



NEW FORMS OF LEISURE

To open up Braambergen for the public

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CONTENTS

01

INTRODUCTION

02

**DEFINITION
OF
LEISURE**

03

**LEISURE
FACILITIES
IN AND AROUND
ALMERE**

04

**MOUNT
TRASHMORE
PARK
IN
VIRGINIA**

05

**NOORDERPARK
BAR
IN
AMSTERDAM**

06

CONCLUSION

01. INTRODUCTION

Braambergen, owned by Afvalzorg Nederland, is one of the last landfills in the Netherlands where waste has been dumped for the last 20 years. The site is approximately 4000 m² and situated just outside the city centre of Almere. Now, after two decades it is ready for being re-used with a recreational function. The site is surrounded by the Dutch polder landscape, close to the borderlines of the former bottom of the Zuydersea, therefore having an interesting landscape. In the direct surroundings of Braambergen you can find many Dutch perspectives on urbanisation strategies which were common since 1970; from 'cauliflower' shaped residential areas such as Almere-Haven up to the future of do-it-yourself urban development like Oosterveld. The re-use of the Braambergen site is in my opinion an invitation to create a new synergy of functions and in doing so enhancing a new phase of the polder to gain new history. What kind of new layers in Braambergen can help this synergy?

Through my research in the first phase of this studio about this landfill I was surprised how many people spend their free time in the park near this location. Braambergen is located next to Waterlandsebos and Oosterveld which are green areas with many leisure facilities for example a golf club, some playgrounds and land art sites like Het Museumbos and The Cathedral. For me it was quite a surprising experience to see the large amount of people trying to spend their leisure time in places which looks like nothing is there. It makes me think about leisure activities and what other possibilities for leisure could be realised in Braambergen although the city of Almere offers a lot of leisure facilities already.

This observation raised with me the following questions; what kind of leisure activities can be found in Almere and around the city, and which facilities are missing? Furthermore, what can these activities, which are now missing, add to the ones which are there already?



To answer these questions, I will look for the definition of leisure first. Followed by a research through personal observation about what kind of leisure activities can be found in Almere and which facilities are missing. In addition, I want to bring forward two case studies which can be related with the Braambergen's future identity: one of them is a park which used to be a landfill with waste where nowadays local people spend their free time and another park where new layers were added by local people by using waste materials. I choose them because the first one, the Mount Trashmore Park in Virginia, USA, is a good example of a large scale transformation and the other park, het Noorderpark in Amsterdam, is a good example of a small scale transformation.

Through my research, I hope that I can find out what kind of intervention will be suitable for the site of Braambergen and what will be the best way to open up the site for the public. Furthermore, I hope with adding a missing leisure activity on a landfill can be a great opportunity to make the residents of Almere aware of their trash and trigger them to have responsibilities about their consumption behaviour.



02. DEFINITION OF LEISURE

“Generally, leisure means time
when one is not working or occupied;
defined as free time.”

- Kelly John -

Generally, leisure means time when one is not working or occupied; defined as free time. [1] But because of this vague definition, leisure means different things to different people. How can I define the meaning of leisure? First, for general definition, I would like to refer to Amy R. Hurd who is a professor in the school of kinesiology and recreation. She argues that there is debate about how to define leisure, however, there is a general consensus that there are three primary ways in which to consider leisure; leisure as time, leisure as activity, and leisure as state of mind. [2] Leisure is time free from obligations, work and tasks required for existing, for example sleeping and eating. It can also be viewed as activities that people engage in for reasons as varied as relaxation, competition, or growth and may include reading for pleasure, meditating, painting and participating in sports. [3] However, it is difficult to come up with a list of activities that everyone agrees represents leisure.

Unlike the others, the definition of leisure as state of mind is much more subjective. It considers the individual's perception of an activity. Hurd choose five key components to determine whether an experience is leisure or not leisure such as perceived freedom, intrinsic motivation, perceived competence, and positive affect. [4] Perceived freedom refers to an individual's ability to choose the activity or experience. Intrinsic motivation means that the person is moved from within to participate. Perceived competence refers to the skills people believe they possess. It relates strongly to satisfaction. Positive affect refers to a person's sense of choice, or the feeling people have when they have some control over the process that is tied to the experience. What may be a leisure experience for one person may not be for another, whether an experience is leisure depends on many factors. However enjoyment, motivation and choice are three of the most important of these factors. [5]

[1] Kelly, John,
Leisure,
1996, p.17

[2] Amy R. Hurd,
The park and recreation
professional's handbook,
2011, p. 12

[3] Shaw, S. M.,
Controversies and
contradictions in family
leisure, 1997, p. 29

[4] Amy R. Hurd,
The park and recreation
professional's handbook,
2011, p. 27

“Leisure is a decision, an act as well as a state.”

