

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC
INSTITUT NATIONAL DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE
CENTRE – URBANISATION CULTURE SOCIÉTÉ

**THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY, CITIES AND
NEIGHBOURHOODS:
SPATIAL, SOCIO-ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL
DYNAMICS IN MONTREAL AND DÜSSELDORF**

by

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M.A. Information Science

Thesis presented to obtain the degree of

Philosophiae doctor, Ph.D.

PhD in Urban Studies

Programme offered jointly by INRS and UQAM

August 2024

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This thesis entitled

**THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY, CITIES AND
NEIGHBOURHOODS:
SPATIAL, SOCIO-ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL
DYNAMICS IN MONTREAL AND DÜSSELDORF**

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For my parents and my family

ABSTRACT

In recent decades, the arrival of the video game industry and its impact on local communities has become an important focus of research. This dissertation contributes to this research by looking at the dynamics between the French software company Ubisoft, its employees and the surrounding neighbourhoods of Mile End in Montreal (Canada) and Flingern-Nord in Düsseldorf (Germany), where Ubisoft has been present for the past 25 years. The relationship is analysed on the basis of four selected dynamics: the spatial, socio-economic, cultural and political dynamics. This research places special emphasis on culture, which is central to the development and offerings of the neighbourhoods. It focuses on the relationship and reciprocal influence between the video game industry, particularly its workers, and the neighbourhood in which it operates. Moreover, the role of cultural dynamics on video game developers, in particular the cultural practices of video game industry workers, is studied. These questions are linked to the concepts of cultural and creative industries, neighbourhoods and dynamics, which form the basis of this work. Cultural lifestyle, cultural amenities and the creative milieu also play a role and are analysed.

This study uses a qualitative approach, notably semi-structured interviews with two distinct groups in both neighbourhoods: people working in the video game industry and cultural actors in the neighbourhood. In addition to the interviews, an analysis of selected newspaper articles on the topic of Ubisoft and its neighbourhood is performed. The thesis also innovates by putting forward a systematic comparison between two sites, two sociocultural ecosystems and two neighbourhoods.

The results of this research are based on 33 interviews and 232 newspaper articles analysed. They show that there is a relationship between the video game industry and the neighbourhood, going in both directions. The dynamics researched play different roles, although not very pronounced. This is also the case for the cultural dynamics that are in the focus. The creative milieu in the neighbourhood around the office, which is described in the literature as a place for social interaction and for the flow of ideas and knowledge, does not play a significant role for video games developers. In this creative milieu, the cultural lifestyle of the workers is not expressed in the use of the cultural offerings and amenities. Nevertheless, as the study shows, the creative milieu does play a certain role: It is the ambience exuded that influences the developers and their work. It further shows that the developers are culturally active. The comparison of the two locations, the Mile End and Flingern-Nord, demonstrates that the dynamics differ, but the expression of the cultural lifestyle is the same in both places. In general, these findings help to create a more differentiated picture of some of the literature about cultural and creative industries and their workers, their practices and representations with regard to their (cultural) environment. In particular, they help to understand how different factors play, or not or to various degrees, a role in the relationship between the video game industry and its location.

Keywords: Video Game Industry; Neighbourhood; Creative Workers; Cultural actors; Dynamics; Culture; Cultural Lifestyle; Creative Milieu; Cultural Participation; Cultural Amenities.

RÉSUMÉ

Au cours des dernières décennies, l'arrivée de l'industrie du jeu vidéo et son impact sur les communautés locales sont devenus un sujet de recherche important. Cette thèse contribue à ces recherches en examinant la relation entre l'entreprise de logiciels française Ubisoft, ses employés et les quartiers environnants du Mile End à Montréal (Canada) et de Flingern-Nord à Düsseldorf (Allemagne), où Ubisoft est présente depuis 25 ans. Cette relation est analysée sur la base de quatre dynamiques : spatiale, socio-économique, culturelle et politique. Cette recherche met particulièrement l'accent sur la culture, qui est au cœur du développement et de l'offre des quartiers. Elle se concentre sur la relation et l'influence réciproque entre l'industrie du jeu vidéo, notamment ses travailleurs, et le quartier dans lequel elle opère. En outre, le rôle des dynamiques culturelles sur les développeurs de jeux vidéo, en particulier les pratiques culturelles des travailleurs de l'industrie du jeu vidéo, est étudié. Ces questions sont liées aux concepts d'industries culturelles et créatives, de quartiers et de dynamiques. Le mode de vie culturel, les équipements et infrastructures culturels et le milieu créatif jouent également un rôle et sont analysés.

Cette recherche mobilise une approche qualitative, notamment des entretiens semi-dirigés avec deux groupes distincts dans les deux quartiers : les personnes travaillant dans l'industrie du jeu vidéo et les acteurs culturels. La recherche effectue également une analyse d'articles de journaux sur le thème d'Ubisoft et de son quartier. La thèse innove en proposant une comparaison systématique entre deux sites, deux écosystèmes socioculturels et deux quartiers.

Les résultats de cette recherche, basés sur 33 entretiens et 232 articles de journaux, montrent qu'il existe une relation entre l'industrie du jeu vidéo et le quartier qui va dans les deux sens. Les dynamiques étudiées, dont la dynamique culturelle, jouent des rôles variés quoique peu prononcés. Le milieu créatif du quartier autour du bureau, qui est décrit dans la littérature comme un lieu d'interaction sociale et de circulation des idées et des connaissances, ne joue pas de rôle pour les développeurs de jeux vidéo. Dans ce milieu créatif, le style de vie culturel des travailleurs ne s'exprime pas dans l'utilisation des offres et des équipements culturels. Néanmoins, comme le montre cette recherche, le milieu créatif joue un certain rôle : c'est l'ambiance qui s'en dégage qui influence les développeurs et leur travail. Les développeurs apparaissent aussi comme étant culturellement actifs. La comparaison des deux sites, le Mile End et Flingern-Nord, montre que les dynamiques diffèrent, mais que l'expression du style de vie culturel est la même aux deux endroits. D'une manière générale, ces résultats contribuent à fournir une compréhension plus fine d'une partie de la littérature portant sur les industries culturelles et créatives et leurs travailleurs, ainsi que sur leurs pratiques et représentations en ce qui concerne leur environnement (culturel). Les conclusions de cette thèse aident à comprendre comment différents facteurs jouent, ou non, ou à des degrés divers, un rôle dans la relation entre l'industrie du jeu vidéo et son lieu d'implantation.

Mots-clés : Industrie du jeu vidéo ; quartier ; ; travailleurs créatifs ; acteurs culturels ; dynamiques ; culture ; style de vie culturel ; milieu créatif ; participation culturelle ; équipements et infrastructures culturels.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my thankfulness for the academic, financial and friendship support I have received throughout the PhD programme in Urban Studies.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my research supervisor, Christian Poirier. Without him, I would not have had the courage to work continuously on this topic throughout the years. Christian, your comments and criticism have contributed enormously to my development, and I will always be grateful for your help and encouragement to never give up.

Secondly, I would like to thank the funding organisations. Without financial support, this project could not have been realised. I would like to thank the Chaire Fernand-Dumont sur la culture for awarding me a specialisation grant and the Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique - INRS for awarding me a grant to complete my dissertation. Furthermore, I would like to thank Saarland University and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for granting me the GradUS global scholarship.

Apart from the financial support, I must admit that this project required many unexpected efforts during the fieldwork. Therefore, I would like to thank everyone who participated in this study. Thanks also to everyone who helped to find these participants: my friends, fellow students and colleagues.

My special thanks go to my family, without whose support I would not have made it. This thankfulness cannot be expressed in words.

I cannot list all those who have accompanied me during this time and to whom I am grateful at this point. However, there are a few who have been very supportive during certain phases and who have helped me to get to this point. I couldn't have started this PhD without the support of some of them. A special thanks to Cory, Emilie, Karin and Stéphane who supported me before this project and made it possible. Thanks also to those who have supported me throughout these years and believed that I would complete this dissertation. In particular, I would like to thank Jeanie and Lucia (and not forgetting Mafalda), who have supported me through all the ups and downs. I would also like to thank those who were there for me at various times during this time when I needed help and support, especially Ana, Cassandre, Cléa, Elke, Guillermo, Hannah, Juliette, Nadine, Patrick, Kiley and Rüdiger. Also, the last phase would not have been possible without the support of my friends and family. A big thank you to Ekkehard, Eva, Joanne, Markus and Paul who supported me a lot in the final phase, and last but not least to my 'fourth space' friends Marianne, Martin and Sahar for the (mutual) moral support over the last two years. And finally, I would like to thank my family and friends who have supported and encouraged me throughout this journey.

This dissertation is the result of seven years of work at the Department of Urban Research at the INRS (Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique, Montreal). That sounds like a long time, but it's actually very short! Over the past seven years, I've mainly made friends. Without naming any more names, I would simply like to say thank you to everyone who has been there for me. Thank you to everyone!

Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique - INRS, August 2024, Melanie Groh

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NOTES ON LANGUAGE

Extracts from interview transcripts

The majority of quotations of interviews come from verbatim transcripts. The following conventions are used:

[...]	An ellipsis indicates a pause in speech.
–	An em-dash indicates an interruption or self-interruption (change of subject).
?	A question mark next to an incomprehensible word that was difficult to understand on the tape.
[laughs]	Words in italics in square brackets are my own explanations or modifications, e.g. to note non-verbal language, anonymize the material or explain an expression.
[name of shop]	
never	using bold when the word is pronounced louder than the rest

Minor changes to actual speech have been made to facilitate reading (e.g. deleting repeated “well”).

The language has also been smoothed out somewhat to retain elements of natural speech and manner of speaking. This means that broad dialect has been corrected. However, local language, incorrect expressions and incorrect sentence structures have been retained.

INTRODUCTION

Video games have found their way into households since the 1980s and online games have become an integral part of our lives since the advent of games on smartphones. The media report a lot about the games, the players and the time spent playing them. The fascination of games and the behaviour of players are also regularly examined. However, in doing so, the focus is lost on the industry and the developers who, with their ideas and creativity, create new worlds in which players can immerse themselves. This dissertation focuses on this industry and the workers in the video games industry.

Just as the world inside households is changing, so is the world outside them. The neighbourhood, the district or the city have also changed during this time. These changes are also the subject of media reports and analyses of the causes and consequences. One focus is on the cultural and creative industries, which have become increasingly important in recent years. The video games industry is one of them. The changes can be perceived as positive, such as a wider range of goods in shops or the beautification of neighbourhood parks to invite people to linger, as well as negative, such as increased prices for (renovated) apartments. Either way, everyone is part of these changes, even if the nature and extent of the influence varies.

In this dissertation, these two points are brought together: the video game industry and the changes in the neighbourhood. It explores the relationship between the two and, in order to better understand the influence, the dynamics that are identifiable and understandable.

Research Objectives

Since the 1980s, the cultural and creative industries, including the video game industry, have gone through a notable change. From an initial niche position, they turned into a more broadly discussed topic not only in science but also in politics and economics (Hesmondhalgh 2013). Creative industries “supply goods and services that we broadly associate with cultural, artistic, or simply entertainment value” (Caves 2000, 1). These cultural and creative industries include what is commonly seen as traditional media, cinema, publishing, music, television, and other ones like design and architecture. In addition, media based on new technology has become a popular field in the creative industries and has brought up new sectors, such as the video game industry. These new industries are located “at the crossroads between the arts, business and technology” (UNCTAD

2004, 4). In this context, cultural and creative industries refer “to those industries in our society which employ the characteristic modes of production and organization of industrial corporations to produce and to disseminate symbols in the form of cultural goods and services, generally although not exclusively, as commodities” (Garnham [1987] 1997, 55). This development has to be seen against the backdrop of the emergence of the new economy, the emergence of new information and communication technologies, changed working conditions and the increased importance of creativity. The major interest in the cultural and creative industries lies within the building of the basis for future economic growth and prosperity. Many governments have established support programs to benefit from this development, which include subsidies and fiscal grants. This has strongly affected the development of creative industries.

The video game industry, as a part of the cultural and creative industries, is worth investigating considering the fact that it is one of these new industries, combining “truly artistic and creative content with emergent and novel technologies” and offering “a fascinating intersection between arts and technology and an area with seemingly greater potential for economic impact and innovation” (Breznitz and Noonan 2014, 597). As O’Donnell (2012, 18) emphasizes, “[g]ame development is a creative collaborative process involving numerous disciplines rooted in a particular culture producing creative, artistic and culturally important works”, leading to a product that differs from any other existing one. The video game industry represents “a new cultural industry that emerged from digitalization, rather than a cultural industry that digitalization affected” (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 358). It has developed during the last 30 years and became, with enormous economic growth, an important economic factor worldwide. The game industry reflects a capability and “reality for arts-related innovation to occupy a substantial role in an economy” (Breznitz and Noonan 2014, 597). For this reason, research on the video game industry usually focuses on economic aspects (e.g. Anderie 2023). In addition, other focal points can be found in academic research, such as the historical development of games and the industry (e.g. Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Smith and Tosca 2013; Wolf 2008a), or the process of game development, labour and work culture (e.g. Hoose 2016; Kerr 2006). The video game industry as a creative industry and its interactions with its environment and its relationship to other creative industries have been less researched to date (except for e.g. Keogh 2015; Roy-Valex 2010).

As part of the cultural and creative industries, the creative class, as postulated by Florida in 2002,

with its creative workers and the creative milieu, must be considered. Florida (2002b, 8) postulates that the creative class with the creative professionals and bohemians is seen, due to their creativity, as a key driving force for economic growth, which is stimulated by innovation. Besides its (critical) discussion (Krätke 2011a; Richards and Wilson 2007; Shearmur 2010; Rolf Sternberg 2012)¹, the theory highlights the importance of the interdependence between workers and the neighbourhoods as places of life and work.

This approach thus encompasses the two points of ‘culture’ and ‘creativity’. It can be seen in the context of neighbourhood development, where culture is seen to enhance attractiveness and image in order to attract and ultimately retain businesses, dwellers and visitors (Krajewski 2022, 435-436). However, it can also be seen in the context of the offer and the people who spend time there. More specifically, what these people do culturally in the neighbourhood and how it influences them because “engaging with culture also encourages creativity and innovation” (Krajewski 2022, 436).

The creative workers are not only defined by their work; they share some norms, values and lifestyles. They became a group, which might be seen, at least partially, as a relatively closed unit. The people in this group interact with each other to share their knowledge, to learn from each other, and to build up a (professional) network. This sharing or transfer of information and knowledge is seen as part of an ongoing innovation process. The “creative milieu is a place [...] that contains the necessary preconditions in terms of infrastructure to generate a flow of ideas and inventions” (Landry 2000, 133). The creative milieu also represents the environment for the workers to interact culturally, to use the cultural offers and amenities, or to participate culturally within the neighbourhood associated with their lifestyle. Workers do not only act inside their workplace but also outside in the neighbourhood, by using the infrastructure and the places around during working time and during their free time. Hence, those places where they locate doesn’t necessarily remain the same, because groups change their location, in the narrower or wider sense, with relevant interactions, such as cultural, spatial, socio-economic and political ones. These interactions are usually initiated by the subjective perception and interpretation of each member of the creative milieu and so is the perception of the dynamics of what is going on in the neighbourhood.

However, this scope cannot be investigated alone. Effects in a neighbourhood are not only one-

¹ For a detailed discussion see section 1.1.2.

way, from creative workers to the neighbourhood, but also bidirectional. The place the creative workers interact also influences their work by providing e.g. a stimulating working environment. According to Merkel (2012, 694), scholars haven't paid so far much attention to the significance of places and the spatial context in relation to creativity. Bidirectional interactions are included in this research, embedded in the context of the neighbourhood dynamics, and represented from the workers' perspective, to cover different aspects of a neighbourhood in evolution.

So far, attention has been paid also to cultural and creative industries and their locations in attractive areas and districts. Scholars have for instance considered where and why those industries have located in certain places (Evans 2009a; Heider 2011; Tomczak and Stachowiak 2015), and what are the economic benefits of cultural and creative industries in communities (Krätke 2011a; Potts and Cunningham 2008; Thiel 2011). Traditional approaches to the changes of neighbourhoods or districts generally focus on issues of gentrification and segregation with the emphasis on the disadvantages for its dwellers in daily life but do not take into account the locals and their behavior if they foster the process or not, and how they witness the changes and what this means for their daily life (Whiting and Hannam 2017, 319). Further, they do not include the effects of changed working conditions in the new economy on the lifestyle of the workers (Floeting 2007, 371), or if certain companies or industrial branches are the cause for transformation processes. As such, there is limited research on the impacts these industries have on their neighbourhood. Scholars have not researched how the place changes and develops when certain companies locate there. More specifically, our literature review reveals that the cultural dynamics are often taken for granted in these processes, as if they 'naturally' accompany them in a sort of 'background'. As a result, their role (necessarily various in nature and according to different contexts) is not really considered and they are not really understood in all their complexity, most notably how they are interpreted by the various actors involved.

To fill these knowledge gaps, this research aims to identify the cultural, spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics of the creative industries in the neighbourhood and what influence they have. Furthermore, it focuses on the cultural dynamics and the connection between workers in the creative industries and culture and creativity. This is followed by a case study of the video game sector in Montreal, Canada and Düsseldorf, Germany. The reasons of this choice of cities lay in the economic importance of this sector. "Montreal is one of the world's most important video game

centres” (Grandadam, Cohendet and Simon 2013, 1706). Because of its location between North America and Europe, bilingualism with French and English-speaking communities, a digital animation culture and well-trained specialists, Montreal has attracted many companies that operate there. Major companies like Ubisoft, Electronic Arts and WB Games Montréal opened up branches in Montreal, which helped grow a video game industry cluster within the city. For Montreal, the video game sector is one of the high-tech sectors that has contributed to diversifying Montreal’s economic base. Nevertheless, this status could not be reached without local and national policies. The establishment of the video game cluster in Montreal has strongly benefited from the support by the Quebec government. Since 1997, the Quebec government’s support program offers public subsidies and fiscal grants for the creation of each new position as well as training programs. Furthermore, in 1998, the Quebec government funded the *Cité du Multimédia* in abandoned and redeveloped nineteenth century industrial buildings close to the centre. The City of Montreal also encouraged the development of this industry (Britton, Tremblay and Smith 2009, 221; Grandadam, Cohendet and Simon 2013, 1706; Tremblay and Rousseau 2005).

Düsseldorf is one of the most important video game centres in Germany. A strong developer scene, important international publishers, gaming-specific education and training facilities, and globally prominent game events are compelling factors for video games companies to locate in Düsseldorf and its surrounding Rhine-Ruhr region (GTAI 2016). Düsseldorf attracted companies such as Innogames, a German-founded company, and as is the case in Montreal, a branch of Ubisoft, including a studio and business office. During the last two decades, the video game industry became one important pillar of the city’s economy. Similar to Montreal, this could not have been achieved without city or state subsidies and funding of special support programs for the video game industry, such as the initiative CREATIVE.NRW of the federal state North Rhine-Westphalia launched in 2009 to support the location of new software companies.

Montreal and Düsseldorf are significant places for the video game industry, and for both cities, the video game industry is an important economic pillar. Although they could benefit from funding policies, supported with local and national subsidies and funding, Düsseldorf did not manage to attract firms to the same degree as Montreal did. However, a comparative study about the video game industry in both places hasn’t been conducted so far. Previous research focused on the clustering and the game developers in the case of Montreal (Darchen and Tremblay 2015;

Grandadam, Cohendet and Simon 2013; Pilon and Tremblay 2013) and for Düsseldorf, the game industry has not been in the focus of research so far.

Studying in parallel the video game industry dynamics in their neighbourhoods in both cities would allow us to highlight the similarities as well as the differences which might help cities planning their future urban development, how and to what extent the relation between the cultural and creative industries and neighbourhood dynamics might spur development.

Besides the video game industry as part of the cultural and creative industries, the focus of this dissertation is on the people working in this industry because these people are out in the neighbourhood and may initiate dynamics or are part of it by their daily presence. These workers are overshadowed and have rarely been the focus of research to date, or in the words of Wimmer and Sitnikova (2012, 153): “The different game cultures have been drawing attention of the researchers for many years already, whereas until quite recently the people who stay behind video games – the so-called gameworkers – were undeservingly staying in shade”. Research so far has focused on the consumers of video games and the content of these games.

The video game developers work in an environment that combines artistic, creative and technological abilities:

Creativity in the video game industry is present throughout the entire structure. This means that it drives the industry, creating endless opportunities, at the same time as it creates great pressure. One would, at a first glance, think that this was a highly technological environment. This is true, to some extent. But [...] technical logics and perfection may not have that much to do with successful video games. One has to look at it from artistic and creative perspectives in most parts of the process of developing and publishing a video game. (Zackariasson and Wilson 2010, 110)

Although the video game developers work in the creative sector, the video game developers are mostly only seen as “nerds only dealing with games all the time” (Wimmer and Sitnikova 2012, 161). Beyond that, the creative or artistic part of their work is recognised but does not receive the attention it deserves in research. Even less attention is paid to the video game developers themselves and their own creativity and relation to culture that might be source for their work.

Examining the cultural and creative side of video game developers provides insight into a specific group of workers who are active in the cultural and creative industries and whose professional field combines the technological and creative worlds of work. It also provides insight into how cultural and creative these people are and how this influences their work as video game developers. These cultural and creative aspects are particularly important. The focus on the cultural and creative is also directed at the neighbourhood, which represents the space for the offers and activities. It also focuses on their relationship to the activities that can take place on a social level, among others.

Research Approach

Based on these aspects, the focus now turns to the topics that play a role in this dissertation. These are the video game industry, the neighbourhood in which it is located, various dynamics between the two, and the workers in the video game industry and their cultural and creative activities. The object of investigation is their connection to each other. Therefore, the first research question is ‘What are and how can we understand the relationships between the video game industry and a specific neighbourhood, in particular the relationship between the video game industry workers and the neighbourhood around their workspace?’ Besides this, the focus is also on the creativity and cultural activities of the video game developers. The neighbourhood is in the immediate vicinity and offers a wide range of cultural activities and events that are used. In connection with the link between the video game developers and the neighbourhood, a further research question arises: ‘What is the role of cultural dynamics in the relationship of the video game industry workers and the neighbourhood, in particular, what is the role of cultural practices in the neighbourhood for creative workers?’

Hypotheses have been developed to answer these research questions. These hypotheses each focus on a different point linked to the dynamics. Four hypotheses emerge from these points: The creative class of the video game industry workers may have an impact, various in nature and scope, on the environment of the video game industries’ neighbourhood, *and vice versa* (Hypothesis 1). The dynamics involved are detectable by means of cultural, spatial, socio-economic and political ones (Hypothesis 2). The cultural dynamics and more specifically the cultural lifestyle are important to understand the relationships between the video game workers and the neighbourhood, how they perceive themselves as creative acting individuals and in relation to the neighbourhood (Hypothesis 3). And the dynamics involve both continuities and changes through time (Hypothesis 4).

The Thesis

Chapter 1 ‘Research area and literature’ provides an overview of the current state of research. The three major sections of this chapter form the basis for the individual areas that are the focus of this dissertation. The first section deals with the cultural aspect, in particular the cultural and creative industries. The second deals with the location, the neighbourhood, what happens and takes place there, and what is subsumed under the term ‘dynamics’ in this dissertation, as well as what can be found there, such as amenities. Both sections are embedded in the field of the new economy, through or during which the course was set in the industry in which the video games industry is part of. This chapter concludes with a description of the people who are the focus of this dissertation: the video game developers. In order to better understand the work of video game developers, this section also includes a look at the industry itself.

The aim of this dissertation is then concretised in Chapter 2. The research questions and the hypotheses based on them are developed in the first part of this chapter. They are what will guide this study in the following. Building on this, the conceptual and operational framework is developed. The implementation of this study is then described in the second part, the methodological one, which deals with conducting the interviews and analysing the newspaper articles.

Chapter 3 takes a closer look at the two neighbourhoods. This is not only about the spatial localisation of the two places, but also about describing the two places in more detail and getting an idea of the two places. After the description of the neighbourhood, there is a description of the relationship between the neighbourhood and Ubisoft as well as additional data to round off the whole relationship.

Part of this research involves analysing newspaper articles. The results of this analysis are presented in chapter 4. The newspaper articles form the first part of the analysis. Articles from three Canadian and three German newspapers that are related to the neighbourhood and Ubisoft are analysed. It is the view of the journalists who have been reporting on Ubisoft’s establishment in the neighbourhood since its inception. It is a continuous view of the development in the neighbourhood from different journalists and what is happening. Whilst the articles must be related to Ubisoft, the articles cover a range of topics. By looking at the last 25 years, topics are also dealt

with that the video game developers interviewed do not (or cannot) know about, as they have not been working in the neighbourhood or associated with it for that long. In short, the newspaper articles broaden the view of what is going on in the neighbourhood. Both neighbourhoods are examined independently of each other, and the results are then compared (see Lamont 2012; Resnik and Goastellec 2019; Stuppia and Ridley 2021). Each individual neighbourhood is analysed using the dimensions presented in the operational framework chapter. Three sections were added to the dimensions because not all relevant information from the articles could be assigned to one dimension, i.e. one section. The additional sections complete the picture and give a comprehensive impression of the relationship between the video games industry, the developers, the neighbourhoods and what happens there.

After the journalists have presented their views, Chapters 5, 6 and 7 focus on the interviews and their analysis. These are interviews with people who work in the video games industry, more specifically at Ubisoft, and with cultural actors who work or have their studio in the area under investigation. Both the people who work at Ubisoft and the cultural actors work or come from different areas. This provides a multifaceted and broad view of the subject under investigation. The interview analysis extends over three chapters, conducted according to our hypothetico-deductive approach as well as to a micro-analysis of inductive nature. The findings from the interviews are very comprehensive and fruitful. It provides a detailed view of the video game developers and of the relationship between the video game industry and the neighbourhood. Furthermore, the analysis is descriptive but, in some section, an analytical aspect is integrated. By dividing the chapters into three, the structure of the operational framework has been retained and remains analogous to the sections in Chapter 4, the analysis of the newspaper articles. Chapter 5 looks at the selected dynamics and the cultural component of this work, i.e. the cultural lifestyle of the interviewees and the cultural organisations in the neighbourhood. The focus is therefore on the things that are going on in the neighbourhood and could be related to the selected dynamics. The place where everything takes place and what can be found there, i.e. the neighbourhood with its creative milieu, and its perception are the focus of Chapter 6, 'Inside the neighbourhood'. The final part of the analysis, Chapter 7, looks at the relationship between the video games industry and the neighbourhood and the role of neighbourhoods in the cultural activities of video game developers. This chapter examines aspects of the research question that have not yet been considered. The research question itself can only be answered on the basis of all three analysis chapters.

Following the descriptive presentation of the results of the analyses of the newspaper articles and the interviews in chapters 4-7, all these results are now considered together in the discussion in chapter 8. Based on the results and the supplementary data, the hypotheses are discussed and the research questions answered. Some points that emerged as significant during the analysis are considered in more detail. To round off this chapter, the results are analysed in relation to the relevant literature to determine whether or not they support my findings.

This work ends with the conclusion, which takes another look at the work as a whole, i.e. what was achieved, what its limitations are and what questions have arisen for further research.

A final remark before examining the literature: The subject of this thesis was chosen in 2016. However, the research project has taken longer to complete than anticipated, with the conduct of the interview phase and subsequent analysis being (among other reasons, including the pandemic) particularly time-consuming. Nevertheless, we feel that a detailed picture of video game developers, their cultural, creative and social life, their perceptions and representations, and their links with the neighbourhood at different levels of dynamics, at the time the interviews were conducted, could be deployed.

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH DOMAIN AND LITERATURE

In the scope of this research are the workers of the video game industry and their related dynamics in the neighbourhood. The development of the video game industry and its location in specific neighbourhoods has to be considered not only under the aspect of cultural and creative industries and neighbourhoods, but also in connection with the changing economic structure. With the emergence of the so-called ‘New Economy’, the significance of culture and the cultural and creative industries has grown and thereby also the discussion about the creative class and the creative milieu. Regarding the new economy and its industries, the way they locate in (former) industrial districts and in clusters gained attention, and their development might be influenced by policies. The characteristics of the industry’s location, the neighbourhood, are specified and coined by interrelations of the new economy and culture. These dynamics in the neighbourhood can be regarded under different aspects, as spatial, socio-economic, cultural, and political dynamics and they can be regarded also as dynamics in relation to workers’ work.

With respect to these points, this chapter is divided in three sections: ‘The New Economy and Culture’ (1.1), ‘The New Economy, Culture and Neighbourhoods’ (1.2) and ‘The Creative Industry of Video Games’ (1.3).

1.1. The New Economy and Culture

The new economy and its diversification of the working environment also implement a development in the cultural sphere, such as to the emergence of the cultural economy. In this section, the development of the new economy together with the development in culture and the cultural economy (1.1.1.) is outlined. Though, the development in the cultural sphere cannot be understood without the rising of the cultural and creative industries and its sectors that gained attention in science and politics due to their presumed potential for economic growth, and hence the people and places connected with them (1.1.2.). We will take a closer look at these conditions for the cultural and creative industries, their people, and places, as well as some of these economic characteristics that are central to understanding the cultural and creative industries and their relationship to the neighbourhood (1.1.3.).

1.1.1. The New Economy and Cultural Economy

1.1.1.1. The New Economy

The emergence of the new economy is connected with the decline of the economic system of Fordism, succeeded by post-Fordism and the post-industrial economy since the 1970s which marks a further form in capitalist society; it is a period that is typified by a decline of the manufacturing sector and an increase in the service sector (Hutton 2008, 20-29; Storper and Scott 2009, 158-161). With the advent of new information and communication technologies, its connected changes in the economic system and an economic growth during the 1990s, scholars see the rise of a new type of economy: the 'New Economy' (Freytag 2000; Hüther 2000; Hutton 2008).

The new economy phenomenon has been researched broadly, e.g. by Hutton (2008), Kelly (2014), Krätke (2014) and Leadbeater (1999), and its characteristics and implications are discussed largely. The understanding of what is the new economy, what it encompasses, and what is new in the new economy vary (Freytag 2000, 304). Krätke (2002, 103) describes critically the new economy and states that

the 'new economy' is a vague term for companies that are doing business with new information and communication technologies, with new media (such as the Internet) or new markets in e-commerce, and at the same time a paraphrase for corporate management concepts that focus on maximizing the flexibility of working forms and employment relationships and maximizing shareholder value. (own translation)

In this statement, Krätke refers to two common discussed characteristics of the new economy: the advances in information and communication technologies, cohesive with a change in requirements of workforces where special skills, knowledge and creativity became important (Healy 2002, 87-88; Scott 2010, 115). Besides the different requirements of skills and creativity, the new economy marks a new division of labour. There is a major quota of workers that work part-time, as freelancers or as contingent labour, and a major part that needs to be flexible with unregulated working hours (Hutton 2016, 122,147-148; Krätke 2011a). New industrial sectors are e.g. in the field of bio-technology, nano-technology, media, Internet businesses, and cultural industries

(Krätke 2014, 57; Leadbeater 1999, 4).

Another aspect that influenced the development of the new economy is globalisation. It changed the sphere of economic activity accompanied with global competitiveness, liberalised markets, circulation of global capital and the possibility of small firms to do business worldwide (Healy 2002, 88-89; Leadbeater 1999, 4); this led to a “restructuring of the local economy” (Storper and Scott 2009, 161). Further aspects of new economy’s nature are e.g. its intangibility of products and activity due to the shift from physical manipulation to the dealing with ideas and information (Kelly 2014, 2,13; Leadbeater 1999, 4), the locations of branches of the new industries, in particular “the emergence of new urban space economics focusing the intra-metropolitan scale” (Krätke 2014, 57), which implies a “return of production to the inner city” (Hutton 2008, 3), and industries’ location “at the heart of the resurgent urban economy” (Krätke 2014, 57). Additional points are the importance of knowledge and human capital (Freytag 2000, 304), and a remarkable reduction of costs for digital and electronic equipment (Kelly 2014, 10).

Linked with the new economy are further partially new emerged and partially overlapping types of economies, that gained attention and that are discussed in the context of economy, culture and territories, such as cultural economy (Hutton 2016; Scott 2000), creative economy (Howkins 2002), knowledge(-based) economy (Powell and Snellman 2004; Sokol 2004), cohesive with the information age, society and economy (Castells 2000), and agglomeration economy (Harrison 1992), which is linked to the discussion about its role as a driver of the cultural industries (Thiel 2017, 26).

The knowledge(-based) economy is one type of economy that is linked with the new economy. Although widely used, the significance of the term ‘knowledge(-based) economy’ is not clear in the literature (Moldaschl 2011, 289; Powell and Snellman 2004, 199). Broadly defined, it is “production and services based on knowledge-intensive activities that contribute to an accelerated pace of technological and scientific advance as well as equally rapid obsolescence” (Powell and Snellman (2004, 201). Further characteristics given are, amongst others, its immaterial character (Simmie 2010, 498), its footlooseness (Möller 2014, 23), its ability to innovate and exploit new markets (Leadbeater 1999, 7), and the reliance on intellectual capabilities, dealing with the usage, transformation and exchange of useful knowledge and information (Kujath and Stein 2011, 127).

Knowledge can be exchanged, as codified (explicit) knowledge, a transfer over distances, and as tacit (implicit) knowledge, a transfer by personal exchange in a face-to-face communication (Grove and Heider 2012, 195). Therefore, the location of industries in the knowledge(-based) economies continues to play a role (Evans 2009b, 33; Gottdiener 2000, 98). Hence, reasons for spatial proximity are face-to-face-contacts (Storper and Venables 2004), but also mutual trust built on personal contacts (Harrison 1992, 477). Only regarding the exchange of codified and tacit knowledge is, according to Asheim (2007), not comprehensive enough and doesn't encompass all its complexity. Thus, he introduced the knowledge-based approach because innovation and innovation processes in industries are based on different knowledge bases due to their growing complexity. In this approach, Asheim (2007) distinguishes between three different bases: the analytical knowledge base (science based), the synthetic knowledge base (engineering based) and the symbolic knowledge base (creativity based), which he describes as followed. First, the analytical knowledge base is important for those industries "where scientific knowledge is highly important, and where knowledge creation is often based on cognitive and rational processes, or on formal models" (p. 225), for example in bio- and nanotechnology. Second, the synthetic knowledge base is significant in industries "where the innovation takes place through the application of existing knowledge or the novel combination of knowledge" (p. 225) to solve a problem or a task, for example in plant engineering, industrial machinery or production system (p. 225). And third, the symbolic knowledge base is "associated with the aesthetic attributes of products, the creation of designs and images and the economic use of various forms of cultural artefacts" (p. 226) in the cultural and creative industries such as media and design. Although the knowledge-based economy is considered a form of the new economy, there are also scientists who argue that knowledge has always been a factor in the development of industry and the economy (cf. Brinkley 2006, 5; Meusburger and Werlen 2017, 7-8; Moldaschl 2011, 291; Sokol 2004, 227).

The new economy as the motor for economic growth also gained attention in politics. As a consequence, governments who wanted to participate in the economic growth tend to bankroll (Evans 2009a, 1004; Scott 2006b, 15) and to adapt policies to push development (Evans 2009a, 1031). So that the cultural and creative industries can also benefit from this growth, "politics of creative sector [...] needs to be placed in structural and institutional context" (Indergaard 2009, 1087).

Some economists, though, question the novelty of the new economy. They are of the opinion that the new economy is not new but a further stage of the so-called old economy (Freytag 2000; Gadrey 2003; Porter 2001). Krätke (2002, 104) questions the simple division into new and old economy, and Porter (2001, 78) concludes in his research that “the ‘new economy’ appears less like a new economy than like an old economy that has access to a new technology. [...] The old economy of established companies and the new economy [...] are merging, and it will soon be difficult to distinguish them”. Howkins (2002, 196) simply states that “[t]he new economy is creativity plus electronics”, which turns our attention to the significance of culture and creativity in the new economy.

1.1.1.2. Culture and Cultural Economy

Connected with the development of the new economy is the increased importance of culture and creativity and its industries, given that they are seen as part of the economic growth and an important factor of the development of places. This is emphasized by Hutton (2015, 1-2) stating that “[c]ulture has been central to the development of cities through history, as seen in complex interdependencies between ‘process’ and ‘place’ in experiences of urban growth and change, and in the formation of imagery in the city”. Aspects of the new economy like the evolving technologies, progress in media, globalisation, which is according to Roy-Valex (2010, 40) in charge of economic, social and spatial dynamics, and the changes in work to creativity also play an evident role in the development of culture and the cultural and creative industries; hence, it has an influence on the cultural and creative industries (Flew and Cunningham 2010, 113-114). These aspects are widely researched: e.g. Markusen et al. (2008) and Schlesinger (2017) for the creative economy, and e.g. Boggs (2009), du Gay and Pryke (2002), Gibson and Kong (2005) and Krätke (2002) for the cultural economy. Similar to the discussion of cultural and/or creative industries, their definition and usage vary and its borders become blurred² (Gibson and Kong 2005, 546; Liefoghe 2010, 182; Poirier and Roy-Valex 2010, 7; Scott 2010, 116). There are, nonetheless, other views on the relationship between the new economy and the cultural industries, e.g. Gibson and Kong (2005, 547) and Scott (2006, 13) see the cultural economy as a part of the contemporary

² See section 1.1.2. for the discussion and development of culture, creativity, and the cultural and creative industries.

economy, as well as Roy-Valex (2006, 332) and Suwala (2014, 277) due to similar characteristics of the cultural economy in the new economy, while Krätke (2002) sees the cultural economy as part of the old economy.

Markusen et al. (2008, 27) emphasise the difference between the creative economy and the cultural one, which is also described by Liefoghe (2010, 184-185) who states that

[l]'économie de la culture [...] porte sur la valorisation économique des pratiques artistiques et du patrimoine, dans leur relation aux équipements culturels et aux politiques culturelles [and that l]'économie de la créativité [...] étudie le développement des industries créatives comme le multimédia [...], le cinéma, la musique, les industries du luxe [...] ou encore la publicité, le design, la mode, l'architecture.

This diversity also leads to different research approaches. In their review on cultural economy, Gibson and Kong (2005, 542-545) present four approaches to clarify the widely used term. For example, they name a '*sectoral approach*', which deals with the question of which types of production should be accepted in the definition of the cultural economy, or a '*labour market and organization of production approach*', which focuses on the types of workers, such as self-employed individuals and their work. Grodach (2013, 1748-1751) as well identifies different approaches in his work. He determines five ideal-typical approaches to the development of the cultural economy, established from the existing literature to emphasise different views and agendas. Examples of these approaches include the '*conventional model*', which focuses on attracting external businesses and industries by creating a good business climate such as through tax breaks, land depreciation, etc., or the '*cultural industries model*', which focuses on functional features of the commercial cultural industries, such as promoting the labour market and education, as well as agglomeration processes, infrastructure development and the promotion of innovation. Furthermore, according to Markusen et al. (2008, 26), two directions can be recognised in research on the cultural economy. One relates to the places that deal with the improvement of cultural spaces and activities as a means of revitalising deindustrialised inner cities, and the other relates to the various sectors involved.

In the context of the symbiosis of culture and economy, and the potential of culture in the economy, scientists in the 1980s identified two distinct processes in which the boundaries between culture

and economy were blurred: the ‘culturalisation of the economy’ and the ‘economisation of culture’. The ‘culturalisation of the economy’ is the growing influence of the cultural sector on the economic one, including the influence on some characteristics of the working environment as well as new products that shape consumer behaviour, and the ‘economisation of culture’ is the growing economic thinking in the cultural sector, and is characterised by a professionalization of the cultural sector (see also: Baumol 2006, 343-345; Bellavance and Poirier 2013; Helbrecht 2001, 215-217; Lash and Urry 1994; Poirier and Roy-Valex 2010, 11-13; Reich 2013, 22; Thiel 2011; Warde 2002).

Besides the recognition that the cultural economy may be important for economic growth based on creativity (e.g. Flew 2012a, 16) and its regional development (Krätke 2011a, 9), the cultural economy is also seen as an “important vehicle for urban development” as it creates “job opportunities, purchase and tax power, and valorizes urban space” (Thiel 2017, 26). The effects on job growth through the creative sector were analysed by Gutierrez-Posada et al. (2023), who found that the creative sector can be responsible for employment growth of up to 16% of non-tradable jobs (p. 1).

The cultural economy shows the same characteristics of work requirements at large as the new economy, such as autonomy, heterogeneity, mobility, flexibility, knowledge, creativity (Roy-Valex 2006, 332) based on innovation and entrepreneurship (Boggs 2009, 1492; Suwala 2014, 277) against the background of the advancing computerisation. These characteristics, connected with the theory of economic growth, also gained attention in the creative class theory of Richard Florida in 2002, which pushed the discussion about the significance of the cultural and creative industries and the cultural economy³.

This description of the development of the new economy focuses on the economic aspects. They play a role insofar as they are seen as an engine for economic development. Special importance is attached to certain branches of the industry, and the cultural and creative industries are one branch of it. The development of the cultural economy is associated with the development of the cultural and creative industries, making a closer look on these industries, the people involved and their

³ See section 1.1.2. for the creative class theory.

places necessary.

1.1.2. Cultural and Creative Industries, People and Places

As seen, the cultural and creative industries evolved in the time of the cultural economy. Closely linked with the cultural and creative industries are the creative class and bohemians, seen as workers who create new technologies or work as creatives, the creative milieu as the environment and place the creative class and bohemians interact, as well as the lifestyle, the manner people act in the neighbourhood. These are all small parts that belong to each other, but not self-evident, and a closer look on the single characteristics is appropriate.

Cultural and Creative Industries

The origin of ‘cultural industry’ is seen in the work of Adorno and Horkheimer who first used this term in the book *Dialektik der Aufklärung (Dialectic of Enlightenment)* in 1947 to describe critically the beginning of the development of mass culture from the point of view of consumption, and its incorporation into the economy. It further stresses the contradictory merging of culture and industry in the middle of the last century (Adorno and Horkheimer 1947/1969; Adorno 1963). The conceptual shift from culture industry (as introduced by Adorno and Horkheimer) to cultural industries in the 1970s and 1980s took place to demonstrate the term’s complexity and to emphasize the difference in work, production and distribution in single branches, as well as to provide distance from the cultural concept, and to emphasize the plurality of industry in an economical context (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 24; O’Connor 2010, 26; Paré 2015, 26-27; Roy-Valex and Bellavance 2015, 12).

In the 1990s, a further shift took place, when the term ‘creative industries’ arose with the emergence of software and computer based technologies (Garnham 2005, 20). The term underlines the potential for urban regeneration combined with economic growth and accentuates the importance of innovativeness and competitiveness (O’Connor 2010, 52-53). As a result, it gained attention in economy and politics. In the economic context, the term ‘creative economy’ became popular to underline the economic character of the cultural and creative industries and the role of culture and creativity in the economy. In 1998, under the Labour government of Tony Blair, the UK’s

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published the *Creative Industries Mapping Document* (DCMS/CITF) “to change the terms of the debate about the value of arts and culture” (British Council 2010, 15) and the term ‘creative industries’ was coined. The definition is based on the “individual creativity, skills and talents” (DCMS 2001, 5) that entail job creation, urban regeneration and economic growth and includes thirteen sectors (advertising, architecture, art & antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film & video, interactive leisure software (electronic games), music, performing arts, publishing, software & computer services, and television & radio) (p. 5). This definition was not uncontroversial, for example it was criticized for its artificial and generalized classification of the creative branches, and for the non-compliance with the national data collection, which revealed a structural deficiency of the data (Roodhouse 2008, 17; Tomczak and Stachowiak 2015,8), but it pushed the discussion of creative and cultural industries, cultural and creative policies and the development of further programmes worldwide (Higgs and Cunningham 2008). Hesmondhalgh and Pratt (2005, 5) summarized this fact by stating: “the 1990s and early 2000s have seen a boom time in cultural policy under the sign of the cultural and creative industries as a result of industrial and cultural changes”.

