'situated knowledges' (1988; see also Narayan 1993), Adrienne Rich's 'politics of location' (1986), Patricia Hill Collins's 'black feminist epistemology' (2000), and Chandra Mohanty's postcolonial critique on feminist scholarship (1988). These scholars advocate for an approach to knowledge

that conceptualises it as necessarily partial, situated, and embodied, and as part of an ongoing process that needs reflection (Narayan 1993; Collins 2000; Haraway 1988; Rich 1986). Partial knowledge is not seen as merely subjective knowledge but conceptualised as *feminist objectivity*. Feminist objectivity means that scholars must account for how their partial perspectives and knowledges are produced, and from which position. Feminist epistemologists argue, contrary to positivistic approaches to objectivity, that knowledge is *more* objective or credible when the how and from which position it is it produced is accounted for (Haraway 1988, 587–89); or, in the words of Collins (2000, 270): 'Partiality, and not universality, is the condition of being heard; individuals and groups forwarding knowledge claims without owning their position are deemed less credible than those who do'.

A situated and partial approach to knowledge is central in most feminist scholarship, including feminist anthropology and intersectionality scholarship. As theories of power, anthropology and intersectionality – as well as its scholars and methods – are immersed in the same power structures they aim to study (Collins 2000; McCall 2005; Willemse 2007, 24), as is also the case in my research (see the 'Reflections on positionality' section). Knowledge is the result of social relations and is thus produced by the power relations between the people involved, and not as detached from power and social relations. Attention to and a reflection on power structures is crucial in feminist knowledge production (Haraway 1988; Leavy 2007, 89; Foucault 1978). What is accepted as knowledge and what is not is, for example, influenced by race, gender, class, religion, or other structures of power. Sociologist of knowledge Patricia Hill Collins states: 'Far from being the apolitical study of truth, epistemology points to the ways in which power relations shape who is believed and why' (Collins 2000, 252). She argues that knowledge validation processes often reflect the interests and location of the dominant group that investigates – i.e. elite white men in the case of traditional scholarship (Collins 2000; see also Brooks and Hesse-Biber 2007, 9). Similarly, postcolonial and Muslim feminist scholars have shown how much white and Western feminist scholarship often only take gender as primary category of knowledge, thereby reproducing an essentialised universal category of 'woman' without paying attention to non-white, Muslim, or postcolonial women's diverse experiences (Mohanty 1988; Shaikh 2013; Rahman 2018). The black, postcolonial, and Muslim feminist epistemologies they propose reflect the interests, perspectives, and standpoints of minoritised women, something I, with my research on Muslim girls in the Schilderswijk, aim for as well.

Although Haraway, Rich, and Collins start from feminist standpoint theory, they do not argue that knowledge produced by subjugated groups is 'better' knowledge, as feminist standpoint theory does. Rather, they argue that reflection and accountability

of one's own positionality, for both researchers from oppressed and dominant groups, is what counts for feminist knowledge production. Yet, they do emphasise that it is important to pay explicit attention to subject positions and lived experiences that have historically been excluded from knowledge production, such as black, Muslim, and feminist knowledges, and that these are thus, in some way, preferred.

Besides arguing against a universalist and positivistic approach to knowledge, most feminist scholars also advocate against radical constructivism, which only leaves room for relativism. Haraway argues that radical constructivism and relativism precisely reintroduce the 'vision from nowhere', the disembodied transcendent practice of knowledge production that constructivists precisely tried to critique: 'Relativism is the perfect mirror twin of totalisation in the ideologies of [positivistic] objectivity; both deny the stakes in location, embodiment, and partial perspective; both make it impossible to see well' (Haraway 1988, 584). Other feminist scholars have formulated a similar critique on postmodern theory, pointing out that, now marginalised subjects, such as women, colonised, or black people, are finally included in research processes and knowledge production, knowledge and subjectivities become 'deconstructed' (Leavy 2007, 85; Hartsock in Abu-Lughod 1990, 17). It is therefore not sufficient for feminist and intersectionality research to only deconstruct power and categories, but also to look at how categories and identities are meaningful in social life – not as fixed, but as particular crystallisations of social relations into identities relevant for social groups (McCall 2005, 1781), and therefore relevant for knowledge about social life. For example, in this research, I could merely deconstruct the ethnic and religious categories of 'Moroccan' and Muslim, which are so often problematically used for minorities in the Netherlands, but that overlooks the fact that these categories are nevertheless important in processes of meaning making, belonging, and (dis)identification for my research participants. A critique of mere deconstruction has especially been put forward by black feminists, emphasising that women of colour or other groups that do not belong to the implicit white norm in scholarship do not have the privilege to live 'without' categories or identities: they always already embody categories of race, ethnicity, or gender by their 'difference' (Collins 2000).

According to McCall, the challenge is not to accept categories as they are, but to 'focus on the process by which they are produced, experienced, reproduced, and resisted in everyday life' (2005, 1783). It is therefore that Haraway not only argues for deconstructing systems of knowledge, but also for *passionate construction* (Haraway 1988, 585; see also Mercer 2017, 12). As mentioned before, feminist research not only aims at deconstructing knowledge and power, but also at 'constructing worlds less organised by axes of domination' (Haraway 1988, 585), the empowerment of oppressed groups, and social justice (Collins 2000, 269). These feminist principles are reflected

in this research, in which I discuss categories and identities as meaningful for the girls in my research, while simultaneously focusing on the deconstruction of these categories, both by the girls themselves and from a feminist epistemological tradition. Furthermore, this research attunes to feminist principles by specifically focusing on a local bottom-up girls' football initiative that is committed to the empowerment of Moroccan-Dutch and Muslim girls in the Schilderswijk and towards less stereotypical representations of the neighbourhood and its residents.

Feminist ethnography: Theory, methods, and analysis

Feminist anthropologists and ethnographers have related to feminist epistemologies by way of feminist ethnography: a specific methodology for empirical research about social life. Since the ethnographer is her own instrument of data collection, feminist ethnography is based on situated and reflexive knowledge production, thereby explicitly paying attention to power relations involved in the positions of researcher and research participants. Feminist ethnography is the study of the lived experiences of people involved in a particular social context, in relation to gender and/or other social power relations (Buch and Staller 2007). According to Davis and Craven, 'feminist ethnography attends to the dynamics of power in social interaction that *starts* from a gender analysis' (2016, 9). In these rudimentary definitions, the authors mention gender as the starting point for researching social life; however, in both collections, the authors show how feminist ethnography, in their elaboration, is essentially an intersectional project, including race, ethnicity, religion, class, sexuality, nation, et cetera. (Davis and Craven 2016; Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007).

Ethnography has been a proven methodology for studying non-normative practices and embodied experiences outside common institutional or discursive structures, such as women's sports (Bolin and Granskog 2003a), young Muslim's ambivalent daily lives (Schielke and Debevec 2012; Schielke 2010; Sunier 2012), and hidden and intimate aspects of urban life (Jaffe and De Koning 2015, 5). Lara Deeb (2006), for example, combined urban ethnography with a focus on religion and gender in her study of women's religious practices in urban spaces. Much contemporary ethnographic research is not an all-encompassing study of social life in a community but is more topic-oriented (Duits 2008, 58), studying certain aspects of social life and its different dimensions. My study is not a comprehensive ethnography of the Schilderswijk but focuses on young inhabitants' social lives in public football playgrounds, and, in particular, on their gendered, racialised, and religious experiences in those football spaces. Although ethnography can also contain quantitative data, my research is based on qualitative data: I research the meaning and social construction of football,

playgrounds, gender, race/ethnicity, and religion, and not the quantitative *degree* of (Muslim) girls' participation in football.

Before I proceed to discussing the specific methods and techniques I have used in this research, I briefly mention the role of theory in feminist anthropology and ethnography. In anthropological and feminist research, and more specifically in ethnography, there is an 'interplay between theory as defining one's research and theory being defined by one's research' (Fonow and Cook 2005, 2214; see also Boeije 2010), which means that ethnographic knowledge follows from interactions with research participants and not from theoretical assumptions or hypotheses that are tested (Duits 2008). Feminist ethnography thus consists of theoretical and epistemological considerations that inform a reflexive research practice, and specific methods and techniques of data collection and analysis that, in turn, generate feminist knowledge and theory (Davis and Craven 2016).

I have conducted the ethnographic fieldwork for this study in several cities in the Netherlands: Den Haag (The Hague), Maastricht, Arnhem, Utrecht, Amsterdam, and Kampen. In the initial phase of my fieldwork, from February 2014 until May 2014, I visited Cruyff Court playgrounds in these cities during organised football activities, mostly during 6vs6 Cruyff Court competitions.[16] Via the Cruyff Foundation, I received the contact details of the local organisers of the competition and asked them permission to conduct my research at the competition and football hours they organised. I observed and held open, in-depth interviews with the girls in the playgrounds and the competitions. I used these four months to get to know the organisation and practices of girls' neighbourhood football and started to explore girls' experiences and concerns. Soon, I realised that, to gain an in-depth insight into girls' activities in playgrounds, and how girls navigate the playgrounds in their neighbourhood, I needed to engage with girls' football in one place for a longer time and build rapport with the football players. The remaining seven months of my fieldwork, from October 2014 until April 2015, were conducted in the Schilderswijk in The Hague.

I chose the Schilderswijk for my in-depth case-study since there were many different girls' football activities taking place: the Cruyff Court 6vs6 competitions, several playgrounds with organised football activities, football in community centres, a multicultural football competition, and, especially interesting for my research, a large girls' football competition organised by women and girls from the Schilderswijk: Football Girls United. I got in touch with Football Girls United via a social welfare organisation in The Hague, which cooperated with FGU. This organisation heard about my research on girls' football and suggested I have a look at the girls' football competition in the Schilderswijk because it is a bottom-up initiative and organised completely by people from the neighbourhood itself. After I explained my research

objectives to Hanan, the coordinator of FGU, she granted me access to the football trainings and competitions FGU organised and introduced me to the other volunteers and the football players.

As I described at the beginning of this chapter, the Schilderswijk is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse neighbourhoods in the Netherlands, and its young inhabitants often figure in debates about integration, urban regeneration, Islam, and gender. The bottom-up organisation of a girls' football competition in a neighbourhood where gender, ethnicity, Islam, and urban regeneration were perceived to be so urgent proved an interesting case-study to see how football girls themselves deal with issues of gender, ethnicity, and religion in a Dutch multicultural neighbourhood. Yet, where girls' football in the Schilderswijk is central in this dissertation, and Chapter 2 is dedicated to an in-depth exploration of the context of the Schilderswijk, the analysis of girls' football in the Schilderswijk is supplemented with research and data from neighbourhoods in Utrecht, Amsterdam, Arnhem, Maastricht, and Kampen. This was an insightful addition, as it showed that the Schilderswijk is not an isolated or exceptional neighbourhood in the Netherlands, and that similar experiences of girls' football, discrimination, racism, and girls' emancipation also play a role in other neighbourhoods.

Participant observation is usually the central element in ethnographic fieldwork, and this was also the case in my research. Participant observation covers a broad range of methods: observations while participating, informal talks, and 'hanging around' in the research setting (Buch and Staller 2007). During the fieldwork periods, I travelled about two to three times a week from Utrecht (where I work and live) to the Schilderswijk to visit girls' football activities, usually on afternoons after school, evenings, or in the weekend. I also participated in other activities FGU organised, such as debates and network meetings. The last four months of my fieldwork, I also lived in The Hague, at the border of the Schilderswijk and an adjacent neighbourhood. In this way, I came to know the neighbourhood better, also beyond the football activities I visited.

The young football players at FGU were between ten and twenty years old and were divided in a competition for under thirteen and for thirteen+. The volunteers of FGU, who were my key informants, were between fourteen and twenty years old, except for the coordinator Hanan, who was in her thirties. The Cruyff Court competitions are organised for grades seven and eight in primary school, which include children between ten and twelve years old. Often, in ethnographic sports research, the researchers are full participants in the sport they study (Bolin and Granskog 2003b). In my research, however, this was less the case. Because of the age differences, and my lack of football skills, I mostly participated along the sidelines of the football field. I helped with

organising the Football Girls United competition, coaching the teams, keeping track of the scores, preparing food and drinks, and participating in the meetings with the FGU volunteers. This provided ample space for small talks with football players about their experiences and about developments on the football field or in the competition, and to follow the talks the football players had amongst themselves. During other girls' football activities and competitions, such as the Cruyff Court competition, I also participated along the sidelines: chatting with substitute players, teachers, and trainers. During the research, I found that informal talks were the best method for this study with young football players. I could immediately follow up on their experiences when the players ran off the field, and, when they were agitated about the match or the organisation of a competition (for instance the lack of attention for girls in the street football competitions), they were happy they could rant about it to someone who was interested in their story. The number of girls present at the football activities varied from five to eighty, and I usually engaged with a different team of about five to ten girls per activity.

I took extensive field notes during and after participant observations. Usually when in the field, I took small notes in my notebook or on my phone, writing elaborate field notes on my laptop on the train or when back home. Although I was always open about my role as researcher in the field (see 'Ethical concerns'), I increasingly used my phone to take notes, since that felt less invasive in the research context than a notebook: most of the football players were busy with their phones off the field as well.

In addition to participant observations, I conducted twenty-one semi-structured in-depth interviews with football players and sports professionals and transcribed them all. Ten interviews were with professionals from the municipality and health and welfare organisations in the Schilderswijk, of which two with Hanan, the coordinator of FGU. Nine interviews were with football girls, and two with football boys. Of the interviews with the girls, two were focus groups with a whole football team and two were interviews with a duo, as they preferred an interview together with a fellow football player. Most interviews were conducted on-site near the playgrounds or in a locker room, and some in a community centre, restaurant, or at the home of the girls. In-depth interviews are characterised by the open structure of the interview, allowing the interviewee to express her feelings, opinions, experiences, and meanings in her own words. Yet, I did have some questions and topics that I wanted to cover, which I adapted to the research focus during the course of the research (Hesse-Biber 2007).

After a few months of research, I found that the interviews with football girls were less valuable compared with participant observations and informal talks, because many girls considered the interviews as quite a formal practice. Because of the age difference between us, girls often saw me as a kind of teacher in the interview setting, which

made them respond in formal and socially desirable ways. Interviews are not always the best method in doing anthropological research with children (Evers, Notermans, and Ommering 2011). Therefore, I also tried the research methods of mapping and drawing, which are often used in ethnographic research with children (Evers, Notermans, and Ommering 2011), but these methods also turned out less suitable for this research and research group, as most of the research participants were teenagers and they considered drawing something for younger children and not 'cool'.[17] Hanging around, chilling, and chatting, as teenagers themselves also continuously do, proved the best methods specific for this age group. Sometimes, I walked with some research participants to different football and leisure locations, thus in that way participating in how the girls navigated through their neighbourhood.

All the data that I collected through observations, talks, and interviews are in Dutch, and I have performed my analysis based on the Dutch transcripts and observation notes. I have only translated quotes into English when selecting them for inclusion in the chapters; in these translations, I have tried to attend as much as possible to original style and not polish language. I alternated fieldwork visits with transcribing and analysing my data, so that I could easily identify issues that needed more attention in my fieldwork or that raised new questions (Boeije 2010). I organised and coded my data following the qualitative data analysis approach developed by Boeije (2010). After the initial four months of fieldwork, I used open coding to identify themes and topics in my research data. For this analysis, I found that space and spatial practices formed a key element of girls' football in the Schilderswijk. After the second fieldwork phase, I used axial coding and developed a coding scheme based on the different girls' football spaces, which later formed the different chapters: the neighbourhood, the playground, girls' football indoors, and the discursive space of girls' football and culturalised citizenship.

As part of the reflexive character of feminist ethnography, and as a modest attempt to 'give back' to the research participants (Davis and Craven 2016, 114), I discussed my analysis and findings with some of my research participants after having written the first draft of the dissertation. In March 2018, I attended a network meeting of Football Girls United, where girls and boys from the Schilderswijk are given the opportunity to enlarge their network with potential employers or internship opportunities by playing football together. I was also invited, and, in between the football matches, I informally discussed the chapters and content of my dissertation with the FGU volunteers I worked with most. Although most of them were enthusiastic to hear that my research was almost finished, they were not overly interested in the results. I acknowledge the importance of not only including the research participants by way of using the data that they helped produce, but also by engaging with them in building the results and

conclusion; yet, this might not always be of interest to the research participants, as Davis and Craven also recognise (2016, 114). This was also the case with the women and girls from FGU: they saw my dissertation and conclusions above all as *my* deal; *their* deal was, and still is, playing football.

Ethical concerns

As I have described, a considerable part of my research participants were under eighteen years old, the legal age in the Netherlands when someone is considered an adult. Especially in research with minors, ethical issues are necessary to take into account. At the start of my research, there was no ethical review board at the Anthropology department, but I did consider ethical issues during the whole course of the research, and I will briefly describe my considerations here. I was always open about my role as researcher to the people I encountered during my research. Mostly, I introduced myself as a researcher with an interest in girls' football and in football being played in ethnically and religiously diverse neighbourhoods. However, 'researcher' was a very abstract concept for most of the young research participants, as this is not a role or job they often come across in their daily lives or amongst acquaintances. They could relate to the role of journalists, however, as, at the time of research, many journalists were visiting the Schilderswijk and were interviewing people, similarly to what I was doing. As a result, my research participants sometimes called me 'house journalist' (*huisjournalist* in Dutch), and I accepted that position; it made it easier for the children and youths in my research to understand what I was doing – namely, interviewing and writing about them – and it therefore enabled them to make a more well-formed decision about whether they wanted to take part in my research or not. I liked the 'house' in 'house journalist', because it suggested that I was not just another researcher or journalist visiting the neighbourhood, but that I was, in a way, attached to the girls' football competition, which I will come back to later in the 'Reflections on positionality' section.

In addition to having informed consent from minor research participants themselves, it is common in social scientific research to also ask the parents or caregivers for informed consent, for example in the form of a letter children take home (Duits 2008), but this is not always necessary (ERIC 2013). I chose not to ask consent from my research participants' parents directly: in the first place, I asked consent from the research participants themselves and the adult who was responsible for the specific youth activity I participated in, usually a sports professional, team coach, or a teacher. In addition to that, Hanan, the coordinator of FGU, included a message about my research in a newsletter she sent to the girls' parents. I chose not to ask for direct informed consent from the parents since I considered the spaces where

my research participants played football with their friends precisely as spaces where they could play without supervision from their parents, as part of adolescence and the process of growing up. Furthermore, in this way, I could acknowledge children's agency as young citizens in football spaces, rather than seeing them as dependent on adults. However, I did engage with parents when they were present during some of the football competitions, talked with them about my research, and asked them about their thoughts on girls' football. The parents I have encountered were all enthusiastic about their daughters' participation in football and stimulated me to conduct research on that topic, as they endorsed the importance to generate more attention for girls' football.

My main concern was thus that the children and young football players themselves gave informed consent for their participation in my study, that they understood that I was going to write about them based on the talks and interviews, and that I would write about them confidentially, without using their real names. There was always the option for them to decline participation in the research when they did not feel like it, although this only happened a few times. I did encounter some cases where a sports professional who organised football in playgrounds, and who was enthusiastic about the research, told their pupils that they should talk with me. In these cases, I always mentioned to the professional and the children that they were not obliged to talk with me and that we would only do an interview if they themselves also agreed on being interviewed.

To prevent recognition, I anonymised the specific locations (playgrounds) and organisations where I conducted fieldwork. All names of persons and organisations in this dissertation are pseudonyms, and I removed connections between persons and specific locations to prevent recognition as much as possible. Yet, I cannot avoid the possibility that people from the Schilderswijk might recognise their fellow football players or trainers.

Research participants

Since the 1980s, there has been an upsurge in research on Islam and Muslims in Europe and the Netherlands. In social research, the category 'Muslim' has become increasingly used as a category of difference and identification that is, presumably, of high importance (Brubaker 2012; Sunier 2012; De Koning 2012). The growing amount of research about 'Muslims' resembles what Essed and Nimako have previously described as the 'Dutch minority research industry': the prolific subsidised production of reports and research about 'ethnic minorities and their cultures' (Essed and Nimako 2006, 284). Currently, this has shifted to a Muslim or 'Islam research industry' (Abbas 2010, 133), and created a fatigue amongst Muslims for being asked to participate in

research because of their religious identification, especially in neighbourhoods where many Muslim citizens live (Abbas 2010, 132–33), and especially since 9/11 (De Koning 2008, 41). Anthropologist Martijn de Koning (2008, 83) points out that many young Muslims dislike being approached 'as Muslims' all the time, because it sets them apart as 'others' in Dutch society.[18] As I will show in the next chapter, this growing importance and categorisation of 'Muslims' in social research is also visible in sports research, which has seen a growing body of literature on Muslim women and sports over the past years (e.g. Walseth and Fasting 2003; Hargreaves 2000b, 2007; Pfister 2006; Ahmad 2011; Dagkas and Benn 2006; Baker 2009a; Benn, Pfister, and Jawad 2011).

I use the terms 'Muslim' and 'Muslim background' in this dissertation while acknowledging that they are container concepts that may include a diverse array of identifications, religions, backgrounds, and belongings, i.e. Sunni, Shia, Sufi, born Muslims, and converts to Islam. Most of the girls in my research are born Sunni Muslims and have Moroccan-Dutch ethnic backgrounds. Because the focus of this research is not on diversity and belonging within Islamic faith, but on how Muslim girls are dominantly perceived in Dutch society and in public (football) spaces as 'others', and how they deal with that, I use this category. However, I acknowledge that the use of this term comes with the risk of reinforcing the category of 'Muslim' as a homogeneous essentialist category and with privileging a faith-based identification above other social identifications (see also Van Es 2016, 7), which will be precisely the subject of the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

Choosing one's research group and research participants and categorising them as 'Muslims' is therefore not an innocent practice, as it can indeed reproduce existing inequalities and representations of this group as 'other' in the Netherlands, especially since Islam is still considered as a migrant religion (De Koning 2012). This practice also reduces Muslim citizens to only one axe of identification, ignoring the (religious) diversity within Islam and the diversity amongst Muslim citizens. I reckon that Muslims and Muslim youths are not merely Muslims, but also students, children, and football players, to name just a few social identities. Furthermore, the representation and categorisation of 'Muslims' in the Netherlands is strongly related to (negative) stereotypes of ethnic minority youths, especially 'Moroccans'. In this study, I therefore did not approach the young research participants primarily as Muslims or as 'Moroccans', but as football players. I selected Football Girls United for inclusion in my research in the first place because they organise girls' football in a diverse multicultural neighbourhood. This was also the way in which I introduced my research to the girls and boys of FGU; only later in the research, I carefully considered questions of religion, race/ethnicity, and being Muslim in relation to girls' football.

As the relationship between identifying as Muslim and playing football is not self-evident, this approach had some limitations. I was hesitant, especially in the beginning of my research, to ask football players about their religious belonging and how that mattered on the football field. I was granted access to FGU based on my research topic of girls' football, and not of Islam, and I felt that the girls and boys of Football Girls United accepted me as a researcher within their midst precisely because my research was about girls' football and not about Islam or Muslim youths. Taking the problematic 'Islam research industry' into mind, it felt morally slippery to ask football players about Islam and about their experiences of being Muslim. At the same time, asking about Islam felt inevitable to be able to critically relate my research to existing research on 'Muslims', ethnicity, and gender in sports and in the Netherlands. Also, as will become clear in the coming chapters, religion and ethnicity did matter to many football players on the football field in relation to dominant white constructions of Dutch identity and citizenship and experiences of racism and/or Islamophobia. As such, the question of how to relate to my research participants – as Muslims, as football players, as girls, et cetera – is a main thread throughout this dissertation, and will come back for the first time in the next chapter, when I discuss feminist intersectionality scholarship on gender, race/ethnicity, and religion.

Taking these thoughts about the categorisation and identification of research participants in mind, I describe the girls and boys in my research alternately as football players, as Moroccan-Dutch, and as Muslims, depending on which identifications they placed at the foreground in the different contexts. This practice highlights the fluidity of identifications and intersectional differences in different social contexts (McCall 2005, 1781–82). It corresponds to my research participants' own practice of identification, which alternates between Moroccan, Dutch, Muslim, girl, and football player, depending on the context. Sometimes, when paraphrasing or quoting voices of my research participants, I use the term 'Moroccan', as the football players amongst themselves often used this term. When talking to me or to other white Dutch people, the football players emphasised being Dutch with a Moroccan background. When I want to highlight ethnic identifications, I thus usually describe my research participants as Moroccan-Dutch, stressing both their identification as Dutch and as Moroccan. This runs against the problematic practice of much research on Dutch multicultural neighbourhoods and sports, in which young residents, most of them born and raised in the Netherlands, are framed as 'Moroccan', 'Turkish', 'Somali', and so on. These scholars thereby reproduce the idea that these residents are not full Dutch citizens, but always 'other' (e.g. Cevaal and Romijn 2011; De Jong 2007; Van der Wilk 2016; Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014; Smit 2014).

Reflections on positionality

As follows from feminist epistemology and objectivity, it is crucial to reflect on my own positionality in this research, and how the knowledge produced follows from the specific relationship I have had with my research participants. In the chapters of this dissertation, I try as much as possible to describe the context in which observations or talks took place, what my role was in those contexts, and which questions I asked, to keep my positionality as close as possible to the data I present and discuss. Nevertheless, there are some general remarks, thoughts, and encounters that are important to discuss here.

As mentioned above, when I decided to focus on the Schilderswijk as the main location of my fieldwork, this was not without hesitation. Taking critical discussions of the problematic aspects of feminists and anthropologists studying ethnic, racial, religious, cultural, or colonial 'others' seriously (Mohanty 1988; Wekker 2016, 62–63; Abu-Lughod 2002, 2013), researching the Schilderswijk was both a reproduction and a departure of this practice. The Schilderswijk, as part of the Netherlands, and therefore of my 'own' social and cultural environment, is still one of the most 'othered' places in the country. By taking this process of 'othering' – of both the research participants and the neighbourhood – into account in this research, and studying how young residents critically deal with representations and stereotypes, it is my aim to represent this neighbourhood differently (Jaffe and De Koning 2015, 34). Specifically, this is possible since my research focuses on girls' football, something that is generally regarded as positive by both people from and outside of the Schilderswijk, compared with the negative representations of radicalisation, crime, and women's oppression. By focusing on a girls' football competition that aims at the empowerment and inclusion of girls in public spaces and in sports, it is possible to provide different representations of youths from the Schilderswijk, thereby contesting their supposed 'otherness'.

As a white researcher from a different part of the Netherlands, my involvement and acceptance within Football Girls United was at first quite limited. After I met Hanan, the coordinator of FGU, she quickly saw the potential of having a researcher at the girls' football competition who would, hopefully, represent a more positive story of the Schilderswijk, and she granted me access to all activities of FGU. The football girls themselves, however, had a wait-and-see attitude towards me. As mentioned before, many Muslim youths, and especially youths from the Schilderswijk, experience fatigue about being a research subject all the time. Much research, both journalistic and from (applied) universities, is conducted in the Schilderswijk, most often in the form of incidental visits by researchers or journalists. At first, the girls and boys from FGU perceived me as 'another one' and paid little attention to me. Talks and interviews were rather short and superficial, and not many in-depth experiences were shared

with me. Later, in the informal talks we had, my research participants criticised the stereotypical images that journalists create and reproduce of the Schilderswijk without seriously engaging with them, the young inhabitants. This specifically became clear in two events, of which I share my observation notes. The first event took place on a Saturday in November 2014:

> *I am visiting FGU for a few months already, but I am increasing my visits as I just decided to focus on the Schilderswijk as an in-depth case-study. I hang around with some volunteers and football players of FGU in a public playground that is often used for outdoor sports activities by different organisations in the neighbourhood. One of the FGU boys tells about his experiences with the police in the Schilderswijk, explaining to me how especially Moroccan boys are often targeted by the police, sometimes in very violent ways. Then, a group of five white, middle-aged people, mostly men, appear around the corner of the school next to the playground. One of them points towards the playground and starts to talk. The others observe us while we hang around and sit on the benches, but they stay at a distance and do not come closer. When it begins to feel like a weird situation, one of the football players, who is running on the field, shouts: 'Yes, indeed, this is the Schilderswijk!' The other footballers on the benches next to me mumble and laugh a bit, but quickly go on with their talks without paying any more attention to the group of adults. After a few minutes, the group leaves. I feel that the footballers were ridiculing their white adult observers, and it gives me a very uncomfortable feeling. It seems to me that what I am doing is not that different after all. I am also a white adult outsider who is studying and observing the football players of the Schilderswijk. My discomfort makes that I am not asking the girls and boys about this incident; I do not want to put any attention on myself being present in the playground, and I silently remain seated with the football players on the benches, until I feel it is time to leave.*

During the second event, a few days later, the reaction of my research participants, and their thoughts about researchers and observers, became clearer:

> *This evening, I am attending a debate between youths and the police at the multicultural youth centre in the Schilderswijk. The evening is organised to improve the relation between youths and the police, which has been disturbed by incidents of discrimination, racial/ethnic profiling, and violence by the police. Many FGU volunteers join the event, and Hanan has invited me to come along. When I arrive at the youth centre, one of the Moroccan-Dutch organisers*

of the debate is very surprised to hear that it is the first time that I visit the centre: 'Oh, you have not been here before? Your colleagues… they… are you from the police?' I explain to him that I belong to the girls from FGU and that I am conducting a research on girls' football in the Schilderswijk, and then he warmly welcomes me. The debate starts with several discussion points about prejudices about the police and about youths. One discussion point is about the high level of crime amongst Moroccan youths. A Moroccan-Dutch youth leader refers to research that concludes that the majority of youths in Dutch prisons is Moroccan, and he argues that the Moroccan community should take its responsibility for this situation. A young man in the audience becomes agitated and interrupts him: 'But what is a Moroccan? I'm not a Moroccan! I'm Dutch! I'm born here.' Ilias, a Moroccan-Dutch trainer at Football Girls United, agrees with him: 'What research is this? Then show me. Because I saw it myself, the term Moroccan is often really used too easily, while sometimes it's a Tunisian or a Turk or somebody else. I'd really like to know where those researchers get their data from!' Upon Ilias's statement, the FGU girls in the audience start to chuckle and look at me. Some of them giggle loudly, and I start to feel uncomfortable again. The girls know that I am also one of those researchers. But, this time, I decide that I must face it, and when the evening has ended, I approach Ilias and I ask him: 'You don't like researchers here, do you?' Ilias is still a bit agitated, and replies: 'No, really not! I really wonder where they get their data from.' I ask, a bit insecure: 'Do you then think it's okay that I am a researcher at Football Girls United?' Ilias, in turn, looks a bit surprised by my question and responds: 'Yes, of course, but you are really there, and you see what is happening with your own eyes, so that is different.'

I was relieved by his answer and his agreement of my participation in FGU. Later in my research, I also asked some football girls about their thoughts about my presence as a researcher in FGU, and they responded in similar ways. What was a crucial difference, I think, is that, for the girls and boys in FGU, I was not a distant and disembodied researcher, producing data about 'Muslims', 'Moroccans', or Schilderswijk youths out of sight, but a human being of flesh and blood who was approachable and really present. My relatively long-term engagement with FGU as a researcher made me different from researchers and journalists who only incidentally visited the neighbourhood.

It was important for my research participants that I would not exclusively write about negative issues in the Schilderswijk. Because I was so often present at the FGU activities, they could make sure that I also came to know the positive sides and experiences of living in the Schilderswijk, of which girls' football was an important aspect. Furthermore, my regular presence at FGU meant that research participants could ask *me* questions about my research, my findings, or about my own life, which they did now and then. These questions were eventually not so much related to my research, but more to concerns in their daily lives that they could not as easily discuss with other adults, such as questions about menstruation or about suitable girls' sports clothing. For Hanan, there were more concrete stakes in my presence as researcher within FGU: the interest of a researcher from Utrecht University could contribute to a positive outreach of the FGU organisation towards the municipality, stakeholders, or other potential funders. Upon Hanan's request, I wrote a reference letter for her and her stakeholders, in which I summarised the results of my research, which showed the impact of the work she is doing in the Schilderswijk. In this way, my presence provided modest opportunities to 'give back' to the research participants, however complicated the issue of 'giving back' is, for power hierarchies and relations between the researcher and the research participants never cease to exist (Davis and Craven 2016, 114–15).

In the Schilderswijk, power relations between people are profoundly racialised. Most professionals who work in the neighbourhood and who hold positions of power – whether sports trainers, researchers, police officers, policy makers, or social workers – are white and are not from the neighbourhood themselves, while most residents are non-white. As became clear from both vignettes, these racialised power relations also played out in my fieldwork. My position was clearly related to the problematic position of other white researchers in the neighbourhood. This position is problematised by young football players, whether implicitly by yelling something at researchers from the football field or explicitly in a debate, as Ilias did. Furthermore, my presence in the neighbourhood was immediately assumed as belonging to the people who do not *live* but *work* in the neighbourhood, being it a police officer, researcher, or policy maker. This created specific relationships with my research participants from FGU, but also with the sports professionals who were part of my research. With the two following vignettes, I will reflect on how these relationships took form. The first was on a Sunday in December 2014:

After the football trainings in a sports hall, the FGU football players are leaving the building to go home. Sarah and Aliya, two FGU volunteers, call everyone together because they have a plan. They want to buy a present for Hanan, to thank her for all the work she is doing for FGU. They ask the football players to bring five euros with them the next training, so that they can buy a wellness retreat in a hammam for Hanan. I really like this initiative and I ask Sarah and Aliya: 'How nice! Can I also participate in the present? Then I'll also bring money with me next time.' Sarah responds: 'Yes, of course, you

belong here too, you are just a Moroccan too.' Many of the girls laugh and look at me amused. Hafsa, another volunteer, approaches me and asks: 'Can I ask you something? Some time ago, you said "hamdulillah",[19] but are you Muslim?' I explain to her that I learned this in Egypt, where I have lived for a few months, and where everyone, also Christians, say 'hamdulillah'. Some girls nod and Hafsa says: 'Ah okay, yes, for us that's a bit weird you know, that eh, a Dutch person says this. We're not used to that.'

Interestingly, at first, my belonging to FGU is articulated through using the ethnic identity marker of 'Moroccan'. Although this does not mean that girls and boys from FGU really identify me as Moroccan – a few minutes later, I was again a 'Dutch person' – their use of this identity marker can be interpreted as a funny sign of their acceptance of me in the football competition, similar to the label 'house journalist' that I received. Precisely because of my racial/ethnic, locational, and religious difference in FGU, the football players needed a symbolic way to articulate my 'inclusion' (i.e. girls who are already included because of similar religious, ethnic, and location backgrounds do not need such symbolic marker).

Furthermore, it is not only religious or racial/ethnic identification that matters in fieldwork, but also a classed and locational/geographical identification (Carrington 2008). My affiliation with a university, educational background, and geographical and classed background of not being from the working-class Schilderswijk thus also contributed to my position as 'different' in FGU. When FGU played against other girls' teams in the Schilderswijk, girls whom I had not met before would sometimes ask the FGU volunteers who I was, and they responded by saying that 'she belongs with us' or 'she belongs with Hanan', or calling me their 'house journalist'. I liked this label because it emphasised my role as someone who writes about the girls and girls' football, including the power hierarchies attached to that, while it also emphasised the 'house' aspect, meaning that, in a way, I also did temporarily belong to Football Girls United. Briefly put, I was one of them, albeit different. The use of funny nicknames for anthropologists to emphasise inclusion and exclusion is not an uncommon practice. Martijn de Koning argued that, by using humour or humorous nicknames, it is possible to temporarily exceed existing ethnic, religious, or locational boundaries, without affecting the boundary itself (2008, 65), which is also an adequate description of my position within FGU.

My position as a white researcher did evoke completely different responses from white sports and health professionals in the Schilderswijk, which became clear, for example, during an interview I conducted with Peter, one of the coordinators of the

sports activities in the neighbourhood, in his office in the school next to his playground in January 2015:

After I have finished the interview with Peter, Mo, a volunteer at both FGU and at Peter's playground, comes into the office to get some sports equipment. I already met Mo before at FGU, and after we have greeted each other, I tell Peter that I know Mo from FGU and we will also do an interview together. Peter then says to Mo: 'Yes, you should do the interview with her, it's important, about girls' football'. Mo nods and, when he leaves the office again to go to his football training, Peter says to me: 'I just told Mo that he has to meet with you. Then he has also heard this from a man, then he knows that it's OK. He's still a Moroccan, eh.'[20]

I was too perplexed to further inquire what Peter meant by that, yet it is clear that gender and race/ethnicity both play a role in Peter's interaction with me and with Mo. It seems that he believes that Mo adheres to conservative gender relations because of his Moroccan-Dutch background, and therefore would not be willing to do an interview with a woman if not stimulated to do so by another man, or that I, as a woman, need Peter's help to find 'Moroccan' male interviewees. This is even more ironic considering that Mo volunteers at several girls' football activities that aim to stimulate gender equality and empowerment of girls and women in football spaces in the neighbourhood. It is precisely gender equality that is Mo's main reason for spending so much of his time volunteering at girls' football, as I later learned during the interview with him. Yet, in the interactions I had with Peter, or with some of the other white sports and health professionals in the Schilderswijk, a kind of implicit 'us' – white professionals (gender and sexually emancipated, understand the value of sports) – versus 'them' – ethnic and religious residents (gender and sexually conservative, and still need to be educated on the value of sports) – is created. This was expressed by utterances such as 'eh' or 'you know…' when talking about sports, gender, and girls' football in the Schilderswijk. It implies a common positionality and an opinion about the Schilderswijk and its ethnic and religious 'other' inhabitants, which these professionals assumed I shared with them. Despite my discomfort in these situations, I regard these instances as highly valuable in my research, as it gave me insights in the underlying assumptions of sports and health professionals in the Schilderswijk, and how these affect girls' experiences with girls' football in public playgrounds in the neighbourhood, as will become clear in the chapters that follow.

Overview of the dissertation

In Chaper 1, I will discuss the scholarly fields that this dissertation engages with more in depth: feminist intersectionality scholarship, feminist studies of religion and gender, and feminist studies of gender and public space. The chapter develops the theoretical and conceptual framework on which I later build my empirical analyses. As these three scholarly fields have different genealogies and focal points, I will particularly pay attention to how and where conceptualisations of race/ethnicity, religion, and gender differ and converge. I point out the theoretical and conceptual shortcomings of conceptualisations of religious difference and Islam in both feminist intersectionality scholarship and in the feminist study of religion and gender, and I look at how a focus on the different spaces with which Muslim girls engage, including football spaces, can contribute to more nuanced conceptualisations of religion and Islam that can encompass the diverse experiences of Muslim girls in public spaces.

The empirical chapters are all dedicated to the different football spaces that are central in this research: from a general discussion of the Schilderswijk to the smaller public playgrounds within the neighbourhood, to girls only football indoors, and then again to the broader discursive spaces of culturalised citizenship in girls' football and Dutch society. Chapter 2, *Being young in the Schilderswijk*, functions as a context chapter, in which I first discuss the Schilderswijk in The Hague from a historical and postcolonial perspective. I look at how public representations of the Schilderswijk are constructed through racialised, gendered, classed, and religionised discourses, in particular about young Muslim residents, and at the role of neighbourhood sports programmes. I argue that public representations of the Schilderswijk should be understood in the context of the Dutch colonial history and colonial constructions of the 'other'. In the second part of the chapter, I discuss how young residents in the Schilderswijk perceive their neighbourhood and how they experience living and playing there, in particular in relation to gender and age as categories of difference and power in public spaces. Last, I provide an overview of the different girls' football organisations that I studied in this research.

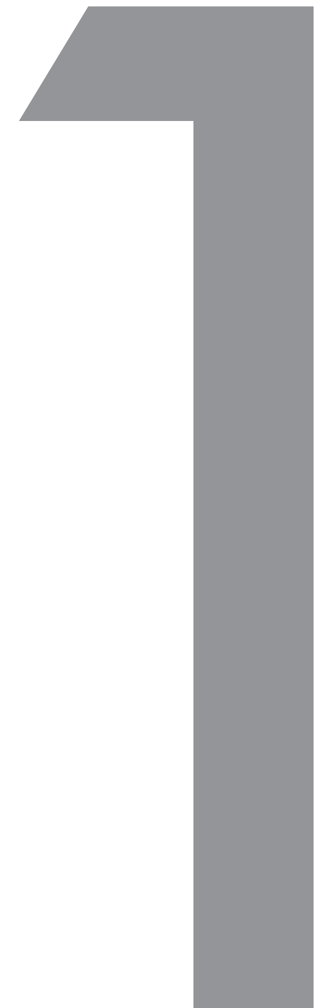
In Chapter 3, *Invading the playground*, I discuss the experiences of girls who play football in the public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk. It discusses how public sports spaces are gendered and racialised, and how the Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls in my research navigate these spaces. I show how public football playgrounds are constructed as normative masculine spaces, through contestations of space and time, and the practices, discourses, and role models of sports organisations. I use Puwar's (2004) concept of 'space invaders' to describe and analyse how the girls in my research contest these dominant gendered constructions of the football playgrounds. Furthermore, I analyse how the gendered construction of public sports spaces intersects with secular norms of public space and with racialised discourses on Muslim girls and boys in the Schilderswijk.

Chapter 4, *Girls only*, focuses on playing football indoors, in the gym hall where the FGU girls' football competition usually takes place. The chapter discusses the motivations of girls to play football in a specific *girls'* football competition, in comparison with playing football in public playgrounds. It shows that their motivations are related to the dichotomous gendered and (hetero)sexualised organisation of sports, and not primarily to religious motivations. Yet, contrary to what its name might suggest, some boys are also involved in FGU. I show how, through engaging and disciplining boys, FGU constructs alternative gender relations and intersectional meanings of masculinity, femininity, and sexuality in football.

Chapter 5, *Playing religion, gender, and citizenship*, focuses on constructions of culturalised citizenship in the Netherlands, and the place of Muslim girls and football within it. I show how Muslim girls are forced to 'integrate' and 'emancipate' in Dutch society through sports, while they are at the same time always also constructed as the religious 'other' because of their religious difference. I argue that gender, Islam, and sports are caught in a paradox in the culturalised construction of citizenship in the Netherlands. Furthermore, I look at how the girls who play football at FGU incorporate the categories of gender, Islam, and ethnicity in their football strategies to win, and how they create alternative citizenship practices by playing football in public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk.

In the Conclusion, I come back to the questions that were raised in the theoretical debate in Chapter 1 and connect these to the conclusions of the empirical chapters. I argue that a conceptualisation of religion and Islam should attend to the experiences of Muslim girls not only from a religious point of view, but also by taking into account practices that are not explicitly religious, such as playing football in public football playgrounds, and how playing football can be a performative act that reproduces and resists the gendered, racialised, and religionised constructions of public football spaces.

Navigating feminist intersectionality research on race/ethnicity, religion, gender, and public space



Introduction

This research is broadly situated in feminist scholarship in the humanities and social sciences. Feminist philosopher Katrine Smiet (2017, 18–19) defines feminist scholarship as 'those forms of research that take an explicitly feminist approach to their methodology, material, or object'. It thus does not necessarily take *gender* as an object of study, or takes place in a department of Gender Studies, but refers more to the approach and methodology. It means having a 'critical attention to (gendered) power relations, an engagement with issues of social justice, and a self-reflexive situating within a feminist tradition both inside and outside the academy' (Smiet 2017, 18–19; see also Davis and Craven 2016). This approach of feminist scholarship is also at the core of this dissertation. This study particularly engages with feminist intersectionality scholarship, feminist studies of religion and gender, and feminist and anthropological studies of gender and public space. In this chapter, I will discuss how these scholarly fields are related to each other, how and where they diverge, and how their conceptualisations can be connected to this ethnographic study. Furthermore, I discuss the concepts that are central in these scholarly fields and for this dissertation: race/ethnicity, religion, gender, and public space, and, I show how they can be applied to the analysis of the empirical chapters.

The chapter starts with a discussion of intersectionality theory and its conceptualisations of race and ethnicity, specifically in the context of Europe and the Netherlands. I argue that intersectional conceptualisations with specific attention to race are necessary to account for the ways in which (gendered, ethnic, religious) differences are always embedded in macrostructures of racialised power relations and in racialised hierarchies. Ethnicity, a concept that refers to performative self-identifications as a group, can therefore never be seen separately from race and racialisations, hence the use of the intersectional co-construction race/ethnicity in this dissertation. The increasing visibility and construction of Muslim citizens as racialised 'others' in Dutch society points to the importance of religion and Islam in an intersectional framework. In the second section, I will connect intersectionality scholarship to feminist studies on religion and gender, in particular focusing on conceptualisations of religious difference, Islam, and religious women's agency. In this section, I will also look at studies of Muslim women and sports, a scholarly field that has seen a solid growth over the past years. I provide an extensive overview and critical discussion of how gender, religion, and Islam are conceptualised in these studies.

I argue that feminist studies of intersectionality, religious women's agency, and Muslim women and sports have rather limited conceptualisations of religious difference and Islam that do not correspond to anthropological lived realities, which are the core of this dissertation. I argue for new perspectives on religion and Islam as categories of anthropological and feminist analysis, which can capture anthropological lived realities of the football girls in my research. These girls are not so much occupied with religious or pious Islamic practices, but primarily with playing football and with their contested belonging to public football spaces as Muslim girls. To that end, in the third section, I bring in feminist and anthropological studies of gender and public space. Space is a crucial but often forgotten category in intersectionality scholarship and in feminist studies of religion and gender, and I argue that taking into account space as analytical category can shed new lights on categories of religious difference and Islam, in looking at how ethnic, religious, and gendered identities are constructed spatially, and how categories of difference shift in different spaces. At the end of the chapter, I will also briefly consider other categories of difference and identity that are part of this research: age and class.

Feminist intersectionality research

Intersectionality theory is currently one of the main approaches in feminist scholarship and theory (Davis and Zarkov 2017; Collins 2015; Nash 2008). It has become the primary theory to conceptualise categories of difference, power, and subjectivity. Intersectionality's central notion is that subjectivity and power are not converged through one axis of difference, such as gender or race, but through multiple axes that co-construct and reinforce each other. At the core of oppression, privilege, and subjectivity are therefore different combinations of axes of difference, such as gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, religion, location, and age (Wekker 2002; Nash 2008). These axes of difference are not 'natural' or pre-consisting but created or enacted through relationships of power. For example, the marginalised position of women in football is not a 'natural' characteristic of gender difference but created through the historical development of the sport by and for men. Furthermore, women's (and men's) experiences in football are not only shaped through gender, but also by other axes of difference such as race, ethnicity, class, or sexuality. These axes of difference and power are thus always simultaneously in play and they cannot be reduced to each other (Nash 2008; Collins 2015).

The term intersectionality was first coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1991), who developed a black feminist critique on feminist and anti-racist politics, foregrounding the *intersection* of gender and race, rather than only one of those. However, there were many black feminist, postcolonial, and anti-racist scholars and activists who paved the way for the development of intersectionality theory without naming it as such: bell hooks (1982), the Combahee River Collective

(1979), and Chandra Mohanty (1988) in the USA, and Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis (1983) in Europe, amongst others (Collins 2015, 7). These scholars focused on the mutual exclusion of lesbian and black women in anti-racist, anti-capitalist, and feminist movements and deconstructed the categories 'woman' and 'black'. In an anthropological fashion, Mohanty introduced a transnational aspect to these early intersectionality studies, by critically discussing the singular and monolithic representation of 'third-world women' in feminist scholarship (Mohanty 1988). Central were the intersections of gender, race, class, sexuality, and colonialism as oppressive social categories of power and difference, but, in some black feminist thought, these categories were also mentioned as source for intersectional identity politics (Nash 2008; Phoenix and Pattynama 2006; Collins 2015; Bilge 2014).

In contemporary feminist scholarship, intersectionality theory is taken up beyond the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class, now typically also including ethnicity, nationality, dis/ability, religion, and age. Although intersectionality is often conceptualised as a theory about oppression, it is also used to account for the multiple ways in which privilege is constructed along intersecting axes of difference (Nash 2008). However, according to Nash, the ways in which both oppression *and* privilege intersect and inform experiences and subject positions is often neglected in intersectionality theory (Nash 2008, 12; see also Valentine 2007, 14–15). For example, in the context of football, a white Dutch girl can be oppressed on the axis of gender, as football is still dominantly perceived as a boys' sport to which girls have less access, but privileged on the axis of race/ethnicity, as white football players generally do not experience racial/ethnic exclusion in public football spaces, as girls of colour do. To study the diverse aspects of girls' street football in the Netherlands, it is thus necessary to use an intersectional approach.

Furthermore, intersectionality is not only the study of structural oppressive and privileging factors – 'macro axes of social power' (Yuval-Davis 2006, 198), but it can also be studied on other analytical levels. Yuval-Davis (2006, 198) mentions two: the lived experiences and identity negotiations of people 'on the ground', and how social divisions are represented in images, symbols, texts, and ideologies. In my research, intersectionality refers to these multiple analytical levels: I study the structural power relations of race, ethnicity, gender, and religion in neighbourhood football in the Schilderswijk, and how these social divisions are represented and reproduced in football spaces and practices. In particular, I focus on the ways in which football girls understand and challenge intersectional power structures and representations of gender, religion, race, and ethnicity in football and how they themselves create and perform intersectional identities and subjectivities on the football field.

Intersectionality is not uncontested: besides more general critiques of intersectionality,[21] it is also criticised within specific disciplines for its relative neglect of class (McCall 2005; Brah and Phoenix 2004), religion (Singh 2015; Weber 2015), age (Hearn 2011; Burman and Stacey 2010), and race (Lewis 2013; Bilge 2014), the latter especially in European contexts. I will further discuss these critiques in the following sections, where I conceptualise race, ethnicity, and religion from an intersectional approach. I will mainly engage with European and Dutch theories of intersectionality and conceptualisations of difference and focus specifically on the denial of race in intersectional and ethnicity scholarship. Furthermore, I look at how religious difference, Islam, and Islamophobia intersect with race, ethnicity, and gender.

Race and ethnicity in Europe

Whereas, in the USA, intersectionality is primarily constructed as a black feminist project, in Europe it is seen as 'the brainchild of feminism and gender studies' (Bilge 2014, 1), making gender the core concept of intersectionality. In this way, it leaves out race and black critique as central to intersectionality's historiography (Bilge 2014, 1), and denies, removes, or disavows race as a useful analytical concept in European intersectional debates and studies (Lewis 2013). Race as analytical category is assumed to belong primarily to the USA and is, in the European context, constructed as meaningful for the British case at most (Bilge 2014, 23; Lewis 2013). Yet, in this part, I will argue that race, next to ethnicity, is a necessary analytical concept also in European scholarship, and thus also for this research.

In feminist and anthropological scholarship, and also in this dissertation, the concept of race is approached as a social construct that has no real biological referent or origin, but is the result or effect of colonial and postcolonial processes of *racialisation* (Smiet 2014b, 37). Racialisation refers to the process whereby social categories of difference or identity, such as class, ethnicity, or religion, become essentialised, naturalised, and biologised, and in which difference is represented as naturally attached to an individual's body, for example through skin colour (Silverstein 2005, 364; Stolcke 1993). In this process, difference becomes inscribed on the body and race therefore presents itself as fixed and as 'truth' (Hall 2017, 62). Racialisation is, according to anthropologist Silverstein (2005, 364), 'the historical transformation of fluid categories of difference into fixed species of otherness' that are positioned hierarchically in fields of power. Social constructions of racialised difference thus have very real consequences in the form of (structural) racism: the hierarchies, exclusions, discriminations, and inequalities made on the basis of racialised difference. Racialisation is not a uniform process but changes over time and in different contexts (El-Tayeb 2011, xiii; Jaffe-Walter 2016, 25). Race, therefore, is also never fixed but a

specific effect or result of racialisation at a specific time and place. Groups such as the Irish, Jews, Roma, and Muslims have historically and in different ways been racialised through cultural, national, religious, or language differences (Jaffe-Walter 2016, 25). These groups have been made into an 'othered' and 'inferior' group of people, being dominated or sometimes even expelled by the majority or dominant group in society that constructs the racialising and naturalising (Stolcke 1993).

When histories and processes of racialisation are not recognised, race easily becomes seen as an irrelevant analytical category in the European and Dutch context, generating a narrative of colour blindness and, consequently, the denial of (structural) racism (El-Tayeb 2011, xv; Smiet 2014b, 38).[22] In the Netherlands, the narrative of colour blindness is especially dominant; when this narrative is criticised, it provokes heavy responses of denial, ignorance, and anxiety (Wekker 2016; Essed and Hoving 2014). Wekker (2016) and Essed and Hoving (2014) provide multiple examples of this denial and anxiety in media, politics, and academia. They, along with other black feminist scholars, argue that race and racisms are not absent in the Netherlands but rather structurally embedded in society, politics, culture, and academia (Essed 1984, 1991; Essed and Trienekens 2008; Essed and Hoving 2014; Botman, Jouwe, and Wekker 2001; Wekker 2002, 2016; El-Tayeb 2011, 2012; Haritaworn 2012).[23] This becomes clear in the Dutch terminology of *allochtoon* and *autochtoon*, supposedly a neutral way to indicate 'those who come from elsewhere' (*allochtonen*). Yet, it effectively racialises people of colour, religious 'others', migrants, and their offspring for endless generations. Although, officially, the concept *allochtoon* is used for all people who have at least one parent who is born outside the Netherlands, or who are born outside the Netherlands themselves[24] – including European migrants – in daily use, it is mainly used to label non-white people and Muslims as 'other'. Its counterpart *autochtoon* ('those who are from here') is kept exclusively for white Dutch people, as Wekker (2016, 15, 23) argues. To emphasise the social constructive and subjective character of these concepts, it is worth mentioning the flexibility of the concepts in denoting different groups in different contexts: it is now mainly Muslims with Moroccan or Turkish backgrounds who are constructed as the ultimate 'others' in Dutch society through the category of *allochtoon*, while, for example, '*Indos*' have moved out of this category (Wekker 2016, 23; Geschiere 2009, 147–53; Essed and Trienekens 2008).[25] The terms *allochtoon* and *autochtoon* provide a disguised way to talk about race without naming it explicitly (Wekker and Lutz 2001, 28), as talking about race is still taboo and often provokes heavy and anxious responses (Wekker 2016, 2017).

In European feminist and sociological scholarship, usually less anxiety-provoking concepts such as 'ethnicity', 'culture', or 'religion' are used instead of the explicit 'race' (Lewis 2013, 882; Smiet 2014b). Scholars of intersectionality have mostly

conceptualised gender and ethnicity as categories of difference useful for the Dutch or European context, for example in most of the articles in the special issue on intersectionality in the *European Journal of Women's Studies*, edited by Phoenix and Pattynama (2006), and, to a lesser extent, in a new special issue in the same journal (Davis and Zarkov 2017). In much sociological research on migration, ethnicity, and minorities, supposedly neutral terms such as 'ethnic minorities', 'migrants', or '*allochtonen*' are used as well, without mentioning processes of racialisation and power, as Essed and Nimako (2006) point out (see also Lentin 2014; Hervik 2004, 151; Lewis 2013, 879). In this way, social studies of migration and ethnicity take ethnic or religious minorities as object of study but often fail to reflect on the racialised and colonial power dynamics that underlie the categorisation of 'ethnic minorities' in policy and academia in the first place.