- Thorsten Veblen -

My findings about the different views on leisure raises the following question: does leisure involves only enjoyment or spending free time as well? When many authors, researchers and others try to define leisure, they all refer to it as ‘time free from obligations’. [6] For me, it means it is something that people absolutely choose by themselves also for themselves. Leisure is a decision, an act as well as a state. [7] And I agree with this statement. And I would like to underline the word ‘decision’. That people choose what to do or where to go means it represents people’s desires, needs and even willing to put efforts and attentions. Especially when I witnessed my friends trying to have more leisure time, it makes me believe that leisure can help people in positiveness in life to deal with all the difficulties that people face in their lives. Leisure is allowing us to express ourselves and be ourselves, helping us finding balance in our lives, providing an opportunity to have fun and

a sense of freedom from the stress in life. It can even connect people with their friends and family. In my opinion, it provides opportunities for people to continue to develop themselves by learning new skills to challenge themselves in new ways. Furthermore, it can even represent people’s identities and characters. Because what people choose to do for leisure, is deeply related to personalities because it is their decisions.

[5] Amy R. Hurd,
The park and recreation
professional’s handbook,
2011, p. 27-41

[6] Thorsten Veblen,
The theory of the leisure
class,
1953, p.46

[7] John R. Kelly,
Freedom to Be: A new
sociology of leisure,
1987, p.49





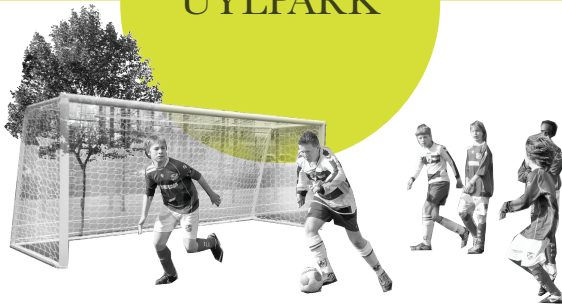
03. LEISURE FACILITIES IN AND AROUND ALMERE

Before I started my personal research about the leisure facilities in Almere, I had the impression that every district in Almere has almost the same sort and even amount of facilities. It started from my expectations about 'manmade city' and 'new city'. It became stronger because of a map that categorized the functions of the buildings, for example offices, hotels, shops, sports, education facilities, healthcare and residences made by Almere blurt 2014. It was hard to read what is missing in Almere on the map but after I visited Almere for the studio assignment, it became easier to understand. I visited the city once a week, a weekend and during Easter Holidays. I choose 10 'leisure spots' that I assumed people will spend their leisure time by checking a map and information on websites: shopping malls, parks, sport clubs and museums.

For my research I visited four parks in Almere; Uylpark, Lumierepark, Vogelbos and Waterlandsebos. Uylpark is located in between the city centre and a residential area. The difference with the other parks is, that it has as football playground, the biggest for amateur players. The players were between 10 and 18 years old. Most of them came from other cities and many parents came together to see their children playing football. Unfortunately, it seemed that there were not enough facilities for the parents. I expected a sort of food truck or something that parents can enjoy while watching matches but there wasn't anything like that. Most of them were just standing or sitting on the ground.