Due to its complexity, there is no common definition of cultural and creative industries. It “is in fact a highly diversified group of activities sometimes differing widely in character” (Tomczak and Stachowiak 2015, 7), and as Hölzl and Mandl (2006, 1) identified, “in several studies the term is defined either very broadly or narrowly”. Authors such as Hesmondhalgh (2013, 22-23), Hesmondhalgh and Pratt (2005, 6), Miller (2009, 89) and Scott (2010, 119-121) see one reason for the discussion in the ambiguity of the words culture and creativity and their usage and implication; and other authors such as Karlsson (2011, 87) refer to the difficulty in measuring and circumscribing creativity and the role of the creative process. Drake (2003, 512) states in this context that “there is a lack of clarity about whether the terms ‘creative industry’ and ‘cultural industry’ are interchangeable, whether they denote different areas of activities”, or if one is part of the other, such as if the cultural industries are a part of creative industries, and how broad or narrow the terms are (Evans 2009a, 1008; Flew 2012b, 10; Solidoro 2009, 2; Tomczak and Stachowiak 2015, 8-9; Vivant and Tremblay 2010, 13,16).

The focus of the definitions and use of these terms also depend on the governments. For example, in Germany there is a stronger emphasis on the economic aspects (Söndermann 2009, XI) and in

Canada a stronger emphasis on the cultural ones (Gottselig 1999, 7-8; Hesmondhalgh 2011, 4). Further discussions deal with conceptual problems, statistical and empirical measures that lead to different representations in terms of political and economic aspects, and the influence of cultural, political, historical and economic country-specific developments that play a role in the definition of the terms (Hölzl and Mandl 2006; Moore 2014; Poirier and Roy-Valex 2010; Roodhouse 2008). As Pratt (2012, 318) states, the term ‘cultural and creative industries’ commonly weaves together the concepts of “public and private; for-profit and not-for-profit; and formal and informal activities”. In science and politics, the terms can be used (with an adapted definition) in connection with clusters, networks, knowledge industries, for sectors and industries, the creative city and the creative milieu, the creative industries and the new economy (Healy 2002). The terms ‘cultural industries’, ‘creative industries’ and ‘cultural and creative industries’ are therefore used both in the singular and in the plural, as their use depends, among other things, on the context, background and discipline in science and politics (Hartley et al. 2013, 77).

The cultural and creative industries need creative workers. They are part of the creative class and are involved in the creative milieu. It is therefore worth taking a look at them.

Creative Class, Bohemians and the Creative Milieu

The workers in the cultural and creative industries are part of the creative class and so with the theory of the creative class. This theory gained attention with Richard Florida’s book *The Rise of the Creative Class* in 2002. Florida defines the creative class as a class of workers: “people in design, education, arts, music and entertainment, whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology and/or creative content” (Florida 2002b, 8). The creative class, as Florida characterises it, is mobile and creative places are characterised by an influx of creative workers. Florida describes different types of creativity and the group of video game developers are part of the so-called ‘creative core’ (Florida 2002b, 69), because they generate knowledge, act innovatively and force both economic and technical developments. Further, the theory highlights the significance of the interrelations between workers and their neighbourhoods as places of life and work. Factors as diversity, street culture and atmosphere, became more important for the quality of place (Richards and Wilson 2007, 8). These specifics are regarded because dealing with the video game industry and its workers cannot be separated from the creative class concept Florida describes in Part One of his book.

Florida's theory and his presentation of the link between the creative class and economic growth have many supporters, but there are also controversial discussions and criticisms. The discussions and criticisms relate, among other things, to the definition of creative jobs, which is a definition of skills rather than creativity, and to the choice of the words 'talent' and 'creative class' instead of 'human capital'. Further critics are the correlation between economic growth and the creative class, if there is a correlation (Boschma and Fritsch 2009; Helbrecht 2011; Krätke 2011; Markusen 2006; Peck 2005), and about the 'jobs follow people' paradigm and not hitherto existing 'people follow jobs' paradigm (Darchen and Tremblay 2010; Fritsch and Stuetzer 2012, 6-7; Hartley et al. 2013, 48-51; Richards and Wilson 2007, 8-13; Shearmur 2010, 117-123; Rolf Sternberg 2012, 13-15), as well as the 3 T's of economic development (talent, tolerance and technology)⁴. Although his theory contributed for more than a decade to these themes, Florida takes stock of the current development in cities in his book *The New Urban Crisis* (2017) in which he observes a crisis in cities connected with the creative class.

Florida's theory, which is based on findings from his research in the United States, was also discussed broadly in Europe but it isn't currently transformable without modifications to European and German cities (see Chantelot 2009, 326-330). A comparison of cities' creativity on the basis of Florida's calculation is difficult due to a slightly variation of data from different sources and, to some extent, various groups are not statistically captured, such as freelancers in German statistics (Fritsch and Stuetzer 2012, 7-8; Gottschalk and Hamm 2011, 518-519). So, an adaptation and a regrouping of professions would be necessary to apply Florida's theory in Germany and Europe respectively. In the case of Germany, a direct correlation between Florida's theory and Germany may not be drawn because of a different historical, cultural, economic and social background, tradition and structures, such as the lower mobility of workers in Germany, an industry that is (still) more based on manufacture than in the United States or the uneven distribution of creatives and industry after the German reunification (Barthelmes 2008, 7; Drewes and Engelmann 2008, 9; Huchler 2009, 93; Klotz 2014, 117-120; Rolf Sternberg 2012, 12). One fact that is not mentioned

⁴ By talent, Florida (2002b) means not only the education sector and good training, but also the ability to act innovatively and creatively. Tolerance means a milieu of openness and diversity, a multitude of cultural impulses and a multitude of different people, and this point plays a key role in Florida's theory. By technology, he means the intensive use of innovative technologies, particularly in the areas of information and communication as well as media and biochemistry. Florida's theory is not part of this research. This research is not about the economic growth, and what is important for economic development regarding talent, tolerance and technology.

in the discussion about the migration of creative workers in Florida's theory is the language barrier. This can influence migration to German and other European cities, as these places may seem more difficult to locate in (Hansen, Vang and Asheim 2005, 20).

In Florida's theses about the creative class, the bohemians such as writers, artists, photographers and entertainers play an important role because they represent another group besides the creative professionals and the creative core. The term 'bohemia' as it is used today first appeared in the 1830s in France and described "young artists who deliberately lived a marginal existence and rejected social norms" (Forkert 2013, 150) including not only the artists but also those who follow and sympathise with this marginal lifestyle (for an evolution see Edgar and Sedgwick 2010; Forkert 2013; Huston, Wadley and Fitzpatrick 2015; Seigel 1999). At the end of the 20th century, Lloyd identified the so-called 'neo-bohemians', who emerged in relation to capitalism and urbanisation, with "the crisis-driven restructuring of American capitalism and American cities" (Lloyd 2017, 360). He argues that since the 1990s the neo-bohemians are responsible for the prosperity in industries such as fashion, design, and creative and media industries (p. 362). In 2000, Brooks neologised in his book *Bobos in Paradise* the term 'bobos', a compound of the words bourgeoisie and bohemians, to describe the new elite in American society that combines values of the bourgeoisie such as hard work, self-discipline and materialism, and values of bohemians such as hedonistic experience, self exploration and self expression (Hannigan 2007, 71). Bobos are highly educated and wealthy, they "prefer to lead a comfortable life, especially after they have children, but don't want to live like their parents do - especially not in the suburbs - and don't mind a little dirt on the streets as long as they feel safe" (Zukin 2010, 7). Hannigan (2007, 71) describes them as "rebels with stock options".

Although the terms 'bohemians' and 'creative class' are used inconsistently and incidentally synonymously, both terms mean something different. Currid (2009, 380) points out that the creative class is not tantamount to artists or bohemians and that "[i]n fact, the creative class is most akin to a measurement of highly educated individuals. Bohemians are a specific subsection of the creative class and simultaneously are also drivers of the presence of the creative class". Their presence indicates openness and diversity which attract further creative professionals (Gottschalk, Hamm and Imöhl 2010, 9).

The existence of bohemians in an area is widely seen as having a positive effect on the economic

development and revitalisation of a neighbourhood, but the extent (if any) to which bohemians are responsible for or have an influence on the economic development of a neighbourhood is controversially discussed in the literature (Currid 2009; Florida 2002a; Fritsch and Stuetzer 2012; Tiruneh, Sacchetti and Tortia 2018). They deal with artistic goods, and the neighbourhoods in which they act or make themselves at home are marked by a special atmosphere and by amenities such as bars and cafés, galleries, and yoga studios which creates the creative milieu.

The creative class and bohemians create the creative milieu as the place where they act and the place where the economic development takes place. The creative milieu is described throughout the literature with several characteristics. A key characteristic is the networking between the individual actors on social, cultural, and economic levels and its dynamics that arise from it. The creative milieu is open to everyone and in physical proximity with individuals, but it is determined by rules, norms and social relationships inside the milieu and the existence of common values and trust (Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2013, 70). Merkel (2012, 694-698) pays attention to another key characteristic: the relevance of local references for the creativity's development and the connection between milieu and place. She puts forward the development of typical social practices, such as the concentration and mixing of people in selected locations, the sharing of resources, networking, visiting each other's exhibitions, socializing in different artistic practices, project-based collaboration and the building of institutions (Merkel 2012b, 66). Additional characteristics are common meanings and the tight connections of living and working, and also that the creative milieu offers individuals an ideal environment to work and an ideal environment for their lifestyle (Merkel 2012, 690-698). The creative milieu is moreover characterized by its internal and external exchanges on an organisational level (Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2013, 70). Co-operation partners on short-time projects, often found in the Internet industry, might change on each project, but the connections and social ties remain established or will be re-established if necessary with new projects initiated (Wittel 2001, 66).

A broad description of the creative milieu and the importance of the place in the development of it is emphasized by Landry (2000, 133). He describes the creative milieu as “a place – either a cluster of buildings, a part of a city, a city as a whole or a region – that contains the necessary preconditions in terms of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ infrastructure to generate a flow of ideas and inventions”. The ‘soft infrastructure’ is typically a system of “associative structures and social networks”, such as

business clubs, think tanks and institutions, as well as “connections and human interactions that underpins and encourages the flow of ideas between individuals and institutions. The ‘hard infrastructure’ is regarded as a “nexus of buildings and institutions, such as research institutes, educational establishments, cultural facilities, and other meeting places” (p. 133), such as cafés and bars, and support services, including public transportation and amenities, such as parks, sport facilities and public places, offered by the neighbourhood or the company. He further states that

[s]uch a milieu is a physical setting where a critical mass of entrepreneurs, intellectuals, social activists, artists, administrators, power brokers or students can operate in an open-minded, cosmopolitan context and where face to face interaction creates new ideas, artefacts, products, services and institutions and as a consequence contributes to economic success. (p. 133)

This definition supports this research in that the creative milieu and the neighbourhood can create conditions that can support the creative process. However, Laurent Simon, professor at HEC Montreal, explains in an interview that “[l]’idée qu’il faut être dehors pour trouver de l’inspiration, c’est un mythe de la nouvelle économie” (Galipeau 2018). A differentiated picture is given by Harrington (2011, 271), who states by looking at the various types of creative people that

[c]reative people differ from one another in many important respects. They have different personalities, motivational profiles, and work styles, for example. Furthermore, the conditions, settings, and environments conducive to one type of creativity (e.g., writing a novel) may not be most conducive to other types of creativity such as producing a series of multimedia canvases or expanding knowledge of a particular mathematical domain. As a consequence, the exact environmental conditions most helpful to any particular creative person working on any particular project may not be the most helpful to other people working on other projects.

Therefore, to what extent the creative milieu is important for people working in the video game industry for their work and how they use and profit from it is included in our study. More specifically, the way people behave and what they do in the creative milieu depends on their lifestyle. Since the creative milieu is an important point in this work, it is essential to look at what lifestyle means.

Lifestyle

In the creative milieu, different people with different lifestyles come together and interact. Lifestyle and what it means are not obvious, because it is the subject of interest of various scientific disciplines. Description and thus definitions are manifold and partly overlapping (see e.g. Beckmann 2005; Chaney 2001; Coulangeon 2004; Diaz-Bone 2010; Featherstone 1987; Gebhardt 2014; Veal 2001). Many scientists refer to the research of Bourdieu (1979; 1994) and refer on the one hand to his habitus theory, i.e. the principles or framework of lifestyles including their representations, and on the other hand to his theory of differentiation, i.e. the differentiation of the spaces of lifestyles, the differentiation between social space and symbolic space.

Lifestyle is often described as a (distinctive) mode of living which refers to a combination of attributes and characteristics and which might be recognizable, and which can be expressed on different levels such as the individual or global one (Jensen 2007). It might give the individual the possibility to build a social identity, and to express the individual's attitude towards life (Coolen and Ozaki 2004, 6-7). Lifestyle is influenced by and influences the environment. It is more than the differences in terms of income levels, housing, or consumption forms. It refers to activities, interests, opinions, values, attitudes and orientations, usually combined and related, and to social relations and representations (Pattaroni, Kaufmann and Thomas 2012, 1224). Cohesive with it is the characteristic set of shared patterns of distinctive behaviour based on the same interests and social conditions, which is formed through social interactions (Stebbins 1997, 350). Furthermore, it also includes the daily routine and activities, for example where to go and how to get there, and what to do, as well as how people experience and use places everyday (Boudon 1999, 154). Lifestyle is closely related to cultural amenities, because they are important as place-making attributes where creative people can express their lifestyle (Floeting 2007, 373; Silver, Clark and Yanez 2007, 3), and lifestyle amenities exist as well, connected to leisure opportunities and urban attraction that influence the lifestyle (Carlino and Saiz 2019, 371). Thus, it is the individual, the creative worker, who expresses the chosen lifestyle by choices, for example where and what to drink and eat, and how to participate culturally, also in the sense as a cultural producer. This is underlined by Fasche (2006, 155) who states that “[c]reative people are not only predisposing and defining lifestyle and identities; they are also transforming these lifestyles and identities into spatial practices – all underlying a claim of authenticity and distinction”, and by Coulangeon 2016, 3-4)

who looks on cultural participation. He says that *“par pratiques culturelles, on entend [...] l’ensemble des activités de consommation ou de participation liées à la vie intellectuelle et artistique, qui engagent des dispositions esthétiques et participent à la définition des styles de vie”*. Together with the focus on the group of creative people by Ley (2003, 2530) who found out that single occupations correspond to a certain lifestyle due to their position in social space, these considerations are interesting for our research.

There are several groups on their way in neighbourhoods. One group is the group of so-called hipsters⁵ that expresses their lifestyle in a way that is recognised by others and that is immanent to certain neighbourhoods with a cultural and creative environment and the creative milieu. The original term hipsters referred to the jazz scene and Black culture in American cities in the 1940s and 1950s to mark a difference to the mainstream that was dominated by white culture (Schiermer 2014, 169; Steinhoff 2021, 3). The term hipster became popular again at the end of the 1990s and is now a worldwide phenomenon with (partial) different characteristics in each place (for examples see Maly and Varis 2016, 644). The emergence of hipster culture is also linked to the renewal of art and thus the creative industries as well as art and culture (Hill 2015, 51; Semple 2023, 15). It is hard to define because it encompasses several characteristics. Hipsters are identifiable by a certain look and by their consumption practices, for example by “skinny jeans, beanies, old-school sneakers, vintage or thrift shop goods as well as frequenting independent local art galleries or fancy cafés“ (Roos 2017, 10), and by cultural trends such as “[v]intage style and retro design, urban gardening, and organic food, DIY entrepreneurship and cafés or vegan restaurants marked by a nostalgic industrial chic” (Steinhoff 2021, 1). Hence, the hipsters are still consumers but their attention is on specific niche products (Maly and Varis 2016, 646). They mostly prefer “former ‘popular’, working-class, ethnic or ‘exotic’ neighbourhoods in the major Western cities” (Schiermer 2014, 170); neighbourhoods where they are now seen in connection with gentrification processes (Stahl 2010, 326, Maly and Varis 2016, 649). In sum, scholars define hipsters in general as “typically middle-class, between 20 and 35 years old, live in urban areas, contribute to the gentrification of big western cities, and follow or are on top of the latest trends regarded as being outside the mainstream“ (Roos 2017, 9).

⁵ This description of hipster gives only an overview and the dimensions that are attached to this topic such as distinction or authenticity are not fully described.

As has been shown, there are many types of lifestyles and some can also be identified as groups. Lifestyle influences the things that are done and the activities that are undertaken, and therefore lifestyle also plays a role in this work. However, in addition to the new developments in recent years, there are factors that have remained the same and are still valid in the context of this topic, as will be seen.

1.1.3. Still Valid – Economical Characteristics Over Time

Although the new economy has influenced the world of work, some conditions are still important and valid. We will look on some of these conditions more closely, in particular networks and social interactions, as well as clusters and policies.

Networks and Social Interactions

Proximity to other companies still plays a role in the establishment of companies of the new economy for knowledge exchange and information transfer. This happens in networks which become an important component of the work life of creative workers to bring new input from different agents to the development of their work and to help them to get access to the market. The term network itself is ambiguous and used in different domains. Aspects of the term network include, amongst others, the identification of people's interrelations, if they are weak or strong, the number of contacts and the creation of sociograms in sociology, the production networks and cluster theory in economy and geography, and further the access to networks and forms of network externalities. Network externalities are "the degree to which an individual **agent** [emphasised in the text] (a person, corporation, organisation) derives benefits from being within a larger network, through access to information, new knowledge, contacts and feedback" (Hartley et al. 2013, 140). Hence, regarding these different aspects, scholars may distinguish network types such as knowledge, business, social or personal networks, socio-technical, technical, formal and informal networks, networks on global, national, regional and local scales, and emerging or established networks (Comunian 2011; Giuliani 2010; Shalley, Zhou and Oldham 2004; Snijders 2001).

Since the middle of the last century, with the emergence of information and computer technology, the so-called network society arose: a society that has no time and space limits and a global society

without boundaries, such as the society that Castells (2000) describes in his book *The Rise of the Network Society*. At the same time Boltanski and Chiapello (1999) developed the concept of the ‘*cité par projets*’ by observing the growing significance of networking in society’s life. Life in this new type of society is characterized by flexibility and continuously changing networks of people and ideas that merge into miscellaneous projects, meaning people do not work on only one project, but one project is followed by another. Significant for workers is that “present-day creative labor operates in a network society, where workers cannot be isolated from their peers” (Pang 2015, 51). Knowledge and information, as regarded in the case of creative workers in the new and cultural economy, flow on a local scale in a knowledge and social network, which includes networking as a success factor for knowledge transfer, spillover, and innovation. Important for the creative workers is that the knowledge sharing is, amongst others, based on trust, community commitment, the close social relationships, and reciprocity (Rese, Kopplin and Nielebock 2020, 2331-32). In connection with the new types of tasks, such as project-based work, and the potentially abrupt and rapid change of partners, the formation of networks is also made more difficult by the fact that there is not enough time to get to know each other and build trust for networking (Tremblay and Rousseau 2005, 323-324).

Linked with networks are social interactions, the ways in which individuals act with others and react to how others are acting during social encounters within their group or community or with other groups and communities, and in which individuals have their own position and role within their group and to others. This not only happens in cafés and bars etc., but also in public places that are accessible for all. “Social interactions [also] refer to particular forms of externalities, in which the actions of a reference group, [... such as] individual’s family, neighbours, friends or peers” (Scheinkman 2008, 629) affect individual’s preferences.

Clusters

The location in particular places close to industries of the same kind, mainly for economic and network reasons, leads to location in so-called ‘clusters’. Linked with the term ‘cluster’ is the economist Michael E. Porter. He characterizes a cluster as “a geographically proximate group of interconnected companies and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and complementarities” (Porter 1998a, 4). It indicates the existence of several companies in the same field, which plays a role for companies because “[w]hat happens *inside* [italic in text]

companies is important, but clusters reveal that the immediate business environments *outside* [italic in text] companies play a vital role as well” (Porter 1998b, 78). This theory was supported amongst others by policies and economists to boost industries and the development of areas to profit from the economic growth. Reasons for the prosperity are seen in a higher productivity, higher innovative ability, spillover effects, a positive effect on companies’ competitiveness, and a larger amount of foundations of enterprises (Haas and Neumair 2008, 97). However, there are also critics about Porter’s cluster theory, such as the critics about the inaccuracy and vagueness of the definition because the lines between clusters and non-clusters are not clear (see Braun and Schulz 2012, 163; Fornahl et al. 2015, 7; Kong 2012; Liefner and Schätzl 2012, 177). Cohesive with the (financial) support of cities and governments, the outcome of the support is still not clear and research results differ (Klotz 2014, 122).

Concerning cultural and creative industries, studies about them and their location are seen in the context of the existence of a creative cluster⁶. They cluster in cities because these places support the process of innovation and creation, encompasses variations, novelties and innovation by offering localization economies like positive externalities from co-locations with other companies and by offering urbanization economies like positive externalities from the location within the city (Lorenzen and Frederiksen 2008). Especially in studies about policies, clusters play an important role, because funding of these industries often refer to those located in clusters. Further significant for a creative cluster is the presence of a community of creative people to be “a catalysing place where people, relationships ideas and talents can spark each other” (Darchen and Tremblay 2015, 313) and tacit knowledge is developed, and to put forward an “ever-changing network of interpersonal exchanges” (p. 313). Creative clusters, according to Breznitz and Noonan (2014, 594), “have a consistently positive effect on local digital media economic activity, employment and innovation”. Creative clusters are researched for different fields, such as for video games (Pilon and Tremblay (2013) for Montreal and Los Angeles; Hasegawa et al. (2012) for Japan), or internet videos (Zabel et al. (2020) for Germany).

⁶ Besides the term ‘cultural cluster’, the terms ‘cultural/creative quarter/district’ are used as well. However, a change in use was determined in a systematic literature review by Chapain and Sagot-Duvauroux (2020). The authors give an overview about the usage, definitions, and differences of characteristics of these notations. See also section 1.1.1.2. for the different usages of the notion of culture and creativity.

Policies

The new economy and cultural and creative industries have gained attention in politics to foster (economic) development and competitiveness on the one hand and neighbourhood renewal on the other, which results in different policies. Policies themselves play a role in the evolution of places, because they “can initiate or change the characteristics of ongoing” activities (Wies 1994, 2). They are subject to governments, management of companies, or organisations. This makes the term ‘policy’ ambiguous and its meaning differs, which is underlined by Sondej (2016, 8) when he states that “[t]he concept of policy causes so much trouble because it is both vague and ubiquitous”. Each policy differs and has its characteristics as Wies (1994, 4) points out in his work when he for example classifies policies in categories such as the life-time of a policy (short, medium, and long-term). The correlation between policies and economics and/or urban development is subject of research, such as Ananian (2017) for Old Montreal and its former Faubourgs, and Indergaard (2009) for New York City.

This section focused on the development of the new economy and the changes that go along with it. The development of the cultural economy, whose importance has increased over time, is also linked to the development of the new economy. This increase in importance is connected with the recognition of culture and creativity as an economic factor. This has also influenced the development of the cultural and creative industries, as they gained attention, whereas in the political sphere they have become the focus of funding due to changes in policies. These points form the underlying background for this work. The cultural and creative industries, one of which is at the centre of this work, are coined by the people who work in them. For this reason, the creative class was presented in more detail, as this work focuses on one group of the creative class. The creative class is also associated with bohemians and the creative milieu that is defined by them. In the creative milieu, interactions take place and it is also a place to express lifestyle. Therefore, these points become central aspects of this work, as will be seen later.

These aspects have so far been described without embedding them in physical space. The following section will therefore take a closer look at the physical space, what goes on there and what the creative class can find there for their needs.

1.2. The New Economy, Culture and Neighbourhoods

Regarding the previous sections, it became apparent that the new economy, the cultural economy, the cultural and creative industries with its creative milieu and location in clusters do not exist in a vacuum, but they are connected with territories, with neighbourhoods. Thus, this connection will be outlined in section 1.2.1., complemented by a description of the characteristics of neighbourhoods as the place where humans (inter)act (1.2.2.). Connected with the neighbourhood are dynamics that occur in the neighbourhood (1.2.3.), and amenities (1.2.4.), place-making attributes, which play a role in the perception of the neighbourhood.

1.2.1. The New Economy, Culture and Territories

There is a link between the new economy, the culture and the territories, as Hutton (2009, 988) states:

New economy industries of the inner city operate not as autonomous entities within the urban economy but rather function as production ensembles intimately linked with (and complemented by) consumption sectors and industries; with the arts and the ‘urban aesthetic’; with the adaptive re-use of [...] principal historical building types of the industrial city; with processes of occupational change and social class reformation; and with the restructuring of neighbourhoods and housing markets.

Or, as Scott (1997, 325) simply notes: “place, culture, and economy are highly symbiotic with one another, and in modern capitalism this symbiosis is re-merging in powerful new forms as expressed in the cultural economics of certain key cities”.

New economy businesses will continue to need physical workspaces, and they are looking for suitable locations and environments with the preferred conditions in inner-city neighbourhoods to meet their requirements (Gottdiener 2000, 98; Törnqvist 2004, 228), and especially for cultural industries “a strong link to territory is verified” (Costa 2008, 186), that interacts with their location and their activities (p. 186). This take over is seen as a “reevaluation of the physical urban space” (own translation) (Thiel 2011, 117), as a renewal or restructuring of production spaces in industrial

districts or clusters (Krätke 2014, 62), although the role of the new type of industrial districts is discussed by some scientists (c.f. Harrison 1992, 479; Hutton 2008, 65). These spaces are often former industrial production sites, such as former factories or warehouses (Hutton 2008, 52) or commonly “aged buildings” (Jacobs [1961] 1992, 187ff).

New economy workers have got inspired by the spaces, but at the same time they have changed them by taking possession of the places (Hutton 2009, 987; Thiel 2011, 117). The outcome varies from place to place due to a different composition of industries and to a different initial position of the neighbourhood e.g. housing structure and labour market (Hutton 2009, 990; Thiel 2011, 119). There are new types and places of consumption and entertainment such as shopping and cultural districts, housing projects (Hutton 2008, 4; Krätke 2014, 82) and recreational facilities (Floeting 2007, 373). As a consequence, the new economy in neighbourhoods does not only have positive effects. The industries are situated in inner-city and former industrial districts. In many cases it effects the living and working population in these places, such as by social dislocation, an increasing socio-spatial inequality, growing polarisation, displacement as well as gentrification of e.g. artists, crafts industries, residents, marginal communities and companies of insufficient means (Evans 2009a, 1008; Hutton 2008, 4; Indergaard 2009, 1066; Krätke 2011a, 187). These effects themselves have hitherto “radical impacts on their urban landscapes and existing cultural production clusters and industrial heritage” (Evans 2009a, 1008), impacts that are “complex, mixed, variable” (Hutton 2009, 990).

Inner-city neighbourhoods and districts are the territories that were outlined so far. They are the territories with their spatial structure, the reconstruction and new urban forms, and the evolution that are responsible for the running processes and the future development cohesive with the cultural and creative industries. In the framework of this research, neighbourhoods are a central element and so they need to be examined more closely.

1.2.2. The Place Humans (Inter)act: Neighbourhoods

When talking about neighbourhoods, the meaning of the term seems self-evident. Yet it is quite ambiguous, and it is widely and variously used across many disciplines. In scientific disciplines, there is no consensus on its definition, which is underlined by Keller’s statement (1966, 67) that

“[a]t times it seems to refer to an area having certain physical properties, at times to a set of human activities or relationships, and then again to an area in which such activities or relationships may, but need not, occur”. Indeed, most definitions and descriptions of neighbourhoods include physical and social components, and imply spatial components such as spatial proximity and spatial boundaries, but differ in detail and focus (Schnur 2012, 453-454). From the perspective of urban design, planning and political economy, the spatial dimension of the concept of neighbourhood is based on the assumption that boundaries exist, which “differentiate[s] the neighborhood or local community, and the associations that define it, from its surroundings” (Chaskin 1997, 532). The neighbourhood is also treated as an administrative unit. Its boundaries are set, for example, by city planners and city administration. In contrast to the neighbourhood as a spatial unit, the neighbourhood as a social unit does not have clear-cut boundaries. It describes the social space, the space that gives opportunities for interaction, and the space for neighbourly relations. Additional specifications are the existence of formal and informal ties and the identification of dwellers as a group (Hamm 1973, 14-18; Jenks and Dempsey 2007, 157; Schwirian 1983, 83). Beyond this social component, the neighbourhood is also a symbolic unit with a recognized name that distinguishes further neighbourhoods by name, and a recognised identity that gives a meaning to the area (Chaskin 1997, 532). However, authors such as Webster (2003, 2611) approach the concept of neighbourhood from the less frequently seen economic aspects and place emphasis on the concept of neighbourhoods as “a nexus of contracts that assign rights over private and shared resources and over their various attributes”.

Intrinsically tied to the term neighbourhood are the terms neighbour and neighbouring as well as the term community. A neighbour is a person who lives next door or “a person who lives near another” (Cowan 2005, 256) and that has a “special role and relationship” (Keller 1966, 67). In her study, Rivlin (1987, 4-5) broadens the term neighbour: neighbours are not only those people living in close proximity to each other (such as next door or in the same block), but neighbours can also be seen as people who are present regularly in the neighbourhood and people from the neighbourhood who interact on a regular basis (such as shop-owners and mail carriers who live outside the neighbourhood) and gained the status of a neighbourhood dweller by their regular presence in the area. Neighbouring is “a set of socially defined activities” (Keller 1966, 67) that “involves positive and negative aspects of social interactions, expectations, and attachments of individuals with the people living around them and the place in which they live” (Skæveland 1997,

10). Actors in the neighbourhood might also use the term community instead of neighbourhood. The distinction of these two terms depends on factors such as whether communities are connected to a certain place or not (Jenks and Dempsey 2007, 157-158). Common characteristics of a community are “networks of interpersonal ties (outside of the household) which provide sociability and support to members, residence in a common locality, and solidarity sentiments and activities” (Wellmann and Leighton 1979, 365).

Regarding studies on neighbourhoods in Germany, it is noteworthy that the term ‘neighbourhood’ and its German translation *Nachbarschaft* have different connotations like they do in English (Hamm 1973, 12). The German term focuses more on social aspects that encompass what is referred to in English by the term ‘neighbouring’. Therefore, scholars in Germany commonly use the words *Quartier* or *Viertel* to describe the English term neighbourhood.

Besides the ambiguous usage of the term neighbourhood in science, in their research Chaskin (1997, 536-538) and Jenks and Dempsey (2007, 160-161) point to people's perceptions and indicate that people understand neighbourhood differently (depending on their status in society, gender or age and the networking possibilities) and that they might see the neighbourhood as levels, layers or as concentric rings with an inner ring which is seen as primarily consisting of home and immediate neighbours, followed by the neighbourhood that includes schools or shopping facilities. What they define as their close neighbourhood or the neighbourhood they live in depends on their perception of it and does not necessarily refer to, for example, the administrative boundaries. Rivlin (1987, 2) goes further and states that “[t]he criterion for a neighborhood is the acknowledgement by residents, merchants, and regular users of an area that a locality exists” and that this “presumes some agreement on boundaries and a name and the recognition of distinguishing characteristics of the setting”.

In addition to the space as it has just been described, it is what takes place in this space that characterises it and determines its development. This is why this is examined in more detail below.

1.2.3. What's Going On in the Neighbourhood: Dynamics

The location of industries of the cultural economy in inner-city neighbourhood changes these places by initiating dynamics. The term dynamics as the driving force of a system is used widely in several contexts. Dynamics are “characterised by change and activity; a situation in which movement is an essential element - refers to the operation or processes that cause change through movement” (Sayegh 1987, 155). The activities of the people who are in the place and the changes vary in speed and intensity, so that they can occur, for example, as a crisis, as an abrupt change or as a gradual change or transition – in short: continuities and changes. However, dynamics are usually connected with change and transformation, and hence with impact and effect. Dynamics are “[a]u sens large, désigne ce qui implique un mouvement, une transformation” (Grawitz 1983, 122). And differently said: “changes are the result of dynamics produced by the interaction between actors, interests and resources” (CITEGO 2024). Taking all these points together, dynamics can be understood as a process that is initiated by interactions and can lead to change and transformation. These changes and transformations can take place both rapidly and slowly.

Common terms in the literature and research are economic, spatial, social, cultural, population, environmental or urban dynamics. A clear separation of each dynamic and isolated research of one aspect are, due to its complexity, not always possible, and combinations of these aspects are carried out, such as socio-economic, socio-cultural, socio-spatial, or economic-political. These types of dynamics occur in urban development and can be examined under different perspectives which are linked together in many ways. Their perception and interpretation vary according to each observer, and judgment varies between positive and negative. Scholars' focus in research about neighbourhood effects so far is usually on the disadvantages dwellers in these areas have, in matters of poverty, education and health, or the effects of socially mixing housing effects to avoid segregation, respectively spatial disparities and what policies can do (Cheshire, Nathan and Overman 2014; van Ham 2013). In order to investigate what goes on in a neighbourhood, this dissertation focuses on the spatial, socio-economic and cultural dynamics that occur there, as well as the associated political ones. These dynamics are described in more detail below and related to this research.

Regarding the spatial dynamics, they are broadly researched and discussed in science under the

aspects of segregation, gentrification, and revitalisation (e.g. Fögele, Hofmann and Mehren 2016; Fouch 2012; Grodach, Foster and Murdoch III 2014; Häußermann 2007; Helbrecht 1996; Neumann 2005; Rosenthal and Ross 2015; Schwirian 1983; Shaw 2008; Smith 2002; Üblacker 2015). Segregation is the spatial separation of residential areas of social groups within a city, a process that can be voluntary or involuntary (Paesler 2008, 80), and gentrification is “the movement of affluent, usually young, middle-class residents into run-down inner-city areas”, with the effect “that these areas become socially, economically and environmentally upgraded” (Hall 2010, 119), by “changing the essential character and flavor of that neighborhood” (Kennedy and Leonard 2001, 6). Revitalisation is “a many-sided effort including revalorization, restoration, reconstruction, modernization, and actions aimed at revival of a building, district or a town devastated in various aspects, also economic and social” (Wilczkiewicz and Wilkosz-Mamcarczyk 2015, 72).

In the literature, there are different discussions regarding the cultural and creative industries in general and the creative class in particular to provoke gentrification or not (for example Grodach, Foster and Murdoch III 2018; Helbrecht 1996; Üblacker 2015). Markusen (2014, 570) writes that the creative industries do not necessarily provoke gentrification, a fact that is also stated by Grodach, Foster and Murdoch III (2014) in their research about the role of arts in neighbourhood change. A contrary point of view is Fasche’s (2006, 148) who sees creative people as the key agents of gentrification. Further spatial dynamics that might occur in the neighbourhood are governmental steps that might influence the transformation and the dynamics of a neighbourhood, such as investing into the beautifying of the neighbourhood with improvements in street lights, comfortable seating that invites to linger, modification in spatial design as better access to parks and public places and more visibility of places, and the transformation of buildings, such as the development of condominiums in former industrial buildings and the lower or higher commercial use of former apartments (Flükiger and Leuba 2015; Rantisi and Leslie 2010, 2838).

Socio-economic dynamics that might occur in the neighbourhood are financial effects on the neighbourhood, the dwellers, shop owners, workers, and individuals, and how they perceive them. In the context of neighbourhood changes these effects concern different parts of the neighbourhood and its dwellers and shop owners. In particular, economic changes might be expressed by a changing price level in housing and for leisure activities, obvious in new shops, cafés, bars and restaurants to adapt to the changing demand, or in new cultural offers, such as cultural events,

shows, sport and leisure facilities, e.g. gyms, indoor rock climbing centers or playing fields for basketball, and art galleries to attract new dwellers and workers in the neighbourhood, which is complemented with a different range of goods and different services. This adaptation is what Bereitschaft (2014, 166) describes as ‘creative gentrification’, the adaptation of shops to the personal or special needs of the creative workers. The neighbourhood gets more expensive and appears swanky and flashy, and it gets characterised by new trendy shops. The creative industries, as Solidoro (2009, 7) mentions, “do not drive economic growth directly, but rather facilitate the conditions whereby innovation drives an increase in knowledge creation, leading in turn to fresh economic development”.

Besides spatial and socio-economic dynamics, there are also cultural dynamics that might occur in the neighbourhood. Cultural dynamics deal with cultural infrastructures, such as museums, galleries, libraries and venues (Mouate 2016, 6), and with cultural participation, including creation, attendance and consumption, and also distribution, sharing and circulation (Poirier et al. 2012, 4-5). These dynamics also include cultural experience, which might be the experience of museums, festivals and shows attended (tangible), but it also includes intangible factors, such as gastronomy, and the atmosphere during the visits, and the atmosphere of places, factors that became more important during the last years (Richards and Wilson 2007, 8).

Another way of cultural participation is possible with the new technologies and the internet, such as the virtual attendance and visits to museums and libraries (Casemajor 2012, 82). Further, new technologies and the internet support the role of producers, for example by facilitating the production of cultural content and publishing (Casemajor 2012, 83-84; Poirier et al. 2012, 4-5). But there is more to cultural dynamics than that. To complete the picture, there are further meanings. Cultural dynamics also apply to values and belief systems, such as the relationship to nature or to others, aesthetics, personal perception and the dimension of time (Sojka and Tansuhaj 1995, 468), values, beliefs and behaviours that are shaped by culture and encompass the ways of life shared by social groups (Lapworth 2023, 84), and to language and communication (Sojka and Tansuhaj 1995, 461). These characteristics are institutionalized by the group, and there is an interchange of these (cultural) elements by acting with other groups (Merkel 2012b, 31).

The neighbourhood is the environment the cultural dynamics take place. This environment that offers the opportunity to participate in cultural events not only influences the way individuals feel,

but also backwards, the active participation in cultural events and the creation of cultural content influence the place in which they act. In the end, these opportunities are responsible for the (creative) image of the place and the formation of a creative milieu that offers the creative class, the bohemians and also the creative workers the opportunity to work in an ideal environment that supports their lifestyle. These lifestyles, connected with culture, are important to understand the way people (here creative workers) perceive themselves as creative persons and the neighbourhood in which they work and/or live.

Cultural dynamics differ in their results. They are present in different ways and represent a mixture and coexistence of cultural aspects in a neighbourhood (Craig and Douglas 2006, 333). Possible consequences in the neighbourhood are the introduction of new forms of working, for instance working outside the companies or in workspaces which change the way of communicating and the way of information exchange with colleagues and co-workers, or the introduction of different commercial establishments and leisure facilities due to changed buying and leisure habits. The established forms might interfuse with the new ones, adapt to the changes, or disappear. These cultural aspects are linked with individual's perceptions and individual's behaviour. Of interest, although not in the specific focus of this research, is the finding of Grodach, Foster and Murdoch III (2014, 23) that "with few exceptions (Noonan 2013; Silver & Miller 2013), researchers have not identified the generalized patterns of how the arts are associated with neighborhood change".

Political dynamics include the effects that government policies and administrative practices may have on the neighbourhood, e.g. in the form of revitalisation or improvements, and on businesses in the neighbourhood, e.g. through new regulations. These impacts can be a reason for the company's decision when choosing a new location.

In addition to the term 'dynamics', the terms 'impact' and 'effect' are also frequently used to describe what is going on in a neighbourhood. Although the three terms have slightly different meanings in terms of their intensity and their connection to change, they are often used as synonyms. The meaning of impact is "the influence of an action/phenomenon on something or someone", and the meaning of effect is "the consequence or result of an action or phenomenon" (Pediaa 2016). The research refers to the dynamics within a neighbourhood, but the terms 'impact' and 'effect' are also used in this research to illustrate a development and the consequences.

1.2.4. Quality of Life Attributes: Amenities

Amenities are part of the neighbourhood and influence the way people, who are acting in and using the neighbourhood, see and participate in the area, and in the end, how people perceive the neighbourhood. Amenities are usually discussed in the context of the economy and their role in economic development (McNulty, Jacobson and Penne 1985; Storper and Scott 2009). Thus, their definition differs. In their paper, Mulligan and Carruthers (2011) describe the characteristics of amenities: They “are key to understanding quality of life (QOL) because they are precisely what make some places attractive for living and working, especially relative to other places” (p. 107). They are “site- or regional-specific goods and services” (p. 108) that make “available an array of meaningful experiences to residents and visitors” (Silver, Clark and Graziul 2011, 229), and consequently to influence decisions.

Types named are, for example, natural and environmental amenities such as landscape (Schaeffer and Dissart 2018, 481-482), and human amenities such as culture (Mulligan and Carruthers 2011, 109). Mouate (2016, 3) lists other (partly overlapping) types, such as local, environmental, rural, recreational, urban, and cultural amenities. Examples for cultural amenities, depending on the authors, are “architecture and design, art galleries, and bars and restaurants” (Maitland 2007, 77), lakes, operas and bars (Mouate 2016, 3), as well as “museums, art galleries, concert halls and multifaceted entertainment districts” (Scott 2006a, 4). As we see, cultural amenities are close to cultural dynamics and their borders are blurred. Vanderleeuw and Sides (2016, 662) consider under quality of life amenities schools, parks, and recreation services and facilities (besides arts, culture and entertainment), and Ananian, Perras and Borde (2018, 535-536) under local amenities shops, e.g. for daily needs, social infrastructure and public services. Some scholars also list endogenous amenities that include safety and schools (Wolman et al. 2024, 426). Carlino and Saiz (2019, 371) introduce the term lifestyle amenities, which they define as “*perceptions* [italic in text] about leisure opportunities, urban attraction, local charm, and the lifestyle they evoke” that might influence consumer behavior. Urban amenities, as described by Sailer and Papenheim (2007, 144), encompass several characteristics, such as climate, structural-architectural characteristics as well as cultural institutions and events. Besides the mentioned amenities, other types of amenities arose with the emerging use of internet and Wireless Local Area Networks (WLAN): virtual and digital amenities, such as “internet access, social media, app-based services or QR codes” (Forum

D'Avignon Ruhr 2015, 62). Digital or technological amenities, such as internet access are nowadays important to receive for example messages and information, and internet access is also needed for example to post or to publish one's own content.

Considering this broad comprehension, Mouate (2016, 1), who researched the cultural amenity concept in the context of city attractiveness, defines an amenity as “a non-market service provided by the specific features pertaining to an area”; moreover, he states that an amenity is “a non-excludable and non-rivalrous service within this area” and that amenities are accessible to everyone in the area in which they operate, and that more than one person can use an amenity at the same time (Mouate 2016, 18). Mouate further defines cultural amenities as a “non-market service such as ambiance provided by assets geographically located” (p. 6).

There are several aspects that are important about amenities. There is a link between places and individuals, and the amenities as described above are place specific features, so that a person who wants to benefit from a certain amenity has to be located nearby (except for virtual amenities). Amenities address all different kinds of people but differently. Some amenities are place given, such as natural and environmental amenities, and attract people. Others, like cultural and urban amenities, attract people as well, but they are also attracted by the people who are already in these places (Holcombe 2011, 395-396). The term amenity is not related to a value: the same amenity can be valued positively or negatively, which depends on the perception of the human being. Furthermore, in the perception of each human, different amenities are more important or more preferred than others. Amenities that are seen negatively are called ‘disamenities’, such as noise and pollution (Mishan 1974, 337). Therefore, amenities affect the attractiveness of a place and finally affect the dynamics in the neighbourhood and its economic development, and the way it affects them depends on the types and number of them.