Studies that use the concepts of race and ethnicity in European feminist or sociological research often fail to account for how the practice of doing research itself is also embedded in a project of knowledge production that has its origins in colonial and racial structures, as Lewis argues: 'In this enactment race knowledge becomes minoritised as belonging to "them" and "there" (instead of being fundamental to colonial modernity and formative of any subjectivity within it) and threated as alien to "us" and "here", including in the production of white subjectivities' (Lewis 2013, 887). Race is then reduced 'to a descriptive identity category that is important to racial/ethnic minorities but not to mainstream scholarship' (Collins 2015, 13), or, in Lentin's (2014, 89) words: 'the ease with which a person or group is described as an "ethnic minority", when severed from race's disciplinary frame, constructs *who is doing the labelling* – hegemonic white Europe – as irrelevant' (emphasis original). When race or ethnicity is discussed in European contexts, it seems only meaningful in relation to racialised minorities to signify 'others', and not as a social construction of whiteness and privilege in structural power hierarchies (Lewis 2013, 884; Bilge 2014, 24–25; Wekker and Lutz 2001; Wekker 2016; El-Tayeb 2011; Hall 2000, 1996). This is also the case in research on diverse neighbourhoods such as the Schilderswijk, where research on integration and ethnicity almost only focuses on racialised minorities and not on white populations. Bodies of the dominant white group are unmarked and considered the 'neutral' norm (Wekker 2002; Lorde 2007b, 116), while non-white bodies are racialised (Silverstein 2005, 27), thus becoming the exception. Interestingly, this norm is constructed in ways similar to gendered norms, where men and masculinities are perceived as the norm and therefore often not seen as gendered (Wekker and Lutz 2001, 32–34). Although this study focuses on Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls, who are racialised, ethnicised, and gendered as a minority, it does not reserve the categories of race, ethnicity, and gender for minoritised groups only. I will also use them to account

for subject positions of racialised and gendered majorities, including myself as a white researcher and the white male sports coaches and policy makers in the Schilderswijk.

Based on the discussion thus far, it becomes clear that race should be an important concept in European intersectionality studies. However, the question arises how to relate it to the concept of 'ethnicity'. In the following paragraphs, I will argue that race and ethnicity are two concepts that are always in conjunction and cannot be replaced by or separated from each other. In most traditional anthropological and sociological scholarship, race and ethnicity are conceptualised as two separate concepts; 'ethnicity' is used to refer to the shared cultural, religious, geographical, and historical backgrounds of a certain group, and 'race' to the social construction of essentialised differences based on biological and/or physical, and not cultural, characteristics (Lentin 2014; Pattynama 1995; Eriksen 2002). However, according to cultural theorist and sociologist Stuart Hall, this dichotomy between ethnicity and race is too simplistic. He argues that 'in most situations, the discourses of biological and cultural difference are simultaneously in play', meaning that there are also social and cultural characteristics attributed to racialised difference, and that the way in which ethnic and cultural differences are constructed is always more or less depending on an attributed biological referent (Hall 2000, 223). Conceptualising race and ethnicity as two separated concepts denies Europe's colonial history and its legacy, where essentialised biological *and* cultural, religious, and historical differences have jointly served as justification for colonisation (Lentin and Titley 2014; Lentin 2014; Stolcke 1993). As mentioned above, 'race' and 'racialisation' refer to more than bodily markers, colour, or phenotype only as it is also through naturalised and essentialised cultural or religious markers that bodies become ascribed as 'white' or 'non-white' (Medovoi 2012), which some scholars describe as 'new' or 'cultural racism' (Hervik 2004; Van Nieuwkerk 2004).[26] Cultural identity, descent, or religion serve as essentialised and naturalised differences, as, for example, in Europe, where Islamic 'others' are portrayed as inherently and 'naturally' related to a destruction of 'European values', to crime, and to homophobia (Lewis 2013, 877–79; Hervik 2004, 151–53; El-Tayeb 2011; Silverstein 2005).

So, when 'ethnicity' aims to refer to the fluid, cultural, historical, religious, and geographical shared backgrounds of groups, it is troubled by a racialised referent that permeates essentialised and naturalised power hierarchies to ethnic difference. Attached to ethnicity is a racial, colonial force that divides people based on essentialised and naturalised differences (Lentin 2014). At the same time, race is troubled by ethnicity, in that racialised difference is not a natural phenomenon or essential in any way but constructed historically, culturally, and politically, through cultural, religious, and ethnic differences (Hall 1996, 446; 2017, 77–78). In studying ethnicity

in Europe, it is thus important to always be attentive to racialised systems of power and oppression that are related to ethnic difference, especially because it has been so often denied. Yet, the racialisation of ethnicity does not make the concept illegitimate or invalid altogether, Hall (1996) argues. Ethnic differences question universalised and ethnocentric discourses and knowledges: 'The term ethnicity acknowledges the place of history, language, and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity, as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual' (Hall 1996, 446). Ethnicity is about the ways group belonging and group distinctiveness are constructed, through different histories and shared experiences. Ethnicised, then, means the process through which ethnic groups are constructed, in the creation of an imagined shared history, language, and culture, and the process of places, spaces, or objects that become connected to specific ethnic groups (Balibar in El-Tayeb 2011, xiii; Baumann 1996, 17–19; Anderson 1983). Ethnicity is about how people create and recreate relationships with the past and in the present. In that way, ethnicity can precisely account for differences within and between racialised groups, such as the different experiences and histories of Moroccan-Dutch, Turkish-Dutch, Surinamese-Dutch, and Antillean-Dutch people in the Netherlands[27] but also the diverse ethnic backgrounds of Dutch Muslims and migrants. These groups share a position as racialised 'others' in Dutch society but have different historical, religious, geographical, cultural, and classed backgrounds, which relate differently to processes of racialisation in contemporary and colonial times (Schrijvers et al. 2018), although these differences are often masked by racial discourses (Hall 2017, 81).

Ethnicity is not only constructed by academics or dominant discourses in society but also by people themselves, and these different constructions of ethnicity are in dialogue with each other (Baumann 1996). The creation of ethnic differences by social groups can be studied as performative articulations of identity, subjectivity, and history. Fatima El-Tayeb (2011, xx) sees in ethnicity the performative potential of resistance against dominant power structures in society, such as racism, through popular cultural practices in urban spaces. According to her, this resistance is informed by the historical, religious, cultural, linguistic, and geographical backgrounds of its practitioners.[28] In my research, too, religion and ethnicity are deployed by the girls as performative potentials of resistance to gendered and racialised power relations in girls' football and in public playgrounds, as will be shown in the subsequent chapters. To sum up, both ethnicity and race are socially and discursively constructed, yet with very real consequences and lived experiences (Hall 2017). 'Race' ultimately refers to power and systems of oppression and privilege. When I use terms such as 'white', 'black', or 'people of colour', I thus refer to a certain position in racialised power structures and relations, one that is, however, by no means fixed. 'Ethnicity' accounts

for religious, cultural, and historical ways of meaning making that form ethnic group relations of identity, place, and belonging (Hall 2017, 107). Both concepts are, however, not to be seen separate from each other; they inform and co-construct each other in a complex entanglement of racialising ethnicity and ethnic and religious differences as part of race. The concepts of ethnicity, religion, and culture in Europe cannot be seen separate from race, racialisation, and Europe's colonial project. Some scholars, such as Wekker (2016, 23–24), therefore use the combination of race/ethnicity rather than either one of the two, highlighting these concepts as co-constituting each other and as a critique on the simplified dichotomy of race as biological and ethnicity as cultural (see also Hall 2000; Andreassen and Ahmed-Andresen 2013, 27–28). In this study, I will also use race/ethnicity as co-constructs and as inseparable yet different from each other. When I use 'race' or 'ethnicity' separately, this is to put the emphasis on either ethnic belonging and identity, or on racialised power hierarchies, but always with the notion that ethnicity does not exist outside racialisation and that race does not exist outside ethnic and/or religious differences. Furthermore, the public football playgrounds of my research are not only racialised and ethnicised, but also intrinsically entangled with discourses, representations, and practices of gender, sexuality, religion, class, and age, as intersectionality puts to the front (Lewis 2013, 879). In the following part, I will focus on the category of 'religious difference' in intersectionality theory, by relating intersectionality scholarship to the feminist study of religion and gender.

Feminist studies of religion and gender

The study of religion, gender, and sexuality is now a central topic in European feminist scholarship (Giorgi 2016; Korte 2011; Hawthorne 2009; Ryan and Vacchelli 2013a; Van den Brandt 2014; Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015). Much of that scholarship focuses on Islam and Muslim women in Europe, for example in relation to the headscarf debate, gendered and sexualised Islamophobia, and the increasing visibility of Muslim women in European public spaces (e.g. El-Tayeb 2011, 2012; Moors and Salih 2009; Amir-Moazami 2010; Bracke 2011; Haritaworn 2012; Duits and Van Zoonen 2006; Van Nieuwkerk 2004; Ramji 2007). These studies point to the importance of the categories of religion and Islam in an intersectional framework and in understanding how constructions of gender and sexuality are in interplay with religion. The current study about Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls who play street football in public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk also looks at how religion, Islam, and gender are entangled in public football playgrounds.

The study of religion within feminist scholarship is not a self-evident topic. Mainstream gender studies are still strongly influenced by secular feminist ideologies, which consider religion, and particularly Islam, as hampering women's freedom and

emancipation (Bilge 2010, 11). Yet, roughly since the new millennium, there has been renewed attention for religion, often defined as the postsecular turn in feminist theory (Bracke 2008; Braidotti 2008).[29] The postsecular turn aims to discuss religion not only as oppressive, as it was previously often seen in feminist scholarship, but also views it as a *source* for religious women's agency and subjectivity. Groundbreaking in postsecular feminist scholarship is Saba Mahmood's critique of secular feminist conceptualisations of agency as resistance. Anthropologist Mahmood conceptualises religious women's agency beyond resistance and liberation, also accounting for the embodiment and cultivation of gendered and religious norms as a form of agency, by studying pious Muslim women in Cairo (Mahmood 2005). Her work has also influenced studies of young pious Muslim women in Europe, as I will discuss in the next section.

In addition to intersectionality, the postsecular turn and studies of religious women's agency could be described as the second major development in feminist scholarship. Yet, as Jakeet Sing (2015) argues, studies of women's religious agency are quite separate from European intersectional scholarship and the two scholarly fields hardly engage with each other. Too often it stays unclear how precisely Islam and religious agency intersect with race and ethnicity in studies of European racialised religious minorities and in studies of Islam in Europe. Therefore, I combine insights from feminist studies of gender, religion, and Islam with the critical discussion of intersectionality and race/ethnicity in Europe. As I have shown in the Introduction, much sports programmes still assume that Muslim girls lag behind in football participation because of their supposed oppressive Muslim and ethnic background. This study challenges that assumption and looks at how religion and Islam play a role in girls' football practices from the perspectives of football girls themselves, and in intersection with other relevant axes of identity and difference such as race/ethnicity. The next section will discuss these intersections and the (dis)engagements of intersectionality scholarship with religion, Islam, and religious difference.

Intersectionality, religious difference, and religious women's agency

According to Beverly Weber (2015, 22–23), 'discussions of intersectionality have been hesitant to engage faith and religion, other than to occasionally list religion as one in a list of relevant differences'. Other scholars have also criticised intersectionality studies for its relative lack of engagement with religion (Bilge 2010; Singh 2015). This shortcoming becomes quite clear in much of the Dutch and European black feminist and intersectional scholarship that I have discussed in the previous section. Intersectionality scholars mention that it is now Muslims who are represented as the ultimate 'other' in Dutch society, yet it stays unclear what the specific axis of religious

difference brings in, and how this intersects with racialised/ethnicised difference. However, some work has recently been done on the intersection of race and religion in Islamophobia and racism in Europe. For example, Lentin and Titley (2014) and El-Tayeb (2011) write on the religious/secular divide in Western Europe and its racialising operations, which essentialises Muslims as inferior to the secular West. I agree with El-Tayeb's (2012) elaborate critique of white gay and lesbian representations of Muslims as homophobic and queer Muslims as oppressed by their ethnic and religious communities; yet, in her article, religion and Islam are merely discussed in relation to *oppression* in the form of Islamophobia in white gay and lesbian communities and in broader Dutch society. She does not discuss what being Muslim can actually *offer* the subjects she studies, for example in the form of moral or theological guidelines, religious agency, empowerment, personal beliefs, or community-forming, as ways of dealing with racialised oppression in an Islamophobic society. The same tendency is visible in the work of Karin van Nieuwkerk (2004), Jennifer Petzen (2012), and Katrine Smiet (2014a). Smiet (2014a) places current Islamophobia and postsecular critique in a historical perspective, highlighting the historical exclusion of religious feminists in mainstream and anti-racist feminist theory, but also the convergences and engagements between secular, anti-racist, and religious feminisms. Yet, also in her work, religion mainly features in the form of racialised macrostructures of power, both as oppression and privilege, in the interesting case of Sojourner Truth.

Other scholars have shown how the representation of Islam as a premodern, unchangeable 'other', and as inferior to European cultures, relies on colonial structures of race and racism (Weber 2015, 29), and how 'naturalised' religious difference is often a crucial aspect of racism and racial logics (Medovoi 2012). Intersectionality scholars have provided elaborate critiques of contemporary Islamophobia as a form of racialisation of religion and its intersections with gender, sexuality, and race/ethnicity (see also Davis and Zarkov 2017, 319). Without denying the relevance and importance of this work, in intersectionality studies, Islam figures mostly as a form of structural oppression, as a category of creating 'others', while Islam and religion in general also offer other possibilities to their adherents. That and how religion works in an enabling and moral-religious way for personal identity and subjectivity formations is thus still a blind spot in feminist intersectional scholarship, as Singh (2015) also argues. For example, how religion plays a role in shaping girls' moral behaviour – 'fair play' – on the football field and in influencing their football tactics will come back in Chapter 5. Singh, in line with Bilge (2010, 24), suggests that studies of religious women's agency pose a challenge to intersectionality theory, as they precisely point to the ethical-political subject formations or identities of women and men. Studies of religious women's agency emphasise that subjectivity and agency are not only formed

by oppression, but also by affirmative ideological or political standpoints, which can be informed by religion or faith. Subjectivity then is not only 'negatively' informed by oppression, but also by faith as a positive source of values and aspiration for religious women (Singh 2015, 663).[30]

Although I appreciate the attempt to bring studies of intersectionality and religious women's agency together, I think the focus on religious women's agency is also limited in the sense that these studies turn to the other end of the spectrum of religion and religious subjectivities. Studies of religious women's agency foreground experiences and perspectives from very pious women in religious settings, in which their religious subjectivity and agency is foregrounded, as also other scholars have observed (Sehlikoglu 2018, 82; Schielke 2010, 2; Schielke 2009, 24). For example, Mahmood (2005) and Bracke (2008) focus on pious women in Islamic and Christian movements. Because of the clearly religious setting and the focus on religious women – who are precisely the focus of and selected for these studies *because* they are religious – these authors mainly explore women's actions, subjectivity, and agency through the lens of piousness. This is also the case in much research on religion, gender, youths, and leisure that is relevant in the context of this dissertation. Examples are Fernando (2016), who studied pious Muslim French youths; Ryan and Vacchelli (2013b), who interviewed observant Muslim mothers in London about the upbringing of their children; and Amir-Moazami (2010), who focused on young pious women in Islamic organisations in France and Germany. The single focus on *pious* youths and mothers results in a rather limited perspective on young Muslims' urban, leisure, and sports activities. For example, it emphasises (some) Muslim women's need for gender-segregated leisure spaces (Fernando 2016; Ryan and Vacchelli 2013b; Amir-Moazami 2010) and contrasts pious youthfulness of young Muslims with dominant conceptions of youthfulness as 'sexually liberated' (Amir-Moazami 2010).

Although I do not dismiss the work of postsecular feminist scholars on religious women's agency in itself, I am faced with the problematic situation in which, as Lara Deeb describes, 'the "pious Muslim" became *the only visible* Muslim' (Deeb 2015, 95, emphasis original). Although being religious and being pious is not the same, many authors only focus on *pious* women when they study religious or Muslim women, and that is a problem. The large attention to piety in these studies does not correspond with the experiences and practices of my research informants, the young Muslim football players at Football Girls United. They, like many other religious young women and men, do not necessarily aspire to live a very pious, observant life, or engage with explicit Islamic or religious organisations. And, even if they do, many religious young women and men also engage with organisations that are not explicitly religious or find themselves in secular or not explicitly religious spaces, such as fashion, work,

sports, or leisure spaces (Sehlikoglu 2018; Schielke 2009, 2010). Religious women's subjectivity or agency is not necessarily always primarily constructed through a pious or religious lens, especially not when it concerns young people (Masquelier and Soares 2016; Schielke 2009). The girls who participated in my research almost all identify as Muslim, yet they are not explicitly observant or pious in the sportive spaces in which the research took place. Furthermore, they are not selected for the research because they are religious, but because they play football. It is this group of what I call 'religious but not that religious' young Muslim women that has, until now, been virtually invisible in feminist research on religion and gender and in intersectionality studies. In addition to making the lives of 'religious but not that religious' young Muslims invisible, the emphasis on piety in feminist scholarship on religion and gender unintentionally reinforces the notion of Muslims as 'different' or 'other' in presumably secular European societies.

It is thus necessary to create a new conceptual space to account for the experiences of Muslim women beyond considering them, on the one hand, as merely enmeshed in oppressive Islamophobic power structures, and, on the other hand, as primarily constituted by piety. It is important to think beyond Islam and piety as primary categories to study Muslim women's lives and as primary sources for Muslim women's agency, and to focus also on other spaces and practices in their daily lives, such as leisure and football (Sehlikoglu 2016, 2018; see also Samie 2013). In the context of this research about girls' football, my next step is to discuss a scholarly field that takes one of these other spheres of life as starting point: studies on sports that engage with issues of gender, religion, and Islam, in specific the flourishing studies on gender and Muslim women in sports.

Muslim women, gender, and sports

Most studies on sports, gender, and sexuality do not take a critical discussion of religion into account (e.g. Elling and Knoppers 2005; Van Amsterdam 2014; Caudwell 2011, 2006; Anderson 2008; Hargreaves and Anderson 2014; Woodward 2009). Yet, research on the intersections of religion and gender in sports has seen an increase over the past years, especially in relation to the question of how religious women and men negotiate and combine religious and sportive practices and belonging (e.g. Magdalinski and Chandler 2002; Baker 2009b; Alpert 2015; Dyck and Archetti 2003). One example in the American context is from anthropologist Annie Blazer (2015), who conducted ethnographic research amongst evangelical women in the sports ministry. She shows how women athletes negotiate notions of gender, sexuality, and the body in evangelical women's football (soccer) and basketball teams and argues that they subtly rethink and reframe evangelical orthodoxy through their sports participation. Blazer's study provides innovative and interesting insights, but also focuses predominantly on religious, pious, and orthodox women who take part in explicitly *religious* sports teams.

Most research on the intersections of religion and gender in sports focuses on Muslim women. This substantial body of literature, mostly from sociological perspectives, responds to the alleged low participation of Muslim women in sports, especially in Western countries. These studies generally aim to indicate and remove the factors that limit Muslim women's participation, both through proposed adaptations of sports spaces, and through providing positive interpretations of Islamic teachings on sports (Walseth and Fasting 2003; Hargreaves 2000b, 2007; Pfister 2006; Ahmad 2011; Dagkas and Benn 2006; Baker 2009a; Benn, Pfister, and Jawad 2011).[31] Although these authors all mention that there is not 'one' Islam and that being Muslim can entail a great diversity of beliefs and practices, they still bring back Muslim women's needs in sports to two basic requirements that they assume count for all Muslim women and girls: gender-segregated sporting and the possibility to play sports with a headscarf and/or covered clothing (Benn, Pfister, and Jawad 2011; Benn and Pfister 2013; Dagkas and Benn 2006). Furthermore, Muslim women are often represented as constituted above all by the assumed gendered family roles in their religion, as mothers, wives, or daughters (e.g. Dagkas, Benn, and Jawad 2011). Exemplary is the title of Kay's (2006) article, in which she describes the sporting women in her research as 'daughters of Islam', as being constituted primarily by family relations and Islam, and not, for example, by sports. In these ways, a duality between 'Western' individual sports cultures, identities, and practices and 'Islamic' collective identities, cultures, and religious practices is created. Those 'two sides' are seen as incompatible with each other and sporting Muslim women are framed as 'caught in between' (Benn, Pfister, and Jawad 2011; Benn and Pfister 2013; Dagkas, Benn, and Jawad 2011; Walseth 2006; Kay 2006; De Knop et al. 1996; Ahmad 2011).

Ironically, after having constructed Islam and Western sports as dichotomous and incompatible in their studies, sports sociologists provide 'solutions' for this incompatibility by discussing Islamic theology. They argue that, according to 'authentic' or 'original' Islam, women are not prohibited from engaging in sports (Pfister 2006; Jawad, Al-Sinani, and Benn 2011; De Knop et al. 1996), thereby creating a new dichotomy between sports on the one hand, and Islamic and/or ethnic minority traditional culture as different from 'true' Islam on the other. Although many of these authors also focus on Western countries and sports institutions and argue that they should 'open up' and accommodate Muslim women's needs, they do this by reducing Muslim women solely to their Islamic religious and cultural identity, as opposed to 'Western' sporting culture. Most sports sociologists reduce Muslim women's

embodied practices and experiences in sports solely to the headscarf and to family and/or religious restraints, as also other critics have argued (Samie 2013; Ratna 2011; Sehlikoglu 2016). This stereotypical and essentialist research has 'systematically denied diverse sporting Muslim women an identity or bodily presence outside of the discursive identity of the veil' and is 'animated around a monolithic Orientalist narrative that sensationalises the veil, and asserts the oppression of Islamic thinking on gender equality and female sexuality', Samie (2013, 257) argues. Intersections with other power structures and categories of belonging and difference in sports, such as gender, class, race/ethnicity, space, age, and sexuality, are ignored. Muslim women are seen as constituted *only* by their religious or ethnic backgrounds and communities, and not also by the dichotomous gendered and sexualised organisation of sports or in relation to gender and sexual norms in broader society (Samie 2013, 257–58). In this reductive social analysis, other social explanations for a low participation of Muslim women in sports or some women's quest for segregated sports spaces are precluded, such as safety, social control, class, or the lack of diverse female role models. Similar to Samie, this dissertation shows that it is not the girls' Muslim backgrounds but rather the gendered organisation of football, the male dominance in football playgrounds, and the lack of female role models that made the girls organise their own separated girls' football competition Football Girls United in the Schilderswijk.

Critiques of these essentialist representations of Muslim women in sports have been taken up by some sports scholars, such as Agnes Elling (2005), who, in her research on gender-segregated swimming in the Netherlands, shows that it is not exceptional to have segregated swimming spaces for specific groups with specific demands, such as disabled or elderly people or naturists, or women's only days in pools and saunas. She mentions that many non-Islamic women do not feel comfortable in a mixed pool wearing the conventional gendered and sexualised minimalist swimwear either. Yet, in relation to the Muslim women in her research, she still foregrounds *Islamic* reasons for gender-segregated swimming, and not reasons related to norms of gender and sexuality in the broader Dutch society. Postcolonial scholar Samie (2013), sports sociologist Ratna (2011), and anthropologist Sehlikoglu (2016) really move beyond a purely Islamic framework to explain Muslim women's experiences of sports and segregated sports spaces. They emphasise the fluidity and hybrid identities of Muslim and ethnic minority women in sports, and convincingly show that the embodied and gendered experiences of Muslim women in sports do not simply fit in the dichotomous idea of 'traditional' Islam versus 'modern' sports.

Ratna focuses mainly on other social factors rather than religious constraints in explaining why British South Asian girls might be hindered in sports, mentioning fear of racial discrimination and safety of going home after trainings (2011, 390–91). Samie

found that British Pakistani Muslim women's participation in sports is not so much shaped by Islamic or religious factors, but by discourses and norms of female bodies exhibiting heterosexual appeal by being fit and sexy ('hetero-sexy'). What mattered for the women in her research was a 'hetero-sexy' performance of femininity in the masculine domain of basketball and the negotiations and paradoxes involved in that. Often, research on heteronormativity, sexuality, body politics, and gender in sports focuses solely on white British able-bodied women, and 'Muslim women of South Asian heritage have traditionally been left out of such literature' (Samie 2013, 259). Negotiations with dominant norms of femininity and sexuality in sports are often only attributed to white (presumably secular) athletes, and not to Muslim athletes, as it is assumed that only religiously gendered norms matter to them. In an intersectional analysis, not only religiously gendered norms but also heteronormativity in sports should be taken into account. For some women on the basketball field in Samie's study, 'hetero-sexy' performance was 'an overt way of embodying a "modern" presence that enabled women to fend off Orientalist claims that the South Asian Muslim female subject and her body was a prisoner of men, neo/patriarchal Asian culture and Islamic theology' (Samie 2013, 265). The sportive and 'hetero-sexy' performances of Muslim women are then also a critique of mainstream Orientalist discourses that frame Muslim women as oppressed and as victims. Similar to Samie, Sehlikoglu (2016) researched Muslim and secular sporting women in relation to the construction of heterosexual norms in public spaces in Turkey, where issues of harassment, the male gaze, and the eroticisation of exercising female bodies in Turkish popular culture are of main concern to the women, and not so much constraints from their Muslim background.

Importantly, as Samie, Ratna, and Sehlikoglu have shown, Muslim women's sportive lives are constituted by more than only their Muslim identity or background. Islam is not necessarily the primary experience or identification of Muslim women in sports – it are rather experiences related to gender and sexual norms in society and identifications as 'hetero-sexy', football player, basketball player, or British. In my research, too, the girls more than once mentioned that, on the field, they do not necessarily identify as Muslim, but as football player. This brings up the question whether the girls I studied on the football fields should be described as *Muslim* girls at all rather than, for example, as *football* girls. However, as observed by, amongst others, Samie (2013, 265), Muslim minorities in Western societies can at the same time not fully escape being identified as Muslim, because their identifications and experiences, also on the sports field, are always a negotiation with dominant Oriental or Islamophobic perceptions in society that frame them *as Muslim*. In this research, I look at girls who play football and who have a Muslim background, but are not necessarily always pious, or who not necessarily identify as religious in the football

spaces of the research. Thus, I do not assume that Islam is the primary category of analysis in this study of girls' football in the Schilderswijk, but I look at how the football girls deal with and negotiate their intersectional identities as football player and as Muslim in Dutch public spaces, and I question how, when, and where Islam actually matters for them on the football field, or does not.

The argument I make to focus on Muslim lives beyond piety, and to question the relevance of the categories 'Muslim' and 'Islam' in sports spaces, is not to reinstal a separation between religion/piety and 'everyday' practices such as football, as religion and piety are of course also lived every day (Fadil and Fernando 2015). It is to question the easy attachment of the labels 'Muslim' or 'Islam' to everything that Muslims do every day, simply because they supposedly embody religious difference and religious otherness in European or Dutch sports spaces. Rather, I precisely question when, how, and where Islam matters in girls' football practices in the Schilderswijk, and how the categories of religion and Islam intersect with other categories of difference and identity in football.

This brings up the question of the secular in relation to Islam, religion, and football, especially because football and sports spaces in Western countries are often perceived as *secular* spaces. However, anthropologists of the secular have argued that the secular and religion are not opposites but produce each other, and that secular practices, spaces, and bodies are also produced through negotiations with norms, expectations, and ideologies in particular contexts (Fadil 2011; Hirschkind 2011; Asad 2003), such as the heterosexual and gendered norms in sports spaces. Thus, the perspective I propose is not a matter of conceptualising football as religious *or* as secular, but a question of how playing football is informed by intersecting religious *and* secular ideologies, practices, and norms, and how and when football spaces acquire religious and secular meanings; or, in other words, how football spaces become religionised. I am aware that the term religionised is not a common word, although the concept is increasingly used in gender and religion scholarship to point to the processes of how bodies, spaces, and practices become immersed with intersectional religious, gendered, and sexualised meanings (Korte 2011, 13; Brah and Phoenix 2004; De Koning 2008). Football spaces and practices are thus not fixed as secular or religious, but gain meaning through the dominant discourses about Muslims and Islam in the Netherlands and through the practices of girls themselves, such as playing football (De Koning 2008). In what follows, I will show that, when Muslim girls play football in public spaces, these spaces are often immediately perceived by white Dutch sports professionals as 'Islamic' spaces that 'clash' with the supposed secular nature of Dutch public sports spaces. Yet, the girls themselves do not necessarily construct their football spaces as religious or Islamic. Rather, by playing football, they resist the

dominant construction of their footballing bodies as 'other' in Dutch public football playgrounds. In studying the meaning and construction of public football spaces in relation to gender, race/ethnicity, and religion, it is also necessary to conceptualise 'public space' more broadly in relation to these categories of difference. This will be the focus of the third and last section of this theoretical framework.

Feminist studies of gender and public space

The girls' football that I have studied in the Schilderswijk and other neighbourhoods in the Netherlands largely took place in public playgrounds such as Cruyff Courts, urban football fields, and football cages. Football courts and playgrounds form an important part of the make-up of public space in urban neighbourhoods, also in the Schilderswijk (Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014). Although street football is a popular sport amongst girls, public football playgrounds are still occupied by boys most of the time, as I will show in Chapter 3.

The limited access of women and girls to public spaces and the gendering of public space are classical feminist concerns. Public space is often thought of as the shared, collective, and open spaces of social and political life that are accessible to everyone – the streets, squares, and playgrounds; yet, in practice, access to and belonging in public space is highly differentiated along lines of gender, race/ethnicity, and religion (Jaffe and De Koning 2015, 55; Puwar 2004; Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003; Massey 1994). Sociologist and feminist postcolonial scholar Nirmal Puwar describes the construction of public spaces as: 'While all can, in theory, enter, it is certain types of bodies that are tacitly designated as being the "natural" occupants of specific positions' (Puwar 2004, 8). Jaffe and De Koning argue that public space is filled with norms about who belongs where, and who can occupy certain spaces, and they conceptualise this as everyday spatial regimes: 'Urban social life is structured through a range of more or less tacit, embodied, social norms and rules regarding appropriate presence and behaviour in different public spaces' (Jaffe and De Koning 2015, 63). Spatial regimes are also constructed through time: there are different spatial regimes operating at different times, and, in the empirical chapters, I will show that this is also the case for the public football playgrounds in the Schilderswijk. However, these gendered spatial regimes and norms in public spaces are not fixed, but subject to change and to resistance by 'agents who negotiate access and belonging to public space across various and varying power relations' (Watson and Ratna 2011, 73).

Feminist anthropologists have argued that gender – the set of ideas of what is regarded as masculine and feminine – is built upon the dichotomous and hierarchical constructions of public and domestic space and of culture and nature. In that dichotomy,

masculinity and men are associated with the more powerful public, cultural, and political life as citizens, and femininity and women with domestic life (Rosaldo 1980; Ortner 1974; Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003; Brouns and Verloo 1995, 41–44). Importantly, these dichotomous hierarchies of men/masculinity/culture/public and women/femininity/nature/domestic are not the result of natural or biological differences between men and women, but socially and culturally constructed (Ortner and Whitehead 1981; De Beauvoir 2011). Furthermore, feminist anthropologists have argued that dichotomies of domestic/public, nature/culture, and women/men are not fixed opposites, but produced through complex and contextual entanglements of politics, citizenship, the labour market, gender roles, sexual practices, racial and class relations, et cetera, and that they vary over place and time (Rosaldo 1980, Ortner and Whitehead 1981; Ortner 1996; Moore 1988).

Although much has changed in terms of women's access to public spaces since the start of this debate, it is safe to say that, in some domains, such as street football, the construction of public space is still very much gendered, or rather, masculinised (Karsten 2003; Clark and Paechter 2007; Christensen and Mikkelsen 2013). However, I argue that this gendered construction is entangled with race/ethnicity and religion, as I will demonstrate that much sports professionals assume that girls with Muslim and ethnic minority backgrounds want to play football indoors, and therefore send them mainly to the more domestic, indoor football spaces. At the same time, public space has become an important aspect of public debates on Muslim girls' emancipation and integration in the Netherlands, as their participation and presence in public spaces is being taken up as a reference point for their degree of emancipation. According to Harris (2004), whereas, for a long time, the domestic home was seen as a privileged site for girls' leisure activities, it is now rather *expected* of girls to be present in public space, as a sign of their emancipation and active citizenship. Public football spaces are thus infused with gendered, racialised, and religionised meanings and ideas about who belongs where (Van Ingen 2003). I have studied how football girls in the Schilderswijk performatively navigate, reproduce, and recreate these spaces and their meanings.

Despite the long feminist engagement with understanding and deconstructing public/private and spatial distinctions, little attention is being paid to conceptualisations of space and place, public and private in current intersectionality theory, and the significance of space in subject formations is not overly explored. Intersectionality theory could highly benefit from a more spatial and empirical perspective, feminist geographer Gill Valentine (2007) argues, because it privileges lived experiences, while spatial empirical research can track how intersecting categories of difference and identification change over time and place. In this study, I take constructions of space and place as central to intersectional power relations, differences, and identities. I

explore how public playgrounds are gendered, racialised, and religionised through girls' football practices, and through the spatial organisation of football in general, and in the Football Girls United competition in specific. In the previous section, I have argued for an approach to Muslim lives beyond purely or primarily through a lens of Islam, and a focus on the different spaces that Muslim girls engage in; the constructions of these spaces in relation to gender, religion, and ethnicity shed light on the lived experiences of Muslim girls. These include, but also exceed, Islam, piousness, Islamophobia, and racialised oppression.

Space, place, and citizenship

Feminist geographer Doreen Massey (1994) has contributed extensively to critical conceptualisations of space, place, and gender. Space, in her view, should be thought of in terms of social relations such as economics, class, gender, or race. Space is not a neutral or absolute variable where social relations happen, but constituted and produced precisely by social relations and practices themselves. As social relations are always implicated in power, space is also constructed through power and difference and vice versa. Massey explains the co-constitution of space and gender: 'Spaces and places are not only themselves gendered, but in their being so, they both reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood' (1994, 170). The gendering of space is the process of attaching a gendered meaning to certain spaces and places, such as a football space that is coded as masculine. This is not a fixed or natural process, but socially constructed through the practices, interactions, bodies, norms, and discourses within these spaces. Vice versa, gender, masculinities, and femininities are not 'natural' categories either, but become constructed through the hierarchical construction and division of spaces into public and private realms (Rosaldo 1980). In Western societies, the gendering of space usually is built upon a dualistic way of thinking about gender and gender difference, as either masculine or feminine (Massey 1994; Rosaldo 1980).

In relation to space, Massey sees *place* as the particular articulation of social relations at a particular moment, in which intersections of identities, differences, and meanings are stabilised, such as specific football playgrounds to which only specific groups of players have access, based on, for example, ethnicity, age, or gender. Yet, this 'stabilisation' is not in any way naturally attached to that place, but more a continuous *attempt* to stabilise the meaning of the place.[32] Place is thus where identities are formed, modulated by spatial power relations (see also Jaffe and Koning 2015, 24). Central in Massey's work is the radical deconstruction of dualistic thinking that is at the core of both hegemonic constructions of gender and space: oppositions such as space and place, masculine and feminine, public and private, and universal and local.

She argues that these concepts are not opposites, but rather constructed through each other (Massey 1994), similar to religion and the secular (Knott 2009; Reilly 2014): a football playground is not fixed as masculine or feminine, or as religious or secular, but these meanings shift and are produced through social relations and interactions of the football players occupying this playground, including resistance to gendered, racialised, and religionised norms (Puwar 2004).

'Citizenship' is an important concept in relation to space and place, as it highlights distributions of inequality, inclusion, and exclusion in national and public spaces, and how citizenship and belonging are configured through space and place, through intersections of gender, religion, and ethnicity in specific places (Jaffe and De Koning 2015; Reilly 2014). Although citizenship used to encompass merely the formal rights and duties of being a member of a state, it is now increasingly constructed in terms of cultural citizenship, defining what it means to be a 'good citizen' through a set of gendered, sexual, secular, and religious norms and practices (Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010). In a cultural construction of citizenship, places are constructed in fixed, nationalistic, and cultural ways, excluding ethnic and religious 'others' as not belonging to the national and local places. In this way, a division is constructed between first-class (those who do belong) and second-class citizens (those who do not belong), which is also called differentiated citizenship (Holston and Appadurai 1999). In the context of my research in the Netherlands, this division between first-class and second-class citizens is made through a set of cultural and sexual norms that define what it means to be a 'real' Dutch citizen – in other words, through constructions of cultural or sexual citizenship (Haritaworn 2012; Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010). In discourses of cultural or sexual citizenship, Dutch society is often framed as a haven for gender equality, women's emancipation, and sexual freedom, while ethnic and religious others are framed as oppressive and backward on these issues. In this dissertation, I will discuss how constructions of cultural and sexual citizenship play out on girls and boys who play football in the Schilderswijk. Additionally, I show how these girls and boys question and resist dominant constructions of cultural and sexual citizenship through their football practices in the public playgrounds in their neighbourhood, as citizenship is not only produced through dominant discursive (sexual and cultural) norms, but, importantly, also through public, political, and embodied *practices* that negotiate and question precisely those norms (Lazar 2014; Nyhagen and Halsaa 2016; Puwar 2004). I thus show how the practices of young residents in public spaces, such as the playing of street football, can be forms of resistance to dominant gendered and racialised power relations and can create alternative constructions of ethnic, religious, and gendered belonging in urban public football spaces.

Age, class, and other axes of difference

In addition to the categories of difference and power discussed thus far, age and class can also be added to an intersectional framework, and are also relevant in the construction of public football spaces. Yet, age, ageing, or childhood are not so prominent in intersectionality and feminist theory (Hearn 2011; Burman and Stacey 2010). Some feminist scholars see older people as being disadvantaged in many societies, and youths as a privileged category or phase in one's life course (Calasanti and Slevin 2006). Yet, I believe that there are particular aspects of children's and youths' lives that position them in both oppressed and privileged positions, for example in relations with adults, in academic research, and in neighbourhood planning; these are all domains in which young people often have little say (Lammers and Reith 2014, 24).

Too often, in youth research influenced by developmental psychology, children or teenagers are seen as not-yet subjects, as growing up to become a full subject or citizen only in later life. Childhood is then seen as a preparatory phase for becoming a full citizen or subject (Burman and Stacey 2010, 230; Bucholtz 2002). For example, such research focuses on how living in 'disadvantaged' urban neighbourhoods – such as the Schilderswijk – influences children's development, behaviour, and education in later life (Nieuwenhuis et al. 2017), but it does not ask how children themselves are active agents in their own development or the development of their neighbourhood. As a reaction to this developmental-psychological strand of children and youth research, sociological and anthropological research have emphasised the need to see young people as competent social actors and agents (Bucholtz 2002). Yet, as Burman and Stacy (2010, 230) discuss, this research assumes young people to be liberal and individual subjects who necessarily resist against their parents and society. Studies that conceptualise youths merely as competent social actors and agents fail to recognise the power differences and intergenerational relations that nevertheless demarcate their agency (Burman and Stacey 2010, 230), or the different ways in which categories of children and youths are constructed, confined, and lived in different contexts and in relation to other categories of difference, such as gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, class, and religion (Masquelier and Soares 2016).

What is needed is feminist intersectional research on youths and children that engages with 'the complexities and mutual dependencies of child–adult relations' (Burman and Stacey 2010, 230), thus not overemphasising either the dependency or agency of young people, but showing how their subject positions are constructed in specific places and contexts, power structures, and in intergenerational relations with adults. Youths and children are not simply age categories, but social positions and relations that are enmeshed with power, hierarchies, and authority. In this research, I look at how youths and children engage with issues of power, racism, discrimination,

and citizenship through being involved in football activities with each other in public spaces that are specifically designed for young people *by adults*. I focus on young citizens' active involvement in football and in their neighbourhood *in itself*, and not as a step towards 'later life' and adulthood.

In addition to age, 'class' is an important category of difference in intersectionality theory. The emphasis I have put thus far on race/ethnicity, gender, and religion reflects broader feminist, sociological, and anthropological research in Europe, and especially in the Netherlands, where a critical inquiry of class is often of lesser importance than other categories of difference (Skeggs 2010; Van Eijk 2011). Topics such as education, inequality, income, and 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods are usually studied individually, without contributing to a broader conceptualisation of class as a construction of sociocultural and economic hierarchies, moralities, and relations (Van Eijk 2011; Skeggs 2010).[33] However, several scholars point to the ways in which race/ethnicity, gender, and religion intersect with class, for example in urban gentrification policies, which are classed, racialised, aged, and gendered (De Koning 2015b); in the ways in which racialised 'others' are often attributed a lower-class position (Wekker 2016); and in integration policies for migrants and ethnic minorities, which are structured along class and education (Van Eijk 2011, 251). Bourdieu (1978) discusses how sports are also an important social sphere where class and morality, along with gender, race/ethnicity, and age, are produced, reproduced, lived, and resisted through bodily discipline. This broad and complex understanding of class means that it is often very difficult to place people in a certain class category, such as lower, middle, or upper class, and to define these categories' intersections with education level (Brah and Phoenix 2004, 81–82). This is also the case for the diversity of people in the Schilderswijk. However, this diversity is often concealed in favour of a popular image of the Schilderswijk as purely lower and working class. Interestingly, it seems more acceptable to talk of spaces or neighbourhoods, rather than of people, as working class. Brah and Phoenix (2004, 81–82) argue that classed subjects are not explicitly being referred to as, for example, lower or working class, but through discourses of living in 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods, or through the discourse of 'child poverty'. According to Wekker and Lutz (2001, 28), the Dutch concept of *allochtoon* is, next to a stand-in for race, also a disguised way to talk about class without naming it explicitly. For the Schilderswijk, which is a neighbourhood that is much discussed in the Netherlands because of its poverty and its image as a 'disadvantaged' neighbourhood, these discourses create a homogeneous picture of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, conceptualising them all, implicitly, as lower-class citizens. In the next chapter, I will discuss how the image of the Schilderswijk as a working-class neighbourhood came into being, and elaborate on how class, race/ethnicity, religion, and age intersect in the historical and current social composition of the neighbourhood.

Not all axes of difference that are relevant in the context of this research are discussed in this dissertation. Dis/ability and body size are also important categories of difference and oppression, especially in the study of sports and space (Van Amsterdam 2013, 2014), yet fall outside the scope of this research. The same goes for gender non-binary, transgender, and intersex persons, who, in the very gender-binary world of sports, face many challenges when it comes to participation, acceptance, recognition, and equality (Symons and Hemphill 2006). Furthermore, sexuality is not a concept I use prominently in this research, as I will not focus on the sexual identities, practices, and desires of my research informants. In Chapter 4, however, I will discuss sexuality in investigating how spatial and embodied practices of football both resist and confirm heteronormative and gendered ideals around puberty.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have set out a theoretical and conceptual framework for the following empirical chapters. The scholarly fields that I have discussed are not self-evidently related to each other, as they have different histories and genealogies, but I have shown that they complement each other in the study of racial/ethnic, religious, and gendered differences and power in girls' football and public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk. In the empirical chapters, I will particularly look at how the football spaces in the Schilderswijk are racialised, ethnicised, gendered, and religionised, both through dominant discourses in the Netherlands about football and about ethnic and religious minorities, but also by the girls who play football themselves. As I will point out, the girls in my research have to negotiate the power relations that shape their access to and belonging in public football spaces, notably the gendered and racialised constructions of public space and the ways in which dominant Dutch discourses about Muslims and Islam shape Muslim girls' presence in public spaces as 'problematic', because their presence is seen as an 'Islamisation' of public space. Yet, I will also show that the football girls critically engage with these categories of difference – gender, religion, and ethnicity – in their football practices to create more inclusive and more equal public football spaces in the Schilderswijk. In the empirical chapters, thus, gender, race/ethnicity, religion, and space form the key concepts for the analysis of the empirical material, while looking at how intersectional processes or racialising/ethnicising, gendering, and religionising take place in and through (football) space, and by spatial practices of the girls who play football. Let me finish this chapter by summarising these key concepts.

I have argued that an intersectionality approach is necessary to study the diverse aspects of power and difference in Muslim girls' experiences of girls' football and public spaces. Intersectionality means that categories of difference and power, such as gender, race, and religion, do not function separately but always co-construct each other (Wekker 2002, 2016; Nash 2008; Collins 2015). From an intersectionality perspective, I have argued for the use of the combination race/ethnicity to attract attention to, first, the ways in which (gendered, ethnic, religious) differences are embedded in macrostructures of racialised power relations and hierarchies, and, second, to how 'ethnicity' captures the differences and diverse histories and experiences between and within racialised groups. 'Ethnicity' accounts for religious, cultural, and historical ways of meaning making that form ethnic group relations of identity, place, and belonging (Hall 2017, 107). 'Racialisation' refers to the process whereby social categories of difference or identity, such as class, ethnicity, or religion, become essentialised, naturalised, and biologised, and whereby difference is represented as naturally attached to an individual's body, for example through skin colour (Silverstein 2005, 364; Stolcke 1993). When I use 'race' or 'ethnicity' separately, this is to put the emphasis on either ethnic belonging and identity, or on racialised power hierarchies. But, I do so always with the notion that ethnicity does not exist outside racialisation and that race does not exist outside ethnic and/or religious differences.

I have also discussed the conceptualisations of religion and Islam in feminist intersectionality scholarship, and in feminist studies of religion and gender, including studies of religious women's agency, and studies of Muslim women and sports. I argued that these conceptualisations do not correspond to the anthropological lived realities that are at the core of this dissertation. On the one hand, intersectionality scholarship only looks at religion and Islam in the context of the racialisation of religion, Islamophobia, and dominant Dutch discourses of Muslims as 'others' (Singh 2015). On the other hand, feminist studies of religion and gender focus largely on pious women in explicitly religious settings and fail to understand religious difference and Islam within spaces and bodies that are not always explicitly religious, such as sports, leisure, and urban public space (Sehlikoglu 2016, 2018; Samie 2013). Muslim citizens not only engage with Islamic spaces or practices in public life, but also in spaces and practices that are not explicitly or primarily religious, such as football. It is this group of what I call 'religious but not that religious' young women who have, until now, been virtually invisible in feminist research on religion and gender. How, for these women and girls, does religion intersect with other axes of difference and subjectivity in their daily, not necessarily always religious, lives, such as in sports? Indeed, I often refer to the girls in my research as 'football girls' and not as 'Muslim girls'. I approach this question by looking at how football spaces in the Schilderswijk become 'religionised': how and when do football spaces acquire religious and/or secular meanings through dominant discourses about Muslim girls and Islam in the Netherlands, and through girls' practices of playing football (De Koning 2008).[34] I have argued that it is necessary to create a new conceptual space to account for the experiences of Muslim women in football spaces beyond considering them, on the one hand, as merely enmeshed in oppressive Islamophobic power structures, and, on the other hand, as primarily constituted by piety. Although being religious and being pious is not the same, many feminist scholars who study religion and gender only focus on pious women when they study religious or Muslim women, and such a perspective is too limited.

A conceptual engagement with space and the spatial practices of football can shed new lights on categories of religious difference and Islam, in looking at how ethnic, racialised, religious, and gendered identities and subjectivities are constructed spatially and differently across spaces, including public football spaces. The gendering of public space means that places become infused with meanings of gender and understood as masculine, feminine, or other gender meanings, through social interactions, practices, norms, and discourses within these spaces, in intersection with race/ethnicity and religion (Massey 1994; Rosaldo 1980; Moore 1988). Yet, the categories of space and place are often forgotten in feminist intersectionality scholarship and in feminist studies of religion and gender, while they are crucial in understanding how intersectional power relations shift in different spaces and across time, and in relation to cultural constructions of belonging and citizenship in public spaces (Jaffe and De Koning 2015; Reilly 2014; Valentine 2007; Holston and Appadurai 1999). Space is the more abstract setting of social relations, practices, and power in a specific context, such as street football; place is the specific articulation of identities and meaning in a given time and context (Massey 1994; Jaffe and De Koning 2015, 24), such as the specific playgrounds in the Schilderswijk. This study of girls' spatial football practices in public football playgrounds emphasises the lived religious, secular, racialised, and gendered experiences of young people in public spaces, which include but also exceed Islam, piousness, Islamophobia, and racialised oppression.

Being young in the Schilderswijk: Postcolonial and anthropological perspectives on a contested neighbourhood

Introduction

Sunday afternoon, 7 December 2014.
In the sports hall River Square, about twenty teenage girls have gathered for the Football Girls United football training. Hanan, the coordinator of FGU, is absent today. On one side of the hall, Mo, one of the FGU volunteers, is giving a football training to the younger girls of ten to thirteen years old. On the other side of the hall, Lamyae, Nora, Mansour, and the older girls are kicking balls around. There are also two small girls of around six years old, the sisters of one of the football players. Mo gives them a ball and a small trampoline, so that they can play together; they are too young to participate in the football training. Aliya looks at the little girls and jokingly says to her FGU friends: 'So the mother thinks, let's bring the girls here so that I can quietly clean the house!'

I am joining Sarah, Chaimae, Lamyae, Aliya, Hafsa, and Siham, all volunteers of FGU. They are sitting on one side of the hall, chatting and catching up with each other. Lamyae talks about her two brothers who live in Morocco, but who want to come to the Netherlands.

> *Chaimae: 'But then they have to come when they are under eighteen, it's much easier then'.*
> *Lamyae: 'But they already have a Dutch passport, eh'.*
> *After Chaimae expressed her surprise, Hafsa says: 'I don't even have a passport. But I'm born in Morocco, eh. My brothers don't have one either'.*
> *Chaimae: 'But then you should apply before you are eighteen years old, otherwise you don't get the monthly student grant.[35] Oh never mind, that became a loan anyway…'.*

Most girls express their frustration about the abolition of the student grants, and the increase in tuition fees.

> *Aliya: 'The Netherlands is one of the richest countries and yet tuition fees are much higher here than in Belgium'.*
> *Siham: 'Yes, that's why my neighbour went to Belgium for her master's degree, there the fees are only 500 euro'.*

The others nod, affirming they can understand this decision. After a while, some of the girls have to leave and the others are joining the football. At 3 p.m., Mo brings the football match to and end and yells through the hall: 'Hey people, stop please! It's time, we only have the hall till 3 p.m. today!' The volunteers quickly tidy up the hall and take all the girls outside. Most of the girls go home, and some of them go to one of the outdoor football playgrounds that are near River Square to continue their match. Sarah, Hafsa, Nora, Aliya, and Siham linger a bit outside the sports hall and then they decide to go to the youth centre: 'Because now we just want to sit and chat somewhere together and that's possible there', Nora tells me. I walk with them to the youth centre, which is only five minutes away from River Square. On our way, we pass by another playground, where a few boys are playing football. Whereas River Square is a large open square with multiple sports playgrounds, most other playgrounds in the neighbourhood are situated in the spaces between the mid-rise flats that are characteristic of the design of the Schilderswijk.

When we arrive at the youth centre, Gamal, the founder, welcomes us. He is still busy with furnishing the centre, and he shows the girls the new couch that he placed in the kitchen next to the bar. He also shares that a new television and cameras will arrive next week: one camera will be placed outside at the door and one in the hallway, and the television will be put in the corner of the kitchen. The girls quickly mention that they do not want any cameras there:

> *Aliya: 'No, there should be no cameras here, only in the hallway. Because sometimes we're here amongst girls ourselves, and then we take off our headscarves for example'.*
> *Hafsa: 'But in any case, one doesn't want cameras here, right…'*
> *Gamal: 'No, only in the hallway there will be a camera'.*

Then Gamal leaves us alone, and the girls make sweet Moroccan mint tea and continue their chats. They show each other pictures on their smartphones of a wedding they attended, and of their holidays to London and Morocco. They impress each other with the Arabic and Berber words they have learned, and talk about the Arabic and homework classes they take at the youth centre. I realise that this is one of the few places in the Schilderswijk where the teenage girls can be freely amongst themselves without adults supervising them. Suddenly, I am very aware of my presence as an adult researcher who is there to observe the teenage girls, and I decide to leave them some time together for the rest of the afternoon, and I go home.

This vignette illustrates a typical Sunday afternoon for the girls of FGU in the Schilderswijk. Already since 2008, the River Square sports hall is the place where girls from the Schilderswijk gather to play football together. River Square is situated on the border of the Schilderswijk, next to one of the biggest squares in the neighbourhood. FGU is a place where the girls play football together, but, equally important, where they can also catch up with each other, and exchange experiences of weddings, family issues, education, holidays, and citizenship matters. Their exchanges illustrate the

diverse backgrounds of the girls when it comes to citizenship and migration status: from Hafsa and Sarah, who are born in Morocco, to the other girls, who are second and third generation, and to family members who move back and forth between the Netherlands and Morocco. The girls also have diverse educational backgrounds, from (pre-)vocational schools to higher education at (applied) universities.

The youth centre is also a popular place where the teenage girls come together after the football trainings. Before the youth centre opened, and after the public library in the neighbourhood closed down, FGU was the only place in the Schilderswijk where teenage girls could hang out together. Most other leisure places, such as cafés, public squares, and playgrounds, are targeted more at boys and/or adults (Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014, 29). Nevertheless, most girls in my research enjoy living and playing in the Schilderswijk very much, as will become clear in this and the coming chapters. Their positive experiences of FGU, the youth centre, and the neighbourhood in general do not correspond with the often negative way in which the Schilderswijk is represented in media and political debates.

The Schilderswijk is a well-known neighbourhood in the Netherlands, as it is often portrayed in media, politics, and public debates as the most 'disadvantaged' and poorest neighbourhood of the country. The Schilderswijk became a symbol for all that supposedly went wrong in the Netherlands when it comes to multiculturalism, migrants, Islam, youth, and urban public space. Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp (2014) argue that these negative representations of the Schilderswijk in media and politics instal and reproduce a 'myth of the problem neighbourhood'. This myth keeps the attention away from residents' lived experiences in the neighbourhood, which cannot be reduced to problems of Islam, ethnic diversity, radicalisation, or multiculturalism, but include much more complex relationships, problems, challenges, and solutions (Lammers and Reith 2014, 24; Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014). Furthermore, popular representations of the Schilderswijk in the media frame the problems in the neighbourhood as a problem of ethnic or religious minorities, and do not pay attention to the broader social history and context of the neighbourhood. In this chapter, it will become clear that the negative image and socio-economic situation in the Schilderswijk are not new phenomena that emerged with the arrival of migrants or religious minorities, but have a longer history.

As the Schilderswijk was the main location of this research, this chapter will discuss the historical and contemporary social context of the neighbourhood. First, I will debunk public assumptions about the Schilderswijk and portray the neighbourhood in a way that is sensitive to the social and socio-economic histories of the neighbourhood, in relation to a broader Dutch history of (post)colonialism and the construction of the ethnic and religious 'other' in urban 'disadvantaged' spaces. I find it important to approach the contemporary racialised, gendered, and religionised constructions of public space and the construction of Muslims as 'other' in Dutch society not as a new or isolated phenomenon, but as highly connected to the Dutch colonial history, as Gloria Wekker (2016) also argues in her book. I will argue that the way in which the Schilderswijk is represented in media, politics, and public debates obscures the social-historical, socio-economic, and postcolonial histories that underlie the development and status of the Schilderswijk. Second, I attend to the perspectives of young female Moroccan-Dutch residents in the neighbourhood and discuss their (gendered) experiences of living and playing in the Schilderswijk. In Dutch public debates about 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods, the young residents are often talked *about*, without their own voices and experiences being taken into account. This chapter will provide a start for discussing young residents' perspectives and experiences with girls' football and public playgrounds, which will be further developed in the next chapters. Last, the final part of this chapter gives an overview of the different sports organisations and public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk where girls play football.