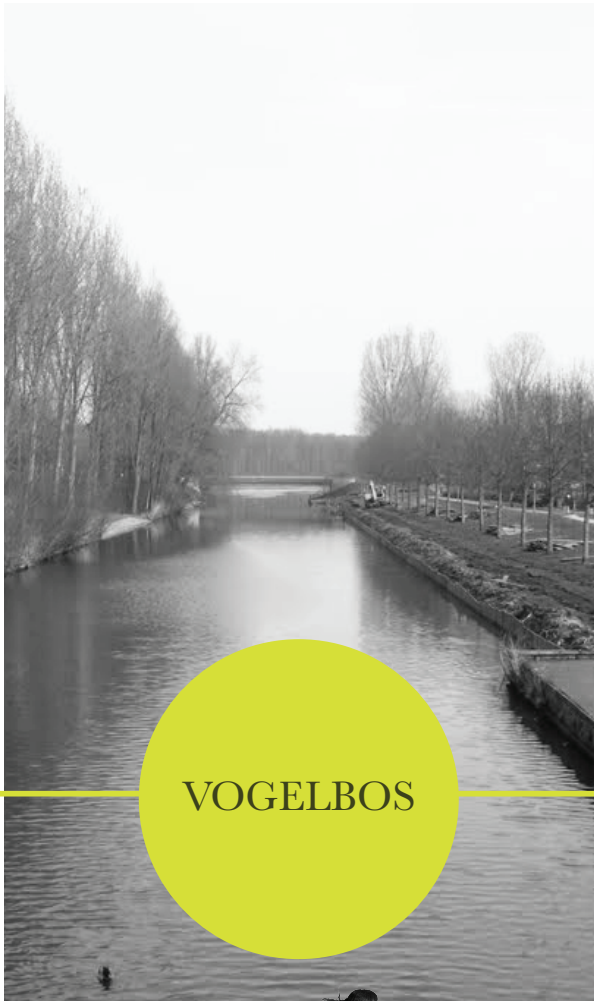
UYLPARK



LUMIEREPARK



Lumierepark is located next to the city centre and the lake of Almere. Here I saw many people who enjoyed biking. It is a usual scene in the Netherlands but it was a bit different because I saw many group bikers who wear the same uniforms.



VOGELBOS



Vogelbos is located next to the Haven district and it has a bad reputation from people who live in Almere. There were not much people who spending leisure time although it's right next to huge resident area. I saw only few people who walked around alone or with their dog.

The Waterlandsebos is the most important park because it is right next to the Braambergen site. It is the largest park and at the same time located the most distant from the city centre of Almere. To my surprise it was full of people and I witnessed different leisure activities; fishing, haunting, biking and spending time with family. I met many families who came from all around Almere and even other cities to have 'family time' as they said.



WATERLANDSEBOS



In this park, there is a 'Fun Forest' and 'De Kemphaan' which is a recreational park with various facilities for children like a jungle, pancake house, monkeys climbing and so on. Although they came here for family time, there was not a certain facility to do things together. Usually children are climbing and running around and parents watch them on the bench. Some parents played catch balls with children but it was something that they brought with them. Around this park, on the roads, I met many people, mostly seniors. They were biking or walking. And I also spoke to some people who were fishing for example a father and son who grew up in Almere, he now lives in another city but he visited his parents often to have some time with his father for leisure.



Then I visited the golf club near Braambergen and it turned out to be quite an interesting place. I expected only seniors but there were many different generations: from youth to seniors. They all spent the same leisure time together. Through these observations I noticed there were many facilities for leisure in Almere but I felt something is definitely missing.



CENTRE & HAVEN

I also visited two shopping malls; one was in the centre and the other was in Almere Haven. They are located in different districts but people's behaviour was quite similar. Both malls were absolutely the place for young people. I met many families in the parks, but there were no teenager groups while in the malls, there were plenty teenagers.





04. MOUNT TRASHMORE PARK IN VIRGINIA

Mount Trash Park is a city park located in Virginia, USA which opened in 1974. It has the distinction of being the world's first park built on a waste landfill. [8] It is a good example of landfill reuse as its creation consisted of the conversion of an abandoned landfill into a park. Once the park was completed, it immediately became popular. According to Sharon Godfrey of Mount Trashmore Park Operations, the park has approximately 900,000 visitors a year. [9]

The park has developed step by step. I find diverse participation by the residents of Virginia Beach. First of all: the name of the park was given by the local people when they started to call it Mount Trashmore during its construction. It was only a nickname but it became official. After Mount Trashmore Park was built, the municipality decided to add a skate park. It was a way to trigger all skateboarders who were tired of scratching up the town's handrails. Also by that time, Virginia Beach

was a big skateboarding town, including Tony Hawk who won numerous professional competitions. After adding a skate park, this park had stronger motivation for people to visit in comparison with other parks in Virginia. The last is Kid's Cove which is part of the park and was constructed totally by 4400 volunteers on top of the landfill. [10] It is a popular spot for picnics; it has a number of playgrounds, including one which was partly designed by children. [11]

The strength of Mount Trashmore Park in my opinion is the cooperation with the residents who live nearby the park. It consistently has developed to fill up resident's needs. Also during the process, the municipality gave opportunities that residents could be involved and have responsibilities in the development of the park. Because of this process I can conclude that Mount Trashmore Park is a good example of successful participative development.