In addition to the amenities, this section described the places where the amenities are located and in which the creative class is active. As has been shown, these neighbourhoods are also linked to the dynamics that take place there. These points are the focus of this research, or more precisely, their relationship to each other and how they influence each other. However, none of this can take place without the people who are present in the neighbourhood. The cultural and creative industries and their workers, which have already been mentioned, are important here. It is the video game industry and its workers that are the focus of this study. It is therefore necessary to take a look at

them, which is done in the following section.

1.3. The Creative Industry of Video Games

The video game industry is one of the cultural and creative industries that emerged with the advent of information and communication technologies, which is based on knowledge and creativity and plays an important role in the creative economy because of its economic value. This is the industry whose workers are in the focus of this research. Thus, a closer look on the video game industry with its history and background is needed (1.3.1.) before describing the group of video game developers and their characteristics (1.3.2.). This section concludes with a description of the developers' behaviour and routine in the neighbourhood (1.3.3.).

1.3.1. The Video Game Industry

The video game industry is, compared to other creative industries such as film and music, a relatively young industry whose products “are based on the innovative fusion of digital technologies and cultural creativity; as a media industry they exploit global networks of production and distribution” (Kerr 2006, 1), and in which “the processes that are involved when producing a video game range from technical competences to artistic skills” (Zackariasson, Styhre and Wilson 2006, 419). Since its initial publicly available game *Computer Space* in 1971 and the first successful game *Pong* in 1972 by Atari (only playable in amusement halls in those days), the industry is constantly growing except for two major crises in 1977 and 1983 (Freyermuth 2015; Wolf 2008a; Wolf 2012). In 1977, the market collapsed as existing video game systems struggled to compete against the new home computers and handheld games, while a flood of new games came onto the market and consumers waited for better and cheaper products (Wolf 2012, 86). The following crisis in 1983, the “Great Crash of 1983” (Wolf 2012, 81), was caused by an oversaturation of the market with different game consoles and a flood of bad and cheap games that disappointed consumers (Wolf 2012, 4). Nevertheless, this period of crisis is marked by an increase of home computers and computer games and a multitude of (affordable) games. During the 1980s the market for home consoles expanded (Atari 2600 at the end of the 1970s by Atari, Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) in 1985/1986 and Gameboy in 1989/1990 by Nintendo, PlayStation in 1994 by Sony), and with the emergence of the Internet in the 1990s, online games and later games for mobiles and smart phones became more and more popular (Castendyk and Müller-

Lietzkow 2017, 4-12). In addition to the advent of the Internet, the 1990s are also marked by innovations in gaming technology that changed the video game industry. 3D technology and the option to store more data on media, such as CD or DVD, offered new possibilities in presenting video games, such as including cinematic presentations (Castendyk and Müller-Lietzkow 2017, 8). It was also the time when “designers, programmers and artists became involved in the process of game development” (O’Donnell 2012, 20).

Nowadays the video game industry is an important economic factor not only in Canada and Germany but worldwide (see table 1), with the most successful development studios located in the US (Kerr 2017, 50). Furthermore, the market continues to grow. Although the German market is bigger than the Canadian one, the number of full-time employees is contrary (see table 1.).

Table 1: The video game industry: Value and number of employees in 2022

	Canada	Germany	Worldwide
Value¹ (in US\$)	3.3 Billion	6.6 Billion	184.4 Billion
Employees²	32,400 (13,500 in Québec)	10,906	n. a.

Source: ¹Newzoo 2022 ; ²Statista 2022, data compiled by the author

Although the video game industry is covered in literature concerning topics such as its historical development, game genres and work (conditions) of the employees, the definition of it is difficult and depends on the working and scientific background (Newman and Simons 2004). Some researchers focus primarily on the term itself and start with the definition of game before passing on to the definition of video game, such as Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Smith and Tosca (2013), or Kerr (2006, 3) who prefers the term ‘digital games’ “to refer to the entire field” instead of the platform-specific terms like video games or computer games. This might reflect, according to her, the cultural background because “computer games are somewhat more popular in Europe and Southeast Asia than in the USA and Japan, where video games reign supreme” (p. 3). In the broadest possible sense, a definition of video game includes “any forms of computer-based entertainment software, either textual or image-based, using any electronic platform such as

personal computers or consoles and involving one or multiple players in a physical or networked environment” (Frasca 2001, 4). As the definitions demonstrate, the video game industry is not homogenous. In the literature, the video games are subdivided into segments, such as console/handheld, standard PC, MMOG (massively multiplayer online game) and mini games (online and mobile applications) (Kerr 2017, 38). Besides the different segments, the video games are divided into genres, such as Strategy, Sports, Beat’em ups, Role-playing games, Action adventure and Racing etc., but video games are also employed in education to support learning (Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Smith and Tosca 2013; Kerr 2006; Wolf 2008b).

These games are made by the video game industry workers which will be considered in more detail below.

1.3.2. Group of Video Game Industry Workers

Neighbourhood dynamics are initiated by the people who live and work there, and they are moreover part of them. In the research focus are the people who work in the video game industry, such as developers, designers, programmers, composers, and testers, which will be hereinafter referred to as video game developers, complemented by managers of the company. To link the neighbourhood dynamics with the group of video game developers, they should form a group that is recognizable in the neighbourhood as an acting group. The group building mechanism and the existence of a video game developer group were already examined by Grandadam, Cohendet and Simon (2013), who researched the way video game developers interact in spaces and places as well as their community, and by Weststar (2015), who examined video game developers from the perspective of a professional community. Weststar (2015) concluded that the video game developer group can be described as a “unique social group” (p. 1238) defined, among other things, by boundaries that distinguish it from other groups and that are recognised by its members. The group is characterised by a social identity created by their work, including codes. They are further characterised by social relations, that “refer[s] to a blurring of work and leisure whereby members are close friends with other members of their occupation” (p. 1241) and these social relations are “reinforced by proximity and work characteristics that constrain the times and modes of recreation” (p. 1242). The fact that the video game developers form a group is also examined by Roy-Valex

(2008, 210-211), underlying “*la très forte homogénéité de la population des créateurs de jeux vidéos*”, which is confirmed by socio-demographic characteristics such as age, family status or level of education. Roy-Valex goes on to say that the group of video game developers has evolved and that this group is characterised by their own “*« culture professionnelle » (une vision du métier), charriant des valeurs et des attitudes spécifiques, possédant ses propres codes ou conventions*” (p. 211). On this basis, the assumption is that this group is visible and recognizable.

The process of video game development is project-based, which means that at the end of the developing process is the finished product – the video game. These video games are developed by different teams⁷ that are responsible for single parts of the game (Weststar 2015, 1239), and within a team each team member has its function and task (Wimmer and Sitnikova 2012, 154). During the development process, in most of the companies the video game developers are able to schedule their work and work progress by themselves but deadlines for certain tasks are given and fixed. These deadlines also lead to so-called crunch time in the video game development process, hot phases in which there is a large, stressful workload and in which developers have to work a lot of overtime (Wimmer and Sitnikova 2012, 155). To succeed their work, the video game developers interact with each other, because they share their knowledge and learn from each other, for instance while working on different projects with new ‘colleagues’ in a team (Hoose 2016, 121). Networking is necessary because knowledge and information transfer brings new input to the game developer's work and is part of the ongoing innovation process, though it is not the single source to getting ideas, as Drake (2003) mentions and lists for example movies and television as sources (p. 519). Networking and its corresponding interactions are not only located inside the company or in virtual with experts but also outside the company in geographical proximity to the working place (Darchen and Tremblay 2015, 327; Cohendet, Llerena and Simon 2010, 165). Outside connections within video game developers and, as the case may be, between video game developers and further creative workers such as performers, dancers, actors, video and filmmakers, designers, musicians, among others, form a base to study the worker's perception of the neighbourhood.

In general, Heebels and van Aalst (2010) found out that the neighbourhood is attracting the workers

⁷ In the early years of video game development, until the late 1990s, most studios looked different from those of today. Video games were mostly developed in small studios by only a few developers who took on several roles in the process (O'Donnell 2012, 21; Jørgensen, Sandqvist and Sotamaa 2017, 466).

on different levels. On the one hand, the workers prefer cafés, restaurants, etc. for professional exchange with others and, on the other hand, they use these places for leisure. On the whole, cooperation and networking between different groups and specialists, even with members of competing companies who share the same interest for a given practice and communication with the outside world, are seen in the literature as a benefit, as a need to be competitive (Béraud, Castel and Cormerais 2012, 88; Cohendet, Llerena and Simon 2014, 132; Grandadam, Cohendet and Simon 2013, 1703; Plum and Hassink 2014 (for Hamburg); Solidoro 2009, 11), and as “an opportunity for inspiration to fuel innovation” (Ruggill et al. 2017, 2). This exchange happens, according to Cohendet and Simon (2018, 123), between members of the same profession that are part of a specific community of specialists,

where people communicate regularly with each other about their practice and trade knowledge through informal cognitive spaces with more or less open boundaries, in a not-so-organised fashion [...], members of a given community of specialists, even when they are assigned to a specific project, remain connected to their community on a daily basis. They continue to exchange and interact with the other members of the community and enrich the knowledge of their community by bringing the experience gained during the project they are assigned to.

In particular, as described by Ruggill et al. (2017, 2), the

game developers tend to be quite free in the ways they share corporate resources and information. They compare notes on how quality of life and team structure differ from company and company, and they exchange ideas and production techniques in ways that would almost certainly trouble their respective public relations and legal department counterparts.

This last point, the element about secrecy, and the associated consequences in video game companies, are also addressed by Weststar (2015, 1240). According to her, this cooperation in information sharing doesn't exist in companies. Alike “to both the competitive creative environment of the entertainment industries and the ICT [information and communication technology] field, intellectual property is closely guarded through non-disclosure and non-compete agreements” (p. 1240). In addition to this professional side, the video game industry also puts great

emphasis on “social life in order to increase job satisfaction, productivity, and cooperation” (Wimmer and Sitnikova 2012, 161). This social life usually takes place after work, which might be going out for a drink, a 5@7, going to parties, doing sports together, or team building events. Hence, the video game developers work in groups of their own company, or they are individuals, using the infrastructure outside for inspiration. It remains to be seen if this behaviour makes a difference how the video game developers use the places around and how they perceive neighbourhood dynamics. Included in this discourse is for what purpose the employees use the neighbourhood, for instance if they only use it for work purpose, because they have e.g. family and return home directly after work, if they also use it for leisure, because they go out with their colleagues and friends after work or use the sport facilities around, or if they live in the neighbourhood and/or use it for provision of goods and services. Also, the group of the video game developers is not the only one that participates in the neighbourhood and might initiate dynamics. Other groups acting in the neighbourhood might initiate dynamics as well and influence the behaviour of the video game developers. This fact must be considered in the analysis of the dynamics but against the background of the perception and interpretation of the people in the neighbourhood.

1.3.3. The Video Game Industry and its Neighbourhood

The neighbourhood where the companies are located is one place besides work where the video game developers interact, whether for work, leisure, housing, or provision of goods and services. This area is often in close proximity of the work place and it is the place where diverse services and infrastructures are offered for daily needs, the place of everyday life, and where networks and friendships can be formed (Schnur 2012, 453-456). As already outlined above, the ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ infrastructures described by Landry (2000, 133) are evident and shall exist in the neighbourhood, such as the system of “social networks, connections and human interactions” that support and stimulate the “flow of ideas between individuals and institutions” (p. 133) (‘soft’ infrastructures), and such as educational and research institutions, cultural facilities and social meeting locations (‘hard’ infrastructures). These should support the desirable networking with neighbouring companies as the industry evolves (Balland, De Vaan and Boschma 2013, 761).

The place where the video game industry is located does not necessarily remain the same as it was at the beginning. Groups change their place, in a narrower or broader sense: “The interrelationships between people and places can take multiple forms, experienced in widely varying ways by different social groups—indicating the complexity and diversity of people-place relations” (Erfani 2022, 452). These interactions are usually initiated by the perception and interpretation of the individual members and can be of a spatial, socio-economic, cultural, and political nature, for example. Spatial interactions understood as a dynamic flow process from one location to another cover a wide range of movements such as ways to work, the usage of public facilities, the transmission of information or capital and the market places of retailing activities (McColl 2005, 857). Economic activity that affects and is shaped by social processes are socio-economic interactions, such as coalition building or trade economies (Gabler-Wirtschaftslexikon 2014). Cultural interactions are a complex and interactive process between human beings, including networks based on the cultural exchange and the exchange of knowledge, ideas and practices in different forms (Arlt 2009, 145), and political interactions are understood as the “communication between politicians and citizens” (Clarke et al. 2017, 15).

Bereitschaft (2014) characterizes the consequences for places where a high concentration of creative workers is involved in “creative, cultural or knowledge-intensive occupations” (p. 160), including the video game industry. He determines as consequences the attraction of amenities such as independent restaurants, street cafés and retail shops, and the establishment of “new spaces of consumption as well as common ground for networking and other social interactions – the supposed catalysts of innovation and economic growth” (p. 161). The habit to interact and to work outside the company contributes to these dynamics. In a daily routine, the video game developers use the infrastructure, the shops and places around. For them, places and spaces in the neighbourhood they use frequently and for different reasons are already their so-called ‘third place’ (in contrast to ‘first place’ home and ‘second place’ work). In 1989, the sociologist Ray Oldenburg described in his book *The Great Good Place*, the place or space in which individuals meet to relax and have discussions about things of their daily life such as their neighbourhood, a place that provides a kind of informal public life. It is a ‘sublime habitat’ for informal social spaces, and “third places may act as social and intellectual crucibles where ideas, knowledge and technical expertise are circulated” (Bereitschaft 2017, 206). Examples of third places are bars, taverns, pubs, coffee houses, cafés, barber shops and beauty parlours, bookshops, libraries, and lounges (Bereitschaft

2014, 165). And authors as Moriset (2017, 4) include co-working spaces as well because they offer the opportunity to socialise, engage in a potentially synergetic exchange of information and promote collaboration between people working in different fields (Harrington 2011, 264). Meeting, working, learning, getting ideas in cafés and restaurants and other public meeting places is often part of the lifestyle of creative workers. Rests and breaks during the working day to get new inspirations become part of their everyday life and some companies already respond to this way of working by offering e.g. coffee lounges and gyms. Work may be done during evening and weekends. In any case, this behavior might lead to the effect that the boundaries between work and leisure dissolve (Schlickewei, Schröter and Waldmüller 2011, 33).

The existence of third places and the access to these places are important for creative workers. Central for the creative workers is further the walkability of the area, the bike-friendly access and good access by public transport such as bus and subway, so that they can reach every location within a short walk or bike-ride and that they have good accessibility to their place of residence. The neighborhood they favor must have an urban feeling and it must have an identity and a sense of place (Bereitschaft 2017, 206) in order to have the environment they need. The facts that are important for creative industries in their neighbourhood are also well researched by P. S. Cohendet, Llerena and Simon 2010. Along with the companies'

ability to recombine bits of this creative slack, a firm's creative potential relies on the successful integration of environmental aspects and participation in the creative process outside the firm. « Diversity and proximity » are key elements for the interaction of local innovative firms while « spaces and places » provide areas for communities to meet and share knowledge, creating « local buzzes », facilitating « projects and events » and thereby translating and hybridizing knowledge from enactment and performance on « global pipelines ». (p. 140-141)

The authors see in this process not only “the transitions of knowledge throughout these communities” but the contribution “to a more comprehensive understanding of local innovation processes” (p. 141).

In the process of responding to place, groups and individuals form places and spaces, and build their own sense of identity related to place and space. The correlation of the neighbourhood to the

people living and working there, and its form and influence are manifold, and differs in effects. As Lippard (1997, 9) argues, “our personal relationships to history and place form us, as individuals and groups, and in reciprocal ways we form them”. This also corresponds to companies in the neighbourhood, and so it is not only the neighbourhood, the location whose development is influenced by the presence of companies they attracted “but locations and firms shape each other in the process” (Cano-Kollmann et al. 2016, 260).

The last section of this chapter took a look at the cultural and creative industry that is at the centre of this work, the video game industry and its workers. This look also included the neighbourhood in which this industry is located.

These points, together with the parts described in the previous sections, such as the creative milieu, the lifestyle, the social interactions and, above all, the dynamics, form the basis of this research. The following chapter, “Research Objectives, Conceptual Framework and Methodological Approach”, describes the research, its aims and implementation.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH OBJECTIVES, CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

As has become clear in the literature review, places, groups, individuals, and companies influence each other and can shape each other. This is an ongoing process. The video game industry, which is the focus of this study, is also located in areas where this process is taking place. The video game industry can therefore become part of this process or contributes to it. So far, this relationship has not been analysed. This is the aim of this research. More specifically, it is to identify and understand the different dynamics that occur between video game industry workers and the company's neighbourhood. To achieve this goal, research questions and hypotheses were formulated, which are presented in the first part of this section (2.1.), followed by the conceptual and operational frameworks that form the basis for the research (2.2.). The way this research is conducted is explained in the final part of this chapter with a section about methodology (2.3.).

2.1. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The aims of this research, building on the literature review presented in chapter 1, are to determine and understand the dynamics that occur between the video game industry workers and the company's neighbourhood in the areas of Mile End in Montreal and Flingern-Nord in Düsseldorf over the past 25 years, the time when Ubisoft settled in both neighbourhoods. More specifically, we want to consider how the workers perceive the occurring dynamics and the neighbourhood associated.

The general questions guiding this research are the following:

1. What are and how can we understand the relationships between the video game industry and a specific neighbourhood, in particular the relationship between the video game industry workers and the neighbourhood around their workspace?
2. What is the role of cultural dynamics in the relation of the video game industry workers and the neighbourhood, in particular, what is the role of cultural practices in the neighbourhood for creative workers?

To answer this, the following hypothesis were derived:

- I. The creative class of the video game industry workers may have an impact, various in nature and scope, on the environment of the video game industries' neighbourhood, *and vice versa*.
- II. The dynamics involved are detectable by means of cultural, spatial, socio-economic and political ones.
- III. The cultural dynamics and more specifically the cultural lifestyle are important to understand the relationships between the video game workers and the neighbourhood, how they perceive themselves as creative acting individuals and in relation to the neighbourhood.
- IV. The dynamics involve both continuities and changes through time.

Therefore, our aim is to identify the cultural, spatial, socio-economic and political relevance of the video game industry and its workers in their locale, also including the bidirectional effects that originate from the neighbourhood to the video game developers by interviewing individuals involved in the dynamics to detect their perception and interpretation of the neighbourhood cohesive with their interaction within it. This is complemented by cultural actors as neighbourhood participants, who work within the neighbourhood to detect their perception and interpretation of the dynamics in relation to the video game industry workers. Figure 1 summarizes the research objectives. The cultural dynamics are marked in red because they serve as the heuristic guideline.

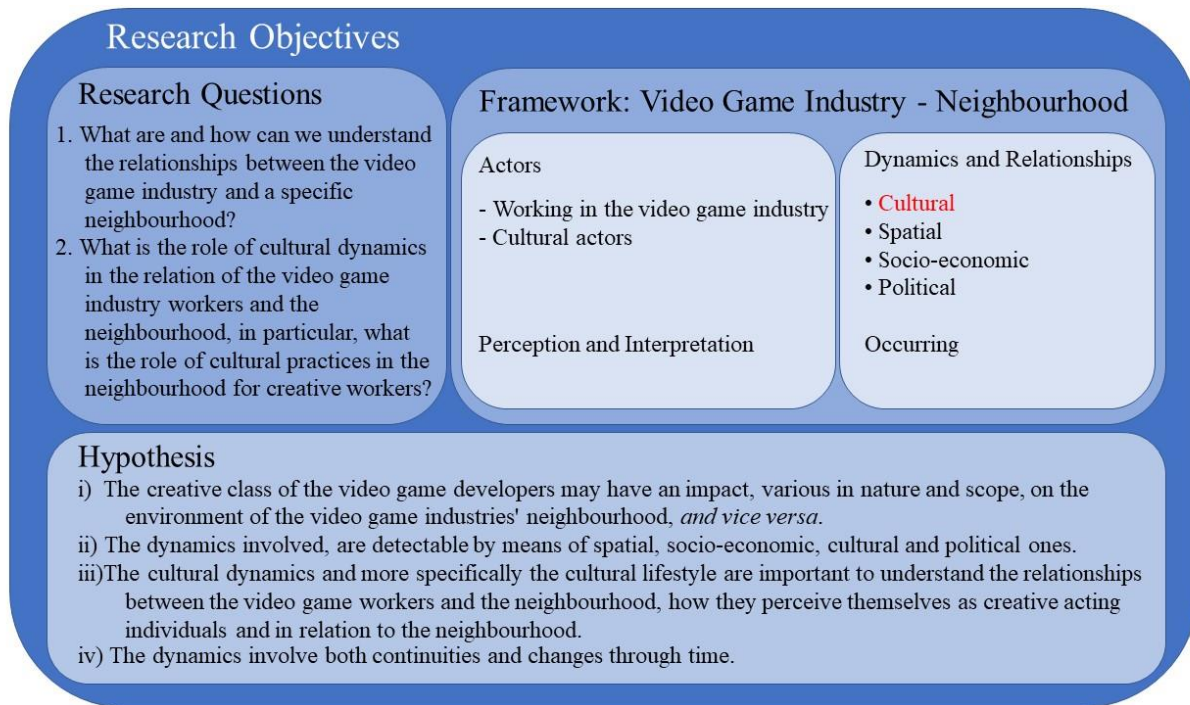


Figure 1: Research summary
Source: Author

2.2. Conceptual and Operational Frameworks

The following section first describes the conceptual framework with its concepts and sub-concepts, which form the basis of this work, followed by a description of their dimensions and characteristics in the operational framework.

2.2.1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 2 sets the stage for the conceptual framework. This figure shows that this research is based on several concepts, of which the concept of cultural and creative industries (indicated as video game industry), of neighbourhood, of spatial, socio-economic, cultural and political dynamics (combined for spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics under dynamics), taking the cultural dynamics as the heuristic guideline (marked in red), and the notions of perception and interpretation (considered in section 2.3.1. when the interviews to be realized are regarded) are considered as main concepts. To complement the framework, four sub-concepts are introduced: the creative class (indicated with its members, the (video game) developers and managers), lifestyle, which is regarded in its cultural context and hence with the cultural dynamics, amenities, and the creative milieu with social interactions and networks.

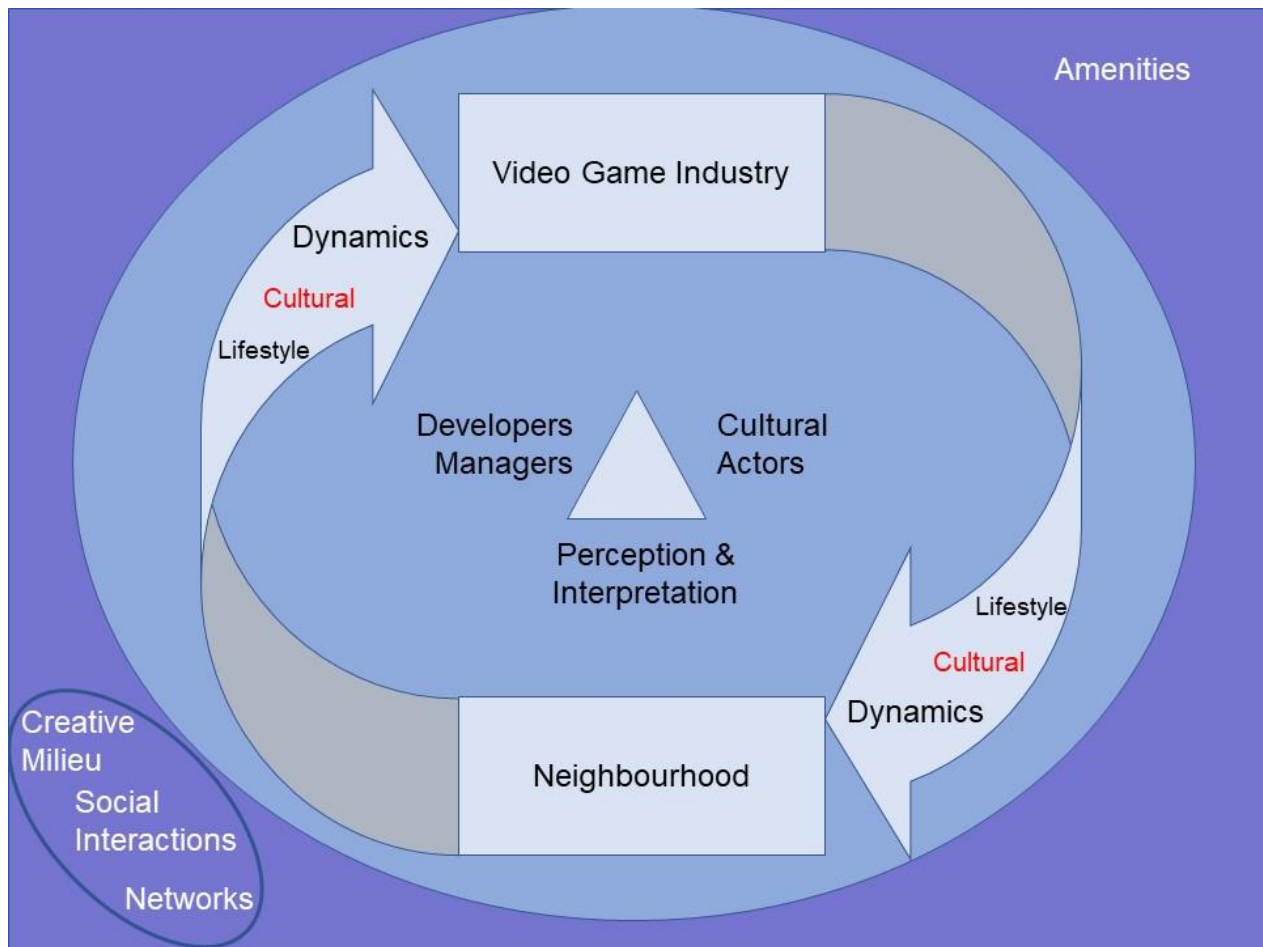


Figure 2: Conceptual framework

Source: Author

The neighbourhood is the researched area where the video game industry, the researched creative industry, settles and both are connected by ongoing dynamics which originate from the video game industry to the neighbourhood, and which originate from the neighbourhood to the video game industry (bidirectional effect). These concepts cannot be considered without taking the sub-concepts into account. The neighbourhood is characterized by amenities, and it is the place where the members of the creative class, of which the video game developers are a part of, interact, where they can develop and express their lifestyle, and where they create the creative milieu characterized by social interactions and networking, which give the neighbourhood its image. At its core are the video game industry workers and cultural actors as neighbourhood participants and their perception and interpretation of the neighbourhood and the occurring dynamics there, of which the cultural actors might be a part as well.

2.2.1.1. Concepts

Cultural and Creative Industries

As we have seen in chapter 1, the cultural and creative industries gained attention in politics when in 1998 UK's Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published the *Creative Industries Mapping Document*. It includes thirteen sectors (advertising, architecture, art & antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film & video, interactive leisure software (electronic games), music, performing arts, publishing, software & computer services, and television & radio) (DCMS 2001, 5) that are based on "creativity, skills and talent" (p. 5) and that stand for job creation, urban regeneration and economic growth. Although criticized (Roodhouse 2008, 17), this document pushed the discussion about cultural and creative industries and their policies worldwide (Higgs and Cunningham 2008). The cultural and creative industries are in the focus of this research, as well as the relation to the neighbourhood. We consider the creative industry of video games because it is one of the new industries that arose with the emerging information and communication technologies against the background of the new economy era, because it is based on knowledge and (cultural) creativity, and because of its combination of arts and technologies (Breznitz and Noonan 2014, 597; Hesmondhalgh 2013, 358; Kerr 2006, 1) (see table 2).

Table 2: Notion considered regarding the 'Cultural and Creative Industries'

	Notion
Cultural and Creative Industries	Video Game Industry

Source: Author

Neighbourhood

The neighbourhood is the researched area where the video game developers interact and where the dynamics occur. Definitions and descriptions of neighbourhood vary (Keller 1966, 67), so the neighbourhood might be seen as the space where individual activities and relationships may occur or the set of it (Schnur 2012, 453-454). The neighbourhood might represent a space, which differs from its surroundings by for example different offers, possibilities to interact and participate, which

leads to a different perception of the neighbourhood unit by the individuals (Hamm 1973, 14-18; Jenks and Dempsey 2007, 157; Schwirian 1983, 83).

Altogether, these facts influence the perception and interpretation of the people connected to the neighbourhood, how they define and what they understand by their neighbourhood (Chaskin 1997, 536-538; Jenks and Dempsey 2007, 160-161). The concept of neighbourhood is examined regarding five different units that cover the possibilities of different perceptions (see table 3): as a social unit where place related activities and relationships take place, as a physical unit, a block with streets and houses, as a spatial unit where proximity is an important factor (Schnur 2012, 453-454), as a symbolic unit with a recognised name and identity (Chaskin 1997, 532), and as an administrative unit with clear (though often artificial) set boundaries (Chaskin 1997, 532).

Table 3: Conceptual dimensions of ‘Neighbourhood’

	Conceptual Dimensions
Neighbourhood	Social unit
	Physical unit
	Spatial unit
	Symbolic unit
	Administrative unit

Source: Author

Dynamics

The neighbourhood and the video game industry are interlinked by the dynamics that occur in the neighbourhood. The thesis focus is on the perception and interpretation of people connected to the neighbourhood regarding the occurring dynamics related to the video game developers. Dynamics can be regarded as a process that is initiated by interactions and can lead to changes and transformations. These changes and transformations can take place at different speeds, i.e. they can be both fast and slow. Examining a single dynamic is, due to its complexity, not always possible. Dynamics are manifold and can be researched under different aspects and in different combinations, such as economic, cultural, socio-cultural or socio-spatial. They reflect processes

that are initiated by interactions and that can lead to change and transformation with different effects in different time frames (Grawitz 1983, 122; Sayegh 1987, 155; Shaw 2008). Dynamics can be understood as a process that is initiated by interactions and can lead to changes and transformations. These can take place both rapidly and gradually.

Common research topics about neighbourhood dynamics focus on negative effects such as disadvantages for its dwellers, segregation and gentrification (Fouch 2012; Shaw 2008; Smith 2002), which are not in the focus of this research. The focus is on cultural, spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics that might occur in the neighbourhood (see table 4).

Table 4: Conceptual dimensions of ‘Dynamics’

	Conceptual Dimensions
Dynamics	Cultural
	Spatial
	Socio-Economic
	Political

Source: Author

To research the dynamics, the cultural dynamics are taken as the heuristic guideline. Cultural dynamics regarded are cultural experience, which is amongst others the experience while attending or visiting cultural activities, also including the atmosphere of places and activities. Furthermore, cultural participation is considered as well. It includes creation, attendance and consumption, as well as distribution, sharing and circulation (Poirier et al. 2012, 4-5) linked with the environment that offers the opportunity to participate in cultural events. This not only influences the way individuals feel, but also backwards, the active participation in cultural events and the creation of cultural content influence the place in which they act (with the focus on its extent and contribution). Further cultural dynamics considered are cultural infrastructures that might be used by the creative workers and can be found in the neighbourhood’s environment, in a cultural environment which is characterized as providing a creative atmosphere for social interactions (Sacchetti, Sacchetti and

Sugden 2009, 664), and which is characterized as not stable, as renewing itself and to which lifestyles (see below) evolve over time (by changing in different degrees) (Veal 2001, 363).

Besides the cultural dynamics, further dynamics are considered in this research. Spatial dynamics focus on spatial design and housing/commerce (Rantisi and Leslie 2010), because they offer an environment that might be important for the neighbourhood's attractiveness to (cultural) participation in the neighbourhood and its experience. Moreover, socio-economic dynamics such as sport and leisure facilities, product ranges in shops, facilities of daily needs (Bereitschaft 2014; Solidoro 2009) are considered as well, because they offer different facilities for the creative workers to use on the one hand, and on the other hand they serve the daily needs close to the workplace and the places for cultural participation. The last considered dynamics are political ones such as policies at different levels and administrative practices in order to contextualize the other dynamics and understand the different factors associated with the presence of video game workers; they will only be used for certain types of people interviewed (managers and cultural actors dealing in the neighbourhood)⁸.

2.2.1.2. Sub-Concepts

Creative Class

Connected with the new economy and the cultural and creative industries is the theory of the creative class, which was pushed by Richard Florida in 2002. The creative class, as described by Florida (2002b, 8), is a class of workers whose job it is to create important new forms, and a class of which the so-called creative core generates knowledge and acts innovatively (p. 69). This theory gained attention not only in science but also in politics due to its postulated correlation between the creative class and economic growth, a fact that is discussed controversially and broadly (e.g. Hartley 2007; Krätke 2011b; Markusen 2006; Shearmur 2010). Nonetheless, the creative class theory emphasizes the importance of the interrelation between workers and their location as places of life and work. Therefore, the video game developers and managers as part of the creative core are included (see table 5).

⁸ See section 2.3.1. 'Interviews' for further explanation.

Table 5: Notions of ‘Creative Class’

	Notions
Creative Class	Video game developers Managers

Source: Author

Lifestyle

Another concept included in this research is the concept of lifestyle, a (distinctive) mode of living which refers to a combination of attributes and characteristics (Jensen 2007). Lifestyles can be transformed into spatial practices, still making a claim to authenticity (Fasche 2006, 155). So, the creative workers express their chosen lifestyle by choices for example where and what to drink and eat and how to participate culturally, and places to express it are inner city neighbourhoods (Fasche 2006, 148). Within this thesis, lifestyle is regarded in a cultural context at the individual level, the video game industry worker, specified by cultural practices which include consumption and participation related to artistic and intellectual life (Coulangeon 2016, 3-4) and tastes (Katz-Gerro 2017, 409) (see table 6).

Table 6: Conceptual dimension of ‘Lifestyle’

	Conceptual Dimension
Lifestyle	Cultural

Source: Author

Particularly basic for this thesis is that lifestyles, connected to culture, are important to understand the way people - the creative workers of the video game industry - perceive themselves as creative persons, build their own identity as creative individuals, not only at work but also outside the working environment, and the way they perceive others and the neighbourhood in which they work and/or live (see figure 3).

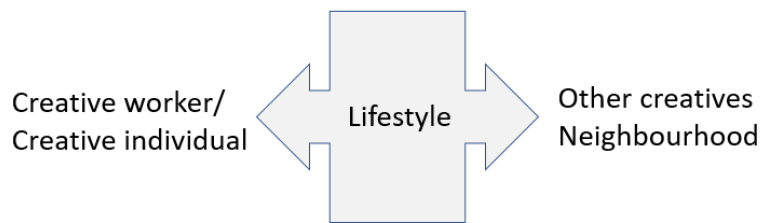


Figure 3: Lifestyle and its connection between the creative worker and others

Source: Author

Creative Milieu, Social Interactions and Networks

The creative milieu is the place where the creative class and bohemians act, and the place where the economic development takes place. The concept of the creative milieu with social interactions and networks is included in this research because it is the environment the video game developers interact, and it is the way they act in the neighbourhood. The creative milieu is seen by Landry (2000, 133) as the place that provides the infrastructure to let ideas and knowledge flow, which underlines its importance for the creative class. It is marked by several characteristics such as close proximity to its individuals or offering of an ideal environment to work in (Merkel 2012a, 690-698). It is the place where social interactions and social practices occur such as the concentration and mixing of people in special locations or networking, including the sharing of resources (Merkel 2012b, 66), and it describes the way people interact with and react to each other. This can be within the group of people working or living in a certain place but also between different groups. Networks also play a role in the way of working in the new economy to exchange knowledge and get information, which might take place for example in social networks, the representations of relations between actors such as individuals or companies (Snijders 2001, 361) through which knowledge and information flow (including online at a local level or online at a global level over long distances). Knowledge transfer might further take place in a knowledge network, a “network that links firms through the transfer of innovation-related knowledge, aimed at the solution of complex technical problems” (Giuliani 2010, 265). Hence, for this research, the look is on the social interactions and networks in the creative milieu because this is seen as a way the creative workers act in the creative milieu of a neighbourhood (see table 7).

Table 7: Conceptual dimensions of the ‘Creative Milieu’

	Conceptual Dimensions
Creative Milieu	Social interactions
	Networking

Source: Author

Amenities

“Amenities are site- or region-specific goods and services that make some locations particularly attractive for living and working” (Mulligan and Carruthers 2011, 108). Amenities are part of the neighbourhood and are seen as important for the way people perceive the neighbourhood. Further, they are important as place-making attributes where creative people can express their lifestyle (Floeting 2007, 373; Silver, Clark and Yanez 2007, 3). Therefore, amenities are included as a concept. Amenities considered in the research are those related to neighbourhoods and that are part of the (daily) life of the people acting in the neighbourhood because it is a link between the creative worker and the neighbourhood. In particular, the focus is on cultural amenities, such as museums, operas, bars, and entertainment districts, technological amenities, such as (free) internet access to receive for example messages and information or post and publish (cultural) content, local amenities such as schools, banks, and doctors, and recreational amenities such as places for indoor and outdoor activities (see table 8).

Table 8: Conceptual dimensions of ‘Amenities’

	Conceptual Dimensions
Amenities	Cultural
	Technological
	Local
	Recreational

Source: Author

2.2.2. Operational Framework

The above-mentioned concepts are grouped into the following blocks: (1) ‘Lifestyle, Dynamics, and Amenities’, (2) ‘Creative Milieu, Networks and Social Interactions’ and (3) ‘Connection to the neighbourhood and Neighbourhood’.⁹

Block 1: ‘Lifestyle, Dynamics, and Amenities’

The first dynamic to be considered in the operational framework is the cultural one, as it serves as a heuristic guideline in this study. This is so because the cultural dynamics establish a link between the individual (the creative worker) and the collective (other people and the neighbourhood). This connection is considered important for the cultural and creative industries as they have an impact on the individual and thus on the (artistic) work. Furthermore, it is also a link to other dynamics. The focus of the cultural dynamics is on cultural lifestyle with cultural practices and tastes e. g. in music, arts, or food. Further dimensions are cultural participation which includes amongst others cultural practices, creation, attendance, and consumption, and also distribution, sharing and circulation of cultural content. Besides cultural participation, the focus is on cultural experience of, for example, the feeling and atmosphere while attending a festival or while doing cultural activities. The cultural dynamics also include the cultural infrastructures and amenities, such as museums, libraries, and restaurants, which might be used by the creative workers in the neighbourhood.

Besides the cultural dynamics, there are also further dynamics that play a role. The spatial dynamics considered are the spatial design and leisure facilities, as well as the changes in use in relation to residential and commercial areas, which can have an impact on the interviewees’ perception of the neighbourhood depending on the practices put forward. Spatial design and leisure facilities are related to cultural dynamics in that they are places and spaces where cultural dynamics can take place, and which can promote cultural practices or other activities. This is associated with technological amenities, as they enable people to receive and write messages or publish content in places that are used for leisure activities, for example. The socio-economic dynamics considered are related to the above-mentioned dynamics in many ways. For example, sports and leisure dynamics can influence participation and the amount of time workers spend in the neighbourhood

⁹ The whole questionnaire contains four blocks. The last block is ‘Complemented Data’ containing personal data.

using leisure facilities. Furthermore, these dynamics in the product range of shops and local facilities can appeal to people, so it can have a positive impact on neighbourhood attendance. Political dynamics focus on government/public policies at all levels, in particular on spatial and cultural policies, and on administrative practices, to put the political dynamics into context and find out about the role of politics in the neighbourhood for video game industry managers and cultural actors (see table 9).

Table 9: Conceptional and operational dimensions of ‘Dynamics’

	Conceptional Dimensions	Operational Dimensions (Examples)	
Dynamics	Cultural	Cultural Lifestyle	Practices Tastes (music, arts, food, others)
		Cultural participation and experience	Active/passive participation in cultural events, possibilities of participation, creation, attendance and consumption, sharing and circulation, festivals, production of cultural content and publication, others
		Cultural infrastructures Cultural amenities	Museums, art galleries, libraries, cinemas, venues, book shops, architecture and design, bars, restaurants, multifaceted entertainment districts, temporary spaces, others

	Conceptional Dimensions	Operational Dimensions (Examples)	
Dynamics	Spatial	Spatial design Recreational amenities Technological amenities	Parks and public places, development of areas Places for outdoor activities, e.g. parks, amusement places, golf course, others Places for indoor activities, e.g. spas, others Internet access in the area, others
		Housing/commerce	Changes in the use of buildings/ parts of buildings, for example transformation of business premises into apartments
	Socio-economic	Sport and leisure	Different offers for sports and leisure facilities
		Housing/commercial rent and value	Shifts in rents, buying price or value, others
		Product range	Products in shops – adaptation to demand e. g. by widening, reducing or changes, trendy products
		Local amenities Facilities Services	Schools, banks, grocery stores, doctors, leisure activities, gas stations, others, access to public transport
	Political	Government/public policies at different levels regarding the neighbourhood	Spatial policies on improvements such as better (public) transport accessibility and cultural policies such as promotion of cultural institutions (theatres, museums, libraries, others), of cultural events (shows, venues, others) and of artists, others

		Administrative practices and government/public policies at different levels regarding the video game industry only	Economic policies in terms of subsidies, consultation and assistance, for example during the establishment, others
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Source: Author

Block 2: ‘Creative Milieu, Social Interactions and Networks’

This block focuses on the creative milieu, in particular on the social interactions and networks that might occur in the creative milieu. It shall reflect the social interactions of the video game developers and the way and purpose of their networking and how these social interactions are perceived by the cultural actors (see table 10).

Table 10: Conceptual and operational dimensions of ‘Creative Milieu’

	Conceptional Dimensions	Operational Dimensions (Examples)
Creative Milieu	Social Interactions	Interrelation, mixing of people, socialising, others
		Representations of relations, others
		Behaviours in groups and with other groups, others
	Networking	Acquiring and exchanging knowledge, information transfer, sharing of resources, others
		Frequency of contacts, access, participation, others

Source: Author

Block 3: ‘Connection to the Neighbourhood and Neighbourhood’

Block 3 contains the information about the relation to the neighbourhood of all interviewees, the neighbourhood as the place to work and/or live and the place where the cultural participation and social interactions take place. The part concerning the concepts is the perception of the neighbourhood as a social, physical, spatial, symbolic, or administrative unit, and the operational dimensions show how the neighbourhood unit might be perceived by the creative workers. The relation to the neighbourhood as a social unit looks in particular to the place-related activities,

relationships, networks etc. that take place, such as kindergarten. These depicted activities, relationships and networks are not related to a creative milieu and might take place independently of them. However, they can have an important influence in private life, such as a network set up with other parents. The relation as a physical unit looks at the perception of the streets and houses, and the spatial unit at the proximity to other places and the perception of where the neighbourhood borders are. The relation as a symbolic unit covers recognition of an identity in the area. Different from the perception of where the borders of a neighbourhood are, the administrative unit covers if there is an awareness of the administrative set boundaries and their possible importance (see table 11).

Table 11: Conceptual and operational dimensions of ‘Neighbourhood’

	Conceptional Dimensions	Operational Dimensions (Examples)
Neighbourhood	Social unit	Place-related activities, relationships, networks, others
	Physical unit	Streets, houses, others
	Spatial unit	Proximity, boundaries, distance to other places
	Symbolic unit	Name, identity, others
	Administrative unit	Urban planning, others

Source: Author

Figure 4 shows the relation of these three blocks. The video game developers and the cultural actors are in the middle of this figure because those are the people whose perception is depicted in the blocks.