Historical, postcolonial, and contemporary perspectives on the Schilderswijk

The Schilderswijk is a residential neighbourhood next to the city centre of The Hague. It has 31,000 inhabitants and is one of the most densely populated areas in the city and in the Netherlands. In addition to that, the Schilderswijk is listed every year as the poorest neighbourhood in the Netherlands (SCP and CBS 2014; Hoff et al. 2016). This position as poorest neighbourhood in the Netherlands needs a critical note, as differences with other neighbourhoods are very small and negligible, and socio-economic differences *within* the neighbourhood are more significant (Klein Kranenburg 2013, 264). Yet, it is the notable position of the last place on the socio-economic list that sticks to the Schilderswijk. This image of poorest neighbourhood in the Netherlands was strengthened when the Schilderswijk became one of the forty 'Vogelaar' neighbourhoods in 2007 (Rana 2014, 37). These were 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods that needed special attention and special policy for the urban regeneration and development of the places, called after Minister Vogelaar of Integration and Housing.

The poverty and density and the marking of the neighbourhood as a 'Vogelaar' neighbourhood, combined with the multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition of the neighbourhood, fed the stereotyped and negative images of the Schilderswijk in public and political debates and media. Interestingly, this negative image of the neighbourhood is not new. A short social-historical overview of the Schilderswijk, mainly based on a dissertation by Klein Kranenburg (2013) and a chapter by Geense

(2004), will show that the Schilderswijk has figured as the poor, problematic, and uncivilised 'other' in Dutch society since its emergence. After this overview, I will discuss what the Schilderswijk looks like today in terms of public representation and classed and racialised urban space.

A social-historical overview of the Schilderswijk

From the second half of the 19th century, the residential area that is now known as the Schilderswijk was constructed, with houses mostly for the middle and working classes. It was especially built for workers who moved from the province to the city, making the Schilderswijk a migration neighbourhood from its inception (Van der Leun 2005, 307). Since there was no official policy on housing, architecture, and urban space, it became a densely populated area with small and crowded houses, often in a dire state. From the end of the 19th century until the Second World War, the middle class moved out of the neighbourhood, and the Schilderswijk became known as a real working-class space with little prestige. At the beginning of the 20th century, official social housing was added to the neighbourhood (Geense 2004, 9–10). Despite the neighbourhood being known as a working-class neighbourhood, there were significant differences in wealth and welfare amongst its inhabitants, combined with differences in social, cultural, and sexual norms and contacts in the neighbourhood. Roughly, the Schilderswijk could be spatially divided in a poorer and richer area in the period up until World War II (Klein Kranenburg 2013).

After the Second World War, richer people continued to move out of the neighbourhood, to the newly built houses in neighbourhoods with a better reputation and better housing (Lammers and Reith 2014, 24; Geense 2004). New groups, mainly poor people from the city centre of The Hague, consequently moved into the Schilderswijk (Lammers and Reith 2014, 24; Klein Kranenburg 2013). The Schilderswijk thus continued to be a poor, working-class neighbourhood, with quite a closed social structure. There was a rather strong feeling of 'us' and 'them' in the Schilderswijk, which was the result of the bad image people outside the neighbourhood had of the Schilderswijk. At the same time, the feeling of 'us Schilderswijk' against 'them outside' in turn strengthened that negative image (Geense 2004). Already in the 1950s, people from outside were warned not to go to the Schilderswijk (Klein Kranenburg 2013, 189). Partly, this resulted in a process of socio-economic homogenisation of the neighbourhood in the post-World War II years, in which the inhabitants constructed their own set of norms and values to 'rebel' against the outside. Yet, also in these years, the Schilderswijk, with its internal migration processes, was a patchwork of relatively separated quarters and streets (Klein Kranenburg 2013). Already in the 1950s, there was discussion about restructuring the overcrowded neighbourhood, but it took until

the beginning of the 1980s for this to became materialised. In the decades in between, hardly any investments were made in the Schilderswijk, which resulted in a poor state of housing, and which attracted criminal transactions, illegal prostitution, and drug trafficking (Geense 2004, 13; Klein Kranenburg 2013).

In the 1960s, the Schilderswijk became nationally known as a problem neighbourhood, nourished by a 1969 documentary about a poor family in the Schilderswijk. This documentary geared a lot of protest, as inhabitants were upset about the negative portrayal of their neighbourhood. In these years, the strong sentiments and distrust against national and local institutions resulted in riots and actions of especially young residents against authorities, such as the police, the municipality, and the church (Klein Kranenburg 2013). Instead of a sense of national belonging, there was a strong sense of local belonging in the Schilderswijk in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. This was not so much a strong overarching 'Schilderswijk identity' – except in response to outsiders and outsiders' portrayal of the neighbourhood – since it was attached to the streets in which families lived. Inhabitants identified especially with micro-local spaces such as streets, local pubs (for men), and local stores (for women), which formed the core of the social design of the public space in the Schilderswijk (Klein Kranenburg 2013). Furthermore, there was a strong social control performed by powerful families in local communities, who defined 'normal' behaviour in the neighbourhood and excluded those from other local areas and families. This became especially visible when (transnational) migrants entered the neighbourhood, who did not conform to and did not 'fit' in micro-local norms, behaviours, and belongings (Klein Kranenburg 2013).

From the 1960s, the ethnic composition of the neighbourhood diversified, when many labour migrants from Spain, Portugal, the former Yugoslavia, and, later, Morocco and Turkey moved in. They were known as 'guest workers,' assuming that the migrants would go back to their home country after a period of temporary work in the Netherlands. Most of these (mostly male) labour migrants lived in overcrowded pensions. In the same period, postcolonial migrants from the (former) Dutch colonies Suriname and the Dutch Antilles arrived in the Schilderswijk (Geense 2004, 13).[36] While the early migrants were mainly single men, in the 1970s and 1980s, migrant families established themselves in the neighbourhood, which made the presence of transnational migrants in public spaces more visible. Especially once migrants no longer restricted themselves to their pensions or homes but increasingly occupied public spaces in the neighbourhood as well, it generated tensions between local powerful families and the new residents of the Schilderswijk (Geense 2004, 13; Klein Kranenburg 2013, 248).

In 1977, 15 per cent of the inhabitants were from the Mediterranean and 15 per cent from Suriname and the Dutch Antilles (Geense 2004, 13). These numbers increased during the urban renewal of the Schilderswijk, which took place from the early 1980s until 2002. Almost one third of the houses in the neighbourhood were demolished and replaced. In this process, inhabitants temporarily had to move out of the neighbourhood, yet most of them did not return and stayed in the newer suburban neighbourhoods of The Hague. In this way, the urban renewal process demolished not only houses but also the local family and street belonging in the Schilderswijk. New, cheap social housing was built during the urban renewal process, precisely according to the demands and needs that were put forward by the residents. However, since many of these residents did not return in the end, more migrant families moved in after the urban renewal was completed (Geense 2004) because they suited the profile for the new houses: big families with low, working-class incomes (Klein Kranenburg 2013, 348). In 1995, 80 per cent of the inhabitants were migrants or people with a migration background, and, in 2001, the number had risen to 86 per cent. This included the migrants formerly known as 'guest workers' from Morocco and Turkey and their children, and people from or with roots in the former colonies of the Netherlands, Suriname, and the Dutch Antilles (Geense 2004).

The Schilderswijk now: Public representations and classed and racialised segregated spaces

Since finishing the urban renewal in the new millennium, there has been lots of attention for the improvement of public space and social problems in the Schilderswijk related to drug nuisance, crime, and illegal prostitution. Nowadays, many public squares and playgrounds in the neighbourhood are much safer and more attractive for children and youths to play in, as was expressed by many sports and youth professionals in my research (see also Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014). Still, even after the process of urban renewal, the neighbourhood is very densely populated and consists mostly of social housing and flats (Geense 2004, 16; Smit 2014, 40). The urban renewal did not always result in better living conditions, as there are still many undefined public spaces in the neighbourhood, and some districts are rather isolated, which can attract nuisance or crime. Neither did the public image of the neighbourhood improve, which had been one of the aims of the urban renewal as well. According to Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp (2014), it is not surprising that the Schilderswijk continues to have a bad public image, as hardly any people from outside the neighbourhood visit the Schilderswijk, with the exception of The Hague Market (*de Haagse Markt*). This market lies at the border of the Schilderswijk and is a major attraction for residents from The Hague and beyond, but not many visitors know that it is actually part of the Schilderswijk. The public image of the neighbourhood is therefore mainly produced and reproduced through the media, in which the neighbourhood is portrayed as the ultimate problem neighbourhood of the Netherlands, with its Islamic radicalism, problematic 'Moroccan' youth, crime, and failed integration (Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014). In these representations, there is little attention for nuances, internal differences, and the lived experiences of residents themselves. The girls in my research were very much aware of the public representations and the stereotypes about their neighbourhood, and they tried to fight these by inviting girls from other neighbourhoods to some of the football tournaments they organised, so that they could get to know each other in real life.

In national debates on themes such as integration and Islam, media and politicians often quickly turn to the Schilderswijk. For example, Geert Wilders, the leader of the right-wing and populist Party for Freedom (PVV) uses the Schilderswijk in his anti-Islam campaign. He visited the neighbourhood in 2013 to 'support *autochtone* inhabitants of the neighbourhood'[37], after the publication of an article in Dutch newspaper Trouw about a supposed 'Sharia-triangle' in the Schilderswijk. Minister of Social Affairs and Employment Lodewijk Asscher from the labour party also visited the Schilderswijk after this publication in Trouw, because he wanted to see the neighbourhood that is so often written about with his own eyes.[38] Later, newspaper Trouw retracted the 'Sharia-triangle' article, as well as 126 other articles of that same journalist, because they were based on unverifiable sources.[39] Yet, the damage of this article and the attention that it generated was already done: a strong association of the Schilderswijk with radical Islam was constructed, and the neighbourhood continues to be seen as the ultimate problematic 'other' to Dutch society (Duijndam and Prins 2017, 13–14).

A second case in which the association with radical Islam was made were two protests in the summer of 2014, which were widely reported in Dutch media. The right-wing group Pro Patria, supported by Geert Wilders, organised a protest in the Schilderswijk 'against ISIS and radical Muslims'. They had banners with slogans such as 'We stay here, we will not be chased away from the Schilderswijk', and 'No Jihad in our street'. The Pro Patria protest was a reaction to a march that was held in the neighbourhood in July 2014 to support Gaza, where some boys and men appeared with flags of the Islamic State (ISIS). The group of protesters carrying ISIS flags was small, and consisted mostly of people coming from elsewhere in the country (which was, ironically, also the case with the protesters from Pro Patria).[40] All Schilderswijk residents I spoke with about this so-called 'ISIS protest' declared that it was by no means supported by most of the inhabitants of the Schilderswijk, and they said that the boys with the ISIS flags had them pressed into their hands by unknown men without

knowing the meaning of the flags (see also Duijndam and Prins 2017, 14). Nevertheless, images from the protest were widely distributed, portraying the Schilderswijk as a breeding ground of jihadism and Islamic extremism. Interestingly, after the Pro Patria protest, the mayor of The Hague forbade future planned demonstrations in the Schilderswijk and in the neighbouring Transvaal, to protect 'most of the citizens of the Schilderswijk that have good intentions', and, especially, to protect the youths of the Schilderswijk from radical influences.[41] Indeed, the Schilderswijk residents I spoke with for my research feel that their neighbourhood, and especially their favourite football squares and playgrounds, are being misused for all kinds of (political) protests and national ideological conflicts.

Most young inhabitants of the Schilderswijk I spoke with think that the problems in the Schilderswijk, such as crime and radicalisation, are overrepresented and exaggerated in Dutch media. Incidents of nuisance and crime that are not unique nor exclusive to the neighbourhood are constantly highlighted in the media when they take place in the Schilderswijk. This overrepresentation of social problems is something that urban anthropologist Anouk de Koning (2013) also observed for the Diamantbuurt in Amsterdam, a neighbourhood similar to the Schilderswijk in terms of ethnic diversity, socio-economic history, and public representation. In local and national media, there is often an overrepresentation of reporting on incidents in 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods, while these incidents are not seen as interesting when they take place in other spaces (De Koning 2013, 19). This strengthens the image of the specific 'disadvantaged' neighbourhood and its residents as a locus for social problems. Social problems are in this way constructed 'in' the neighbourhood, while other, positive things are constructed 'out' of the neighbourhood. For example, the beautifully renovated houses on the border between the Schilderswijk and the Stationsbuurt, a neighbourhood with a slightly better reputation, are deliberately mentioned as belonging to the Stationsbuurt, and not to the Schilderswijk. Former drug crime in that same spot on the border is often narrated as belonging to the Schilderswijk only (Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014, 37). This is also something that De Koning (2013, 21) observes for the Diamantbuurt: 'problems that occur in a larger area are often projected onto the "core Diamantbuurt" and thereby feed into the continuous recitation of its problematic nature and its exceptionality'. She calls this a 'fluid territorialisation', which constructs these neighbourhoods as a static and homogeneous problem space with a clear border from neighbouring spaces that are considered unproblematic (De Koning 2013, 22). Additionally, the girls in my research feel that the focus in the media on the negative things in the Schilderswijk takes the attention away from the positive things, in particular their FGU football competition, which is famous in the Schilderswijk but hardly known outside of it.

Furthermore, specifically 'Moroccan' and Muslim youths are central in discussions and representations of urban 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods, also in the Schilderswijk. Ethnic and religious diverse urban spaces are becoming increasingly related to anxieties about the Islamisation of public space and the development of radical Islam (Modest and De Koning 2016), and urban 'Moroccan' boys are seen as the most problematic, the biggest threat, and the least integrated persons in Dutch society (De Koning 2013, 2016). In representations of 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods, social positionings and identifications such as gender, sexuality, religion, and nationality are often ignored in favour of a static image of 'Moroccan youths' as the embodiment of urban multicultural problems (De Koning 2016, 111–12). The category of 'Moroccan' then becomes a container concept that implicitly *assumes* other social categories of difference such as religion and gender: 'Moroccan' is equated with being Muslim, whether people themselves identify as Muslim or not, and 'Moroccan' often implicitly means 'Moroccan' *boys*, as boys are often perceived as the troublemakers and girls as the victims. Moreover, 'Moroccan' is not a self-explanatory ethnic category, but is, in public discourses, a racialised ethnic category, based on physical appearances of brown skin and hair colour that look 'North-African'. As I have shown in Chapter 1, in processes of racialisation, difference becomes essentialised and inscribed in the body, in this case through skin and hair colour (Hall 2017, 62; Silverstein 2005, 364; Stolcke 1993). Everyone who looks this way can then be called a 'Moroccan', making it a derogatory term for racialised difference rather than for ethnic belonging. One of my research participants rightly questioned the racialised use of that term by journalists and researchers by asking 'What *is* a Moroccan?', for he recognised that the term is used for everyone who looks 'different'.

Not only in media representations, but also in official municipality statistics, the level of 'disadvantage' of neighbourhoods is coupled with migrants and ethnic and religious minority residents. The level of 'disadvantage' of a neighbourhood in the 'neighbourhood monitor' database of The Hague is measured in terms of how many people move out, the average economic value of houses, the average income, the percentage of unemployed people, and, quite shocking, the percentage of 'non-Western *allochtonen*' (Buurtmonitor Den Haag 2017; see also Rana 2014, 36). In other words, places become framed as 'disadvantaged' when they have a low socio-economic status, high unemployment and poverty rates, and relatively many migrants or ethnic minorities (De Koning 2013, 16–17; Rana 2014, 36). This assumes a direct relationship between socio-economic and cultural 'disadvantage' of a neighbourhood and a migration or non-white ethnic background of residents (De Koning 2013, 2015b, 2016). Discourses about 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods are thus often not about the space itself, but about its lower-class or ethnic minority residents (Brah and Phoenix

2004, 81–82); or, in the words of Jaffe and De Koning (2015, 35–36): 'the term is used to map a social category (poor people) onto spatial terrain, and confuses the physical problem of substandard housing with the characteristics of the people who live there'. Because the issues of integration, poverty, problems with multiculturalism, and 'Moroccan' and Muslim youths are so often coupled with the status and development of 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods, they almost become a 'natural' compound (De Koning 2013, 16). 'Disadvantaged neighbourhood' becomes synonymous for problems with ethnic minorities or with Islam (Rana 2014), and this discourse of 'disadvantage' is highly present in public and popular representations of the Schilderswijk.

These representations do not account for the historical developments of the Schilderswijk, in which the neighbourhood has always been a place or refuge for lower-class, working-class, and poor people and 'outcasts', and not only since the arrival of migrants or ethnic and religious 'others' (Klein Kranenburg 2013). Similarly, the bad reputation of the Schilderswijk is not new, nor are its socio-economic conditions and the attention of researchers, policy makers, and journalists for the neighbourhood. In the 1950s, there was an upsurge in research about the 'bad state' and the 'wild youths' of the Schilderswijk, which meant that many researchers visited the neighbourhood to research the neighbourhood and its 'othered' residents. This caused a lot of distrust amongst inhabitants towards institutions and researchers (Klein Kranenburg 2013, 47, 364), something that is also at stake now, as I have shown in the Introduction to this dissertation.

I will now specifically focus on some of the social characteristics of the Schilderswijk and The Hague, to explain the pervasive status of the Schilderswijk as the poorest and the most 'othered' neighbourhood of the Netherlands. The Hague is the most segregated city in the Netherlands (Verweij 2014, 96), and is – typical for The Hague, in comparison with other big cities in the Netherlands – strongly segregated based on income and class (Lindner 2002, 8). As becomes clear from the historical overview discussed above, the Schilderswijk has always been a neighbourhood with a high level of social mobility; when families earn a higher income, they often move to another neighbourhood with better and bigger housing, making space for new families with a low income (Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014, 55; Smit 2014; Lammers and Reith 2014). The neighbourhood can thus be described as a 'passage neighbourhood' or 'springboard neighbourhood' (Lammers and Reith 2014, 23; Klein Kranenburg 2013). This is inherent to the spatial organisation and housing of the Schilderswijk, which consists mostly of small, cheap apartments, which is thus not attractive for families who can afford more space. In this way, the Schilderswijk stays one of the poorest neighbourhoods in the Netherlands, but the people who live there continuously change. This aspect is often ignored in representations of and research on the Schilderswijk, in which the Schilderswijk is presented as if it houses people without any social mobility, while the place is in fact highly dynamic.

Furthermore, this position of being the 'poorest' neighbourhood is always a relative position in relation to other places on the list. That is, if all places become 'better' or richer, the Schilderswijk is still seen as 'worse', without attention to absolute changes or improvements. Jaffe and De Koning (2015, 35) call this the 'urban hierarchy of people and places': a hierarchy that frames certain neighbourhoods, such as favelas or ghettos, and its residents as always already deprived and disadvantaged. Even when these spaces and the living conditions improve, it could be the case that their position in relation to other, more wealthier neighbourhoods, become even worse; in other words, the inequality can still increase (Jaffe and De Koning 2015, 35). This is also the case for the Schilderswijk, which stands out next to the adjacent affluent neighbourhoods in the segregated city of The Hague.

Spatial segregation based on income and class in The Hague is related to ethnic segregation. Nowadays, families who move into the Schilderswijk are often families with an ethnic minority or migrant background, too. For the Netherlands, and specifically The Hague, ethnic segregation is caused mostly by education level and the relatively bad position of ethnic minorities on the labour market, and thus income level (Verweij 2014, 96; Lindner 2002). Other factors of ethnic segregation are the allocation of social housing (Verweij 2014, 97; Lindner 2002) and white people moving out of neighbourhoods with lots of ethnic minority residents (Lindner 2002). Lindner (2002) concludes that, in the Netherlands and in The Hague, there is no preference of the vast majority of people with migrant backgrounds to live in ethnically segregated or concentrated neighbourhoods. Crul, Schneider, and Lelie (2013, 76) found that it are rather native (white) Dutch people who segregate in various European cities, including Amsterdam, because it are the young residents with a native Dutch background who have most social encounters within their own ethnic group. Yet, the role of white citizens in ethnic spatial segregation in cities is often not recognised.

In public and political discourses about integration, the responsibility for 'ethnic segregation' is 'transferred onto racialised communities through the trope of "self-segregation" and "self-ghettoising", supposedly caused by their fundamentally different and inferior culture, increasingly identified with Islam', as El-Tayeb (2012, 82) argues. The idea that ethnic minorities are responsible for ethnic segregation is implicit in the terminology used. The Schilderswijk is seen as a neighbourhood with a 'concentration of ethnic minorities' that is 'segregated' from the rest of The Hague, because it has only 9 per cent of native (white) Dutch residents (Buurtmonitor Den Haag 2017). This formulation implies that the neighbourhood is seen as a homogeneous segregated neighbourhood because it is non-white. The concept 'concentration of

ethnic minorities' denotes a hierarchical, racialised spatial segregation of white and non-white citizens in European urban spaces (El-Tayeb 2011, 15). In reality, the Schilderswijk consists of a very diverse array of ethnic backgrounds and is highly heterogeneous. In comparison, a neighbourhood with mostly white Dutch people, which is much more ethnically homogeneous than the Schilderswijk, is never seen as 'ethnically segregated' or 'ethnically concentrated', nor perceived as a problem (Rana 2014, 36). This racialised narrative of problematic 'ethnic segregation' is also used in policy discourses about sports, where the homogeneity of white sports settings is never questioned, while sports clubs with an ethnically diverse and non-white membership are perceived as homogeneous, as segregated, and as problematic (Rana 2014, 35–36; Vermeulen and Verweel 2009, 1215; De Koning 2015b, 1218).

A spatial concentration of ethnic minorities feeds into the idea of the urban neighbourhood as 'other', and as not properly belonging to the Netherlands and to white Dutch citizens (De Koning 2013, 2015), for example, by calling the Schilderswijk a 'no-go area' for white Dutch people (Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014, 36). The racialised discourses of ethnic segregation show that, in urban neighbourhoods in the Netherlands, white Dutch residents are constructed as the norm and therefore as unproblematic, while non-white Dutch citizens are treated as a problem, and therefore as subject of spatial and urban regeneration policies. This denies the complex and intersectional processes that are at the base of spatial segregation in cities, which are caused by class, the housing market, the labour market, the history of the neighbourhood, and migration patterns of white and non-white residents.

On summarising the discussions of the contemporary and historical Schilderswijk, the neighbourhood has, for a long time, been a place for citizens who are constructed as the social outcasts of Dutch society, based on intersecting classed and racialised hierarchies and dynamics. In contemporary Schilderswijk, popular representations of the neighbourhood evade the class aspect that underlies the social-historical construction of the Schilderswijk, in favour or a mere racial/ethnic and religious lens on the social context of the neighbourhood, which constructs Muslim and Moroccan-Dutch citizens as ultimate problem citizens and residents. The Schilderswijk neighbourhood and its residents are thus placed in racialised discourses that project social and urban problems onto migrants, ethnic and religious minorities, and young people of colour: the racialised 'other' of a supposed 'homogeneous and trouble-free white Dutch society' (De Koning 2015b, 1220; see also Silverstein 2008).

In practice, these discourses translate to security policies in the form of CCTV and intensified police surveillance, and massive police action in response to what are only small incidents, prompted by exaggerated media attention (De Koning 2015b, 2016). Furthermore, racial/ethnic profiling and police brutality against non-white residents (Çankaya 2015) are an urgent issue in the Schilderswijk (Duijndam and Prins 2017). The relationship between mainly young residents and the local police is a complicated and disturbed one, and it receives attention both nationally and locally and amongst residents who have set up projects to improve this relationship. Young inhabitants, especially boys, experience that they are often asked to show their ID cards without reason, or are arrested when they question doubtful police actions they experience as racist (Duijndam and Prins 2017; see also De Koning 2016, 122). These experiences were often talk of the day amongst boys and girls in the public football playgrounds where I conducted my research. Furthermore, there have been major incidents of police violence against racialised minorities in or near the Schilderswijk: the killing of 17-year-old Rishi Chandrikasing and Mitch Henriquez (42) in 2012 and 2015, respectively, and the violent arrest of fourteen-year-old Oubayda Jab Allah in 2014, which all triggered protests in the Schilderswijk against police brutality and racial/ethnic profiling (Duijndam and Prins 2017, 42–51). What is interesting to note is that the protests against the police in the Schilderswijk are not new, as Klein Kranenburg (2013) also documented: the complicated relationship involving riots between young residents and the police and other authorities have existed since the 1960s.

The Schilderswijk from a postcolonial perspective?

In this section, I place the history and social and spatial composition of the Schilderswijk in the broader history of Dutch and European colonial constructions of racial/ethnic and religious 'others'. I will argue that the contemporary racialised discourses about Dutch neighbourhoods such as the Schilderswijk are built upon a colonial framework of governing Islam and racial/ethnic 'others'. In the Netherlands, and also in the Schilderswijk, the two largest groups of racialised minorities – Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch citizens – have a history of labour migration, which started in the 1960s and 1970s, and not a postcolonial migration history. Yet, it is insightful to also use a postcolonial perspective in broader European urban multicultural contexts, as Ponzanesi and Colpani (2016, 6; see also Loftsdóttir 2011) argue: 'It is crucial to acknowledge how race and its colonial codifications have come to form part, more broadly, of the European hegemonic approach to difference and cohabitation, be there or not a history of former colonisation between Europe and those who are subject to its contemporary racialising optic: migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and ethnic minorities.' In Chapter 1, I have argued for an intersectional approach in studying how public spaces in urban multi-ethnic and multi-religious neighbourhoods such as the Schilderswijk are gendered, racialised, and religionised. In this chapter, I connect this intersectional approach with a postcolonial perspective as a conceptual, theoretical, and analytical tool to look at the histories of racialisation, ethnic diversity, Islam, and

‘othering’ in urban neighbourhoods, and how these histories are connected to colonial constructions of Islam and racial/ethnic ‘others’. However, the connections between (post)colonial histories and contemporary Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch communities are not direct and linear, but diffuse and multi-layered.

Specifically, the relation between Dutch (post)colonial history and the racialisation of Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch migrants can be traced along three intersecting lines: Dutch governance of Islam; gendered and sexual discourses about the ‘other’; and Dutch minority and integration policies. First, part of the dominant framing of Muslims as ‘other’ to Dutch society and culture, is the idea that they are a ‘new’ migrant group in the Netherlands. Yet, Islam has in fact been part of the Netherlands for a long time, through the colonisation of Indonesia: ‘Not so long ago the Netherlands was a colonial society in which a majority of the population was Muslim’, Van der Veer states (2002, 7). According to him, the colonial governance of Muslims can be compared with the contemporary multicultural governance of Muslims, as both see Islam as a ‘backward’ religion, and try to integrate or assimilate Muslims into modern citizens who are suitable for Dutch society. Contemporary Islamophobia and the othering and politicisation of Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch Muslims in the Netherlands are derived from the colonial Dutch governance of Muslim citizens in the former Dutch Indies, now Indonesia (Van der Veer 2002). Especially when Muslims became more visible in Dutch public spaces through labour migration from Morocco and Turkey, colonial ideas of Islam as backward and unemancipated were taken off the discursive shelves of the Dutch colonial ‘cultural archive’ (Wekker 2016, 2–3).

Second, there are strong gender and sexual components in both colonial and contemporary representations of Islam and Muslim citizens: Muslim women are portrayed as oppressed and in need of gender and sexual liberation from their supposed conservative and oppressive religion (Van der Veer 2006; Moors 2011) through a narrative of ‘saving Muslim women’ (Abu-Lughod 2002, 2013). Postcolonial scholar Spivak characterised the gender aspect in colonial discourses with the following famous words: ‘white men saving brown women from brown men’ (Spivak 1993, 297; Ponzanesi and Colpani 2016, 12–13). Nowadays, this gender narrative is, for example, visible in the gendered representations of Muslim boys and girls in neighbourhood sports programmes, in which girls are portrayed as victims who need to be saved, and boys as oppressors and aggressors (Rana 2014). Annelies Moors argues that present-day attempts to regulate Islamic women’s dress also bear traces of colonial attempts – especially the frequent references to Muslim women’s gender oppression, with the veil as the ultimate symbol – to underline Islam’s difference from and inferiority to Western European societies (Moors 2011, 149). Sexuality, especially gay rights and women’s sexual rights, has also been used in colonial and contemporary times to

frame Muslim citizens and Islam as backward and as inherently incompatible with Dutch ‘modern’ society (Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010; Wekker 2016).

Third, Dutch ‘ethnic minority and integration’ policies, which are now mostly applied to Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch (post)migrants, have their origins in the violent protests of young Moluccan postcolonial migrants in the 1970s, after which the ‘bureaucratic apparatus for ethnic minority affairs’ was established (Wekker 2016, 53; see also Jones 2014, 323–24; Essed and Nimako 2006). The first policy document on ethnic minorities in 1983 was the direct result of these postcolonial Moluccan protests, but included a ‘strange amalgam’ of different (ethnic) groups: Surinamese, Antilleans, Moroccans, Turks, Southern Europeans, Moluccans, but also Roma and people who permanently lived in mobile homes (Wekker 2016, 54). Guno Jones has analysed ethnic minority and integration policies related to postcolonial migrants and argues that the construction of Dutch citizenship was based on the exclusion of racialised overseas Dutch citizens and their offspring, who were never seen as ‘really’ Dutch. ‘Real’ Dutch citizenship was reserved only for white Dutch citizens. This comes back in contemporary constructions of Dutch cultural citizenship, in which Muslim girls are not seen as full citizens because of their racialised religious difference. In neighbourhood sports programmes, as I will show in Chapter 5, they are framed as if they still need to become full citizens, and participation in sports is seen as the privileged site for that. This discourse on cultural citizenship overlooks the fact that many Muslim girls already participate in sports and football, albeit in their own organised competition. Discourses of cultural citizenship and policies of integration thus say more about the dominant white group than about the minority groups; or, in other words, discourses on cultural citizenship produce a white majority through narratives on ethnic and religious minorities or ‘others’ (Jones 2014, 317). The group that is framed as being ‘other’, however, constantly changes.

Whereas, at first, postcolonial migrants from Indonesia, Suriname, and the Dutch Antilles were seen as ‘others’ in Dutch society, this position later shifted to labour migrants and their children, once it became clear that they would not leave the country. More recently, some argue since 9/11, the discursive construction of the ‘other’ underwent another shift, and became mostly framed around Islam and Muslims as ‘alien’ to the Netherlands. Currently, Muslims are constructed as a minority group that is seen as most ‘problematic’ and most ‘other’ to Dutch society (Wekker 2016, 15, 155-156; Van der Veer 2006; Jones 2014, 332). This can be illustrated with research by Gloria Wekker on the case of *Zwarte Piet* (Black Pete), a colonial racist remnant in the form of a popular Dutch blackface tradition. She analysed the 1500 hate mails that two artists received after their installation at the Van Abbe museum in 2008, which criticised the phenomenon of *Zwarte Piet*. Interestingly, one of the themes

that surfaced in the hate mail were strong anti-Muslim sentiments, even more so than anti-black sentiments. 'There is a tension in the fact that most protesters against Black Pete are black, yet it is overwhelmingly Muslims who get blamed for everything that is wrong in the Netherlands in the e-mail bombardment', Gloria Wekker writes (2016, 155). Her analysis of this Muslim blaming is that, currently, the social distance between Surinamese and Antillean-Dutch citizens and white Dutch people is felt less in comparison to the social and cultural distance white Dutch people feel between themselves and Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch Muslim citizens. It are now 'Muslims' who occupy the 'othered' spot on which postcolonial citizens were positioned for years. The colonial system of racial and cultural othering remains, but the social groups have changed (Wekker 2016, 15, 156; Jones 2014, 332).

As I have shown before, Dutch integration and minority policies are often coupled with the 'improvement' and urban regeneration of 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods. One of the central tools of national and local policies for the integration of ethnic minority youths living in 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods is sports. Sports are seen as a meaningful leisure activity for urban young residents, which will keep them from hanging around[42] in the streets, and which will make them familiar with what are seen as 'Dutch norms and values' (Rana 2014, 35). This central role of sports in cultural integration and emancipation is not new: historically, sports have been an important domain through which national citizenship is produced. Sports were an essential part of colonisation processes to discipline and civilise the colonised into modern and moral subjects (Besnier and Brownell 2012; Bale and Cronin 2003). This makes sports, Bale and Cronin (2003, 5) argue, a 'legacy of colonisation', one that is continued today in sports global governing bodies, who are still 'on a colonising mission' (Bale and Cronin 2003, 3). Locally, a 'colonising mission' could be observed in the implementation and promotion of youth sports in 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods, including the Schilderswijk, for the social and cultural integration and civilisation of its (ethnic minority) residents. In Chapter 5, I will discuss these neighbourhood youth sports programmes, and how the girls in my research critically engage with such programmes.

To sum up, the contemporary constructions of Muslims and Islam as inferior and 'other' to the Netherlands, and its related integration policies, have origins in Dutch colonial history. In contemporary Dutch discourses on migration and multiculturalism, racialised postcolonial and labour migrants (and their children) are framed as 'foreigners', 'newcomers', and 'immigrants' who want to profit from the Dutch welfare system, and who are fundamentally seen as 'from elsewhere', even generations who are born and raised in the Netherlands (Gilroy 2016; Wekker 2016; Modest and De Koning 2016; El-Tayeb 2011). This denies the long history of Muslim citizens as part of the Dutch empire (Van der Veer 2002), and the history of the 1960s and 1970s labour migration from Southern Europe, Morocco, and Turkey, when migrants were recruited by the Dutch themselves to meet the growing demand of cheap, low-skilled labour. 'Racialised populations are thus externalised from contemporary Europe, and as a result, their long-standing presence within the continent is absent from most historical accounts' (El-Tayeb 2011, xxi). This delegitimises the presence of postcolonial and post-migrant citizens and their claims on European citizenship and European spaces (Modest and De Koning 2016, 99). There is a lack of historical knowledge and the active 'forgetting' of both (post)colonial Dutch history and Dutch labour migration history, which forms the source of contemporary racism and anxieties regarding Islam, migration, and racialised minorities (Modest and De Koning 2016). In denying the complex postcolonial and labour migration histories, contemporary European societies are imagined as racial and culturally homogeneous spaces that are now 'invaded' by strangers, while, in fact, there has never been something such as a homogeneous Europe or static European identity (Modest and De Koning 2016, 99; Ponzanesi and Blaagaard 2011). In the Schilderswijk, too, there was never a homogenised local space that is now 'invaded' by ethnic minorities or Muslims.

In his dissertation, Klein Kranenburg (2013) reports on nostalgic feelings of white inhabitants of the Schilderswijk towards the past. This nostalgia consists of an idealisation of a homogeneous happy neighbourhood with a lot of social contact, tolerance, and the absence of any social problems, and is part of a broader nostalgia of white Dutch residents towards a homogeneous and tolerant past in the Netherlands that has actually never existed (Wekker 2016; Duyvendak 2011; Mepschen 2016). The Schilderswijk neighbourhood, too, never existed as such, as a feeling of belonging was only ever limited, and a bad image already clung to the neighbourhood. Furthermore, the Schilderswijk has always been a neighbourhood of migration and socio-economic 'newcomers', whether from within the neighbourhood or from the outside, and certainly not only since the arrival of postcolonial and labour migrants (Klein Kranenburg 2013). Klein Kranenburg concludes on these feelings of white nostalgia:

> In contemporary debates about working-class neighbourhoods, the arrival of foreign migrants and their families is usually seen as the tipping point in a development of social decline and cultural alienation. While this image might look plausible at first sight, the idea of a homogeneous, stable neighbourhood that, in the 1970s, suddenly was disturbed by the presence of labour migrants is not correct. Before this period, too, constant demographic changes, whereby, again and again, the upper layer of the neighbourhood left and gave way to a

new group of residents, ensured that little remained the same for long. (Klein Kranenburg 2013, 341 my translation)

In the historical overviews of the Schilderswijk that I have discussed in this chapter, the references to Dutch colonial history are scarce, except for mere sentences such as ‘Surinamese and Antillean people settled in the neighbourhood’ (Geense 2004, 13, my translation), which do not even mention that these people came from the (former) Dutch colonies. In other words, the social life and ethnic composition of the Schilderswijk seems disconnected from Dutch (post)colonial history in these historical accounts.

A problematic aspect of his otherwise very thorough and interesting social-historical analysis of the Schilderswijk is Klein Kranenburg’s (2013) neglect of ethnic diversity, labour migrants, and postcolonial residents, except for a short epilogue. In his chapters about the Schilderswijk from the 1960 until the 1980s, he only presents narratives from white Dutch residents who lived in the Schilderswijk in this period, while, already in 1977, 15 per cent of the residents were Surinamese and Antillean, and 15 per cent came from Mediterranean countries (Geense 2004). In this way, he creates an image of the Schilderswijk as white and portrays Surinamese, Antillean, Moroccan, and Turkish residents and their children as people who did and do not really belong to the Schilderswijk and its social history.[43] These groups almost only come into his story when talking about the problems white residents experience with migrants in the neighbourhood, while the experiences of the migrants themselves are ignored. In this way, Klein Kranenburg reproduces an image of the neighbourhood as authentically a white space and constructs non-white citizens ‘out’ of the history of the neighbourhood and the Netherlands, and ‘in’ contemporary discourses on urban ‘disadvantaged’ neighbourhoods and its social problems. A similar tendency can be observed in the popular television series *Making ends meet in the Schilderswijk*[44] and in the media reporting on the Schilderswijk: most of the time, white residents form the protagonists. In this way, white residents are still framed as the ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ residents of the Schilderswijk, and ethnic and religious residents as ‘others’. Although Klein Kranenburg argues that migrants and ethnic minorities do not form the source for the social problems in the Schilderswijk, he does not include postcolonial and labour migrants and their children as a fundamental part of the history of the neighbourhood and of Dutch society. In this way, he unintentionally reproduces the dominant idea of the Netherlands as white, and of white Dutch self-representations in which the role of colonialism and race in the construction of Dutch society are denied (Wekker 2016). It is therefore important to focus on the experiences of the young Moroccan-Dutch residents as protagonists in this anthropological study of public football spaces in the Schilderswijk. I will now discuss their perspectives on the Schilderswijk, in which age and gender form important categories of difference in the access to, experiences of, and constructions of public spaces in the neighbourhood.

Being young in the Schilderswijk: Aged and gendered public spaces

The Schilderswijk is a ‘young’ neighbourhood in terms of the relative age of its residents: 30 per cent are younger than twenty years old. Almost half of the residents, 46 per cent, are under thirty years old. These numbers are much higher compared with The Hague as a whole, with 23 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively (Buurtmonitor Den Haag 2017). As many houses in the Schilderswijk have no gardens, children and youths often play in the public squares, playgrounds, and the parks in their neighbourhood (Smit 2014). In popular representations of urban ‘disadvantaged’ neighbourhoods such as the Schilderswijk, young people often play an important role. These neighbourhoods are portrayed through images of youths hanging around in the streets, and topics such as multicultural youths and street cultures and languages and the potential criminalisation and radicalisation of young residents are highlighted (El-Tayeb 2011; Puwar 2004, 31). Especially non-white boys are constructed as a threat and as dangerous when they hang around in urban public spaces (Puwar 2004, 51; El-Tayeb 2011). Furthermore, young residents are often a specific target group in urban renewal and urban development policies, also in the Schilderswijk. On the other hand, urban public space is often also the domain occupied by youths. Youth cultures and lifestyles are often developed in urban spaces, and the popular sport football is practised extensively in public playgrounds in Dutch cities. Urban public spaces are then also spaces for popular culture, creativity, resistance, politics, and critiques of dominant, adult, or colonial constructions of racialised youths as problematic (Jaffe and De Koning 2015, 95–96; El-Tayeb 2011). In this part, I will pay attention to representations of and policies on urban youths in the Schilderswijk, as well as young residents’ own experiences of living there.

Since 2012, the municipality pays specific attention to the problems with unemployment and poverty amongst young residents in the Schilderswijk. The municipality developed policies to guide youths to paid work, to combat early school dropout, to help socially vulnerable families, and to prevent youths from hanging around in public spaces and engaging with criminal activities (Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014, 8). As I have pointed out before, one of the ways this is done is through organising youth neighbourhood sports as a way of ‘integrating’ urban youths into desirable and disciplined citizens and residents. Mariet, who works at the municipality in The Hague, even mentions in an interview that Sportteam, the organisation that

organises sports for youths in public playgrounds in neighbourhoods in The Hague, is mainly there to prevent youth nuisance and 'hang-around youths' (*hangjongeren*):

> *Mariet: Sportteam was started about ten years ago to get young people to move and sport, maybe it was even fifteen years ago. But now it is there for totally different reasons, to reduce nuisance by youths, yes, I'll be honest about that.*
> *Kathrine: What kind of nuisance are you talking about then?*
> *Mariet: The uncontrolled hanging around in those playgrounds.*

As follows from her statement, young residents who simply hang around in public playgrounds are perceived as undesirable. Public playgrounds and public space, which used to be the domain of young people for unorganised, creative play, are now increasingly under regulation by adults and used for education, integration, and discipline purposes (Harris 2004). According to adults and policy makers, youths need to be taught how they should spend their leisure time in a productive manner: 'The notion that young people's unstructured free time is a breeding ground for "social problems" and that they need to be taught to use this time in "constructive" ways lies at the heart of the discourse of education and training' (Griffin in Harris 2004, 96). Discipline, education, and training are increasingly put into practice via the organisation of structured sports activities in public playgrounds in urban spaces (Harris 2004), also in the Schilderswijk. Clubs, companies, municipalities, and parents increasingly determine what should happen in the public sports spaces, when, and why. There are street football competitions organised by many different organisations, some of which are sponsored by commercial companies and industries. Although some of these institutionalised street competitions aim to create a more equal access to public space, they do have their own inclusion and exclusion mechanisms based on gender, race/ethnicity, and religion, as I will show in the next chapters. The girls, for example, are only given access to the playgrounds in a limited number of 'girls' hours', and some Muslim girls are excluded if they wear a headscarf. Public space becomes increasingly 'privatised' by companies and organisations, according to Harris (2004, 116): 'At a time when young women are finally able to access this [public] sphere for leisure purposes, there is in fact very little public space left'.

For the Schilderswijk specifically, Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp (2014) fear an increased commercialisation of public space, where freely accessible public spaces become replaced by commercial spaces, such as cafés, terraces, or private gyms, which mostly cater to men (see also Van der Wilk 2016). In the design of public squares and playgrounds, the municipality of The Hague does not sufficiently take residents' experiences, wishes, and needs into account (Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014, 9), and especially not young residents' voices (Lammers and Reith 2014, 24). Although the municipality tries and promises to work from the needs of the residents, these, however, do have to 'fit in their plans', as was mentioned by a policy maker from the municipality during a residents' meeting on public space in the Schilderswijk. It is, however, crucial to look at how young people themselves experience their neighbourhood, and to what extent this resonates with adults' assumptions and ideas about the design of urban public space, hang-around youths, and about the Schilderswijk as 'disadvantaged'.

Many young residents are very positive about the Schilderswijk, and, contrary to their parents, many want to stay in the neighbourhood. Nisa said:

> *I will never leave this neighbourhood, it is so nice here, everyone knows each other, everything is close, and there is always something to do. This really is my neighbourhood.*

Other research participants, too, mentioned that they will 'never leave this place'; they feel their neighbourhood to be a real home. Aspects that were mentioned a lot were the proximity of friends and family, the playgrounds at almost every corner, and the liveliness of local stores, which are open until late. However, this does not mean that these young residents, who feel at home and familiar in the Schilderswijk, also want to stay when they are older, as Lammers and Reith (2014, 28) found in their research. Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp (2014, 37) also interviewed young residents in the Schilderswijk, and they found that, for example, a young Moroccan-Dutch woman stated that she never wanted to leave the neighbourhood, but that she, at the same time, mentioned that, once she has children, she might leave, she might want to get rid of the label 'Schilderswijk'. The Schilderswijk is thus a neighbourhood that is differently experienced and perceived related to age. The young residents usually have positive experiences of living and growing up in the Schilderswijk, yet they are also very aware of the stigma of the neighbourhood and want their children not to have that stigma.

The young residents in my research feel the pressure of the negative label attached to the Schilderswijk, and they often tried to debunk it in the interviews. Like Youssef (twelve years old), for example:

> *People say a lot of things about this neighbourhood, but really, it's just a super neighbourhood. Maybe not in the past, but now I think it's just the best here. There are so many playgrounds to play football!*

Aliya also recognised the negative label that the Schilderswijk has, and blamed the media for the bad image:

The Schilderswijk, really, it's just, it's the media that makes everything bigger than it is.

At a girls' football hour at a community centre in the Schilderswijk, I talked to a young woman from another city doing her internship at the centre, and I asked her what she thought of the Schilderswijk:

It's such an exaggeration, like really. Everything is normal here, even boring. When I got my internship here, people at home said: 'Oh scary, there's so much happening there'. Well, there's actually often nothing going on.

Some young residents do not understand the fascination of journalists, researchers, and outsiders for their neighbourhood, and describe the Schilderswijk as 'boring', 'nothing happening', and 'nothing special'.[45] This corresponds to young residents' experiences from the Diamantbuurt in the research of De Koning (2013, 18): they often only heard about incidents in their neighbourhood through the media, and not from their own experiences or observations. Both youths from the Diamantbuurt and the Schilderswijk consider precisely the exaggerated media attention for their neighbourhood as creating a problem that otherwise does not exist.

This negative portrayal of the Schilderswijk also influences the daily lives of some of the young residents. At an evening at the youth centre in the Schilderswijk, I talked to a boy about the Gaza protest where the ISIS flags were seen, and he said to me:

Those people with those flags were not even from here, they came here from all over the country to mess around. They don't dare to do that in their own neighbourhood. And now we have the trouble here because of that, a very bad image of our neighbourhood. Personally, I have not had experiences with it, but friends of me did, they were treated negatively because of it.

However, this negative portrayal also creates a high involvement of residents, including many youths, to commit themselves to their neighbourhood: to reduce social problems and to do something positive to counter the bad representation. In the Schilderswijk, there are, for example, the 'neighbourhood fathers' (*buurtvaders*), who keep peace in the streets and mediate between youths and the police, especially around events such as New Year's Eve and protests. There are also 'neighbourhood mothers' (*buurtmoeders*), who want to reduce loneliness amongst women, and the football players at FGU volunteer at elderly homes and in community centres. Furthermore, FGU football players invite youths from other neighbourhoods in The Hague to the Schilderswijk to play football together and to reduce stereotypes about the Schilderswijk and its residents. In Chapter 5, these activities will be discussed more in depth, but here I

will share Hanan's experience of inviting girls from the rival white neighbourhood Duindorp to the Football Girls United competition:

The Schilderswijk was recently negatively in the news and we want to show the positive side with our initiatives. And we did this last Sunday: we invited girls from Duindorp, and they came and said afterwards: 'we didn't know foreigners were that nice!'

Although playing football together helped in creating a more positive image of the Schilderswijk, this event also showed that the Schilderswijk and its Moroccan-Dutch young residents are still perceived as 'foreign' by white Dutch youths from another neighbourhood, reproducing the dominant narrative about 'Moroccan' youths, Muslims, and the Schilderswijk as 'other' in media and politics.

In relation to the 'outside', the young residents are concerned about the image and representation of the Schilderswijk, but they do not necessarily feel a strong belonging to the Schilderswijk as a whole. Often, more local places, such as the street, squares, or public playgrounds, were more important spaces of belonging in the daily lives of young residents. Gathering and playing in local football playgrounds are important in how young people experience and identify with the neighbourhood. The football teams in the FGU competition are based on local squares and playgrounds, and the names of these squares often also function as the names of the teams. In the competition, the teams thus compete with teams from other playgrounds and squares in the Schilderswijk. Young residents' experiences of living and playing in the Schilderswijk are thus strongly attached to the particular squares and playgrounds that are close to their homes. When I, for example, asked one volunteer at FGU about a specific playground in the Schilderswijk and whether that was also a spot where he sometimes plays football, he said:

Yes, sometimes I go there because some friends of mine live there, but that's not my area and not my playground, so I cannot just go there and occupy that playground to play football.

The experiences of belonging to smaller local squares and areas in the Schilderswijk is not something new; as I showed in the social-historical overview of the neighbourhood, this has always been the case in the history and development of the Schilderswijk. The division of the Schilderswijk in smaller local areas of belonging is a character of the social and spatial design of the Schilderswijk (Klein Kranenburg 2013).

However, the local belonging to urban public playgrounds is highly gendered. There are very few public spaces in the Schilderswijk for girls to relax, play, or study together. Most shisha lounges and coffeehouses are perceived as male spaces, and girls

or women feel outsiders or not welcome there. This is often also the case for public sports playgrounds, as I will elaborate on extensively in the next chapter. The Football Girls United competition and a few smaller girls' football initiatives are almost the only leisure places in the neighbourhood that are explicitly for girls, and these will be discussed more in depth in Chapter 4. There is one other important place for girls in the Schilderswijk – the local library – but it was closed in 2012 due to municipal budget cuts. Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp, who conducted research on public space in the Schilderswijk and organised tours in the neighbourhood, explained what this meant for the girls in the neighbourhood:

> With every Schilderswijk tour we organised with Zoulikha and Kaoutar, two Moroccan girls of nineteen years old, we stop at the now empty library. Angrily, they tell us how much they miss the library. For years, it was the place where they did their homework and where they met with their friends. And since they do not want to go to the coffeehouses and shisha lounges, it was the only safe place in the neighbourhood where their parents allowed them to go to. And now there is no longer such a meeting place for adolescent girls in the Schilderswijk. (Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014, 29, my translation)

After a lot of protest from residents, the library reopened in 2015, and it now also houses social initiatives such as education projects, office hours of social services, and media projects for youths and children. The lack of public spaces for girls in the Schilderswijk contributes to the strong attachment many girls feel with Football Girls United. Because this space is specifically created for girls, many girls mention that they feel at home at FGU, and they have even come up with the nickname 'The Familia' for FGU. It is through playing with their local teams in FGU that the girls perform their belonging and attachment to the local squares and playgrounds in their area; outside FGU, these are still often the domain of boys, as the next chapter will show.

Another specific gendered experience of the neighbourhood is social control, something that some of the girls I talked to mentioned, especially in relation to playing football. I asked Nisa, who organises girls' football in a community centre, if there are religious or cultural norms that prevent girls from playing football in public spaces in the Schilderswijk:

> *You know what? Here, in the Schilderswijk, social control is huge. Really, wherever you are, the Schilderswijk is one big social control. So, it is not even only your family, but talk goes around the neighbourhood. For example, this is actually not the case with me, or with my family; people can talk, but I am really free, my parents are like that. But, for example, for those who are not that free, and they were to play football in the streets, then people who don't even know them will talk about 'look, that girl is playing football till late, what kind of girl is that? What kind of daughter is that?' You have a social control in the Schilderswijk that makes that many girls don't dare to play football in the streets. So, therefore, there are a lot of community centres that offer girls' football indoors. But yes, culture and religion, not only in the Moroccan community, but yes religion, it does play a role a little bit, because then they look at you.*

She continues to explain that, in her view, cultural or religious backgrounds matter because it makes that people belong to the same community, and there are norms and restrictions within communities. If one is from another community, there is, according to Nisa, less talk or social control. Without dismissing Nisa's experiences and explanations, because strict gendered and spatial norms and social control can certainly be exercised within ethnic communities, there are also other factors that contribute to the degree of social control in specific neighbourhoods (Green and Singleton 2007). A strong social control is also related to class and the density of the neighbourhood, and the precarious situations of many residents, such as poverty, unemployment, and the stigmatisation of their neighbourhood. For example, according to girls' football trainer Lara, the white working-class neighbourhood Duindorp also has a rather strict social control with gendered norms in public spaces. Furthermore, this kind of social control is not new for the Schilderswijk, as Klein Kranenburg (2013) also described when discussing the existence of self-contained areas within the Schilderswijk, where local, powerful families defined the social, cultural, and sexual norms that were attached to that local area. It is therefore likely that a strong degree of social control is also related to the socio-economic history of the neighbourhood and the position of the neighbourhood as 'other' in relation to broader Dutch society.

Despite the gendered access to public leisure places and some girls' experiences of social control in the neighbourhood, many girls in the Schilderswijk play football in different competitions both in public playgrounds and sports halls. Before moving on to the next chapters, in which I will discuss girls' experiences of playing football in public playgrounds in the neighbourhood extensively, I will give an overview of the different sports organisations, initiatives and playgrounds in the Schilderswijk where girls and boys play football.

Girls' football, public sports playgrounds, and sports organisations in the Schilderswijk: An overview

Almost all mainstream sports clubs have moved out of the city, and few young residents of the Schilderswijk are a member of those sports clubs.[46] Often, they are too far away to go to on their own, or they are too expensive, or not known amongst young residents. However, there are several local community sports organisations in the neighbourhood.[47] These organisations can easily adapt to the wishes and needs of the residents, because they are not attached to a larger sports federation. They ask a small financial contribution and are generally very popular in the Schilderswijk (Houdijk and Ekelschot 2014). Almost all the participants in my research played football or sports in one or more of those local organisations, in addition to 'unregulated' playing at public playgrounds. I will discuss these different neighbourhood sports organisations together under the umbrella pseudonym of Sportteam, to prevent recognition and to protect the anonymity of my research participants. Almost all sports organisations in the Schilderswijk have football as their most important activity, yet basketball and kickboxing are also popular (see Rana 2014). Furthermore, I discuss the football competition of Football Girls United, the 6vs6 Cruyff Court competitions, and some other football initiatives that take place in the Schilderswijk. Because I began my research at the Cruyff Court playgrounds during the 6vs6 competitions, I start with these football competitions.

The 6vs6 Cruyff Court competition is a nation-wide competition for street football teams of local Cruyff Courts, for pupils in the final two years of primary school (between ten and twelve years old). Cruyff Courts are football playgrounds with artificial grass that are built and sponsored by the Cruyff Foundation (named after the famous Dutch footballer Johan Cruyff), in cooperation with local sports organisations or schools. These local partners organise the local 6vs6 competitions, of which the winners go to the next round on city level, and then to the regional, national, or international finals. In The Hague, the local Cruyff Courts are exploited and managed by Sportteam; the trainers of Sportteam organise weekly activities on the Cruyff Courts and also organise the yearly 6vs6 competitions. The football teams that take part in the 6vs6 competitions are compiled, trained, and coached by the physical education teachers at their primary schools. The 6vs6 competitions have a separate girls' and boys' competition. The Cruyff Foundation regards gender equality as very important, and therefore have specific attention for girls' participation on the Cruyff Courts. As a rule, a local Cruyff Court team may only participate in the competition if they also put forward a girls' team, so local organisers are forced to compile girls' teams as well. In most places, including the Schilderswijk, there are indeed local girls' teams in the

6vs6 competition. However, in some places, I still observed only boys' teams, despite the official rule on gender equality. During the ten months of my fieldwork, I followed one girls' team from the Schilderswijk in the several matches they played in the 6vs6 competition, and I have conducted a focusgroup interview with its members. Many of these girls I also encountered in the other football locations I studied, such as FGU and the community centres.