[8] Guide of Mount Trashmore Park, city of virginia beach, 2010

[9] Hattie Brown Garrow, Trashmore has million reasons to celebrate, 2007

[10] The Baltimore Sun, Sarah Hartough, 2005

[11] History of Mount Trashmore Park, Chris Pearce, 2015

05. NOORDERPARKBAR IN AMSTERDAM

It seems that in Western Europe, a new orthodoxy of resident participation is rising. [12] This new type of citizens' involvement can help to guide the future direction of a site, for example by suggesting new uses. [13] Following this trend, the NoorderparkBar in the Northern part of Amsterdam is a project designed and developed by three neighbours who felt the lack of facilities in the area where they live.

In 2007, local resident and cultural professional Floor Ziegler was disappointed with the lack of cultural activities in the park. She opened the NoorderparkKamer; it was intended as a 'cultural living room' in the park, with theater, music and children's activities programmed by cultural professionals from Amsterdam Noord. [14] Over the past few years, the 'room' has developed into a popular meeting place for neighbours and has become so busy that extra space was needed.

Three regular visitors of the 'room', which also architects, approached Floor separately with their own plans to add an extra area, to enjoy a drink in the park.

The initiators started collecting the necessary materials from an auction website. Considering the tight budget, the initiators had to do almost the whole construction themselves on a voluntary basis. [15] A year later they had finished the bar, brought it to the park and served the first couple of beers. The bar became very popular. Nowadays it attracts visitors from the neighbourhood and other neighbourhoods as well. What makes this project unique is that the bar does not have a contractor, a formal owner or a business model. Nobody owns it and as such everybody does.

Another uniqueness of the NoorderparkBar is the materials: the bar was built by second-hand materials. Every single piece of material has a history: personal stories from many of the sellers were collected and put on a blog together with their pictures. The project has been nominated for several awards, which is quite unusual for this kind of projects, built by residents with a low budget.

I can conclude that since the idea and realisation of NoorderparkBar were carried out by the residents of the Van der Pek neighborhood, this project is for me an example of successful participative development. Its success is also linked to the fact that the NoorderparkBar provides an urban facility that was needed in the community.

[12] Atkinson & Eckardt, 2004

[13] Cumberlidge & Musgrave, 2007

[14] We Own The City, Francesca Miazzo and Tris Kee, 2014, p.44

[15] We Own The City, Francesca Miazzo and Tris Kee, 2014, p.47



06. CONCLUSION

At the beginning of my research, I hope that I could find out which intervention would fit the location and what is the best way to open up the site for the public. I also hoped to find a way that by adding leisure activities to the site it would give the opportunity for people to become aware of their trash and that they would feel responsible about their consumption behaviour. But after I visited the site and talked with people and dived into some successful case studies, I started to have my doubts. I couldn't find a way to transform the site from an un-wanted landfill to become a loved place by emphasizing its unique identity which is trash. Then I thought maybe I should focus to 'open up the site for the public' by adding what people already like to do. For me, the answer is: leisure. Leisure is loved activities for people and a lot of people are already nearby Braambergen for it. In my view, it has enough power to trigger people to the site.

After research, I can conclude that the leisure facilities that lacks in Almere are the opportunity to socialize, interact and participate. In the city of Almere you can find many interesting projects designed by famous and powerful architects. This means that most of the ideas come from outside the city and are top down. In my opinion, the best way to deal with participation can be derived from two cases studies: the Mount Trashmore Park as a successful example of a good combination and cooperation between the municipality and the residents. In the case of the NoorderparkBar, the adjacent organization and location Noorderpark Kamer was engaged in the management of the Bar and connected its program with the whole of the park and its cultural activities. In NoorderparkBar case, architects designed main concept and got participation during realized process.

It is my goal that people participate during process. I can conclude that the best way to open up Braambergen for the public is taking less roles as designers and hand over the opportunities for the public. But since it is hard to define leisure activities, as designer, I should have big frame about new leisure in Almere. In my view, it is leisure for all generations can gather and also for socializing between residents. Either they can choose same activity or they can do different activity in same place. Through giving them the opportunity to have leisure activities, I hope people can activated Braambergen.

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INSIDE_THEORY

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