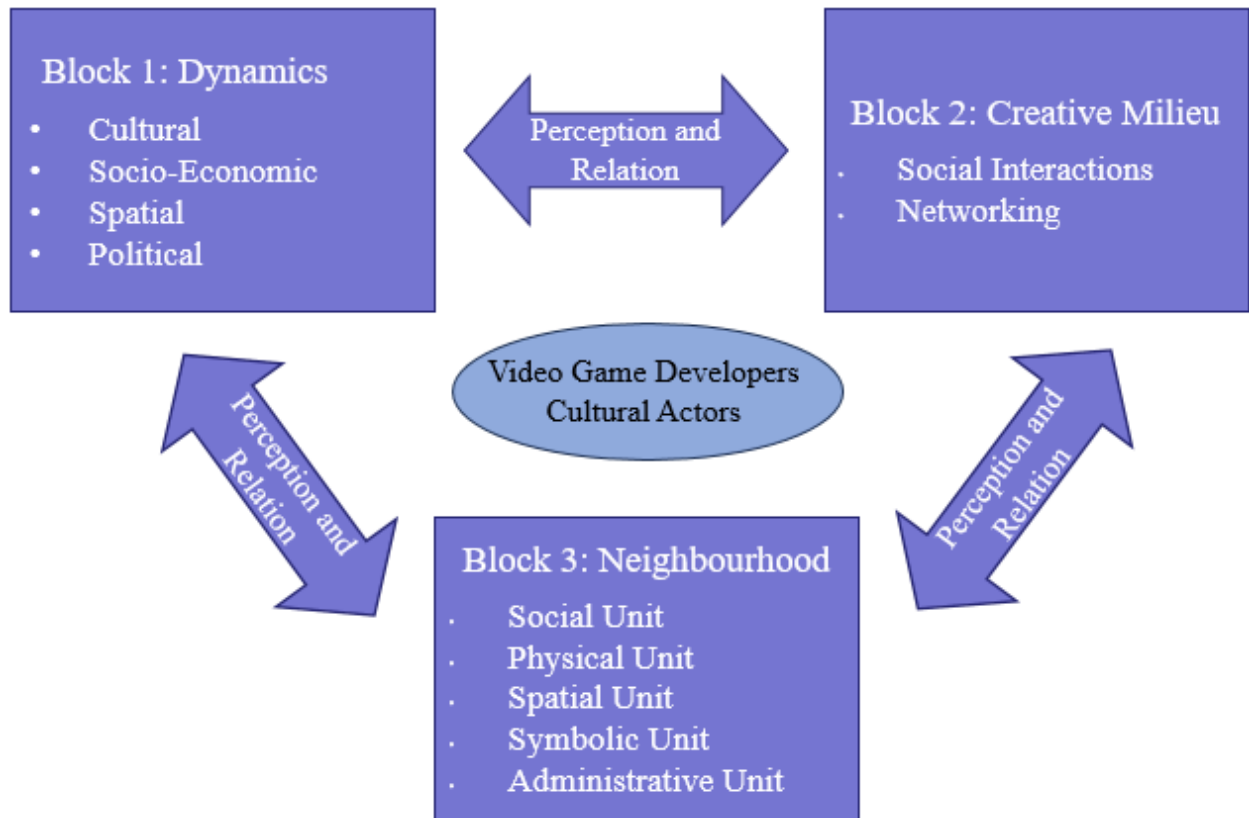


Figure 4: The relationship between the blocks and the groups interviewed

Source: Author

2.3. Methodology

This section presents the methodology on which this study is based. A qualitative approach was selected as the research method for this thesis, through the use of semi-structured interviews as the main basis. Therefore, the individual steps taken to conduct and analyse the interviews are first outlined (2.3.1.), before turning to the newspaper articles as a secondary basis for this study and the steps taken to collect and analyse them (2.3.2.). Finally, the section concludes with complementary spatial, socio-economic and cultural data (2.3.3.).

2.3.1. Interviews

This part focuses on the interviews, the main basis of the research. Hence, the first section looks at the preparation and execution of the interviews (2.3.1.1.), including amongst others the composition of the sampling/study groups and an overview of the interviewees in detail. Afterwards the interview phases in both places are described (2.3.1.2.), before turning to a description of the precautions that were necessary to conduct the interviews (2.3.1.3.). The section ends with the steps taken to analyse the interviews, including the way of transliterating and the content to be analysed (2.3.1.4.).

2.3.1.1. Interview Preparation and Execution

Before the actual interviews could be realised, several decisions had to be made and steps had to be considered, which are now described in detail. These were the composition of the group and the determination of the type of interview, followed by an overview of the taken interviews including the selection of samples.

Sampling/Study Groups

The focus of this research is on video game developers and cultural players. For this reason, there are two interview groups. Their composition, the selection method of the respondents, the number of interviews, and the selection criteria are described here.

The focus of this research is on people working in the video game industry located in the research area, in particular, people working at Ubisoft. Although there are several video game companies in the neighbourhoods, the focus is on Ubisoft for mainly the following reasons: Ubisoft forms the basis for the comparison of both places, it is the largest company in the research area and associations with the video game industry refer to this company. Also, including additional companies would multiply the number of interviews conducted, which would exceed this research.

From the group of people employed at Ubisoft, hereafter referred to as video game developers, employees from different areas and in different positions were selected, such as gameplay programmers, level designers or technical artists, due to their potentially different neighbourhood experiences. In addition, a mix of gender is also considered, as well as an even distribution by age. As reference age, the average age of workers at Ubisoft was taken, that is 35 years old in 2018 (Company Profile : Ubisoft Entertainment S.A 2018). The native language does not play a role in the selection, as the interviews could be held in the language that is most comfortable for the interviewees. The selection of participants is randomised. It must be considered in advance that it may be necessary to clarify whether the interviewees are authorised to give interviews. This is because security concerns could prevent participation.

This group also includes the managers of video game companies who have their headquarters in the region. In terms of interview questions, they are asked different questions than the group of video game developers for several reasons. Interviewing managers gives an insight on how they see their employees as creative workers and the relation to their work, on the one hand. On the other hand, if possible, managers could provide details about the role of government policies for their company, such as in what sense policies, such as funding programs, were important for the choice to settle in the neighbourhoods of Mile End and Flingern-Nord and what kind of government policies are still important or desirable. Managers might participate and act differently in the neighbourhood, experience the changes within the neighbourhood differently and might name different dynamics. Choosing participants on the management level however poses a problem. The number is reduced to a minimum because they have little time, for example. Further, the interviewed manager should be able to know the relevant information, such as about policies, and be willing to share the information. This selection is made by specific enquiries.

The second group interviewed is formed of cultural actors from the neighbourhoods, who have at

least their studio, business or place of work in the neighbourhood. Cultural actors include people who work for cultural organisations or in art galleries or are artists, in order to analyse their perception and interpretation of the dynamics. They are part of the dynamics, experience it directly, and, when appropriate, they have to respond to the dynamics by for example adapting to changing demands. Preference is given to respondents who have worked in the area for a long period of time; for example, those who have worked in the area for more than five years are more likely to be able to describe changes in the neighbourhood, such as detailed information about former shops or cultural organisations.

The aim of selecting the participants of both groups was to obtain a diverse range of respondents. This means that variables such as age, gender, place of residence, ethnocultural identity, language, economic factors or social position did not play a role in the selection, as this was not the aim of the research, as well as in the analysis. Further analyses linking these variables with the perceptions expressed by the participants would be relevant in future research.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The interviews are semi-structured with a single interviewee. The interview schedule is developed in accordance to methods in qualitative research and so the scheduled duration is 45-60 minutes for all groups (Baur and Blasius 2014; Bryman 2012). All interviews are recorded with the consent of the interviewee. Further notes during the interview have been taken as well if necessary. Prior to the interview, the questions were pre-tested. The interview takes place in the language chosen by the respondents, who can choose between English, French and German. Language was not a selection criterion.

The focus of the questions (see the questionnaires in annex 1) for video game industry workers is on how they see the neighbourhood, in particular how they describe the neighbourhood, and what they do there with the focus on cultural dynamics - on cultural practices - to understand the correlation of the workers to the neighbourhood and its dynamics. On the one hand, respondents were asked to describe how they use the neighbourhood during working hours and which places they visit for which reasons, for example in their free time or as “part” of their daily work and routine. In addition, respondents were asked to describe how they participate culturally and whether the neighbourhood plays a role in this. In any of these cases, the interviewees shall specify if they

can name or feel dynamics in the neighbourhood. In the case of cultural actors, the key aspects of the questionnaire are on how they see, describe, and use the neighbourhood, (if) how they see and describe cultural acting people, a description of dynamics and if they can name some reasons for the dynamics. Questions asking specifically about the video game developers are designated to establish a connection between both groups. The questionnaires for both groups were complemented with questions about the interviewee's view on living in the researched neighbourhood: The reasons why they have chosen the researched neighbourhood or if they could imagine moving there and why. In the end, each group interviewed has its own questionnaire.

In this research, the perception and interpretation of the video game developers and cultural actors are in the focus of the interviews. The findings of the interviews are subjective because human beings observe and experience dynamics and changes differently. The perception is in this sense the subjective representation of external conditions, and further selective because people are not able to perceive all stimuli in the environment (Heineberg 2006, 163; Kopp and Steinbach 2016, 366). In addition, this selective perception underlies several characteristics with each individual. Kastanakis and Voyer (2014, 426) differentiate in their study the sources of perception into (1) external factors to people, such as social practices, societal values, similar cultural dimensions, and artefacts, and (2) internal factors, such as an independent or interdependent self-interpretation or other traits, and language, and Nęcka (2011, 217) points to the fact that the external world is perceived through images and words, so to say in a verbal and non-verbal way. In their research, Gosse et al. (2016, 532) list several scientifically discussed aspects that influence perception and interpretation of neighbourhoods which depends on the characteristics of each person and his experience. These aspects are linked together and interact. Scholars quote that perception and interpretation depends on the attachment to a place, respectively the feeling of attachment and the satisfaction of living in the neighbourhood. These aspects are related to the length of time people have lived in the neighbourhood. Another aspect is the influence of age as older people potentially have different needs than younger people. In addition, the time they have been associated with the neighbourhood is different and they have experienced the development of the neighbourhood over time. Regardless of age, there is an influence of marital status, as the needs of families and singles differ, for example. These aspects that influence the perception and interpretation of the video game developers and the cultural actors and how they experience the neighbourhood in their daily life have to be considered in the analysis. However, perception and interpretation reflect only a part of

all dynamics going on in the neighbourhood and the different aforementioned elements, and they depend on subjectivity.

Interview Overview

At the beginning of the study, the number of participants was set at 40 interviews in the two groups. There were to be 20 persons per neighbourhood, including eleven video game developers, one manager and eight cultural actors. There should be more video game developers as the focus is on the video game industry and the same number of interviews in both neighbourhoods (see table 12).¹⁰

Table 12: Number of foreseen interviews in Mile End and Flingern-Nord

Interviewees	Mile End	Flingern-Nord
Video Game Industry		
- Video Game Developers	11	11
- Managers	1	1
Neighbourhood		
- Cultural Actors	8	8
Total	20	20

Source: Author

However, this number could not be achieved. Fewer interviews were conducted in both neighbourhoods except for managers and video game developers in the Mile End. This means that fewer video game developers could be found in Flingern-Nord and fewer cultural players in both neighbourhoods. Expressed in numbers: In the Mile End, two fewer interviews than planned were conducted with cultural actors, and in Flingern-Nord two less with video game developers and three less with cultural actors (see table 13). In total, 33 interviews were conducted.

¹⁰ An overview of all the data presented in this section is given in annex 2.

Table 13: Number of taken interviews in Mile End and Flingern-Nord

Interviewees	Mile End	Flingern-Nord
Video Game Industry		
- Video Game Developers	11	9
- Managers	1	1
Neighbourhood		
- Cultural Actors	6	5
Total	18	15

Source: Author

There are several reasons why fewer interviews were carried out. First, in the group of video game developers, the size of the company, i.e. the number of employees, differs. The studio in Flingern-Nord is significantly smaller (3,000 in Montreal to 300 in Flingern-Nord employees in 2017/2018 (Company Profile : Ubisoft Entertainment S.A 2018; Blue Byte GmbH 2017)). It was also more difficult to get in touch with Ubisoft employees in Flingern-Nord. The pandemic also had an impact, as it was more difficult to get in touch with them personally. Nevertheless, only two fewer interviews were conducted in Flingern-Nord than planned. In Montreal, the planned number of interviews could be conducted at Ubisoft. Second, in the group of cultural actors, the number of interviews differed from the planned number in both locations (two or three interviews less). No further campaigns were launched with this group due to time constraints, as a campaign, including conducting an interview, can take several weeks. Even though the number is lower, the interviews conducted show a comprehensive and differentiated picture of the dynamics in the individual neighbourhoods. All taken interviews are considered in this research because there was no need to exclude one. The procedure of the interview phase is described in more detail in section 2.3.1.2.

Selection of Samples

Before describing the interview phases, it is worth taking a look at the interviewees with regard to their profession, age, sex, and the interview language, first at the video game developers, then at

the cultural actors. Once again, the selection of interviewees was made randomly, but for the participants from the video game industry, they had to work for Ubisoft in the corresponding neighbourhood, and for the cultural actors, they had to have their institution or their workspace in the corresponding area.

First, the look is at the people working at Ubisoft. The interviewed people at Ubisoft work in different fields¹¹, such as (gameplay) programmer, back-end software developer, game designer, engineer/sound design, art developer, technical worker, and production manager in Montreal, and as level artist, (software) developer, programmer, game designer, creative director, and narrative writer in Düsseldorf. In both places a person from the management was interviewed. In Montreal it was the Chief Communication Externe and in Düsseldorf it was the Managing Director of Ubisoft Düsseldorf.

A gender mix was largely achieved in line with the proportion of women. In the video game industry, only around one fifth were women in 2017 (Statista 2024). In the Mile End, there were 25% women and in Flingern-Nord about 20%, or expressed in number, 9 men and 3 women in the Mile End, and 8 men and 2 women in Flingern-Nord, as seen in table 14.

Table 14: Overview of male and female interviewees in the video game industry

Sex	Mile End	Flingern-Nord
Male	9	8
Female	3	2
Total	12	10

Source: Author

Looking at the age range, a diverse picture between neighbourhoods is given (see table 15). Most of the people working at Ubisoft Montreal were younger than 35 years old: seven younger than 35 years and five 35 years and older. In Düsseldorf, on the other hand, most of the participants were

¹¹ The job titles and professions are those used by the people interviewed. These different professions reflect the different fields of work at Ubisoft: Animation, Art, Game Design, Gameplay Programming, Level Design, Project Management, Programming and Quality Assurance (Ubisoft Entertainment).

aged 35 and over: four were younger than 35, six were between 35 and 44 and one respondent was aged 45 and over. As said earlier, the starting point for the age ranges was the average age of Ubisoft Montreal, which was 35 in 2018 (Company Profile : Ubisoft Entertainment S.A 2018).

Table 15: Age range of participants in the video game industry

Age range	Mile End Male	Mile End Female	Flingern-Nord Male	Flingern-Nord Female
25-34	5	2	2	2
35-44	4	1	5	0
45-	0	0	1	0
Total	9	3	8	2

Source: Author

The interviewees were selected regardless of their mother language, but they had to agree to take the interview in one of the languages the interviewees were conducted. So, they were free to choose their preferred language: English, French and German. In the end, interviews in English and French were conducted in Montreal, and in English and German in Düsseldorf. The interview language does not reflect the mother language of the interviewees. Some participants in Montreal did the interview in English although their mother language is French. As a result, nine interviews were conducted in English and three in French. In Düsseldorf the interviews were carried out in English and German, although the mother languages of the participants were German, Portuguese, Romanian, and Latvian (see table 16).

Table 16: Interview languages in the video game industry

	Montreal	Flingern-Nord
English	9	7
French	3	0
German	0	3
Total	12	10

Source: Author

Now, the look is at the cultural actors in Montreal. Amongst the interviewee there are a cinema owner (since 2018, she worked before in the cultural sector in the Mile End for eleven years), a designer (eight years), a film maker and author (25 years), a member of a cultural organisation that offers conferences and guided tours in the Mile End as an expert (six years), a painter and sculptor (more than 30 years), and a visual artist (20 years), of which two have their studio in the area of Saint-Viateur Est next to Ubisoft. The ones in Düsseldorf are a director of a cultural organisation that organises cultural events such as exhibitions, music and lectures since 2017, a director of another cultural organisation which leads a socio-economic center that organises cultural events and workshops (since 2003 in Flingern-Nord), a gallery owner (since 2009, before she has been an artist for more than two decades), a film and theater maker that does projects in dance, music and theater (since 2015), and the head of the competence center for culture and creativity of the City of Düsseldorf as an expert (since 2016).

Amongst cultural actors as well, a mix of genders of the interviewees could be carried out. Here, the distribution is equal: There are three male and female cultural actors in Montreal, and three male and two female interviewees in Düsseldorf, as shown in table 17.

Table 17: Overview of male and female interviewees in the cultural field

Sex	Mile End	Flingern-Nord
Male	3	3
Female	3	2
Total	6	5

Source: Author

Looking at the age range of the cultural actors it becomes clear that most of the interviewees are older than the video game developers (see table 18). Further, a less balanced picture is shown if the age structure of Ubisoft is taken as a basis. In the Mile End, all interviewees are older than 35 years, and in Flingern-Nord, only one is younger than 35 years.

Table 18: Age range of interviewees in the cultural field

Age range	Mile End Male	Mile End Female	Flingern- Nord Male	Flingern- Nord Female
25-34	0	0	1	0
35-44	1	1	1	0
45-	2	2	1	2
Total	3	3	3	2

Source: Author

The cultural actors were selected, as for the video game developers, regardless of their mother language, but they had to agree to take the interview in one of the languages the interviewees were conducted. In other words, they were free to choose which language they preferred: English, French and German. In Montreal, the interviews conducted were in English. In Düsseldorf, all interviews were conducted in German. The interview language does not reflect the native language of the interviewees in Montreal. Some participants in Montreal conducted the interview in English, even

though their mother tongue is French or German. As a result, six interviews were conducted in English and five in German (see table 19).

Table 19: Interview languages of cultural actors

	Montreal	Flingern-Nord
English	6	0
French	0	0
German	0	5
Total	6	5

Source: Author

Finally, the look is at the interview length. The interview length varies between the groups. The shortest interviews were 20 minutes, one in Montreal and one in Düsseldorf, both at Ubisoft. The longest ones were 105 minutes in Montreal and 75 minutes in Düsseldorf, both with cultural actors. This is also reflected in the average length of the interviews. The average length of all interviews is 43 minutes. Interviews conducted in the video game industry are slightly shorter, only 38 minutes on average in both cities (37.5 minutes in Montreal and 37.7 minutes in Düsseldorf) and for cultural actors 52 minutes (46 minutes in Germany and 60.3 in Montreal). Although the length varies between both groups, there are no significant differences in the information content. The video game developer's answers are shorter but more focused.

Before the description of the interview procedure in both places, a short summarisation of the selection criteria is given. The interviewees from the video game industry must work at Ubisoft. Other criteria did not play a role for the developers in the first step, as a mixture of different tasks, lengths of time working at Ubisoft, native language and gender should be given in order to obtain a broad picture that represents the company. A further mailing was reserved in the case that, for example, only participants from one professional group or only men had registered. For the manager, the selection criteria were given as explained.

The selection criteria for the cultural actors are that they must have their studio, organisation or

office in the study area. Care had to be taken to ensure that they come from different professional fields in order to have a range of experiences and points of contact. Their offer must be usable by individuals at Ubisoft (such as the cinema in the Mile End or the events of Kulturzimmer in Flingern-Nord) or by Ubisoft as a company (such as the sculptor in the Mile End or the city employee in Flingern-Nord). Other criteria such as age, gender and mother tongue were not decisive in the first stage. Here too, if there was no diversity, the intention was to contact other cultural players.

2.3.1.2. Interview Phases in Düsseldorf and Montreal

The interview phase lasted several months and was characterised by the pandemic. Therefore, before describing the interview phase in Düsseldorf and Montreal, i.e. how the interview phase went, the impact of the pandemic is described.

The Pandemic: COVID-19 Virus and Online Interviews

Originally it was planned to conduct the interviews face-to-face, preferably outside the working space, but the years 2020 and 2021 were coined by the pandemic caused by COVID-19 or Corona virus. Similar measures were taken in Canada and Germany to prevent the further spread of the virus, such like lockdowns, travel restrictions and social distancing rules. These measures affected the interview phase planned in 2020. In March, when the first restrictions and the lockdown were enacted, I was taking interviews in Düsseldorf. So, I had to stop the presence in the neighbourhood of Flingern-Nord. In April 2020, there was the need to adapt to the new situation, which means, taking the interviews online. This consequence was also asked by INRS, and hence, taking interviews online is in concordance with the *Comité d'éthique en recherche (CER)* of INRS.¹² As a result, three interviews in Düsseldorf were taken in person until March 16, 2020, and the remaining ones were taken online in both places. This change is accompanied by another change in the handling of the interviews. In the three face-to-face interviews, the interviewees saw the questionnaire for the first time during the interview. In the online interviews, on the other hand, the questionnaires were sent to the participants in advance. I decided to do this in order to counteract

¹² <http://inrs.ca/coronavirus-covid-19/modalites-de-la-recherche>, as of April 14, 2020.

possible nervousness due to the use of a new medium. Besides the nervousness aspect, it turned out to have another advantage. Having the questionnaire in hand was significantly important for the video game developer because they knew before the interview that there were no work-related questions and, consequently, they were more relaxed about the interview. These concerns were told by some of the interviewees before the interview. In general, some of the interviewees were prepared to answer the questions by reflecting on the answers beforehand and/or read along the questions during the interview (which didn't disturb the process).

Taking online interviews has advantages, but there are also disadvantages or limitations which mostly come along with the tool (Bryman 2016, Deakin and Wakefield 2014 and Meß 2018)¹³. Advantages are, amongst others, the possibility to take interviews with people who are not in the same place, the possibility to save time and money to get to the interview place, a higher flexibility in the case of last-minutes adjustments to the scheduling like cancellations and appointments, or it is easier to leave the interview by just switching off. Disadvantages that have to be considered are, amongst others, technical issues which include problems of getting connected (for example no connections or missing passwords), having a poor connection during the interview which results in delays of speak or missing of words, a missing familiarity with online communication, or having no control as an interviewer what the interviewee is doing during the interview. It must also always be remembered that with an online tool, data protection and security always depend on the security settings of the respective programmes.

Conducting online interviews also had advantages and disadvantages for me. One major advantage was that I was able to conduct the interviews in Düsseldorf and Montreal regardless of location, or in other words, interview dates could be set without having to worry about which city I was in. Another advantage was that the interview date could be changed by the interviewees at short notice and the interviewees were still available. There were no disadvantages when conducting the interviews. The participants were familiar with the technology and there were no significant connection problems.

The interviews could be conducted via SkypeTM, Zoom, MS Teams and Facebook, but the

¹³ See also Hanna 2012; Janghorban, Roudsari and Taghipour 2014; Krouwel, Jolly and Greenfield 2019; Lo Iacono, Symonds and Brown 2016, and Mirick and Wladkowski 2019 for further aspects that should be considered by taking interviews online and some differences in taking interviews in person.

participants only chose between two of the programmes: Skype™ and Zoom.¹⁴ In the case of Zoom, the account provided to me by the university was used. In the case of Skype™, an account was specifically created for the interview phase. Both programs offer the same possibilities, such as audio or video calls, both are free of charge for the interviewees, and run on all common systems. The difference between the programs is that for interviews conducted by Skype™, the interviewee must have an account as well and must exchange this information with me, while with Zoom, the interviewee does not need an own account¹⁵. In both programmes, the interviewee can switch on and off the microphone and the camera and can easily exit the interview. All interviews were recorded. Though I could have recorded the interview in a cloud in Skype and Zoom, I used an external recorder, so that no third party got access to the data. Privacy and security of the programmes were secured to my knowledge during the interview phase.

Interview Phase in Düsseldorf

The interview phase in Düsseldorf did not proceed in a straight line as planned, because of the change from face-to-face interviews to online interviews and a second round of online interviews one year later. At the beginning, I was supposed to spend three and a half months in Flingern-Nord, from mid of January until end of April 2020 to conduct the interviews in person. I also lived in the neighbourhood of Flingern-Nord to get to know the neighbourhood which should support the later interview analysis.

In the case of Ubisoft, I contacted the company in January. The resonance was positive. The HR department and the management were interested in the research because, according to the HR department, the Düsseldorf branch is often compared with Ubisoft Montreal, without knowing similarities or differences between the two locations¹⁶. They assured support for the research and so, they sent the request for the research to Ubisoft's employees three times by e-mail. Five employees responded to me, and I scheduled interview appointments. The first three interviews were taken at the beginning of March 2020 in person in Flingern-Nord, the neighbourhood Ubisoft is located. This part stopped in mid-March, when pandemic rules applied and from then on, I did

¹⁴ For legal terms of their usage: see Skype™ : Skype Legal (2021), and Zoom Video Communications (2021); see also Browne (2020).

¹⁵ Except an Authentication Profiles for meetings and webinars.

¹⁶ First meeting at Ubisoft to explain the research, January 17, 2020.

the remaining two scheduled interviews online. Despite the support of Ubisoft, I only could take five interviews with their employees. A sixth one was agreed but I couldn't schedule an appointment for the interview. The interview phase at Ubisoft Düsseldorf was completed in June 2020. Fortunately, at the end of January 2021, the interviewee of the second last interview in Montreal worked in cooperation with the studio in Düsseldorf. After explaining the research topic, she offered me to ask her colleagues in Düsseldorf if they would participate. I accepted the offer and after emailing and scheduling the interviews, I was able to contact five more interviews within a week (February 4-11, 2021).

In the case of the cultural and creative actors in Flingern-Nord, I first conducted a site visit with mapping of the cultural and creative institutions, offices and places between January 15 and February 10, 2020. After concluding this part, I addressed cultural actors and institutions randomly from the list by e-mail, starting mid of March.¹⁷ So over the next few months, between March and August 2020, four mailings were executed. In total, 23 people were contacted this way, ten of whom responded. Four of them accepted to participate. I was able to recruit another participant through a snowball effect.

The reasons for refusing to take part vary. Some did not find the time for interviews due to the stress caused by the pandemic and others simply did not want to take part. There was also a refusal due to a misunderstanding of the research topic. The video game industry and neighbouring industries are not widespread and visible in Flingern-Nord or are simply not perceived by the recipient. Therefore, it is difficult to understand the aim of this research or what the video game industry has to do with the Flingern-Nord neighbourhood. Some cultural actors justified their rejection by saying that they do not perceive the video game industry in the neighbourhood. In this case, I explained to them that this observation was very interesting for the research. As a result, three people agreed to participate in the research, still wondering how they could contribute to this study. For the participants who were too busy to be interviewed, I asked for a short statement about the video game industry in the neighbourhood, which three of them gave.¹⁸

¹⁷ A personal contacting in the cultural and creative field was not made because the weather conditions didn't allow to walk from door to door, and confinement regulations couldn't be foreseen.

¹⁸ These statements are not analysed but serve as complemented information about the situation in Flingern-Nord.

Interview Phase in Montreal

The interview phase in Montreal was conducted in a straight line over a period of six months, although there were some breaks due to new mailings. All interviews were conducted online due to the pandemic requirements.

The interviews in the Mile End with cultural professionals were conducted in August and September 2020 and in January 2021. The contact with these cultural actors came about partly through private contacts and partly through a snowball effect. People I talked about this research asked their friends from the cultural and creative sector in the neighbourhood. Several of them showed interest. Unfortunately, not everyone who showed interest was later available for an interview. So, of the 16 people who were initially willing, I was only able to conduct an interview with six. Unlike in Düsseldorf, the other ten cancelled without giving a reason.

There were some delays in conducting the interviews at Ubisoft. I contacted two people in charge at Ubisoft in August and September 2020 to get permission to conduct interviews with employees. This was also very important at the time, as the #MeToo scandal hit Ubisoft Montreal in the summer of 2020 and employees were instructed not to give interviews. The feedback after a few weeks was positive, as this work is scientific research, and the questions are not work-related. Unlike in Düsseldorf, an email with the enquiry could not be sent to all employees. That's why contact was made with interested employees through a snowball effect within my network. Within six weeks, from the end of October to the beginning of December 2020, I conducted nine interviews with Ubisoft employees. I conducted the remaining three interviews in January 2021.

2.3.1.3. Ethics and Considerations

Conducting interviews represents a potential intrusion into the privacy of the interviewees. As part of ensuring good scientific practices, compliance with research ethics standards must be ensured at all stages of the research and be consistent with the research conducted (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight 2010; Fletcher 1992; von Unger 2014). Research ethics principles include free and informed consent, which implies that participation is voluntary (no direct or indirect coercion to participate by an authority), that the participant is aware of the aims and methods of the research and that he

is informed about the risks and avoidance of harm that could result from participation. It should therefore not be possible to draw conclusions about the interviewees from the results. Additional ethical considerations apply to online interviews, as an instrument is used here that is provided by a third party.¹⁹ For example, it is possible for third parties to gain access to the data collected during the interview.²⁰ Linked to these principles is the confidentiality and anonymisation of the data collected. The field notes and transcripts collected should not contain any personal identifiers and the personal data collected should be minimised and anonymised as soon as possible. Data should be locked and/or password protected.

These measures were considered in this research, and all personal data collected in the interviews are treated in accordance with the rules of the *Comité d'éthique en recherche (CÉR)* of INRS²¹, so that there are no major risks for the participants of this research.

2.3.1.4. Interview Post-Processing and Evaluation

Once the interviews have been conducted, the next steps must be considered before the interviews can be analysed. The collected data from the interviews were transcribed (Bernard 2006, 484-492; Häder 2015, 413-415) in preparation to analyse them by coding on the basis of a self-developed scheme (Kaiser 2014, 89-123; Saldaña 2013; Schreier 2014). This section describes how the transcription of the interviews, and the analysed content was carried out, as well as the method of coding.

Transcription

All the interviews were recorded. Therefore, each interview had to be transliterated before the analysis. The transliterations therefore form the basis for the analysis.

At the beginning I cleared the way and the codes of transcription to have a stringent form. I referred

¹⁹ Besides general ethical considerations, Deakin and Wakefield (2014, 210) come to the conclusion that “ethical concerns are therefore different in face-to-face and online environments, and researchers must be sensitive to such differences before embarking on research”.

²⁰ See also Deakin and Wakefield (2014, 609-610), Lo Iacono, Symonds and Brown (2016, 6.1-6.9) and Meß (2018, 69-70,75-76) for discussion about confidential handling of personal data and data security in online interviews compared to face-to-face interviews.

²¹ Link: <http://www.inrs.ca/recherche-valorisation/ethique-recherche>; for the certificate see annex 1 D.

to the modularly transcription system based on the book *Grundlagen der Transkription* [Basics of Transcription] by Fuß and Karbach (2019, 39-59). This modularly transcription system contains eight modules, such as language smoothing, pauses, voice sounds, uncertainty, interruption, and omission, of which I included those that were relevant to the analysis. I defined a system and stuck to it to have a continuity and equality in all interview transcription. Another point was to exactly keep the meaning of the point of view of the interviewee. Nevertheless, when an interviewee digressed from the topic and talked about things that were not related to the research topic, these parts were summarized with own words (see also Mayer 2013, 47 and Przyborski 2014, 162-164).

Analysed Content and Coding

Qualitative content analysis according to Mayring (Mayring 2008, Mayring 2015, 97-99)²² forms the basis for analysing the interviews. Mayring²³ developed a system in which the analysis sections are broken down into individual steps, which are then compiled into a process model to guide the content analysis work and its review. First, the entire transcript of the interview was defined as the starting point for the unit of analysis. The content analysis was orientated towards the general topic of the work. Thus, after an initial reading, I eliminated the parts that were not relevant to the research, e.g. when the interviewee talked about projects they were carrying out for their company, but which were not related to the video game industry or similar, thus defining the remaining parts as the sampling unit. I then formulated the category system. The coding used for the analysis refers to the conceptual dimensions and their operational dimensions defined in section 2.2. Two additional codes were added to the coding scheme during the first coding (pre-coding). One code was set to “0” if the interviewee did not mention the dimension, and another was set for additional dimensions that were not considered at the beginning. The statements and points mentioned in this field were integrated into the second coding in order to capture all possible dimensions mentioned in the interviews. After the first versions of the analyses, I did a second coding of the interviews to add points that I had not considered (to a due degree) in the first analysis process. This was for example the item Covid-19, as it did not exist in the initial situation. The codes are unambiguous,

²² The approach is complemented with the work of Renner (2020, 98-102).

²³ Philipp Mayring PhD, born in 1952, is retired Professor of Psychological Methodology at the Institute of Psychology at the University of Klagenfurt. In Klagenfurt, he was head of the Centre for Evaluation and Research Consultancy at the Institute of Psychology. Philipp Mayring has been instrumental in the development of qualitative content analysis in German-speaking countries since 1980.

and I created a list of examples for each category. For the analysis, I considered the units that focus on and encompass a particular theme, which could be a sentence, part of a sentence or a paragraph. I coded each of these units based on the categories. Nevertheless, in certain rare cases, more codes were used if the information content was so complex that it could not be assigned to just one code. Based on these codes, the analysis was carried out in a descriptive manner in the form of a micro-analysis. The micro-analysis provides a detailed picture that ultimately gives a comprehensive picture of the video game developers, the cultural actors and their relationship to the neighbourhood. It also provides a detailed portrait of the relationship to and perception of culture and creativity of video game developers and cultural actors (Davis 2000).

Besides the interviews, this thesis is also based on newspaper articles. Their selection and analysis were also subject to a process that needs to be considered in more detail.

2.3.2. Newspaper Articles

Newspaper articles are part of this research to demonstrate the relation between the video game industry and the neighbourhood and the occurring dynamics in the Mile End and Flingern-Nord. These articles and their meanings “make up the social reality shared by members of the society” (Altheide and Schneider 2013, 5) and their relevance grew in understanding daily life because newspaper articles are available to everyone (Altheide and Schneider 2013, 75). The newspaper article analysis complements the interviews by showing a further perspective of the ongoing dynamics in the neighbourhood.

This section first describes the steps before conducting the newspaper article search (2.3.2.1.), before moving on to the individual steps taken after receiving the search results and to an initial presentation for both locations (2.3.2.2.).

2.3.2.1. Newspaper Articles Preparation and Execution

Prior to the database search, preliminary considerations had to be made about the specific newspapers to be used for the analysis and about the selection of suitable databases and keywords for the search. In the following, the newspapers choice and the database research is explained.

Newspapers Choice

The analysed articles are from three selected daily newspapers for each neighbourhood to cover the researched areas. All these newspapers have in common that they do not belong to the tabloid press and that they are available in databases in order to gain access to the individual articles.

For the neighbourhood of Mile End in Montreal, three daily newspapers were chosen. These are the francophone *La Presse* and *Le Devoir*, and the anglophone *The Gazette*, which all are based in Montreal. The average distribution, online and print, in 2018 for a weekday issue was 649,000 copies for *La Presse*, 190,000 for *Le Devoir* and 234,000 for *Montreal Gazette* (Media in Canada 2018). These newspapers all offer an online version. In the case of *La Presse*, it stopped its printed version in 2017 and started to offer an online version only: *La Presse+*. Both versions existed side by side during a transition period. In the following it is referred to as *La Presse*. It should be noted that *The Gazette* changed its name in November 2014 to *Montreal Gazette*, referred to as *Montreal Gazette* in the following.

For the neighbourhood of Flingern-Nord in Düsseldorf, the choice fell on the two locally available newspapers²⁴ that cover all resorts and a national daily newspaper to include a broader view on the topic. These newspapers are *Die Welt*, *Rheinische Post* and *Westdeutsche Zeitung*²⁵. *Die Welt* (Hamburg/Berlin) is a national daily newspaper, and *Rheinische Post* and *Westdeutsche Zeitung* are local newspapers that cover the southern region of North Rhine-Westphalia in different regional issues of which Düsseldorf is one. In the fourth quarter of 2019, the sales volume (online and print) per day of *Die Welt* was 107.777 (Statista 2020a), of *Rheinische Post* 275.400 (Statista 2020b) and of *Westdeutsche Zeitung* 60,000 (only print, WZ 2020, 6). For all regarded German newspapers, a

²⁴A list of all local newspapers for Düsseldorf can be found here: <https://www.duesseldorf.de/medienportal/medien-in-duesseldorf/?L=0>.

²⁵The translation of the newspaper names is *Die Welt* = *The World*, *Rheinische Post* = *Rhenish Post* and *Westdeutsche Zeitung* = *Western German Newspaper*.

printed and an online version exist. Online and printed versions had to be considered for *Die Welt* and its online version *Welt online*. Articles are written for the online version and the printed version is only a selection of these articles. However, in the following the reference is only to *Die Welt* which also includes *Welt online*. For *Rheinische Post* and *Westdeutsche Zeitung*, there is no distinction between online or print necessary; the printed version of the articles was analysed.

When selecting the newspapers for both locations, an attempt was made to have a similar reach. For example, there are no local newspapers for the neighbourhood of Flingern-Nord. Therefore, no newspaper at neighbourhood level was considered for the Mile End either.

Database Research

After selecting the newspapers, the article search included selecting appropriate databases, determining the time period and defining the search terms for the company name and the environment. The individual steps are described below.

Databases

For the newspaper articles search, I referred to different databases, and I only analysed the articles that were referenced in these databases. *La Presse* and *Le Devoir* are referenced in the database *Eureka* with full-texts, *Montreal Gazette* is referenced in *ProQuest* and *Nexis Uni*[®] with full-texts²⁶, and *Die Welt*, *Rheinische Post* and *Westdeutsche Zeitung* are referenced in the database *Genios* with full texts available in the database *Wiso*.²⁷

Time Period

The regarded period was considered from 1997 to 2020 to include the initial situation and possible motives of Ubisoft's neighbourhood choice (H. Klein 2014). The articles in the databases for the desired period are available for all three Canadian newspapers (*La Presse* since 1985, *Le Devoir* since 1992 and *The Gazette* since 1995), but not for the German newspapers. *Die Welt* and *Rheinische Post* cover only the past 20 years (*Die Welt* since 1999 and *Rheinische Post* since 2001)

²⁶ Due to limitations and restrictions of accessibility for the whole period, both databases were consulted to get access to all articles and not only to the reference.

²⁷ Links: *Eureka*: <http://eureka.cc>; *ProQuest*: <https://search-proquest-com.res.banq.qc.ca/publication/44893> via BANQ; *Nexis Uni*[®] <http://www.nexisuni.com/>; *Genios*: <https://www.genios.de>; *WISO*: <https://www.wiso-net.de>.

while *Westdeutsche Zeitung* is only referenced since 2008. Though, research in the database over all German newspapers in the 1990s with the search terms Ubisoft and Düsseldorf did not score a single article that matched the criteria, and hence, this time gap has no significant influence on the results of this newspaper article research. The available issues from Monday to Saturday are included in the request.

Search Term: Company Name

In the newspaper article analysis, as for the interviews, the focus is on the company Ubisoft, analogue to the argumentation that justifies the concentration on Ubisoft in the interview part. As the largest company in the neighbourhood of Mile End, Ubisoft serves as a reference whenever possible, and Ubisoft and Mile End cannot be separated from each other since the early 2000s. A fact that appears in the newspaper articles as well, so, for example, only nine articles in *La Presse* deal with the video game industry in the Mile End without mentioning Ubisoft. Consequently, the search term is ‘Ubisoft’. However, this search had to be complemented with two further ones. When Ubisoft was founded, the company wrote its name ‘Ubi Soft’. The company changed the name at the end of 2003 in Ubisoft. These spellings were also respected in the research because the used databases handle the notation differently, as is the case for the databases Genios and Eureka in which both notations are indexed as separate companies. Further, analyzing Ubisoft in Düsseldorf, the company Blue Byte should be included as well. Blue Byte was bought by Ubisoft in 2001, but it carried its name until 2019 because of its image in Germany (bth 2019). So, including the Blue Byte in the research covered articles as well when Ubisoft was not mentioned by name but when Ubisoft was already the owner of Blue Byte.²⁸

In summary, the newspaper articles analysed contain the search terms mentioned above: Ubi Soft, Ubisoft and Blue Byte (see table 20).

²⁸ In the following, the reference is only ‘Ubisoft’. The other spelling ‘Ubi Soft’ and the reference to ‘Blue Byte’ is only used when necessary. Further, the connector OR in the research of ‘Ubisoft OR Blue Byte’ does not influence the results because only *Die Welt* covers the period before the take-over of Blue Byte by Ubisoft; it was only in 2013 that *Die Welt* started to report about Ubisoft or Blue Byte in Düsseldorf.

Search Term: Neighbourhood

Concerning the neighbourhood, some difficulties arose which needed to be adapted in the database research because I couldn't search only with the name of the areas. Search terms on different geographical levels were used, namely regarding the area in Montreal, and the city's name for Düsseldorf.

In the case of Montreal, I searched for the neighbourhood 'Mile End' on the one hand because the focus of this research is on the Mile End and researching Montreal would have exceeded the number of articles.²⁹ Ubisoft and the Mile End cannot be separated from each other today. Though, this connection was not always the case because the neighbourhood Mile End became popular in the context of the video game industry only at the beginning of this century. To cover the first years when Ubisoft moved to its location, I adapted the search terms to the circumstances at that time and I combined 'Ubi Soft' with 'Saint-Laurent'³⁰, the street where the Ubisoft building is. This decision is underlined by request results. Only the journalist Marie-Andrée Amiot used the neighbourhood's name 'Mile End' besides 'Saint-Laurent'³¹ in 1998 while four other journalists used 'Saint-Laurent' between 1997 and 2004. Remarkable is that one article from 2000 named the neighbourhood 'Outremont adjacent' (Petrowski 2000). For Düsseldorf, research about the exact neighbourhood limited the results. Articles related to Ubisoft mention Düsseldorf only or Düsseldorf in connection with a neighbourhood³², so that for the database search, the search term 'Düsseldorf' was used. In short, for the neighbourhoods, the search terms for the neighbourhood were Mile End or Saint-Laurent in the case of Montreal and Düsseldorf in the case of Düsseldorf.

Combining these search terms for the company and neighbourhood, the database research with the following search terms was executed, as seen in table 20.³³

²⁹ For example, the search terms 'Ubisoft' and 'Montreal' resulted in *La Presse* with more than 1000 hits.

³⁰ The spelling 'Ubi Soft' also connected with the search term 'Saint-Laurent' was used in the request for articles for the first years of the presence in the neighbourhood up to 2003. After 2003, the neighbourhood's name 'Mile End' has become known, as well as the spelling 'Ubisoft'.

³¹ These two articles are Amiot (1998a) and Amiot (1998b).

³² As the analysis of the interviews showed, the perception of the neighbourhood borders blur. The same phenomenon appears in the newspaper articles. Authors name as Ubisoft's location the wrong neighbourhood, for example Busch (2017) who referred to the neighbourhood Flingern, two years before Ubisoft moved there.

³³ Further search terms such as lifestyle or dynamics combined with Ubisoft that are not connected to a neighbourhood were not used because the number of articles would have exceeded the amount of work and would go far beyond the aim of the newspaper article analysis.