Besides the 6vs6 Cruyff Court competitions, other street football competitions are organised in playgrounds in the Schilderswijk as well, such as the Danone Nations Cup and the Schilderswijk Street League, but these do not have a specific policy on the participation of girls' teams. Therefore, much fewer girls participate in these competitions, or sometimes even none. The Danone Nations Cup is also a nation-wide street football competition, and Sportteam is the local partner of the Cup in The Hague. The Schilderswijk Street League is a local competition, co-organised by ADO Den Haag, the professional football club of the city. In 2015, they started off in the Schilderswijk, but the Street League is meant to become a street football competition for the whole city of The Hague in the future, so that youths from different neighbourhoods can play against each other. In the 2015 Street League, nine boys' teams participated, and only one girls' team, and I followed this girls' team in the Street League competition as well.

Sportteam is an organisation attached to and funded by the municipality of The Hague, to support and organise sports for youths in the city. They organise after-school sports hours in playgrounds, where a sports professional gives training, and they organise the local rounds of the national competitions named above. Sportteam organises activities in twenty-two playgrounds in The Hague, of which six are located in the Schilderswijk. For a large part, my participant observations took place during these after-school activities in the playgrounds in the Schilderswijk. Peter, Frank, and Joost are coordinators of Sportteam for the Schilderswijk, and Jimmy, Ibrahim, and Kayleigh are trainers of Sportteam who work in the Schilderswijk and whom I have interviewed. Sportteam also works together with other initiatives in the neighbourhood, such as youth and community centres, Football Girls United, and ADO Den Haag. Since 2015, Sportteam's aim is to attract more girls to their sports activities in the playgrounds, as they observed that girls participated less than boys. To achieve this aim, Sportteam appointed two female sports professionals, Kayleigh and Chaimae, and, as Kayleigh explained to me, they will start organising sports for girls in more 'shielded' spaces. Before Chaimae became a trainer at Sportteam, she volunteered at Football Girls United; now and then, she joins the FGU trainings and competitions to catch up with her friends, like in the vignette I described at the beginning of this chapter. Sportteam also takes care of the management of the

playgrounds, some of which are closed with a fence at night to prevent them from being used by 'hang-around youths'.

Several community and youth centres organise girls' football hours in the Schilderswijk next to their more general social work. These girls' football hours are mostly indoor and are usually attended by six to fifteen teenage girls. During these football hours, I also participated and interviewed some of the girls and volunteers. Most of the times, these community centres ask a female volunteer or intern to organise the football trainings for the girls, and this makes for an unsustainable practice. When a volunteer or intern leaves, the girls' football hours usually also disappear, until a new female volunteer starts it up again. The boys' sports hours that are offered at community centres are incorporated better in the standard programmes and are organised by more permanent employees of the centres. Because the girls' football trainings are indoor, not many girls are actually aware of these football opportunities: contrary to football in public playgrounds, it is invisible when walking through the neighbourhood. Participation usually goes via the snowball method: girls bring friends, sisters, or neighbour girls with them to the trainings. Nisa and Hamza are two social workers and sports trainers who organise football at youth and community centres in the Schilderswijk, and who have participated in my research.

Football Girls United (FGU) is a collective of girls and boys who organise a weekly girls' football competition and football trainings for girls in the Schilderswijk. Hanan is the coordinator and initiator of FGU and started with organising girls' football in the Schilderswijk in 2008. She manages the competition with the help of a group of nine volunteers, who are all between fourteen and twenty years old: Nina, Noor, Hafsa, Sarah, Ilias, Aliya, Mansour, Nora, and Mo. Sometimes, former volunteers, such as Siham, Chaimae, and Khalid, still help out on busy competition days. In the competition, football teams from different community centres and playgrounds in the Schilderswijk play against each other, with a final match every year in May. At the peak of the FGU competition, about eighty girls between ten and twenty years old participated in the different teams. The competition is usually divided in a competition for girls under thirteen and one for thirteen+. Some boys have also joined the FGU girls' football as a volunteer, and I will discuss their participation extensively in Chapter 4. Most girls and boys in FGU are from the Moroccan-Dutch community in the Schilderswijk, but not exclusively. Some Pakistani-Dutch, Surinamese-Dutch, and white Dutch girls also participate in the competition. A nickname the girls from FGU sometimes use for their football competition is 'The Familia', to underscore the feeling that they are like family to each other.

FGU uses different existing sports spaces in the neighbourhood for their activities, both indoors in the sports hall and outdoors in public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk.

Irregularly, FGU also organises other sports, such as volleyball, Thai boxing, and kickboxing. In 2015, the subsidy for FGU was stopped, which meant the end of the weekly competition. The trainings continued on a more informal basis, with about fifteen to twenty-five girls participating. The football players of FGU also take part in and volunteer at several other initiatives in the neighbourhood, such as helping out in an elderly home or assisting at the activities from the youth centre in the Schilderswijk. FGU became the most important organisation in my fieldwork, since the FGU's girls' football activities are organised by girls from the neighbourhood themselves, and not by social workers or sports trainers from more official neighbourhood sports organisations or from outside the neighbourhood. FGU is different from the other sports organisations in the Schilderswijk, as it does not have its own location or organisation structure with paid employees: it is a real bottom-up initiative with almost only volunteers. When there is funding, this is used to rent sports locations and to compensate Hanan for the hours she puts into coordinating the competition. The organisers and volunteers at FGU belong to the same group they want to reach with their activities, which is different than most of the initiatives I described above, of which the paid coordinators and decision makers on the football activities are mostly white Dutch men from outside the neighbourhood. FGU thus shows how girls themselves organise and play football in the Schilderswijk, and how this differs from the more established sports or football organisations.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the public image of the Schilderswijk and how it is constructed through popular discourses of Muslim residents as racialised, gendered, classed, and religionised 'others'. These discourses reflect a denial of the different histories that are at the basis of the neighbourhood and of Muslims in the Netherlands. I have discussed the social history of the Schilderswijk, which shows how it became a working-class neighbourhood and a 'refuge' for poor 'outcasts' of Dutch society. Contemporary social problems are often portrayed as if they are specific to the Schilderswijk and the ethnic minority and Muslim citizens who came to live there since the 1970s, while these issues are, in fact, not new at all. The ways in which the Schilderswijk is a neighbourhood inhabited by social 'others' in Dutch society have already been the case since the inception of the neighbourhood. The Schilderswijk has always been a working-class neighbourhood, the residents of which were seen as 'poor' others and social outcasts. Now, residents are not so much 'othered' based on class, but based on racialisation and religion, although those axes intersect with class, age, and gender. What has stayed the same is that the Schilderswijk, from the beginning, has

functioned as the most 'disadvantaged', unmodern, uncivilised, and unemancipated 'other' of dominant white Dutch society.

A history of postcolonial and labour migration is often actively forgotten in dominant representations of 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods or (post)migrants, whereby Muslims or ethnic minority citizens are portrayed as 'new' and 'other' to the Netherlands, while there is in fact a long-standing history of Muslim and ethnic minority citizens in the Netherlands. Muslims were already part of the Netherlands during the Dutch colonisation of Indonesia, and, in this colonial governance of Islam, Muslims were already constructed as uncivilised 'others' to Dutch society. Nowadays, Muslim and ethnic minority citizens are still not seen as 'real' Dutch citizens, and, in urban 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods such as the Schilderswijk, this becomes visible through neighbourhood sports programmes that aim at the integration of ethnic and religious minority citizens through sports. I have argued that public representations of the Schilderswijk and the implementation of neighbourhood sports programmes should be understood in the context of the broader Dutch history of (post)colonialism and the construction of the ethnic and religious 'other' in urban 'disadvantaged' spaces.

The young residents of the Schilderswijk must deal with stereotypical and stigmatising representations of their neighbourhood daily. In the public debates about the Schilderswijk, the young residents are often talked *about*, without their own voices and experiences being taken into account. In this chapter, I have started to discuss the perspectives of young female Moroccan-Dutch residents of the Schilderswijk and shared their (gendered) experiences of living and playing in the Schilderswijk. Age and gender form important categories of difference in the access to, experiences of, and constructions of public spaces in the neighbourhood. Most leisure places, such as cafés and public squares and playgrounds, are targeted at boys and/or adults, but, in reaction to these masculinised public spaces, the girls in my research have created their own girls' football competition called Football Girls United. Despite the gendered construction of public spaces and social control in the Schilderswijk, most girls enjoy living and playing in the Schilderswijk very much. Their positive experiences of FGU, the youth centre, and the neighbourhood in general do not correspond with how the Schilderswijk is often represented in media and political debates. Yet, these girls use FGU to construct a more positive image of their neighbourhood by inviting girls from other neighbourhoods. The experiences of young residents with the Schilderswijk that I have discussed in this chapter are an introduction and provide context to the next chapters, in which I discuss girls' experiences with girls' football, and its intersections with ethnicity, religion, Islam, and gender in the public spaces of the Schilderswijk in more detail.

Invading the playground: Gendered and racialised constructions of public sports space

Introduction

What stands out while walking through the Schilderswijk is the abundance of public squares and playgrounds filled with young inhabitants. There are at least fourteen such squares and playgrounds (Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014, 16), and even more if also counting the smaller public lawns on every street corner. Some of them are specifically designed for sports, such as a basketball or football court. Many are designed for general leisure and play, with children's playground equipment, such as swings and seesaws, benches, and grass lawns. Often, squares are a combination of both. They are frequently used by children, youths, and adults from the neighbourhood. On a nice spring day, the squares fill quickly with mothers, fathers, children, groups of friends, and sports teams. Community centres also organise activities in the public squares and playgrounds: cycling classes, sports hours, and football competitions such as the 6vs6 Cruyff Court competition and the Danone Nations Cup. Although the squares and playgrounds in the Schilderswijk are public and thus, in theory, accessible to everyone, in practice they are not. When walking through the neighbourhood, it does not go unnoticed that the public playgrounds are mainly the domain of boys. Girls' football is growing, but, compared with boys, girls are still marginally present in public football spaces. In this chapter, I discuss how the public sports playgrounds in the Schilderswijk are constructed and inhabited through gendered and racialised norms and expectations (Massey 1994), and how Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls who are playing football in public playgrounds act as 'space invaders', performatively destabilising the gendered and racialised norms (Puwar 2004; Butler 1993).

As I have shown in Chapter 1, space and public spaces are not neutral but shaped by cultural and social practices, relations, and norms (Low 2009; Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003; Kokot 2007; McDowell 2003; Massey 1994), which means that different gendered and racialised bodies do not equally inhabit public spaces (Massey 1994; Puwar 2004). This certainly also counts for sports spaces, which are clearly shaped by gender, sexual, and racial/ethnic differences (Green and Singleton 2007; Aitchison 1999; Thorne 1993). Vice versa, these gender, sexual, and racial/ethnic differences are also constructed through the social and spatial organisation of sports, for instance in the reproduction of dichotomous sexed bodies (Van Ingen 2003; Butler 1998). Sociological research on public sports playgrounds has pointed out that girls form a minority in public sports playgrounds, and that especially boys claim these sports spaces (Cevaal and Romijn 2011, 12–13; Karsten 2003; Clark and Paechter 2007; Christensen and Mikkelsen 2013; Swain 2000). Karsten (2003) and Clark and Paechter (2007) show that the spatial construction of sports and leisure playgrounds contributes to a gendered use of the playgrounds, where boys dominate the central sports spaces and girls occupy the borders of the playgrounds. Furthermore, football is one of the main domains to perform hegemonic or 'idealised' masculinity (Swain 2000, 96; Renold 1997). Besides marginalising boys who do not perform hegemonic masculinity through football, this also excludes girls, as the intimate connection between football and masculinity normatively designates football space as a masculine space (Swain 2000; Clark and Paechter 2007; Renold 1997; Elling 2004; Elling and Knoppers 2005).

Yet, feminist scholars of gender and public space have also pointed out that the gendering of spaces is never fixed, and that, through performative actions, people can resist dominant gendered norms in public spaces (Massey 1994; Butler 1993; Watson and Ratna 2011). Puwar has developed the concept of 'space invaders' to capture this element of resistance to the social norms that construct public spaces. She studied the increased presence of women and racialised minorities in UK institutions and organisations, such as the parliament and academia, and describes these organisations as 'spaces in the public realms which have predominantly been occupied by white men' (Puwar 2004, 7). Puwar argues that these spaces are constructed through marking bodies that do *not* belong, rather than explicitly defining the norm, the bodies that *do* belong, i.e. white male bodies. White and male bodies then become the 'somatic norm' (Puwar 2004, 8). Those bodies that constitute the somatic norm are implicitly perceived to be 'universal' bodies; they are, supposedly, not marked by race, ethnicity, gender, or other social identities. Similarly to what I have discussed in the previous chapter on whiteness and race/ethnicity, Puwar argues: 'whiteness exists as an unmarked normative position. Similarly, the male body is invisibly as a sexed entity' (Puwar 2004, 58; see also Wekker and Lutz 2001; Wekker 2016; Lorde 2007a).

Public spaces are thus socially constructed through bodies that have been historically and conceptually constructed as *out* – in the case of Puwar's research in UK organisations, women and racialised minorities. This constructing of bodies as *out* is not fixed in place, but a dynamic and changing process that is formed through historical-colonial processes of power and difference (Puwar 2004; see also Wekker 2016; Ahmed 2000). Puwar argues that the normative social construction of public space only becomes visible when those bodies that are constructed as *out* actually enter the space. By entering, women and racialised minorities change the status quo, through which they make visible and destabilise the somatic norm. The somatic norm is 'firmly entrenched in space and time', but the boundaries of the norm are constantly 'under risk of eruption' by way of the bodies of women and racialised minorities who enter the space (Puwar 2004, 13). Therefore, Puwar conceptualises women's and racialised minorities' bodies in public spaces as 'space invaders'.

Although Puwar's analysis is based on formal institutions and organisations in the UK, she states that her analytic framework can be extended to other organisations, institutions, or spaces, such as streets and sports spaces. In the introduction of her book, she extensively quotes feminist geographer Doreen Massey on football and rugby pitches as male spaces where women are 'space invaders' (Puwar 2004, 7; Massey 1994, 185). In the case of sports spaces, it are also male and white bodies that are 'taken as model' (Gatens in Puwar 2004, 33) for the normative sporting body, as this chapter will show. At first, the streets and public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk look like spaces where everybody can participate in playing street football. There is no need of a membership, the game can easily be adapted to the amount and wishes of the players, and there is an absence of formal rules and regulations, unlike in club football. Contrary to the organisations and institutions Puwar studied, there are no recruitment or hiring processes that can reproduce inequality and unequal access to the organisational spaces. Yet, also in street football, there are many normative and unwritten rules and expectations about who belongs on the football field and who does not, and about how the football teams are socially divided. Most people in my research often considered it 'natural', or the 'somatic norm' (Puwar 2004, 8), that boys occupy public playgrounds, especially in sports contexts. In these spaces, girls are present but constructed as 'out of place' (Puwar 2004, 8). Furthermore, race/ethnicity, religion, age, and place also play important roles in the unwritten norms and expectations about the occupation of public playgrounds (Watson and Ratna 2011).

In this chapter, I discuss my empirical material on how girls experience playing football in public football playgrounds in the Schilderswijk. I focus on the dynamics of how football spaces are continuously constructed and reconfirmed as masculine through spatial, embodied, and discursive practices and differences on the field. Literature on gender and playgrounds has often focused on the role of schools in reproducing hegemonic gendered norms of playground occupation (Clark and Paechter 2007; Evaldsson 2003; Swain 2000; Thorne 1993), but I specifically look at how gendered norms are reproduced outside the school contexts in youths' leisure times and spaces. As I showed in the previous chapter, youths' 'free' leisure time is increasingly managed and supervised by neighbourhood and sports organisations. In this chapter, I show that these organisations contribute to the reproduction of the gendered construction of the playground as dominantly masculine, while they often aim for the opposite – creating more space for girls. I argue that public sports playgrounds in the Schilderswijk are constructed as masculine spaces, in which the Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls from my research are space invaders. The gendered construction of spaces is not a 'natural' given but constructed over time and through intersecting dynamics of power and difference that reinforce each other (Watson and Ratna 2011, 73; Rosaldo 1980; Moore 1988; Massey 1994; Valentine 2007). I will identify four dynamics that, together, form the layered process of gendering and invading the playgrounds: contestations over space and time, gendered embodied practices, gendered and sexualised discourses, and role models in the playgrounds.

In the second part of the chapter, I discuss how the gendered construction of the playground intersects with racialised constructions of public sports space, and with implicit secular norms of public space in the Netherlands. I discuss how this plays out for Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls and boys in public playgrounds, and how their experiences are shaped by intersecting racial/ethnic, religious, and gendered differences. Most studies on gender and public playgrounds only marginally pay attention to issues of race/ethnicity and religion (e.g. Evaldsson 2003; Clark and Paechter 2007; Swain 2000), and most studies on racial/ethnic differences on playgrounds only marginally look at gender (e.g. Peters and De Haan 2011; De Martini Ugolotti and Moyer 2016). Yet, it is crucial to integrate gender, race/ethnicity, and religion, and to provide an intersectional perspective on the construction of public sports spaces, belonging, and power, as intersectionality scholars have argued (Yuval-Davis 2006; Valentine 2007; Watson and Ratna 2011). But, first, I discuss my ethnographic material on gendering and invading the playground, since gender was one of the first things that the girls came up with in my research, as the vignette in the next section will show.

Gendering and invading the playground

One of the first times I visit the Schilderswijk for my fieldwork, in March 2014, I attend a 6vs6 football competition at the Cruyff Court. There are three girls' teams and four boys' teams from the surrounding schools, playing against each other in the competition. I express my interest in girls' football to one of the girls waiting to play the next match and ask about her experiences with the competition and street football. Quickly, a group of about eight girls and a few boys gather around me, and they are all eager to talk with me about football. I ask the girls questions about girls' football, but, because of their enthusiasm, the conversation proceeds rather chaotically and is difficult to follow. However, one thing that does become very clear to me is that the inequality between boys and girls in the football playground is a very important topic for the girls, as I continue to jot down phrases such as:

'There are many more boys playing football than girls.'
'Some parents do not allow girls to play football, but they do allow boys.'
'You have to be safe as a girl.'
'Boys do not shoot the ball at us, because they think we are bad players.'
'Yes, but in the end, we won, and they didn't!'

Then, one of the boys approaches me and asks: 'Will you also interview me?' I answer him that I first want to talk with the girls and will then come to him. However, he does not leave and asks me a couple of minutes later whether I will interview him now. I do, and I arrange to visit the girls' team at their school the day after to conduct an in-depth group interview in a quieter context, and to further talk about the issues they have raised.

This vignette exemplifies what was my general impression of playgrounds in the Schilderswijk and other neighbourhoods in the Netherlands: regularly, girls will be playing football, but boys are often the majority and receive the most attention from trainers, coaches, teachers, and spectators. Girls often mentioned that they feel 'second-class' players in football playgrounds. In this context, it was exceptional that a researcher was particularly and primarily interested in the girls and in girls' football in the football playground, and, many times, girls were jumping around me to talk about their experiences with football. It gave me the impression that, for many girls, being interviewed about football was a recognition of their status as a real football player. The boys in the fieldwork encounter above, however, were not used to come 'after' the girls in football spaces: one of them demanded to be interviewed and did not leave before I also asked him some questions. The next day, when I conducted a group interview with the girls at their school, the boys also became annoyed that the girls had the privilege to be in the teachers' room and were allowed to come late to class because of the interview about football. This was opposite to what they were used to; usually, in football contexts, most of the attention goes to the boys, and the girls are 'second'.

Yet, despite these experiences, girls' football in urban public playgrounds became increasingly popular over the past years, as sports researchers have pointed out (Romijn and Elling 2017; Elling 2015, 2004; Elling and Knoppers 2005). This is also observed by some of my research participants. At the start of my research in 2013, I spoke with Aisha, a Moroccan-Dutch footballer in her late 20s. About ten years ago, she was one of the first women who organised girls' football for mainly Moroccan-Dutch girls in Amsterdam. She told me that, nowadays, she sees much more girls playing football in the public playgrounds than when she was a teenager. Jasmine, another street footballer from Amsterdam in her late 20s, told me something similar:

> *I think that street football became just much more accessible for girls. I see this, for example, also in Rotterdam South and in other places; a lot of girls just play football in the streets. Also with a headscarf and with different cultural backgrounds. Yes, what I said, it is much more accessible, and I see a lot of opportunities now for girls' and women's football.*

Football players Hanan and Nisa from the Schilderswijk also mention this difference. Nisa, who is twenty-two years old, told me that, when she played football in the playgrounds in the Schilderswijk as a teenager, she was always the only girl amongst boys. Now, she sees much more teenage girls playing football, who are all very enthusiastic when she, as a young adult woman, joins them. However, although more girls play football in public playgrounds, this does not mean that they experience equal access to these spaces as compared to boys. Many girls still experience being marginalised in the football playgrounds, as this chapter demonstrates. Puwar (2004, 1) also argues that 'while they [women and racialised minorities] now exist on the inside, they still do not have an undisputed right to occupy the space'. Thus, the dominant construction of football spaces as 'masculine' goes beyond mere numbers of male or female football players. It is not the actual number of girls' or boys' players that determines how a space is gendered, but rather an idealised discursive and embodied social construction of who belongs where and when (Jaffe and De Koning 2015; Massey 1994; Puwar 2004). Despite an increase in girls' participation in street football, the football spaces are still perceived to be dominantly masculine, and this is reproduced through the four dynamics of space and time, embodied practices, gendered and sexualised discourses, and role models.

Contestations over spaces and times

Girls' increasing presence in football spaces is contested. They do not always feel welcome when a football playground is occupied by boys. For example, I heard from my research participants that boys make comments such as 'What are you doing here?' or 'Girls cannot play football' when girls enter playgrounds. Girls feel 'out of place' and experience an 'unwelcome and awkward position as footballers', as also Clark and Paechter (2007, 265) observed. Skill is indeed often the main criterion in the selection and access of players (Karsten 2003, 269), but skill is differently defined and evaluated for girls than for boys. For boys, skill is assumed, while girls must first prove that they are really good enough to enter the playground. In these football spaces, boys claim ownership and girls need 'permission' to enter, a dynamic that is also observed by Clark and Paechter (2007, 265–66) in their research on football playgrounds in London. Often, only the girls who are known to be good players are accepted in the game by boys. During a 6vs6 match in the Schilderswijk, I had a short interview with Lily (eleven years old), who often plays football with her female friends after school in a small playground near her house. When I asked her if she prefers playing with boys or with girls, she told me:

Actually, not with boys. But sometimes we have to. If they come to the playground and if they ask to participate then we always let them join, because otherwise they will bully us and take away the ball. But vice versa, if they are already there, then we are not always allowed to participate, actually that is not fair and mean.

Other girls whom I interviewed mentioned the same dynamics and power relations in the playground: they must share the space with the boys, but when boys occupy the football space, girls have to wait and see if the boys allow them to participate. This is also observed by Thorne (1993) in her famous sociological research on gender and children's play in US schools: boys invade girls' games much more often than the other way around, which is, according to her, a sign of the dominant position of boys in the playgrounds.

Contestations over playground spaces also intersect with age. Sahar (eleven years old), whom I met at a community centre, told me that she is also sometimes chased away from football playgrounds by older boys *and* girls of fourteen years or older. For this reason, she likes playing girls' football at the community centre, because the girls are of the same age there. The occupation of playgrounds is formed through the group that is most dominant or powerful when it comes to claiming the space, which are often boys and older boys specifically (see also Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014, 19–20), but sometimes also older girls.

At times, in extreme cases, girls are aggressively chased away from football courts by boys. Nora told me:

At the football court, girls are chased away. Or once they threw eggs at us. We were with two girls' teams at a street football competition and then the boys of the football court, they immediately called us whores because they think we came to play for the boys. But we just play football where we want, we don't go there to be seen by boys. But there was no one from the organisation there, so they just threw eggs at us. Later, when we complained, they were sent away.

Nora's story makes clear that, sometimes, girls who play football are not only chased away but also sexualised. Their presence on the football field is then 'read' by boys not as a wish to just play football, but as a (hetero)sexualised performance. This aspect of the sexualisation of girls will be discussed more in depth in one of the next sections on gendered and sexualised discourses. The experiences that I have discussed so far show, at first, that girls do not automatically have the right to play football in public playgrounds; it depends on the access that is granted to them by boys.

A second important observation was that, often, boys play football in the official football or sports court, while girls play in the children's playground or on the lawn next to the football court. In these spaces, girls use children's playground equipment, such as swings, to make goals. Hafsa, volunteer at FGU, shared how she and her friends deal with the gendered division of football spaces. When they go to a public playground in the Schilderswijk to play football, usually boys already occupy the football court, and they just play next to it:

It is not a real football field, but if we also want to play, we just create our own field where we can play.

Lily also creates her own football space with her friends in the playground:

We make a football pitch ourselves, we put the swings aside and we mark the boundaries of the field with the fence and the slide.

When comparing these children's playgrounds with the actual sports playgrounds, the children's playgrounds have a more 'feminine' image, as they are often occupied by mothers and small children. The gendered use of different kinds of spaces is also something Karsten (2003, 466–68) and Clark and Paechter (2007) observed in their research on playgrounds in Amsterdam and London, where the girls often occupied the marginal or hidden spaces at the borders of the playground. As such, although girls' football participation in public playgrounds is growing, boys still dominate the 'real' sports spaces, and girls often use smaller or marginal public spaces that require more adaptation and spatial creativity of the girls.[48]

To my surprise, this was also, or even especially, the case when a sports professional from Sportteam was present in the playground. I often observed that a trainer from Sportteam was having a sports hour after school in which only boys participated. Sometimes, I saw girls hanging around the football court or playing football next to the court on the pavement. During one of these sports hours with only boys, I conducted a short interview with Ibrahim, who works for Sportteam and organises football in a playground in the Schilderswijk on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. I asked him whether girls also participated in his football hour, and he responded:

Yes, they do come, that group of girls for example, always on Mondays. Girls also want to play football. And then usually we go to the small field there in the children's playground, and then here the boys. And then we play handball or something like that, football. Oh, but sometimes also boys and girls together, but that is more difficult. Because what do I do when a mother comes and says,

that and that boy assaulted my daughter? I do not want that. I just do not dare to let the boys and girls play together.

Ibrahim talked about a big square in the Schilderswijk that is divided into two parts: one part is a big football and basketball court, the other part is a children's playground with grass. Often, during the football hours organised by Sportteam, the boys play in the real football court and the girls play on the small grass field, like Ibrahim explained. Although it is a tactic to attract more girls, and to avoid problems between girls and boys, it does confirm the idea that 'real' football is for boys, putting girls at the margin of football spaces. It also suggests that boys are still the main target group of Sportteam, which is confirmed by Kayleigh, who also works for Sportteam, with the specific task to attract more girls:

We now have a new strategy: everywhere we are, we're with two of us. And then, for example, my colleague Jimmy goes to train with the boys who already always come here, and I can then every time try to involve more girls. But if I am on my own, yeah, then I also do the training with these boys, I can't leave them alone. If there are like twenty boys and two girls, yes, then it is difficult to let the girls participate. On some squares, there's the advantage that it's a bit more secluded, so you play a bit out of sight. Then that's nicer for the girls. On other squares, it's different, they are very open, girls are present there only very occasionally. It's difficult then to let them participate structurally.

This new strategy follows from the goal of Sportteam to involve more girls in their activities. However, paradoxically, this does not result in a more equal use of football space, as Sportteam leaves the boys on the football court and directs the girls to the spaces next to the 'real' football court. Sports trainers often find it difficult or too time-consuming to structurally include girls in their sports hours on the 'real' football courts, because the boys will clash with the girls or because they are afraid of problems, as Ibrahim mentioned. Even if this strategy increases girls' participation in Sportteam's activities, it also simultaneously confirms the idea of 'real' football spaces as masculine. The increasing participation of girls is not supposed to change anything in regards to boys' dominant access to football spaces, or boys as the main target group of Sportteam. Furthermore, Kayleigh assumes that girls prefer to play in more closed-off spaces (none of the girls in my research themselves expressed this wish), thereby reproducing the traditional association of girls with more private or domestic spaces, and boys with public and open spaces (Rosaldo 1980).

The role of sports organisations is an important addition to existing studies on gender and playgrounds, which focus on the role of schools and teachers in the gendered construction of the playground (Clark and Paechter 2007; Evaldsson 2003; Swain 2000; Thorne 1993), but not on organisations or actors with the specific aim to increase girls' participation. My research shows that, even when organisations specifically focus on girls' participation, they still reproduce gendered and masculine norms of public playgrounds.

Third, when specifically analysing street football competitions, for example the Danone Nations Cup and the Schilderswijk Street League, it becomes clear that the main focus of these organisations and actors is also on the boys. Often, there are no or only one girls' team in the competition.[49] This makes the girls the 'exception' in a competition that otherwise exists only of boys and boys' teams. Again, this reinforces the dominant idea of football spaces as masculine spaces, giving girls the idea that football competitions are organised 'more for boys', as they mentioned to me. Sometimes, girls think that football competitions are actually boys' competitions, like Jamila, who plays on the only girls' team in the Schilderswijk Street League:[50]

Kathrine: What do you think about the fact that you are the only girls' team?
Jamila: Yeah, we did not know about that at all, because this competition is actually for boys. You know, that is really strange, because there is never something for girls. So much is only being organised for boys. We also thought that we would play only against girls, and only when we went to the club to sign the contracts, we heard that it was for boys. We really were made to look like a fool, because you have to climb on the stage to sign and it was really so embarrassing. You really saw everybody look like 'oh... also girls'. And we went to McDonald's, and we were only with four girls, because the other girls of our team could not come, they had to go to school. And we were with the four of us, sitting at a table, alone.

Jamila expressed a feeling of being 'out of place' when her team climbed on the stage. The fact that other participants were surprised to see a girls' team means that the football competition and its spaces were dominantly perceived to be masculine by the actors and players involved. This implicit or 'hidden' norm of football space as masculine became uncomfortably visible when the girls entered the stage to present themselves (see also Puwar 2004). Furthermore, the girls literally occupied a separate space from the boys when they went to eat at McDonald's after the start of the competition. Although it is not exceptional that players sit together with their own team after the match, here, the division also marked a gender division, and Jamila felt 'out of place' and isolated from the other football players, the boys.

During organised street football competitions, social and spatial divisions are not only visible on the official football field itself, but also in the 'additional' spaces, such

as the table settings at McDonald's described above. Next to the official football fields, there are often also smaller panna courts,[51] grass fields, or gym equipment. Whereas, during training hours, the girls are usually directed to these marginal spaces, during larger competitions, these spaces also become the domain of boys. In between or before the matches, boys are often exercising in the additional sports spaces, or already doing a warm-up on the field. Girls are usually only on the field during their official playing time and hardly make use of the panna court or gym equipment. I saw girls doing a warm-up only a few times, and this was on the sidewalk and not on the field or using the gym equipment. During mixed competitions, I also observed that girls quit the match earlier than boys, for example when there are too many players, when someone needs to change, or when they do not receive the ball in the field. Karsten (2003, 466) also observed that girls spend less time on the football field than boys. In other words, even though girls' participation in football competitions is growing, in the spaces and times 'in between' official matches, football spaces are the domain of boys, and this is perceived as a self-evident or 'natural' given by football players, organisers, and spectators. The 'somatic norm' in football is still defined by male bodies (Puwar 2004; Wekker and Lutz 2001). Yet, at the same time, girls are increasingly occupying and invading football spaces, or moving at the borders of these spaces, and thereby also contesting the norms of football spaces as masculine, which I will come back to later.

Fourth, the normative ideal of football as masculine is not only constructed through gendered processes of space, but also of time. An important way of constructing football space as masculine through gendered time is the 'girls' hour' in football playgrounds. In sports sociological literature, women's or girls' hours in swimming pools (Elling 2005), after-school clubs (Christensen and Mikkelsen 2013), or gyms have been critically discussed. These hours often take place at unpopular times at which no one else is using the sports space. Furthermore, girls' and women's hours often quickly cease to exist, due to practical matters (Christensen and Mikkelsen 2013), or due to resistance in society, especially when mainly Muslim or ethnic minority women use the women's hours (Elling 2005). These examples in the literature emphasise women's or girls' own wishes and needs for a separate space, because they do not want to sport or play with men or boys for various reasons. Yet, I found in my research that, also when girls do like to play football with boys, sports organisations still find it easier to organise a separate girls' hour. Trainers organise girls' hours to increase the participation of girls in their activities, but also because they think it is easier to train boys and girls separately, by which they avoid having to deal with gender stereotypes, interaction between boys and girls, and differences in level.

Many neighbourhood sports organisations, including Sportteam in the Schilderswijk, organise a girls' hour once or twice a week, which means that, during this designated time, only girls are allowed in the playground. In practice, the existence of girls' hours means that girls are encouraged to *only* come during the girls' hours and not during regular sports activities. Girls, then, are 'forced' to attend the girls' hours, not because they do not want to or are not allowed by their parents to play football with boys, but because they are not welcome during the 'regular' football hours, which are, implicitly, for boys only. Peter is the coordinator of several sports playgrounds in the Schilderswijk, at which trainings for different sports are offered, including some trainings for girls only. After I conducted an interview with Peter, he gave me a tour of the playgrounds and showed me the various sports trainings they offer. We watched a football training for children of about ten years old, in which only boys participated, and I asked him whether girls can also come to this 'regular' football hour. Peter responded carefully:

> *Let's say we do not stimulate that, that if one girl shows up, that she participates here.*

Officially, Peter cannot prevent girls to participate in the 'regular' football training, but by stimulating girls to only come to the girls' football training, the 'regular' football training becomes a boys' training. The organisation of separate girls' hours, when football space is temporarily defined as feminine, then only confirms regular sports time and space as masculine.

Furthermore, there is a specific spatial aspect in the organisation of girls' hours. Mostly, these girls' hours are organised *indoors*, in a sports or gym hall, even though most girls in my research do not have a preference themselves to play indoors. At one of the football playgrounds in the Schilderswijk, I talked with Jimmy and Ibrahim, both Sportteam staff members. I asked Jimmy whether any girls play at his football court. He responded:

> *No, for the girls we have the gym hall behind the court, so they can play football there. We organise that with the community centre. And with them we agreed that sometimes we reserve the football court here for the girls. Once in a while.*

Jimmy then had to return to his training, so I continued the conversation with Ibrahim. I asked when this 'once in a while' took place specifically, but he remained vague:

> *When it suits us and the girls. In the beginning, we had some girls, but now they go to the gym hall and that is better, because playing together with the boys doesn't work out. In this way, we don't get any problems and we don't have to explain the parents anything, because sometimes people think that*

girls play to hit on the boys. And now, in Winter, we don't really have girls, because they need to be home on time and so on.

When I tried to figure out when the outdoor football court is reserved for the girls one last time, Ibrahim said:

You really have to ask the community centre that, we really left that part to them.

Some community centres indeed organise girls' football indoors, but, here, it seemed that these girls' football hours indoors served as an excuse for Sportteam to not include girls or organise girls' football in their public playgrounds outdoors. Peter, who cooperates with Football Girls United (FGU), also said:

I think it is ideal that they [FGU] take care of that part [girls' football].

Indeed, the more institutionalised and subsidised sports organisations, such as Sportteam, often leave the organisation of girls' football to community centres and bottom-up organisations such as FGU. As I showed in the previous chapter, FGU receives less or no structural funding for organising sports in the Schilderswijk, and community centres organise girls' sports on top of their regular activities. Boys' football is thus the core of Sportteam's activities in public playgrounds, and girls' football is offered when there is time and space left, often on a less structural basis, and often indoors or in more domestic, closed-off spaces. Both the temporal and spatial organisation of girls' hours confirm outdoor public football spaces as normatively and implicitly masculine.

The organisation of girls' football hours indoors is also related to the emphasis that is put on safe spaces for girls, both by sports organisers and parents. Nisa organises girls' football in a community centre and sometimes comes across parents who are hesitant at first to send their daughter to girls' football. She said:

Sometimes, parents or other people in the neighbourhood have conservative ideas that girls should not play football or should not be in the streets but at home.

According to Nisa, this mostly has to do with concerns about safety in public spaces, and organising girls' football in a safe space indoors therefore makes the threshold for parents and girls lower. Concerns about safety are diverse and include parents' fears of sexual and racial attacks on their daughters in public spaces (Parmar in Green and Singleton 2007, 111). Nisa told me that, after the parents' initial hesitation, they are usually very positive about their daughters' football participation. In the next chapter, I will discuss the girls' own motivations for playing girls' football in the FGU competition indoors in more detail.

The gendering of football space and time is also reflected in the amount of training time that girls and boys receive to prepare for competitions. I asked Jamila what she thought of the Schilderswijk Street League competition:

Jamila: Well, we are the only girls here, so I actually think that is quite embarrassing.
Kathrine: Why do you think so?
Jamila: Well, because we lose all the time, now we just won one time and once we played draw, and the rest we lost. I think we are at the bottom. And people look at you all the time when you are playing, I just don't like that. And I also thought that we would get much more training, that is way too little. Hamza has not enough hours, they say, to give us training. But he also has weekends and leisure time, so he just has to do it then, because we are also here in our leisure time. And he does train the boys. And I want more trainings. Because this sucks, we just do something on the field now and we do not train. When I started with this, I expected that we would have trainings. And I said it many times to the community centre, but they do nothing.

Jamila explicitly connects football and training with contestations over time: she and her fellow team members receive less training time from Hamza, who works at the community centre that supports Jamila's team, than the boys' team from the same centre. Swain (2000, 100) also observed that girls receive less training time in football trainings at a UK school. The lack of training that Jamila experiences directly translates to their performances on the field. Because of the limited training time and limited skills that girls practise, their practices and performances on the field are often not as good as those of boys, and girls feel more insecure about their football performances. The differences in girls' and boys' football skills are thus not 'natural' aspects of gender difference but constructed through access to and contestations of space and time (Rosaldo 1980; Massey 1994; Butler 1998).

In other words, girls have to compete with boys over access to football spaces and times, and boys are still seen as the 'automatic' or 'natural' occupiers of football space, by both boys and sports organisers. Paradoxically, sports organisations that aim to increase the participation of girls reproduce and institutionalise football space and time as normatively masculine, by directing girls to separate spaces and special girls' hours. Girls contest and resist those dominant constructions of football space and time precisely by entering and claiming these both. Just by being present in football spaces as football players, girls already act as space invaders who lay bare

the masculine norm of these spaces (Puwar 2004). Clark and Paechter (2007, 272) argue: 'in many ways, simply stepping onto the football pitch can be seen as a form of resistance, since embodying the concept of "footballer" represents a challenge to its masculine association'. The gendered bodies that are normally 'constructed out' of football spaces, are now visible and active on the inside (Puwar 2004, 1). Yet, being a space invader is not merely a byproduct of girls' wishes to play football, or an unwitting practice; sometimes, the girls in my research also deliberately act as space invaders. Hafsa told me:

> *Except for FGU, I do not know of any girls' competition. Nowhere. But as soon as we see a competition, also with only boys, then we sign up as a girls' team.*

She is very aware of the masculine norm of football competitions and tries to challenge this by invading the competitions with a girls' team. Nisa also stimulates girls to claim football spaces, by telling the girls she trains at a community centre:

> *If you want to play football, then you go play football! It's none of your business what people say.*

In turn, the presence of girls' bodies in public football playgrounds, 'marked' as gendered bodies 'out of place' (Puwar 2004), generate embodied and discursive practices to confirm masculine dominance in football (Swain 2000). This is visible in the form of gendered or sexualised comments to girls who play football, or through embodied practices on the field, as I will show in the following parts. Dominant construction of football as masculine are thus not easily challenged by girls invading football spaces. The embodied practices, discourses, and role models in the playgrounds reproduce football as a masculine practice.

Gendered embodied practices and play

In football trainings and competitions, I observed gendered differences in the embodied practices on the field. First, differences were visible in how the game, the teams, and the competitions were managed and divided. Usually, when there is a group of football players in a playground, a few of them alternately choose which players they want on their team. Girls often mentioned that they are the last ones to get picked. For example, Nora told me in an interview about her experiences with street football:

> *You were always the last one chosen and so on, because yes you are a girl and you cannot play football, you cannot run, you cannot do anything.*

Even if girls are allowed or invited to participate, in the practice of dividing teams, boys are often picked first, and female bodies are perceived as less desirable in the game. Having good football skills that are seen as 'exceptional' for girls can turn around this dynamic, as Noha from Utrecht mentioned:

> *Boys like it that I'm good, often they want me on their team. So, if one of them says, 'I choose her', then the others are all like 'Ohhh, I also wanted her!'*

In this case, boys find it special that a girl is very good at playing football and want her on their team. The fear of losing from a girl could also contribute to this preference for exceptionally good football girls, as boys usually do not want to lose from a girl and therefore pick her for their own teams. The articulation of good football skills of girls as 'exceptional' is further discussed in the next section on discourses.

In organised street football competitions, girls also have different experiences of the organisation of competition than boys. Zainab tells me about her experiences with a yearly national street football competition. The competition starts locally with group stages, and ends with a regional and national final:

> *Often, we were the only girls. And then we had to play against the boys. We always made it through the group stage because we were the only girls' team and, because of that, the organisers wanted our team in the next regional stages. But that's really not nice, you just want to play real football.*

Because Zainab's team was the only girls' team, it did not matter whether they played well or not, whether they lost or won the matches during the group stage: they always proceeded to the next rounds anyway. In Zainab's experience, this was not 'real' football. The competition element, which is the whole point of a football competition, became lost to the girls in this way. Some sports organisers think that the competition element is more important for boys, and that girls like to play football just to be with their friends. But, most of the girls that I spoke with play football precisely because they enjoy the competition element; later on, I will show how, through competition and winning, girls can negotiate and question male dominance in football. This way of organising also implicitly constructs 'real' competitive football as a boys' matter, and girls' football as a practice where 'participation' (in the next rounds) counts as more important than playing 'real' competitive football. Of course, if girls play 'real' competitive football, there is the risk that they lose from boys all the time because of limited training and skills, like Jamila experienced. Yet, in both cases, girls' football is taken less seriously by organisers than boys' football and it is that experience, of being considered 'second-class' players, that bothers girls.

Second, the gendered differences in the ways in which football competitions and teams are organised also translates into the embodied practices and play on the football field itself. In her famous article *Throwing Like a Girl*, feminist philosopher Iris Marion Young (2005 [1980]) argued that girls and women move and use their bodies differently than boys and men. She argues that men are taught to take up more space than women, leading to more free motion in their bodily movements. Women are socialised to use their bodies in a more limited and confined way; their bodily movements are constrained through social norms on what is considered 'feminine' bodily behaviour. To be clear, these different embodied practices are not 'natural' characteristics of male and female bodies, but socially constructed norms related to gendered bodies (Young 2005), and this was visible in my research as well. If the competition element lacks, it demotivates girls and gives them less challenges on the football field, which, in turn, prevents them from developing new and creative embodied practices and tactics. Girls often mentioned that they have less possession of the ball while playing mixed football; boys rather shoot the ball to other boys or keep the ball themselves than to shoot the ball to the less desired bodies of girls on the field. I indeed observed a few times that boys keep the ball themselves while moving across the field at mixed football matches, instead of shooting the ball to the girls who were open (see also Clark and Paechter 2007, 265–66). Furthermore, in football, boys take up more space by running with the ball through the field instead of passing it to girls, and girls are often positioned in the net (Clark and Paechter 2007, 267–68). Especially in sports that are perceived to be 'masculine', such as football, gendered norms about the use of the body on the field are reproduced to keep up male dominance, Clark and Paechter (2007, 262) argue: 'gendered expectations about play and the use of the body serve actively to discourage girls whilst consolidating male dominance in the game.' For example, boys interact mainly with boys on the field, and remain therefore the central players of the game (Evaldsson 2003, 484). Men's bodily convictions and performances of strength, skill, and power in football are especially important to perform hegemonic masculinity (Swain 2000). The embodied practices of football in public playgrounds thus show how gender and space both co-constitute each other (Massey 1994).

Gendered expectations and norms of bodily movements also guide the design of public spaces. I talked with Mariet from the municipality of The Hague about the design of public space in the neighbourhood:

> *You only see boys in the public spaces, but it is changing now, more girls come to the public spaces, and we have to adjust the use of public spaces for that. Because, now, there are too few locations for typical girls' things, such as fitness equipment where you can train in not-too-revealing poses.*

Besides football courts, Mariet often mentioned seesaws as an example of the design of public playgrounds, and it could well be that she sees seesaws as a 'feminine' counterpart for the 'masculine' football courts. In that way, girls are not only relegated to the marginalised spaces of playgrounds, but different kinds of embodied activities and sports are offered to them as well. In the choice of sports and play activities that are offered, a gender division is present: often, sports organisers think that, if they offer other sports or activities than football, more girls will show up. The way in which Mariet and sports organisers think they should adapt the activities to girls' wishes reflects dominant ideas on what is considered feminine bodily movement (confined, not-too-revealing, closed, docile) and masculine bodily movement (loose, open, expressive, capable) (Young 2005; Azzarito 2010).

Yet, feminist anthropologists have emphasised that merely studying the different embodied practices of boys and girls reproduces and essentialises the dichotomous construction of gender, rather than deconstructing gender categories and understanding how they come into being (Rosaldo 1980, Ortner 1996; Massey 1994). By only looking at the different embodied practices of girls and boys, football practices are only read through a dichotomous gender lens, as either masculine or feminine, and differences are overemphasised (Thorne 1993; Evaldsson 2003). In reality, embodied and gendered football practices and performances are more diffuse, and there are different kinds of interactions in different football contexts that are also shaped by class, racial/ethnic, and religious differences, something Young does not pay attention to (Azzarito 2010; Evaldsson 2003; Thorne 1993). Furthermore, as Butler (1998) argued, women's and girls' athletic behaviour in 'masculine' sports is precisely an important domain where gender and body norms can be altered.

As I discussed above, girls can be considered as space invaders in football contexts in that they make visible and resist the gendered and masculine norms that underlie football spaces and embodied football practices. Some of the specific football tactics and practices of the girls in my research can be seen as resistance to and as performative play with gender and body norms (Butler 1998). For example, Hafsa told me about her experience with gendered expectations in football playgrounds. Sometimes, she, with friends from FGU, goes to other cities to play football with girls and boys in public playgrounds there. When they go to a playground and ask the boys if they can participate, this is the reaction they often receive:

> *Even very small boys then laugh at us, because they think 'Oh girls, they cannot play football'. But only until we play, because then they are shocked, like 'Wow, they can really play football'. And then the story goes like 'Wow, they can really play football, it's better you don't play against them'. Before the*

match, they are like 'Yes, come on, come on, we can handle you', and that is the fun part. We act as if we cannot play football and then we prove otherwise, and then they get scared.

Here, Hafsa and her friends go along with the gendered expectations that girls cannot play football at first, only to turn it into their football strategy later. Because their opponents do not expect their strong play, they can attack suddenly and win the match. The idea that girls are not good at playing football or move less expressively than boys is incorporated in the girls' tactic to win. The girls invade the sports spaces by performatively using specific bodily expectations, thereby challenging the gender and body norms and expectations that underlie embodied football practices and play as well. They do not merely resist or oppose these norms and expectations but incorporate them into their embodied competitive practices on the field. Nora had a similar experience and tactic, but she mentioned that norms and expectations about girls playing football are also related to their racial/ethnic and Muslim backgrounds, something I will come back to later in this chapter. Girls are space invaders not simply by being present on and invading the football space, but also through specific embodied practices and tactics, in which they performatively incorporate gender norms, expectations, and stereotypes, thereby resisting them (Butler 1993, 1998).[52]

Gendered and sexualised discourses

Gendered and embodied constructions of football spaces, times, and practices are maintained through a dominant gendered discourse that is present in street football. I approach discourse not as merely a language, but in the Foucauldian sense, as historically and culturally specific systems of knowledge, meaning, and power attached to social practices, albeit using language (Bucholtz 2003, 45; Hall 1997, 44–47). Discourse is thus not merely a reflection of the social world, but a way of creating that social world – in this case, the world of street football, where ideas and ideals of gender and power are (re)produced and become regarded as 'natural' (Butler 1990, 1993).

In street football, there is a strong discourse about girls and football skills, to which I already referred earlier. The idea that girls are not good or not 'real' football players is implicit in much of the competitions and organisations, and within players themselves. I already mentioned that girls often have to prove themselves before they are allowed to participate. Sports professionals and organisations also contribute to the dominant idea that boys are better and more motivated football players than girls, through the language they – intentionally or unintentionally – use. Sometimes, girls are blamed for a lack of involvement or motivation by coaches and trainers (Clark and Paechter 2007, 272). For example, when Peter was making a short film about his

sports playground, he instructed the children who were to figure in it, and especially emphasised to the girls that they needed to be active:

Okay, you start with the warm-up. The girls are in the front, I see, so there's a big chance that you are most prominent in the picture. So, walk a bit active please, can you manage that? Do not just trudge.

During some of the Cruyff Court 6vs6 competitions that I attended, the organisers also mentioned that boys are a bit more fanatical (in Arnhem), or that girls are really not pushing forward (in Utrecht). Some sports trainers mentioned to me that there is no real interest amongst girls to play football, and I heard others emphasise to the girls they train that they really need to do their best. For boys, the emphasis was much less on their motivation or on 'being active', but more on the tactics and techniques on the field. Trainers already assume that boys are motivated for football, so they do not need to emphasise that.

For girls, stereotypical feminine descriptions were often used by trainers and bystanders to describe girls' behaviour in the field, such as 'soft', 'little dreamer', 'chit-chatters', 'they're too sweet', or 'they complain or cry'. Boys' behaviour, in turn, was often described with typical masculine characteristics such as 'rough', 'strong', or 'offensive play'. The masculine characteristics that are attributed to boys are generally valued higher than those of girls (Ortner 1974; Rosaldo 1980), exemplified by the expression 'you play like a girl', which means poor play (Clark and Paechter 2007, 264). I only heard this expression a few times, probably because people are aware of its sexist meaning, but it is still a lingering example of the gendered hierarchy in football. Another example is the way in which girls' performances are hailed when they do play very well. When girls demonstrate good football skills, this is often firmly articulated by statements such as: 'Do you see that girl play! Wow' or 'those girls nowadays, they are good football players!' These expressions frame girls' good performances in football as rather extraordinary. Thus, through the implicit gendered language use of trainers, bystanders, and teachers, a dominant position for boys in football is reproduced.

Sometimes, trainers or teachers were more explicit in thinking football is more of a boys' sport. When I was at the 6vs6 Cruyff Court competition in the Schilderswijk, I talked with a female school teacher who coached one of the teams from her school. I explained to her that I was conducting research about girls' football and that I was therefore interviewing girls who participate in the competitions. She responded:

But what do you want with your research? You just see that girls play less football, also I think it is more of a boys' sport. Maybe that's discriminating, but yeah. It also matters what you are used to from the past, I think. You also just see that boys are much better at playing football than girls.

Her observation that less girls play football, and that they are usually not as good as boys, translates into a conclusion that football is more of a boys' sport, although she recognises that this connection of football and boys is historically formed. Other sports organisers, as I also mentioned before, assume that girls like other sports better than football, such as horse riding. The employee of a neighbourhood sports organisation that organises sports in public playgrounds in Maastricht told me:

> *Because we organised mainly football at the start, the enthusiasm from the boys was significantly bigger. Now we aim to offer more diverse sports.*

Instead of investigating why there was a bigger commitment from boys, this sports organiser simply assumed that football belongs more to boys, and other sports will 'naturally' attract more girls. While it is likely that there are girls who indeed prefer other sports above football, this is not because of a 'natural' preference for softer sports, but part of the dominant discourse and organisation of football as a masculine sport. Furthermore, the 'naturalised' connection of masculinity with strength, power, rough play, and football, and femininity with softer sports through the language use of sports professionals, also overlooks the possibility of boys' preferences for other sports (Swain 2000; Renold 1997).

Importantly, an implicit gendered ordering is already present in the jargon and terminology that is used in football. During the matches, masculine terms are used, such as 'the last man' when referring to the position of one of the players, also when they are girls. Sometimes, I heard sports organisers, coaches, or referees talk about 'the boys', when they referred to the football players, also in the case of mixed trainings or competitions. As I already showed above, a 'football' training or competition is often perceived as a boys' football training or competition, emphasised precisely by the absence of a gender marker. Boys, with their male bodies, are constructed as neutral and not as having sexed or gendered bodies (Puwar 2004; Wekker and Lutz 2001). As such, using the term football without a gendered marker means boys' football. Girls' football is only recognised by the addition of the gender denominator. In other words, the organisation of girls' hours in football does not only spatially and temporarily construct football as masculine, but also discursively, through the process of the naming of the trainings and competitions.

The construction of girls' bodies as bodies that are explicitly marked by gender is also related to the sexualisation of girls' bodies in football. Girls mentioned that they were sometimes called 'whore' or 'slut', because boys think that girls just play football to impress boys. When I asked Jamila what the boys of the Schilderswijk Street League thought of playing against a girls' team, she said:

> *They like it, to get attention from girls. And, right away, they think that they can win.*

As became clear in the stories from Nora, Jamila, and Ibrahim, some boys or adults interpret girls' play as sexualised performances to hit on the boys. Although girls and boys playing football together can certainly include an aspect of flirting, this is not something I have observed. The girls I talked with all mention that they are not interested in flirting with boys in football; they really, primarily, want to practise their football skills. Actual dating and flirting takes place in domains other than football, such as the homework classes at the youth centre, where girls' access does not threaten boys' hegemony as much as in the masculinised football spaces. However, girls' participation in the masculinised domain of football is sometimes interpreted by other players as sexualised, because they do not take girls' participation as real football players seriously.

Other words that girls heard were 'butch' or '*manwijf*', a derogatory Dutch term literally translated as 'manwoman'. With these words, girls' football performances are not interpreted as sexualised, but their femininity is questioned in regards to a dominant perception of hegemonic femininity that is seen as not compatible with playing football. Puwar (2004) observed a similar dynamic in her research, in which the femininity of female leaders in organisations was questioned. Clark and Paechter argue that girls who play football are either 'stigmatised as lacking in full heterosexual femininity', or stigmatised based on sexual identity or reputation, in the case of sexualising them (Clark and Paechter 2007, 270; see also Green and Singleton 2007, 116–18). Girls are subject to sexual labelling, they argue, since their football performances are perceived as threatening the heteronormative gender order (Clark and Paechter 2007, 270). Both sexualising girls and questioning their femininity are ways of reconfirming hegemonic heteronormative masculinity in football (Swain 2000, 96; Renold 1997, 2003): when girls 'invade' the public sports playgrounds, hegemonic masculinity becomes threatened and needs to be rearticulated (Clark and Paechter 2007, 264). The gendered and sexualised discourses that were used in football by staff, trainers, football players, and observers continuous to reinforce the idea that football is inherently a masculine practice, to which girls and femininity do not belong. In the next chapter, I discuss how the girls of Football Girls United deal with gendered and sexualised discourses and practices in an alternative manner in the bottom-up girls' football competition they organise.

In one way, being space invaders in football resists the gendered and sexualised discourses present within it, because girls show that they are also football players and that they can also win. When girls enter football spaces and play football, dominant

ideas on femininity, masculinity, and sexuality become contested. At the same time, girls' football participation and skills can strengthen gendered and sexualised discourses, because girls' skills contest masculine dominance on the field; as a result, this dominance becomes even more articulated and preserved by male players, not in the least part through the practices and language use of sports organisers.

Yet, there were some different voices and experiences, especially from the younger girls and boys. There were boys who mentioned that, for them, 'it is normal that girls also play football'. The boys who play football at FGU, and who are thus used to play with girls, also do not think of football as primarily a boys' sport. When talking about FGU, Hafsa confirmed this:

> *The boys who come here, they just know that girls can also play football.*

These boys contest the idea that football is inherently a boys' sport. Girls themselves contribute to changing discourses on gender and football too, like Arzu (eleven years old). I met her at a 6vs6 Cruyff Court competition in the Schilderswijk and asked her whether she likes playing in the competition:

> *Yes, I like it a lot, I would also like to join a football club. In the past, I thought that football was only for boys, but then we played football a lot at school and now I think, now I know, that football is also for girls!*

Through playing football herself, she was able to change her own ideas on femininity and football, and frame football also as a girls' sport. It seems that these younger boys and girls may have a more flexible approach to gender, masculinity, femininity, and football than the sports organisers and older people whom I discussed above. They, however, lack older or adult female role models in sports who also embody those alternative conceptions of femininity and football, the subject of the next section.

Role models

The issue of female role models in football is one that is connected to the dynamics that I have discussed thus far, as it is also a matter of space invading, the embodiment of gender and football, and resisting gendered discourses. Yet, because it was an issue that was often mentioned specifically by my research informants, and an important topic in sports and gender literature, I discuss the topic of role models here specifically. In the literature on gender and sports, the concept of the role model is often defined in a broad way: a role model is someone who inspires an individual or a group of people, and who is perceived as exemplary or worthy of imitation (Young et al. 2015; Adriaanse and Crosswhite 2008). In the context of sports, attention is often paid to famous sports stars as role models, but the construction of sports stars as role models is gendered: male sports stars are much more visible as role models than female sports stars (Lines 2001; Hargreaves 2000a). Research in Australia has pointed out that family members (especially mothers) and peers are much more often described by adolescent girls as important sports role models than sports stars (Vescio, Wilde, and Crosswhite 2005; Young et al. 2015). Local and familiar sports players, such as family members, peers, or neighbours, can thus also be important role models for girls in sports. Furthermore, a third way of being a role model is having a leadership role in sports, such as being a coach or trainer. Sports scholars have shown that, even though girls' and women's participation in football is growing, the positions of trainers, referees, coaches, and board members are often still occupied by white men (Elling and Claringbould 2005; Claringbould and Knoppers 2013). These are important roles when it comes to female leadership in sports being performed, and people occupying these roles can therefore function as role models for football players.

When I asked girls how they came into contact with playing football, most of them mentioned that they started to play with their fathers, brothers, cousins, uncles, or neighbours. They have imitated much of the tricks of street football from these fellow male football players. When I asked the girls in my research whether they watch football on television, most of them said they occasionally watch national or international men's football (again, often with their fathers and brothers), and only rarely women's football. It is not that girls do not like women's football, but that women's football receives much less media attention (Cevaal 2017; Elling, Peeters, and Stentler 2017), and the players are therefore less known and less attractive as role models than male football players (Tilman and Van Sterkenburg 2017, 253). The street football competitions in the Schilderswijk and The Hague also only pay attention to the professional men's team from the city, ADO Den Haag. For example, the Schilderswijk Street League does not play on the days on which ADO Den Haag's 'first team' plays its home matches, the organiser explained to me, so that the participants in the league can visit the match. Here, the 'first team' means the first *men's* team from the club; the first women's team is not taken into account. As such, both on the local level, in the media, and in the professional football players they encounter, the football girls in the Schilderswijk often have male role models.

Sports organisations in the neighbourhood only marginally take into account girls' need or wishes for (male or female) role models; on this matter, their main focus is on the boys as well. Only boys participate in the trips that are organised for youths from the neighbourhood to visit professional football matches. It is not that girls are not allowed to attend these trips, but they are often simply forgotten. When I went to a girls' football hour in one of the community centres, many boys were gathering at the

entrance to pay a visit to ADO Den Haag. They looked very excited about their trip, and I wished I could join them to observe the whole event. However, the girls were left behind in the community centre with two interns who would give the football training. Only one of the interns knew about the boys' trip; the rest of the girls were not aware of it and could therefore not demand to attend, had they wished so.

In another, rather extreme, case, Hafsa's girls' football team had won a national street football competition, and, as a prize, they received tickets for a professional women's football match in The Hague. But, she told me, a staff member of the community centre under which name they played, gave these tickets to the boys' team, who had not won anything in the competition. On top of that, he took the cup from them and placed it in the trophy cabinet of the community centre, which is a place the girls never visit, because they only receive their trainings at Football Girls United and not at the community centre. It seems that the tickets served as a consolation prize for the boys, to compensate for the fact that they lost in the competition, whereas the girls had won. In other words, the girls' team lost both the tickets for the women's match and the cup they had won, two important elements in regards to the recognition of girls' football and the possibility of having female role models. Thus, on both local and (inter)national levels, girls' football role models are mostly men, and many sports organisers do not consider the importance of football role models for girls. Research on sports and role models shows otherwise: female role models in sports are important for girls, especially in domains that are dominated by men, such as football (Vescio, Wilde, and Crosswhite 2005; Adriaanse and Crosswhite 2008). Female football role models can show girls that they can have success, despite the experiences of gender-related barriers in football (Lockwood 2006).

Hafsa told me that she never wants to play for the community centre anymore; she only wants to play for FGU, which is almost the only place where girls can find female role models in football. Women's leadership is explicitly promoted within FGU and girls can also become coaches and trainers. In most other football organisations in the Schilderswijk, the trainers, coaches, referees, and organisers are male, occupying important spaces of leadership and power in football. Whereas many girls see themselves as (street) footballers, they often do not figure themselves as leaders in football. For example, when the girls' team in the Schilderswijk Street League was preparing for their match in the cloakroom, a younger boy, perhaps a brother of one of the girls, acted as self-appointed coach and instructed the girls on their positions and strategy. For him, it was more 'natural' to take up this position, since leadership in sports is implicitly and explicitly connected with hegemonic masculinity and is therefore not a position that girls easily claim for themselves (Claringbould and Knoppers 2013; Elling and Knoppers 2005).

Sportteam, however, is aware of the lack of female role models and leaders in their sports activities and tries to appoint more female Sportteam staff members. The coordinator of Sportteam, Frank, told me that it is a difficult matter, especially to attract female coaches with a Turkish-Dutch or Moroccan-Dutch background. One of the problems is that women are usually educated in social health and not in sports coaching, and a sports education is one of Sportteam's formal requirements. Frank explained:

> *Chaimae, for example, does not have a sports education, so we really have to brush up that knowledge, we have to teach her how you create a good sports training. That is where she lags behind, like she's very good at playing football, and she has a lot of experience with that, but, still, that's different.*

Because of this formal requirement of a sports education, and because many girls from the Schilderswijk choose to study social health,[53] it proves to be very difficult to hire female sports coaches. Aliya, one of the FGU volunteers, also volunteered for Sportteam and later applied for a paid position at the organisation. A week after her application, I asked her what the outcome was. Aliya responded disappointedly:

> *Unfortunately, I didn't get the job. Because I do not know enough about sports. But I was good enough to do volunteer work for them for three years.*

In this way, Sportteam holds on to norms and rules that do not fit with the daily reality of the Schilderswijk. In the talk I had with Frank, I noticed that Sportteam hardly considers the added value of having sports coaches with a social health rather than a sports education, although coaches have daily contact in public playgrounds with socially vulnerable youth, where a social health education can be valuable. As such, also through the lack of female coaches and role models in football and public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk, the sport is constructed as dominantly a masculine sport.

Nisa confirmed the importance of female role models in public playgrounds. When I asked her what had to happen to attract more girls to public sports playgrounds, she said:

> *You should put a female role model there. For example, if mostly Moroccan girls are living in that area, as an example eh, then you have to put a Moroccan girl, with a headscarf, who looks like them, in that playground. So that she can show, like, girls, nothing is wrong, you can come. You know, this playground is ours, not only theirs. Like a role model.*

Actually, Nisa herself acts like a 'space invader role model' for younger girls, when she plays football in public playgrounds with her friends. She claims the public space as 'ours' and not only 'theirs', and, with that, she shows other, younger girls that girls can play football and claim public playgrounds as well. Hanan and the other girls from FGU also act as female role models and leaders for other girls in the Schilderswijk neighbourhood.

It is clear, however, that not only gender matters when it comes to role models and space invaders in public football spaces. Nisa mentioned the importance of matching religious and ethnic backgrounds of female role models so that girls from the Schilderswijk with Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch backgrounds recognise themselves in the women in the playgrounds. From a theoretical intersectional perspective, race/ethnicity and religion can be equally important as gender in having role models and space invaders in sports and leisure, because girls look for role models with similar experiences (Walker and Melton 2015; Meier and Saavedra 2009; Pelak 2005; Watson and Ratna 2011). The experiences related to race/ethnicity and religion in public sports spaces will be the focus of the following part of the chapter.

Racialised and religious intersections of the gendered playground

Central to Puwar's framework of 'space invaders' are not only gendered bodies, but also racialised bodies who invade public spaces. The construction of public space is not only based on a gendered logic but intersects with racialised norms and structures of power and difference (Silverstein 2005; Stolcke 1993). Puwar argues that the public spaces in her research are implicitly defined by a white norm and shows how this white norm becomes visible through the entering of racialised minorities' bodies. Whereas Puwar's research provides a useful framework for thinking about and explaining how public football spaces become gendered and 'invaded' through different but intersecting dynamics of spaces, times, bodies, and discourses, her discussion of the racialisation of public space is rather limitedly applicable to the public football spaces in my research. In her book, she often talks about 'women and racialised minorities' as *one* category of space invaders in white male public spaces. She does mention the different processes and dynamics of gendering and racialising spaces, but, in taking 'women and racialised minorities' together so often, she tends to overlook the ways in which race *and* gender intersect in women's and men's racialised bodies and experiences, the cornerstone of intersectionality theory (Wekker and Lutz 2001; Wekker 2002).

In the case of my research in the Schilderswijk, the gendering and racialising of spaces works in different ways. Contrary to the public spaces in Puwar's research, the public football playgrounds are not spaces that are predominantly occupied by white bodies. In line with the ethnic composition of the Schilderswijk, most boys and girls in the public playgrounds have non-white backgrounds. Usually, public playgrounds reflect the ethnic composition of the area (Cevaal and Romijn 2011, 12), with a slight overrepresentation of the dominant ethnic group (Karsten 2003, 465). It is not surprising, then, that gender was most prominent in the stories of the girls, since they often shared racial/ethnic and religious backgrounds with the boys in the public playgrounds, whereas gender was a clear difference. Yet, the racialisation of space, in intersection with religious difference and religious embodiments, is still an important aspect of the construction of norms and belonging in playgrounds. As I have argued at the beginning of this chapter, the construction of public spaces is not depending on the actual numbers of racialised bodies in public spaces, but shaped through dominant ideas, norms, and discourses about who does and does not 'naturally' belong to places (Massey 1994; Holston and Appadurai 1999), and about what is considered appropriate behaviour in public spaces (Jaffe and De Koning 2015, 63; Puwar 2004).

Racialised, religionised, and secularised public playgrounds

Public spaces in multicultural neighbourhoods are given meaning through dominant ideas on racialised and religious 'others', Islam, and young 'Moroccan' residents, as I have discussed in the previous chapters (De Koning 2008; De Koning 2013, 2016). The increasing visibility and regulation of Islam in public spaces is a contested topic, as public debates on the burkini ban in France and the burqa ban in the Netherlands show, discussed in the Introduction of this dissertation. In relation to sports, the headscarf also continues to be debated in both public and academic discussions (Prouse 2015; Benn and Pfister 2013; Benn, Pfister, and Jawad 2011), and amongst sports professionals in the Schilderswijk. Furthermore, as Muslim and Moroccan-Dutch women are often stereotypically portrayed as oppressed, passive, and inactive, playing football is seen as 'alien' to racialised Muslim girls by white sports professionals and broader society (Ratna, 2011; Samie, 2013). Therefore, the girls in my research do not only act as space invaders as girls, but also as Muslim and Moroccan-Dutch girls in public spaces that are normatively constructed as white and secular (Bracke 2013; Moors and Salih 2009; Sunier 2009). Racialised boys, who resist dominant discourses related to them as racialised and 'problematic others', can also be seen as space invaders in public spaces, especially through their sports performances (De Martini Ugolotti and Moyer 2016), as I will also discuss at the end of this chapter.

In some of the playgrounds in the Schilderswijk in which Sportteam organises sports trainings for ten-to-twelve-year-olds on weekdays after school, wearing a headscarf is discouraged. Peter, the coordinator of these playgrounds, discourages

girls to play sports with a headscarf, because he thinks the headscarf does not belong in football and sports fields:

> *I just don't want it. Already for ten years, we've been doing it like this, during gym classes at school it's also not allowed, and this is just an extension of the gym classes.*

The implicit message is that football space is supposed to be areligious or secular, and that Islamic religious markers are undesirable in these spaces. Now and then, girls step up to discuss this issue with Peter, and, recently, he has allowed an older girl to wear her headscarf during kickboxing classes, because she is now in secondary school.[54] Although girls challenge his rules, in this case, the power to regulate girls' bodies in public sports spaces is still in the hands of Peter. How Peter's arguments are related to a broader discussion of Islam and culturalised citizenship in the Netherlands will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

A second way of constructing public football spaces as implicitly 'secular' through the spatial and temporal organisation of football becomes visible by looking at the days and times football competitions and trainings take place. The 6vs6 Cruyff Court competition and other football activities usually take place on Wednesday afternoons, when most public, secular, and Christian schools in the Netherlands finish early. Islamic schools, however, finish early on Fridays, because of the Islamic Friday prayers. During my observations of the 6vs6 Cruyff Court competitions in Amsterdam East, I became aware of this difference. Right next to the public playground in which the competition took place, an Islamic primary school was situated. This school finished at 3 p.m., when the competition was already in full swing. Many of the children from this school came to the playground to watch the football matches, but none of them could participate because they were still in class when the competition started. When I asked some of the girls and boys from this school about football, they told me that they would have liked to participate in the competition if possible. In the Schilderswijk in The Hague, there are two Islamic primary schools that finish early on Fridays and not on Wednesdays. The football activities organised by Sportteam in the Schilderswijk start at noon or 1:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, and at 3 p.m. on other weekdays. On Saturdays and Sundays, there are also sports activities in the playgrounds, but only in a few of them. Nevertheless, there are still plenty of activities children from the Islamic schools can participate in, and most of the schools in the neighbourhood do finish early on Wednesdays; for practical reasons as well, it makes sense to start early on the Wednesdays. In Amsterdam, however, it was unfortunate to observe that the children from the school right next to the playground were not able to participate. This case points to a way of organising football that is implicitly structured by the dominant public calendar in the Netherlands, which makes it easy to overlook schools with other calendars, such as Islamic schools.

Football spaces are not shaped by a clear divide between religious or secular, but more through implicit or explicit ideas about which bodies are seen as the norm, in which spaces, and when (Puwar 2004; Massey 1994; Fadil 2011). In one of the first quotes I presented in this chapter, Jasmine refered specifically to girls 'also with a headscarf' playing football in public playgrounds. Muslim girls who wear headscarves are even more noticeable as space invaders in public football spaces, because they are not perceived as the gendered and secularised norm in such spaces. Girls do not always like being explicitly noticed or singled out in 'male' football spaces due to their headscarves. When I attended the Schilderswijk Street League competition, there was a small film crew of two white men from the TV channel of ADO Den Haag, which co-organised the Street League, who were walking around in search of a spot to film the football matches from. Nadia, one of the players on the only girls' team, asked me a bit upset:

> *Nadia: Are they going to film? Because I don't want to be filmed.*
> *Kathrine: I don't know, I don't know them. But I can tell that man that you don't want to be filmed? Or do you want to tell him yourself?*
> *Nadia: I rather not go myself, I think that's a bit unpleasant.*
> *Kathrine: Okay, I'll tell him.*
> *Nadia: Yes. Because then I'm again the only one with a headscarf you know, I don't like that.*

In this space, in which Nadia was the only one wearing a headscarf, she feared being singled out by the film makers because of her headscarf. As the only girls' team in this 'boys'' competition, the girls already felt 'out of place', and being the only girl with a headscarf strengthened this feeling for Nadia, specifically when being visible on film for a wider, mostly white and non-Islamic, audience. She did not want to be singled out because of her headscarf in a space in which the gendered embodiment of religious adherence through a headscarf is not perceived as the norm. Therefore, Nadia did not want to be filmed, and prefered me to communicate this to the film crew; otherwise, she still felt as if she would be attracting too much attention.

Role models and invading the gendered and racialised playground

The lack of female role models with Muslim or Moroccan-Dutch backgrounds contributes to the feelings of being 'out of place' that girls with headscarves experience in football competitions (Dagkas, Benn, and Jawad 2011, 231). Because the trainers, coaches, referees, organisers, and camera operators from Sportteam and other football

competitions are almost all Moroccan-Dutch or white men, girls do not have someone who looks like them in leadership positions in football. When I talked with Nora about a meet-and-greet she attended with the professional women's football team from ADO Den Haag,[55] she talked about the lack of Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch role models:

> *Kathrine: How did you like it, to see and to meet those girls or women?*
> *Nora: Yeah, that was really nice, because you saw, like, a brown girl there, but, for example, you didn't see a Moroccan girl or so, no Turkish girls, really only Dutch or Surinamese girls like that.*
> *Kathrine: Yeah, you noticed that?*
> *Nora: Yeah, that was really remarkable because I thought, there are enough Moroccan girls who are as good as they are, why are they not there? Like that.*
> *Kathrine: Yes, and do you know why that is? I don't know actually…*
> *Nora: No, I really don't know. But if I get the chance to play on a professional team then I really would just do it.*

Through the way in which Nora framed her experience of meeting the professional women's team, it becomes clear that seeing brown girls as part of the team was something that she valued, but she did wonder why there are no Moroccan-Dutch or Turkish-Dutch women playing at this professional level. Having role models from similar ethnic communities or with similar religious backgrounds is important for girls in football spaces that continue to be shaped by constructing Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls 'out' of the norm (Dagkas, Benn, and Jawad 2011, 231; Lockwood 2006).

In this way, girls from the Schilderswijk who act as space invaders, such as Nisa and Hanan, not only challenge the gendered and masculine norm of football spaces, but also the racialised and secularised spaces of football in the Netherlands, in which whiteness and masculinity still function as the discursive norm. Hanan told me that, when she started to organise girls' football in the Schilderswijk, it was an advantage that she was a Moroccan-Dutch woman herself:

> *After the first weeks, we noticed already that more and more girls came, also from other neighbourhoods, yes, who also wanted to participate because, yeah, you were seen as a role model. Like, if she can do it as a Moroccan girl, why can't we?*

In the quote from Nisa in the section on female role models above, she also argued for Moroccan-Dutch and Muslim role models in public playgrounds. When she said, 'You know, this playground is ours, not only theirs', she referred to invading the gendered playground: the playground is for girls, not only for boys. But, she also referred to invading the racialised and secularised playground, by framing an 'ours' that explicitly encompasses girls with Moroccan-Dutch and Muslim backgrounds. In this way, she avoids the risk that girls' football is seen as something only white or non-Muslim girls or women participate in, as is often the case with professional football role models.

Nisa, Hanan, and other girls in the Schilderswijk act as role models and space invaders of the gendered, racialised, and secularised public playgrounds. In the previous part, I showed how Hafsa and her friends turned gendered expectations about girls as bad football players into their football strategy. In a similar way, Nora and her football team turned racialised expectations about Muslim girls and football into a winning strategy:

> *People underestimate us. A lot. Two years ago, we played the National Street Football finals. The final was against a team from Heerenveen, and this was really a group with only Dutch girls. And, of course, they thought: 'We will win, they are just Moroccan girls with headscarves, they cannot play football'. But in the end, yeah, we've beaten them to the max. But they really didn't expect that, because they thought we couldn't play, and they really underestimated us, so they played very nonchalant.*
> *Kathrine: How did you notice this during the match?*
> *Nora: They ridiculed us, laughed, such things. If we play against another team, then you see them laughing at us from the stands. Not that we care, because in the end we are the ones who run off with the cup!*

Clearly, the best way to be a space invader and challenge racialised and gendered norms and expectations in public sports spaces is to win the match and leave the football court as winners. De Martini Ugolotti has shown how, in capoeira and parkour, the embodied use of public space is a way of reappropriating public spaces and of challenging dominant ideas of who belongs in public space (De Martini Ugolotti 2015; De Martini Ugolotti and Moyer 2016), and, in my research, the use of public space by football girls is also important. However, in the case of football, there is an extra aspect inherent to the game, and that is the opportunity to literally defeat opponents, and thereby to 'defeat' the dominant gendered and racialised constructions of sports spaces in the game itself (Bale and Cronin 2003, 1, 5). Winning the match, and being skilled in football, are then the performative acts (Butler 1993) that resist gendered and racialised norms and hierarchies in football spaces.

Racialised boys, gender, and public space

The racialisation of public space is not limited to girls, but also shapes Moroccan-Dutch and Muslim boys' position in public football spaces.[56] Although, in my research,

I have predominantly studied the perspectives of girls, sometimes I do focus on boys to highlight their role and position in the (gendered) construction of football spaces, both in this chapter and in the next chapter, where I will discuss the role of boys in FGU. When I talked with Peter about public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk,[57] he expressed his experiences with those spaces:

> *Peter: Okay, it is really great that there is a square where you can make laps with your scooter, and a football field that everybody can use, really great. But then, for a trainer, let's say from Sportteam, it is quite a struggle to be there. All those big – in The Hague, it are often Moroccan guys, or at least boys from the neighbourhood – and this trainer just has to know that, if they enter the playground with a bag full of balls to organise a sports hour, and they get a big mouth from the boys, that they can deal with it in their way. And yes, although people know me in the Schilderswijk, I cannot do it this way! I cannot show up with a bag of balls and then say, 'Yeah leave, I have to train here'.*
> *Kathrine: And this is because you have a Dutch background?*
> *Peter: Because I am not from the neighbourhood. And every trainer belongs to a certain playground, a certain area. Yes, I did once walk here to this playground to ask something but yes you have to... well... watch out is a word that is too strong, but, like, it's not natural. Hamza, he's from the community centre, he's just a Moroccan of two metres high and if he says something should go this way, then it really happens that way. And I have to ask it, haha.*

For Peter, the dominance of Moroccan-Dutch boys in public playgrounds means that they can potentially create trouble and might not listen to him. From his experience, public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk are constructed through a 'Moroccan' masculine norm, where he, as someone who is not from the neighbourhood and who has a different ethnic background, is considered 'out of place'. Although I can certainly understand that it is difficult for someone 'out of place' to claim ownership over a playground, I also cannot forgo to see his experiences as part of a broader discourse in the Netherlands about 'Moroccan' boys in urban public spaces as a nuisance and a threat (De Koning 2013, 2016; Martineau 2006; Watson and Ratna 2011, 75).

Ibrahim also mentioned the boys in public playgrounds as a potential threat, when I talked with him about Sportteam's aim to attract more girls and their new strategy to have two staff members, including female staff members, in the playgrounds:

> *Yes, but then those boys will harass her, although we do have female sports trainers. Then you also need two other trainers, because what can I do? I cannot protect her if boys harass her, because I'm busy.*

Here, Ibrahim frames not only girls, but also female Sportteam staff members as potential victims of harassment in public playgrounds, and boys as potential harassers. He did not mention 'Moroccan' boys specifically as a threat in this context but framed the boys in public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk as boys who grow up in unstable contexts in relation to family problems, poverty, and unemployment, framing them as classed and gendered 'problematic' subjects in public playgrounds. How he takes on the protection of girls and women in playgrounds from these boys – by regulating the access of girls and women – is also a way to reinstal masculine dominance in public spaces (see also Prouse 2015).

Racialised (and classed) ethnic minority boys are differently 'read' by adult sports professionals than white boys when they occupy public playgrounds. Although the perceived problem of 'hang-around youths' in urban spaces in the Netherlands is not limited to racialised boys, as conflicts also arise between white youths and white adults, the issue of 'problematic' youths often slips into one of ethnic difference (Martineau 2006, 227). One reason for that is that the relation of ethnic homogeneity and space is differently perceived. When white boys are in the majority in public leisure spaces, that usually is not considered problematic, because the space is already seen as 'theirs' and white majorities are not seen as 'ethnically concentrated' (Watson and Ratna 2011, 76). However, when racialised ethnic minority boys form the majority in public spaces, it is perceived as 'ethnic concentration' – even if they are diverse in ethnic backgrounds – and it is considered problematic (Rana 2014, 35–36; Vermeulen and Verweel 2009, 1215; De Koning 2015, 1218). 'There is a "normalization" of access to leisure and public space for dominant groups', Watson and Ratna (2011, 76) argue, that is not there for racialised minority groups. Racialised boys' position in public spaces is thus not so much limited because they are a minority or because they are not allowed to physically occupy the space, but because, in discursive and cultural ways, their spatial dominance is framed as problematic, dangerous, and as threat, as I also discussed in Chapter 2.

Furthermore, sports projects are also an opportunity to stimulate boys' (and girls') behaviour that does fit normative ideas on appropriate behaviour in public sports spaces. Kayleigh, for example, mentioned how she teaches her pupils in the playgrounds 'to be on time, practise discipline, to give a call when they do not participate, and to help each other and not only think about yourself'. This topic of disciplining in sports will be further investigated in Chapter 5, but, here, it is useful to refer to Puwar, who also emphasises the 'assimilative pressure to conform to the behavioural norm' on racialised subjects in (white and/or upper-middle class) public spaces: 'adherence to the norms and values of this hegemonic culture is almost a condition of entry' (Puwar 2004, 150), while the norms itself are not in question (Puwar 2004, 117). One can

question whether the norms that are imposed on public sports spaces for youths through sports projects are not too far away from the idea of 'free' leisure time for youths in public spaces (Harris 2004), as playing street football or other sports in public spaces are precisely 'free' practices that do not need designated training and playing times (De Martini Ugolotti and Moyer 2016, 201).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown how public football spaces and football training times are unequally divided amongst boys and girls, despite a growing participation of girls in football. I have not only argued that public sports playgrounds are constructed as masculine, but I have also shown how this construction comes into being through spatial, temporal, embodied, and discursive practices and differences on the field. The masculine dominance in football is not only visible and constructed through contestations over football space and time, but also reproduced through embodied practices and play in the football playgrounds, as well as the gendered and sexualised ways of talking about football by players, trainers, parents, and teachers, and the lack of female role models.

I have particularly paid attention to the role of sports and neighbourhood organisations in the reproduction of the masculine norm in football. These organisations, even if they pay specific attention to the position of girls, continue to fall back on and reinstal masculine constructions of public sports spaces. Although I drew my ethnography mainly from the Schilderswijk, my argument is not limited to this neighbourhood. Lara, a social worker from Duindorp, a white working-class neighbourhood in The Hague, observed similar dynamics in her neighbourhood of public sports spaces as masculine, a lack of female role models, and a gendered discourse in football. In the other places of my research as well – Arnhem, Amsterdam, Maastricht, Kampen, and Utrecht – I saw similar processes. My findings are also reflected in other research on this topic (Swain 2000; Clark and Paechter 2007; Renold 1997; Elling 2004; Elling and Knoppers 2005; Cevaal and Romijn 2011, 12–13; Karsten 2003; Christensen and Mikkelsen 2013), although these authors have not specifically focused on the paradoxical role of sports organisations.

Second, I have shown how the gendered construction of the playground intersects with racialised constructions of public sports spaces, and with implicit secular norms of public space in the Netherlands. On this matter, it are also mainly the sports organisers who perceive religious and racialised visibility in public sports spaces as problematic, and who therefore reproduce and construct norms of secular, white, or upper/middle class behaviour and social relations on the field. Yet, for the young

residents themselves, wearing a headscarf and playing football, for instance, are not seen as incompatible. Most organisations are aware of the unequal gender relations in public playgrounds and the lack of girls in their activities, but they usually do not reflect on issues of race/ethnicity and religion and how these shape unequal access to public spaces: for example, wearing headscarves, the lack of role models, or the perceiving of 'Moroccan' boys as a threat in public spaces. As such, organisations reinstal the norm of public spaces as secular and white, while assuming and perceiving public spaces as 'neutral' spaces, where everybody can participate equally (Puwar 2004, 135). Yet, I have also argued that Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls who play football in the public playgrounds act as 'space invaders', and destabilise these gendered, racialised, and secularised norms in spatial, embodied, and discursive ways – most notably by winning the match. Winning the match and being skilled in football are performative acts of power that resist gendered and racialised expectations in football spaces. Space invading can, in this way, be seen as a political act: 'Youth presence in public spaces is political both in how they use spaces and in how they are perceived by others while doing so' (Cele 2013, 74).

The spatial, embodied, and discursive 'exclusion' of girls in public sports playgrounds is thus not something unique for the Schilderswijk, or for Moroccan-Dutch or Muslim residents only. It is rather a characteristic of male dominance in football and the marginal position of women's football in the Netherlands, on professional levels, in local and youth clubs, and in leadership positions in football (Prange and Oosterbaan 2017). An intersectional analysis, thus, means that gendered power relations cannot be explained only by race/ethnicity or religion, although, when it concerns Muslim women, this is still often the case. Karsten, in her study of children's gendered use of public playgrounds in Amsterdam, explains without hesitation the absence of Turkish and Moroccan girls in the public playgrounds she observed: 'In particular, Turkish and Moroccan girls aged over 10–12 years old were very rarely seen. This no doubt reflects cultural rules within these ethnic groups' (Karsten 2003, 465). Next to her problematic framing of these girls as only 'Moroccan' or 'Turkish', and not also as Dutch (they are children with Moroccan or Turkish ethnic backgrounds but they did grow up in Amsterdam), she also explains the absence of these girls as 'no doubt' being caused by their cultural ethnic backgrounds. I would like to question such a simple and easy explanation, as I, in my research, found that Moroccan-Dutch and Muslim girls are not absent in public playgrounds, but rather pushed to the margins through dominant masculine and racialised power relations. The absence that Karsten has observed might precisely be caused by the fact that these girls often play in non-official and less visible spaces and are therefore often not observed by researchers.

Importantly, Puwar states, women and racialised minorities cannot only be seen as outsiders in male and white spaces, since they also ‘exist on the inside’, and contribute to constructing public spaces differently by their increasing presence. Football girls are both insiders, by being space invaders and exposing the previously hidden norm, and outsiders, as they precisely do not embody that norm. I am, thus, not claiming that girls are simply ‘victims’ or ‘excluded’ in public football spaces, but rather follow Puwar in claiming that girls are included, albeit differently: ‘Here we see how it is too simple a story to say that women are simply excluded [...]. Instead, through a set of hierarchies of inclusion they become included differently’ (Puwar 2004, 24).

Puwar rightly states that only changing or diversifying spaces by ‘adding’ women and racialised minorities is not sufficient, as the somatic norm, and its related institutionalised power relations of racism and sexism, will stay in place. According to Puwar, policy and organisation research has focused too much on quantifying diversity and has failed to identify and theorise the norm of male and white bodies. I think this is also the case for the organisations of neighbourhood sports; they, indeed, focus on the quantification of sports participation in terms of gender and ethnicity and identify social groups that ‘lag behind’ in sports participation but fail to look at the construction of white and male normativity in sports spaces. As I argued before, to study the construction of the somatic norms in football spaces, it is necessary to look beyond mere numbers.

Girls only? The spatial politics of gender and sexuality in girls' football

Introduction

In the Schilderswijk in The Hague, football is not only played in public playgrounds, but also in a large, indoor girls' football competition, organised by Football Girls United (FGU). In 2014, about eighty girls – mainly with Moroccan-Dutch and Muslim backgrounds – between ten and twenty years old played football in this competition. Hanan (thirthy years old), the initiator and coordinator of FGU, rents a sports hall in the River Square sports complex, next to one of the biggest squares in the Schilderswijk, every Sunday and Wednesday afternoon. On Wednesdays, the girls receive football training, and, on Sundays, the different teams play against each other in the competition. The teams are formed by the girls themselves around a public playground or community centre in the local areas in the Schilderswijk, where they live and meet each other. The competition is divided in a competition for girls under thirteen years old, and one for girls from thirteen to eighteen years old, although, in practice, older girls sometimes also participate. When the weather is nice, the footballers from FGU also play outdoors in one of the public playgrounds in the neighbourhood. When the competition started in 2008, the girls who participated made up the name Football Girls United. The name is clear: this is football for girls; yet, boys also participate in the competition, as I found out during my fieldwork at FGU. There was a group of six girls and three boys between fourteen and twenty years old who played football at FGU, but who also acted as volunteer in organising the competition. The volunteers furthermore gave trainings to the younger girls, and some of them followed a course to become a certified sports trainer. Amongst the football players, boys were also present sometimes, usually a brother of one the girls or a friend of one of the volunteers. During my fieldwork period, the FGU volunteers also organised a boys-girls-competition once, in which girls' teams played against boys' teams. Often, parents came to watch the football training and matches of their daughters, and all the parents gave permission for their daughters to play football in FGU. In this chapter, I discuss girls' motivations for and experiences of playing in the FGU girls' football competition, while showing that the practice of FGU is less strictly gender segregated than the name might suggest.

Amongst football professionals in the Netherlands, the issue of girls' football and gender-segregated or mixed football is a hot topic, also within the Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB). In these discussions, different pros and cons are being discussed for both gender-segregated and mixed football, related to level, talent and skill development, physical difference, facilities, and girls' and parents' wishes and needs (Siebelink 2016a, 2016b). Currently, the KNVB presents the following options in a report on girls' football: mixed football where girls play on a girls' team in the 'boys' competition' (possible only until the age of fifteen years, because of 'physical differences'), or mixed football where talented girls play on 'boys' teams' in the 'boys competition', which is possible until the age of nineteen (Siebelink 2016b, 8). Playing with a girls' team in a separate girls' competition is also possible, but this is not encouraged by the KNVB. In other words, although the KNVB encourages 'mixed' football rather than gender segregation, 'mixed' still means that girls play in the 'boys' competition'. As such, a discursive gender segregation of boys and girls is still at the core of thinking and talking about youth football in the Netherlands. This discursive gender segregation is related to ideas on 'natural' and physical differences between sexed bodies, differences in skill and development, and the dominant position of boys in football through framing the competition as a 'boys' competition'.

However, in the case of Muslim or Moroccan-Dutch girls who play football, the focus of sports professionals, policy makers, and sports researchers is not on the supposed physical or skill differences between boys and girls, but often only on the supposed traditional religious motivations for participation in a girls' football competition (e.g. Benn, Pfister, and Jawad 2011; Benn and Pfister 2013; Dagkas and Benn 2006; Kay 2006; Dagkas, Benn, and Jawad 2011; KNVB 2009). Because of these assumptions, sports professionals and researchers look at Muslim or Moroccan-Dutch girls' participation in football only from a religious point of view, and do not look at Muslim girls' preferences and motivations for playing football in relation to other axes of difference and power, such as gender and sexuality. In this way, a narrative is reproduced in which the sports and leisure lives of Muslim girls are only seen in the context of religion and Islam, and as separate from the broader discussions on gender difference and segregation in football. Studies of Muslim women and sports already presuppose that religion or Islam is the most important category of difference, and do not take an intersectional approach in their studies. As I have discussed in Chapter 1, Muslim girls' experiences of sports are hardly studied in relation to the dichotomous gendered and sexualised organisation of sports or in relation to gender and sexual norms in broader society (Samie 2013). Yet, Samie's and my research shows that the dichotomous gender and sexual norms in sports also form the core of Muslim girls' experiences in sports. In this chapter, I will show that girls' motivations for playing in a separated girls' football competition are diverse and not limited to religious motivations, but primarily shaped by gender and sexuality norms. Furthermore, the football that is played at Football Girls United is less strictly segregated than it seems at first sight.

Often, sports organisations offer football, sports, or leisure activities for girls under the name 'women only' or 'girls only'. The girls' football hours organised by Sportteam, discussed in the previous chapter, are examples, but there are also women

only swimming hours (Elling 2005) or women or girls only leisure hours at community centres (Green and Singleton 2007; Christensen and Mikkelsen 2013). As I showed in the previous chapter, these girls only hours produce sports spaces temporarily as the 'feminine' counterparts of sports spacess that are normally perceived as masculine. Such girls only hours are especially organised in sports projects that target Muslim girls and women and take place in spaces that are clearly segregated and separated from the 'regular' sports or leisure spaces and from boys and men (Elling 2005; Benn, Pfister, and Jawad 2011). In FGU, however, this strict separation was not the case, as I will show in this chapter.

In football, or sports in general, usually two strictly separated categories are used, which are seen as 'natural' and invariable: the girls and the boys. Girls' football or girls only football, then, seems football in which, *by definition*, only girls participate. However, gender theorists have pointed out that the separation of girls' and boys' bodies into two strict categories is not a 'natural' phenomenon in itself, but socially constructed based on gendered norms and practices in society (Butler 1990, 1993; Rosaldo 1980; Ortner and Whitehead 1981). In sports, the division of sexed and gendered bodies is reproduced through the division of sporting bodies in two separate domains of men's and women's sports, and through the control and regulation of hormones (Butler 1998; Caudwell 2003). Although, in sports, it seems self-evident that boys and girls play football in their own separated spaces and competitions, this is not a natural but a socially constructed distinction, based on social and gendered norms and practices, and therefore subject to change. As Butler (1998) has argued, women's athletic performances are important domains for the performative re-construction of gendered bodies and norms (Butler 1993, 1998; Gagen 2000; Thorne 1993).

In this chapter, I will show that the girls' football competition that is organised by Football Girls United is not a competition based on the traditional dichotomous separation of boys and girls in sports. Rather, they construct a difference between *different kinds of boys,* in allowing certain boys in their girls' football space and others not, albeit that this difference is still based on ideas and ideals of gender and sexuality. Girls' football at FGU is not about creating girls' football as essentially separated from boys' football, but about creating a football competition as alternative for the dominance of boys in football and public playgrounds, and a place where girls, rather than boys, are the norm – both in terms of football level and in access to football spaces and training. Girls' football at FGU is thus not simply a strictly gender-segregated football practice, nor is the organisation of girls' football related primarily to religious motivations.

I start this chapter with a discussion of girls' motivations for playing in the specific *girls'* football competition of FGU, which include four aspects: social justice, friendship, embodied and physical contact, and football level. I argue that these motivations are related and a reaction to the dominance of boys in 'regular' football in public playgrounds, and I relate these motivations and experiences to critical gender theories on the binary construction of gender and sexuality in football. In the following parts, I discuss the role of boys and the spatial constructions of gender and sexuality in the girls' football of FGU. I argue that Football Girls United resists dominant constructions of gender and heteronormativity in football by organising girls' football and promoting a gender education project that stimulates alternative and more inclusive constructions of masculinity, femininity, and heterosexuality in football. Yet, in these performances of alternative masculinities and femininities, heterosexuality is still being reproduced as the norm in the sporting context of FGU.

Girls' motivations for girls' football spaces: Gender segregation, sexed bodies, and heteronormativity

The girls who play football at Football Girls United are very enthusiastic about the competition and the teams. They experience FGU as a nice and pleasant space to play football together, contrary to girls' experiences of playing football in public playgrounds where they often do not feel welcome, as I discussed in the previous chapter. The most important reason for girls' positive experiences with FGU is that it is a *girls'* competition; the whole organisation of the competition and trainings is focused on girls, and they are thus never the only girl or the only girls' team. This does not mean that girls by definition only want to play football with girls; my observations and interviews show that most girls incidentally or structurally also play football with boys, both in public playgrounds and in FGU. There are, however, different preferences: some girls prefer to play with girls, for example because they think that boys play too hard, while other girls do not care if they play with girls or boys. For example, for Nisha (thirteen years old), one of the FGU football players, skill is more important than gender:

> *FGU is my favourite place to play football, other places such as school are not my favourite, because, there, people think they can play football, but then, in reality, they really cannot. Here, they can.*

I only spoke to three girls in my research who only want to play football in a space where there are no boys around, and their perspectives will be discussed in the section 'Only girls today'. Usually, the preference of girls depends on the context. When I asked a group of twelve-year-old girls, who play football at a community centre in

the Schilderswijk, whether they prefer mixed football or girls' only football, Maya responded:

> *Sometimes with boys and sometimes only girls.*

Sahar, another player, added:

> *Only with boys from our school class, because that's what we're used to, and we know them. We feel better with that. With other boys, you don't know how they react when you touch them by accident for example, like if they get angry or not.*

Most girls thus do not think it is a problem to play with boys, but they prefer to play with boys they know, from the neighbourhood or from school. In FGU, the boys who participate and volunteer are boys they know and are familiar with. That is precisely the reason why girls do not think it is a problem that boys participate and help: they are known, and they are a minority.

The fact that boys are the minority in FGU is the most important and crucial difference with the presence of boys in public football playgrounds. Playing football in public spaces usually means that, as a girl, you play 'with the boys'. In FGU, that is exactly the opposite: boys play amongst and 'with the girls'. Nora, a sixteen-year-old football player and volunteer at FGU, described this in a striking way:

> *I don't mind if there are boys playing with us, it's not like that, because amongst the volunteers are also boys. But there is more attention for boys' football and if we, if girls play with the boys, then we don't get the ball, or we are not picked. If the boys play with the girls, then it's different. Last year, we organised competitions with boys and girls mixed, that just went very well. But as soon as we participate in a boys' competition, then we're again the only girls who play. That's just different than a boys' group here between the girls.*

It is noteworthy that Nora talked about boys' football and boys' competitions. Formally, these general competitions, such as the Danone Nations Cup or the Schilderswijk Street League, are not boys' competitions: they are for everybody. Yet, as I showed in the previous chapter, in general often only boys or a majority of boys participate in these football competitions, and many girls therefore see this as boys' football. Sometimes, the girls use the term boys' football to refer to a competition that *is* specifically for boys, such as the 'masculine' counterpart of FGU: Futsal School Competition. In this boys' football competition, like in FGU, teams from schools and community centres play against each other in a football competition indoors. Notably, there is no gender

marker in the name Futsal School Competition: only the general name for indoor football is used, *futsal*. This implies again that 'general' football, or football without a gender marker, actually means boys' football. Girls' football, then, means a football space that is different than the regular football spaces; it is the counterpart or the exception that confirms regular football space as masculine.

Girls' football at FGU, therefore, is more an alternative for the gendered organisation of public sports spaces than a space that is literally meant only for girls. The starting point is not that *only girls* are allowed in the FGU football spaces, but that girls form the central players and can claim ownership of the football space. Football Girls United, thus, is not a strictly gender-segregated space, but a reaction to and intervention in the gendered construction of the football spaces at most clubs and public playgrounds (where boys dominate and claim ownership), and, thus, an alternative way of gendering football space (Massey 1994; Watson and Ratna 2011). As such, the girls in my research do not think it is a problem that boys are involved in the FGU's girls' football competition. Nadia (fifteen years old) told me that she thinks it is extra nice to play in a girls' football competition, because of the people and the atmosphere:

> *I really can do my own thing there. I always go home with a happy face. In other competitions there's never something specific for girls.*

When boys joined FGU as volunteers, that did not make a difference according to Nadia: 'It just always stayed the same'. What matters to her, and the other players at FGU, is that, despite the involvement of boys, FGU is still a *girls'* competition, where girls are the majority and the point of departure. 'Majority' is not necessarily a majority in quantitative terms, but more importantly a qualitative majority in terms of power and ownership of football spaces. Even when boys participate, or incidentally form the majority, the main focus of FGU stays on the girls and they feel they have more ownership in FGU than in public playgrounds. This is expressed in the name of the competition, Football Girls United, which explicitly includes the name *girls*. The gendered power relations are also expressed through the organisation of FGU competitions, in which girls make their own teams, and decide themselves whether they want to allow boys or not on their teams. What is more, all girls are welcome in FGU, but certainly not all boys. Therefore, Nadia feels comfortable in the FGU competition; she decides with whom, when, and where she is playing, contrary to public playgrounds, where boys are in charge.

For the football girls, the alternative gendering of football spaces, power, and ownership at FGU provides a crucial difference compared with 'regular' football. This becomes clear in their motivations for and experiences of playing in FGU, from

which I identified four different dynamics of gender and power. A first dynamic of the importance of a specific girls' football competition is a form of social justice for the girls. Many girls, and some boys, in my research mentioned that 'there is so much organised for boys; here, at FGU, finally something is now organised for girls'. Since 'regular' football trainings and competitions are often seen as boys' football, it feels right to also have a girls' football competition of their own, next to all the boys' competitions. Although the girls in my research generally think that boys and girls are equal, they experience that, in practice, this is not always the case, like Samira (eleven years old), who participated in a girls' football training:

Kathrine: What do you think about the football only being for girls? Or do you also play with boys?
Samira: Actually, it does not matter because nowadays boys and girls are the same. But it was also really nice, because it was safer, you could make friends, and tell secrets.
Kathrine: And do you think it is important that there are separate sports for girls?
Samira: Actually, it should not be necessary, but it is also really nice. Because some girls wear a headscarf, so then it's nice, and there's also football only for boys: boys' football.

In Samira's comments, there is an implicit message that it is a bit out of date that girls would need their own girls' football spaces. Yet, she justifies the existence of a separate girls' football training by mentioning that there is also boys' football. Most girls in my research think that, since there are already so many sports and leisure activities for boys (although, officially and most of the time, this is general football for everybody), it is a form of social justice and equality that they get to have their own football competition as well.

Social justice is an important topic in sports and intersectionality research, especially in relation to equal access to facilities, resources (Elhage 2017), and in challenging intersectional structures of oppression such as racism and sexism (Dhawan and Castro Varela 2016; Bilge 2014), also in sports (Long and Spracklen 2011). Yet, social justice is not only about being 'equal' to boys or having equal opportunities, but also about power and being in charge of football spaces: 'Social justice is about a fair distribution of material goods but also goes beyond material goods to things like respect, opportunity, power and honour' (Young in Foley, Taylor, and Maxwell 2011, 175). Social justice is also about how power and ownership is distributed spatially (Jaffe and De Koning 2015; Harvey 2008), and it is important for girls to be able to claim ownership and power in football spaces, like they do at Football Girls United.

A second dynamic of gender and power in girls' experiences of their own girls' football competition also became clear in the talk I had with Samira. She mentioned that it is nice to play with girls, so that she can make friends and share secrets. Here, playing football is related to making friends also outside of the football context, something that is more complicated when girls play in 'boys'' football. According to Thorne, friendships outside school and sports contexts are often structured along gender lines, especially in puberty: 'Although girls and boys are together and often interact in classrooms, lunchrooms, and on the playground, these contacts less often deepen into friendship or stable alliances, while same-gender interactions are more likely to solidify into more lasting or acknowledged bonds' (Thorne 1993, 47). Because of the limited leisure spaces for girls in the Schilderswijk, they have less opportunities to solidify their friendships in public spaces, away from their parents' supervision, than boys (Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014). When girls have their own football competition, it is easier for them to develop friendships than when they are the only or amongst the few girls in 'regular' football competitions. How these gendered friendships and relations are also shaped within heteronormative contexts in society and sports will be discussed in relation to the next section on bodies, gender, and sexuality.

A third dynamic in girls' experiences of girls' football is related to the embodied play itself and the construction of gendered bodies and heteronormativity in sports. Girls sometimes feel uncomfortable playing football amongst boys, as Hafsa (sixteen years old) told me when we talked about FGU's girls' football competition:

Kathrine: What do you think about the fact that this competition is only for girls?
Hafsa: Ehm, I think it is actually very good that it's only for girls, since there are very few places where girls can play football. There aren't any football competitions for girls, also there aren't really any football clubs for girls. Everywhere it's really only boys. You can sign up for a boys' competition, but then you're in a group of four girls. Still then you're playing amongst the boys. You just start to feel uncomfortable then and so on. Here, it's girls amongst themselves, that's just much easier, yes. You can learn from each other.

In this quote, it is not entirely clear what causes Hafsa's uncomfortable feeling when she plays in a boys' competition. Later in the talk, when I asked her how she thought about the boys who participate in FGU, she told me that, especially with the younger girls, it was no problem. With the older girls, such as of her age, it is, according to her, better when not many boys are present, or only boys whom they are familiar with. More girls expressed a feeling of discomfort when playing with (many) boys or with

boys they do not know, and some related this to physical contact in the game. Football, especially the street football variant, is a sport with a relative degree of physical contact between the players – a reason why football was seen as unfit for women for a long time (Derks 2017). When girls are at an age during puberty in which their body is changing and developing, this physical contact can make girls feel uncomfortable, insecure, and ashamed (Evans 2006; Thorne 1993, 142; De Beauvoir 2011, 320); this is what Hafsa referred to when she talked about the 'older girls'. Samira mentioned that playing amongst girls can be nicer for girls who wear a headscarf. For some girls, wearing a headscarf marks the transition from girlhood to womanhood, and her comment about the headscarf should therefore not only be related to Islam, but also to changing bodies in puberty and adolescence.

Puberty is a phase in which, in Western countries, girls become constructed as women, as Simone de Beauvoir framed in 1949 with her famous words: 'One is not born, but rather becomes, woman' (De Beauvoir 2011, 283). Embodied and gender differences between boys and girls are not a natural given, but always already performed within a dominant gendered construction of sexed bodies as man or as woman (Butler 1990, 1993). Whereas Butler does not speak about age in the gendered construction of bodies, De Beauvoir specifically pays attention to puberty, when 'the child's body is becoming a woman's body and being made flesh' (De Beauvoir 2011, 320). Before puberty, children are already educated into ideals of femininity and masculinity, for example through stimulating active or passive behaviour, girls' or boys' clothing, or choice of 'feminine' or 'masculine' sports (De Beauvoir 2011; Martin 1998, 1996). Yet, during puberty, this dichotomous gender construction becomes more rigid and explicitly embodied through the separation between men's and women's bodies in domains such as sports, and becomes instilled with a heterosexual meaning (Thorne 1993, 135; Martin 1996; Mora 2012; Swain 2003). The (athletic) body is central in adolescents' construction of distinct gender identities; it is common that boys perform hegemonic masculinity through growing muscles and playing sports (Mora 2012; Swain 2003), whereas girls who play football often avoid growing muscles, since that is not considered 'feminine' enough (Jeanes 2011).[58] Furthermore, feminist scholars have shown that heterosexuality functions as the main normative force in the development of children's gender and sexual identities, which are produced within a heteronormative framework (Renold 2005, 2003; Ortner and Whitehead 1981; Butler 1993). Thorne (1993, 155), inspired by Adrienne Rich (1980), stated about the phase of adolescence: 'Transition to adolescence can be understood as a period of entry into the institution of heterosexuality'. It is in this context of 'entrance' in heterosexuality, and the embodied performance of hegemonic masculinities and femininities, that physical contact in sports can acquire a heterosexual connotation. This, then, can make adolescent players such as Hafsa, Samira, and Sahar feel uncomfortable or unwished for, especially when they play with boys they are not familiar with and whose reactions to physical contact they are as such not yet aware of (similarly, for boys it can be more comfortable to play with boys only, too).

In sports, heteronormativity and gender differences are even more emphasised and enlarged through the segregation of men and women's bodies and the (hetero) sexualising of athletes (Caudwell 2003, 380; Van den Heuvel 2017).[59] The norm of gender segregation in football, along with other spatial gender segregations in (semi-) public spaces such as work (Massey 1994, 179) and bathrooms (Browne 2004; Doan 2010), materialises sexed and gendered bodies in a heteronormative framework (Anderson 2008). Gender differences and hierarchies amongst boys and girls are thus not 'natural' but socially constructed (Ortner and Whitehead 1981; De Beauvoir 2011) – in the case of this research, through the dominant gendered organisation of sports and segregated sports practices. As such, the girls' wishes to have their own girls' football competition need to be placed within this context of gender segregation and heteronormativity in sports, and the development of gendered identities and sexed bodies in adolescence. Playing together with boys in football spaces that are always already sexualised and gendered constructs girls and boys as potential sexual partners rather than mere football buddies. Boys and girls who play football together always run the 'risk' that a sexual relation is assumed or attached to physical contact in the game. Thorne (1993, 71–72) observed in her research that trainers and teachers also try to avoid physical contact in leisure and sports between girls and boys in puberty because of heterosexual meanings. In the previous chapter, these heterosexual connections with playing football became clear in the sexualised discourses that girls experienced in playing football in public playgrounds: they were sometimes accused of 'playing for the boys'. The point previously mentioned in this chapter, that it is easier for girls to develop friendships in girls' football competitions, also takes shape in a heteronormative context in which friendship is often conceptualised as same-gender friendship, and friendship between girls and boys is seen as more complicated (Renold 2005). Playing in a girls' competition with no or with only a few familiar boys might thus feel more comfortable for adolescent girls. Nisa, who organises girls' football at a community centre, also noticed this: 'When girls play amongst girls, then they're different, they dare to play more'.

Football Girls United is not a 'traditional' girls' football competition in which only girls play, but a space where boys and girls play football together. In this alternative football space, the volunteers and football players deal with gender norms in heteronormative contexts in a different way, for example through promoting (non-sexual) friendships between boys and girls. Because of this possibility, girls and boys

are less quickly placed in a context of assumptions around sexual relations and can therefore play more easily and comfortably with each other. Contrary to what Van den Heuvel (2017) argues for elite women's football (where women's football also literally means football only for women, defined by regulation), the girls' football of FGU does have the potential to destabilise gender norms, precisely because it does not hold on to a fixed and rigid spatial binary of gender segregation. Rather than a gender-segregated space, girls' football at FGU is a space where (alternative) gender *relations* are central, through the organisation of a *girls*' competition that encompasses *boys*. In the section on the role of boys in FGU, I will elaborate more on this point.

Next to gendered bodies, social justice, and friendships in football, there is a fourth dynamic of gender and power in girls' experiences of and motivations for girls' football: the football level of boys and girls. Many boys and girls told me that they experience that boys are generally better at playing football than girls. When the difference in football level is too big, it can be less amusing for girls to play amongst boys, and any possible insecurities regarding their (changing) bodies can become amplified with insecurities about their football level and skills (Evans 2006). Sonia (twelve years old) told me that, in the future, she might want to play at an official football club, but only on a girls' team:

> *Because yes, it's girls and then you know a bit what their level is. Maybe boys are better, and then you're on a team with boys and then you think 'Yes, they are better, what am I doing here then?'*

Noha (ten years old) mentioned that she likes playing on a girls' team, but 'only with girls who are really good, otherwise that's useless'. She usually plays with boys, and she won in a 6vs6 Cruyff Court competition in Utrecht with her girls' team. Level is thus important in determining with whom football players want to play, although many trainers, players, and parents already assume that girls are less good at playing football. Noha, for example, saw the need to mention that she wants to play football with girls, but 'only if they're really good'. Evans (2006), in her research, found that girls prefer to play amongst girls, because they feel ashamed and insecure about their football skills compared with boys. In other words, level is an important factor in girls' preference for playing amongst girls or mixed, although level is inextricably attached to dichotomous embodied and gendered differences and separations in football.