Table 20: Newspapers and search terms

Journal	Search terms
<i>La Presse, Le Devoir, Montreal Gazette</i>	(Ubisoft or Ubi Soft) and (Mile End or Saint-Laurent) ³⁴
<i>Die Welt, Rheinische Post, Westdeutsche Zeitung</i>	(Ubisoft or Blue Byte) and Düsseldorf ³⁵

Source: Author

2.3.2.2. Newspaper Articles Post-Processing and Evaluation

After running the database query, several steps were taken to determine the set of articles to be analysed and the way they should be coded. These steps are described below, followed by first depictions of the articles without analysing the data. This section ends with a view on articles that were published in Düsseldorf about Montreal and vice versa.

Research results by different criteria and coding

Defining results by formal criteria

As described above, the newspapers offer a printed and an online version, which causes some adjustments to the result selection in the case of *La Presse* and *Die Welt* because both versions are recorded in the databases. *La Presse* stopped its printed version in 2017 and since then, only an online version, *La Presse+*, is available, but during a phase of transition, both versions existed in parallel. The case is similar for *Die Welt* and its online version *Welt online*. Articles are written for the online version and the printed version is only a selection of these articles. For both newspapers, *La Presse* and *Die Welt*, the printed version of the article was analysed when available because the printed version is no subject to later changes.³⁶ Articles that were only published online are

³⁴ In the following, this request is only referred to as ‘Ubisoft and Mile End’ as long as no specification is needed.

³⁵ In the following, this request is only referred to as ‘Ubisoft and Düsseldorf’ as long as no specification is needed.

³⁶ For example: The article by M. Reich (2019): Ausnahmerecheinung “Die Siedler”: “So weit sind wir mit Made in Germany noch nicht” [Exception “The Settlers” : “We are not that far with Made in Germany yet”] was published

included in their latest published version, if there were several versions of the articles available.³⁷ This situation doesn't refer to *Le Devoir*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Rheinische Post* and *Westdeutsche Zeitung*. The databases provided only references to the printed versions of the articles.

Defining results by content

A first refining of the query results was done by deleting doublings. Besides this, I only regard those articles in which Ubisoft is mentioned in a clear conjunction with the neighbourhood or the city respectively. In other words, articles where Düsseldorf is indicated as the city of newspaper publication but not in the context of Ubisoft are excluded, for example in descriptions of games when Ubisoft was mentioned as the developer of the game (see for example Albustin 2018 (in the overview of the newspaper articles in annex 4)). An example for Montreal is when Ubisoft is mentioned in an article together with Mile End Mission but there is no connection between these two terms, or when Ubisoft is mentioned in a quiz about Québec as a developer of a game and Mile End is part of a question dealing with the indie band Half Moon Run (Abley 2015).

Performing a query in the several databases with the above-described search terms and conditions, including the available issues from Monday to Saturday, led to the following refined results (by December 31, 2020) (table 21).

three times online with not significant changes at two different dates besides a not significantly different printed version.

³⁷ It might happen that an article was published online several times. This especially occurred when small changes were made, which all were recorded in the database. The number of words, which is indicated, does not vary or only slightly, but none the less the databases count every single version. The latest version of online articles was analysed.

Table 21: Articles in Canadian and German Newspapers (number)

Journals - Canada	(Ubisoft or Ubi Soft) AND (Mile End or Saint-Laurent)	Journals - Germany	(Ubisoft or Blue Byte) AND Düsseldorf
<i>La Presse</i>	88	<i>Die Welt</i>	10
<i>Le Devoir</i>	28	<i>Rheinische Post</i>	40
<i>The Gazette</i>	53	<i>Westdeutsche Zeitung</i>	13
Total	169	Total	63

Source: Author

The analysis considers the 169 results in the Canadian newspapers and the 63 results in the German newspapers. The total number of articles analyzed is 232 articles. The analysis of the newspaper articles in this research is an analysis of each single selected article and its content. It is not an analysis of its formal criteria such as, amongst others, the number of photos in the article, the length of the text or the language used (Rössler 2017, 108). A weighting of the articles by the means of genre or article length is not done because the article research is not based on the frequency of the search terms since in the articles, Ubisoft is not necessarily the main topic, and hence, a further analysis of formal criteria would not contribute to a better understanding. Though, a depiction by some formal criteria, such as by publication year and newspaper column, when given, is done (Rössler 2017, 112).

Coding

For the analysis, a coding scheme with categories in accordance with the operational framework and its dimensions was developed to establish a connection to the interviews and its questionnaire (see section 2.1.) (Früh 2017, 79). Each category is selective. The final coding scheme consists of three main categories: *Dynamics* (A), *Creative Milieu* (B), and *Neighbourhood* (C) based on the operational framework. All main categories have several sub-categories, the dimensions. For each dimension of the operational framework a code was given, including the option that the article does not deal with the aspect, which was marked with '0'. If necessary multiple coding in one category

was possible. These main categories were complemented with the categories *Ubisoft (D)*, in which context Ubisoft is mentioned in the article and when Ubisoft is the main subject of the article. Besides the coding scheme, each article was tagged with three key words, and I summarized the context in which Ubisoft was used in the article with one sentence. The reasons to complement the three main categories derived from the operational framework are the following: By a first look it became clear that Ubisoft was mentioned in different contexts, varying from being named as the developer of a game in a game description, as an event location, as the spatial reference point of another business, or as the company that settled in the Mile End and became a factor in the Mile End. This category was completed with a marker if Ubisoft was the main topic of the article or served as a reference or example. These aspects are not covered by the main categories, but they serve as a basis for the analysis of the articles and make the connection to the context in which newspapers report about Ubisoft.

Depiction by Formal Criteria

After the coding, I did a first presentation of the 169 articles for Montreal that were published in Montreal and the 63 articles for Düsseldorf that were published in Germany according to formal criteria to get a first impression of the articles before their analysis, such as the presentation by publication, in order to put the published articles into a temporal context. Furthermore, it includes the context in which Ubisoft was mentioned in the article as well as in which newspaper section the article was published to get a first impression of the relevance of Ubisoft within the newspapers.

Depiction by publication year

During the timeframe investigated, 1997-2020, the number of analysed newspaper articles grew for each year, though not constantly. It grew from two in 1997 up to nine in 2020, with ups and downs that vary between zero in 2002 and 22 in 2016. This progression is illustrated in figure 5.

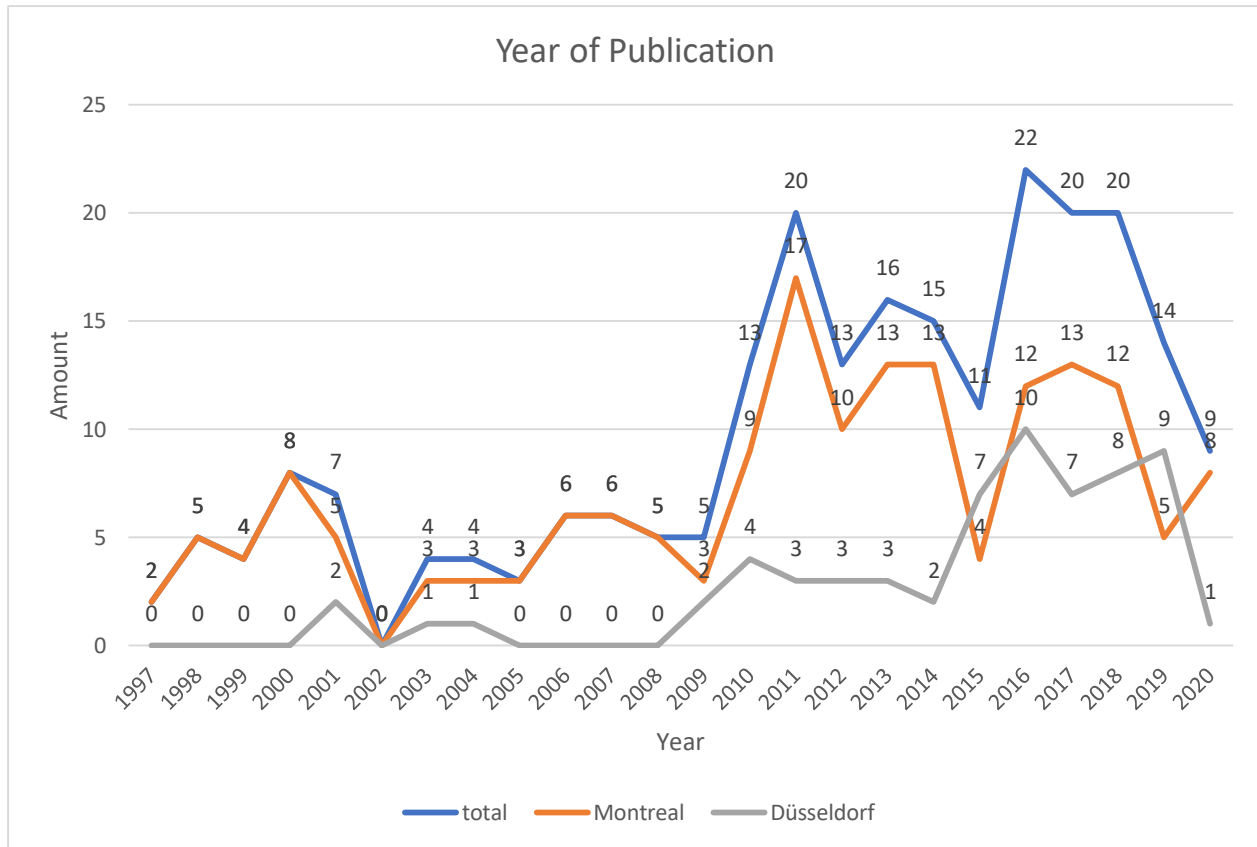


Figure 5: Newspaper articles, Montreal and Düsseldorf (number by publishing year)

Source: data compiled by the author

The Canadian newspaper articles show two recognisable phases: one from 1997-2009 and another from 2010-2020 which is almost in the middle of the regarded period. Until 2009, the number of published articles varies between zero and eight with an average of four publications a year. From 2010 on, the number lies between four and 17 articles with an average of eleven articles a year. The year 2009 marks also a break for German newspaper articles. Until 2009, only four articles were published, namely in 2001, 2003 and 2004, and since then, Ubisoft in Düsseldorf was always worth some news during a year with a maximum of ten articles and an average of five articles per year. Comparing the numbers in both countries allows to state that there are more articles about Ubisoft in Montreal than in Germany. There are only two years when more articles were published in Germany, in 2015 and 2019. Since the development was not constantly growing, I will have a closer look on the two phases and their peaks and bottoms, including the (general) topic³⁸ of the articles and the context in which Ubisoft was mentioned when appropriate. This will help to get

³⁸ That means that this is not a content analysis. This will be done in chapter 4.

some first indications for the subsequent analysis.

As far as the content of the first phase is concerned, more than half of the articles deal with a description of Ubisoft, its establishment in the Mile End, its development since then, founding, and the development of high-tech companies in Montreal, which is a focus that is distinctive in the first years. In only two articles, Ubisoft or the building Ubisoft is mentioned as a reference point of location to other buildings or facilities. In the first peak in 2000 and 2001 (with eight and seven articles respectively) which is followed by the year when no articles were published, the focus of the news was not only on the subsidies and the circumstances Ubisoft settled in Montreal as in the years before, but also on new topics such as Ubisoft games, their development, and on the developers. Noteworthy is that in 2007 a new topic showed up, Ubisoft's engagement in the Mile End in connection with culture and festivities, and consequently in 2007-2009 half of the articles deal with this topic. The beginning of the second phase in 2009 is marked by a peak with a significant rise from five to 20 articles within two years. Though in 2012 it's the same number as in 2010. Looking at the topics, new topics arose, which are in Montreal almost evenly distributed in these two years. Ubisoft is now reported in the context of culture as a location for concerts, in the context of the (successful) establishment of new industries and founding in Montreal, and in the context of internal company news. A fourth context arose as well, namely Ubisoft and its relation to the neighbourhood, for example employees as customers or the development of the neighbourhood since Ubisoft settled there.

In 2015, there is a remarkable drop in the number of articles from thirteen, in 2014, to four and back to twelve articles in 2016 again. Most of the articles in 2014 cover topics related to the company itself and to Ubisoft in the Mile End. In contrary, half of the articles published in 2016 cover topics related to Ubisoft as event location, and related to employees of Ubisoft that are perceived as customers in the neighbourhood. The four articles published in 2015 cover different topics, such as a report about the company that owns and rents the office building on de Gaspé and the Peck building or the roof of the Ubisoft building as event location. The five articles published in 2019 focus on the employees as customers or taking the Ubisoft building as a reference point of location. The last year considered is 2020, which was coined by the pandemic, and therefore popular topics such as concerts are omitted. Thus, only eight articles were published. Half of the articles apply to an incident that happened in November, when Ubisoft was the location of a hoax

about a hostage-taking, and all newspapers reported about. The remaining four articles report about four different topics, which were about a new restaurant opened next to Ubisoft, virtual holidays in connection with a game by Ubisoft, a gamer event organised by Ubisoft and the #MeToo³⁹ scandal in summer.

As for Montreal, two phases are also obvious for Düsseldorf with almost the same year that marks the break: 2009. Between 1997 and 2008, only four articles were published with topics such as Ubisoft as a sponsor of prizes in a lottery or a hotline test. From 2009 on, the topics changed, and in 2010 and 2011 the articles refer mainly, five out of seven articles, to Ubisoft games, a topic that is not covered in earlier years. In 2015 more articles are published in Düsseldorf than in Montreal, after a significant increase from two in 2014 to seven in 2015, a trend that was succeeded in 2016 with ten published articles. The articles in 2014 are both descriptions of BlueByte/Ubisoft and those from 2015 report mainly about games and their development and usage. 2019 was the second time that more articles were published in Düsseldorf than in Montreal with the focus on the company Ubisoft in different contexts. The focus was not on games anymore which has been, besides to a lesser extent the funding of the video game industry, in the focus of the articles published after 2009, including games festivals.

As far as the presentation of the years of publication of the articles is concerned, it can be stated succinctly that two phases can be identified for both places, the breaking point of which is in 2009. In the second phase, the number has increased significantly. In Canada the number tripled and in Germany it quintupled. In Canada, almost three times as many articles were published as in Germany in the regarded period 1997-2020 (Canada 169, Germany 63). During these two phases the focus of the articles also changed. In Canada, the focus was first on the company, its establishment and funding, and than also on the developers during the first phase. During the second phase, other topics arose, such as the video game developers and their connection to the neighbourhood or Ubisoft as an event location. Ubisoft and its buildings are used as a reference in the Mile End for other locations etc. In Germany, there is no focus in the first phase and in the second, the major focus is on games but also on the company itself.

³⁹ There was only one article about #MeToo in connection with the neighbourhood. Without mentioning 'Mile End', further articles were published about the scandal involving high-ranking Ubisoft employees who are said to have (sexually) harassed female colleagues.

Depiction by further characteristics

To get a broader overview of the newspaper articles and the significance of Ubisoft in the articles, the newspaper columns in which the articles were published and the (global) context in which Ubisoft was mentioned in the article were considered.

The category and therefore the position within the newspaper reflects the editorial importance of the content and the target audience defined (Rössler 2017, 121). Articles that are regarded as important and therefore read by a huge audience are published on the first pages in Canadian and in German newspapers (Pohle 2012, 47; Yarhi 2017). However, the following sections differ in both countries. In Canada, the newspapers are usually divided into the sections 'National/International News', 'Local News', 'Business', 'Sports', 'Entertainment/Amusements/Lifestyle', 'Editorials/Opinions' and 'Neighborhood News' (UNF Library 2021). The sections of German newspapers are usually 'Politics' (internal and worldwide political issues), 'Economy', 'Culture', 'Sports' and 'Local/Regional', 'Society', 'Media', and 'Science' (Nowack 2009, 105-108). The column 'Regional' describes a geographically limited area in which other columns are subordinated (Nowack 2009, 118). Regional German newspapers aim to reach a broad audience (Chmura 2009, 40), and so this column is most popular and read by more than 80% (Kübler 2001, 1743; Nowack 2009, 118). For a better analysis, the columns are categorised in eight superordinate categories, derived from the departments found in both countries: 'Politics', 'Economy', 'Culture', 'Sports', 'Regional', 'Miscellaneous' and 'Science' (categories used in the analysed articles; Meier 2002, 157; Nowack 2009, 105). These numbers can be compared but the conclusion drawn must be regarded separately. The majority of articles in Montreal, 52%, is published in the section 'Economy' and 'Politics/News'. These two sections are considered to be the two most important sections in a newspaper. Notable is that more than a third, 35%, of the articles are assigned to the sections 'Society' and 'Culture and Arts'. Further sections don't play a significant role. Most of the articles published in Düsseldorf, 67%, are categorized in the column 'Regional'. Only 14% of the articles are in the section 'Economy' and no articles were classified in the section 'Politics/News'. 8% are counted among 'Society' and 'Culture and Arts', and 10% are published in the section 'Technology/Science'.

The context in which Ubisoft was mentioned was also considered. For Montreal newspapers, in most of the articles it was the company itself that was in the focus of the article (39%). Remarkable

is that Ubisoft serves in over a third of the articles (34%) as a reference, e.g. the building and Ubisoft location. The game development itself and the games respectively are too a much lesser extent in the news (9%), with the same ‘importance’ as Ubisoft mentioned as an event location (9%). Not significant are topics such as staff matters (3%). The context in which Ubisoft is mentioned in Düsseldorf newspapers is mainly a reference context (38%). Almost the same attention gets the games of Ubisoft (30%) and the company itself (27%). Subsidies/funding and staff matters are not significant (each 2%).

To sum up, most of the articles in Montreal are published within the two sections that are regarded as most important, namely in the section ‘Politics’ and ‘Economy’. The context Ubisoft is mentioned was mainly a report about the company itself, closely followed by the point that Ubisoft served as a reference point of location. To a much lesser extent but with the same emphasis Ubisoft was mentioned as an event location and in the context of ‘News’. This is also reflected in the fact that Ubisoft serves mainly as a reference in the articles and that Ubisoft is to a much lesser extent the main topic of the article. Most of the articles in Düsseldorf are published in the section ‘Regional’, which is regarded as the section to reach a broad audience. In these sections, Ubisoft served mainly as a reference, followed by the description of video games and the company itself. The number of articles that refer to Ubisoft or in which Ubisoft is mentioned is almost balanced in the case of Düsseldorf.

Articles Referring to the Compared Area

In addition to the above, a second search was conducted for articles published in Montreal about Düsseldorf and for articles published in Düsseldorf about Montreal. The search terms were Ubisoft and Blue Byte as well as the city’s name to get an impression of the attention of Ubisoft in the other country. The data obtained were processed in the same way as for the research about Montreal and Düsseldorf.⁴⁰

Performing a query in the several databases with the above-described search terms and conditions, including the available issues from Monday to Saturday, led to the following refined results as

⁴⁰ These articles won’t be analysed in chapter 4 in the same way, because this depiction shall only give an impression about how the other neighbourhood is regarded.

presented in table 22 (by December 31, 2020):

Table 22: Articles in German Newspapers about Montreal and Ubisoft and Canadian Newspapers about Düsseldorf and Ubisoft

Journals	Ubisoft + Montreal
<i>Die Welt</i>	9
<i>Rheinische Post</i>	0
<i>Westdeutsche Zeitung</i>	2
Total	11

Journals	Ubisoft + Düsseldorf
<i>La Presse</i>	1
<i>Le Devoir</i>	0
<i>The Gazette</i>	0
Total	1

Source: Author

There is only one article, published by *La Presse* in 2004 in the ‘Economy’ section, that reports about Düsseldorf. Düsseldorf is mentioned as another Ubisoft studio (Robillard 2004).

The newspapers in Germany recognized Montreal as a location from Ubisoft in 2005, articles can be found regularly, as shown in table 23.

Table 23: Articles about Ubisoft Montreal in German newspapers

Year	Number
2018	2
2017	1
2016	1
2014	1

Year	Number
2013	2
2012	1
2009	1
2005	2

Source: Author

A look at the section can be combined with a look at the connection to Ubisoft. The articles that are published in the sections ‘Society’, ‘Culture and Arts’, ‘Technology and Science’ and ‘Economy’ focus on Ubisoft games or the development of one. Two articles focus on the company. One is a report about the company and the other is a report about three French video game developers and the economic development in this sector.

Summarizing, it becomes clear that Düsseldorf in the context of Ubisoft does not play a role in Montreal's newspapers, while more than a sixth of published articles in Düsseldorf's newspapers report about Montreal and Ubisoft. However, these articles report mostly about Ubisoft games. Only four articles, more than a third, report about the company. Even when the number is small, it indicates that Ubisoft in Montreal is recognized as a video game company in Germany.

2.3.3. Complementary Data

This research is complemented with the study of secondary data such as data for spatial, socio-economic and cultural information, which contain quantitative and qualitative data.

To complete the spatial dynamics, official documents published by the city or governments are used. These are reports on projects or programmes financed and/or supported by the city. These descriptions are supplemented by scientific studies carried out in the neighbourhood of Mile End in Montreal or in the neighbourhood of Flingern-Nord in Düsseldorf. Projects and studies that have been realised over the last 25 years and are (or can be) related to the dynamics under investigation are presented. The project presentation includes the aim, steps and the result as well as the executing partners. Data for the socio-economic dynamics are mainly gained from statistical data, such as data that contains information about shops, rent indices, real estate valuation and types of buildings and their ownership, which are mostly provided in the case of Germany by the Federal Statistical Office (*Statistisches Bundesamt*), by the statistical offices of North Rhine-Westphalia and the city of Düsseldorf, and in the case of Canada by Statistics Canada, by the *Institut de la statistique du Québec* and by the City of Montreal. Information to evaluate cultural dynamics are subject to different sources. Databases containing cultural data are set up by different institutions. Besides the Federal Government, each province and city in Canada and Germany provides its own data about culture, and in Germany, research results of qualitative research, for example, are provided by research institutes (Noll 2000, 10-13). The cultural data includes a list of cultural and creative places and amenities as well as a presentation of festivities held in the neighbourhoods.

When analysing the data, it should not be forgotten that the documents themselves represent a certain version of reality (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight 2010, 230; Carey 2012, 174; Coffey 2014, 369). The data obtained from these different types of sources are evaluated in the same way that

allow a proper comparison of the two researched neighbourhoods (Burzan 2014; Noll 2000). Burzan (2014:1034) points out that the indicators chosen shall relate to the researched topic to obtain valid results (validity).

These types were selected to have complemented data to the interviewees' perception of the dynamics. It should be noted that the objective of the consultation of the data is not its systematic analysis as for the interviews and newspaper articles but to identify the elements of the research in the general context of the neighborhood and its main statistical parameters in line with this study. The selected projects and programmes and data shall support the understanding and the interpretation of the qualitative analysis of the interviews and not be seen as separated independent research (see table 24).

Table 24: Types of documents and data

Data	Types/Examples
Spatial Data	Development plans, urban renewal projects and programmes
Socio-economic Data	Information about shops, rent indices, types of buildings and their ownerships; programmes to promote business structures
Cultural Data	Information about cultural institutions and organisations, cultural events like festivals

Source: Author

CHAPTER 3: MONTREAL AND DÜSSELDORF – THE TWO NEIGHBOURHOODS

This study examines the neighbourhoods of Mile End in Montreal and Flingern-Nord in Düsseldorf. In the following, the two cities and neighbourhoods are described to get a better understanding of the areas (3.1. Montreal and 3.2. Düsseldorf). This is done in view of the subsequent newspaper and interview analysis in order to contextualise the places, events and things the interviewees talk about and finally to better understand their answers and comments. Additionally, the choice of both researched neighbourhoods is described in connection with the reasons and objectives of a comparison (3.3), and the characterization of funding allocation in both places (3.4.).

3.1. Montreal

The Mile End in Montreal is one of the chosen neighbourhoods for the study. The following is a look at the neighbourhood and its historical development since the late 1950s. This look also includes the description of the neighbourhood and its creative milieu of the Mile End (3.1.1). This is followed by the relationship between the Mile End and the company Ubisoft, which forms the basis for this study (3.1.2). This part concludes with an overview of complementary information on spatial, socio-economic and cultural data (3.1.3).

3.1.1. Mile End

The City of Montreal is located in the southwest of the province of Quebec (figure 6). It is the second largest Canadian town with 1.76 million people living in the city and 4.1 million in the metropolitan area in 2016 (Statistics Canada 2022). The neighbourhood of Mile End is in the middle of Montreal, in the northwest of the arrondissement Le Plateau Mont-Royal (figure 7).⁴¹

⁴¹ A larger scale map is available in annex 3. There are also photos of Mile End to get a better impression of the neighbourhood.



Figure 6: Location of Mile End within Canada and Montreal

Source: Map of Canada (Title: OpenStreetMap, Authors: Contributors, Source: www.openstreetmap.org, Licence (CC BY-SA 2.0)) (Own representation)

Source: Map of Montreal (Title: Arrondissements et quartiers de Montréal, Author: Emdy, Source: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_des_quartiers_de_Montr%C3%A9al, Licence (CC BY-SA 4.0)), modified by the author



Figure 7: Neighbourhood of Mile End

Source: Map of Mile End (Title: OpenStreetMap, Authors: Contributors, Source: www.openstreetmap.org, Licence (CC BY-SA 2.0)), modified by the author

Before the annexation by the City of Montreal in 1909, Mile End, named Saint-Louis du Mile End, was a village on the outskirts of Montreal. Today, Mile End is part of the Le Plateau-Mont-Royal borough. The neighbourhood used to be an old industrial area populated by workers. During the 20th century until the 1980s, the predominant industry in the eastern part, the so-called *Secteur Saint-Viateur Est*, was the garment one which shaped the area with its huge six to seven floor tall red-brick construction buildings built in the first half of the 20th century and the megastructures built in the 1950s and 1960s. Besides the industrial buildings, Mile End is dominated by two- or three-floor high apartment buildings. The area is characterized by a cultural mix which is the result of its history of successive waves of immigration that changed its identity over time. At the beginning of the 20th century, Eastern and Southern European Jews moved to Mile End and made it as the principal Jewish neighbourhood in the city for almost 50 years. This group was succeeded by Greek and Portuguese people which made Mile End their centre before moving to the suburbs, to be superseded lately by a Hassidic Jewish community. During the last two decades of the last century, young educated non-immigrants settled in the neighbourhood, francophone and anglophone, attracted by low rents (Germain and Radice 2006, 120). The diversity of the neighbourhood is also reflected in the number and percentage of different mother tongues spoken by the residents, which is higher than the average in Montreal (Rantisi and Leslie 2017, 128). Besides these, Olazabal (2006, 11) remarks the existence of different social classes and the presence of a new Franco-Quebec bourgeoisie that let the Mile End stand out against the neighbourhoods around in the first decade of the millennium. All in all, it is this social, socio-economic and cultural diversity that is “*depuis longtemps à l’origine de son atmosphère conviviale, créative et ouverte*” (Rantisi and Leslie 2017, 143). Today in the neighbourhood of Mile End lives approximately 33,981 people on 1.6 km² (Ville de Montréal 2021).

Besides the variety of nationalities and religions, the Mile End neighbourhood is one of the most diverse neighbourhoods in terms of concentration of creative industries and workers. Mile End is characterized by places-based attributes, such as industrial buildings and public places, e.g., Lahaie Park and Lhasa-De Sela Park, that form an environment for the social encounters of creative workers and neighbourhood dwellers. After the downgrade of the garment industries, the former industry buildings became home for artists and musicians since the 1980s. They were attracted by the low rents and also contributed later to the Mile End’s image of a creative area. Today, there are an independent music scene, designers’ workshops, fashion boutiques, home furnishing stores and

a design scene that contribute to and want to profit from the cosmopolitan atmosphere and feeling in the neighbourhood (Rantisi and Leslie 2010, 2824-2825). For young and new artists and musicians, the neighbourhood is still pull factor because it offers the possibilities to gain experiences and to build up a network due to the variety of places close to each other, such as Club Social, Café Olimpico and Barfly, where they can meet and perform (Cummins-Russell and Rantisi 2012, 91). Against this background, the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN) nominated Mile End as Canada's Music Creation Capital in 2016 (SOCAN 2016). However, due to gentrification and the rising cost of rents, there has been a decline in the attraction of the neighbourhood for young artists and musicians and so the former networks have lost much of their vibrancy and various venues have also become tourist destinations.

In the neighbourhood, local cafés, bars, various restaurants and shops exist, complemented by the diversity of buildings, such as houses, commercial places, industrial buildings that characterise the neighbourhood and its 'feeling' (Cohendet, Llerena and Simon 2014, 124; Darchen and Tremblay 2015, 313; Germain and Rose 2000, 189; Tremblay and Battaglia 2012, 63), as well as temporary used public places, such as La Petite Floride in winter (ice-skating, 2016-2017) (La Pépinière 2016) or Aire Commune in summer (space for working, networking and relaxing with café/bar in the years 2017-2019⁴²) (Aire Commune 2017) next to *Champ des Possibles*, a brownfield next to the industrial site. In the words of Rantisi and Leslie (2010, 2832), it is "a lively bohemian quarter, and the dynamism of the area is reinforced by the compact, seamless mix of residential, commercial, and residual industrial spaces". Though, according to Désilets (2020, 4707) it has started to transform "from a bohemian multicultural hub to an international global village" with "students, professionals, visitors and tours who flock the streets of Mile End all year long" (p. 5). To these groups, one more can be added. In Montreal, the Mile End is also the place associated with the term 'hipster', which is becoming increasingly common in this neighbourhood. Hipsters are typically described as middle-class people between the ages of 20 and 35 who follow the latest trends (Stahl 2010, 321,326). In this picture of new people coming to the Mile End and a started transformation, one may not forget the point of gentrification. As in other neighbourhoods, a gentrification process has already started and is noticeable (Rantisi and Leslie 2010, 2839). But regarding the cultural and creative part of the Mile End, Rantisi and Leslie (2010, 2825) state that

⁴² Aire Commune existed from 2017-2019, i.e. in the three years before the interview phase.

“in contrast to other bohemian quarters, where gentrification has diminished creative processes, Mile End continues to nurture such processes”.

This development goes hand in hand with the attention given to the Mile End and the measures taken by the city authorities. Already at the beginning of the 1990s, the Mile End was included in Montreal’s city plan in 1992 as an inner-city neighbourhood where main streets and commercial streets are seen as places where people come together and network to foster neighbourhood vitality (Montréal 1993, 31). One decade later, the arrondissement Le Plateau-Mont-Royal includes improvement activities for the Mile End in its development plan, such as the project *Secteur Saint-Viateur Est* in 2004 to improve the attractiveness of the area (Le Plateau-Mont-Royal 2017b).

It is worth spending some words describing the group of the Hassidic Jews because they coin the neighbourhood distinctively and are a visible (immigration) group. The Hassidic Jews immigrated from Europe after the Second World War and today this community is the second important ultra-orthodox Hassidic community in North America (Désilets 2019, 12). They began to settle in the eastern part of Outremont. Less orthodox Jews first moved to the western part of Mile End before moving on to the suburbs of Montreal (Bur et al. 2017, 196). The main streets they settle are around Hutchison, Durocher and Jeanne-Mance (Alton 2011, 10).

3.1.2. Mile End and Ubisoft

The neighbourhood of Mile End is considered as “one of the most creative clusters worldwide” in the field of the video game industry (Grandadam, Cohendet and Simon 2013, 1705) and is home to several small companies, independent start-ups and the French based video-games firm Ubisoft. This company, which opened its Montreal branch in 1997 in a red-brick former textile industrial building in the centre of Mile End (figure 8), is one of the biggest video-game companies worldwide and employed about 3,000 people in Montreal in 2018 (Company Profile : Ubisoft Entertainment S.A 2018), of more than 12,000 worldwide in 35 studios (Anderie 2018, 45) at the time this research was conducted. Nowadays, besides the main building on Saint-Laurent/Saint-Viateur, Ubisoft is located in the neighbourhood in two other buildings on de Gaspé (close to the main building).



Figure 8: Edifice Ubisoft Mile End, corner Saint-Laurent/Saint-Viateur

Source: Author

Reasons for Ubisoft to choose this area were, besides the benefit of substantial grants and tax credits offered by the provincial government and a cheap rent, the image of the district “as one of the hippest urban areas in the city, the Mile-End neighbourhood” which should have “greatly contributed to stimulate and inspire the employees, by giving them the opportunity to actively take part in the local creative communities [...], and frequently meet together in the different concert halls, bars, clubs, art galleries and trendy stores” (Cohendet, Grandadam and Simon 2010, 102), and “the growing experience of the local creative workforce, well-trained in computer-science, cinema, fine arts, literature, theatre, management and marketing” (Cohendet and Simon 2007, 124). Ubisoft can profit from schools and universities that are specialised in programming and video game developing, such as Université de Montréal which trains their students at Campus Ubisoft and ISART Digital Montréal Inc. Ubisoft plays “the role of pillar firms, around which the clusters are revolving and evolving” (Cohendet, Llerena and Simon 2010, 164). The company supports with its policies a connection to Mile End by, for example, deploying constant efforts to attach its employees to the local creative milieu. At the beginning, the firm organised festivals and workshops to make the exchange of ideas and concepts between the employees and the neighbourhood possible (Cohendet, Grandadam and Simon 2010, 102-103), and it still celebrates their anniversaries in the neighbourhood with street festivals such as in 2007 and 2017. Besides this, Ubisoft supports the artistic sector, the “*« marginalité créatrice » qui anime le Mile End*” (Roy-Valex 2010, 369), other small companies in the neighbourhood (Moore 2013, 5), and it further financed cultural events for its employees “to absorb new creative inputs”, and to provide the opportunity to “build informal contacts with local artists and creators” (Grandadam, Cohendet and Simon 2013, 1706).

3.1.3. Complementary Data for Mile End

As supplementary data, secondary and statistical data on spatial (3.1.3.1.), socio-economic (3.1.3.2.) and cultural (3.1.3.3.) information is used. This information is additional to the main study, it is not analysed but has a descriptive and explanatory function. The urban development programmes and data presented are intended to support the understanding and interpretation of the qualitative analysis of the interviews and newspaper articles and are not to be understood as independent, separate research.

3.1.3.1. Spatial Data

The spatial data regarded are development plans realized by the City of Montreal and by the arrondissement Plateau-Mont Royal initiated during the last 20 years. In the following, selected spatial data that are connected to this research are briefly presented. These are data such as different urban development projects by the city, plans regarding green areas in the neighbourhood, housing schemes and the development of the cycling network in the Mile End. Measures up to 2021 were considered, i.e. up to the date during which the interviews were conducted.

Urban Development Projects by the City of Montreal

Project Secteur St. Viateur Est

The project *Secteur St. Viateur Est* encompasses an area that is situated in the northeast corner of Mile End between Saint-Laurent in the west, Henri-Julien in the east, Maguire in the south and the railway tracks in the north. It is the most densely built part of Mile End, coined by the former industrial buildings of the garment industry, classified in the project as “*megastructures manufacturières*”. The area also includes the former wasteland which is nowadays the *Champ des Possibles*. In 2004, the area dominated by apartments, empty lots and warehouses was identified in the *Plan d’urbanisme de la Ville de Montréal* as an area with a need for action. The construction period was 2008-2017 and the scheduled costs were 16 M\$ (Le Plateau-Mont-Royal 2017b; Le plateau-Mont-Royal 2017d). The measures to improve the whole area were for example the widening of sidewalks, refurbishing, redevelopment of streets, construction of *Allée Saint-Viateur*

including a cycle and foot path, installation of lighting, benches, bike racks and bins, decontamination of soil as well as landscaping (trees, shrubs and perennials) (Le Plateau-Mont-Royal 2014; Le plateau-Mont-Royal 2017d; Le Plateau-Mont-Royal 2017c, 3). Besides this, the project's vision is to protect premises dedicated to artists, to offer a diversity of shops, services and jobs, and areas for an abundant social and cultural life (Le Plateau-Mont-Royal 2017b), and later on the diversification and protection of artists' studios, as well as the valorization of *Champ des Possibles* (Le Plateau-Mont-Royal 2014, 6). The redevelopment of the St. Viateur sector also included the construction of a crossing for pedestrians and cyclists of the railway tracks to connect Mile End with the Rosemont metro station. This part couldn't be realized because of a rejection by the Canadian Pacific railway company (Touzin 2017).

Project Fairmount Est/Saint-Dominique

In this project, the street Fairmount was transformed over 20 meters between the two parts of Saint-Dominique into a car free green public space between 2019-2020. This project also contributes to the greening of the neighbourhood, and the improvement of road safety. The development of the public space Fairmount cost about \$6 million (Ville de Montréal 2017).

Project Campus Outremont MIL

Although the new campus of Université de Montréal isn't in Mile End but in Outremont, MIL is included in the list of urban development projects because the new campus is next to the Mile End and an influence on the future development of Mile End cannot be excluded.

The new campus is located on a former railroad shunting yard of the Canadian Pacific, which was abandoned in 1985 and since then unused (Ville de Montréal 2020c). The transformation of the area of 38 hectares has started in 2011 with an estimated budget of 174.2 M\$ in cooperation with the City of Montreal and in coordination with the bordering neighbourhoods (Ville de Montréal 2020c). Parts of the project are, amongst others, the construction of the new science complex of Université de Montréal and further university buildings on 30 hectares (opened in 2019), the building of 1,300 new apartments and of public spaces including a public square and three neighborhood parks on four hectares. In addition, infrastructure measures were carried out, such as the construction of a bridge between the Acadie metro station and the MIL campus, as well as the

expansion of cycle paths and a road network (Ville de Montréal 2020c).

Master Plan Arrondissement Plateau-Mont-Royal

In 2005, the borough Plateau-Mont-Royal published a master plan for its urban development within the framework of the City of Montreal's master plan of urbanism which was updated regularly until 2015 (Ville de Montréal 2005/2015). Single actions regarding the Mile End are the valorization of the Mile End's library (Ville de Montréal 2005/2015, 13), and the particular attention to the shopping streets in the Mile End in order to keep their characteristics after reconstructions (Ville de Montréal 2005/2015, 33).⁴³

Green Areas

Abord des Voies Ferrées dans le Mile End

The sector that borders Mile End in the north along the railway line is in the focus of the project *Abord des voies ferrées dans le Mile End - Les passages à niveau cyclo-pédestres*, which started with first projects in 2014. The main aim is to form a green corridor along the railway line between Saint-Urbain and Henri-Julien to increase the quality of life of the neighbourhood dwellers (Ville de Montréal 2019a). In particular, this project should, amongst others, increase the number of places for recreation and for social and cultural meetings and offer more public space for the dwellers by for example transforming former parking lots into parks. Further, the project should increase the security of pedestrian's walkways and bike paths. New places created are for example the sculpture park *Jardin du Crépuscule*, the skate park under the viaduct which was requested by the local community, the parks Parc Lhasa-De Sela, and Parc sans nom, as well as *Champ des Possibles* (Ville de Montréal 2019a).

Champ des Possibles

The *Champ des Possibles* is a brownfield on a former train station and industrial site which was abandoned in the 1970s (McSwiney and Rose 2012,1). The 12,737m² large area (Ville de Montréal 2019a) is located in the northeast corner of Mile End, at the corner of Bernard Est and de Gaspé, along the railway line in the north, Henri-Julien in the east and Allée Saint-Viateur in the south.

⁴³ The master plan Arrondissement Plateau-Mont-Royal has not been reissued since 2015.

After first actions in 2008, the non-profit organization *Les Amis du Champ des Possibles* was founded as a community project to maintain the area (McSwiney and Rose 2012, 4). The area was bought by the City in 2009 and integrated in the project of St. Viateur Est. In 2013 it was recognized as natural habitat by the borough (Le Plateau-Mont-Royal 2020). The objectives of the *Champ des Possibles* are to preserve the wild green space and protect the urban biodiversity reserve, characterised by many different species of plants, birds and insects. It also aims to promote sustainable development and preserve the heritage character by keeping interventions in the area to a minimum (Ville de Montréal 2019a).

Ruelles Vertes

Since 1997, there are so-called Ruelles Vertes, small streets that are transformed into green streets and places by plantation of flowers and bushes for at least one year. Responsible for the Ruelles Vertes are the neighbourhood dwellers. Also in the Mile End, neighbourhood dwellers created ten Ruelles Vertes in the Mile End during the last 15 years. They can be co-financed by the arrondissement (Ville de Montréal 2020b).

Housing Schemes

The Mile End is already a very dense neighbourhood. Thus, there are hardly any large-scale housing projects, nor are there any urban construction projects worth mentioning. Nevertheless, three projects are presented. They are next to the buildings Ubisoft is located in, which the employees of Ubisoft pass by everyday, and which resulted in a further influx of people in the neighbourhood. One of the projects is the *Résidence Le Mile-End*, a retirement home for people with moderate income, situated on Maguire between de Gaspé and Henri-Julien, which offers 181 dweller units since 2008. The project is part of the revitalisation of Maguire initiated by the arrondissement Plateau-Mont-Royal (Vallée 2008). One block away, the housing project *Coopérative d'habitation Mile-end* (Coop Mile End) is in the former *École des Premières Lettres* of *Collège Français* on de Gaspé. The school was transformed into 92 dweller units to revitalize the Saint-Viateur sector (Le Plateau-Mont-Royal 2017a, 8). The *Coopérative d'habitation Mile-end* is a social housing project and opened its doors in 2018 especially for people with low income, families and artists (Coopérative d'habitation Mile-end 2020). Finally, on Henri-Julien between Maguire and du Carmel, the project *Plateau 54* was realized by Habitations Laurendeau, a private

company. 63 condos were built between 2018-2019 on a former brownfield (Habitations Laurendeau 2020). All projects refer to the creative environment of Mile End, the centrality of its location in Montreal and the easy access to it by metro, bike etc.

Transport Development Plan: Réseau Express Vélo REV

The Réseau Express Vélo REV is a network of bike axes on no less than 184 km in whole Montréal, of which 17 axes are accessible all year round (Ville de Montréal 2020a). In 2018, the bike lane on Clark was rebuilt. A strip now separates the bike lane from the street which makes it accessible all year round. In 2020 two new bike lanes were added to the REV. One of the new lanes is the 8,7 km long axe Berri-Lajeunesse/St-Denis that gives access to the Mile from the north and south. The second one is the axe on Bellechasse, which connects de Gaspé and Chatelain on a six km long bike lane and which gives easy access from the east (Ville de Montréal 2020a). Although these two added lanes don't cross the Mile End, it plays a role for the neighbourhood, because the Mile End is now more easily accessible by bike.

3.1.3.2. Socio-Economic Data

The socio-economic data in this section focuses on shops, rent indices, real estate valuation, ownership rate of housing, as well as on data of the neighbourhood and its dwellers. The City of Montreal and Statistique Canada provide numbers about neighbourhoods on a regular basis, every five years, which are published in the *Profil de district électoral* and *Recensement de la population* respectively. Although the Mile End is part of the arrondissement of Le Plateau-Mont-Royal, all the desired statistical data from 2004 onwards could be found. Earlier data on the neighbourhood, e.g. from 1996, also include the area south of Mile End down to Avenue de Pins, which was then called Saint-Louis/Mile End, and later data until 2004 refer to the former borders of the arrondissement that changed due to a reordering of the arrondissements. Therefore, no reference is made to data prior to 2004 unless necessary. In addition to this data, scientific papers that have been published on the Mile End and are related to (individual) dynamics of this research are taken into account.

Shops

The changes of shops in the neighbourhood are the subject of several scientific studies, some of which are included because they clearly show the current state and changes. Shops are along the several commercial streets in the Mile End. Classified as commercial streets by the City of Montreal are Bernard, Fairmount and Laurier Est all between Saint-Laurent and Hutchison, and Saint-Viateur between de Gaspé and du Parc, as well as du Parc, Saint-Laurent, and Saint-Denis in the area the Mile End (Ville de Montréal 2019b).

Shopping Streets and their Density

Villain (2011) researched the density of commercial activities in selected streets of Montreal⁴⁴ under the aspects of urban form and its influence on retail activities, for example the influence of a metro station on the streets around. Although her research is not specifically about the Mile End, she researched single street blocks of the area. She examined the retail density, i.e. how many retail businesses are located in a street section.⁴⁵ (Villain 2011, 124). For the Mile End, Villain identified the following densities. On Fairmount, the retail density is the lowest. There are slightly more businesses on Saint-Viateur and Bernard. There is a clearer difference between du Parc (with a higher density between Saint-Viateur and Bernard) and Laurier. The intensity of shops is highest on Saint-Laurent between Laurier and Saint-Viateur.

Vacancies

In April 2018, the *Coalition Commerce Vie de quartier* (CCVQ) was founded by the *Comité des citoyen-ne-s du Mile End*, shop owners, dwellers, etc. of the Mile End because they were concerned about developments in the Mile End's commercial sector at the end of 2017 and at the beginning of 2018. Concerns were, amongst others “*au fil des dernières années, une « spéculation » galopante, un grand roulement des commerces, une pérennité des petits commerces fragilisée, des*

⁴⁴ The City of Montreal defines commercial streets as “*une voie de circulation où l'on trouve un grand nombre de commerces. Cela implique une certaine densité commerciale en rez-de-chaussée*” (Ville de Montréal 2019b), but a definition of “grand nombre” is not given. Villain 2011 refers to the following definition in her work: “a ‘commercial artery’ is defined as ‘a concentration of a minimum of 50 commercial establishments located on a section of a Montreal street. In general, this section is no longer than 1 km in length’” (Villain 2011, 60).

⁴⁵ Villain (2011) calculated the density in the following way: (Total number of commercial establishments along the street segment / Street Segment Length) * 100 (p. 124).

fermetures de petits commerces indépendants et de proximité et de plus en plus de locaux vacants” (Coalition Commerce Vie de Quartier (Mile End) 2020, 2).⁴⁶ The aim was to propose recommendations and solutions for political institutions and politicians regarding how to keep a diversity of shops that met the needs of the dwellers and finally how to save the identity of the neighbourhood. In January 2020, the final report was presented. They report that several (small) shops have gone out of business in recent years, especially in Bernard and Saint-Viateur, mostly connected with new owners of the buildings and an above-average rise of rents that the shop owners couldn’t afford any more or a denial of rental extensions. In some cases, long-established businesses are also affected. In the report some examples are given such as the book shop *L’écume des jours* and the clothing store *Le Nid de la Cigogne* both on Saint-Viateur or the café *Cagibi* on Saint-Laurent (Coalition Commerce Vie de Quartier (Mile End) 2020, 3). Some of these shops were replaced by restaurants, cafés or other businesses willing to accept the new conditions. But there were also shops that remained empty for several months, or, as in the case of the former *Cagibi*, where the shop even stood empty for two years because of speculation or rack-rents (Coalition Commerce Vie de Quartier (Mile End) 2020, 2). This coins the neighbourhood visibly and emotionally in the sense of the neighbourhood spirit.

Rue Saint-Viateur

Of the seven streets classified as commercial streets by the City of Montreal, the focus here is on Saint-Viateur by referring to the work of Martha Radice (2010), *Everyday Cosmopolitan Place Making: Multiethnic Commercial Streets in Montréal Neighbourhoods*. She researched Saint-Viateur under the angle of “social relations in the multiethnic neighbourhood commercial street” (Radice 2010, 74). On this basis, Radice gives a detailed picture of Saint-Viateur between Saint-Laurent and du Parc and the shops and offers located there. On Saint-Viateur, that is

in the heart of the neighbourhood [...] there are roughly fifty businesses in all, about thirty of which deal in food in some form – grocery stores, bakeries, caterers, restaurants and cafés. The others include two bookshops, a few clothing stores, and the ubiquitous

⁴⁶ In 2018, between Saint-Joseph and Saint-Viateur a vacancy rate of 10% is stated by a company that did a research about the potential of the street for the location of new companies (Paquin Recherche et Associés inc. 2018). It also analysed the type of structure of the shops and states about this section of Saint-Laurent that “*La proportion de commerces indépendants y est élevée (93%), mais on y trouve aussi quelques chaînes, dont La Cordée (l’ancien Yéti). C’est aussi un secteur d’artistes et de galeries*” (Paquin Recherche et Associés inc. 2018).

hairdressers and *depanneurs*. Some of these businesses are marked as Italian or Jewish (Ashkenazi in the case of the bagel stores, Orthodox kosher for a butcher and fishmonger); other businesses are easily identifiable as Polish, Senegalese, Caribbean or Greek. (Radice 2010, 87).

Having a look on the years before, she states that

at the commercial level, ten new restaurants or caterers have opened on St-Viateur since 1996; one of the main grocery stores won a design award for its thorough renovation; and the street now boasts a chocolatier, an expensive stationery shop, two bookshops and an art gallery which has taken to advertizing local real estate for sale in its window. (p. 88)

Besides the shops, Radice characterizes the street as more densely and more lively than Saint-Viateur's parallel shopping streets and indicates that "the borough puts public benches back on the street each summer, and the cafés and restaurants that do not have terrasses [*sic*] on side streets put a table or two outside" (Radice 2010, 88). During her research, she discovered that the owners of the shops and the workers do not perceive the transformation of Saint-Viateur so differently. They state that "neighbourhood has changed very much [...] since [...] 1999" and "St-Viateur becoming, so popular over the years [...] a new breed of people coming in" (Radice 2010,110). This transformation of the neighbourhood and its businesses is seen, among other things, in the context of the new people in the neighbourhood who bring their own businesses. These new people are perceived as all kinds of people and different kinds of communities connected by the same interests (Radice 2010, 130). The 'old-established' groups are replaced by a group of young people, described as trendy, students, and yuppies, young families, as well as "hipster musician types, creative people" (Radice 2010, 163) who made the neighbourhood trendy. The ethnic background and ethnic groups respectively are not important for the interviewees and were "named less often than the young 'artist' (or hipster, musician, creative or bohemian) crowd" (Radice 2010, 215).

Offer and demand of the different stores are also addressed in her research. Regarding food, one shop owner who sells some groceries and homemade Polish food explained that the business is running better for the last years since the street became more popular and young people, students, musicians and artists come to the neighbourhood (Radice 2010, 183). Another shop owner who sells south American cuisine has a different experience. His customers don't ask for original food

but “sandwiches to take out to the street or back to the office” (Radice 2010, 186).

Regarding the shop’s offer, different statements are given. One participant points out the diversity of the shops and their offer due to the owner’s background and country of origin, which for the participant has also become a more inseparable part of the neighbourhood (Radice 2010, 189). Another participant’s statement goes in a similar direction. He points out the different offer that each new shop owner brings, while keeping the offer of the predecessors because of his/her old customers. This leads to a rich, different offer from all over the world (Radice 2010, 188). As this offer is intended for the neighbourhood, other shops in the district are aimed at groups such as the bohemian and artistic public, according to the study. These are stores such as “the ‘Eastern’ style jewellery and accessories shop, the crêpe restaurant, the martial arts centre, the boutique selling local designer fashion” (Radice 2010, 297). Based on these findings, the author sees Saint-Viateur as gentrifying (Radice 2010, 83) because “gentrifying commercial streets are necessarily oriented towards the outside, since they must be immediately legible for newcomers, whether they live locally or not” (Radice 2010, 71).

Rent Indices, Real Estate Valuation and Ownership

Rents, the average monthly housing costs of tenant households, have increased throughout the period under review, 2001-2016⁴⁷. On average, they have risen by about \$100 every five years. Rents have gone up in the Mile End from \$585 in 2001 to \$971 in 2016 which is an increase of about 66%. In the same period, they have gone up from \$555 to \$835 in Montreal (50.5%) (Ville de Montréal 2021). The increase in rent in the Mile End is also reflected by the increase in real estate valuation, the average value of dwellings. It is \$415,382 in 2011 and \$481,527 in 2016, which is an increase of 15.2%. This percentage is the same as in the whole Montreal where it rose from \$373,475 to \$430,072 for the same time. Along with the increase in the value of private property, the share of private property also increased, but not to the same extent. In the Mile End, the share of private property rose of 9.5% in the period from 2006 to 2016. There is a less marked increase in Montreal: in the same period the share only rose by 6.9%. Thus, in 2016, the rate in the Mile End is 32.2% and in Montreal 36.7% (Ville de Montréal 2021).

⁴⁷ The period analysed goes up to 2016, as no more recent data was available at the time of the interviews.

Types of Buildings

The City of Montreal classifies neighbourhoods in different types of land use. Most part of the Mile End is classified as residential area. Du Parc, Saint-Laurent, and Laurier-Est between these two streets are classified as mixed-use area where office and commercial buildings and light industries can be found besides housing and retail. The area of the former garment factories is categorized in different types, as mixed-use and employment area where industrial, office and commercial buildings predominate. Along the railway line, the area is identified as employment area, and further three blocks are classified as major institutional facility (two) and as Convent, Monastery or Place of Worship (one) (Ville de Montréal 2005/2015). More than half of the buildings in the Mile End, 54.7%, were built before 1946. In the succeeding periods, 29.8% were built between 1946 and 1980, and 12.4% between 1981 and 2000. Between 2001 and 2011 the share of new buildings was 4.1% (Ville de Montréal 2014, 28).

Neighbourhood Dwellers

The population of the Mile End rose slightly during the last two decades, from 31,910 in 2011 to 33,981 in 2016, an increase of 6.2%. This is less than the population increase of Montreal, which rose about 7.9% from 1,580,494 to 1,704,694 in the same time period (Ville de Montréal 2021). The population increase in the Mile End cannot be directly attributed to one group. The change in the proportion of the population by different age groups varies by only 1-2% over this period, and not only in the Mile End but also in Montreal. The share is 12.8% in 2006 and 13.7% in 2016 for the 0-14-year-olds in the Mile End (15.1% and 15.6% in Montreal for the same time period). For the 15-34-year-olds the share in the Mile End is 39.7% in 2006 and 38.9% in 2016 (in Montreal it is 28.6% and 28.8% for the same time period) (Ville de Montréal 2021). To complete this picture, the share of immigrants is included. In the same time period, this share doesn't vary much in the Mile End. It decreases in the Mile End from 25.5% in 2006 to 24.8% in 2016 in the same time period, while in Montreal it increases from 30.8% to 34.3% (Ville de Montréal 2021).

3.1.3.3. Cultural Data

Mile End is the centre of artists in Montreal. According to a 2006 study, the Mile End was the neighbourhood with the highest density of artists in Canada (Hill 2010). With this in mind, it does not make sense to list all the cultural institutions associated with artists and galleries and only a selection is given.⁴⁸

Cultural Institutions

There are several cultural institutions⁴⁹ in the Mile End of which some are briefly presented to give an overview and an impression of the variety of the cultural activities in the neighbourhood.

Besides the artist complexes on de Gaspé and Casgrain, where many artists and exhibition places are located, there are also galleries outside these two buildings. Galleries, for example, are *Galerie D'Avignon* on Laurier Ouest, *Galerie D'Art Gala*, *Galerie Simon Blais* and *Galerie Youn*, on Saint-Laurent, and artists with their art galleries are *Articule* on Fairmount Ouest and *Atelier Galerie Alain Piroir* on Casgrain, for example. As examples of artists and their art galleries in the complex of de Gaspé are *Atelier Circulaire / Centre d'artistes en arts imprimés*, *Centre D'art et de Diffusion Clark*, *Elektra – BIAN*, and *Occurrence / Mandate espace d'art et d'essai contemporains*. It is also home to *Ateliers Créatifs* which is a non-profit real estate developer whose work aims to create and maintain affordable and appropriate working and creative spaces for professional visual artists. Further cultural institutions in the Mile End are, for example, the theater and event locations *Fairmount Theatre (ex-Cabaret du Mile End)* and *Théâtre Rialto* on du Parc as well as *Casa Del Popolo* and *La Sala Rossa* on Saint-Laurent, the movie theater *Cinéma Moderne* on Saint-Laurent, the *Musée des pompiers de Montréal* on Saint-Laurent and *Twilight Sculpture Garden* on van Horn. To add to this list is the public library *Mordecai-Richler*, as well as the office of the music festival *POP Montreal*, both on du Parc.

⁴⁸ A detailed description of the institutions and festivals listed here is given in annex 5.

⁴⁹ The following definition is used: “Cultural institutions are institutions with an acknowledged mission to engage in the conservation, interpretation and dissemination of cultural, scientific, and environmental knowledge, and promote activities meant to inform and educate citizens on associated aspects of culture, history, science and the environment.” (RICHERS resources 2014), and suggestions by Paré (2015, 115) who lists examples of cultural institutions.

Cultural Events and Street Festivals

There are also several cultural events and street festivals that take place in the Mile End and that contribute to the cultural atmosphere in the neighbourhood. Some of the major ones are listed below and as for the presentation of the cultural institutions, this presentation can only be selective. Cultural events in the Mile End are for example the art event *Atelier Portes Ouvertes (APO)* (since 2008, irregular), the events of the historical society *Mémoire du Mile End* (2003-), the festival *Phenomena* (2012-) and the music festivals *Mile Ex End Music Festival* (2017-2019) and *POP Montreal - International Music Festival* (since 2002). Besides these events there are also street festivals that take or took place in the Mile End and are well-known. These are for example *La fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste* (1986/88-2001), *Mile End en fleurs* (since 2014), *San Marziale* (since 1971) and the single street festival *St-Viateur festival de rue* (2007) organised by Ubisoft.

3.2. Düsseldorf

The second neighbourhood in this research is Flingern-Nord in Düsseldorf. In the following, the focus is on Flingern-Nord and its historical development since the late 1950s, including the creative milieu of the area today (3.2.1). Thereafter, the relationship between Flingern-Nord and the company Ubisoft is described to set the frame for this research (3.2.2). In addition, a description of two further neighbourhoods is included. It is the neighbourhood of Flingern-Süd because this part cannot be easily separated from Flingern-Nord, and Stadtmitte. It is connected to the former location of the company Ubisoft that moved in 2019 to Flingern-Nord (3.2.3). This part concludes with complementary information on spatial, socio-economic and cultural data for Flingern-Nord (3.2.4).

3.2.1. Flingern-Nord

Düsseldorf is the capital of the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia and lies in the west of Germany (figure 9). It is the 7th largest city in Germany with about 646,000 inhabitants in the city and 2.07 million in the metropolitan area of Düsseldorf/Mittlerer Niederrhein (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020d). The city is the main centre for advertisement in Germany, also called the capital of advertisement (Glauner 2004) and it became the centre for fashion in Germany after World War II with one of the biggest fashion shows worldwide (Montag 2004). This contributes as well to Düsseldorf's image as the creative class' center of the province (Gottschalk, Hamm and Imöhl 2010, 24). Flingern-Nord is in the centre of Düsseldorf, east of Stadtmitte and the main railway lines, south of Düsselal, and north of a railway line that marks the frontier to Flingern-Süd (figure 10)⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ A larger scale map is available in annex 3. There are also photos of Flingern-Nord to get a better impression of the neighbourhood.

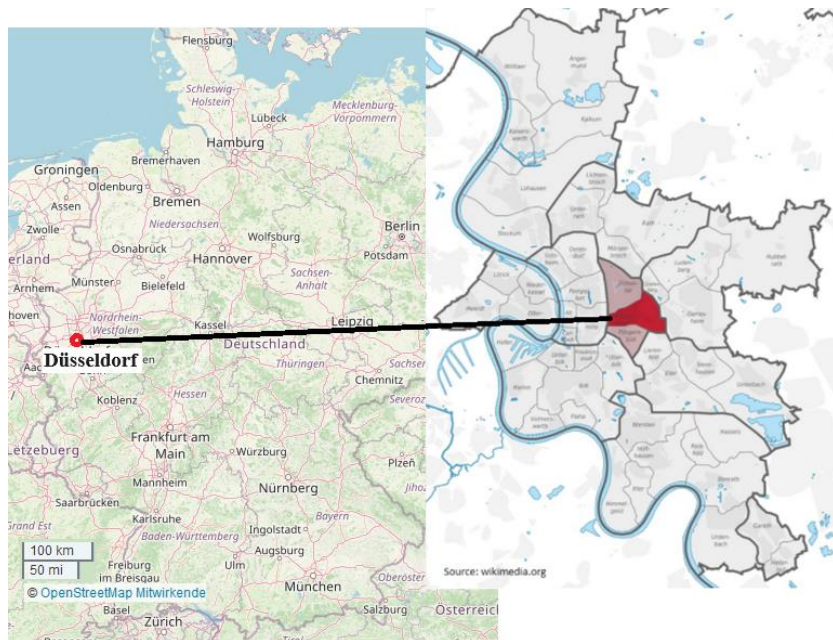


Figure 9: Location of Flingern-Nord within Düsseldorf and Germany

Source: Map of Germany (Title: OpenStreetMap, Authors: Contributors, Source: www.openstreetmap.org, Licence (CC BY-SA 2.0)) (Own representation)

Source: Title: Location of borough Flingern-Nord in Düsseldorf, Author: TUBS, Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:D%C3%BCsseldorf_Stadtteil_Flingern-Nord.svg, Licence: Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic, modified by the author

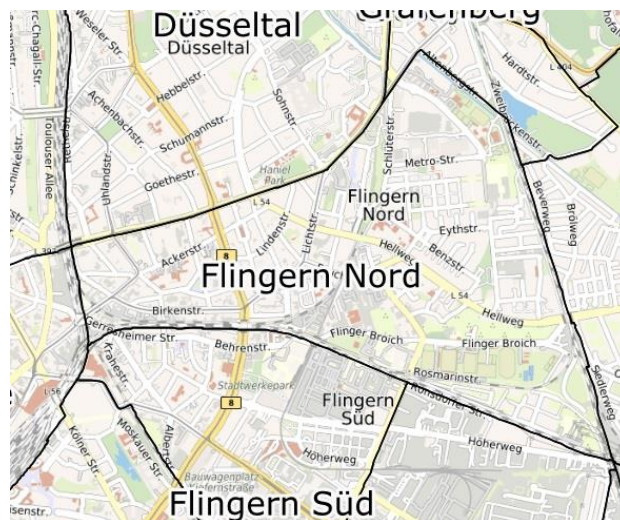


Figure 10: Neighbourhood of Flingern-Nord

Source: Stadtplanwerk 2.0 © Regionalverband Ruhr und Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf (Lizenz: dl-de/by-2-0), Datengrundlagen: ALKIS, ATKIS - Land NRW/Katasterämter (Lizenz: dl-de/zero-2-0) und OpenStreetMap - Mitwirkende (License: ODbL), modified by the author

Although the first roots of Flingern go back more than 800 years, it remained a farming village for nearly six centuries. The neighbourhood only started growing in the second half of the 19th century with the beginning of industrialization and during Wilhelminian time (1870-1914), and it developed as a working-class district (Eckert 2013). The area is marked by four- to five-story buildings partially with stores on the ground floor. Typical for this area are backyards with workshops and garages which are accessible from the streets. Flingern-Nord, long seen as a blue-collar worker area (Klose 2017), but also as a neighbourhood with bourgeois people and craftsmen (Eckert 2013), was long a preferred neighbourhood for students, young people and artists besides long-established dwellers, and home to the creative scene in Düsseldorf also due to cheap rents (Herrendorf 2011) and a reasonable availability of apartments (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2006, 50). Since the beginning of the 21st century many artists, ateliers and art galleries settled in Flingern-Nord which led to a creative and young atmosphere (Haselbach, Gerecht and Hempel 2010, 45). Because of its high concentration of designers and cultural workers, Flingern-Nord is described as a center for creatives (Glatter and Sturm 2019, 182; Üblacker 2015, 73), and it has become one of Düsseldorf's hip neighbourhoods (Teigeler 2013). Business life mainly takes place on Ackerstraße and Birkenstraße. The neighbourhood is coined by cafés, shops with unique and handmade fashion, jewelry and furniture stores, clubs and traditional restaurants as well as ateliers and a wide range of galleries (Harnischmacher 2019; Ihme 2014). It is also specialized in furniture in antiques (Sobotta, Grebe and Maniura 2017, 108). The neighbourhood is home to several small one room galleries, and it is also home to the *Sammlung Philara* [Collection Philara] on Birkenstraße, a private collection with more than 1000 exhibits of contemporary art. Flingern-Nord is also a place for an independent movie theatre and libraries. There are public places and parks in the neighbourhood, such as *Stadt-Natur-Park* [City-Nature-Parc] on Schlüterstraße with play corners for all ages and workout devices, and *Hermannplatz* [square Hermann] where since 2003 a farmer's market takes place on Saturdays, which attracts young families (Neumann, Schmidt and Trettin 2007, 77). The roots of the city's soccer team, *Fortuna Düsseldorf*, that plays in the German soccer league lay in Flingern.

Since World War II, waves of immigrants have coined Flingern-Nord. Between the late fifties and the early seventies, the so-called '*Gastarbeiter*', guestworkers, came to the area. The guestworkers came mainly from Mediterranean neighbouring states, such as Italy, (former) Yugoslavia, Turkey, Spain and Greece, and moved to West Germany as labour migrants. They settled inter alia in inner

city districts, such as Flingern-Nord. Thus, today still a noteworthy number of Greek, Turkish, Polish and Italians (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020d) live in the neighbourhood. This wave of immigration was succeeded by immigrants from Eastern Europe during the 1990s. Glebe (1997) states that until the 1990s the immigrants tend to stay in their neighbourhood, but nowadays the migration movement within the city has increased (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020d). Glebe (1997, 155) further states that the new dwellers “are less status-minded in the selection of their housing environment, and even favour the multicultural ambience of the inner city” and that “[t]hey like to shop in the exotic atmosphere of Turkish stores, and to eat in Italian pizzerias or Turkish kebab fast food grills”. Flingern-Nord covers an area of 2.79 km² and its population is about 25,500 (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020d).

The district of Flingern-Nord is defined by its administrative boundaries, as is Flingern-Süd, which is separated from Flingern-Nord to the south by a railway line. Both are clearly marked. Nevertheless, this differs from the linguistic usage and perception of Düsseldorfers as to what Flingern, Flingern-Nord or Flingern-Süd is.⁵¹ In the language use, the name Flingern is used widely, meaning both, or only one part of it. This depends on any single person and can only be identified with the context (for example, Neumann, Schmidt and Trettin (2007) distinguish between Flingern and Flingern-Süd; Gazsi Laki (2018) uses ‘Flingern’ to describe Flingern-Süd; Bernhardt (2016) uses ‘Flingern’ for both parts; and Glebe (2004) focuses on Flingern-Nord by using ‘Flingern’). Administrative boundaries are also one point of the analysis in this research.

3.2.2. Flingern-Nord and Ubisoft

Düsseldorf attracted video game companies to open their business there, especially in the early years, when North Rhine-Westphalia was the starting place of the video game industry in the 1980s and 1990s in Germany (Castendyk and Müller-Lietzkow 2017, 20), and still today it attracts new companies to open up studios (Kaczmarek 2015). One of the companies is Ubisoft with its German branch (figures 11 and 12) which was attracted, according to the CEO of Ubisoft Düsseldorf, by

⁵¹ This was also explained to me by inhabitants of Düsseldorf. For instance, one said that when he used to live in the neighbourhood, people only talked about Flingern. The usage of Flingern-Nord came recently, and he is not sure where the borders are. Further, to this confusion, the signposting of neighbourhood names placed by the city might contribute. At the corner of Grafenberger Allee and Lichtstraße, the town sign only indicates ‘Flingern’ when entering Flingern-Nord.

the airport with its good and fast transport connection to the Paris headquarter and the cosmopolitanism of Düsseldorf (Blue Byte 2015, Jovanovic 2016). Ubisoft's Düsseldorf branch opened in 1995, and the associated video game company Blue Byte, founded in 1988, was taken over by Ubisoft in 2001. In 2019, the company executed several changes. First, in August, the company changed its name from the common used one 'Ubisoft Blue Byte' to 'Ubisoft Düsseldorf' only (bth 2019), and second, the company relocated from Adlerstraße next to the suburban railway station *Am Wehrhahn* to a new building in Luise-Rainer-Straße in Flingern-Nord (GamesWirtschaft.de 2019) which is two kilometers away from the old location (see figure 13). The new building offers Ubisoft more space. Along with the new location, Ubisoft grew and employs 520 employees (GamesWirtschaft.de 2019) (compared to 300 people in 2017 (Blue Byte GmbH 2017))⁵² and ranks among the biggest video developers in Germany (GamesWirtschaft.de 2019). Nevertheless, this branch is smaller than the branch in Montreal (3,000 employees in 2018 (Company Profile : Ubisoft Entertainment S.A 2018)).



Figure 11: Edifice Ubisoft Düsseldorf, Adlerstraße (until August 2019)

Source: Author



Figure 12: Edifice Ubisoft Düsseldorf, Luise-Rainer-Straße (since August 2019)

Source: Author

⁵² The number of employees is the one during the interview phase.



Figure 13: Former and new location of Ubisoft in Düsseldorf

Source: Stadtplanwerk 2.0 © Regionalverband Ruhr und Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf (Lizenz: dl-de/by-2-0), Datengrundlagen: ALKIS, ATKIS - Land NRW/Katasterämter (Lizenz: dl-de/zero-2-0) und OpenStreetMap - Mitwirkende (License: ODbL), modified by the author

The Düsseldorf branch can profit of skilled employees trained at local schools and universities specialized in video gaming and programming, such as the *Mediadesign Hochschule*, one university with whom Ubisoft cooperates (Patel 2012). Ubisoft also pays attention to the young and school students to inspire them for video game developing, and therefore supports summer schools and organisations where kids can learn how to program a video game (Lange 2019; Trinks 2018).

So far, Ubisoft and Blue Byte haven't initiated activities in the neighbourhood, but they are participating in events that take place within Düsseldorf such as the 16th *Düsseldorf 'Frankreichfest'* (France Festival) at which they organised a (video) dance competition at the Ubisoft booth, and the North Rhine-Westphalian *NRW KULTURsekretariat's Next Level Festival* in 2017 at which they organised a game art exhibition. Further, they organised a game jam in 2016 (arl 2016), and a public game competition with a game made by Ubisoft in 2018 (Lieb 2018).⁵³

⁵³ The activities considered go up to the interview phase.

3.2.3. Flingern-Süd and Stadtmitte

In the case of Düsseldorf, it is necessary to consider further neighbourhoods: Flingern-Süd, because the literature and dwellers doesn't separate clearly between both parts, and Stadtmitte, as it is the neighbourhood which is connected to the former location of Ubisoft in Adlerstraße, and which also borders Flingern-Nord in the east.

The development in both parts of Flingern differs, which was accentuated by the building of the railway line during the industrialization period that separates both parts. In the southern part, factories such as Henkel opened, as well as public utilities, but in contrast to the northern part no commercial area was established (Glebe 2004, 126). Flingern-Süd is still coined industrially, and it is still marked by houses for industrial workforce and houses with a basic structure for buildings. The metalworking industry was rampant and coined the neighbourhood until its decline followed by plant closures in the 1970s (Molck 2004, 144). These former areas were transformed to cultural centers since the 1980s, starting with the *Zakk Zentrum für aktuelle Kunst* [Zakk – Centre for actual art]⁵⁴ on Fichtenstraße for alternative neighbourhood culture, and the Musicalhaus Capitol and *Tanzhaus NRW* [House of Dance NRW]⁵⁵ on Erkrather Straße (Molck 2004, 144; Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2019). In Flingern-Süd, on 1.48 km² live nowadays about 10,100 people with a higher number of foreigners than in Flingern-Nord, 36,7% (to 24.4%), and with a notable share of Turkish, Greek, Polish, Moroccan and Syrian (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020d).

The former location of Ubisoft was in Adlerstraße, so it is also worth looking at the neighbourhood of Stadtmitte. Stadtmitte is the economic centre of the city and very heterogeneous with office buildings, an important number of retail businesses and department stores, busy shopping streets as well as a financial district. Stadtmitte is one of the most diverse neighbourhoods in Düsseldorf concerning migration background with high share of Japanese⁵⁶, followed by Greeks, Chinese and

⁵⁴ The Zakk, the Centre for Action, Culture and Communication, was founded in 1977 and is housed in a former industrial building. Its aim is to offer culture for everyone in the fields of music, literature, cabaret, and comedy. It also offers the opportunity for exchange/discussion groups on political topics and organises parties. According to their website (www.zakk.de), they organised 900 events with 150,000 visitors in 2017. The Zakk is a non-profit limited company that also receives funding from the city.

⁵⁵ The tanzhaus nrw specialises in contemporary dance and has eight dance and training studios; dancers can learn, train, and perform in an academy. Performances take place regularly.

⁵⁶ Düsseldorf has the third largest Japanese community in Europe after London and Paris.

Indians (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020d). The Japanese started to settle in Düsseldorf in the 1950s due to the city's central location within Western Europe, the proximity to the Ruhr District and the transport connection to harbours as Rotterdam. This group was lately succeeded by the Chinese and Indians. Today, this part of the city is home to about 15,000 inhabitants on 1.77 km² which makes it one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods in Düsseldorf (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020d).

3.2.4. Complementary Data for Flingern

Secondary and statistical data regarding spatial (3.2.4.1.), socio-economic (3.2.4.2.) and cultural (3.2.4.3.) information are included. This information is complemented to the main research, it won't be analysed but has a descriptive and explanatory function. It shall support the understanding and interpretation of the qualitative analysis of the interviews and newspaper articles and shall not be seen as separated independent research. The focus is on the measures that refer to this research. As already described in section 3.2.1., the neighbourhood's name Flingern-Nord is interfused with Flingern and Flingern-Süd. This is also the case for official documents issued by the city. Nevertheless, for this research its incorrect use is indicated when necessary.

3.2.4.1. Spatial Data

The spatial data regarded are development plans and housing schemes realized by the city of Düsseldorf, by federal support programs and by the neighbourhood of Flingern initiated during the last 20 years. In the following, selected data that are connected to the research are briefly presented.

Development Plans

One development plan is the project *Stadtteile mit besonderem Erneuerungsbedarf* [Quarters with special need for renewal] as part of the urban development promotion program *Soziale Stadt* [Social City] (1999-2007). This programme was supported by the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and the provincial governments. It was completed

after eight years, with a funding volume of 7.2 Million € (\$10.36 Million⁵⁷) in 2005 (Aehnelt and Kahl 2008, 22). Besides Flingern-Nord, two further neighbourhoods were put forward: Flingern-Süd and Oberbilk because in these neighbourhoods “the economic and social, the urban, the infrastructural and the ecological situation is problematic” (own translation) (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 1999, 2). These areas were classified as old industrial districts with predominantly old buildings with commercial wasteland (Aehnelt and Kahl 2008, 22). The focus of the action plan regarded six different aspects and included the strengthening of the district centers, green and open spaces, the housing and living environment, environment and ecology, jobs and employment and the social infrastructure and its cohabitation in the district (Stadtplanungsamt Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2009, 10). In particular, it restructured Hermannsplatz including the inauguration of a weekly farmer’s market in 2003 due to a request of the residents in 2003⁵⁸ and the installation of a playground and benches to sit down. Further, the action plan did sidewalk widening, installed bike lanes and bike racks, and created new parks and green spaces, such as the Stadtwerkepark Flingern (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 1999, 19). It had a remarkable lasting effect on the area due to restructuring measures and improvement of places, streets, and houses.

Housing Schemes

In the northeastern part of Flingern, three housing schemes were executed during the last decade to improve living conditions and to increase the number of dweller units. Under these projects, about 1000 housing units were built through new construction, reconstruction or conversion, which is a fourfold increase compared to the period 2004-2013 (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2016b, 43). The biggest housing scheme project in the area was *Neues urbanes Wohnen in Flingern-Nord* [New urban living in Flingern-Nord] which was executed in an area of eleven hectares (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020c) around the streets of Hellweg, Benzstraße and Bruchstraße. In this area, up to 300 new dwelling units were built between 2018 and 2022 by replacing parts of the existing houses with new ones. Further, 250 houses were redeveloped (SWD 2019, 38-39) and they also densified the area with new apartment complexes (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020c). Another project in

⁵⁷ Exchange rate: February 28, 2023.

⁵⁸ Also in Mile End the residents asked for a weekly farmer’s market, as Heffez (2009) states in her report about a forum of the *Comité des Citoyens du Mile End* in 2009. Until now, there is no farmers’ market directly in Mile End but there is the *Marché Fermier* selling organic food and local artisanal products at the metro station Laurier (exit Laurier) which takes place twice a week on Thursdays and Sundays. This metro station is on the edge of Le Plateau-Mont-Royal, just a few minutes by walk from the Mile End.

the area was the conversion of the Thyssen-Trade-Center, a former office building complex, into 340 apartments between 2015 and 2017 after its vacancy for four years (BBSR 2017, 2). The complex was renamed to Living Circle and is right next to the new location of Ubisoft. Next to these two projects another small one was initiated: *Wohnen für Familien in Flingern* [Living for Families in Flingern] to provide affordable living for families. In this publicly founded project, three new residential buildings with a total of 32 apartments were built between 2019-2022 in the area of Benzstraße, Körtingstraße and Eythstraße (SWD 2019, 41-42).

3.2.4.2 Socio-Economic Data

The socio-economic data focuses on shops in Flingern-Nord, on rent indices, ownership, and types of buildings, as well as on the people living in the neighbourhood. The focus is on statistical data gained mainly from public authorities since 1995, though in the case of shops the reference is to a scientific study and two municipal programs because they best reflect the state and changes in the research area.

Shops

The main shopping streets in Flingern-Nord are Birkenstraße and Ackerstraße. When it comes to representation of the neighbourhood as a place to shop, both streets are in the focus, and hence they are also in the focus of municipal programs and research.

Program Social City and the Framework Plans Retail

In the program Social City (1999-2007), one aim was to reduce the vacancies in retail by finding a new, economically viable usage (Neumann, Schmidt and Trettin 2007, 26), not only by finding new retail but also other kind of businesses or alternative usage for those spaces (Neumann, Schmidt and Trettin 2007, 40). At the beginning of the project, the economic situation of Birkenstraße was described with job losses in the steel industry, vacant shop premises, investment backlog in the building stock and a lack of parking spaces, so that the project goals were to protect and strengthen the Birkenstraße area, reduce vacancies, enhance the image and stabilise the population structure (Neumann, Schmidt and Trettin 2007, 69). At the end of the project, an increase in service providers and offices was noted and the number of vacancies in Birkenstraße

was reduced from twelve in 2002 to five in 2006 through sponsorship (out of 140 buildings) (Neumann, Schmidt and Trettin 2007, 107, 112). This was achieved through campaigns to attract businesses, especially in the creative industries, and by introducing round tables for local businesses to support cooperation in the neighbourhood (Neumann, Schmidt and Trettin 2007, 76).

Subsequent to the Program Social City, the city of Düsseldorf launched two retail framework plans, one in 2007 and the other in 2016 with the focus on the two major shopping streets, Birkenstraße and Ackerstraße. One of the aims in 2007 was to stop the trading down tendencies caused by shops that sold inexpensive goods and by a high proportion of pubs and fast food and small-scale structures of businesses that made it difficult to adapt to a contemporary store size (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2008b, 66). Hence, the planning objectives were, amongst others, expansion of the existing offer for specialist retail, local supply and ‘scene’-gastronomy, upgrading through small-scale additions to the range of offer, establishment of businesses that can attract other ones, and the improvement of the street layout and the quality of stay (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2008b, 66). In the framework plan 2016, the described situation is different. The plan came to the conclusion that the trading down tendencies stopped (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2017, 162). Thus, the planning objectives are amongst others the expansion of the existing offer of specialist retailers, upgrading through small shops with a different product range, strengthening local supply, and further establishment of businesses that can attract other ones (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2017, 162).

The Commercial Changes Around Ackerstraße

In 2018, Matthias Klein published his bachelor thesis *Der gewerbliche Wandel rund um die Ackerstraße: Funktionale Gentrifizierung in Düsseldorf Flingern Nord* [The commercial changes around Ackerstraße: functional gentrification in Düsseldorf Flingern Nord]. The aim of the thesis is to find out if new neighbourhood dwellers have changed the business sector regarding business shares, price level, clientele, goods and services offered along and around the central part of Ackerstraße between Lindenstraße and Hermannstraße during the last years (M. Klein 2018, 2). Klein interviewed 17 shop owners of different types such as fashion/clothing, gastronomy or services in the selected road section (M. Klein 2018, 55-56). Only about a third of the shop owners have been in business for more than ten years, with two owners having been in business for more than 40 years and one for more than 60 years. The others are all younger (M. Klein 2018, 27-28).

The reasons for settling in the neighbourhood were for all the same: the good location and customer proximity within the neighbourhood (Klein 2018, 31), complemented recently by the reason that Flingern is said to be a hip neighbourhood, and therefore a good location for business (Klein 2018, 33).

The goods on offer in five shops are aimed at local residents. The others (twelve shops) offer goods for the general public (Klein 2018, 32). Hence, looking at the customers, slightly more than half of the customers can be assigned to the middle class, to whom the offer is predominantly directed. About one third can be assigned to the upper class, while only about thirteen percent belong to the lower class (according to the perception of the shop owners) (Klein 2018, 29, 31). This goes hand in hand with an adjustment to the range of goods on offer in these shops. Almost 36% changed their offer to the changing neighbourhood dwellers. It is an adaptation to the families who moved to the neighbourhood and replaced the former working-class dwellers with lower income (Klein 2018, 40). Examples given by the shop owners for the whole neighbourhood are a recent increase of new cafés and alternative shops, shops that offer handmade goods, or something extraordinary that you won't find anywhere else. In this context can be added that Klein compared the stores he mapped on an inspection tour with the stores that were on Google Street View taken in September 2008. Most of the shops seen on Google Street View that belonged to the lower price segment are gone, listing middle-/lower class pubs and inns, a greengrocer and a gambling hall (Klein 2018, 20). There is also an increase in activity in the neighbourhood. Not only the residents of the neighbourhood are being noticed by the shop owners, but also people from other parts of the city, tourists and guided tours. One shop owner pointed to a new lifestyle of the customers since special concepts for shops are now fundamental to have a successful business (Klein 2018, 35).

The development of the neighbourhood is seen positively, except for two, who owned their shop in the neighbourhood for more than four decades. They complain about raising, almost priceless rents, the high number of new art galleries, and a higher turnover (Klein 2018, 36). For the future, most of the shop owners wish that the neighbourhood will become an alternative shopping area with people who spend time for shopping in the neighbourhood. Some of the shop owners also wish that the neighbourhood should be cleaner (Klein 2018, 36).

Rent Indices, Ownerships and Types of Buildings

A rent index and property price index for Flingern-Nord can only be given for the last five years, considering various sources. The Housing Market Report 2018 of Düsseldorf (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2018, 112) notes an increase of 16.7% in the rent for a house or flat excluding heating and other ancillary costs per square metre between 2014 and 2017 for Flingern-Nord, which is far above average. According to this list, the rent for a flat rose from 11.24 € (\$16.17⁵⁹) in 2019 to 12.01 € (\$17.28) in 2022 per square metre, an increase of 6.9% within the last four years (mietspiegeltabelle.de 2022). According to the same list, the average price in 2022 for whole Düsseldorf is 11.99 € (\$17.25) per square meter, so the rent in Flingern-Nord is slightly above average. During almost the same decade, the ownership rate in Flingern-Nord increased by almost 50% from 8.54% in 2010 to 12.20% in 2017 while in the whole city of Düsseldorf it only increased by less than 10% from 18.08% to 19.60% (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2012; Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020a). The city of Düsseldorf divides the districts into different types of residential areas. According to this, Flingern consists of 31% inner-city old building area, 23% 50s and 60s multi-family house areas, 15% mixed construction before 1970. The remaining percentage is spread evenly over the decades from 1980 to 2020 (Open Data Düsseldorf 2020).

Neighbourhood Dwellers

An important part of a neighbourhood is its dwellers. During the last 25 years, the number of dwellers increased more or less steadily from 21,347 in 1997 to 25,464 in 2019, which is an increase of about 19.3%. The population of Düsseldorf has also increased over the same period from 570,504 to 645,923 in 2019, but only by 14.6% (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2016a, 17; Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020d). This increase was mainly due to migration, as the proportion of children (0-18 years) remained relatively the same in Flingern-Nord and Düsseldorf over the years from 2000 to 2019 (about 15% in Flingern-Nord and about 15.5% in Düsseldorf (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2008a; Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020d) while in the group of people aged 18-45/50 it rose of about 6-7% for Flingern-Nord and Düsseldorf from 2009 to 2019 (Flingern-Nord 44.4% to 51.6%, and Düsseldorf 39.4% to 45.1% (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2010, 63, Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020d). That leads in 2019 to an average age of 41 in

⁵⁹ Exchange rate: February 28, 2023.

Flingern-Nord and 42.9 in Düsseldorf (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020d). Further, the share of immigrants rose more or less constantly in Flingern-Nord from 17.9% in 1995 to 24.4% in 2019, though in Düsseldorf the numbers grew more in percentage terms, from 15.7% in 1995 to 23.6% in 2019 (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2008a, 62; Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020d).

3.2.4.3. Cultural Data

In order to better understand which cultural offerings participants can take part in, a brief overview of the cultural offer in Flingern-Nord is given, i.e. the cultural institutions, cultural events, and street festivals. In addition to these offerings, there are of course more events, institutions etc., but listing them would go beyond the scope of this part: the largest and best-known are listed.

Cultural Institutions

There are several cultural institutions⁶⁰ in Flingern-Nord, of which some are presented briefly. A detailed overview with explanation of their offer etc. is provided in annex 5.

There are several art galleries in Flingern-Nord, such as *Konrad Fischer Galerie* on Platanenstraße, *Petra Rinck Galerie* and *Van Horn* on Ackerstraße, as well as artists with their galleries such as *Konsortium* on Ackerstraße and *plan.d.* on Dorotheenstraße. Cultural institutions are the *Filmwerkstatt Düsseldorf*, an art house cinema including *Flingernlichtspiele* at Birkenstraße, and the art collection *Sammlung Philara* in the same backyard. Further there are two libraries in the neighbourhood, the district library at the corner of Flurstraße and Hoffeldstraße and the *Stiftung imai - inter media art institute* at Birkenstraße that is dedicated to the archiving, conservation, and distribution of video art. Besides these institutions there are also cultural associations such as the *BBK Kunstforum Düsseldorf e. V.* on Birkenstraße, and the cultural centres such as *Kabawil e.V.* on Flurstraße and *Kulturzimmer Flingern* on Hoffeldstraße. In Flingern-Nord, there is currently no theatre and event venue. Until 2014, there was the theatre *FLiN*⁶¹ on Ackerstraße that showed cabaret, comedy, and music shows. It moved because the backyard it was located in was transformed into apartment houses, the so-called Acker-Lofts.

⁶⁰ For the definition of cultural institutions used in this context see section 3.1.3.

⁶¹ Theatre FLiN moved to Grafenberg, another neighbourhood in Düsseldorf, and renamed itself in KaBARett FLiN.

Some cultural institutions in Flingern-Süd are presented as well because they are in the immediate vicinity and can influence the impression of the cultural offerings in Flingern, since the separation of the two districts is not always clear. Worth mentioning is the dance theatre *Tanzhaus NRW e. V.* on Erkrather Straße that offers for example dance classes, and the cultural center⁶² *Zakk Zentrum für Aktion, Kultur & Kommunikation* on Fichtenstraße.