Through sports performances in a binary gender system, gendered athletic bodies become naturalised, as if they exist as such in biology, although they are actually produced *performatively*, according to Butler: 'The contour that marks the athletic body is a contour produced over time, established again and again, the spatialized result of a certain repetition' (Butler 1998, 2). It is the result of the spatial separation

and construction of (athletic) bodies in two dichotomous categories: men and women. Through repetitive performances of spatial segregation, football training, and body stylisation, girls' and boys' football performances, level, and skills become inscribed onto their bodies. Because boys have more access to football spaces, and often receive better training than girls (see the previous chapter), there is a self-fulfilling logic in which boys become better football players than girls. Differences in football level between girls and boys are maintained through this binary segregation, because, in Dutch football clubs, girls who are really good at football are often placed on the boys' teams (Siebelink 2016b), so the girls' teams cannot develop and will always stay at a level below the boys' teams.

Girls wishing to play football amongst girls because of level thus need to be placed in this context; it is not a 'natural' difference of boys' and girls' bodies, but a consequence of the dichotomous spatial organisation of sports. Their wish for their own girls' football competition is, at the same time, also a performative reproduction of the gendered difference in football level and of gendered bodies in football, although with a difference, because some boys' athletic bodies are also included in FGU, which is the topic of the next section.

In this first part of the chapter, I have shown how girls' experiences of and motivations for playing in a girls' football competition has four interrelated dynamics of gender, power, and spatial organisation in football: social justice, friendship, sexed and gendered bodies, and football level. Girls' motivations for having their own girls' football competition are not necessarily based on the wish to play in a strictly gender-segregated girls only football competition, as is often assumed in research on gender and sports when it concerns Muslim women, as I have discussed in Chapter 1. The girls' wishes are rather a response to the dominant ways of constructing football space in gender-binary and hierarchical ways, with boys and men in dominant positions of power and girls being constructed as 'out of place' (Puwar 2004). The girls' practices and wishes in football are thus not primarily motivated by religious motivations or piety (except for the 'only girls today' case, which I discuss later in this chapter), as is often assumed in research on Muslim women and sports, but by the gendered and spatial organisation of football. In my research, an intersectional perspective puts the attention on different categories of difference (Wekker 2002; Nash 2008; Collins 2015) rather than explaining Muslim women's sportive lives only from the axis of religion and Islam. In the next chapter, I focus on how girls' gendered experiences in football intersect with religion and Islam.

FGU offers an alternative football space where girls', rather than boys, are the central players, and where girls are in charge of organising football in terms of friendship, level, and embodied play, even if boys are present. The 'girls' in Football

Girls United and in girls' football is thus not a literal description, but a performative act (Butler 1993) to create a football space with alternative gendered power relations: a space where girls are in charge. The performative naming of 'girls' in girls' football is not only discursive, but also creates a specific physical space of football that is different from 'regular' football spaces, such as the public playgrounds in the neighbourhood. The act of naming the competition a 'girls'' competition is necessary, even though it does not include in its name the participation of boys, because football without a gender marker is, within the dominant gendered constructions of football, automatically perceived as boys' football. Within this spatial and discursive performative act of Football Girls United, it remains the question what is specifically the role of boys in the football competition. In the next part, I will zoom in on the underlying idea of FGU to welcome and include boys in their girls' competition.

Girls only? The role of boys in Football Girls United

The first time I visited FGU, in March 2014, Hanan introduced the organisation of the trainings and competitions to me and made clear the reason of boys' participation in the girls' competition:

> *The competitions and trainings are only for girls, but boys can watch, just not too much. Some girls don't feel comfortable with that. First, we were very strict, like really only for girls. But it's also important that they learn how to deal with boys, they see them in their daily life as well. So now we're a little bit more flexible when it comes to that.*

A month later, the boys and girls of FGU were playing football in one of the public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk, and I again talked about this issue with Hanan. She told me that, in 2008, when they started, she really wanted the competition strictly separated for girls:

> *At that time, we thought that that was good. But now we want for boys and girls from the neighbourhood to get to know each other. You know, otherwise they only see each other in those shisha cafés, there is one around the corner.*

One of the football players who sat next to us nodded affirmatively, and Hanan continued:

> *Where in this neighbourhood do you see boys and girls interact with each other and learn how to interact with each other? Nowhere. Here, we teach girls how to deal with boys, and here we teach boys how they should deal with girls.*

The participation of boys in FGU is thus not just a side issue, but central in the gender and education goals of FGU. Hanan not only wants to provide girls with a safe space to play football amongst girls, but also to create a safe space where girls can interact with boys in leisure times and spaces.[60] As the initiator and coordinator of FGU, Hanan is, most of the time, the one to implement and focus on these gender relations amongst boys and girls in FGU. This is not the official policy, but more an organic process based on the wishes and needs of the girls and in dialogue with them, much like the competition itself. In this case, it was an explicit wish of the girls in FGU to also involve boys in the competition, Hanan told me.

The goal of FGU is, as Hanan frames it, to create a space for girls and boys from the Schilderswijk to meet and engage with each other in a friendly way. This contrasts with other leisure spaces in the neighbourhood such as shisha cafés; as I sensed from her comment above, these are not known as positive spaces for boys and girls to meet each other. Hanging around in public squares or in shisha cafés with boys calls on unwanted sexual associations, as became clear from Hafsa's following comment (see also Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014, 41). Hafsa told me that it are not only her parents who think it is positive that she plays football at FGU, but that she herself also thinks it is better to play football than to hang around outside:

> *We're inside here, it's safe here; outside, you have many girls who hit on the boys, for example by lying between the boys in shisha lounges. That's not for me, I rather play football. But that's my opinion, I don't know what others think about that. Others may think: 'Oh, she's playing football'.*

An important difference is that, in FGU's girls' football, boys arrive in a space that is dominated and defined by girls, and where boys are present in order to create different gender and sexual relationships. In shisha cafés and the streets, this is the other way around: these are leisure spaces that are constructed and reproduced as masculine, and mainly occupied by boys.

The preparation for the yearly finale of the FGU competition is a good example to look at the boys' role in creating new relations of gender and power in football. The yearly finale is a festive closing of the football season with music, food, an award ceremony, and spectators such as parents, residents, and sponsors. A few weeks in advance, a group of about ten volunteers and football players gather after a football training to brainstorm about the set-up of the day. Jamal (thirteen years old), who had been a volunteer for a little less than a year at the time, told the group that he is a rapper and that he would like to sing a song at the finale, for example the song 'Totally fucked up'[61] from the Dutch band The Partysquad. Hanan responded:

> *It should be a good text, a text with respect. I want the parents to see that we do good things here. So, you can come up with a text yourself about girls who can play football very well and who deserve respect. But you can make that up on the melody of the 'Totally fucked up' song.*

The young boy became very enthusiastic and quickly made up the first sentence of his song: 'Girls are the best, come try and test!'[62] In this way, this boy was steered and educated to remake a rap about booze and barmaids, which can be interpreted as sexist, into a self-made rap about girls who are the best at playing football and who deserve recognition and respect. This is clearly a reaction to and alternative for the dominant gendered power relations in public football playgrounds, where girls are seen as bad football players or only have limited access to.

Although FGU is not a school, it does have some commonalities with schooling. In schools, there are regulations about who can occupy certain spaces when, there are written and unwritten rules about desirable behaviour, and there are implicit gender norms imposed on the pupils. Lupton and Tulloch (in Evans 2006, 547) state the following about the school context: 'One of the "hidden agendas" of the school is to regulate, normalise, and discipline children's bodies' (see also Morris 2005). According to Christensen and Mikkelsen (2013) and Harris (2004), regulation and control of children's bodies is increasingly becoming the practice in the daily lives of children also in public leisure spaces. Leisure and 'free' play in public spaces are becoming increasingly institutionalised by adults, even though children's leisure used to be precisely identified by the *absence* of adults and institutions' control and regulation (Harris 2004). FGU is a space in which boys (and girls) are also disciplined and educated into appropriate gender relations and behaviours. According to Foucault (1977), discipline is a set of methods and techniques to exercise power on bodies and to create docile bodies that behave in desirable ways in social contexts such as work, the army, or prisons. Sports (with coaching and training) and education (with surveillance, control, and learning) are important domains for disciplining bodies in desirable ways, related to behavioural norms based on gender, heteronormativity, class, religion, and race/ethnicity (Morris 2005; Martin 1998; Dortants and Knoppers 2013).

Discipline is always exercised through a spatial and temporal division of bodies, in both material – for example, a fence – and discursive ways – such as the creation of hierarchies or level. Discipline is ideally exercised in a segregated space and time, such as a pedagogical educational space that is separated from daily social lives (Foucault 1977), as is the case in schools, in sports, and in FGU. To create alternative gender and sexual relations in FGU, a separated space from 'regular' football is needed, in which there can be a level of control on which boys enter, and on which boys can be educated and steered according to the equal gender relations that Hanan promotes in FGU. It is necessary for Hanan to create a separated space to be able to implement disciplinary power that is based on alternative and more equal ideals of gender relations in football. Furthermore, Hanan expects that the boys take on an active role in organising the girls' football competition and are not just there to hang around and watch the girls play. By taking on an active role as volunteer or trainer, they can be educated or trained in approaching girls with respect.

The gender relations that Hanan promotes also encompass different gendered spatial practices, as she frequently takes boys from the field who move the ball through the whole field without passing it to girls, or who play aggressively or egoistically. In some matches, boys are allowed to participate on the field, in others they are expected to remain at the sidelines or only defend the goal. Hanan disciplines the boys through limiting their spatial and embodied practices. She often calls from the sidelines that they should play together and cooperate. In this way, boys learn that they cannot claim football space as only theirs, but that they have to share it with girls, or even give priority to the girls. Hanan aims to change dominant gender relations in football through gendered spatial practices on the field; these spaces are not only gendered themselves, but, through space and spatial practices in football, gender relations are constructed and reconfigured (Massey 1994; Jaffe and De Koning 2015; Rosaldo 1980).

Many boys in FGU are cousins, brothers, or neighbours of the football girls. Usually, the girls introduce the boys to FGU, so they have a voice in which boys participate in the girls' football, and the boys are known and familiar to (at least some of) the girls. Although Hanan has mentioned to me that boys are not allowed to just watch the girls' play, and can only come along if they actively participate as volunteer, referee, or coach, I did speak with a few boys who were spectators at first, and only later became volunteers. Khalid, for example, who is in his early twenties:

> *I've been coming here for five years already, but now a little bit less because I'm busy. I first came here to watch the girls, then I was like that, a young boy. Then, that was what you did, like, to impress. Then Hanan asked me if I wanted to help out and now I've been doing that already for five years.*

Mansour (fourteen years old) became involved with FGU in this way, too. He sometimes came to FGU to watch the matches, and then Hanan asked him if he wanted to help with a small task, and later he helped more often. He is very positive about the girls' competition and he told me that the boys who volunteer also make sure that no unknown boys come to FGU. But, he emphasised, there are only boy volunteers as long as the girls agree.

During my talk with Mansour, we were sitting in the hallway of the sports complex, and a few boys came in. Mansour sent them away, but I could not follow the conversation because it proceeded in Moroccan.[63] After the boys went away, he told me: 'they are not allowed in here'. It could be possible that, in that moment, he sent the boys away to enforce his previous statement to me, that the boy volunteers are also there to control other boys. Yet, at other moments, the volunteers of FGU also made sure to keep unknown or undesirable boys outside, for example at the finale of the competition in May 2014: when I left the sports complex at the end of the day, there were volunteers in the hallway who quickly closed the door and who controlled who could enter. In other words, the role and regulation of boys in FGU is not always related to the specific tasks or roles boys pick up, but more importantly to only allowing 'good' boys entry to the girls' football spaces of FGU. Hafsa explained this to me in the following way:

> *Kathrine: There are quite a few boys on the staff and as volunteers in FGU, is that on purpose, that there are both boys and girls in FGU? Or is it just that everyone who wants to volunteer can just come?*
> *Hafsa: No, because Hanan does look at whether they, whether they are really committed. Not that they just come for the girls, but that they are really there to volunteer and to learn girls how to play football. Not to score their phone numbers or something like that. But you also feel that, with the boys in FGU, they're just, they are here voluntarily, they come to teach football, and then they just quietly go home after. It's not like 'hey, hang around with me' or something.*

Hanan said the following about the boys who volunteer in FGU:

> *We can really benefit from good boys, like Ilias. But we just have to make sure that no strange boys come in.*

In FGU, 'good' boys are thus described as boys who come to FGU because they are committed to girls' football, have respect for girls, and make sure that girls can play football in a context that is not overly sexualised. Mansour, Khalid, and the other male volunteers describe their involvement in FGU as if they are training their own sisters or cousins in football. As became clear from the talk with Mansour, boys also take up roles as 'protectors' of girls, who, in that way, become constructed as 'vulnerable' and in need of this protection. This reproduces the patriarchal idea that men need to protect women. 'Bad' boys are described as unknown or 'strange' boys who just come to the girls' football to watch the girls play, to hit on the girls, or to look for a girlfriend, and they are unwanted in the FGU football spaces. When unknown boys come to FGU, Hanan first talks to them to get an idea of their motivations to join, and to teach them about respect for the football girls.

When I visited FGU again in the last phase of writing this dissertation, in March 2018, Hanan was educating new boys who wanted to participate in the football at FGU, too. When I entered the sports hall, she had no time to extensively greet or introduce me, but she said, in a casual way, that she was still teaching 'Moroccan class' and that she would join me quickly after that. Here, she casually related her gender education project to the specific Moroccan-Dutch community to which most of the girls and boys in FGU belong, and where specific concerns regarding gender, sexuality, physical contact, and public spaces can be experienced.[64] As also Green and Singleton (2007) point out, discourses in local (ethnic or religious) communities about girls' and women's respectability and reputation, related to patriarchal ideas of honour and modesty, are an important concern in the decision of girls for appropriate sports and leisure activities. In my research, some girls, too, showed concerns regarding 'appropriate' leisure spaces, in which most girls agree that shisha cafés in the neighbourhood are not places they want or can visit, whereas FGU is a safe and welcome space for girls. The focus on respect in FGU risks to reinstal dominant norms and relations of gender and sexuality, in which girls, in turn, need to be *respectable* and protected.

Much attention in this dissertation is paid to challenging gendered and racialised stereotypes of Muslim girls that are based on dominant ideas of Islam as backward and essentially oppressing women. The risk of this focus is to overlook the specific issues regarding gender and sexuality that Moroccan-Dutch, Turkish-Dutch, Muslim, or Hindustan girls and women struggle with. Two recent examples that Nadia Ezzeroili (2018) discussed in her opinion piece in Dutch newspaper *de Volkskrant* are the phenomenon of exposure WhatsApp groups, and the framing of Muslim women who are out late at night as *kechs* (whores). Although I have not observed this, some girls in my research also mentioned that boys called them whores because they played football in public playgrounds. The risk to overlook these issues is related to my own situatedness in the research as a white non-Muslim researcher from outside the Schilderswijk; specific experiences regarding Moroccan-Dutch communities are possibly much less emphasised by Hanan and the other girls to me and to other white Dutch people outside the neighbourhood, because they do not want to reinforce negative representations of Moroccan-Dutch and Muslim citizens. The experiences of girls as 'out of place' in public football playgrounds is not specific to or exclusionary of Moroccan-Dutch or Muslim women, or only the case in the Schilderswijk – this was something I found across the Netherlands in multiple places. Yet, the gendered, sexual, bodily, and spatial struggles and norms girls and women in public spaces in and outside football have to deal with, especially concerning respectability, have different

histories and impacts on women with different ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds, and this should also be part of feminist intersectional analyses (Dhawan and Castro Varela 2016).

Hanan's gender educational 'intervention' can thus be seen as working in multiple directions: within the public spaces of Schilderswijk and amongst children and youths with Moroccan-Dutch and Muslim backgrounds; within the dominant gendered spatial organisation of football that creates girls as 'second-class' players; and outside the Schilderswijk, in relation to representations of Moroccan-Dutch and Muslim youths in broader Dutch society. The work of Hanan and the other volunteers in FGU shows that specific gender and sexual struggles in Moroccan-Dutch communities and in football are not inherent or fixed but are subject to change, creating possibilities for more equal opportunities, and this is precisely why she includes boys in FGU. This 'positive' message is one that she is keen on sharing with others, in allowing me as researcher in her football competition, but, for example, also through representations in social media, where she shared a picture of some of the boy volunteers with the caption: 'Moroccans are doing something good for their neighbourhood!'

The gender and sexuality norms the girls have to deal with, and the exercise of those norms in 'respectable' leisure spaces, is not only imposed on them by boys, parents, or adults. There is also the exercise of self-discipline, which is, according to Foucault, a form of discipline in which the institution that is imposing power and norms is absent, yet those norms are internalised by subjects, who therefore exercise control over themselves. This is, for example, visible in how girls themselves frame shisha cafés as inappropriate leisure spaces, like Hafsa did. Norms, normalising, and conformity in societies thus come into being not only by external force, but through the internalising of norms and the 'naturalisation' of norms as well (Foucault 1989, 251; 1977; Harris 2004, 115), for example in the strictly arranged segregation of bodies in sports (Foucault 1977; Butler 1993). Yet, the internalising of norms is always performed *with a difference*; discipline is never one-directional but subject to performative resistance and change. Subjects, including children, do not just 'undergo' discipline, but use discipline, resist and challenge discipline, and rework discipline, not in the least case through performative practices in sports (Butler 1993, 1998; Dyck 2008; Caudwell 2003; Dortants and Knoppers 2013; Markula and Pringle 2006). Gendered norms are always 'ideals which no gendered body fully or exhaustively embodies. [...] Indeed, such ideals are also transformed in subtle and significant ways in and through their public and dramatic performances' (Butler 1998, 4). This aspect of performative change is the focus of the next part, in which I look at how gendered norms in sports are reworked into alternative constructions of femininity and masculinity by the girls and boys in FGU through playing football. From the specific focus on the role of boys in FGU, I move to a broader discussion of the spatial organisations and intersectional constructions of gender and (hetero)sexuality in FGU's practice, and I illustrate this with two case studies: the boys-girls-tournament and 'only girls today'.

Intersectional constructions of masculinity, femininity, and (hetero)sexuality at Football Girls United

Much sports sociological and feminist research on gender and sports has taken Foucault's model of the body, discipline, and power to study how coaching, training, and sports pedagogies play out (differently) on women's and men's bodies, and in relation to hegemonic conceptions of masculinity and femininity (Friedman 2013; Azzarito 2010; Pringle 2014). As I have stated earlier in this dissertation, hegemonic femininity, with ideals of being passive, decent, polite, physical attractive, and slim, is difficult to combine with hegemonic ideals in football, where ideals that are perceived as masculine, such as power, competition, and physical activity, are central (Friedman 2013; Evans 2006; Morris 2005; Azzarito 2010; Young 2005). Various scholars argue that, especially in women's sports, and, more specifically, in women's football, alternative performances of gender and femininity are possible, because of its radical altering of dominant gender norms in athletic performance (Caudwell 2003; Butler 1998; Pringle 2014). Furthermore, the 'spectacular public restaging' of women's sports can 'broaden the scope of acceptable gender performance' and pose performative resistance to hegemonic femininity (Butler 1998, 4). Azzarito (2010) indeed shows that gender and sexuality norms can be subject to change in and through sports. According to her, new hegemonic femininities have emerged in relation to sports and sports media, which produce an ideal of fit, healthy, strong, and sportive female bodies. Notwithstanding, these athletic femininities are still produced and only acceptable within a framework of heterosexual feminine performance (Evans 2006, 557; Van den Heuvel 2017).

However, an intersectional approach is needed here: race/ethnicity, religion, and class co-determine to which specific bodies an ideal of athletic femininity as strong, sportive, and slim is accessible. Azzarito (2010) argues that Muslim girls are constructed outside of this ideal, because they are often perceived as oppressed and inactive, supposedly because of their headscarf and covered clothing.[65] They are rather portrayed as unhealthy and 'at risk' (see also Abu-Lughod 2013; El-Tayeb 2011), as 'other' compared with the healthy, sportive, and strong dominant performances of white femininity in the sports media that Azzarito has analysed. For boys, too, race/ethnicity, religion, and class are central in disciplining bodies as desirable subjects in school or sports. Sports are normally a domain in which values, movements, and actions that are seen as 'masculine', such as power, competition, and dominance, are

the norm (Shogan in Pringle 2014, 401). Yet, for racialised and Muslim boys, this 'masculine' behaviour is, in many public and educational contexts, not seen as the norm but as a problem (El-Tayeb 2011; Ferguson 2001; Jaffe-Walter 2016; Martin 1998; Morris 2005; Thorne 1993). Jaffe-Walter (2016, 144) argues, based on Danish research by Laura Gilliam: 'Rather than viewing the individual infractions of Muslim students through the lens of normative male adolescent behaviour, teachers see them through the lens of criminality and cultural deviance'. Racialised boys are systematically seen as a threat, as causers of problems, as deviant from the norm (El-Tayeb 2011, 7 see also previous chapters), and therefore more often subject to disciplinary forces than white or ethnic majority boys (Ferguson 2001; Morris 2005; Jaffe-Walter 2016).[66] The carefully formulated comments of Peter in the previous chapter about 'Moroccan' boys in public playgrounds can be seen as part of this dominant framing of 'Moroccan' boys as problematic. Another Dutch example in the context of sports is the statement made by football commentator Johan Derksen,[67] who said that there are too many 'Moroccan' boys at football clubs and that this is causing problems. They are, in his words, often good at kicking a ball, but not disciplined enough to become real, professional football players. The constructions of masculinity and femininity in football are thus embedded in racialised power relations and hierarchies, in which Muslim or ethnic minority boys and girls are perceived as essentially different (Silverstein 2005; El-Tayeb 2011).

Sports and school are important domains for the disciplining and embodiment of national ideologies, citizenship, and for the supposed integration of racial/ethnic or religious minorities (Silverstein 2000, 33; Besnier and Brownell 2012; Jaffe-Walter 2016, 33; Rana 2014). Gender and heterosexual norms are crucial in disciplining racialised and religious 'other' bodies, such as the norm in sports to take a shower together, naked, with same-sex sports players after the training. Boys and girls who are not comfortable in doing so, who are already assumed to not want to take part in those norms because of their religious or ethnic background,[68] are constructed as not yet fully disciplined and integrated into Dutch national ideologies of gender, sexuality, and sports. In the next chapter, I will discuss the construction of Dutch cultural citizenship in relation to gender and religion in sports in more detail.

In Football Girls United, ideals and norms of gender and sexuality in relation to football, race/ethnicity, and religion are differently produced. Dominant spatial gender norms of playing football are being transformed into renewed and more inclusive performances of femininity and masculinity, also in relation to religion and race/ethnicity. FGU promotes an inclusive interpretation of femininity that is not in conflict with playing football or wearing a headscarf. There is space in FGU for forms of femininity that are not necessarily based on hegemonic athletic femininities of slim, sportive, and hetero-'sexy' attractive bodies. Girls who wear headscarves or covered

clothing are recognised and accepted as real football players, too. Yet, at the same time, other norms are installed within FGU, based on desirable behaviour of boys and girls: smoking and hanging around in shisha lounges are, for example, seen as less desirable activities for girls. There is also an alternative conception of masculinity in FGU, based on having respect for and recognising girls as 'real' and good football players. Rather than reproducing hegemonic masculinity (Swain 2000; Anderson 2008; Renold 1997), boys are taught that it is normal for girls to play football, that girls also perform competition and athletic activity, and are thus 'in place' in football spaces and competitions. Furthermore, boys are educated to limit their claims on football spaces in FGU, as these are mainly reserved for the girls – contrary to football in public playgrounds.

In FGU, Moroccan-Dutch boys are not perceived as a problem, and as supposedly threatening Dutch national values of gender and sexual emancipation (El-Tayeb 2011; Wekker 2016; Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010; Masquelier and Soares), but as part of the solution for creating more equal opportunities for girls in football spaces in the Schilderswijk and beyond. Crucial here is that not only girls' performative football play poses challenges to dominant spatial constructions of gender and sexuality in football, but also boys' performative play, through playing and volunteering in the girls' football spaces of FGU. The role of boys as crucial actors in challenging hierarchical and exclusive gender relations in different (public) spaces is a topic that has increasingly gained attention in feminist activism over the past years,[69] and fits within a broader growing attention in feminist research on the various hegemonic and non-hegemonic performativities of masculinity (Renold 1997, 2005, Swain 2000, 2003; Anderson 2008; Archer 2003; Mora 2012). This does not implicate that patriarchal or heteronormative power relations are lifted (Renold 1997), but they are performatively reworked in different contexts and in relation to constructions of femininity and sexuality, for example in and through sports.

FGU creates a separated and controlled *girls'* football space with norms that provide resistance to gender and sexuality norms in 'regular' football spaces. Yet, norms in 'regular' football space are, at the same time, also being reproduced in FGU, for example the patriarchal idea that boys need to protect girls and the risk of reproducing patriarchal conceptions of girls' 'respectability', but also the norm of heterosexual orientation. A dichotomous difference between boys and girls is still present and reproduced, for example through the difference in access: all girls are welcome, but only certain, 'good' boys are allowed in, and they have to first be educated by Hanan on the topics of respect, gender, and sexuality. One of the aims of FGU is to challenge the sexualisation of girls in football; yet, by placing this dynamic as part of regulating the relations between boys and girls, it assumes heterosexual

orientation. In the following case studies, the norms and assumptions of gender and heterosexuality in FGU in relation to the different spatial ways of organising girls' football in FGU are discussed. The case studies show that gender segregation in the girls' football competition is never stable, but subject to changing needs, wishes, and contexts.

'Only girls today'

Although football at FGU almost never means a 'real' gender-segregated space, it does in exceptional moments. On a Sunday afternoon in January 2015, Hanan asked the boys and girls who came for the girls' football to sit down on the benches in the sports hall, and said: 'I would like to ask all men and boys to leave. You can come back at half past four. *I only want girls today*'. The boys walked away and went to sit together in the hallway of the sports complex. I asked one of the volunteers why the boys had to leave, and Nora responded:

> *Nora: A few girls don't like it when boys join.*
> *Kathrine: Why not?*
> *Nora: They wear a headscarf, a niqab,*[70] *and then they can play football without a headscarf here.*

Shortly after, the three girls, Hilal, Lisa, and Farida, about whom Nora was talking, came out of the locker room in sports clothes. I had not seen them before at FGU or at different football activities in the Schilderswijk. In the meantime, some volunteers were sticking trash bags over the windows of the sports hall, so that no one could look inside. Mansour came in the doorway to ask something, but Hanan responds angrily: '*No* boys here now, no, really not!' Hilal walked to the other side of the hall and kept her hands before her face, saying: 'I don't know if there's a boy here'. Later, I again saw her watching the door carefully when it opened, to see who was entering. Hanan emphasised that no one was allowed to put pictures of the sports training on social media, something they normally do. Hanan did take a picture of Lisa, Hilal, and Farida for social media, but in such a way that their faces were not visible. The girls also filmed each other, but they made sure their faces were not included.

When I had a short talk with Lisa, she told me that she thinks it is a pity that there were not that many girls of her age (twenty-one) present that afternoon:

> *Lisa: For years, I didn't play sports, that's really clear to me now, your physical fitness vanishes really quickly! While, in the past, I used to be very sportive. And when I went to secondary school, I quit playing sports.*
> *Kathrine: Do you want to come here more often?*

> *Lisa: Do they do this every week here? Yes, then I would like to be with more girls of my age. I do miss football. Hanan is my neighbour, that's why she took us here this time.*

When I asked the girls whether it is important that the football is only for girls, Farida responded: 'For me that's important, yes'. I did not have time to ask them much more, because they had to return to the field, and I did not want to take their spare football time away by asking too many questions. I asked Hanan whether the boys mind that they had to leave: 'Oh no, they don't mind, they respect that. And still, they watch if no strange boys come in. They feel very responsible'. When the boys came back around 5 p.m., they confirmed this. Mansour said: 'No, it's normal that they also get time to play football here, right?'

Football Girls United thus also wants to create space and time for girls who do not want to play with boys because of their religious beliefs. Most of the times, boys are allowed in the football spaces of FGU, yet this time it was necessary to create a separated space within the space of FGU, one really only for girls. Although not physically present in the sports hall itself, the boys did play a role in making sure that no other boys were entering the sports complex. The organisation of a real girls only football training in FGU nevertheless remains an exception, as this was the only girls only afternoon during my fieldwork period. Hanan told me that, when they organise a mother-daughter sports day, they usually also play without boys and men, because mothers are not used to playing football, so it can be more comfortable for them when they only play with their daughters and other women. My observations in FGU, where the girls also play with boys, for example in the girls-boys tournament I will discuss below, run against the prominent focus on girls only sports in debates and research on Muslim women. In these debates, it is assumed that gender segregation is crucial for Muslim girls' sports participation because of their religious beliefs, but this is too simplistic, and overlooks the ways in which gender and sexuality norms in sports also shape Muslim girls' experiences, as I have shown in this chapter (see also Samie 2013).

The girls-boys tournament

On a Wednesday afternoon in April 2014, the FGU volunteers organised a girls-boys tournament on their own initiative. This was the first time that FGU organised such a tournament for both boys' and girls' teams. When I arrived, the sports hall was full of boys and girls between eleven and fifteen years old. The matches had not started yet and the preparations were in full swing: the registration of the players, the forming of the teams, and the set-up of the schedule. On the left side of the stands, the boys' teams were sitting, and, on the right side, the girls'. Although the girls' teams and boys'

teams sat separately, the volunteers of FGU sat mixed between the boys and the girls. They were there to make sure that the boys and girls stayed on their own half, and they guided and coached the teams during the tournament. Some of the boy volunteers of FGU sat between the girls, and Nina, also one of the volunteers, sat on the left side between the boys. Some other volunteers of FGU laughed about that, because Nina was the only girl from FGU to sit between the boys. One of the volunteers said: 'She's looking for a boyfriend. But those boys are much younger than her, haha!'

Then, the first match began, and the girls' teams played against the boys' teams. After every goal, a famous Moroccan song was played through the sound speakers. The boys' and girls' teams moved up quite equally in the rankings of the day. But, when Nisha and Ines's team had lost several matches, they asked two boys to be standby for their team, and to become substitute players when they were losing. Other football players told me that they sometimes use that same tactic in school football competitions. In the end, one of the boys played on Nisha and Ines' team, but they lost the match nevertheless. When the day was almost finished, and the finals were being played, Hanan told me that, if the day proceeds well and if everyone likes it, she might organise boys-girls-tournaments more often. But, possibly only with the younger football players, as the boys between thirteen and fifteen years old are 'too noisy and they don't listen'.

This tournament made clear that the girls of FGU like to play with – or against – boys; this competition was their own initiative. It is, however, still the case that the boys and girls are separated and treated as distinct groups. Part of the fun was precisely to play as girls *against the boys*, as a kind of battle of the sexes. Such a battle follows from the dominant sexed and gendered binary segregation in sports. In challenging gender norms in sports, it is exciting and motivating for girls to challenge the biggest gender norm in sports: the hierarchical gender separation with boys at the top of the ranking. Nevertheless, if boys are needed for your own team to win, they are more than welcome to join, as Nisha and Ines negotiated. Although this might reinstal the dominant idea that boys are better football players than girls, the difference with street football is that, here, the girls are in charge of the when, how, and why of letting boys join. The spatial and sportive performances of gender in football show that the performativity of gender is never a linear process, but one of messy negotiations of gender, bodies, play, and winning. In some moments, gender norms and stereotypes are being challenged and resisted, in other moments – when winning is more important – they might be reinstalled.

The kind of spatial segregation of boys and girls in FGU is one that is different and messier than the usual ways of gender segregation in sports. At the same time, this spatial segregation reinstalls and reproduces a dominant heterosexual orientation, as

possible sexual relations between boys and girls continue to be negotiated, for example when the volunteers were making fun of Nina, who sat between the boys.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that girls have diverse reasons for playing football in a specific girls' football competition, and these are not limited to their religious beliefs or backgrounds. Social justice, friendships, embodied and physical contact, and football level are important concerns for girls in choosing for a girls' football competition, and these all have to do with the dominant constructions of gender and sexuality in sports. At the same time, I have shown that girls' football does not necessarily mean a strict gender segregation, but that, in FGU, girls' football is about creating different gendered power relations in football, as a reaction to the dominant position of boys in 'regular' football. FGU's girls' football places girls as the central players, but also leaves room for the engagement of certain boys in the girls' football competition – which is the opposite of gender relations in football in public playgrounds. Furthermore, Football Girls United creates more inclusive ideals of athletic femininity, masculinity, and gender relations between boys and girls in the context of friendship, rather than of sexualisation in football. This means that boys are present in FGU's girls' football, to educate and discipline both boys and girls into the gender norms and ideals of FGU: masculinity is constructed as having respect for girls, and femininity is constructed as encompassing both football and Muslim embodiments and identities. In that, both boys and girls performatively practise alternative gendered bodies and norms through playing football.

At the same time, I have shown that the spatial practices of girls' football at FGU also reproduce gender and sexuality norms related to protection, respectability, and heteronormativity. Spatial constructions of gender and sexuality are messy, sometimes contradictory, and subject to change. Performative and spatial practices of girls' football are both a resistance to and reproduction of dominant norms of gender segregation and (hetero)sexuality in football and sports. Girls' football at FGU cannot escape gender dichotomies of girls and boys in football either, but their spatial football practices are much more layered and nuanced than a simple rigid and fixed segregation. This is an important addition to and critique on existing literature on Muslim women and sports, in which Muslim girls' football is approached as a strictly gender-segregated space, informed primarily by religious convictions. These studies approach Muslim girls' participation in football only from a religious point of view, and do not look at Muslim girls' preferences and motivations for playing football in relation to other axes of difference and power, such as gender and sexuality in broader

sports culture. This reproduces popular and public representations of Muslim girls as inherently 'other' to white Western societies, while this and the previous chapter have shown that Muslim girls actually share much of the broader concerns of gender norms and male dominance in football and public playgrounds. Therefore, FGU girls' football is about creating alternative gender relations between boys and girls in football, and about creating alternative masculinities and femininities in athletic contexts. Yet, the construction of Muslims as ultimate 'others' in Dutch society, and the implementation of neighbourhood sports programmes for the integration and emancipation of Muslim girls, does bring in culturalised citizenship and religious difference as specific categories of power and oppression the girls in my research had to deal with. This is the focus of the next chapter.

Playing religion, gender, and citizenship: Girls' football and Dutch culturalised citizenship

Introduction

Football Girls United's activities in the Schilderswijk play against the backdrop of polarised debates about Muslim immigration to Europe and about the integration of ethnic and Muslim minorities in urban multicultural neighbourhoods. In dominant discourses in media and politics, the starting point is that Moroccan-Dutch and Muslim citizens still need to be 'integrated' into Dutch society, even when they are born and raised in the Netherlands. This narrative of (the lack of) integration is also apparent in the context of girls' football. When I started my research in October 2013, Aisha, who had organised girls' football in Amsterdam for ten years, already told me that her football team was criticised because it consisted only of Moroccan-Dutch girls. It would supposedly not stimulate Moroccan-Dutch girls' integration in the Netherlands if they had their 'own' football team, she told me. In the Schilderswijk, similar concerns are being voiced by sports professionals and policy makers from the municipality. They relate the self-organised girls' football competition of Football Girls United to (a lack of) cultural integration, citizenship, and emancipation in Dutch society, and they question the boys' and girls' proper integration and gender and sexual emancipation in relation to their Islamic backgrounds. Football players in the Schilderswijk thus also become central subjects in contestations over and debates on Dutch national identity and cultural citizenship in relation to Islam, gender, and sports; this is the topic of the current chapter.

Dutch scholars have argued that cultural participation, in the form of emotions, norms, traditions, or symbols, has largely replaced the discourse of economic participation in Dutch society (Duyvendak, Hurenkamp, and Tonkens 2010; De Koning 2015a). Citizenship is not so much conceptualised in relation to legal or socio-economic indicators anymore, but through a set of cultural norms and practices, defining what it means to be a 'good' or 'real' Dutch citizen. This process is called the culturalisation of citizenship (Duyvendak, Hurenkamp, and Tonkens 2010; De Koning 2016, 116). Gender and sexuality are prominent markers of the cultural norms of Dutch citizenship, using women's and sexual emancipation as indicator for the division between 'real' and second-class citizens – often Muslim or other religious or ethnic minority citizens (Holston and Appadurai 1999; Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010; Bracke 2012; Wekker 2016). The Dutch culturalisation of citizenship can therefore also be described as sexual citizenship: women's and sexual emancipation are at the forefront in the arguments of why Moroccan-Dutch, Turkish-Dutch, and other racialised Dutch citizens – now often subsumed under the label 'Muslim' – need to be integrated, or, rather, assimilated, in Dutch society and norms (El-Tayeb 2011; Wekker 2016; Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010; Ghorashi 2010; Butler 2008). In the debates on integration and emancipation in the Netherlands, Dutch gender and sexual norms are represented as modern, liberal, and equal. Islam is seen as antithetical to that: traditional, backward, and characterised by a lack of women's and sexual freedom (Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010; Scott 2009). Consequently, even those people who are citizens, like most of the Muslim girls and boys in my research, are not seen as full Dutch citizens in cultural terms but are portrayed as still in need of integration and emancipation.

Sports are a main domain in which Dutch cultural citizenship is learned and embodied, especially for youths. Youth sports are seen as an important aspect of civic engagement, youth education, and social participation, in the form of playing sports but also in the accompanied volunteer work that parents are expected to engage in. Sports projects are thus presented as a means of national and local governments and organisations to 'integrate' and 'discipline' urban youth, especially of Muslim or ethnic minority backgrounds, into dominant Dutch society and cultural, sexual, and gender norms (Rana 2014, 34; Besnier and Brownell 2012, 452–53; Vermeulen and Verweel 2009). Especially (men's) football is an important embodied practice and symbol of Dutch national identity, and it is therefore no coincidence that many neighbourhood sports programmes focus on this popular sport. In this chapter, I will show how ideals of sexual citizenship, integration, and emancipation are incorporated into neighbourhood sports programmes in the Schilderswijk and beyond.

Judith Butler (2008) has stressed the temporal dimension of constructing Muslims as second-class citizens through sexual and cultural citizenship, which is built on an idea of a secular and sexual progress from tradition to modernity (see also Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010). In this chapter, however, I will show that the culturalisation of citizenship is also related to a *spatial* dimension of gender and sexual politics in sports. In cultural and sexual constructions of citizenship, there are ideas about which gendered and religious bodies can occupy public spaces. As I will show in this chapter, the visibility of Muslim women and girls in Dutch public spaces becomes contested through secular norms of Dutch cultural citizenship that problematise visible and public religious difference. Furthermore, the Muslim girls' separated girls' football competition becomes criticised in cultural and sexual constructions of citizenship as unemancipated, although gender segregation is inherent in most sports. To compare, white girls' football teams are never problematised regarding gender segregation. Muslim girls' spatial football practices become a paradoxical part of cultural and sexual constructions of citizenship in which Muslim sports players are constructed as unintegrated and unemancipated in Dutch society.

In this chapter, I place the sports and gender education project of Football Girls United within Dutch constructions of cultural and sexual citizenship, and in Dutch

debates on Islam, integration, and emancipation. From the perspectives of sports professionals, policy makers, and football girls themselves, I unravel the complex and contested entanglements between girls' football, spatial gender segregation in sports, and Dutch sexual citizenship. The main argument of this chapter is that the intersections of gender, Islam, and girls' football are caught in a paradox of sexual citizenship: Muslim girls should participate in playing football for their cultural integration and emancipation yet will never become full citizens because they are always already constructed as the essential religious 'other'. In this paradox, spatial gender segregation in football forms a crucial axis through which differences between white Dutch citizens and Islamic 'others' are discursively brought into existence.

Furthermore, I discuss how the football girls and boys in my research question and resist dominant Dutch constructions of cultural and sexual citizenship through the spatial and playful football practices in their neighbourhood. Many feminist and anti-racist scholars have critically studied the ways in which cultural citizenship and homonationalism create Muslim citizens as inherent 'others', and how young Muslim women challenge these constructions by combining religious agency with national identities (Bracke 2011; Fernando 2016). Yet, as I also pointed out in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, those studies mainly focus on *pious* women and *religious* agency as a challenge to structural oppression and exclusionary constructions on citizenship, based on religion, race/ethnicity, or gender. Feminist scholars of religion and gender have not extensively engaged with how children and young Muslim citizens deal with these constructions of cultural citizenship *beyond* a primarily religious agency, for example through popular cultural practices such as football. The work of Fatima El-Tayeb is an exception, as she studied young ethnic minority and Muslim citizens' engagements with hip-hop as resistance to dominant constructions of racialised and religious 'othering' in European societies. I argue that playing football also forms an important practice for Muslim girls, through which they challenge cultural and sexual constructions of Dutch citizenship.

The chapter starts with a short discussion of how citizenship, Islam, and integration and emancipation discourses are incorporated in neighbourhood sports projects in the Netherlands and beyond. Secondly, I will show how these discourses play out on girls' football in the Schilderswijk, focusing in particular on the issue of spatial and gender segregation in girls' football from the perspectives of sports and neighbourhood professionals. In the last part of the chapter, I will discuss girls' playful performances of gender, religion, ethnicity, and citizenship in football as resistance to culturalised and sexual constructions of citizenship, and I propose to see playing football as *practices* of citizenship.

Citizenship and 'integration' in neighbourhood football: Muslim bodies and sexual emancipation

The neighbourhood football organisations and competitions in the Schilderswijk not simply offer football or sports but place their sports activities within a broader discourse of social participation, integration, and citizenship, albeit not always very explicitly. For example, the Cruyff Court 6vs6 competition is related to enhancing social cohesion in urban neighbourhoods. The aim of the Cruyff Courts in general, and the 6vs6 competition in specific, is to get to know and involve oneself with youths from different backgrounds, and to learn how to deal with each other in playing sports and in daily life. Cooperation, responsibility, respect, integration, social participation, and creativity are central aspects of the competition, highlighted in the '14 rules of Johan Cruyff'.[71] Whereas most neighbourhood sports programmes and sports-for-development projects are used as a way of integrating marginalised people or people from ethnic minority backgrounds (Besnier and Brownell 2012, 453; Silverstein 2000, 2002; Jaffe-Walter 2016, 64; Gagen 2000; Spaaij 2009; Vermeulen and Verweel 2009), at the Cruyff Court 6vs6 competitions, integration is seen as more of a mutual process, involving *all* youths who live in the neighbourhoods where the Cruyff Courts are placed. Since the Cruyff Courts are often found in urban spaces, but not *only* in 'disadvantaged' urban neighbourhoods such as the Schilderswijk, they actually involve a wide range of 'majority' and 'minority' youths in their sports activities for integration, participation, respect, and social cohesion.

The other neighbourhood sports activities in the Schilderswijk are more specifically focused on the (supposed need of) integration, citizenship, and respect of urban ethnic and religious minority youths. The Schilderswijk Street League and the activities of Sportteam intent to increase youths' and their parents' participation in the neighbourhood. In a business meeting about the Schilderswijk Street League, Jeroen, who set up the competition together with Sportteam, explained the goals of the Schilderswijk Street League:

> *The goals of the Street League are: parents' participation, so that they can become the coaches of the teams; preventing nuisance; combatting obesity; transmitting norms and values, such as being on time, et cetera. The children can also get points for sportive behaviour, not only when they win a match. For instance, by showing respect, properly wearing their team uniforms, and we organise theme meetings for which they will get points if they participate. For example, about what's going on in the neighbourhood, which problems there are, such as radicalisation and bullying, discrimination. For contributions to their neighbourhood, they can also get points, like*

baking pancakes for the neighbourhood, helping elderly with doing grocery shopping, cleaning up playgrounds. It's even better when children themselves think of a neighbourhood contribution, what best fits their neighbourhood. Furthermore, we engage with a project in which children learn to make short films about the neighbourhood, so that not only the football players but the whole neighbourhood becomes involved. So, in the end, not the best football player wins, but the most engaged team.

In this neighbourhood sports project, it is assumed that young residents need stimulation by way of earning points to engage with participation and citizenship activities, and that they still need to be educated into properly embodying norms and values such as punctuality and discipline. Although such sports programmes are also used to combat obesity amongst children, much emphasis is put on the 'participation' aspect, as the quote above shows. Such neighbourhood citizenship projects usually only take place in 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods and not in affluent or dominantly white neighbourhoods; in these latter places, it is assumed that citizenship education is either not necessary or that residents already engage in citizenship activities. Furthermore, what is interesting is that the Schilderswijk Street League project is not only targeted at children but extended to their parents and the whole neighbourhood. The idea is that the 'disadvantaged' neighbourhood as a whole needs to be stimulated to engage with citizenship and integration activities, as an 'othered' neighbourhood that not yet fully fits within Dutch norms and citizenship.

Furthermore, the goal of neighbourhood sports projects and competitions is often to 'guide' youths to participation in official sports clubs: playing street football is seen as a first step towards membership of an official club (Hoekman et al. 2011a). In Dutch youth sports culture, participation in an official sports club rather than only playing football in public playgrounds is seen as 'real', 'proper', or 'full' sports participation. For example, Marieke from the municipality of The Hague, said the following in an interview about the municipality's sports policy:

So, we think it is important that girls play more sports, but also that they do that in a sports club. And why do we think that is important, well, because playing sports in clubs leads to a more sustainable sports participation.

Thus, in sports policies, 'unorganised' forms of sports participation by minoritised groups are valued less than other, 'official' forms of sports participation. The implicit cultural norm of sports participation in the Netherlands is that only playing sports in the controlled environment of an official football club is considered the ultimate embodiment of 'full' citizenship. As I have pointed out before, this does not always fit within the experiences and wishes of youths in urban multicultural and working-class neighbourhoods: these sports clubs are further away and expensive, and some Muslim or Moroccan-Dutch children do not want to play there because they are afraid of experiencing racism and/or sexism. Furthermore, some girls in my research said that they prefer to play football in a football court rather than on a field, as matches in street football are more flexible and faster, and there is more space for technical tricks.

The focus on 'proper' integration, citizenship, and social participation in neighbourhood and youth sports projects is not new. In the *Time for Sport* policy (2005) of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, youths were a specific target group, and sports were seen as a way to 'organise groups to play sports instead of loitering or hanging around' (VWS 2005, 6 my translation). The ministry launched a large project in cooperation with the minister of Foreign Affairs, called 'Participation allochthonous youth through sport' (*Meedoen allochtone jeugd door sport*), which ran from 2006 to 2010.[72] Starting from the assumption that Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch youths 'lag behind' in sports participation,[73] this project focused on encouraging ethnic minority youths to participate more in sports through neighbourhood sports projects. From the aims of the project, the explicit connection with citizenship became clear:

To create encounters between allochthonous and authochthonous youths and the involvement of their parents; to address the lagging participation of allochthonous youths in sports (integration in sports); to advance full citizenship and participation of allochthonous youths in society and countering social isolation (integration through sports); and to address and prevent nuisance and problematic behaviour (education through sports). Consequently, a dropping out of Dutch society can be prevented or reintegration accomplished. (VWS 2006, 2, my translation)

These goals show that 'allochthonous' youth, though many of them are born and raised in the Netherlands, are not yet seen as full citizens in terms of cultural citizenship. The Participation project provides specific attention to the transmission of norms and values, respect and tolerance, social skills and cooperation, resilience and emancipation, the learning of discipline and self-control, and the regulation of aggression (VWS 2006, 3), which can be seen as crucial aspects of Dutch cultural citizenship, according to this project. Van Sterkenburg (2011, 24), discussing the Participation project, argues, in line with Wekker (2002) and Lorde (2007b, 116): 'Sport is used here to bring the cultural norms and values of *allochtonen* closer to those of *autochtonen* while rendering the group of (white) *autochtonen* normative'.

Religious and ethnic minorities are portrayed as if they can only become full citizens through sports, discipline, integration, and empowerment. Although women's bodies are central in debates about integration, emancipation, and citizenship, the focus on gender and sexuality in 'integration' discourses clearly also plays out on (immigrant or Muslim) men's bodies (Silverstein 2000, 27). Anthropologist Paul Silverstein showed how, in France, ideologies of nationalism and citizenship are projected on male Muslim bodies through governmental youth sports projects and corporate sports advertisements. During the Algerian Civil War in the 1990s, Muslim boys in *banlieus* in France, mainly with Algerian backgrounds, were depicted as potential terrorists and supporters of radical Islam, in a context in which Muslim religious difference was discursively constructed as 'inassimilable to French secular standards' (Silverstein 2000, 31; see also Selby 2011; Fernando 2016). Seeing sports as the privileged site of disciplining citizens into norms and ideologies of national citizenship, the French nation state organised neighbourhood sports projects in *banlieus* as alternative for or even against Islamic community organisations. Through sports, the state sought to construct and discipline youths into secularised and individualised citizens to whom Islam would only be a private matter and who would therefore be compatible with secular French citizenship and national belonging. 'Practitioners of such an Islam would play soccer [football] by day, pray to Allah at night, and vote in municipal elections every two years', Silverstein (2000, 32) summarises expressively.

Although Silverstein's article is based on the French context in the 1990s, there are striking resemblances with contemporary Europe, where young Muslim boys from 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods are similarly represented as potential terrorists in the context of a renewed fear of radical Islam after 9/11 (Masquelier and Soares 2016; Archer 2009; El-Tayeb 2011), and, more recently, the rise of ISIS. Muslim girls and women are also increasingly represented within a framework of Muslim radicalism and Jihad, yet they are more often framed in terms of being victims rather than aggressive perpetrators (El-Tayeb 2011; Abu-Lughod 2013). Neighbourhood sports programmes often have specific projects for Muslim and Hindu girls – suggesting that the 'standard' sports projects are implicitly targeted at boys (see also Chapter 3). In these programmes, Muslim and Hindu girls are represented as the most inactive and oppressed, and in need of help and assistance with emancipation and participation in sports and society (VWS 2006; KNVB 2009, 2014). Whereas ethnic minority or Muslim boys are often perceived as *too visible* and a threat in public spaces, and thus in need of disciplining and regulation, ethnic and religious minority *girls* are perceived as not visible *enough* in public spaces and thus in need of emancipation (Rana 2014; Harris 2004). In this line of thinking, the visibility of Muslim girls in public spaces is presented as an indicator of their level of emancipation in Dutch society. Yet, as I will point out later, Muslim girls' actual visibility in public spaces is, in practice, more ambiguous. Neighbourhood sports projects, such as the Participation project, thus often aim at emancipation in the case of Muslim women and girls, and at regulation of supposed aggression and criminal behaviour in the case of Muslim boys (Rana 2014, 33). Rana (2014) argues that this (often implicit) differentiation based on race/ethnicity, religion, and gender in neighbourhood sports programmes, while aiming at integration and social cohesion, actually reinforces racial/ethnic and gender inequality and differences in sports.

Although the Participation project has officially ended, the focus of much current neighbourhood sports programmes is still on social participation and citizenship in a broader context of social participation in the Dutch welfare state (Tonkens 2014) and in migration and integration policies (Asscher 2013, 2015).[74] The Participation project has set the tone for subsequent sports projects in 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods, such as Sportimpuls,[75] where integration, becoming a 'good' and 'healthy' citizen, and social cohesion are also central (Rana 2014). These neighbourhood sports programmes also fit into the broader increasing regulation of youths' free and leisure time in urban neighbourhoods: organised sports are, contrary to 'just' hanging around in the streets, seen as a 'meaningful realisation of leisure time' (VWS, page, my translation; see also Harris 2004).

In 2008, Hanan started organising the FGU girls' football competition with subsidy from the Participation project. She received the subsidy – for renting the sports hall and the coordination of the competition – to encourage the sports participation of Muslim and Hindu girls in The Hague. When, in 2010, the Participation project ended, the municipality took over the financial contributions, but the subsidies dried up in the following years. Since 2015, FGU has not received any substantial subsidies, and the competition was forced to scale down. According to Hanan, this was because FGU was apparently not successful enough, since they did not attract as much players as the boys' competition did. As in the whole range of women's football, here boys' football served as the norm to which the 'success' of girls' football was held as well. In the next part, I will discuss the ideas of policy makers and sports professionals in The Hague about the girls' football competition in the Schilderswijk, and the relation they construct between girls' football and Islam. It will show how Dutch sexual norms and citizenship specifically play out on girls' football in the Schilderswijk.

Muslim girls and football: A paradox of Islam, gender, and segregated girls' football

During my research in the Schilderswijk, I interviewed several policy makers from the municipality of The Hague who are responsible for the Schilderswijk neighbourhood,

youths, or sports in the city. I asked them what they thought about youths' sports participation and about the two separated football competitions in the Schilderswijk: the Football Girls United girls' football competition and the boys' football Futsal School Competition. Mariet, one of the policy makers, replied:

> *I think it's one of the most backward things you can imagine. Look, backward till a certain age though, because, during puberty, different feelings arise. Like I was raised at a time when there were still girls' schools and I was in such a girls' school, and then there was a rival boys' school we had lots of exchanges with. Like lots of exchanges that even resulted in marriages. And actually, I have to say, I thought it was nice and comfortable to be only with girls. Because boys, yeah, they are quite different, they find other stuff important. Because the last year was a mixed school and then, suddenly, we had those footballing Henkies that I thought well… But yeah, I don't stimulate it here. Because the reason here is not puberty; it are completely different motivations.*
> *Kathrine: Like what kind of motivations?*
> *Mariet: Traditional religious motivations. So, I don't support that, I think there are much more normal attitudes if you play mixed football with boys and girls. Because now you see it's always a bit tensed. Boys don't know how to deal with girls and girls don't know how to deal with boys.*

In this quote, it becomes clear that, although Mariet acknowledges from her own experiences that it can be comfortable to be exclusively with girls – especially during puberty – she does not want to ascribe this experience to the footballing girls in the Schilderswijk. She assumes that, because these girls have a Moroccan-Dutch or Muslim background, their reasons to play football with girls only have to do with tradition and religion, and not with puberty, like she experienced herself.

Other organisers of youth sports in the Schilderswijk, too, mentioned in the interviews that they recognise the desire to play sports with people of their own gender. For example, Peter played on a volleyball team with only men and experienced it was very different and less 'natural' when two women joined their team: 'With men, it was just more convenient because the net can also be put high', he said. Or Hanan, who told me that, when she was younger, she preferred to play on a girls only football team. In the conversations about this topic, the Dutch words '*gewoon*' (just, ordinary, naturally) and '*lekker*' (in this context meaning nice and comfortable) were often expressed. It appears that, for many adults, both white and non-white Dutch, it feels more 'natural' and comfortable to play sports with people of the same gender. For white Dutch people, however, gender segregation in sports is seldom discussed as problematic, as it is seen as a normal consequence of puberty, or as part of 'natural' physical differences

between men and women. This is not surprising, as, in the previous chapter, I have shown how the organisation of sports is built on the premise of sexed and gender-segregated bodies (Anderson 2008; Caudwell 2003; Alpert 2015, 30; Siebelink 2016b).[76] Yet, when exercised by Muslim or Moroccan-Dutch girls, gender segregation in sports is considered, at least by Mariet, an anomaly based on fundamental religious motivations, and a lack of integration in Dutch society and culture. Indeed, Rebecca Alpert (2015, 30) also poses the question of 'why religions are criticised for gender segregation when it is a universally accepted dimension of sports culture'.