Cultural Events and Street Festivals

There are also several cultural events and street festivals that take place or have taken place throughout the years. Some of them have been going on for more than 20 years. At the street festivals, the cultural organisations and local businesses work together to promote their work, with up to 80 businesses in Flingern taking part in these events. Cultural events are for example the music festivals *Acoustic Festival* (2015-2023), *Acoustic Winter Festival* (since 2015), *Flingern Open Air* (since 2006) and *Flingern ohne Strom* (since 2003), and the art festival *Kunstpunkte* (since 1997). Examples for street festivals are *Flingern in love* (since 2016), *Flingern Nacht/Flingern at night* and *Flingern rollt den Teppich aus* (both since 2007), and the *Internationales Straßenfest* (International Street Festival) which exists for more than 40 years.

⁶² Cultural centres in Germany are cultural places of gathering with several rooms that are dedicated to a variety of cultural activities such as cultural events, social projects and gastronomy. They are run by local authorities, associations, or non-profit organisations. Most of them are publicly funded.

3.3. Comparison of Mile End and Flingern-Nord

Studying in parallel the dynamics in Mile End and Flingern-Nord would allow us to point out similarities and differences about the dynamics and how they are experienced by the people involved. In both cities the video game company Ubisoft implemented branches. Both were opened around the same time, Montreal in 1997 and Düsseldorf in 1995, and they are two out of four branches with the functions as studio and business offices (besides San Francisco, U.S.A. and Paris, France). The deciding factor for the choice of neighbourhoods was that Ubisoft has a studio and business premises in both locations. Both locations have the same initial situation. Therefore, the neighbourhoods in which Ubisoft is based came into the focus of the study. These two neighbourhoods differ in spatial, socio-economic, cultural and political structures, but the historical development is broadly similar. Both neighbourhoods were former working-class neighbourhoods with low income that have turned into creative and cultural districts during the last decades. A possible influence of the different locations on the perceptions has to be seen.

The two cases also demonstrate, however differently, the presence of a creative cluster. In the case of the video game industry, there are specific useful surveys about the game industry in Montreal. Darchen and Tremblay (2015), Pilon and Tremblay (2013) and Tremblay and Rousseau (2005, 321) confirmed in their work that the video game industry in Montreal is a creative cluster, with spots in Mile End, Central downtown and Multimedia City/*Cité Multimedia* in the former industrial waterfront district. In the case of Düsseldorf, there is less research about the video game industry and its establishment. Cluster research focus typically on the region of Düsseldorf, with its neighbouring cities and/or the Middle Lower Rhine-area, or the Rhine-Ruhr region (BIU 2017, 28), except for Bourgeois (2009, 7) who researched Düsseldorf and identified a game industry cluster around Ubisoft. The existence of a cluster in both cities would form a common basis for the research. This is underpinned by Currid and Williams (2010, 322), who state that the decision for companies to settle in specific urban locations depends on the links with particular kinds of infrastructures and the economic and social networks, which means that creative industries have similar clustering patterns independent from the city's size and type.

Research about the creative class (and cultural and creative industries) for Düsseldorf focuses on its effect on economic growth and on statistics, often as a comparison with other German cities (cf.

for the province: Gottschalk, Hamm and Imöhl 2010). Research doesn't focus on the creative class and the creative milieu. Thus, there is little research on the behavior of the creative class and their perception, on the comprehension of the relationship of the creative class and the creative milieu concerning the city, and single neighbourhoods. However, this does not mean that there is no research into the creative industries and artists in German cities. Examples given are for Berlin (Grésillon 2003; Krätke 2011a), Braunschweig (Bingel et al. 2017) and Hamburg (Barthelmes 2008; Méndez-Ortega and Arauzo-Carod 2020).

3.4. Public Funding of the Video Game Industry in Montreal and Düsseldorf

In the context of this research, funding and subsidies might play a part in the establishment and development of video game industry companies and should not be underestimated because “video games today comprise an industry with high financial input” (Zackariasson and Wilson 2010, 110). The award of funding and subsidies, their application modalities and the number depend on the political background of each place. Consequently, a closer look at the different systems put in place is necessary because this might have an influence on the establishment and development of the video game industry.

The political systems in Canada and Germany have similarities. Both countries are federations. As in Canada, Germany has two constitutional levels of government, the federal and the provincial. The municipalities are part of the provincial states and they form the lowest level (Bundesregierung 2018; Gottselig 1999; Library of Parliament 2018; Pöttsch 2009). In both countries, each level has the possibility to attract and to support companies e.g. by supplying facilities and infrastructures, by funding, subsidies, and tax incentives, or by an adaptation of tax rates for companies.

Canada’s video game industry can benefit from diverse subsidies. Canada is known since the 1990s as one of the countries with the best financial support for the video game industry with the focus on attracting international foreign production companies to open developer studios in Canada. On the federal level, the support’s focus is on (technical) innovation and it includes tax incentives of 5%-10% (Castendyk and Müller-Lietzkow 2017, 161). More important are provincial subsidies, such as in Québec, where the government launched a subsidy programme for the video game sector in 1996 that finances 30% of staff costs plus 7.5% in the case of a French-language production. (Castendyk and Müller-Lietzkow 2017, 162). A new program was launched in 2015 (until 2019) to support project costs (Gouvernement du Québec 2015). Subsidies are offered in the form of tax incentives and subventions calculated as a percentage of the expenditure of employees taxed in the region, including contractors in the form of individuals and partnerships. The common type of funding is the one of labor costs, namely salaries; this means that the provincial government pays a certain percentage of the personnel costs, which is in cooperation with the City of Montreal. However, funding programs as the abovementioned federal and provincial programs are not mentioned in the literature for the City of Montreal.

Like Montreal, the video game industry in Düsseldorf is also eligible for subsidies. Unlike in Montreal, German companies can apply for subsidies on four different levels that differ on the spatial scale: “the supra-national level (e.g. the European Union), the national level (federal government), the regional level (provincial state or larger metropolitan area) and the local level (counties/districts)” (Robert Sternberg and Lubart 1991, 6). All subsidies are to promote the video game industry, but the instruments and the levels of support differ. Each level started its own funding and award program, such as the *Creative Europe program* by the European Union, Federal Funding ‘*German Game Award*’ since 2009 by the German Government, and the *Film- und Mediienstiftung NRW* (Movie and Media Foundation North Rhine-Westphalia) by the provincial government of North Rhine-Westphalia. Governmental and regional funding programs support projects and not companies, and funding is in general not a direct subsidy but a repayable loan, which is connected to the success of the product. The highest amount of funding is awarded by the European Union with a maximum of 150,000 € (\$97,500⁶³) for specific funding of prototypes and concepts (Anderie 2016, 210). In Germany, regarding the *German Computer Game Award*, the highest amount is given to the ‘Best German Game’ with an amount of 100,000 € (\$145,930) (Der DCP 2023), and the total yearly funding amount by the Federal Funding for Computer Games is 50 million €/year (\$73,33 million) for the period of 2019-2023 (Anderie 2023, 531). As outlined, there are a variety of funding opportunities in both Montreal and Düsseldorf, but the amount and the procurement process differ, and the uptake varies. These subsidies and grants can play a role in the location and development of video game industry companies, as mentioned earlier.

⁶³ Exchange rate: June 29, 2018

CHAPTER 4: A PICTURE OF THE DYNAMICS IN THE NEWSPAPERS

This chapter presents the analysis of newspaper articles reporting on Ubisoft and Mile End and Düsseldorf in the period studied (1997-2020). The articles give their own picture of the dynamics of the respective neighbourhood and the importance of the video game industry in these areas. It is the view of the journalists, who not only reflect the view of people interviewed, but also their own view through their description. Thus, it reflects a certain perception of the neighbourhood and what is going on, and where the news focus is and not. This view and the analysis of the newspaper articles add to the findings of the interviews conducted with the people who are part of the dynamics (see chapters 5-7).

This chapter starts with the articles reporting on the Mile End (section 4.1.) before turning to the articles dealing with Düsseldorf (4.2.). Each location is analysed according to the dimensions explained in the operational framework⁶⁴, and supplemented by a summary of the results. The chapter concludes with a comparison of the results from Mile End and Düsseldorf, which are also summarised in a table at the end (4.3.).

4.1. The Mile End in Newspaper Articles

The analysis covers all articles of the database request according to the coding scheme described in chapter 2. Of the 169 articles published in Montreal between 1997 and 2020, 128 articles address at least one of the topics of cultural, spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics, lifestyle, amenities or the creative milieu, emphasizing the relevance and relationship of Ubisoft and the neighbourhood. In the following, the results of the analysis are presented grouped according to the parts of the operational framework, which are ‘Cultural Dynamics, Lifestyle and Amenities’, ‘Spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics’, ‘Creative Milieu’ and the ‘Perception of the neighbourhood’. These parts are complemented by the three sections: ‘Neighbourhood - a global view of what is going on’, that encompasses a global perception because not all aspects that are valuable for the understanding of the perception could be captured in the parts defined in the

⁶⁴ See Chapter 2.

operational framework, ‘Relationship between the video game industry and the neighbourhood’, which considers the effects from one to another, and ‘Role of the neighbourhood for developers’ cultural activities’, that looks at the role of culture, creativity and the neighbourhood for the interviewees.⁶⁵ The reference number of the articles (A1 to A232) refers to the newspaper bibliography in annex 4. They are ordered by time, so the lower the number the newer the article: article A1 is from 2020, article A161 from 2010 and article A232 from 1997, for example.

4.1.1. Cultural Dynamics, Lifestyle and Amenities

Lifestyle

Lifestyle, as defined in the operational framework, is related to creativity and the way this is linked to the neighbourhood. The lifestyle is only represented by a general description of video game developers, in particular, how they behave, dress, etc., as this is something that is also perceived by others and seen as part of their lifestyle.

There are two major thematic blocks identified in the part of lifestyle in the 52 articles addressing this topic. More than half of these articles characterize the neighbourhood and a little bit less characterize the video game developers. Minor blocks are about the cultural and creative field in the neighbourhood in connection with a general neighbourhood description (seven times) and lifestyle habits that are not connected to a certain group (three times).

In the characterization of the neighbourhood three ‘key words’ or ‘key word groups’ respectively stand out between 2004-2020. These are ‘branché/vibe’, ‘embourgeoisement/bohemians’ and ‘hipster/hip’ in comparable numbers and evenly distributed over the years. The neighbourhood is described as the neighbourhood that “*est devenu un des secteurs très branchés de Montréal*” (A152) and as the “hyper-cool Mile End district” (A181), a place for hipsters to be, the “hipster Mile End” (A103), the “*Mecque pour hipsters*” (A58), or “*un quartier à la mode – celui du*

⁶⁵ The analysis was conducted according to the dimensions of the operational framework. The purpose of the publication, the time and the personal interests of the author(s) and the circumstances of the creation of the articles must be considered, as they could influence the content and the results, as well as possible biases, what the document says or not, how it relates to previous and later documents. Furthermore, it must not be forgotten that the articles themselves represent a certain version of reality (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight 2010, 230; Carey 2012, 174; Coffey 2014, 369)

restaurant X et des hipsters” (A90). Hipsters are typically seen as trendy people between the ages of 20 and 35 from the middle-class (Stahl 2010, 321,326). Besides this, the Mile End is also described as a bohemian neighbourhood which is usually connected with creativity and art, such as an area with “certain bohemian artistic spirit” (A34) and “neighbourhood’s bohemian vibe” (A157). The term ‘embourgeoisement’ is mainly mentioned in a negative context or with neighbourhood changes, such as in connection with rising rents (A8), or with specific places in the neighbourhood like the Café Olimpico (A197).

The characterization of the video game developer addresses several aspects. They are described as young, dressed casual in “*vêtements caractéristiques de ce milieu*” (A26) which are mainly “*jeans bleus ou noirs, des casquettes et des hoodies*” (A26), or “[p]as une cravate ni un costume à l’horizon. *Que des t-shirts, généralement noirs, sur des pantalons mous, froissés et bouffants*” (A221). In one of the first articles about Ubisoft, the developers are described as young people, “*qui, tous sans exception, proviennent de la maison-mère. Ce sont « des gens de la structure ubisoftienne »*” (A232). Regarding the description of people working at Ubisoft, journalists use the term “Ubisoft demographic” (A126) or “*la génération Ubi*” (A221) of which some understand the “*clientèle Ubisoft*” as “*une clientèle jeune, friande du ‘numérique’ et souvent anglophone*” (A110). The commonly used view is that “*la génération Ubi est une joyeuse collection de nerds, de cracks et de freaks branchés sur le respirateur artificiel de leur ordinateur 24 heures sur 24*” (A221), but it is a “*description injuste*” (A221) as this article remarks as well. In only one article their behavior is described in a negative way. The working attitude and the behavior are described for the first years as: “It was pretty hardcore back then, [...] It was very much an overtime culture - basically work, drink, sleep, repeat. And it was just a lot of guys, a lot of nerds. [...] It was like ‘These guys are too drunk’” (A8). Connected with this description is another aspect: their passion for video games. On the one hand it is described as a basic requirement to work in this field (e.g. A226), and on the other, the passion is connected with their free time leisure, so what they do during lunch breaks (A192, A195) or after work, mostly together with their colleagues (A195, A227): “It’s part of the whole culture to just play all the time.” (A195). They are together with people “with similar interests” (A225), and “[n]ous sommes tous liés par la même passion, celle de jouer” (A229).

Besides playing during lunch time, the lunch break habits are mentioned in several articles. The habits are that usually around noon, “*les employés d’Ubi Soft vont se chercher un sandwich qu’ils*

mangent en pitonnant sur le coin de leur bureau” (A221) or in their office (A219). Especially when the weather is good, they go outside during lunch time, and then “[c]’est la cohue vers la sortie. Par groupe de cinq, dix, voir 15, nos passionnés de la manette vont manger thaï ou se chercher un sandwich en bas de l’immeuble” (A219). But they are also described as “la clientèle pressée du Mile End (lire les employés d’Ubisoft !)” (A13) that doesn’t have too much time during lunch break. Places mentioned, where employees of Ubisoft go, are the pizzeria *Magpie* (A103) on Maguire⁶⁶, and *Café Olimpico* (A62, A197) and *Comptoir21* on Saint-Viateur where the atmosphere and the action around lunch time are described as this: “The offices of Ubisoft are to thank in part for all the action: around one o’clock, the area looks like the site of a food field trip, as groups of game developers head back to their desks” (A170). Employees of Ubisoft, or the “Ubisoft clientele” (A110), are also seen as customers in other contexts: “the cafés are crowded with well-to-do techies who work at Ubisoft and other multimedia companies in the area” (A34), and in the Boa Bar on Saint-Laurent a handful of people are identified as “refugees from UbiSoft” (A190).

The number of artists in the area is a topic in several articles (e.g. A85, A141, A156). Only a few point to the music scene, in 2015, 2017 and 2018 (A24, A62, A90), and the words “creative class” (A114), “gens créatif” (A155), “travailleurs culturels” (A152) are hardly found in the connection with the neighbourhood.

About the lifestyle of further people in the neighbourhood, there is only one place that can be connected to it. Aire Commune, a temporary space at the corner of de Gaspé and Bernard, offers places during summer to work outside, alone or in groups, in 2018 and 2019 (A31, A54). However, there is no description of the people using it, but only the concept of Aire Commune.

So, regarding the articles dealing with the lifestyle, the characterization of the neighbourhood and of the video game developers are in the focus. However, the description of the neighbourhood usually doesn’t go much further than the statements that the Mile End is a hot and vibrant neighbourhood which attracts a lot of hipsters. On the contrary, the characterization of the video game developers encompasses several aspects, such as the way they dress and how they behave,

⁶⁶ In the newspaper articles, the streets are quoted both with and without the word ‘street’, ‘avenue’, etc. In the following, the street names are named without the specification ‘street’, etc.

as well as their work and lunch time habits. This characterisation is complemented by the way they are recognised in the neighbourhood, usually as a group and mostly during the lunch break.

Cultural Participation and Cultural Experience

Most of the 40 articles addressing cultural participation and experience (sixteen) were announcements or critics of concerts or music festival that took place in the neighbourhood from 2009 on (e.g. A25, A53, A91, A165). Besides, other cultural events are included in the reporting as well, such as the festival on Saint-Viateur in 2007 (A186, A189). There are several street festivals reported in the Mile End where dwellers and visitors can participate in different events and games. Two of the street festivals were organised by Ubisoft to celebrate their 10th - and 20th -anniversary. For the 10th anniversary in 2007, Ubisoft initiated the return of the festival ‘*La fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste*’ on Saint-Viateur (A189) as a street festival, a festival that is popular amongst the dwellers (A189), and for their subsequent jubilee in 2017 Ubisoft built a two-kilometre play path in and for the neighbourhood so that everyone could join in (A51).

Besides music festivals, there are also events organised by the artists. The ateliers, art galleries and artists opened their studios to the public for a day or two during the last 10 years (e.g. A174) to allow “*au public de découvrir librement et gratuitement des ateliers d’artistes ainsi que certaines galeries d’art du quartier du Mile End*” (A158). This kind of event and the participation in *Les Journées de la culture* gives the public the opportunity to participate in cultural events in the neighbourhood and “*cet événement permettra aux Montréalais de découvrir le processus créatif des occupants du quartier*” (A153), including Ubisoft which offered a tour of its offices (A182). Further cultural activities mentioned are professional organised walking tours in the neighbourhood (A14, A49), which is the sign for a neighbourhood dweller in 2018 that lately “things had really changed” (A34).

Summing up, in the regarded articles, the neighbourhood is the scene for different cultural events and festivals that are open to the public and where everyone can participate and in which Ubisoft plays a role as the location where events take place, or as initiator, supporter or participant since 2007.

Cultural Infrastructure and Amenities

In connection with the music events and festivals, several places of the cultural infrastructure are mentioned in sixteen articles, e.g. the Rialto Theatre on Parc or Église Saint-Enfant-Jésus du Mile End on Saint-Dominique (e.g. A101, A118, A133). Also, Ubisoft plays a role as a stage. For several years (2010-2018), the roof of the Ubisoft building was an event location for concerts (e.g. A91, A99, A116, A159, A165). Further examples of cultural infrastructure and amenities in six of the articles are the galleries, though only two are mentioned by name (Galerie d'art contemporain/Pied Carré (A112), and gallery Yves Laroche (A167)) of which one has a cooperation with Ubisoft (A167). Libraries are mentioned in a general way in one article in 2018 (A39).

Of the 49 articles addressing cultural amenities, 22 articles describe or report a specific restaurant, e.g. the opening or closing, or they talk about the offer of restaurants in the neighbourhood. Apart from these articles, only a few places are mentioned in the other articles. These are the pizzeria Magpie on Maguire, the cafés Club Social, Olimpico and Le Cagibi, and the pub Bishop & Bagg on Saint-Viateur. The variety of restaurants is mentioned in two articles and is described by stating that “boulevard Saint-Laurent, le choix est vaste. ‘On est très bien servi. Il y a toutes les sortes de cuisine’” (A219), and “the neighbourhood has cafes aplenty, and now some fun burger joints, pizzerias and its very own fish and chips shoppe” (A170). The reports about the opening and closing of restaurants indicate a continuous change in places, which is depicted in one article. In 2016, one author states that “*Le niveau de restauration augmente sans cesse, on dirait qu’il y a un nouveau restaurant ou un nouveau café qui ouvre ses portes tous les mois*” (A77). Including Ubisoft in the development of choices and restaurant offer, one article wrote that “It’s symbiotic: they need restaurants and restaurants need them” (A170) and another one states that “*Il y a beaucoup d’employés d’Ubisoft à nourrir!*” (A98).

There are two statements by Ubisoft that cannot be categorized in one of the abovementioned dimensions but that are important in this context. In 2008, Cédric Orvoine, Ubisoft Canada’s spokesman, said about the connection of the employees and their work to the neighbourhood and its creative surrounding: “Our people are spending their days here and being influenced by their local environment” (A181), a statement that was affirmed in 2017 in the context of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of Ubisoft when the company said that “it is also a product of the hyper-creative Mile End ‘eco-system’” (A62).

In summary, there are several cultural places and facilities in the neighbourhood that one can visit and where events etc. take place. One of these places is the roof of Ubisoft as a concert venue, which is only mentioned and not described further. Nevertheless, the major part of the articles in this section describes restaurants and bars, their opening or closing, or they offer a description, which shows a picture of the development over time. Noteworthy are Ubisoft's statements underlining the connection and its effects between the company and its employees or the neighbourhood.

Summary Overview

The cultural dynamics, the lifestyle and the range of cultural participation and experience as well as the cultural infrastructure are present in the newspaper articles with varying degrees of intensity. The Mile End is described as a hot and vibrant neighbourhood that is scene for different cultural events and festivals that are open to the public and where everyone can participate. These events and festivals take place in the manifold locations in the Mile End that are quoted in the articles, though not further described in detail. One of the locations is the roof of the Ubisoft building; hence, Ubisoft is also part of the cultural activities in the neighbourhood, not only as initiator, supporter or participant of cultural events since 2007, but also as an event location for the rooftop concerts in the 2010s. There are two groups the newspapers report about, recognisable as a group. There are on the one hand the hipsters that are attracted by the neighbourhood because it's cool and vibrant, though they are only mentioned but not further characterized, and, on the other hand, connected with the research are the video game developers. Their characterisation includes several aspects, e.g. the way they dress and behave, as well as their working and eating habits. This characterisation is supplemented by the way they are perceived in the neighbourhood, mostly as a group and mostly during the lunch break. This last point is mainly connected with the description of restaurants and bars which covers most of the articles about cultural amenities. It focusses on their opening or closing, or their offer description, which shows a picture of the development over time. Remarkable are the statements of Ubisoft that emphasise the connection and its effects between the company and its employees respectively and the neighbourhood.

4.1.2. Spatial, Socio-Economic and Political Dynamics

Spatial Design and Recreational Amenities

The neighbourhood and the area around Ubisoft are described in about a quarter of the articles (43 articles). Over all the years, the area around Ubisoft's location in the Mile End is commonly characterised in fifteen articles as "a former textile district" (A140) with "old greystone buildings, warehouses and factories" (A159), or "*ancienne usine de textile*" (A111, see also 67, A112, A182), "*gros immeubles cubiques*" (A141) or "*mastodontes de béton*" (A141) in a "tired-looking industrial area" (A114) where the "*rare piétons apparaissent minuscules à côté de ces mastodontes d'une douzaine d'étages*" (A141). Some articles use descriptions such as immense (A86, A113) or gigantic (A67) for the buildings, or as "industrial Mile End's brood of hulking concrete blocks" (A121). Though, one article points out that this part of the Plateau is one of the most densified places with "*mégastructures immobilières*" (A152), and the authors state further that "*[c]'est unique, certains coins de rue ont même l'air un peu soviétique, carrément communiste d'architecture*" (A152). Apart from these descriptions, for the residential area close to Outremont, the following statement is given: "*Je trouve qu'on a l'impression d'être à la campagne en ville; la rue est bordée d'arbres*" (A77), which gives a contrary picture of the neighbourhood as described around Ubisoft.

The neighbourhood dwellers want to improve the quality of life, which includes the greening of streets (A90). So, changes in the design are mentioned as well, e.g. the transformation of a former parking space into a park under the viaduct (A24). Aire Commune located in a formerly vacant lot near de Gaspé and Bernard as an example of a temporary space is also described as a change from the industrial buildings (A31, A39, A54). Although the neighbourhood is already very dense, a retirement home was built in 2008 on a former parking lot, next to the former garment factory building (A183), changing the spatial design of the neighbourhood, though the architect tried to "*préservé l'harmonie architecturale de ce quartier*" (A183).

Two topics have been in the focus of articles since 2011 and are connected to the spatial design of the area in a broader sense. These changes affect all companies who settled in the neighbourhood, and Ubisoft is mentioned as an example, also including statements of Ubisoft management. One topic is a requested crossing over the railway tracks to get a better and faster access to Rosemont

metro station, a crossing denied by Canadian Pacific, the owner of the railway tracks (A47, A50, A63, A71)⁶⁷. The second topic is the parking situation in this area. There are too less parking lots (A65, A132, A155) and because of the density, alternative parking possibilities are limited. Since 2012, most of the outdoor parking lots are now to pay, much to the chagrin of Ubisoft (A132). Further things mentioned that coin the area are wall paintings (A59), art objects or sculptures in the neighbourhood in front gardens (A69) and games in the neighbourhood installed for Ubisoft's 20th anniversary in 2017 (A51).

Looking at the spatial design and recreational amenities, the description of the neighbourhood is twofold: it is the area around Ubisoft with its immense industrial buildings and the areas in the residential parts that show the pictures of a suburban area. Particular changes of the spatial design are not in the focus of the articles and only few examples as the change of parking lots into a park and a retirement home are mentioned. This transformation is connected to a topic which is in the news since 2011: the parking situation in the Mile End and what it means for Ubisoft employees. The number of available car parks has decreased and most of the remaining ones have been converted into paid parking spaces. Besides this, the access to Rosemont metro station via the train tracks is also an issue during several years.

Housing and Commerce

The transformation of buildings was not a topic until 2011, except for one article in 2005. Of the 26 articles addressing this topic, the focus of fourteen is on the transformation of the former garment factory buildings, in which Ubisoft rents offices. In particular, they report about the transformation of the buildings into offices (A112, A121, A141), as well as the renovation and the transformation of the entrances, bathrooms, further common rooms, and facilities in the buildings (A142, A155). Still, there are ateliers for artists that remain in the buildings due to a special contract between Allied Properties, the owner of the building, artists' collective Pied Carré and the city signed in 2013 (A114). It is also reported that former warehouses and factories were transformed into "new condos and more design-intensive studios and boutiques" and "artists' studios" (A157) in the neighbourhood. The article of 2005 refers to the area around Ubisoft but in its focus are the

⁶⁷ The content of the newspaper articles could be clearly coded, with one exception. These are articles in connection with Rosemont metro station. The content addresses various topics. As it is significant for all of them, multiple coding was permitted in this case (see also chapter 2).

new shops that “are transforming grimy old warehouses and storefronts into temples of cool, sleek modern design” (A196). Besides this comment about the transformation and changes in the commercial sector, not much else is reported about it. Further changes reported are the separation of a former store into two (A110), or the announced transformation of a store into something new (A110, A154). Unspecific comments about transformation in the neighbourhood are given as well, about the constant change in the neighbourhood (A27) and that Saint-Viateur Street is in transformation (A28). Unfortunately, there are no explanation regarding exactly what the authors mean. There are very few comments about the changes in the residential area, such as the immediate renovation of dwellings (A34) and that “*les nouveaux propriétaires ont détruit les hangars, rénové les maisons et embelli les ruelles*” (A90). The transformation of apartments to AirBnB is only addressed in a discussion round with politicians about their manifesto for the mayoral election in the arrondissement in 2017 (A61).

The buzzword “gentrification” is also used in articles about the neighbourhood during the last years, though very rarely (e.g. A62, A114, A157, A196). According to two articles, gentrification is an incident that is not new to the neighbourhood. In one article, a neighbourhood dweller states in 2014 that because of the demographic change in the Mile End the ongoing gentrification process already exists “*depuis une dizaine d’années*” (A98) and three years later, another neighbourhood dweller notes: “*Dès la fin des années 70, certains disent : le Mile End, c’est fini, c’est gentrifié ! Le quartier depuis près de 40 ans est condamné pour ne plus être ce qu’il était*” (A49).

All in all, transformation of buildings is a topic in the newspapers since 2011. There are the transformations of the old garment fabric buildings into offices, the area where Ubisoft is located, the changes in the commercial sectors that include the outside of the stores but also the interior changes of shops and the transformation in the residential sector such as the building of new condos or the transformation of buildings into condos. Though, for the last two, not much is reported.

Sport and Leisure

Regarding the offer and facilities associated with sport and leisure, only two points in the context with Ubisoft are mentioned. Two early articles, in 2000 and in 2004, report about the internal sport and leisure habits of the employees (A200, A221). The employees organised a hockey and a baseball league in early years (A221), and in 2004 a freshly renovated gymnasium at Ubisoft

opened, which is at their disposal (A200). Further sport and leisure activities were inaugurated by Ubisoft for their 20th anniversary in 2017 when the company initiated games in the neighbourhood for the summer (A51, A59, A62) and in 2018 by Aire Commune around their space (A31).

Summing up, not much is reported about sport and leisure in connection with Ubisoft during the regarded period. The articles focus mainly on the internal sport activities of Ubisoft such as hockey or the gym, and on the leisure facilities built for Ubisoft's 20th anniversary.

Housing and Commercial: Rent and Value

The development of rents and property values was not seen in connection with Ubisoft until 2011. In that year, the artists who had their studio in one building on de Gaspé had to face an increase of their rent, an increase which they wouldn't be able to afford because they can't afford the same rent as other tenants in the building, such as Ubisoft (A11, A58, A62, A112, A114, A141, A152, A155, A156). The artists were attracted once by "*loyers à prix modiques*" (A155), followed by characteristic consequences such as: "*Au point où le quartier, branché, se définit comme une destination créative. Conséquence: augmentation des loyers et difficulté à obtenir des baux à long terme*" (A152), and "It's a familiar pattern: Artists move into a declining district, the area becomes trendy and then the artists are pushed out by soaring property values and real-estate speculation" (A140). The artists are not the only ones facing higher rents: from 2014 on, newspaper articles regularly start to report about the difficulties shop owners and dwellers have facing major rent increases (e.g. A8, A11, A28, A49, A77). In the case of shop owners, rents mostly rose connected with new landlords. One of the first shop owners reported moving out in 2014 and states: "On a l'impression, dans le quartier, que les propriétaires confondent le Mile End avec Manhattan et s'imaginent que les commerçants sont tous très prospères! Ce n'est pas vrai. Les loyers sont rendus hors de portée" (A98). Another example that one author focused on in 2018 was the rent increase of the café *Le Cagibi* on Saint-Viateur and the moving out of this café, which he contributed three articles (A27, A28, A29). In addition to the reasons for the increase in rents for artists and commercial operations, there is another reason in the private sector. Here, the demand for housing has changed: it has increased. A higher demand for housing and a rise in property value is already underlined in 2015 with the following statement: "*Aujourd'hui, c'est un quartier très recherché où les maisons peuvent dépasser le million de dollars.*" (A90). Another statement in 2016 is that "*Les prix des propriétés y ont récemment explosé. [...] Le Mile End est plus demandé que jamais*" (A77).

The transformation of places leads as well to a rise of rents for dwellers in the neighbourhood (A8, A62, A157).

The rental situation can best be summarised with two statements: “rents certainly have gone up for everyone” (A62) in 2017, and the neighbourhood “is being taken over by money. It’s just very difficult to witness it” (A34) in 2018. A link between rental and property value development and Ubisoft was first reported in 2016, including the reasons for this, such as the increasing demand for space as the Mile End is in high demand. This might lead to the reported moving of different groups to other parts of the city, or the closing of amenities, and difficulties in finding new places for shops etc.

Product Range of Shops

The product range and its changes were shortly noticed between 2005-2007 by reporting about new cool and modern shops around Ubisoft (A196), and “[h]ardly a week goes by without some familiar commercial landmark disappearing or getting a makeover” (A184). Unfortunately, no further details are given. Later on, from 2014 on, this topic gained more attention, when authors started to point out that small local, mostly family run businesses are closing down and new stores, including some chains, open (A27, A28, A49, A62, A98, A121). Here are the words of a neighbourhood dweller interviewed in 2014: “*Le paysage commercial aussi a changé. Plusieurs petits commerces ont été remplacés par des boutiques et des restos à la mode*” (A90).

For new and transformed restaurants in the area (e.g. A2, A13, A97, A127), “the flexible format is big with restaurateurs trying to figure out how to adapt to changing market conditions while telegraphing that they’re trendy” (A126) to attract the Ubisoft clientele, according to the article. The supermarket *Latina* on Saint-Viateur adapted to the new clientele in the neighbourhood, a supermarket “*qui était le supermarché de quartier [et] est devenu une épicerie fine et plutôt coûteuse*” (A90). In contrast to that, shops like *Monastiraki* on Saint-Laurent, a shop that sells art supplies and artistic things, and *Wilensky* on Fairmount, a traditional sandwich place, haven’t changed their offer to the new clientele in the neighbourhood (A58, A154). The owner of a grocery shop on Saint-Laurent did not change his offer for years, but in 2001 he noticed changed consumption habits due to the new, young employees in the area, that is, since Ubisoft settled in the neighbourhood (A207).

On the whole, except for the years 2005-2007, changes in commercial establishments are recognised from 2014 on. These are mainly remarks of a general nature. Linked with the changes of restaurants is the presence of new customers, in other words, mainly the employees of Ubisoft as (new) customers. The presence of new customers might lead to a change in the range of goods. This is reported differently. On the one hand, an adaptation to the new clientele is reported (not necessarily connected to the presence of Ubisoft), and on the other hand, there are shops that still offer the same things.

Local Amenities, Facilities and Services, and Technological Amenities

Most of the local amenities, facilities and services are connected to already mentioned dimensions, like the grocery stores described in an article from 2001 (A207) or the supermarket Latina on Saint-Viateur (A90). The terms ‘shops’ and ‘boutiques’ are used in general contexts without further specifications (A28, A51, A58, A90, A180, A196), as well as businesses connected with the artistic branches that are named as “the welders and designers, colour suppliers, textile merchants, videographers” (A114). There are also reports about a jeans clothing store on Fairmount (A121) and the new store of Lululemon on Saint-Viateur (A28).

A description of Saint-Viateur Street, entitled “the heart of the neighbourhood” (A184) in 2007, is included here because it reflects the nature of the latter as well as the changes in the street and maybe the neighbourhood. In 2007 a Westmount real estate agent stated that

St. Viateur is the trendiest street in the city. [...] An eclectic mixture of cafes, restaurants, boutiques, books, bagels and fripperies [...] the true measure of Mile End’s zeitgeist rests with a dizzying variety of small business and professional services that dot the landscape. [...] Clothing stores; handful of vintage and indie creation shops. (A184)

In 2017 the mayor of the arrondissement Le Plateau-Mont-Royal stated that “*il n’y a pas un local à louer sur Saint-Viateur*” (A61), but one year later, the following comment about the situation of the street was given: “Mile End’s iconic St-Viateur St. strip is in a transformation from which there may be no turning back” (A28). This indicates that a recognisable transformation process began quickly and was already underway in 2018.

A local service mentioned is access to public transport. This also plays a role for neighbourhood

dwellers and workers in the neighbourhood, which is mainly expressed in the discussion about the access to Rosemont metro station (A47, A50, A61, A65, A70, A71, A77, A155). Further local amenities, facilities and services are not mentioned in connection with Ubisoft.

The technological aspect of people working with their computers in public places is only mentioned in the description of Aire Commune, but not in the context of Ubisoft and the Mile End. Aire Commune offers free Wi-Fi so that people can work there (A54, A79). By broadening the view and looking at the Mile End as a technological neighbourhood, some statements can be found. In two specific years, the technological aspects of Montreal and hence the Mile End are in the focus of articles. It was already in 2008, when the technological side of the Mile End was emphasised and connected with the presence of Ubisoft: “*grâce entre autres à l’arrivée d’UbiSoft [sic], qui loge boulevard Saint-Laurent, attirant dans son sillage d’autres entreprises de technologie*” (A183). Ten years later, in 2018, an article looks at the technological aspects of Montreal in the context of Montreal as a smart city in general. There, Mile End is mentioned as the place where start-ups like to settle (A43), which corresponds to the description in another article writing about technology companies in Mile End in the same year (A42).

All in all, in the articles not many local amenities, facilities and services are addressed, and of those only a few are mentioned by name or type of business. The only exception is Saint-Viateur. The offer and the shops are listed in a description of this street from 2007. The commercial stores (as well as the whole situation) have however started to change by 2018 according to a comment in an article. Regarding public transport, the focus is on the access to Rosemont metro station via the train tracks, an issue that is addressed not only by the companies in the neighbourhood but also by its dwellers. In terms of the neighbourhood from a technological point of view, only a few examples are given of the neighbourhood being considered technological due to local businesses. There are no reports of people working on their computers in public places, except in the community of Aire Commune.

Government Policies Regarding the Video Game Industry and Administrative Practices

Having a look at political dynamics, the focus is on those that are connected directly with the video game industry and Ubisoft respectively. Hence, the focus is on subsidies given by the province to the video game industry. Especially during the first five years of Ubisoft’s establishment, articles

about Ubisoft report about or mention within the article the subsidies Ubisoft received from the government. Almost half of the articles regarding subsidies are published in this period (fifteen out of 31, e.g. A108, A149, A204, A213, A217, A226-232).

In addition to policies related to the video game industry, there are also administrative practices and decisions that are in some way related to the neighbourhood and Ubisoft. Political and administrative decisions may also have an impact on the development of a place and on its perception. Politics were sought between 2011 and 2013 when it came to support the artists who had their studio in the building on de Gaspé and who weren't able to afford the new rent. A political solution could be found by signing a contract with the building owner for 30 years that allows artists to stay in the building on four floors by paying a small rent. This project was supported and got funding from the City of Montreal, the arrondissement du Plateau Mont-Royal and the province with the collaboration of Pied Carré (A112, A114, A152, A156) in order to "*préserver le caractère culturel du quartier*" (A156). In the same line the question "How the city could help business owners" was posed in two articles in 2018 (A27, A28) because commercial establishments are also facing the problem of rising rents. This question is answered by the statement that shop owners "are not protected by rent control" (A27) and that "[c]ommercial leases are under provincial jurisdiction" (A28).

The requested overpass over the railway line from Mile End to Rosemont metro station was also a political topic. The project was supported by city authorities to find a "political solution" (A47, A50, A63, A71) because the Canadian National Railway Company (CN), the owner of the land, denies installing an overpass. Connected with commuting, the arrondissement introduced parking fees in this sector in 2012, which led to higher costs for people working in this area, and so, also for Ubisoft employees (A119, A132). On another front, the inauguration of the temporary space Aire Commune during the summer of 2017 would not have been possible without public support. On the one hand provincial and municipal governments supported this development by funding (A39) and on the other, city authorities provided the space where Aire Commune is located (A54).

In short, subsidies that were given to Ubisoft by the government play only a role in newspapers during the first years of Ubisoft's establishment in the Mile End. Related to administration practices, three topics are covered in the articles. One of these is the increase in rents, which affects artists and commercial establishments. The artists themselves or the studios have to leave the

neighbourhood. But it is a problem that can be solved, according to several articles. Another one focuses on the commuting to the Mile End. It is the access to Rosemont metro station where companies ask for official support, and the increase of paid parking in the neighbourhood. A last one is the support for the location of Aire Commune.

Summary Overview

Spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics in the neighbourhood cover several, different aspects. Almost all are connected with changes over time. One aspect of the spatial dynamics is the described transformation of the buildings in the area since 2011. Besides these, the spatial dynamics also include the changes in stores and the residential sector. The spatial design of the neighbourhood is perceived differently: The industrially characterised part is described in negative terms, while the residential part is viewed positively. About the changes, only the parking situation in the area is noteworthy addressed. Socio-economic dynamics are reported mostly during the last ten years. The topic of rising rents and the consequences for artists, residents and shop owners cover a wide area, for example that artists have to leave the neighbourhood. Since 2016, some authors have included Ubisoft in this dynamic because they see a connection to the company in this development. This rarely includes a description of local amenities, facilities, and services and how they have changed. The exceptions are about Saint-Viateur, where some snapshots are given over the years, that indicate a change of offers and amenities, and the restaurants that note a change of customers, mainly people working at Ubisoft. The impact on the range of goods varies. It is reported that shops are adapting their range, but also that shops are continuing to offer the same. About sport and leisure activities and possible dynamics, there is nothing reported in connection with Ubisoft except for some comments about internal activities of the Ubisoft employees in the early years. Political dynamics concentrate during the first years on the policies about the subsidies given to the video game industry, and later on, for a specific time frame, on the (financial) support for the artists and the assistance for the overpass over the railway line to Rosemont metro station.

4.1.3. Neighbourhood - a Global View of What is Going On

In several articles, the development of the neighbourhood is considered in a larger time frame. The way in which the dynamics are described cannot be categorised as one specific dynamic, such as

the cultural, socio-economic, spatial and political dynamics described above, but encompasses other ones on a larger or smaller scale. This section therefore presents statements about the transformation of the neighbourhood over time, as well as comments about the transformation and general statements about the neighbourhood, starting with statements dating back to the 1970s.

Long before Ubisoft came to the Mile End, locals were already noticing changes in the neighbourhood. In retrospect, one notes that as early as the 1970s, the first residents spoke of gentrification and irreversible change (A49). One author describes in his article in 2005 the neighbourhood in the following way: “This used to be a no-man’s land for 15 or 20 years. [...] A brief burst of development on the upper Main began in the 1980s” (A196). That is similar to pictures given in 2007: “For years, Mile End was one of Montreal’s best kept secrets. A sleepy, multi-ethnic residential neighbourhood, it didn’t even have a name in the 1970s and ’80s, when artists, hippies and students were discovering” the borough (A184), and in 2017: “In the 1990s, the streets of eastern Mile End were mostly deserted, populated by artists who had moved into old derelict factories and warehouses” (A62). These descriptions also reflect the impression of Ubisoft when they settled in the neighbourhood as underlined in 2015 by Yannis Mallat, CEO of Ubisoft Montreal: “*Il y a 18 ans, à notre arrivée, personne ne voulait même venir dans les environs*” (A89), and in 2017 by Cedric Orvoine, Ubisoft vice-president for communications and human resources: “When we started, people said, what will you do? This is a dead area - textile factories shutting down, and a bunch of artists’ lofts, but there was no real thinking of what would come next” (A62). A shop owner describes this time as well: “*En pleine frénésie marchande du temps des Fêtes, personne ne se marchait sur les pieds ici les jours de Boxing Day -- ni aucun des autres jours de l’année d’ailleurs*” (A58). Finally, a statement of a new Montreal dweller about Boulevard Saint-Laurent in 2018 who refers to recent developments: “About 10 years ago: [...] There was nothing around, every (storefront) was empty” (A27). These descriptions of the neighbourhood, how it was and how it looked like before Ubisoft settled and even during the first years of Ubisoft’s presence in the area, differ from the picture that is given today.

These characterisations led to a closer look at statements about current and future development and transformation. Statements without referring to the video game industry or Ubisoft are rare. An early statement about the future of the Mile End is given in 2001 by a grocery shop owner on Saint-Laurent who worked in the Mile End for 45 years. He identifies a change in consumer habits by

the new, young people working now in the Mile End and so he comes to the conclusion that “[y]ou can still buy green bananas at Marche Feldman but the Mile End landmark is ripe for transformation” (A207). In an article from 2008, the cause for the continuing change is seen in “*la présence d’originaux et patenteux de toutes sortes qui ont permis à des cafés, boutiques et restaurants de se développer*” (A180). Some authors report about a changing vibe in the neighbourhood; e.g. in 2005, the change of vibe is seen positively when a shop owner states that there will be another Mile End in the future and that the Mile End is “definitely a thriving neighbourhood. There’s just a huge energy” (A196). Though, in 2007 another author reports about first signs of changes that are seen negatively. The author states that “the neighbourhood is showing signs of resistance to the worst aspects of change” (A184). Then, in 2011, a slowly eroding neighbourhood vibe (A157) is reported, and finally in 2018, an artist complains that it is the end “of a certain bohemian artistic spirit that used to define Mile End that has slowly been replaced by a more consumer-oriented culture, as happens inevitably to hipster ‘hoods’” (A34).