The different meanings that are given to gender-segregated sports practices are an example of 'how sexual regulation operates through the regulation of racial boundaries' (Butler 1993, 20) and vice versa, including the construction of racialised religious difference of mainly Muslim citizens. Racial/ethnic and religious difference is intrinsic in constructions of gender and sexual difference, and gender and sexuality are central aspects of constructions of racial/ethnic and religious difference (Wekker 2016). Gender differentiation and segregation of white Dutch people is seen as superior and more advanced, in which a dual gender system is based on supposed 'natural' bodily differences. On the other hand, gender differentiation and segregation of racialised and Muslim girls is interpreted as backward and based on traditional cultural or religious convictions. In this case, racial/ethnic and racialised religious differences are constructed through meanings of gender and sexuality. According to Dutch cultural discourses on integration and citizenship, religious and ethnic 'others' first need to become 'modern', 'gender equal', and liberated from their 'backward' religion, before they can segregate again. The emphasis that is put on playing 'mixed' football is only a prerequisite for educating and disciplining ethnic and Muslim 'others' into dominant Dutch norms and values, but is not in itself part of these norms and values for white Dutch people.

Mariet, however, was the only person I spoke with who had such strong opinions about separated girls' football in the Schilderswijk as backward and undesirable. Others, such as Marieke from the municipality and Peter from Sportteam, support and facilitate girls only sports hours, yet do so in a way that also reinforces racial/ethnic/religious difference through gender and sexuality and vice versa. Marieke deals with gender segregation in sports in the following way:

> *Kathrine: How do you, the municipality, think about football being separate for girls and boys in the Schilderswijk?*
> *Marieke: Yeah, that's difficult for us. Eh, mainly because… look, I'm from the sports section and here we believe it's important that you can exercise sports well, so it's important to connect to the level and wishes of the target group*

that wants to play sports. So, that means that, if we organise a competition, we have to think carefully about the entry levels, and then the difference between boys and girls is very important, that's just the case in sports. Therefore, we have... there are just physical differences and other things based on which teams are divided. So, that's what is important for us, that you can exercise a sport properly, and then you have to make a difference.
Only from a political point of view, ehm, around the discussion of diversity and Islamic backgrounds, that has become a charged topic. So, for example, we have had a whole issue around segregated swimming and if, with the segregated swimming, arguments are involved from belief, faith, then, politically, it becomes a sensitive topic. And then we have the VVD in the city council and they would say that they don't want that. And the CDA, they are also quite, eh, strict in that.[77] *So, up until now, we offer, from within the municipality, no segregated swimming. For this reason. So, it's a difficult topic for the municipality.*
Kathrine: And how do you deal with this topic in other sports? For example, with the girls' football competition?
Marieke: Well, we always make the link just with sports and not with faith. And with what works for these children. How they want it. So, in that way, we of course try to avoid the faith issue a bit. Because of course it plays a role and it also has to do with why precisely playing segregated is that important, that they, from their own beliefs and cultural background, feel safe in there.

Like Mariet, Marieke also makes a distinction between an 'accepted' gender segregation in sports, here motivated by sports level and 'natural' physical differences between boys and girls, and a problematised gender segregation in sports based on Islamic faith. Unlike Mariet, she is, however, not 'against' separate girls' football in the Schilderswijk, and actually aims to facilitate it, motivated by the municipality's policy of making sports accessible for everybody. She, however, still thinks that Islamic reasons are at the core of Muslim girls' motivations for playing football separately, yet covers this up by politically focusing on the accepted motivations for gender-segregated sporting: the supposed 'naturally' different bodies of girls and boys and the difference in sports level that are a result of that.[78] In this way, she facilitates girls' football by reinforcing sexed and gender differences and stereotypes in football: girls cannot compete with boys in football because of 'natural' differences and therefore need their own competition. This is even more ironic because Football Girls United's gender education, as explained in the previous chapter, aims to do exactly the opposite: learning boys and girls that girls can be as good at football as boys are, and creating a space where boys and girls can play football together on equal terms.

Peter from Sportteam facilitates a segregated girls' football hour in his playground too, besides the 'regular' football hours during which mostly boys play. According to Peter, most girls are 'too nice' to play with boys, and then 'it just doesn't work'. Only if girls really want to and if they are good enough, they can play on the 'regular' boys' team. Peter's motivation for a separate girls' team follows the same line of argumentation as Marieke's: based on football performance level and differences between boys' and girls' bodies, it is better to have girls play football separately. Yet, facilitating girls only football is also a way to implement Peter's informal headscarf policy. He discourages and does not allow girls to wear a headscarf during the sports hours he organises in the playground. This is rather an informal policy, as Peter explained to me that he cannot forbid them from wearing a headscarf, 'because that would go against freedom of religion'. Rather, he told me, he will have a conversation with the girls to discourage it.[79] When I asked him why exactly he does not want girls to wear a headscarf during the sports hours, he explained that it is not a matter of safety – they all have special sports headscarves – but more a way of drawing a line:

Actually, yeah, I just don't want it, because where is the line then? What is now a headscarf could become a burqa tomorrow.

So, facilitating girls only sports without boys or men being present – besides football, girls' only dance classes are also organised in Peter's indoor playground – makes girls more willing to take off their headscarf while playing sports, and this is exactly what Peter aims for.

In the following quote from the interview, Peter's ideas on girls only sports are further articulated, when I asked him about separated sports hours for girls:

I do think it's good if there are certain sports where girls can just take off their headscarves, with blinded windows for all I care, with the door closed and with a female teacher, bút! Then it must be a teacher who's pedagogically sound, who, for all I care, also only takes off her headscarf herself in that moment, while she wears one the rest of the week. But she should look at the world around her with an open mind. So, nuancing what is happening, like now in Paris,[80] *and being able to communicate openly about that with the girls. So, also being pedagogically and didactically experienced. And not just saying like, 'Now, take off your headscarf, we're going to dance, and eh, I think this and that is the truth'. And then putting on the headscarf again and going outside. Ehm, it should be a real teacher, it must have added value.*

As becomes clear, at Sportteam, segregated football or sports is accepted and facilitated, yet for Peter there is always the risk of radicalisation. He relates a separate girls' hour and girls' headscarves in his playground, where mostly girls with Muslim and ethnic minority backgrounds play, to radical Islam and terrorism. A separated girls' team, then, is accepted as long as it has an 'added value', which, for Peter, means teaching appropriate norms and values to the girls. There is an explicit connection between sports, education, and citizenship here. Sports is used to 'draw a line' between what is desired and what is not – such as wearing a headscarf – in dominant Dutch, presumed secular, norms and values of sexual emancipation and freedom, and to create a specific type of citizen – one who looks at the world in an 'open' and 'nuanced' way. I find this strikingly corresponding with how Wekker (2016, 166) critically describes white Dutch self-representations as 'deeply tolerant, ethically elevated and justified, colour-blind, and antiracist'. By emphasising these values, it is assumed that white Dutch norms and values are ethically elevated, and Muslim girls do not yet have an open mind and tend more towards Islamic fundamentalism ('this and that is the truth'), radicalisation ('it could become a burqa tomorrow')[81], or even terrorism ('Paris'), especially if they play sports in gender-segregated spaces. Although gender-segregated football hours support the no-headscarf policy, it is, for Peter, also intimately connected with 'radical Islamic' ideas. As I mentioned before, when it concerns white Dutch people, gender-segregated sporting is rather seen as a 'natural' consequence of physical differences between gendered bodies than associated with radical ideologies. In the Al-Qaida case in this chapter, I will further discuss the discursive connections that are made between gender, the embodied practice of sports, and radical Islam in public spaces.

Mariet, Marieke, and Peter explain Muslim girls' gender-segregated sporting practices from a purely Islamic perspective, as if their gendered and spatial sports practices only stem from a traditional religious and ethnic background. In this way, they do not recognise or acknowledge that Muslim girls are also situated in gendered and sexual power dynamics in the domain of (Dutch) sports itself (see also Samie 2013), particularly in football in public playgrounds, where girls are marginalised and cannot easily claim public football spaces. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, this gender dynamic in public sports spaces is the most important reason for girls to organise themselves and to play football in a *girls'* competition, where they can be in charge of the football space and the game. By focusing only on religious motivations for gender segregation in sports, or on supposed 'natural' physical differences, the social construction of football and public sports spaces as normatively and dominantly masculine are overlooked. Mariet, Marieke, and Peter assume that public sports spaces are neutral spaces, where everybody can and should participate equally (Jaffe and De Koning 2015, 55) – that is, until 'natural' physical differences do not allow for this anymore; if Muslim girls play in their own segregated football spaces, they assume this is simply because of their religious or ethnic minority background. Furthermore, these assumptions overlook the fact that the girls' football of FGU is not so much a strictly gender-segregated space, given the central role of boys in the competition, but more a discursive naming of a football space to challenge dominant gendered power structures in football, as I have argued in the previous chapter. Interestingly, only a *girls'* football competition is perceived and 'read' as gender segregation in this paradox of gender, Islam, and girls' football. A boys' competition is supposedly not marked by gender and not interpreted as gender segregation, but as the 'standard' or 'neutral' version of the sport.

This problematisation of girls' separated football in the Schilderswijk is also related to a problematisation of racial/ethnic and religious segregation in much neighbourhood (sports) policies. Muslim women who play football together are also framed as ethnic and religious minorities who 'withdraw in their own communities', and thus refuse to participate in wider Dutch society.[82] These 'own communities' are assumed to be homogeneous, also if they consist of girls with diverse (ethnic or religious) backgrounds. Ironically, ethnic homogeneity in white (sports) settings is hardly questioned, while sports clubs with mostly 'ethnic minorities' are often more ethnically diverse than white clubs, as Vermeulen and Verweel (2009, 1210) found in their research (see also Rana 2014, 35–36). These ethnically diverse sports clubs are nevertheless seen as homogeneous, because of a racialised discourse in the Netherlands in which all non-white Dutch citizens are framed as 'others', and as obstructing proper integration and citizenship. In integration and sports policies, ethnic homogeneity is framed as if it is a deliberate choice of Muslim or ethnic minority citizens to live and sport in ethnically and religiously segregated spaces, while, in fact, spatial and ethnic segregation in neighbourhoods, schools, and sports clubs most of the time can be explained from class or socio-economic factors, or by white people's self-segregation (see Chapter 2).

In her research on a women's basketball team in the UK, Samie suggests that the ethnic make-up of sports spaces and clubs is often a reflection of the ethnic composition of a neighbourhood, and that 'the Asian-only demographic of the team was not a deliberate endeavour, but an outcome of the high demand for sports and leisure opportunities from women in the local area' (Samie 2013, 262). It is likely that this is also the case in the Schilderswijk, where there is a high demand amongst boys and girls to play football, resulting in enough teams and competitions to play football in the neighbourhood itself without having to go outside the neighbourhood and mix with football players from other places. This is in sharp contrast with the dominant representation of Muslim girls in sports policy texts as 'inactive' and as

'lagging behind' in playing sports. Gendered and racialised spatial segregation in sports are thus crucial aspects of the construction of Muslim girls as unemancipated and unintegrated in Dutch sexual norms and citizenship.

In Dutch culturalised citizenship, ideas on public space and who belongs in public spaces are based on a religion/secular dichotomy, and this dichotomy is crucial in differentiating between white Dutch citizens and Islamic 'others'. In Dutch society, religion is normatively framed as a private matter: religion should be practised in churches or homes and not in public spaces, which are normatively constructed as 'secular' (Bracke 2013; see also Silverstein 2000 for the French context). Especially public sports spaces are assumed and expected to be secular (see also Chapter 3), despite the existence of sports clubs with Christian denominations in the Netherlands.[83] Similarly, public schools in the Netherlands are framed as being 'secular', although many of them take the Christian tradition as guideline for cultural participation. For example, Peter told me that, at the public primary school he is affiliated with as a sports teacher, all children are expected to participate in the Christmas celebrations, and he talks about the importance of attending the celebrations at his sports lessons. Christianity is, contrary to Islam, seen as 'harmless' to and coexisting with the secular norm of public space, as it is perceived as being part of the national identity and heritage, whereas Islam, as 'othered' religion, is not (Oosterbaan 2014; Van den Hemel 2014). The presence of Islam in the public spaces of schools and sports is seen as contradictory to the perceived secular 'nature' of Dutch public space (Jaffe-Walter 2016, 40; Oosterbaan 2014; Butler 2008).[84] The no-headscarf policy of Peter is one example of the 'secular' norm of public sports space: the public sports playground should be free from Islamic religious signs such as the headscarf, and sports is used to teach and discipline girls into the Dutch cultural and 'Christian secular' norm – they are not supposed to be wearing a headscarf but are expected to participate in Christmas.

Within this normative secular/religious construction of public spaces, it is assumed that, if Muslim girls play football with a headscarf, the football space automatically becomes a priori an *Islamic* space – the football space becomes religionised, which, in turn, conflicts with the secular norm. Yet, the girls in my research themselves experience and frame football space above all as a *football*, and not as a religious, space, as I will show in the next section. In the views of the policy makers and sports professionals in my research, playing football in a separated girls' space or playing football with a sports headscarf is perceived as a threat to the secular norm of public spaces, rather than as a normal aspect of sports culture and practices. The sports professionals and policy makers I interviewed reduced Muslim women's practices and experiences solely to 'being Muslim', and did not acknowledge intersections with

gendered, sexual, classed, spatial, and racialised power relations in Dutch sports and society.

The reduction of Muslim girls' football practices solely to their Muslim background points to a paradox of Muslim girls' football participation that is inherent in Dutch culturalised and sexual constructions of citizenship. In sports and neighbourhood policies, Muslim girls are constructed as in need of integration and emancipation, because of their racialised and religious 'difference' within dominant white Dutch society and because of their supposed gender and sexual oppression. Sports, and especially football, are often used as the privileged domain to 'integrate' or 'discipline' Muslim youths into the desired forms of cultural and sexual citizenship. It is worth repeating here that the Football Girls United competition also precisely aims at girls' emancipation in the Schilderswijk and in public football spaces. As I have shown in the previous chapter, they create a separated girls' football competition as a counterspace to the male-dominated street football spaces where girls are often excluded. I have also shown that dominant Dutch sports culture is based on the premise of differentiation and spatial segregation of sexed and gendered bodies. The paradox is that, when girls with Moroccan-Dutch and Muslim backgrounds play football in a girls' football competition, it is not interpreted as integration or as a normal aspect of sports culture, but as essentially linked to their alleged traditional religious backgrounds and therefore *contrary* to integration. In this situation, it is impossible for these girls to be regarded as full citizens, because their sportive performances will always 'fail' within dominant constructions of cultural and sexual citizenship, where they are and stay essentially positioned as 'different' and 'other' from white Dutch sporting culture and society.

Even more, the construction of Muslim girls as essentially 'other' within Dutch society becomes articulated precisely when Muslim women or girls become more visible in public spaces, such as when playing football, as anthropologist Sunier argues: 'The more closely Muslim women are involved in European societies, the more their religious background seems to become a problematic issue. As long as the veiled lady cleans our buildings, looks after our children, or cooks our food, in other words keeps a certain occupational and social distance to the rest of society, there is no need to get disturbed and to raise the religious question. But when they enter 'our' life worlds, something else is at stake' (Sunier 2009, 475). Sunier states that Muslim women become perceived as a 'problem' when they become more visible as social actors, in presumed secular public spaces, while, at the same time, they are 'expected', according to integration and emancipation policies, to increase their participation in public (sports) spaces. This is the paradox in Dutch integration and citizenship discourses: Muslim women need to become integrated and emancipated, but it is simultaneously

and precisely their successful integration and emancipation in public spaces that subsequently frames them as problematic (Henkel 2009b, 476). Dutch cultural and sexual constructions of citizenship are thus always unreachable goals, yet crucial to construct essentialised differences between white Dutch citizens and racialised and religious 'others'. In the next two case studies, I will further illustrate how the girls in my research are constantly negatively defined by their 'Islamic otherness' in football spaces in the Schilderswijk.

The Al-Qaida case

In an interview with Noor and Aliya, both volunteers at Football Girls United, we talked about wearing a headscarf while playing sports, and Noor told me the following story:

> *One day, it was so funny, it was a comment about us, I laughed about it a lot. We were playing football and most of us were wearing a headscarf, we were with five girls. Then a Dutch guy passes by on his bicycle, and, when he sees us, he says: 'Is this a training camp for Al-Qaida or something?' Hahahaha. And I had to laugh about what he said. And I thought, how can you make this up, how could you possibly be thinking about Al-Qaida?!*

I asked Noor and Aliya how they felt about this situation, and both mentioned their laughter about such comments, and they expressed a certain resigned attitude towards the issue. They mentioned they do not really care about such comments, and framed it as ignorance on behalf of the people who say such things:

> *Noor: Yeah, what can I say about it, it's a comment they make, and we just don't pay attention to it. I don't care because they don't know what a headscarf means, so then I don't talk to these people. If you know what a headscarf means, you don't talk about Al-Qaida, because then you know what it really means.*
> *Aliya: Yes, I actually don't mind when they say something to me about a headscarf. I really don't mind; if I were to receive such a comment, I think I would also laugh! It's just a joke. Perhaps I would say 'Hey, join us! Then you can also wear a headscarf!'*
> *Noor: Indeed! Hahahaha.*

Just like in Peter's playground, in this case there is also an immediate association of Muslim girls who wear headscarves and play football with terrorism and Islamic radicalism (see also Nyhagen and Halsaa 2016). When girls wear a headscarf, they are more directly recognisable as Muslims than boys are, invoking a reaction based on Muslim girls' embodied religious difference (Smiet 2014a, 17–18). In addition, for (Muslim) boys, exercising and playing football in public playgrounds is seen as 'natural' and therefore not suspicious. For Muslim *girls*, playing football is not related to 'just' playing football, but seen as an outstanding 'Islamic' presence in supposed 'secular' and 'masculine' public spaces of football. The connection with radical Islam or Jihad is then apparently obvious, even if it is a joke. This case is a clear illustration of the paradox of gender, Islam, and girls' football in Dutch cultural and sexual citizenship discourses that I have outlined above: the Muslim girls in this case participate in Dutch society and embody Dutch norms of emancipation and integration by playing the national Dutch sport football in public playgrounds, but, since they always already embody visible 'Islamic otherness', their football activities in public spaces are primarily read as related to Islam and seen as problematic and a threat, rather than as emancipation (Sunier 2009; Henkel 2009a).

While Noor and Aliya laughed about the situation, I was shocked at hearing their experiences of playing football being related to radical Islam. According to Noor and Aliya, other girls might also laugh about the joke, as they did, but some girls might become aggressive and think the guy is a racist. For Noor, her reaction to such comments also depends on the situation; most of the time, she is too busy playing football to notice or react at all. It shows that girls employ different strategies of dealing with such 'microaggressive' experiences (Jaffe-Walter 2016, 134): continuing playing football, laughing, or becoming angry.

The laundry case

On the one day on which no boys were allowed at FGU, discussed in the previous chapter in the 'Only girls today' section, I wrote down more observations and interactions that I want to discuss here:

> *The boys already left and the girls and me are sitting on the benches, dividing the teams before playing. While Hanan is explaining what we will do today, three white middle-aged men with hockey sticks and sports bags walk past us to the exit of the sports hall. The last one of them stops, looks around, and says: 'So, can I leave my laundry here?'*
> *Hanan immediately responds to the man, but I cannot hear what she says, as the girls around me get very agitated and shout: 'He's a racist!' I get really angry as well because of his comment, so I cannot recall exactly what happened afterwards. I remember that Hanan stays calm and says to me and the girls: 'Well, we shouldn't pay attention to those kinds of people', then continuing her explanation of the training and start playing football.*

A couple of days later, I met Hanan at a community centre for an interview, and she told me:

> *I've organised girls' football in several community centres and neighbourhoods. And still that's not always accepted. Or like that man from Sunday!? Yes, you got very angry, me too, and, if the girls hadn't been there, I would've hit him, but now I couldn't because the girls were there. So, I said to him: 'Oh, because we wear a headscarf you ask this? That's racist'. And then he reacted like 'Well, well, well'. But you know, next Sunday, I will go a little bit earlier to the sports hall and then I'll confront him with what he said. Then I'll ask him: 'Sir, what did you mean by that?'*

Reflecting on my own emotions during this encounter with the man, I felt personally humiliated, and shouted 'He's a sexist!' in the uproar. When I heard the other girls shout 'racist', I was surprised for a second, because, as a white privileged woman in the Netherlands, at that moment I could only personally experience his comment in a sexist way. For the girls, however, it is an intersection of being woman, being recognisably Muslim, and being non-white (looking 'Moroccan') that shapes their experience of this comment as racist, sexist, and probably also classist.[85]

In this case, the paradox of gender, Islam, and girls' football also becomes clear: in the football space of FGU, where Hanan and the volunteers teach boys and girls gender equality and respect, and aim for girls' emancipation in sports and society, the girls experience harsh sexism, racism, and classism. Because of their gendered and racialised religious difference, the girls were not seen as 'normal' football players and as participants in Dutch society; in this case, they are rather being reduced to the stereotyped and feminised lower-class 'foreigners' job of laundry washers for upper-class white male hockey players. Such a comment relegates the 'integrated' and 'emancipated' football girls back to the private space of the home, where they are expected to act as cleaning ladies (Sunier 2009, 475).

Interestingly, in this case, the girls only used the concept of racism to express and describe the racist, sexist, and classed comment: I was the only one mentioning sexism. In other talks or interviews too, girls expressed both racist and sexist experiences under the term 'racism'. For example, in a short interview I had with a girls' football team at the Cruyff Court 6vs6 competition in the Schilderswijk:

> *Kathrine: Sometimes, people say that football is more for boys, what do you think about that?*
> *Amira: That's totally not true.*
> *Hind: That's really racist.*
> *Kathrine: Why is that racist?*
> *Hind: Because they discriminate between boys and girls, that's racist.*

I think the language of racism is more available to the girls than the language of sexism, since racism is a theme discussed quite a lot in the Schilderswijk at community and youth centres, where they mainly talk about police violence, job discrimination, and discrimination and racism at football clubs – and often only amongst men and boys without paying attention to girls' and women's experiences. The language of racism assumes a united experience of racism and social inequality amongst boys' and girls', and is therefore shared and exchanged between them, but it also overlooks girls' specific intersectional experiences of racism and sexism. Girls thus sometimes express their intersectional experiences of gender, class, religion, and race/ethnicity only through the available discourse of racism. In that, they are being 'forced' to reduce their experiences to only one axis of power and difference, resulting in the implicit reproduction of the dominant discourse in Dutch cultural citizenship in which these girls are framed primarily through (visible) racialised religious differences.

These two case studies have further illustrated how gender, racial/ethnic, religious, and classed differences within Dutch cultural citizenship play out on girls who play football in the Schilderswijk, through experiences of racism, sexism, and stereotyping. When Muslim girls play football in their own girls' competition, this is not seen as normal part of the gendered organisation of sports, but interpreted as an Islamic practice by sports professionals and in Dutch discourses on integration, emancipation, and culturalised citizenship. Public football spaces subsequently become framed as religionised or 'Islamised'. Yet, in the girls' own identifications and football practices, Islam is not always at the forefront, as the next section will show.

Girls' performances of gender, religion, ethnicity, and citizenship in public football spaces

From the girls in my research, I seldom heard Islamic explanations or motivations for playing in a girls' football competition. Most research participants never expressed any interest in having their own segregated sporting space according to Islamic ideologies or because of their Muslim backgrounds, except for the three girls in the 'only girls today' case I discussed in the previous chapter. Most girls rather want to have their own football space as an alternative to the male-dominated public football playgrounds and to resist dominant gender norms in football. Samie (2013) argued as well that the sports participation of the British Pakistani Muslim women in her research was not so much shaped by Islamic or religious factors, but by discourses and norms of female bodies exhibiting heterosexual appeal by being fit and sexy ('hetero-

sexy'). Furthermore, FGU does not consider itself as a *Muslim* football competition, although most of the girls in FGU have Moroccan-Dutch and Muslim backgrounds. Yet, the football players often mentioned that FGU is not a football community for Moroccans of Muslims only, but for all girls in the Schilderswijk and adjacent neighbourhoods. Nora explained to me:

> *We're not like: 'This place is only for headscarves or Moroccans or Muslims', because we also have Christian girls, or Catholics, or different backgrounds with a different skin colour.*

Contrary to Nora's claim, I did not encounter Christian or Catholic girls during my fieldwork at FGU, but I suspect that she referred to a few of the white Dutch girls who participated irregularly in FGU, and whom she assumed had Christian religious backgrounds. I did not explicitly ask all football players about their religious beliefs, identities, or practices. Yet, in our talks about playing football and its relation to gender and ethnic and religious backgrounds and identities, most of the girls and boys mentioned that they identify as Muslim. What that meant for them in daily life, however, was diverse. In the talks they had amongst each other on the football field, some girls and boys mentioned religious engagements, such as going to Sunday mosque classes, taking Arabic and Quran classes, finding halal candies, and trying to pray regularly. Others did not mention their involvement in such religious activities and saw Islam merely as a cultural-religious guide for norms and values in daily life.

When I asked the FGU football players in what ways their religious backgrounds or beliefs mattered on the football field, many responded with the word '*gewoon*' in Dutch, meaning something like 'just, normally', implying that playing football and Islam are not in conflict, like Nisa's response shows as well:

> *I'm just a girl who likes to play football and who believes in Islam.*

Some players immediately said: 'faith does not matter, it does not make a difference'. It became clear to me that many football players, especially the younger girls, were not very interested in talking about their faith or religion with me. After all, they were there to play football, not because of any religious matters. Some might have wanted to avoid talking with me about Islam, because of the stigmatisation of Muslims in the Netherlands; others might not have been interested in religion because of their young age. In this context, insisting to talk about Islam seemed strange and problematic to me, as I did not want to suggest that I was reinforcing stereotypes about Muslim girls in sports. It was thus mainly during conversations in which my research participants opened up themselves to talk about religion that I pursued to ask about religious matters.

A few players made clear, sometimes implicit, how they incorporated religious beliefs in their activities on and off the field. Hanan, coordinator of FGU, was one of them. After a football training, we were driving to a restaurant for an interview when she saw a woman with a *niqab* (face veil) walking in the street. Agitated, she told me:

> *Look, that woman in niqab, I'm against that. Islam requires you to be open and welcoming. To be open to society and your neighbours. And, therefore, we welcomed you in our competition. A niqab is not open, you shut yourself off.*

In the quote, Hanan refers to the way she and the FGU volunteers were willing to participate in my research and were open to my research questions. I was not the only person from outside the Schilderswijk or the Moroccan-Dutch Muslim community to be welcomed in FGU; a few times a year, the volunteers organise a football competition with girls from other neighbourhoods in The Hague to get to know each other, including girls from predominantly white Dutch neighbourhoods. For Hanan, to be open and welcoming to people from outside the neighbourhood is linked to her Islamic faith, although this was probably also prompted by her wish to challenge negative stereotypes of the Schilderswijk and its Muslim residents.

Other football players perform their religious belief mostly by way of moral behaviour on the field. When I asked whether there are girls with different religious backgrounds at Football Girls United, one of the boy volunteers, Mansour, said:

> *This is not important at all. Yes, most are Muslim. But everyone is treated the same. For example, if I do something racist, that's not okay. Or last week, there was a girl who became ill. Then we took her to the side, and we cared for her. We have to take care of each other.*

It happened more often in my research that, when I asked about religion or Islam in FGU, research participants would at first respond that religion does not matter, after which they started to talk about 'being nice for each other on the field'. For many of my research participants, including Mansour, Islam was not a main concern in Football Girls United. Only when I explicitly continued to ask them about religion, they connected Islam to morality, values of care, and (gender) equality on the field, all things FGU explicitly strives for.

There were, however, some signs of Islamic convictions in playing football, for example in the wish of some girls to play football in sports clothes that also cover their legs. For them, playing football with bare legs would be a mismatch with wearing a headscarf, but it was also related to not wanting to play in 'boys' clothes',[86] and to a hesitance to show too much of their (sexualised) body in athletic revealing poses when boys are looking. Religion or Islam on the football field thus always intersects

with the gender and sexual dynamics in sports culture and football, and Muslim girls' experiences should therefore not only be discussed and explained from a religious perspective.

In relation to the competition aspect in football, sometimes *ethnic* identifications were explicitly performed or mentioned on the football field rather than religious identifications. I talked with Mona and Sabia, two football players in their twenties from a women's football team in Amsterdam, about how one's ethnic background influences playing football. At first, they mentioned that ethnicity does not play a role, because everyone on the field is just a football player.

> *Mona: I want to enter the football field as a footballer and not as Moroccan or Dutch or whatever. And we also leave the field as a footballer.*
> *Sabia: Except when we win.*
> *Mona: Indeed, then we are Moroccan, haha!*

Although they were clearly joking, it is also a playful but serious engagement with dominant perceptions of Moroccan-Dutch Muslim women who play football in the context of discrimination, racism, and Islamophobia on and off the field. Explicitly identifying as Moroccan when one wins can be interpreted as a playful resistance towards dominant power structures and stereotypes in Dutch society. A football player from FGU also told me that, especially when a 'Moroccan' team plays against a 'Dutch' team, they insist on winning:

> *Then you just don't want to lose, definitely not from Dutch people.*

Winning on the football field is a way to challenge dominant perceptions and stereotypes of Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls in Dutch society. The girls performatively reclaim and play with ethnic identification markers and perform a dominant position on the field through winning. In this way, the girls in my research resist the 'othered' and marginalised position that is often attributed to them in dominant perceptions of Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls as inactive, bad football players, and as oppressed. Fatima El-Tayeb (2011) has conceptualised this reclaiming of ethnicity as 'queering ethnicity' in the case of hip-hop in European public space and describes it as 'forms of resistance that destabilize the ascribed essentialist identities not only by rejecting them, but also through a strategic and creative (mis)use' (El-Tayeb 2011, xxxvi).

In Chapter 3, I showed how Hafsa and her friends use gendered expectations about girls as bad football players in their strategy. Similarly, some other girls told me that they employ gendered and racialised stereotypes about Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls in their football strategy as well: they first play very shy and act as if they are afraid of the ball, so that the other team becomes sure that they will win. At some point, they switch to full force and impress the opponents by making one goal after the other. They reclaim categories of ethnic and religious difference to resist stereotypes and prejudices and to win the match. Nora's story about the National Street Football Finals, which I discussed in Chapter 3, serves as a good illustration here as well. Nora told me about the expectations of white Dutch players that Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls cannot play football, and how their opponents laughed when she and her team members entered the football field with headscarves. However, Nora also mentioned that, in the end, she and her team members did not care that much about prejudices and stereotypes because they won the match. The way Nora and her team mates deal with stereotypes about them as Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls is incorporated within the game of football itself, where winning is the ultimate goal. Just as winning is a strategy to resist and challenge dominant gender stereotypes in football playgrounds in relation to boys (Chapter 3), winning is also a strategy to challenge stereotypes and prejudices about Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls on the football field.

Contrary to the policy makers and sports professionals' assumptions, girls' football experiences indicate that many of them do not primarily see themselves as Muslims or as believers on the football field but, simply, as football players. Although her story shows otherwise, Nora actually believes that religious, racial, or ethnic backgrounds should not matter on the football field, but that simply playing football is the most important:

> *Kathrine: How does it feel when people have such prejudices about you?*
> *Nora: Yeah, I think there is no need for them, because, in the end, we are as good as them, or well... Yeah, no one is better than the other. So. But I don't really care, we all have the same blood, right? We are all humans, so... If you have a headscarf or if you are brown or black or whatever, if you can play football you just play, that's not because of your skin colour or your descent or your beliefs.*

Sport scholar Ratna also found, in her research on women's football in the UK, that the women did not want to be described in ethnic terms but as 'players of women's football' (Ratna 2011, 261). The girls in FGU do not necessarily 'invade' football spaces *as Muslims*, because that would still make them 'other' or 'different' from the perceived 'natural' (white, male) occupants. They invade the spaces *as football players* who happen to be Muslim, and who claim that they equally belong to urban public spaces as white or secular Dutch girls and as boys do. Farah (twelve years old) told me in an interview about a recent experience in which she was not welcome in a public football playground because of her ethnic and religious background. At the end of her story, she said:

Whose space is this in the Netherlands? It's surely as much my space as it is a blonde Dutch girl's space!

By playing football and claiming public football spaces, my research participants claim belonging to public spaces as football players and as Dutch citizens.

For the Muslim football players in my research, Islamic or religious practices and identities are not the most important on the football field, nor do they play football because of any religious motivations. They describe themselves primarily as football players and not as Muslims, and it is as football players that they claim access to Dutch public football spaces. I am not suggesting that the football players are not pious or religious in general or in other spaces, but, *on the football field*, religion or Islam is not their primary concern. Samie (2013) arrives at similar conclusions in her research on British-Muslim women in sports, who prioritise their gendered and sexual identities on the field, rather than their religious identifications, as a response to both gender ideals in sports and to British stereotypes about Muslim girls. In other words, although girls primarily see themselves as football players, ethnic and religious identities *are* important in relation to how other football players perceive them and in relation to dominant Dutch discourses of Muslim girls. The girls in my research are very much aware of Dutch stereotypical representations of them as oppressed Muslim and Moroccan-Dutch girls, and, in response to these stereotypes, they do play with the categories of ethnicity and religion. For example, they playfully reclaim an identity as Moroccan when they win a match or incorporate stereotypes of Muslim girls in their strategy to win a match. The girls in my research challenge dominant Dutch constructions of Muslims as 'other' by embodying the popular Dutch sport football and identifying primarily as football players. Foregrounding an identity as football player is a response and resistance to dominant Dutch discourses on Muslim girls, cultural citizenship, and racist and Islamophobic prejudices. In the next part, I will discuss how looking at playing football as citizenship practices can contribute to understandings of citizenship that go beyond the dominant culturalist discourses, and that include Muslim girls' performances and resistances.

Playing citizenship

Until now, I have mainly discussed citizenship in relation to the culturalisation of citizenship and sexual citizenship, as discourses about what it means to be a 'good' or 'real' Dutch citizen. In Dutch cultural constructions of citizenship, there is a paradox in which Muslim girls are always constructed by their religious difference and continue to be seen as racialised and religious 'others', even when they engage with neighbourhood football, a popular practice that is often taken as indicator for

properly embodying Dutch citizenship. However, I have also shown how the girls in my research use football to challenge and resist dominant discourses on Muslim girls and cultural and sexual constructions of citizenship. Approaching citizenship as differentiated or culturalised citizenship offers limited space to include these forms of resistance. Research on the culturalisation of citizenship mainly focuses on the level of dominant discourses and representations of citizenship, and not on actual practices of citizenship and marginalised subjects' resistances (El-Tayeb 2011). Approaching citizenship mainly from the perspective of the dominant culturalisation of citizenship overlooks how citizenship is also something that is always performed, practised, and lived. Citizenship is not only produced through dominant discursive (sexual and cultural) norms, but, importantly, also through public, political, and embodied *practices* that negotiate and question precisely those norms (Lazar 2014; Nyhagen and Halsaa 2016; Jaffe and De Koning 2015).

Nyhagen and Halsaa conceptualise citizenship as lived practices: 'An emphasis on citizenship as lived practice is based on the idea that citizenship is not so much a fixed attribute of a particular group but rather involves contested, fluid and dynamic processes of negotiation and struggle' (Nyhagen and Halsaa 2016, 60). Actions of negotiation and resistance in turn contribute to changing dominant perceptions of citizenship: citizenship 'is a dynamic construct which shifts as much due to the actions of those excluded from citizenship as those with the greater power of full membership' (Lazar 2014, 72). Occupying urban public spaces through street demonstrations, neighbourhood-based social gatherings, or creative forms of protest such as graffiti are contemporary forms of citizenship action (Lazar 2014, 76), and this could also include playing street football.

In the Schilderswijk, practices of citizenship extend beyond football, although Football Girls United is an important domain for practising inclusive citizenship for the girls. Previously, I already mentioned the youth centre in the Schilderswijk where discussions are organised on societal and local issues, such as discrimination, unemployment, radicalisation, crime, and the relationship between youths and the police in the neighbourhood. It is run by three men from the Schilderswijk, and they help young residents with all kinds of issues: school and homework, finding a job, gaining self-confidence, et cetera. FGU cooperates with the youth centre, and Hanan always takes a group of girls from FGU to the events of the youth centre to stimulate girls' and women's participation in the discussions and trainings. Her participation works in two ways: it gives girls opportunities to become engaged in activities that can help them in their studies and work, and it challenges the normally dominantly masculine spaces of the youth centre. The girls from FGU also take part in other volunteer activities in the Schilderswijk: they help in an elderly nursing home, collect

money and food for homeless and poor people in the neighbourhood with Ramadan, and participate in diner events at which residents with different backgrounds can meet each other in the Schilderswijk. Once a year, the girls from FGU participate together in the Dutch 'Royal Games' (*Koningsspelen*).[87] Next to stimulating girls' participation in the male-dominated spaces of football, FGU also encourages girls' participation in other traditionally male-dominated spaces in the Schilderswijk, such as politics and public debates.

Even if dominant culturalised constructions of citizenship create Muslim girls' as 'second-class' citizens, playing football is a way in which Muslim girls do perform and 'play' citizenship. Playing football is in itself a citizenship practice, but, in the Schilderswijk, girls' football also opens doors to other forms of citizenship practice, through volunteering and engaging in political debates. Through performative actions and practices of citizenship, the girls in my research redefine and reconceptualise what it means to be a Dutch citizen. They do not uncritically take part in neighbourhood sports projects for the integration, disciplining, and emancipation of Muslim girls and boys, but adopt football as a citizenship practice to create their own sports practices and recreate citizenship more inclusively (Silverstein 2002, 2000).

The citizenship practices of the girls and boys in my research take place in relation to national belonging, by emphasising that they belong to Dutch public spaces as Dutch citizens, but also in relation to local belonging and local practices in the neighbourhood in which they live and play. According to Holston and Appadurai (1999, 3), citizenship is not only produced at the national level, but also in the city, where local spaces and practices of citizenship are 'challenging, diverging from, and even replacing nations as the important space of citizenship'. In these local citizenship activities in and beyond football, the girls and boys claim that they are already part of Dutch society, and that they do not need to *become* a Dutch citizen through culturalist discourses of integration or emancipation. According to Jaffe-Walter, this is precisely what being an active citizen entails, and critically analysing society is the best citizenship practice: 'critiquing the norms, values, and institutions that produce inequalities helps students to be more engaged in society' (Jaffe-Walter 2016, 171). The football girls in my research do not only claim football spaces as theirs, but, by playing football, also the discursive spaces of Dutch citizenship.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown how the gender and football project of Football Girls United intersects with discourses of integration, emancipation, and citizenship in neighbourhood and youth sports policies, in which Islam, gender, and sexuality play prominent roles. I have pointed out a paradox of gender, Islam, and girls' football in Dutch culturalised and sexual constructions of citizenship: Muslim girls should participate in playing football for their cultural integration and emancipation, yet, even when they do so, they are not seen as full citizens because they are always constructed as the essential religious 'other'. Within this paradox, no attention is paid to the intersections with the gender and sexual norms in dominant sports culture, and how sports itself is based on the premise of the binary separation of gendered bodies. When Muslim girls' play in a separated girls' football competition, this is not seen as a normal part of sports culture, but as an essentialised Islamic religious conviction. As such, a Muslim girls' separated girls' football competition becomes criticised in cultural and sexual constructions of citizenship as unemancipated, although gender segregation is inherent in most sports. Muslim girls are placed within a single framework of Islamic gender regulations in explaining their sportive play, and not within a broader framework of dominant gender and sexuality norms in sports culture (Samie 2013). The sports professionals and policy makers I interviewed reduce Muslim women's practices and experiences solely to 'being Muslim', and do not acknowledge intersections with gendered, sexual, classed, spatial, and racialised power relations in Dutch sports and society. Spatial gender segregation in football forms the axis through which differences between white Dutch citizens and Islamic 'others' are discursively made. The spatial gender differentiation that is inherent to sports is also a crucial part of constructions of Muslim football players as 'backward' in Dutch culturalised and sexual citizenship.

Yet, the football girls themselves expressed that their Islamic backgrounds were not that important on the football field: they rather identified as football players. In their football practices, they move the focus away from religion and Islam, towards a focus on football and winning. Whereas most feminist scholars of religion and gender frame young Muslims' practices of challenging dominant constructions of gender and Islam by looking at women's religious agency and religious and pious practices (see Chapter 1), I argue that playing football (and winning) also forms an important practice through which cultural and sexual constructions of Dutch citizenship can be challenged. In this chapter, I have shown how Muslim girls in the Schilderswijk incorporate stereotypes of themselves as Muslim girls in their football tactics and strategies, through which they were able to win. By playing football, the young footballers in my research 'unsettle established or dominant notions of social and cultural difference' (Burchardt and Becci 2016, 2). The young people in my research question and resist dominant Dutch constructions of cultural and sexual citizenship through the spatial and playful football practices in their neighbourhood, which I analysed as practices of citizenship.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have presented my ethnographic research of girls' football in public playgrounds as a critical perspective on contemporary dynamics and intersections of gender, race/ethnicity, and religion in Dutch society. The study has looked at how girls in the Schilderswijk engage with and create public playgrounds as gendered, ethnicised/racialised, and religionised by playing football. It argues that power, inequality, and difference, converged through gender, race/ethnicity, and religion, are performatively resisted and reproduced through girls' spatial and playful practices of football in public playgrounds.

This research is situated in the context of three related societal developments in the Netherlands, as I have set out in the Introduction of this dissertation. First, girls' football has seen an enormous growth over the past years, both in official clubs and in other, more 'unorganised' football spaces such as urban playgrounds (Romijn and Elling 2017, 24), despite the still dominant image of football as a masculine sport. Street football has become increasingly popular amongst Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch girls in urban multicultural neighbourhoods such as the Schilderswijk, the location of this research. The girls' football competition that formed the ethnographic body of this dissertation, Football Girls United, is a living example of the popularity of football amongst ethnic minority and Muslim girls in urban neighbourhoods.

The increased presence of ethnic minority and Muslim girls in public football spaces relates to the second point, which is about the political and public anxieties around the increasing visibility of Islam in European cities (Modest and De Koning 2016; De Koning 2016; Oosterbaan 2014). Muslim citizens have become constructed as the ultimate religious and racial/ethnic 'others' in hegemonic Dutch society, with gender and sexuality as central 'markers' of the created divisions between white Dutchness and Muslim 'others' (Wekker 2016). In this narrative, the chapters of postcolonial history that acknowledges that Muslim citizens have been a part of the Netherlands for a long time already are ignored.

Third, these national dynamics of Dutch identity, gender, and Muslim 'others' play out in specific urban working-class neighbourhoods that become constructed as 'disadvantaged'. Discourses about Muslim 'others' feed into the construction of urban Muslim and ethnic minority youths in these neighbourhoods as 'problematic' (De Koning 2015a, 2016). In turn, neighbourhood sports programmes are implemented as part of policies to improve 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods, and to integrate its ethnic minority and Muslim youths into dominant Dutch society (Rana 2014), usually through the most popular national sport: football. The starting point of these policies is that Moroccan-Dutch and Muslim citizens still need to be 'integrated' in Dutch society, even if they are born and raised in the Netherlands. Muslim and ethnic minority girls often form a specific target group of neighbourhood sports programmes, because of their

assumed lack of participation in sports, and in football specifically. In a paradoxical way, this assumption leads back to what I mentioned earlier: sociological research has pointed out that ethnic minority girls' participation in (street) football is actually vastly increasing, but these numbers are often not included in official statistics, which are based on club membership only (Romijn and Elling 2017; Elling and Knoppers 2005). Muslim girls' increasing football participation, thus, provides challenges to persisting assumptions and perceptions of Muslim girls as 'inactive' and 'oppressed'; to popular perceptions of the visibility of Islam in urban neighbourhoods as a threat; and to football as a domain of masculine nationalistic performance and identity.

In Chapter 1, I have set out the theoretical framework of feminist scholarship in the social sciences and humanities, more specifically the scholarly fields of feminist intersectionality scholarship, feminist studies of religion and gender – including studies of Muslim women and sports – and feminist studies of gender and public space. I have critically discussed conceptualisations of race, ethnicity, and religion in European feminist intersectional scholarship. Based on Wekker (2016) and Hall (2017), I argued that intersectional conceptualisations with specific attention to race and processes of racialisation are necessary to account for the ways in which (gendered, ethnic, religious) differences are embedded in and produced through macrostructures of colonial racialised power relations, oppressions, and hierarchies. Sports sociological studies of Muslim women and sports, however, hardly take a critical intersectional approach into account. In these studies, Muslim women are seen as constituted *only* by their religious or ethnic minority backgrounds and communities, and not as also situated within dominant gender and sexuality norms in sports and football and in dominant discourses that frame Muslim girls as racialised 'others'. This has resulted in a simplistic focus on gender-segregated sporting and the headscarf in most research on Muslim women and sports. Furthermore, I have critically engaged with conceptualisations of religion and Islam in feminist intersectionality scholarship and in the feminist study of religion and gender and argued that these studies also have a limited perspective on the role of religion – as either a form of racialised oppression or as piety – in Muslim women's lives, which does not correspond to the experiences of the football girls' in this research. I will come back to this point after rehearsing the findings of my ethnographic chapters.

Chapter 2 concerns the specific location and context for this research: the Schilderswijk. This neighbourhood is often portrayed as the most 'disadvantaged' neighbourhood in the Netherlands in media, politics, and public debates, because of its ethnic minority and Muslim residents, especially youths. In Chapter 2, I have demonstrated that race/ethnicity, Islam, and gender are central axes of difference through which urban public space is constructed as 'problematic' in the Netherlands,

embodied especially by 'Moroccan' Muslim boys. Furthermore, in this chapter, I have shown that the construction of the Schilderswijk as 'problematic' is not new and has not only emerged with the arrival of migrants or religious minorities: it has a longer history related to the social-historical development of the Schilderswijk as a working-class neighbourhood. Based on historical research, I argue that there never was a homogeneous local social space of the Schilderswijk that is now 'invaded' or 'disrupted' by ethnic minorities or Muslims. Yet, since its emergence, the neighbourhood has figured and functioned as the poor, working-class, problematic, and uncivilised 'other' in Dutch society.

The ways in which the Schilderswijk is represented in political and public debates obscures the social-historical and classed dynamics that underlie the contemporary social and ethnic characteristics of the neighbourhood. Political and popular representations of the Schilderswijk instal a myth of the problem neighbourhood, which is a narrative that only pays attention to the social problems in the neighbourhood, supposedly related to ethnic minorities, gender, and Muslim youths, and not to residents' actual experiences of living in the neighbourhood. It is therefore that ethnographic research in this neighbourhood is important to create more nuanced perspectives on the Schilderswijk. In Chapter 2, I began to investigate young residents' own experiences and perspectives of their neighbourhood, and I showed that these are generally positive, because of the proximity of other children, friends, and neighbours. Playing football together contributes to their positive experiences, but also provides a way to combat the negative representations of their neighbourhood in politics and media by inviting children from other places to the football competitions in the Schilderswijk. Sports are thus not only a tool of urban regeneration and youth integration policies, but also a practice of young residents themselves, through which they can construct the public football playgrounds, and the public image of their neighbourhood, in different ways. Yet, there are crucial gendered ways in which the public space of the Schilderswijk is lived, for example related to the lack of public spaces for girls' leisure and sports activities, and in relation to stereotypical perceptions of Muslim girls by white sports professionals in the neighbourhood.

In Chapters 3, 4, and 5, I have looked at how Muslim girls' spatial and football practices construct football spaces in ways that both reproduce and resist the intersecting differences of gender, race/ethnicity, and religion in football. I have approached girls' football and *playing* as forms of children's performative and critical engagement with categories and differences of gender, race/ethnicity, and religion. Following Butler (1990, 1993, 1998), performative play includes both the inhabiting of (gender, racial/ethnic, religious) norms and power relations, as well as the transgression, critique, or resistance of those norms and power relations. Playing

football, thus, not only refers to 'non-serious' acts of leisure or recreation, but also to the playful and performative acts of gender, race/ethnicity, religion, space, and citizenship. By playing football, girls and boys in the Schilderswijk also perform and 'play' with those social and epistemological categories of difference, in a playful yet critical manner.

Although football is one of the most pervasively gendered differentiated domains, it has not been taken up broadly within feminist and intersectionality scholarship – it has stayed mainly within sports sociology. In Chapter 3, I have shown that, despite the growth of girls' football, compared with boys, girls are still marginally present in public football spaces. Public football playgrounds are continuously constructed and reconfirmed as masculine, through spatial, embodied, and discursive practices and differences on the field. In the construction of football space as masculine, I focused on the particular role that neighbourhood sports organisations play. I have argued that, even when they aim to create more football spaces for girls, they still contribute to the reproduction of the gendered construction of the playground as dominantly masculine. The reproduction of gendered space is a layered process in which the norm of masculinity in public playgrounds is performatively installed: through contestations over football space and time; through embodied practices and play on the football field; through the implicit and explicit gendered and sexualised ways of talking about football by players, trainers, parents, and teachers; and through (the lack of) female role models.

However, for girls in the masculine terrain of football, playing football is also a way of performative resistance to the gendered norms and constructions of football space, in which, I argue, girls act as 'space invaders' (Puwar 2004). Girls are not simply 'outsiders' in public football spaces but contribute to constructing public football spaces differently by their increasing 'invasions' of and claims on public football spaces. Football girls are both insiders, by being space invaders and by exposing the hidden (masculine) norm, and outsiders, as they precisely do not embody that norm. The still dominant masculine norm of public football space was also the main motivation why girls in the Schilderswijk created their own girls' football competition. In Chapter 4, I discussed this Football Girls United competition, and showed that the main motivations for girls to create their own girls' competition are related to social justice and gender equality, creating friendships with other football girls, the embodied, physical, and sexualised contact in playing football, and gendered differences in football level. Furthermore, I have shown that, although FGU is a girls' football competition, it is not as strictly gender segregated as the name might suggest. Boys are a central part of the organisation of the competition and of FGU's gender emancipation project. Football Girls United is not a football competition based on the traditional dichotomous spatial

segregation of the categories of boys and girls, as is the norm in sports, but they rather construct a spatial difference between *different kinds of boys*, in allowing certain boys in their girls' football space and others not, albeit that this difference, in FGU, is still based on normative ideas and ideals of gender and (hetero)sexuality.

The main reason for including boys in the girls' football competition was to teach them different gender norms and hierarchies in football, in which girls' can equally claim football space as boys, and where boys have respect for girls' football qualities. In this way, FGU aims to create different gendered hierarchies in football, through creating a space where girls are the central players and can claim football spaces, contrary to the dominant position of boys in 'regular' football in public playgrounds. Both girls and boys performatively created more inclusive gender norms in FGU, for example a femininity ideal that encompasses both football and Muslim embodiments and identities. Yet, I have also shown that, in FGU's alternative constructions of masculinity and femininity in football, some gender and sexual norms are being reproduced, for example related to the ideas that boys need to protect girls and girls deserve respect and thus must embody respectability, and the fact that heterosexuality functions as the norm in the sporting context of FGU. Although girls' football at FGU cannot fully escape gendered and heterosexualised dichotomies of boys and girls in football, their girls' football practices, which include boys, are much more layered and nuanced than a simple rigid and fixed gender segregation. Too often in research on Muslim women and sports, girls' football is approached as a strictly gender-segregated space, while, at FGU, girls' football is rather about creating alternative relations between boys and girls and about creating alternative masculinities and femininities in athletic contexts.

I found that girls' motivations for playing in a separated girls' football competition are not so much shaped by religious motivations, but more by the gendered dynamics of public football spaces, where girls do not embody the masculine norm. The ethnographic material of Chapters 3 and 4 has demonstrated that the dichotomous gendered and sexualised organisation of sports and the related gender and sexual norms and hierarchies in football are dominant in shaping girls' football experiences, and not religious or Islamic factors. As Samie (2013) also argues, Muslim women's participation in sports is not necessarily shaped by Islamic or religious motivations and convictions, but by discourses and norms of gendered and (hetero)sexualised bodies in broader ('secular') football culture.

In Chapter 5, I showed that sports organisers perceive the visibility of Muslim girls in public sports spaces and their own girls' football competition as problematic. The sports professionals and policy makers whom I interviewed assume that, when Muslim girls enter football spaces, these spaces become 'Islamised' and therefore threaten the supposed secular nature of public space. Here, they reduce Moroccan-Dutch Muslim women's practices and experiences solely to 'being Muslim', and do not acknowledge intersections with gendered, sexual, classed, spatial, and racialised power relations in Dutch sports and broader society. I have pointed out a paradox in Dutch debates of gender, Islam, and football – the privileged site of 'integration' in Dutch society – in which Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls' participation in girls' football is not interpreted as integration or as a normal aspect of sports culture, but as essentially linked to their alleged traditional religious backgrounds and therefore *contrary* to integration. Gender segregation in sports and football becomes a crucial axis through which differences between white Dutch citizens and Muslim 'others' are discursively made, and through which Muslim football players are constructed as unintegrated and unemancipated in Dutch society. Yet, for the young football players themselves, religion and Islam are not their primary interests on the football field, but they rather want to win the match and perform an identification as football player. As part of their performances as football players, however, they do take up and 'play' with the categories of religious difference and Islam: they take up dominant perceptions of Muslim girls as 'oppressed' and 'inactive' and incorporate them in their football tactics to win.

My central theoretical argument is that there are conceptual shortcomings regarding religious difference and Islam in feminist studies of intersectionality and women's religious agency, and in studies of Muslim women and sports. The focus of these studies on piety, racialised oppression, and explicit religious identifications does not capture the performances and experiences of the girls in my research. Intersectionality focuses on relationships of (racialised) oppression and structural power in the constructions of identity and difference, but this is, at the same time, its limitation (Singh 2015). This focus on macrostructures of power creates a dominant framework in intersectionality studies in which religion and Islam are mainly studied in relation to structural (racialised) oppression, such as Islamophobia and how Muslims are constructed as 'others' in European societies. In this way, intersectionality studies overlook the possibilities of religion and ethnicity as sources of value and agency for subjects. On the other hand, I have argued that feminist studies of religion and gender often precisely centre around the agentic aspect of religion but do so by centralising mainly perspectives and experiences of observing, pious women, in explicitly and predominantly religious (research) settings. While I do not deny that, for women in these settings, piety can indeed be their primary and main source of religious identification and agency, this is not the case for all religious or Muslim women. Agency for the footballing girls in my research is not necessarily performed through pious or religious embodiments, but through playing football as performative acts of

resistance. The conceptualisations of Islam and religious difference as either a form of racialised oppression or as piousness in feminist intersectionality scholarship and in feminist studies of religion and gender do not correspond with the anthropological lived realities of the 'religious but not that religious' girls in my research who play football together.

In the context of their football activities, the girls in my research did not necessarily aspire a very pious, observant life, or engage with explicit Islamic or religious (sports) organisations; they engaged with what often is considered the 'secular' practice of playing football. I put secular in quotation marks, because there is no such thing as a purely 'secular' practice: what is constructed as secular is always produced through what is constructed as religious and vice versa. Girls do not readily accept how public spaces in the Netherlands and in their neighbourhood are gendered, racialised, and religionised through dominant discourses of ethnic minority and Muslim girls as 'other', but, by playing football and 'invading' public playgrounds, they performatively recreate racialised norms of gender, ethnicity, and religion in public spaces and in football. The girls 'play' with the categories of religious difference, gender, and ethnicity, and create more inclusive and more equal public football spaces in the Schilderswijk, to which also Muslim and Moroccan-Dutch female football players can belong. Intersectional processes of racialising/ethnicising, gendering, and religionising thus take place in and through (football) space, and through the spatial practices of the girls who play football. It is important to also study perspectives and experiences of Muslim girls outside explicitly religious spaces such as mosques or religious women's groups, as Muslim women's lives are not confined to these spaces only.

The empirical focus in this research on football spaces, rather than on explicitly religious spaces, has provided new interpretations of gender, race/ethnicity, and religion in the lives of young Muslim women in the Netherlands. I did not approach their lives and experiences primarily from a religious perspective (by, for example, focusing on explicit religious practices such as praying or by looking at Islamic women's organisations), but from a perspective of their navigations in spaces that were not explicitly religious. In this way, I was able to look at how differences of religion, race/ethnicity, and gender are being taken up by a group that is often overlooked in feminist research on religion and gender: the 'religious but not that religious' young women for whom piety is not their main practice or interest but playing football is. By looking at public spaces and practices of girls who are not explicitly religious, I have been able to give new interpretations of what religious difference and Islam can mean in Muslim girls' lives in the Netherlands. These are not restricted to piety or racialised oppression, but also include the performative engagements with religion and difference in non-religious spaces and practices such as football. An intersectionality perspective

has been crucial here, because this perspective means that the analysis should not be limited to only one aspect of difference: it takes multiple categories of difference into account. Furthermore, by also engaging with space as an analytic category in religion and gender and intersectionality research, I was able to emphasise how intersectional categories of difference and power, such as race/ethnicity, religion, and gender, are not fixed but reproduced, resisted, and changed by the actions and performances of girls themselves in different spaces. Spatial empirical research can track how intersecting categories of difference and identifications can change over time and place, and emphasises the transgression of boundaries, rather than clear cut categories.

The ethnographic approach in this research has been crucial here. Ethnographic research emphasises the perspectives and lived experiences of research participants in specific contexts, in this case the football spaces in the Schilderswijk. I was able to observe how the girls interacted with each other and with boys and white sports professionals in the spaces in which they played football, and I observed how their performances of gender, ethnicity, and religion were related to these interactions in different spaces. An ethnographic approach with in-depth interviews and participant observation does not assume a priori that a certain topic or category is most important but follows the research participants themselves in what they consider important. Especially in research with children, the methodology of this research and the focus on public football playgrounds worked very well. Football is a popular sport amongst many young residents in urban neighbourhoods and, in their teenage years, the public spaces where they can 'hang around' become important spaces in their daily lives, also for girls. Thus, by hanging around with these young residents in the playgrounds, I was able to engage with them outside the more formal spaces such as schools, or the more formal interview setting. Because of the ethnographic approach and the empirical focus on girls' football, I was able to move beyond conceptualisations of religion as racialised oppression, Islamophobia, and piety; instead, I have been able to focus on an aspect of Muslim girls' daily life that is often forgotten: playing football in the public playgrounds in their neighbourhood.

I argue that future research should focus more on these 'other' aspects of Muslim girls' lives, such as education, work, leisure, and sports. Feminist and intersectionality research on religion and gender should not only focus on pious women in religious spaces, but also engage with sports as an embodied practice of women's agency. The insights of this study about football as an opportunity for girls' critical engagements with gender, ethnicity, and religion could, in this way, be further explored in the broader domain of sports and leisure. This will enhance feminist anthropology and intersectional understandings of gender, religion, and race/ethnicity, as sports and leisure have, until now, been quite absent in these studies, while they are of crucial

importance in the lives of girls with migrant and Muslim backgrounds. It is time to pay attention to these spheres of life and to move beyond the limited focus on religion and Islam in studies of Muslim women. Future studies of sports and leisure can enhance understandings of the ways in which agency in Muslim girls' lives is not only performed through religion or Islam, but also through other domains that are not explicitly religious. In this way, the shared experiences of girls with diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds can be emphasised, rather than only their 'religious difference'.

On the other hand, a more thorough intersectional approach should be taken into account in sports and leisure studies to move beyond the limited focus on gender-segregated spaces and the headscarf when it concerns Muslim girls, and to pay attention to the multiple identifications and backgrounds of the sporting girls. Similar to this study of football, future studies of sports could provide new insights in the daily lives and experiences of girls with diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds, and could pay attention to how sports, leisure, and popular culture can be spaces of resistance and agency. Furthermore, future studies of children and sports can pay attention to how children's public and popular cultural performances, such as street football, are ways of engaging with political developments, such as the rise of right-wing parties and debates on migration, Islam, and diversity in the Netherlands and Europe.

Regarding fieldwork locations for further research, I argue that it is important to consider not only urban multicultural neighbourhoods that are problematised in public and political debates, but also neighbourhoods with a majority of white Dutch inhabitants. Problematised neighbourhoods, such as the Schilderswijk, are often 'over researched' places where many research projects are conducted (e.g. Rana 2014; Duijndam and Prins 2017; Franke, Overmaat, and Reijndorp 2014). Although these research projects often aim to challenge public stereotypical representations, there is a risk that much academic attention reproduces the 'otherness' of such neighbourhoods. Furthermore, as I discussed in Chapter 2, the Schilderswijk has a specific history and public image, so it cannot be simply assumed that, in other neighbourhoods, young residents engage in similar ways with the public football spaces. For example, although the Schilderswijk is one of the most ethnically diverse neighbourhoods in the Netherlands, the neighbourhood itself is quite segregated along ethnic lines. This was visible in the Football Girls United competition, which consisted of mostly Moroccan-Dutch girls. It would be interesting to see how football, gender, race/ethnicity, and religion are entangled in public playgrounds in neighbourhoods that are less segregated and could be seen as (super-)diverse (Burchard and Becci 2016), or in neighbourhoods with a large white majority population.

Furthermore, future research could explore some issues that were not explicitly part of this research but are nevertheless important in relation to girls' football and

public spaces. How sexual desire, falling in love, and sexual identities are part of girls' football is a topic about which more research could be done. This is especially interesting in relation to the historical development of women's football as a space for the performances of non-heteronormative sexualities, which is now rapidly changing in current representations of women's football and female football athletes. How the performance of non-normative sexualities plays out in non-professional street football performances of girls in multi-ethnic and multi-religious neighbourhoods is an important topic of further investigation. This also raises new questions about the relation between girls' street football and the professional national women's team, the OranjeLeeuwinnen, with which I started my dissertation. How does the growing participation of Muslim and Moroccan-Dutch girls in street football translate into the Dutch professional women's football teams, in which, until now, no Muslim and Moroccan-Dutch women have played, something one of my research participants also mentioned? The relationships between street football, girls' club football, and professional football with attention to race/ethnicity and religion as categories of difference, and the access of girls with diverse backgrounds to professional women's football, is an important topic for further research.

Endnotes
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1 https://www.jokesmitprijs.nl/, accessed 15 January 2018.

2 Most players have white Dutch ethnic backgrounds, two players have Surinamese-Dutch ethnic backgrounds, and one is Colombian-Dutch. None of the players is known to be Muslim.

3 I use the concept 'ethnicity' as fundamentally entangled with the concepts 'race' (as a social construct) and 'racialisation'. In the next chapter, I will elaborate on the intersections of race, ethnicity, and religion in Europe by discussing feminist and intersectional scholarship on these topics. I use the related terms 'ethnicised', 'racialised', 'religionised', and 'gendered' to highlight these social and analytical categories as processes and interactions rather than as fixed.

4 Like all other names of organisations and persons in this dissertation, this is a pseudonym.

5 The Schilderswijk was part of an urban regeneration policy from Minister Vogelaar of Integration and Housing, who identified forty 'problem neighbourhoods' in the Netherlands, for which specific investments in social, physical, and economic factors were planned by the government (Rana 2014, 38).

6 The online database from the city of The Hague uses the Dutch concepts '*allochtoon*' (people with a migration background, including the second generation) and '*autochtoon*' (native). In the next chapter, a critical discussion of these concepts will be provided.

7 For example, newspaper Trouw published a special magazine named *Back in the Schilderswijk* (2015), after they had to retract an article about a supposed sharia triangle in the Schilderswijk, based on questionable and unverifiable sources: https://www.trouw.nl/home/terug-in-de-schilderswijk~a3d6017c/, accessed 14 January 2018.

8 Maarten Zeegers (2016), *Ik was een van hen. Drie jaar undercover onder moslims* (I was one of them. Three years undercover amongst Muslims) is mostly about the neighbourhood Transvaal in The Hague, but it also discusses the neighbouring Schilderswijk; Hendrik Jan Korterink (2017), *Crimescene Schilderswijk: Misdaadbiografie van de beruchtste wijk van Nederland* (Crimescene Schilderswijk: Criminal biography of the most notorious neighbourhood in the Netherlands); Martin Schouten (2017), *Schilderswijk*; and Eric de Vroedt (2017, Dutch National Theatre), *The Nation*.

9 The law was approved by the House of Representatives (*Tweede Kamer*) on 29 November 2016 and by the Dutch Senate (*Eerste Kamer*) on 26 June 2018. Officially, all face covering is prohibited in public spaces (not only a face veil), except when necessary for sports or professional matters. A penalty can be imposed on a person wearing a face cover. Upon writing, the law had not yet come into effect, and the date of operation will be announced after consultation with the public sectors involved: https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2018/06/26/gedeeltelijk-verbod-gezichtsbedekkende-kleding, accessed 9 November 2018.

10 There are other examples of an implied troubled relationship between Islam and migrants on the one hand, and feminism, women's, and sexual rights on the other, such as the open letter from Prime Minister Mark Rutte (2017) to all Dutch citizens, in which he calls groups of people who behave 'poorly' to 'act normal'. He gives examples of these groups: people who hang around in the streets, people (implying migrants) who came to our country for its freedom, but reject Dutch norms and values regarding sexual freedom and women's equality, and people who critically discuss racism in Dutch society. Sybrand Buma (2017), leader of the Christian Democrat Party (CDA), gave a similar lecture as Edith Schippers, in which he also called for migrants to adapt to Dutch traditional norms and values, which, according to him, encompass 'enlightened' Jewish-Christian traditions, but not Islam. These are only recent examples, but the use of gender and sexuality in anti-multiculturalism or anti-Islam discourses in the Netherlands is by no means new. Most scholars take the rise of politician Pim Fortuyn in the early 2000s as a reference point for the intensification of debates on multiculturalism and Islam (Bracke 2011; Mepschen, Duyvendak, and Tonkens 2010; Prins 2002), which roots can nevertheless be located in the gendered and sexualised construction of racial 'others' in colonial times (Stoler 2002, 2016; Wekker 2016).

11 Examples of such programmes are the national 'Time for Sport Memorandum' (*Tijd voor Sport Nota*) of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, and the 'Participation migrant youth through sports' programme, a collaboration between the aforementioned ministry with the Ministry of Integration and Housing of Minister Vogelaar. Rana (2014, 37–39) and Sterkenburg (2011) have discussed these programmes in more detail, and I discuss these programmes in relation to my research on girls' football in the Schilderswijk in Chapter 5.

12 The aim of the 'Participation migrant youth through sports' programme, for example, was to increase migrant youths' official sports club membership (Hoekman et al. 2011a).

13 https://www.nwo.nl/onderzoek-en-resultaten/onderzoeksprojecten/i/45/10145.html and

http://sportonderzoek.com/?page_id=240, accessed 20 January 2018.

14 http://sportonderzoek.com/?page_id=156, accessed 20 January 2018.

15 That is not to say that adults cannot engage with playing football as a performative act, but, in the context of this research, girls' football was a specific way of investigating how children and young adults perform gender, ethnicity, and religion in a Dutch neighbourhood.

16 The 6vs6 Cruyff Court competition is an initiative of the Cruyff Foundation, a Dutch national organisation that builds football playgrounds in neighbourhoods and organises, in collaboration with local partners, a yearly competition. The Cruyff Foundation was one of the societal partners in this research project, and their playgrounds provided an important first encounter with girls' football for me. In the next chapter, I will discuss the different (girls') football organisations that I have researched in more detail.

17 Mapping and drawing provide space for articulating experiences in a different form than words. Mapping with research participants provides information on how they relate their experiences to the social context and neighbourhood, and how they navigate through public space. I prepared to do such a mapping exercise with a few players from FGU between the ages of eight and thirteen. In the locker room, we sat on the ground and I gave them posters on which they could draw and map their routes and football playgrounds in their neighbourhood. When I explained what we were going to do, two girls interrupted me and said: 'I swear, I'm *really* not going to *draw* here'. I quickly responded that I would also be happy to just have a talk with them. These two girls were the older girls of the group (twelve and thirteen years old), and I suspect that they found drawing too childish, something belonging to the primary school they had just graduated from. Some of the younger girls did like to draw and map, but, to make sense of their drawings, I still needed to ask them additional questions. Because most of my research participants were twelve years and older, I decided not to continue with this method.

18 He also points out that, paradoxically, this often leads to a deeper understanding of and identification with Islam (De Koning 2008, 93).

19 This is Arabic for 'Thank God' and an often-used expression amongst Muslims in the Netherlands and amongst people in Arabic-speaking countries.

20 In Dutch: '*Het blijft toch een Marokkaan, hè*.'

21 For example, its lack of methodology (Nash 2008), its limited transnational application and political potential (Dhawan and Castro Varela 2016), and the lack of a clear and confined definition – the often present 'etc.' after the list of axes of difference (Yuval-Davis 2006, 202–3; Ludvig 2006, 246–47).

22 According to Lewis (2013) and Hervik (2004), it is difficult to talk about race and racism in Europe because of the memory of the Holocaust; the political and academic focus on 'cultures' instead of 'races'; and discourses of egalitarianism, especially in northern Europe, including the Netherlands (see also Wekker 2016). In northern Europe and the Netherlands, race is often seen as a purely biological construct, and has thus disappeared with the rejection of Nazism and biological racism, as a 'historical phenomenon that we have left behind' (Andreassen and Ahmed-Andresen 2013, 27; see also Smiet 2014b, 38).

23 Recently, after the publication of Gloria Wekker's *White Innocence* (2016) and its Dutch translation *Witte Onschuld* (2017), there has been more attention for structural racism and white privilege in the Netherlands. Author Anousha Nzume (2017) also published a book about white privilege, called *Hello White People* (*Hallo Witte Mensen*). Further, a documentary by Sunny Bergman (*White is a colour too*, [*Wit is ook een kleur*]) and a theatre performance by Ioana Tuder (*Losing our whiteness*) were made around this topic.

24 https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/faq/specifiek/wat-verstaat-het-cbs-onder-een-allochtoon-, accessed 28 January 2018.

25 Technically, the concept '*allochtoon*' is divided into Western and non-Western, and '*Indos*' now belong to the category Western allochthon, but, in practice, only non-Western allochthons are categorised as *allochtoon*. In November 2016, the Dutch government decided not to use the concepts *allochtoon* and *autochtoon* anymore, instead proposing the concept 'people with a migration background', which potentially provides more space to account for different histories of migrant groups and citizens, but ultimately also essentialises cultural, religious, or ethnic differences by way of discursively separating othered groups from white people. It is an endless separation of native from non-native that is impossible to overcome (Lentin 2014; El-Tayeb 2011). The concept still groups all non-white people together, without acknowledging for diversity within and between different ethnic, religious, or migrant groups.

26 I prefer the term cultural racism, as this type of racism is not new but based on the colonial constructions of race and racism (Lentin 2014; Stolcke 1993).

27 The ways people categorise themselves in relation to ethnic backgrounds varies depending on the context. In the section 'Research participants' in the Introduction of this dissertation, I have shown that, at least for the girls in my research, they identify as both Dutch and Moroccan, hence my use of Moroccan-Dutch in this dissertation. Such an identification emphasises their status as Dutch citizens, with 'Moroccan' as descriptor of their ethnic background.

28 In the USA and UK, blackness has also been constructed as a political identity and as source for resistance (Hall 2017, 96–99), yet, in continental Europe, the construction of such a black identity has been much less prominent, and has developed more in terms of ethnicity (El-Tayeb 2011).

29 The postsecular turn has influenced the broader humanities and social sciences, for example in migration studies (Ryan and Vacchelli 2013a) and in urban studies (Beaumont and Baker 2011). Here, I will only focus on the postsecular turn in feminist theory. On a critical note, the renewed focus or the 'discovery' of religion in feminist scholarship says more about the secular assumptions of most feminist research, than about the actual place and relevance of religion in feminism itself. Indeed, feminist theologians and religious studies scholars in different academic and religious traditions have always questioned the secular assumptions of mainstream feminists and, at the same time, questioned gender and sexual inequalities in religious traditions. Feminist religious scholars and activists have produced feminist reinterpretations of religious texts, practices, and structures for a long time (Vincett, Sharma, and Aune 2008), at least as early as Sojourner Truth in 1851 (Smiet 2014a).

30 Feminist anthropologist Sherry Ortner has noticed a similar trend in anthropological theory: an increasing occupation with power, domination, inequality, and oppression – what she calls 'dark anthropology'. She also points to a set of works on 'anthropology of the good', studying, for example, happiness, morality, and well-being, and argues that both perspectives need to be in active interaction in identifying modes of resistance and activism (Ortner 2016).

31 In the selection of this literature, I have focused on the European context. There is more literature on Muslim women and sports in Muslim-majority countries, for example by Homa Hoodfar (2015).

32 Recalling the conceptualisations of race and racialisation in the previous section, there is a similarity in how race and place are both temporary stabilisations of (racial or spatial) processes of power in particular social contexts and times.

33 Both Van Eijk (2011) and Skeggs (2010, 347) base their analysis on Bourdieu and his model of economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital. Based on Bourdieu's (1978) article on sports and class, I think it would be plausible to also add embodied capital to this model.

34 I do not look at the ways in which football itself is also religionised in some contexts, such as the experience of football as religion or the worshipping of football players as saints. Such an experience of football as religion was not the case amongst the girls in my research.

35 In Dutch: *studiefinanciering*.

36 Migrants (repatriates) from the former colony the Dutch Indies also moved to The Hague in the 1950s (Klein Kranenburg 2013, 150), but it is not clear if and how many of them settled in the Schilderswijk.

37 https://www.volkskrant.nl/politiek/wilders-in-de-haagse-schilderswijk-ik-waan-me-niet-in-nederland~a3444643/, accessed 15 January 2018.

38 https://www.ad.nl/den-haag/asscher-tempert-onrust-over-schilderswijk~aa459f84/, accessed 15 January 2018.

39 https://www.trouw.nl/home/trouw-trekt-tien-procent-artikelen-van-ramesar-in~a3d04121/, accessed 15 January 2018.

40 https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2014/09/19/in-de-schilderswijk-zijn-ze-het-zat-1422849-a676475, accessed 15 January 2018.

41 https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/van-aartsen-verbiedt-alle-demonstraties-schilderswijk~b2e69df2/, accessed 15 January 2018.

42 Dutch policy makers are especially preoccupied with the phenomenon of 'hang-around youths' in urban public space, and these youths are seen as a nuisance and dangerous (Martineau 2006).

43 Similarly, he neglects the small Jewish area in the Schilderswijk, the Van-Ostade houses that were built at the end of the 19th century. These circa 200 houses were built for poor Jewish people who could not afford to live in the city centre of The Hague, although many non-Jewish people also lived there (http://www.joodserfgoeddenhaag.nl/van-ostadewoningen/, accessed 6 February 2018).

44 In Dutch: *Rondkomen in de Schilderswijk*. The series ran for two seasons with thirteen episodes in total: https://www.rtl.nl/gemist/rondkomen-in-de-schilderswijk/, accessed 15 January 2018.

45 These interviews and talks were conducted before the protests in the summer of 2015 against police brutality, when, for five nights, there were riots and clashes between (young) residents and the police. In the research by Duijndam and Prins (2017, 125–33), young residents often did refer to those riots when talking about the Schilderswijk, which, according to them, emerged because of a lack of communication and response from the police after the killing of Mitch Henriquez. Yet, even the emergence of the riots in 2015 does not contradict the otherwise positive and peaceful experiences of young residents beyond those five exceptional days.

46 With mainstream sports clubs I mean sports clubs that have an official status as sports club and are affiliated to a national sports federation. Usually, sporters pay a yearly membership fee, and play in the local, regional, and/or national competitions.

47 In Dutch: *buurtsportvereniging*.

48 This is similar to the gendered use of space at football clubs, where the boys come first when it comes to the use of the football field and other facilities (Elling 2015, 20; Williams 2003), and where girls often have to use the lesser maintained fields and cloakrooms, which are sometimes further away or in a bad state.

49 The 6vs6 competitions from the Cruyff Foundation are an exception, as they explicitly stimulate girls' participation in the competition. They have two parallel competitions: one for boys and one for girls, and, officially, a local Cruyff Court is only allowed to participate in the competition if they have at least one girls' team as well (although, in practice, that is not always the case).

50 In the previous chapter, the different football initiatives in the Schilderswijk have been explained. The Schilderswijk Street League is a competition organised by ADO Den Haag, the professional football club of the city, in cooperation with Sportteam and community centres in the Schilderswijk. At the start of the competition, all participants went to the football club for the official launch and to sign a contract of participation.

51 A panna court is a small football court, especially designed for the form of street football that centres around (individual) skill, speed, technique, and tricks (such as the panna trick, where you shoot a ball through the legs of your opponent).

52 In this chapter, it is my aim to show how gender norms shape and construct public sports spaces and the different embodied practices and performances in those spaces. Yet, the relation between gender, bodies, and space also works the other way around. Through the gender-segregated organisation of football – and sports more in general – different gendered uses of the body by boys and girls are reproduced. To speak with Butler, through the repetitive performances of the gendered and footballing body, differences between girls' bodies and boys' bodies in football are reproduced and become 'naturalised', as if they exist 'naturally' in this way. In the next chapter, I will focus more on how gendered, sexed, and sexualised bodies are produced through the spatial organisation of sports.

53 Most likely because sports studies are also dominantly perceived as masculine.

54 This headscarf issue is only an issue when Peter himself is in charge of the 'official' sports trainings in the playgrounds after school; when FGU organises football trainings in the same playgrounds in the evenings and on the weekends, Peter does not see it as a problem that girls play football with a headscarf.

55 They met the professional women's team when they won the street football competition and received the cup and the tickets, which were later given to the boys, as I described above.

56 An important topic in this regard is the relationship between youths, especially boys, and the police in the Schilderswijk. In the previous chapter, I have briefly discussed this topic, but here it is beyond the scope of the chapter, as I focus mainly on public space in relation to sports organisations and football. For a recent research about the experiences of girls and boys from the Schilderswijk and their trust in the police, see Duijndam and Prins (2017).

57 Here, we talked about the playgrounds that are not part of 'his' playgrounds behind the school of which he is the coordinator.

58 Here, I am mainly talking about non-professional female football athletes, and not about professional football players. However, Van den Heuvel (2017, 163) has shown that some professional female football players also prevent their bodies from growing too much muscle because it does not fit the standards of hegemonic heterosexual femininity. However, female athletes' growing muscles can also be seen as resistance to gender and body norms (Butler 1998).

59 Whereas women's football was traditionally seen as a lesbian sport (Caudwell 1999), its popularity nowadays seems to exist on the premise of heterosexual attraction to the (elite women's) football players (Van den Heuvel 2017; Elling, Peeters, and Stentler 2017). The stereotype of women's football as a lesbian sport, and the emphasis that is consequently put on heterosexual appeal to resist that stereotype, is particularly strong in professional women's football. In my research, I have not encountered the stereotype of women's football as a lesbian sport, nor such strong emphasis on heterosexual appeal. Yet, it does show the larger context of how gender and heteronormativity are produced in women's football in the Netherlands and beyond.

60 Of course, the school is also a space where boys and girls interact, and school spaces have never been mentioned as a problematic space of boys' and girls' interactions in my research (see also De Koning 2008). Yet, in this research, the focus is on public and leisure spaces outside the more strict and controlled spaces of school, education, and learning. Some leisure spaces in the Schilderswijk are seen as problematic by girls and their parents, such as the shisha cafés and hanging around in public spaces late at night (see also Chapter 2).

61 In Dutch: '*Helemaal naar de klote*'.

62 In Dutch: '*Meiden zijn de beste, kom het maar testen!*'

63 It was highly exceptional that girls and boys talked with each other in Moroccan in FGU, except for the use of certain Moroccan terms or concepts for daily objects and practices related to food, marriage, or famous Moroccan football players.

64 Unfortunately, I have not been able to follow up with her on this topic yet.

65 Although Azzarito speaks about Muslim girls, she acknowledges that this subject position is about intersecting dynamics of race/ethnicity, class, and religion.

66 Research in US schools has pointed out that this is also increasingly the case for racialised black girls (Crenshaw, Ocen, and Nanda 2015).

67 In the television programme Voetbal Inside, 11 April 2016, RTL. Although the men in the football talk show programme are heavily criticised by feminists and anti-racists for their racist, sexist, and trans- and homophobic comments, the programme still appears to be popular amongst Dutch football fans.

68 In the same football talk show, Johan Derksen stated about Moroccan boys that they 'all take a shower while wearing their underwear'.

69 For example, the European project IMAGINE on the role of boys and men in gender equality and the prevention of sexual intimidation and sexual violence, http://www.emancipator.nl/imagine/, accessed 9 November, 2018.

70 Although, here, Nora talked about a *niqab*, I later saw that these girls did not wear a face veil but a *khimar*, which covers the whole body but leaves the face uncovered.

71 https://www.cruyff-foundation.org/en/activities/14/14-rules, accessed 15 January 2018.

72 Interestingly, as Rana (2014, 37) points out, soon after the start of the project, its name changed from 'allochthonous' to 'all' youths, indicating a shift away from policies for specific target groups and the use of alternative words for 'allochthonous', such as 'new Dutch'. Subsequently, the policy texts referred to 'neighbourhood residents' instead of 'allochthonous youths'. In other words, the focus on disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the sports project stayed, thus implicitly still referring to youths with migrant backgrounds, as 'neighbourhoods' came to stand in for 'multicultural' or 'allochthonous' youths. Rana states: 'Even if the words change: [...] "*alle*" instead of "*allochtone*", the underlying discourse does not. Implementing sports programmes as part of neighbourhood regeneration efforts supposedly transcends ethnic profiling, but in everyday practice social categorisations are still implicitly reproduced' (Rana 2014, 45).

73 As I also explained earlier in this dissertation, this supposed 'lack of participation' is likely the case because the numbers of sports participation are often based only on official club membership, whereas ethnic minority and urban girls often play sports in public playgrounds without being a member of a club (Romijn and Elling 2017, 24; Hoekman et al. 2011b).

74 For example, the 'participation contract' from Minister Asscher of Social Affairs and Employment that migrants have to sign, with a strong focus on Dutch norms and values: https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2017/06/20/ook-eerste-kamer-voor-participatieverklaring-nieuwkomers, accessed 20 January 2018.

75 http://www.sportindebuurt.nl/sportimpuls/sportimpuls-jeugd-in-lage-inkomensbuurten/, accessed 20 January 2018.

76 With a few exceptions in cheerleading (Anderson 2008) and the Dutch sport korfball, where mixed teams are the norm. However, both in cheerleading and korfball, the gendered and sexed spatial organisation of the sport is still crucial, albeit in different ways: cheerleading is constructed as a discursively feminised space (Anderson 2008), and, in korfball, gender differentiation on the field is practised through the defence rules of the sport (men may only defend men and women may only defend women).

77 The VVD is the conservative democratic party and the CDA the Christian democrat party. On a national level, these two parties formed the coalition Rutte-1 from 2010–2012 together. They received extra coalitional support from the PVV, the xenophobic and populist 'party for freedom' led by Geert Wilders, which meant 'a swing to the right of the entire political spectrum' (Wekker 2016, 110). It is not unlikely that this has also influenced the local government and policies in The Hague.

78 This also explains why gender-segregated swimming is more difficult to facilitate by the municipality: it is not about competition but about individual 'fitness' swimming and the argument of gender segregation based on sports level and physical differences can therefore not be used.

79 Here, I am talking about the sports hours organised by Sportteam in this playground, on weekdays after school. Peter follows the same policy as the primary school that his playground is attached to, and of which he also uses the indoor sports hall. At the school, headscarves are not allowed during physical education classes. On Saturdays, when FGU uses Peter's playground, they can set their own rules. Wearing a headscarf, like in all of FGU's activities, is not a problem then.

80 He refers to the Charlie Hebdo shooting in Paris on 7 January 2015.

81 I am aware that wearing a face veil (in popular language often called a *burqa*) and radicalism and terrorism are different things, and that wearing a face veil is more often a sign of adhering to Salafism than of radicalisation. Salafism means adhering to orthodox or 'pure' Islam, and is not necessarily related to jihadism. This is only the case for a small group of Salafis who adhere to the jihadist Salafi groups. The other two groups are the political and puritan Salafi's and they condemn violence (De Koning, Wagemakers, and Beckers 2014). Yet, in dominant Dutch discourses, these practices are conflated and wearing a face veil is often associated with radicalisation and terrorism (De Koning, Wagemakers, and Becker 2014) and seen as a threat to Dutch society and the Dutch nation state (Moors 2009).

82 In several policy documents, 'withdrawing in their own communities' is framed as one of the causes for a lack of integration in the Netherlands. For example, this is the case in the Integration Memorandum of 2007–2011 from the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Integration section of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (WWI/VROM). The name of the Memorandum is 'Make sure you're part of it!' (*Zorg dat je erbij hoort!*) and signals the fact that 'people withdraw in their own ethnic circle or their religious faith and live, so to speak, with their backs to society' (VROM/WWI 2007, 5, my translation). Minister Asscher from Social Affairs and Employment also expressed his concern of migrants in 'parallel communities', who do not feel the need to meet or communicate with others (Asscher 2013).

83 Which is a remnant of the former pillarisation of Dutch society (see Bracke 2013).

84 The norm of public space as secular and religion as private is more an idealised conception than a lived practice, and has been challenged throughout Dutch history by different religious 'others': Catholics and Muslims (Tamimi Arab 2014, 11–12).

85 In the Netherlands, hockey is known to be an upper-class sport, and, as I explained in the previous chapter, non-white people are often assumed to belong to the working class. Furthermore, the sports hall where this incident took place lies at the border of the Schilderswijk and the more affluent city centre, so it caters to sports people with diverse classed, racial/ethnic, and religious backgrounds, who rent the sports hall. Class difference, in this case, is thus constructed through gender, sports, and racialised difference.

86 In most of the community centres where girls play football, except for FGU, they only have boys' team uniforms available. As this is another sign of football still being seen as a masculine sport, girls like to have their own recognisable outfits, also as a recognition of football as a girls' sport.

87 The *Koningsspelen*, or the Royal Games, are sportive activities organised by the Johan Cruyff Foundation and the Richard Krajicek Foundation for primary school children around the national Dutch holiday King's Day, on which the birthday of King Willem Alexander is celebrated. During the Royal Games, adults and children dress in the colour orange (an orange *Djellaba* [Moroccan traditional dress] was worn by Peter), which is the national colour of the Netherlands, the royal family, and the national football team and all other national sports teams.

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English summary

On 11 December 2017, two Dutch Joke Smit emancipation prizes were awarded: the encouragement prize was for the OranjeLeeuwinnen (Orange Lionesses), the Dutch national women's football team who won the European Championship that same year, and the oeuvre prize for anthropologist Gloria Wekker, Emeritus Professor of Gender and Ethnicity at Utrecht University, who plays a crucial role in Dutch debates on gender, race/ethnicity, and intersectionality. Both winners have contributed profoundly to women's emancipation in the Netherlands, and this dissertation brings them closely together in an ethnographic study of Moroccan-Dutch Muslim girls who play street football in the Schilderswijk in The Hague.

In the Netherlands, there is an enormous increase in girls' participation in football, both in official clubs and in other, more 'unorganised' sports spaces such as playgrounds and football courts, especially amongst girls with migrant and Muslim backgrounds. Like the OranjeLeeuwinnen, Muslim girls' increasing football participation challenges the dominant idea of football as a men's sport. Furthermore, Muslim girls' football participation plays against the backdrop of dominant representations of Muslims as religious and racialised 'others', and an increased problematisation of the presence of Muslim citizens in Dutch public spaces, as Gloria Wekker and other anthropologists have pointed out. However, in current feminist intersectional and anthropological studies of gender, race/ethnicity, religion, and public space, leisure and sports are not central topics. A focus on girls' football, therefore, provides an innovative perspective to study how categories of difference and power intersect in public spaces, and it emphasises how young women themselves deal with power and difference in their daily life by playing football as performative acts of gender, ethnicity, and religion.

Theoretically, this dissertation engages with three scholarly fields: feminist intersectionality scholarship, feminist studies of religion and gender, and feminist and anthropological studies of gender and public space. It discusses how power and difference, converged through gender, ethnicity, and religion, play out in girls' football and in public playgrounds in a Dutch neighbourhood, and how girls challenge these power structures and inequalities by playing football. The research question is formulated as follows: *How do girls in the Schilderswijk engage with and create public playgrounds as gendered, ethnicised, racialised, and religionised by playing football, and what do we learn from this with regard to conceptualisations of race/ethnicity and religion in intersectional feminist and anthropological scholarship?*

The ethnographic research took place in public playgrounds in several cities in the Netherlands, but mostly in the Schilderswijk in The Hague with the girls' football competition called Football Girls United (FGU). FGU has about eighty players, and

most are between ten and twenty years old and have Moroccan-Dutch and Muslim backgrounds. The fieldwork period took place in 2014 and 2015 and the methods used were participant observation, informal talks, and in-depth interviewing. In the methodology and epistemology section of the Introduction, I argued for a feminist, situated, and reflexive approach to knowledge, in which the ethnographic data is interpreted as the result of the interactions and power relations between researcher and research participants. To that end, I have also critically reflected on my own positionality as a white, highly educated, non-Muslim women researcher from outside the Schilderswijk.

The theoretical and conceptual framework of this research was set out in Chapter 1. I introduced the intersectionality approach in feminist scholarship and argued that this approach is necessary to study the diverse aspects of power and difference in Muslim girls' experiences of girls' football and public spaces. I argued for the use of the combination race/ethnicity, to bring attention to how (gendered, ethnic, religious) differences are always embedded in macrostructures of racialised power relations and hierarchies, but also to how ethnicity comprises the differences and diverse histories and experiences between and within racialised groups. Furthermore, I discussed the conceptualisations of religion and Islam in feminist intersectionality scholarship, in studies of religious women's agency, and in studies of Muslim women and sports, and I argued that they do not correspond to the anthropological lived realities that are at the core of this dissertation. These studies either look at Islam as a form of racialisation and as embedded in macrostructures of power, or at Islam through the eyes of pious women in explicitly religious spaces. As such, they fail to understand religious difference and Islam within spaces and bodies that are not always explicitly or primarily religious, as is the case with the football girls in my research. I proposed to look at space and the spatial practices of football to emphasise the lived religious, secular, racialised, and gendered experiences of girls in public spaces. Furthermore, a spatial perspective emphasises how gender, race/ethnicity, and religion are constructed spatially and differently across spaces, including public football spaces.

Chapter 2, *Being young in the Schilderswijk*, is entirely dedicated to the social history and context of the Schilderswijk, the main location of this research. The Schilderswijk is a working-class neighbourhood and is known for its ethnic and religious diverse population. Furthermore, it has a relatively high percentage of young inhabitants. I looked at how public representations of the Schilderswijk as a 'problem' neighbourhood are constructed through racialised, gendered, classed, and religionised discourses, in particular about young Muslim residents. Furthermore, I paid attention to the role of neighbourhood sports programmes in the representation of the neighbourhood as a 'problem' neighbourhood. In the chapter, I argued that public representations of the Schilderswijk and the implementation of neighbourhood sports programmes should be understood in the context of Dutch colonial history and colonial constructions of the ethnic and religious 'other' in urban 'disadvantaged' spaces. In the second part of the chapter, I discussed young residents' positive and negative experiences of living and playing in the Schilderswijk and showed how age and gender form important categories of difference in the access to, experiences of, and constructions of public spaces in the neighbourhood.

In Chapter 3, *Invading the playground*, I focused on the experiences of girls who play football in the public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk. The central argument is that, despite a growing participation of girls in football, public football playgrounds are still dominantly constructed as masculine. The masculine norm is constructed and reproduced through four dynamics: the gendered contestations over football space and time; embodied practices and play in the football playgrounds; gendered and sexualised ways of talking about football by players, trainers, parents, and teachers; and the lack of female role models. Second, I showed how the gendered construction of the playground intersects with racialised constructions of public sports space, and with implicit secular norms of public space in the Netherlands. In particular, sports and neighbourhood organisations reproduce the masculine, secular, and white norm of public football spaces, even if they aim to increase Muslim girls' participation in their football activities. I used the concept of 'space invaders' to describe and analyse how the girls in my research contest and destabilise these gendered, racialised, and secular norms of football spaces – most notably by winning the match as performative resistance.

Chapter 4, *Girls only*, is dedicated to the Football Girls United (FGU) competition in the Schilderswijk, which usually takes place in a large gym hall. I showed that girls' motivations to play in this specific *girls'* football competition are related to the masculine norm and the dichotomous gendered and (hetero)sexualised organisation of sports. Social justice, friendships, embodied and physical contact, and football level are important reasons for girls in choosing for a girls' football competition. Contrary to what is popularly believed, Muslim girls' motivations to play in a girls' football competition are *not* primarily related to religious beliefs and backgrounds. Furthermore, I paid attention to FGU's gender education project, in which they explicitly involve boys to construct more inclusive ideals of athletic femininity, masculinity, and gender relations. At the same time, the spatial organisation of football at FGU also reproduces gender and sexuality norms, related to protection, respectability, and heteronormativity. I argue that girls' spatial football practices are much more layered and nuanced than a simple rigid and fixed segregation, which is an important addition to and critique on existing literature on Muslim women and sports, in which Muslim girls' football is approached only as a strictly gender-segregated practice, supposedly primarily informed by religious convictions. These

studies do not look at Muslim girls' preferences and motivations for playing football in relation to other axes of difference and power, such as gender and sexuality, in broader sports culture. This reproduces popular and public representations of Muslim girls as inherently 'other' to white Western societies, while the ethnographic material in this dissertation actually shows that Muslim girls share much of the broader concerns of gender norms and male dominance in football and in public playgrounds.

In Chapter 5, *Playing religion, gender, and citizenship*, I discussed how the gender and football project of Football Girls United intersects with a culturalisation of citizenship in the Netherlands, and with discourses of integration, emancipation, and citizenship in neighbourhood and youth sports policies. The central argument was that a paradox of gender, Islam, and girls' football exists in Dutch culturalised and sexual constructions of citizenship: Muslim girls are expected to participate in playing football for their cultural integration and emancipation, yet, even when they do so, they are not seen as full citizens because they are always already constructed as the essential religious 'other'. In this paradox, no attention is paid to the intersections with the gender and sexual norms in dominant sports culture, and to how sports itself is based on the premise of the binary separation of gendered bodies. I contrast this dominant discourse with the experience of the football girls themselves: according to them, their Islamic backgrounds were not always most important on the football field. They rather identified as football players, and, in their football practices, they move the focus away from religion and Islam towards a focus on football and winning. I therefore argued that playing football (and winning) forms an important performative practice through which culturalised and sexual constructions of Dutch citizenship can be challenged. The young footballers in my research question and resist dominant constructions of cultural and sexual citizenship through the spatial and playful football practices in their neighbourhood, which I analysed as practices of citizenship.

In the Conclusion, I came back to the theoretical and conceptual discussions that were raised in Chapter 1 and connected these to the conclusions of the empirical chapters. I argued that a conceptualisation of religion and Islam should attend to the experiences of Muslim girls not only from a religious point of view, but also by taking into account practices that are not explicitly religious, such as playing football in public football playgrounds. The football practices of the girls in my research are performative acts that reproduce and resist dominant gendered and racialised power relations in public football playgrounds, and the girls create alternative constructions of ethnic, religious, and gendered belonging in urban public football spaces. Thus, I argued, by playing football, Muslim girls in the public playgrounds in the Schilderswijk also performatively play with the categories of gender, ethnicity, and religion.

Nederlandse samenvatting

Op 11 december 2017 zijn twee Joke Smit emancipatieprijzen uitgereikt: de aanmoedigingsprijs was voor de OranjeLeeuwinnen, het Nederlandse vrouwenvoetbalelftal dat zich in de zomer tot Europees kampioen kroonde; en de oeuvreprijs was voor antropoloog Gloria Wekker, hoogleraar Gender en Etniciteit aan de Universiteit Utrecht, die een cruciale rol speelde in Nederlandse debatten over gender, ras/etniciteit, en intersectionaliteit (kruispuntdenken). Beide winnaars hebben een fundamentele bijdrage geleverd aan vrouwenemancipatie in Nederland, en in dit proefschrift komen ze samen in een etnografische studie over Marokkaans-Nederlandse moslimmeiden die straatvoetbal spelen in de Schilderswijk in Den Haag.

In Nederland is er een enorme toename van de participatie van meiden in voetbal, zowel bij officiële clubs als in andere, meer 'ongeorganiseerde' sportruimten zoals speelveldjes en voetbalpleintjes, in het bijzonder onder meiden met een migratie- en moslimachtergrond. Net zoals bij de OranjeLeeuwinnen, is de groeiende participatie van moslimmeiden in voetbal een verzet tegen het dominante idee dat voetbal een mannensport zou zijn. Verder speelt de participatie van moslimmeiden in voetbal zich af tegen een achtergrond van dominante representaties van moslims als religieuze en geracialiseerde 'anderen' en van de groeiende problematisering van de aanwezigheid van moslimburgers in Nederlandse publieke ruimten, zoals Wekker en andere antropologen hebben aangetoond. Echter, in huidige feministische, intersectionele en antropologische studies over gender, ras/etniciteit, religie en publieke ruimte, zijn vrijetijd en sport geen centrale onderwerpen. Een focus op meidenvoetbal biedt daarom een innovatief perspectief om te bestuderen hoe categorieën van verschil en macht in publieke ruimten elkaar kruisen, en het stelt centraal hoe meiden zelf omgaan met macht en verschil in hun dagelijks leven door het spelen van voetbal als performatieve handeling van gender, etniciteit en religie.

Op theoretisch vlak verbindt dit proefschrift drie vakgebieden: feministisch kruispuntdenken, feministische studies van religie en gender, en feministische en antropologische studies van gender en publieke ruimte. Het bestudeert hoe macht en verschil, via de assen van gender, etniciteit en religie, zich afspelen in meidenvoetbal en op publieke speelveldjes in een Nederlandse wijk, en hoe meiden zich verzetten tegen deze machtsstructuren en ongelijkheden door het spelen van voetbal. De onderzoeksvraag is als volgt geformuleerd: *Hoe gaan meiden in de Schilderswijk om met, en hoe creëren zij publieke speelveldjes als gegenderd, geëtniseerd, geracialiseerd en gereligioniseerd door het spelen van voetbal, en wat kunnen we hiervan leren met betrekking tot conceptualiseringen van ras/etniciteit en religie in intersectioneel feministisch en antropologisch onderzoek?*

Het etnografisch onderzoek vond plaats op publieke speelveldjes in verschillende steden in Nederland, maar voornamelijk in de Schilderswijk in Den Haag, bij een meidenvoetbalcompetitie genaamd *Football Girls United* (FGU). FGU heeft ongeveer 80 spelers en de meesten zijn tussen de tien en twintig jaar oud en hebben Marokkaans-Nederlandse en moslimachtergronden. De veldwerkperiode vond plaats in 2014 en 2015 en de gehanteerde methoden waren participerende observatie, informele gesprekken en diepte-interviews. In de sectie methodologie en epistemologie van de introductie heb ik gepleit voor een feministische, gesitueerde en reflexieve benadering van kennis, waarin de etnografische data wordt geïnterpreteerd als het resultaat van de interacties en machtsrelaties tussen de onderzoeker en onderzoeksparticipanten. Daartoe heb ik kritisch gereflecteerd op mijn eigen positionering als een witte, hoogopgeleide, niet-moslim en vrouwelijke onderzoeker van buiten de Schilderswijk.

Het theoretisch en conceptueel kader van dit onderzoek is uiteengezet in hoofdstuk 1. Ik heb de intersectionele benadering in feministisch onderzoek geïntroduceerd en beargumenteer dat deze benadering noodzakelijk is om de diverse aspecten van macht en verschil in de ervaringen van moslimmeiden in voetbal en in publieke ruimtes te bestuderen. Ik pleit voor het gebruik van de combinatie ras/etniciteit, om de aandacht te vestigen op hoe (gegenderde, etnische en religieuze) verschillen altijd ingebed zijn in macrostructuren van geracialiseerde machtsrelaties en hiërarchieën; maar ook hoe etniciteit de verschillen en diverse geschiedenissen en ervaringen omvat tussen en binnen geracialiseerde groepen. Verder heb ik de conceptualiseringen van religie en islam besproken in feministisch intersectioneel onderzoek, in studies over de *agency* van religieuze vrouwen, en in studies over moslimvrouwen en sport, en ik heb beargumenteerd dat deze conceptualiseringen niet overeenkomen met de antropologische geleefde realiteiten die de kern vormen van dit proefschrift. Deze studies kijken hetzij naar islam als een vorm van racialisering en als ingebed in macrostructuren van macht, of naar islam door de ogen van vrome vrouwen in expliciet religieuze ruimtes. Op deze manier slagen deze studies er niet in om religieus verschil en islam te doorgronden in ruimtes en lichamen die niet altijd expliciet of primair religieus zijn, zoals de voetbalmeiden in mijn onderzoek. Ik heb voorgesteld om naar ruimte en ruimtelijke praktijken van voetbal te kijken om de geleefde religieuze, seculiere, geracialiseerde en gegenderde ervaringen van meiden in publieke ruimtes te benadrukken. Daarnaast benadrukt een ruimtelijk perspectief hoe gender, ras/etniciteit en religie ruimtelijk geconstrueerd worden en ook hoe zij op verschillende manieren geconstrueerd worden in verschillende ruimtes, waaronder publieke voetbalruimtes.

Hoofdstuk 2, *Jong zijn in de Schilderswijk*, gaat over de sociale geschiedenis en context van de Schilderswijk, de voornaamste locatie van dit onderzoek. De

Schilderswijk is een arbeiderswijk en staat bekend om de etnische en religieus diverse populatie. Bovendien heeft de wijk een relatief hoog percentage jonge inwoners. Ik heb gekeken naar hoe de publieke representatie van de Schilderswijk als 'probleemwijk' geconstrueerd wordt door geracialiseerde, gegenderde, gereligioniseerde en klasse discoursen, in het bijzonder over jonge mosliminwoners. Daarnaast schenk ik aandacht aan de rol van buurtsportprogramma's in de representatie van de Schilderswijk als 'probleemwijk'. In dit hoofdstuk beargumenteer ik dat de publieke representatie van de Schilderswijk en de implementatie van buurtsportprogramma's begrepen moeten worden in de context van de Nederlandse koloniale geschiedenis en van de koloniale constructies van de etnische en religieuze 'ander' in urbane 'achterstandswijken'. In het tweede deel van het hoofdstuk bespreek ik de positieve en negatieve ervaringen van de jonge inwoners met betrekking tot het leven en spelen in de Schilderswijk, en laat ik zien hoe leeftijd en gender belangrijke categorieën van verschil zijn in de toegang toe, ervaringen van, en constructies van publieke ruimtes in de wijk.

In hoofdstuk 3, *Het binnenvallen van de speelveldjes*, focus ik op de ervaringen van de meiden die voetbal spelen op de publieke speelveldjes in de Schilderswijk. Het centrale argument is dat ondanks de groeiende participatie van meiden in voetbal, publieke voetbalveldjes nog steeds dominant geconstrueerd worden als masculien. De masculiene norm wordt geconstrueerd en gereproduceerd door vier dynamieken: de gegenderde strijd over voetbalruimte en -tijd; de belichaamde praktijken en spel op de voetbalveldjes; de gegenderde en geseksualiseerde manieren van praten over voetbal door spelers, trainers, ouders en leraren; en het gebrek aan vrouwelijke rolmodellen. Daarnaast laat ik zien hoe de gegenderde constructie van het speelveldje kruist met geracialiseerde constructies van publieke sportruimten en met de impliciete, seculiere norm van publieke ruimte in Nederland. Het zijn de buurtsportorganisaties in het bijzonder die de masculiene, seculiere en witte norm op de publieke voetbalveldjes reproduceren, zelfs als zij ernaar streven om de participatie van moslimmeiden te vergroten in hun voetbalactiviteiten. Ik gebruik het begrip '*space invaders*' om te beschrijven en analyseren hoe de meiden in mijn onderzoek deze gegenderde, geracialiseerde en seculiere normen van voetbalruimten bestrijden en destabiliseren – op de opvallende manier door voetbalwedstrijden te winnen, wat gezien kan worden als performatieve weerstand.

Hoofdstuk 4, *Girls only*, gaat over de competitie Football Girls United (FGU) in de Schilderswijk die meestal plaatsvindt in een grote sporthal in de wijk. Ik laat zien dat de motivatie van de meiden om in een specifieke *meiden*competitie te spelen te maken heeft met de masculiene norm en de dichotome gegenderde en (hetero) seksuele organisatie van sport. Sociale gerechtigheid, vriendschappen, lichamelijk en fysiek contact en voetbalniveau zijn belangrijke redenen voor meiden waarom

zij kiezen voor een meidenvoetbalcompetitie. In tegenstelling tot wat vaak gedacht wordt, is de motivatie van moslimmeiden om in een meidenvoetbalcompetitie te spelen *niet* primair gerelateerd aan religieuze overtuiging en hun religieuze achtergrond. Verder heb ik aandacht geschonken aan FGU's gender educatie project, waarbij FGU expliciet probeert om jongens te betrekken bij het voetbal om meer inclusieve idealen van atletische vrouwelijkheid, mannelijkheid en genderrelaties te construeren. Tegelijkertijd is het zo dat de ruimtelijke organisatie van voetbal bij FGU ook gender- en seksualiteitsnormen reproduceert, gerelateerd aan bescherming, respect en heteronormativiteit. Ik beargumenteer dat de ruimtelijke voetbalpraktijk van meiden veel gelaagder en genuanceerder is dan een simpele rigide en vaststaande segregatie; en dit is een belangrijke aanvulling en kritiek op bestaande literatuur over moslimvrouwen en sport, waarbij de voetbalparticipatie van moslimmeiden alleen als een strikte gender gesegregeerde praktijk wordt gezien die primair te maken zou hebben met religieuze overtuigingen. Deze studies kijken niet naar de voorkeuren en motivaties van moslimmeiden zelf om voetbal te spelen die verbonden zijn met andere assen van verschil en macht, zoals gender en seksualiteit in de bredere sportcultuur. Zo worden populaire en publieke representaties van moslimmeiden als inherent 'anders' ten opzichte van de witte, westerse samenleving gereproduceerd, terwijl het etnografisch materiaal in dit proefschrift juist laat zien dat moslimmeiden veel van de bredere zorgen over gendernormen en masculiene dominantie in voetbal en op publieke speelveldjes delen.

In hoofdstuk 5, *Het spelen van religie, gender en burgerschap*, bespreek ik hoe het gender- en voetbalproject van FGU kruist met de culturalisering van burgerschap in Nederland en met discoursen over integratie, emancipatie en burgerschap in buurtsport- en jeugdbeleid. Het centrale argument is dat er een paradox is met betrekking tot gender, islam en meidenvoetbal in Nederlandse geculturaliseerde en geseksualiseerde constructies van burgerschap: moslimmeiden worden geacht om te participeren in voetbal voor hun culturele integratie en emancipatie, maar als zij daadwerkelijk voetbal spelen, worden zij niet gezien als volledige burgers omdat zij altijd als essentiële religieuze 'ander' worden geconstrueerd. In deze paradox is geen aandacht voor de intersecties met de gender en seksuele normen in dominante sportcultuur en voor hoe sport zelf is gebaseerd op het uitgangspunt van de binaire scheiding van gegenderde lichamen. Ik contrasteer dit dominante discours met de ervaringen van de voetbalmeiden zelf: volgens hen zijn hun islamitische achtergronden helemaal niet altijd zo belangrijk op het voetbalveld. Zij identificeren zich juist als voetbalspelers en in hun voetbalpraktijken proberen ze de aandacht weg te halen van religie en islam en juist de aandacht te richten op voetbal en winnen. Ik beargumenteer daarom dat het spelen van voetbal (en het winnen) belangrijke performatieve praktijken zijn waardoor

de geculturaliseerde en geseksualiseerde constructies van Nederlands burgerschap betwist kunnen worden. De jonge voetballers in mijn onderzoek bekritiseren en verzetten zich tegen dominante constructies van geculturaliseerd, geseksualiseerd burgerschap door middel van hun ruimtelijke en speelse voetbalpraktijken in de wijk, die ik analyseer als burgerschapspraktijken.

In de conclusie kom ik terug op de theoretische en conceptuele discussie uit hoofdstuk 1 en verbind ik deze discussie met de conclusies uit de empirische hoofdstukken. Ik beargumenteer dat een conceptualisering van religie en islam niet alleen aandacht moet schenken aan de ervaringen van moslimmeiden vanuit een religieuze optiek, maar ook de praktijken in acht moet nemen die niet expliciet religieus zijn, zoals het spelen van voetbal op publieke speelpleintjes. De voetbalpraktijken van de meiden in mijn onderzoek zijn performatieve handelingen die dominante, gegenderde en geracialiseerde machtsrelaties op publieke speelpleintjes reproduceren en betwisten. De meiden creëren alternatieve etnische, religieuze en gegenderde constructies van zich thuis voelen op de urbane, publieke voetbalpleintjes. Ik beargumenteer kortom dat door het spelen van voetbal op publieke speelpleintjes moslimmeiden ook performatief spelen met de categorieën van gender, etniciteit en religie.

Curriculum vitae

Kathrine van den Bogert was born in ‘s-Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands. She studied Cultural Anthropology and Development Studies at Radboud University, Nijmegen, with a minor in Gender Studies. She did additional internships at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and at a women’s organisation in India. In 2012, Kathrine graduated cum laude from the Research Master Gender and Ethnicity, Utrecht University, with a research on gender, religion, and social change among young revolutionists in Cairo during the Egyptian uprisings. During and after her studies, she worked as project coordinator and workshop facilitator at Stichting Oikos in Utrecht. In 2013, Kathrine started her PhD research at the Department of Cultural Anthropology, Utrecht University. In addition, she worked as a lecturer at the department and taught courses on gender, sexuality, and the body and supervised bachelor research and theses. She secured a grant from the Utrechts Stimuleringsfonds Onderwijs (Utrecht Education Incentive Fund) for the Toolbox Diversity in Education project, in which she co-developed an interactive app for university teachers and lecturers to make their teaching more inclusive and diversity-sensitive. Kathrine has published in Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies, Religion and Gender, and Frontiers: a Journal of Women Studies. From 2015-2018, she was founding board member of the International Association for the study of Religion and Gender. As of 1 May 2019, she works as postdoctoral researcher at Gender & Diversity Studies and Anthropology and Development Studies at Radboud University Nijmegen, with a research on the role of new migrant self-organisations in civic integration and inclusion in Nijmegen and Birmingham (UK).