Summary Overview

All in all, neighbourhood dynamics in general are noted throughout time, starting with comments that refer to the 1970s/1980s. The early descriptions of the time before Ubisoft settled are mostly about the appearance of the neighbourhood. The Mile End is mostly described as a dingy neighbourhood that was not in the focus as a neighbourhood to live in and to move there. The presence of artists is reported in the 1990s as the main group in the area around Ubisoft, though the area is still described as empty and with barricaded storefronts. This impression is also underlined by the statements of Ubisoft when it settled. The description of the Mile End in 2020 differs and during the last decade, the spirit and vibe that coin the Mile End are in the focus, as well as different types of people that are present in the area. Overall, most of the statements are positive about the situation lately, although some negative remarks about the future of the neighbourhood can be found as well.

4.1.4. Creative Milieu

The creative milieu concerns two aspects: social interactions and networking. A clear separation is not always possible because while socializing with others, building networks can be done as well and in the newspapers those topics go along together. Nevertheless, they are separated in the analysis as far as possible.

Interrelation, Mixing of People and Socialising

The group of people working at Ubisoft and their interrelations and socialising in the neighbourhood are described in some statements mostly linked with the description of how they behave during lunch time (e.g. A192, A195, A219), what they do after work (e.g. A195, A225, A227), and their sport activities in the neighbourhood (in the early years) (e.g. A200, A221). These activities they do within their team or with other employees of Ubisoft, but it is not reported that they do it with people who don't work at Ubisoft.

This topic, which concerns the residents of the neighbourhood, is often related to changes in the neighbourhood, along with changes in the community and in social interactions. Having the community feeling and social interactions in mind, one interviewed dweller states in 2015 that “*Avant d’être un quartier à la mode - celui du restaurant X et des hipsters -, le Mile End est un quartier multiculturel où la vie communautaire compte pour beaucoup*” (A90). Three years later, another dweller complained that all his friends moved out from the neighbourhood and that it isn't the same anymore (A34). In relation to new shops, a person interviewed in an article states that “Once housing goes up because of new chains, we will start to see a change in character, making it difficult to build a sense of community, ownership and common purpose.” (A157). The community feeling in its positive way is addressed by a dweller in 2014 by stating that “Part of the goal was to have a Mile End feel, with different community groups” (A101). There are further examples given of a good interrelation between the dwellers (A24, A28). A dweller states that “The residents of the area are so involved, on all levels. It's easy to mobilize people for projects, whether it's a skate park or deciding what to do with the area around the train tracks” (A28).

Opportunities for people working in the Mile End to meet and socialise were offered in 2017 and 2018 during summer at Aire Commune, which was also an aim of its establishment (A27, A31,

A54). The owner states at its inauguration that the aim is to “*s’attabler gratuitement pour travailler et échanger [...] réunir tant les gens des bureaux du Mile End que des autres quartiers de la ville pour créer des échanges, assister à des conférences (payantes) et participer à des 5 à 7*” (A54), and in the following year he repeats this intention by stating that they aim to “*favoriser des connexions entre les gens du milieu et les professionnels*” (A31). Who attends this place and to what extent the people do work in the area is not reported.

Regarding the social interactions, the description of the Ubisoft developers is not without its prejudices. One of them is from the year 2000 and refers to their behaviour and interactions. The author writes about the video game developers: “*préférant les relations virtuelles aux relations humaines et ne connaissant rien au monde réel qu’ils ont surtout vécu par simulation. C’est une description injuste et pas vraiment conforme à la réalité*” (A221).

The *Open Days* of artist’s studios in the Mile End between 2008 and 2017 are described as an opportunity not only for people from the neighbourhood and artists to meet, exchange ideas and make contacts in a relaxed atmosphere, but also for anyone interested. (A48, A98, A153, A158, A174, A179, A180). In the eyes of an artist, it is “*plutôt rare d’avoir l’occasion de tourner autour d’une oeuvre, de la regarder de près et de questionner son créateur. C’est un moment permissif et enrichissant sur le plan humain*” (A158). Another opportunity for local residents, artists, and Ubisoft employees to meet, socialise and contribute are the street festivals organised by Ubisoft in 2007 and 2017 (A51, A186, A189). As a place where different kind of people from the neighbourhood come together to socialise, the café Olimpico is mentioned in one article in 2005 (A197). Other places in the neighbourhood are not described like this.

To conclude, the interrelation, mixing of people and socialising is marginally reported in the case of Ubisoft employees, e.g. lunch time behavior or in-house sport (teams). The few things they report that they do, they do within their team and not with other people in their profession. Two occasions are mentioned when Ubisoft employees had the possibility to socialise in the neighbourhood: the two festivals organised by Ubisoft. On the contrary, more depictions are given for neighbourhood dwellers. The articles report about the community, the (positive) community feeling, the close relationship between the dwellers, and the engagement of the neighbourhood dwellers in the development of the neighbourhood. This engagement is usually provoked by the changes in the neighbourhood. One occasion is reported when artists and (mainly) neighbourhood

dwellers got the chance to socialise and interrelate in a conscious way. These are the *Open Days* of the artist's studios that took place regularly from 2008 to 2017.

Representations of Relations and Behaviours Within and to Other Groups

In the neighbourhood different groups maintain specific representations of relations and behaviours within their own group and with others. On the one hand, the residents, the artists, and the Ubisoft employees can be defined as a group in the neighbourhood.⁶⁸ The neighbourhood dwellers are represented as a group in some articles⁶⁹, e.g. in those articles which are connected with the plans of changes in the area on the administrative level. While participating in processes, they perform as a group (A112, A117, A121, A140), e.g. in the public consultation on the future development in the area around Saint-Viateur Est (A140). They act as a group that is dedicated (A90) and can be mobilised quickly (A112). This acting as a group wouldn't be possible without a community spirit that is mentioned in several articles (A90, A157, A184, A196). An interviewee states about it in 2007 that "the community spirit that makes the neighbourhood so great" (A184), which plays a role in how the neighbourhood and its dwellers approach other groups or changes. The neighbourhood dwellers as a group are addressed by Ubisoft, namely in the context of Ubisoft's anniversaries in 2007 and 2017 (A51, A186, A189). As a spokesman of Ubisoft said in 2007, the festivities are not only to celebrate Ubisoft's presence in the neighbourhood, "*mais de faire rayonner le Mile End et de mettre en avant ce qui se fait ici*" (A186), and the offer of activities in 2017 should "[*permettre*] *de créer des relations, d'échanger et de vivre des moments communs. [...] Et c'est ce que la compagnie souhaite créer dans son quartier d'adoption*" (A51). The attitude towards each other is described several times in articles that report about the company and its employees (e.g. A8, A163, A221). The employees of Ubisoft, "*la grand famille Ubi Soft*" (A226) how they called themselves at least at the beginning, are recognised as a group, mostly during lunch time, in places like the pizzeria *Magpie* (A103) on Maguire, *Café Olimpico* (A197, A62) and *Comptoir21* on Saint-Viateur (A170), or *Boa Bar* (A190) on Saint-Laurent. Ubisoft shares the office building with artists, who themselves represent a group. The presentation of their relationship is described as positive, albeit fragile (A45, A115, A173). Both groups worked

⁶⁸ The commercial sector does not play a noteworthy role.

⁶⁹ The neighbourhood dwellers themselves encompass different communities that are not further distinguished. In the neighbourhood exist e.g. Italian, Greek, or Spanish communities.

together, including at the *Open Days* (A179). This event also gives the artists the opportunity to represent themselves as a group to the neighbourhood (A153), and also to shape the representations, their communication, and social interactions, among themselves (e.g. A67).

On the other hand, further groups are identifiable by certain characteristics, such as language or religion. Members of the aforementioned groups might be part of the following groups as well. A group that is mentioned in articles as present in the neighbourhood is the ‘anglos’, people who speak English. One interviewee, who defines himself as ‘francophone’, states about Anglophones that they are the “neighbourhood’s most visible minority - young anglos” (A184), a group that he further sees as responsible for “a vibrant young anglo scene” (A184) in the neighbourhood. This depiction is confirmed by the owner of a former bookstore in the Mile End and his customers, although not without impacts for francophones. He states about his francophone customers that “[d]e plus en plus, ils se sont mis à entendre leur voisinage discuter en anglais” (A110), which gives them a feeling of ‘eviction’. A different picture of the living together of these two groups is given in a description of people sitting in a café outside, on a terrace. The author writes that “*Anglos et francos s’y côtoyaient en parfaite harmonie en sirotant les moins chers, mais surtout les meilleurs lattes en ville*” (A197), so that there is no difference between these two groups. A last group that is worth mentioning is the group of Hassidic Jews because they are a visible group in the neighbourhood that is marked by their behaviour - within their group and to other groups⁷⁰. They are only mentioned in one article in which a dweller tells the story about her first time in the neighbourhood at the end of the 1970s. She says that “*une voisine hassidique est tout de suite venue lui souhaiter la bienvenue*” (A90).

Summarising the representation of relationship and behaviour, the groups of neighbourhood dwellers, Ubisoft employees and artists are all related to each other in different ways. Each group acts within its group, such as the neighbour dwellers who act actively as a group concerning questions about the development of the area, also in political contexts, the employees of Ubisoft whose description is limited to the visible group during lunch time, and the artists who profit from being close to other artists. There are also relationships, for example between the residents and Ubisoft through the festivals organised by Ubisoft, between the artists and Ubisoft because they

⁷⁰ Not included are further Jewish groups. They are usually mentioned in connection with immigrant waves in a historical context, e.g. A14, A49, A56, A196, A207.

share the same building, and between the dwellers and the artists during the *Open Days* of artist's studios. Besides these groups, groups of different characteristics can be identified, such as those who speak English and those who speak French. Though, this representation is depicted differently between a separation and a coexistence.

Networking

Networking, the acquiring and exchange of knowledge, information transfer and participation, is not in the focus of newspaper articles. In only twelve articles, information about these topics can be identified throughout the years. An aim of the establishment of Aire Commune in 2017 was to “*réunir tant les gens des bureaux du Mile End que des autres quartiers de la ville pour créer des échanges, assister à des conférences (payantes) et participer à des 5 à 7*” (A54), therefore providing the facilities to work and to meet (A31, A54).

The artists in the Mile End share their knowledge and emphasise access and participation, on the one hand between each other, as stated by an artist in 2011: “*Et il faut une communauté autour: quand j’ai de la menuiserie à faire, [...] je n’ai qu’à aller dans un autre atelier. J’ai un paquet de ressources dans un réseau de 150 mètres autour de moi.*” (A152), and on the other hand with people who do not exercise their profession. There is an exchange between them and neighbourhood dwellers, which happens e.g. in events like the *Open Days* (e.g. A48, A158), described by an artist as this:

C’est un échange intéressant. En art, on a de la difficulté à faire comprendre notre démarche. [...] J’aime beaucoup l’interaction avec les personnes qui viennent dans mon atelier [...]. Les visiteurs partagent des points de vue différents qui me permettent d’avoir de nouvelles perceptions sur mes peintures. (A158)

In the video game sector, Ubisoft is in contact with other companies, though, Montreal is mentioned only as the geographical location without giving specification about what these contacts look like (A204). For its employees, teamwork, exchange of knowledge and the sharing of information are important because one says that “[*f*]aut prendre le temps de se changer les idées si on veut rester productif” (A219), and “[*l*]es gens ont souvent leurs meilleures idées chez eux en prenant un café, quand ils discutent avec d’autres ou même quand ils joggent” (A79). A good connection to the

artists and creatives is an important concern for Ubisoft in relation to their work, because “creativity emerges from connection. If you succeed in connecting these people, you can do a lot” (A181). A regular exchange and participation with the neighbourhood and its dwellers is also important for Ubisoft: “*La consultation régulière de comités de citoyens a aussi permis à Ubisoft et aux autres développeurs privés du secteur de s’assurer de l’appui de la population*” (A89), as stated in 2015. Nevertheless, within the group of Ubisoft’s employees, it is also reported that during lunch break, they share their knowledge and ideas, but they do it inside the office (A219).

All in all, it reports on the networking of artists who try to build or maintain their networks inside and outside their studios by visiting other artists or during the *Open Days*. Since it is important for their job, Ubisoft employees shall build up networks with artists and other creative people as well as with the neighbourhood. This depiction is given by the company, though reported in the articles is networking only within the group. One place mentioned that is supposed to support the building of networks is Aire Commune.

Summary Overview

In this section about the creative milieu, social interactions are a part of it. They are reported from time to time in different contexts. The intensity depends very much on which group is being reported. Of Ubisoft employees only the lunch time habits or in-house sport activities within their group are noted, besides the possibilities for them to socialise in the neighbourhood with neighbourhood dwellers and the artists in the same building. However, nothing more is reported. Of neighbourhood dwellers several descriptions of socialising and interrelations are noted, especially about the community, their close relation and cooperation connected with neighbourhood changes. Further, their possibility to socialise with the artists during the *Open Days* is mentioned. The artists themselves talk about the benefits of a close relationship to other artists. The social interactions of the artists are connected to networking. Networking is described in the case of artists who try to build or maintain their networks inside and outside their studio. Building a connection from employees to artists and creatives is a goal for Ubisoft because this connection is seen as important for their work. The company also includes the neighbourhood in this intention. Though, reported is networking only within the group of Ubisoft employees.

4.1.5. Perception of the neighbourhood

The neighbourhood as a social unit is the place for activities, networking, or relationships. In the newspaper articles, it is mostly seen throughout the years as a neighbourhood with its dwellers: their living environment and the social space with a community feeling (e.g. A34, A49, A56, A90, A98, A101, A110, A157, A184). Further, it is seen as the area to go out and where activities take place (e.g. A13, A24, A51, A54, A59, A62, A90, A117), e.g. the activities during the Ubisoft festivities in 2007 and 2017 (e.g. A51, A62) and the events organised by *POP Montreal* (e.g. A117). Less examples are given regarding the neighbourhood as a social unit connected with work (e.g. A28, A121, A142, A156).

Proximity and boundaries that characterize the neighbourhood as a spatial unit are mentioned throughout the years and with different specifications. The location of Ubisoft plays a role in some articles to refer to the distance to certain places, such as opposite of the Ubisoft building (e.g. A2, A27), the area around Ubisoft (A51, A62, A132) or to quote a distance in meters, such as “Half of Ubisoft’s employees live within a five-kilometre radius of its offices” (A181), or in minutes, such as “an eight-minute walk from Ubisoft” (A184).

A couple of articles uses the expression ‘in the heart of’. However, this location means different parts of the neighbourhood. Some use the characterisation “*en plein cœur du quartier*” (A98) without any further specification (e.g. A22, A85, A104), others mention “[*a*]u cœur du Mile End [*as the area*], là où l’industrie du jeu vidéo a littéralement transformé le quartier” (A35) or “au cœur d’un quartier en pleine mutation” (A183), which does not necessarily mean the same area. This is in line with the statement that “Ubisoft Montréal est installé au cœur du Mile End” (A111). Further specifications for the area are “au nord du quartier, vers la voie ferrée, [...] le regroupement de bâtisses industrielles situées sur l’avenue de Gaspé” (A158), “a one-time factory in the industrial sector east of St. Laurent Blvd. and south of the CN tracks beside Rosemont Blvd”⁷¹ (A140), “se trouve au bord de la voie de chemin de fer” (A69) or “on de Gaspé Ave. near Rosemont Blvd. in Mile End” (A114). Some authors see the street Saint-Viateur as the heart of the neighbourhood (A184), the “heart and soul of Mile End” (A27) respectively, where the festivities

⁷¹ CN: Canadian National Railway Company

take place (A186). Two articles take a larger view and see the Mile End in the heart of Montreal (A77, A142). There are also articles that claim places as being in Mile End, though they are part of other districts, such as the article that claims 6250, rue Hutchison as “*au coeur du Mile End*” (A48), though it is in Outremont just across the railway tracks in Mile-Ex.

Besides the mentioned streets, there are also certain parts of Mile End that are named and that can be seen as sub-areas within the neighbourhood. Examples are “*secteur Maguire*” (A183), “*quartier Saint-Viateur*” (A156), or “*Mile End’s St-Viateur East neighbourhood*” (A114). Without referring to a certain place, proximity and distances to other places are addressed in some articles (A24, A47, A49, A56, A65, A67, A77, A110, A116, A121), such as its location close to Mont Royal (A77). There are a few articles that use the name ‘Upper Main’ to signify the area in Mile End around Saint-Laurent (A157, A190, A196). This name was usually used at the beginning of the research period but could still be found in 2011⁷². Parallel to that, the street name Boulevard Saint-Laurent was used for the area (e.g. A89, A219, A226), or “*upper Saint Laurent*” (A157). One article from 2000 uses the formerly known expression “*l’Outremont adjacent*” (A221) to specify the area. A noteworthy statement of the neighbourhood and its boundaries made in 2015 reflects some perceptions: “*Ça nous a forcés à penser à l’est du Mile End alors que dans notre esprit, le Mile End s’arrêtait au Blv. St.-Laurent*” (A90).

The neighbourhood as an administrative unit is also represented in several articles. These deal with the overpass over the railway lines (A47, A50, A63, A71). The neighbourhood as a physical unit is not mentioned to any significant extent.

Summary Overview

In the perceptions of the neighbourhood, only the perception as a social or spatial unit plays a role in the articles. As a social unit, it is seen in the context of dwellers’ living environment, the social space with its community, the area for leisure activities, and, though rarely, the working environment, without remarkable statements. All the more meaningful is the way, the Mile End is seen as a spatial unit. One aspect is connected with Ubisoft. The company or the building respectively is used as a relative or absolute reference to other places, which signifies that Ubisoft

⁷² Still today Boulevard Saint-Laurent is called ‘The Main’.

is known. Another aspect is the view on the neighbourhood and where the heart of the Mile End is. It varies widely. Besides this representation, other representations, or names respectively for different subareas within the Mile End are used as well. Most of them refer to the area around Ubisoft.

5.1.6. Relationship Between the Video Game Industry and the Neighbourhood

In this section, an extended look at all the newspaper articles shows the various relationships and the context in which Ubisoft is mentioned. Most of the points have already been addressed, but not with a focus on the relationship.

Ubisoft built up a relation to the cultural sector in the neighbourhood. The company supported cultural events for several years by giving funding and/or by participating, e.g. the *Open Days* of the studios organised with the local artist community (A48, A153, A158, A174, A179, A180, A182). Ubisoft also supports local artists by buying their work of arts (A69), or they present their artistic work in a local gallery in the Ubisoft building (A167). For a couple of years, from 2011 to 2018, concerts were held on the roof of the Ubisoft building (A24, A25, A91, A99, A100, A101, A115-118, A133, A135, A159, A165), of which some events were planned by local organisers, such as POP Montreal (A101). Further, Ubisoft “involved itself in the community through a series of initiatives, including a St. Viateur street festival [that] it organized with local people last June” (A181) for its 10th anniversary in 2007. Ubisoft also organised a street festival for their anniversary in 2017, which was open to everyone and also organised to include the neighbourhood dwellers (A51, A53, A59, A62, A186, A189).

The relation between the neighbourhood and Ubisoft, in particular its employees, can also be seen on an economical level. The employees are customers in the neighbourhood mostly for the local restaurants and bars, as pointed out in several articles throughout the years; however, how intense this relation is, is not mentioned, but by looking at the relation, Ubisoft’s employees are the consumers and the restaurants etc. are on the supply side (A13, A22, A31, A54, A97, A98, A103, A110, A126, A154, A170, A190, A197, A219). In 2021, Ubisoft and the Mile End seem irrevocably connected with each other. This becomes clear when Ubisoft serves as an example of a company that settled successfully in the Mile End, often used as the only reference in the article

regardless of context (A28, A39, A66, A67, A77, A140, A155, A157, A207), or when the Ubisoft building on Saint-Laurent serves as a reference point, e.g. the “Ubisoft building, which everyone knows” (A14) to specify the location to other companies, restaurants, etc. (A2, A14, A15, A27, A29, A56, A104, A121, A127, A187, A196).

A major point regarding the relation is the connection between Ubisoft and the transformation process of the neighbourhood seen as initiated by Ubisoft (A152). The transformation of the neighborhood and Ubisoft’s role in it is very complex. Ubisoft or the location of Ubisoft in the Mile End respectively is often claimed as the source of the transformation process or claimed that it contributed to it (A35, A89, A112, A138, A149, A183, A207). Different consequences of the arrival of Ubisoft are named, e.g. “*L’entreprise française contribue à la transformation du Mile End. Le quartier accueillera par la suite plusieurs entreprises technologiques*” (A42), or “Then came Ubisoft ... and take up a lot of space - literally and figuratively - as cafes and restaurants and hipster clothiers followed in its wake” (A62). About Ubisoft’s role in the neighbourhood, it is further stated in 2017 that

The company has played a role in the gentrification of the neighbourhood, pushing out some of the artists, in part to make room for Ubisoft’s offices and studios but also because rents and property values have grown alongside it. [...] Ubisoft brought a lot of young people and energy and created a lot of business [...] they support a lot of small businesses [...]. (A62)

Although this article sees Ubisoft as a major player in the transformation process, the author finally states that “it’s not Ubisoft that created the whole rise of Mile End - it helped but it’s not their fault” (A62). These points are also addressed in further articles, such as the attraction for other companies to settle (A140, A183), of which some followed Ubisoft (A77, A155), the attraction for hipsters and young people to come to the Mile End (A58, A183), the “*impact économique indéniable sur ce secteur effervescent et créatif*” (A51), the restaurants around Ubisoft (A90, A98), that the workers bring money to the neighbourhood (A90), or that, as a result, artists have to leave their studio (A152, A156). A few statements lead to the result that the readers of the articles know what the transformation process and its consequences in the Mile End are by only mentioning that the “*même phénomène qui s’est produit dans le Mile End avec l’arrivée d’Ubisoft se reproduit ici*” in Mile-Ex (A11). These examples are mostly connected with negative impacts on the neighbourhood,

but there are also statements using positively associated words to describe the process initiated by Ubisoft, such as “*la renaissance du Mile End*” (A138), “*redynamisé la rue Saint-Viateur*” (A132) or “*a commencé à reprendre vie il y a 14 ans, quand le géant du jeu vidéo Ubisoft s’est installé*” (A141). As Yannis Mallat, CEO of Ubisoft Montreal states in 2012: “[a]ujourd’hui, on imagine mal le Mile End sans Ubisoft” (A138), and as Cédric Orvoine, Ubisoft vice-president for communications and human resources, underlines five years later in 2017: “It’s hard to say just how different Mile End would be without Ubisoft” (A62).

Summary Overview

On the whole, it is reported throughout the years that Ubisoft took an active role to build a relationship to the neighbourhood by organising and supporting (cultural) events for the public. A further connection to the neighbourhood was built via the employees as customers in the local restaurants and bars, especially around the location of Ubisoft. These two reasons partly contributed to the intertwined relation between Ubisoft and the Mile End. Much more concise to this intertwinement, and more elaborated, is the point that Ubisoft is seen as the source or as part of the transformation process that is going on in the neighbourhood. This point is usually regarded negatively but there are some rare positive voices about the role of Ubisoft in this process.

4.1.7. Role of the Neighbourhood for Developers’ Cultural Activities

Cultural activities and cultural lifestyles are a focus of this study. They are linked to specific places. The significance of the neighbourhood under investigation plays a major role here, as will be seen below. An extended look is taken at the findings already mentioned above, supplemented with further statements that are not part of other dimensions and have therefore not yet been considered. This section therefore takes a special look at Ubisoft’s cultural and creative relationship in the neighbourhood and the significance that culture and creativity have for the company and the work of the developers.

In addition to public funding, the presence of creativity and creative talent also played a role in the decision in favour of Montreal as a location (A163, A225). In Montreal, the company found conditions in Mile End that were in line with its ideas, so that they “are growing very fast because

we were very happy with what we found here” (A225) as stated in 1999, a statement that Yannis Mallat, president and CEO, specifies in 2007 by saying that: “*Le Mile End regroupe une population artistique et créative, décalée, mais aussi multiculturelle*” (A189). Further arguments for Ubisoft’s choice for Mile End, according to an interview with Yannis Mallat in 2011, are: “*Parmi les raisons qui ont pesé dans la balance, Yannis Mallat mentionne la qualité de vie du Mile End, inestimable pour les employés montréalais du géant français*” (A142), and regarding the whole environment, Ubisoft said six years later that the company “is also a product of the hyper-creative Mile End ‘ecosystem’ - and wouldn’t change a thing” (A62). In connection with the last statement, the location of Ubisoft, i.e. the building in which they are located, is also significant. This is first underlined by spokesman Cedric Orvoine in 2007, who says that “the building and the neighbourhood are key ingredients to Ubisoft’s Montreal success” (A184), and he adds that “[w]e wouldn’t be what we are today without this building” (A184). This fact is expressed later again in 2011 by Yannis Mallat: “*Il y a vraiment là un écosystème créatif, un écosystème de vie, et un équilibre parfait qui fait que le tissu créatif qu’on trouve à l’intérieur des murs trouve son écho à l’extérieur*” (A142). Authors state about the reasons for Ubisoft to choose the Mile End that “Mile End is a dynamic village, a charming neighbourhood - which is why (video-game giant) Ubisoft set up there” (A28), and that the company “*voulait s’implanter dans un quartier branché*” (A200).

Cultural lifestyle, cultural participation, and experience, as well as cultural amenities and a cultural infrastructure are important for Ubisoft and its employees according to the statements of the management. They see a connection between creativity, the neighbourhood and its employees and they see creativity as an important part for the work of the employees. This is emphasised by Yannis Mallet, CEO, in 2006 by stating that “It’s, indeed, a big goal, but we have some key elements to reach it: innovation and creativity that are valued by gamers” (A193), and in 2007 that: “*C’est ça aussi la créativité. Ce n’est pas seulement dans le jeu vidéo que nos employés s’expriment et brillent*” (A189). To build up a connection or a relation between Ubisoft and the creative sector, Ubisoft initiated or supported different events, such as the *Open Days* of the artist’s studios (e.g. A179, A182), because, as Cedrid Orvoine, Ubisoft Canada’s spokesman underlines: “It’s important for us to keep in very good contact with the local creativity and feed from it [...] Our people are spending their days here and being influenced by their local environment” (A181). In line with this are the festivities for its ten years in the Mile End when Ubisoft states: “*Pour nos 10 ans, on veut célébrer la créativité, et célébrer la texture de ce quartier*” (A189) and taking the artists into

account: *“C’est une façon de remercier les artistes du coin, qui font du Mile End un quartier où règne la diversité. ‘Le Mile End est riche sur le plan artistique et ça nourrit la créativité des employés d’Ubisoft’”* (A186). Conversely, it is stated that *“cette compagnie de renommée internationale a un impact économique indéniable sur ce secteur effervescent et créatif”* (A51).

Not much is reported about Ubisoft employees using the cultural infrastructure or amenities in the neighbourhood, with the exception of the restaurants and bars (A170, A219, A221), which seems to be around their offices: *“Beaucoup de jeunes employés préfèrent sortir, surtout s’il fait beau. Et boulevard Saint-Laurent, le choix est vaste. [...] ‘On est très bien servi. Il y a toutes les sortes de cuisine’”* (A219).

Summary Overview

All in all, the company states that the creativity and creative talent that was (and still is) present in the Mile End played a role in the choice of this neighbourhood. The company is still of the same opinion about the decision to settle in the neighbourhood. Another positively seen aspect of the neighbourhood mentioned by the company is the quality of life that is offered to the Ubisoft employees. Regarding the relation between the company and the neighbourhood, Ubisoft sees an effect from the creative environment on their work, including the building they are in, which supported their development to the position they have today in the field of video games. Creativity plays an important part for the work of Ubisoft employees, as noted by the management. They see a connection between creativity, the neighbourhood and its employees, in particular the influence of the local and the creative environment on work. To build up, support and preserve this connection to the artists and the neighbourhood as well, Ubisoft is actively involved in different projects and festivities. There is not much reported about the use of the cultural infrastructure or the amenities in the neighbourhood, except for the restaurants and bars around their location.

4.1.8. Conclusion

Looking at the images shown of the Mile End in the newspaper articles, the dynamics taking place there and the groups operating there, a relationship on different levels and with varying intensity between the video game industry, Ubisoft and its employees, and the neighborhood becomes

apparent.

The picture of the neighbourhood given in the newspapers is manifold and encompasses the different dynamics. Understanding the development over time, the incorporation of the time period before Ubisoft settled in the Mile End helps its understanding. The first statements about the neighbourhood date back to the 1970s/1980s. These descriptions are mostly about the appearance of the neighbourhood. The Mile End is described as a dingy neighbourhood, and a neighbourhood which was not a favourite place to move to or to live in. From the 1990s on, the presence of artists is reported as the main group in the area where Ubisoft is located today, though it is still described as empty and with barricaded storefronts. These were more or less the conditions when Ubisoft decided to settle there, which is also underlined by Ubisoft's statements of that time. Today, the depiction of the Mile End is contrary. During the last decade, the spirit and the vibe present in the Mile End are in the focus of the neighbourhood description. The Mile End is described as hot and vibrant, where there is a scene for various cultural events and festivals open to the public. Anyone can take part in one of the variously listed places, one of which is the Ubisoft rooftop. In general, most of the statements are lately positive about the situation, though negative remarks about the future of the neighbourhood are also given.

Looking at cultural dynamics, one focus is on restaurants and bars, in particular on the description of their opening or closing, or their offer description. It is therefore an anthropological view of culture rather than participation in the arts and culture fields per se. This reflects one of the pictures of the development over time. Not only the cultural dynamics illustrate the development and the changes during the last two decades in the neighbourhood, but also the spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics. The neighbourhood has evolved in the area where Ubisoft is located to a technological neighbourhood with several high-tech companies. This process goes along with described renovations and transformations of buildings in the area since 2011, and a changing parking situation. Besides, changes in stores and the residential sector are mentioned as well in the whole neighbourhood. It coins the experience of the spatial design: negatively described is the industrial part while the residential one has a positive image. In the same period, reports of rising rents and the consequences for artists, residents and shopkeepers emerged, a topic that became one of the most discussed socio-economic dynamics during the last decade. Since 2016, Ubisoft is mentioned in relation to these dynamics in some statements because the company is seen as a force

involved. In the same way, the changes in local amenities, facilities and services can be recognised. The most reported change over the years are the changes and the development of Saint-Viateur Street. Snapshots are given for several years, and the last one from 2018 indicates higher vacancies of stores than for the previous years. The change of offers and stores respectively might apply to the new customers, though a change of customers is mostly reported by restaurants and identified as Ubisoft employees. About sport and leisure activities and possible dynamics, there is nothing reported in connection with Ubisoft because the employees participate at internal activities. At the beginning, political dynamics concentrate on the policies about the subsidies the video game industry received. Later, their focus was on the (financial) support for the artists and the assistance for the overpass over the railway line to Rosemont metro station.

This cultural dynamic is also related to the people who are in the neighbourhood, what they do and how they behave, e.g. the artists, the neighbourhood residents, the visitors, and the video game developers. In this thesis, the social interactions and networking activities in the neighbourhood are in the focus. Their implication depends on the group involved. For the group of neighbourhood dwellers and for the group of artists, socialising and interrelation occasions are reported, such as for neighbourhood dwellers about the community, the close relationship and cooperation connected with neighbourhood changes which also coin their perception of the Mile End (as a social unit), and for the artists about the close relations and (internal) networking. Both groups also got the possibility to socialise and network during special events. As visitors to the neighbourhood, hipsters are recognized and described as a group that is attracted by the cool and vibrant image of the neighbourhood. For the group of video game developers, on the other hand, hardly any examples are given. The only activities mentioned over the years are their appearance during lunch breaks and in-house sporting activities within their own group, although through events, etc. opportunities exist. Possibilities to connect with each other exist throughout the years. The described dynamics are connected to the neighbourhood, though the perception of the neighbourhood, where its borders are, differs. This is underlined e.g. by the location of the ‘heart of Mile End’, whose perception varies widely.

Before looking at the reported relation between the people working in the video game industry and the neighbourhood, a closer look on the reported relation between the industry itself and the area is appropriated since it might influence the behavior of the workers in the neighbourhood.

According to the newspapers, building a connection between the employees, the artists and creatives and the neighbourhood is beneficial for Ubisoft, as it is very important for the work of Ubisoft's employees. This is also underlined by the reasons given by Ubisoft management (still valid) for locating in the Mile End, such as the presence of creativity and creative talent, a good quality of life, and the presence of cultural infrastructure and facilities that support the cultural lifestyle of its employees. Ubisoft states an effect from the creative environment on their work, including the building they are in, which supported their development to the position they have today in the field of video games. Therefore, the company tries to build up, support and preserve a close, good connection with the neighbourhood and hence, it is actively involved in the neighbourhood, such as the cultural involvement by acting as initiator, supporter or participant of cultural events. The high profile of Ubisoft in the neighbourhood is marked by the fact that Ubisoft or the building respectively is used as a relative or absolute reference to other places.

Regarding the people working at Ubisoft and their behaviour in the neighbourhood, several, different things are reported. This group is recognised in the neighbourhood, such as by the way they dress and the way they behave, as well as their work and lunch time habits, which is the time period when they are mostly recognised. This is the connection, the intertwined relationship between Ubisoft employees and the neighbourhood, which has also contributed to the opinion that Ubisoft is the source or part of the transformation process taking place in the Mile End. This opinion is generally seen in a negative light, but some positive comments regarding this connection can also be found. Except for the lunch time habits in the neighbourhood, networking, socialising, sport, and leisure activities are only reported within the group of Ubisoft employees, and not much is reported regarding the usage of the cultural infrastructure or amenities in the neighbourhood besides restaurants and bars, although the employees have the opportunity to do so.

4.2. Flingern-Nord in Newspaper Articles

The analysis includes all articles of the database query according to the coding scheme described in chapter 2. Of the 63 articles published between 1997 and 2020, 21 articles address at least one of the topics of cultural, spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics, lifestyle, amenities or the creative milieu, which emphasize the relevance and connection of Ubisoft and the neighbourhood.

In the following, the results of the analysis grouped according to the parts of the operational framework are presented. These are ‘Cultural Dynamics’ including lifestyle and amenities, ‘Spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics’, ‘Creative Milieu’ and the ‘Perception of the neighbourhood’, complemented by the sections ‘Neighbourhood - a global view of what is going on’, ‘Relationship between the video game industry and the neighbourhood’ and ‘Role of the neighbourhood for developers’ cultural activities’.⁷³ The reference number of the articles refers to the newspaper bibliography in the annex. They are ordered by time, so the lower the number the newer the article, for example is article 1 from 2020, article 161 from 2010 and article 232 from 1997.

4.2.1. Cultural Dynamics, Lifestyle and Amenities

Lifestyle, as defined in the operational framework, is related to creativity and how it relates to the neighbourhood. In this analysis, the view of lifestyle is broadened to describe video game developers in general, how they behave, etc., to include other (cultural) facets. It also looks at which types are attracted to the neighbourhood and what the reason for this is.

Düsseldorf newspapers don’t report much about cultural dynamics, lifestyle and amenities. Three points are mentioned in five articles. In two articles, a description of the characteristics of video game developers is given. The articles are about games made by Ubisoft and the development process (A16, A120). In these articles, the video game developers describe themselves as video

⁷³ Although the analysis is carried out according to the dimensions of the operational framework, the purpose of the publication, the time and personal interests of the author(s) and the circumstances of the creation of the articles, which could influence the content and results, must be considered, as well as possible biases, what the document says or not, how it relates to earlier and later documents. It must also be borne in mind that the articles themselves represent a particular version of reality (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight 2010, 230; Carey 2012, 174; Coffey 2014, 369).

game fans who don't mind being in front of a computer for hours (A16), and as nerds that turned their passion for playing to profession (A120). This statement was given by the CEO of Ubisoft Düsseldorf Benedikt Grindel in 2013. The other two points refer to a games festival for “artists and scientists, representatives of the industry, electronics freaks and gamers” [own translation]⁷⁴ (A84) in 2016, where it is reported that venues such as theatres integrate gaming themes into their offer during the festival period (A84), and to facilities in the vicinity such as cafés and meeting places, which are however only reported on in general terms in two articles (A30, A80).

In short, the most important point reported in this section is the (own) characterisation of video game developers, especially their passion for video games, so that they do not mind working for hours at the computer.

4.2.2. Spatial, Socio-Economic and Political Dynamics

The spatial dynamics in Flingern-Nord in connection with Ubisoft play no role in the newspaper articles. Nor is there much coverage of the socio-economic dynamics considered here. Statements on transport connections can be found in two articles. In one, Ubisoft points out that the proximity to the airport is very important for the company and its employees (A105), and in another one, Blue Byte/Ubisoft is named best company that encourages employees to bike to work in 2016 (A83). One article mentions, among other points, the opening of a café, named *Holocafé*, in 2018, a place where people can play games and have a drink, owned by former employees of Ubisoft (A30). Ubisoft is mentioned as a customer in an article about the closure of a world-famous confectionery in 2016 (A80).

The most covered dynamic in German newspapers is the political one. The topic of subsidies in Germany is covered in six articles (A19, A32, A46, A52, A60, A72). In five of these articles, statements by Benedikt Grindel, CEO of Ubisoft Düsseldorf, are quoted as representing the video game industry. In all of the articles, Grindel complains about the lack of promotion and subsidies in Germany, while Canada is mentioned as a country where there is a better promotion. Of these articles, there is only one in which Ubisoft is mentioned as a company in connection with subsidies.

⁷⁴ All articles published in Germany are in German. Therefore, all citations are translations. For reasons of readability, [own translation] is not further indicated below.

Besides that, another political aspect is mentioned. It is an event organised by the Competence Centre Cultural & Creative Industries KomKuk, the department of the City of Düsseldorf to foster the creative and cultural development in the city, in which Ubisoft participated (A33).

To sum up, there are several single descriptions of the different dynamics that doesn't create an overall picture. Noteworthy are the establishment of the Holocafé by former Ubisoft employees as a place to play and meet, the award given to BlueByte/Ubisoft as a bike-friendly company, and the topic of (missing) subsidies.

4.2.3. Neighbourhood - a Global View of What is Going On

A general view, one that sees the neighbourhood of Flingern-Nord in a larger context and/or over a longer period is not given. There are only two articles with statements about the city of Düsseldorf, which describe the entire city but are not specific. In interviews with Ubisoft employees, they describe Düsseldorf as a "location that has international flair", which is an important fact (A75), and they state that the "Düsseldorf's attractiveness makes it easier for us to find qualified people" (A173). There are no examples or further statements, so it is unsure what aspects are addressed.

In short, only Düsseldorf as the whole city is described as international and attractive and as a city that has flair in an unspecific way, and no comments about Flingern-Nord are given.

4.2.4. Creative Milieu

The creative milieu concerns two aspects, the social interactions and networking. The focus of the articles in German newspapers is on the networking aspect. In relation with a game festival, which took place in 2016, this aspect is mentioned several times (A64, A76, A78). The occasion to build networks during the game festival is for professionals from all domains in the video game sector, and for students, amongst others to find out about job opportunities. This is underlined in one article by stating that the festival "networked fans and experts of the digital entertainment culture" and

“schoolchildren, students and up-and-coming designers get tips from industry professionals and make valuable contacts” (A78). The importance of this kind of networking, and the search for new employees, is already underlined by another German video game company in 2015 (A93). Part of the game festival is a so-called *Game Jam* organised by Ubisoft where interested people could develop new games in groups, which reflects the point of interrelation and socialising (A64, A78, A84).

The City of Düsseldorf has found that many businesses are unaware of the other sectors in the city, which prevents the building of relationships, including the mixing of people and relationships with each other, but also the building of networks (A33) to work together on projects. Ubisoft is not an exemption to it. This description from 2018 shows that previous efforts to bring together companies in the video game industry have not had the desired success, as the first meetings to bring this industry together took place back in 2014 (A107). The already mentioned Holocafé (A30) is the only listed location for regular meetings, for groups to game, and where video game developers meet.

Summing up, building networks is an issue for Ubisoft and the video game industry in Düsseldorf as depicted in the articles. The occasions to build up networks are on diverse festivals, not only with other experts but also with new recruits. Besides these festivals, the City of Düsseldorf states that other opportunities for networking are not used. The events and the Holocafé are the only occasions mentioned when the developers socialise and interrelate.

4.2.5. Perception of the Neighbourhood

The neighbourhood and its perception don't play a role at all in Düsseldorf. There are no descriptions of the neighbourhood nor a description of the relation between the video game industry, people and the neighbourhood. The only noticeable thing is that Ubisoft's location is indicated differently, in all articles. As long as Ubisoft was located in Adlerstraße 74, the street name was mentioned eight times (A75, A120, A160, A166, A171, A173, A178, A202), and besides this, the neighbourhood is mentioned as well, though incorrectly, Flingern (A46) and Stadtmitte (A96). Another description of its location is *Wehrhahn* (A105), which is the suburban railway station in a two-minute walking distance. After its relocation to Flingern-Nord in 2019, only eight

articles were published, and only two references to the neighbourhood can be found, both in connection with developments in the real estate market. The neighbourhood is indicated as Flingern (A17) and sub-sector Grafenberger Allee (A20). Grafenberger Allee is the street that forms the northern boundary of Flingern-Nord. All analyzed articles are considered as one administrative unit based on the keywords of the article search.

To sum up, the neighbourhood and its perception don't play a role at all in the newspaper articles. Therefore, there are no statements about Flingern-Nord. There are only some local points named in connection with Ubisoft, mostly the former location of Ubisoft, which is named by the street and rarely by the neighbourhood.

4.2.6. Relationship Between the Video Game Industry and the Neighbourhood

A broader view on the relationship includes the context in which Ubisoft is mentioned in the articles, because there could be statements that do not fit into the dimensions previously given, but which could complete the picture. For Düsseldorf, however, no relationship between the neighbourhood and Ubisoft or the video game industry is mentioned, not even for the City of Düsseldorf as a whole.

In brief, no statements can be made about their relationship.

4.2.7. Role of the Neighbourhood for Developers' Cultural Activities

Cultural activities and cultural lifestyles are at the centre of this study. They are associated with certain places that are assigned a specific role. To this end, the view is expanded on the above findings and supplemented with further statements that are not part of other dimensions and have therefore not yet been considered. This section takes a special look at Ubisoft's cultural-creative relationship in the neighbourhood and the importance that culture and creativity have for Ubisoft's video game developers and their work.

For Ubisoft in Düsseldorf, cultural dynamics seem to play a role, not at the neighbourhood level but at the city one. As Benedikt Grindel, CEO Ubisoft Düsseldorf, points out in interviews,

Düsseldorf has the “air” and is an important location because it is an attractive city and can attract qualified video game developers (A173). This is an important point for Ubisoft since they the company faces some difficulties to attract qualified workers. One reason given in the article is that “game developers, game designers and 3D artists are professions that have not yet had a long tradition in Germany” (A134). Unfortunately, no explanation of what Grindel understands of ‘air and attractiveness’ is given. The air and the attractiveness of the city in the cultural and creative sense might be connected with the description of the city as a “big and dynamic location for the cultural and creative industries” in 2018 (A33), a point that is already noted by Ubisoft in 2012: “Düsseldorf is important for us because the city is an important media center” (A134). Further statements about cultural dynamics are not given.

In summary, cultural dynamics in the city play a role for Ubisoft. Unfortunately, it does not go into more detail about which cultural dynamics are meant and what effects they have.

4.2.8. Conclusion

An analysis of the newspaper articles on Ubisoft and Flingern-Nord reveals a relationship at various levels and with varying degrees of intensity between the video game industry, its employees and the neighbourhood or the City of Düsseldorf.

The picture of Flingern-Nord given in the newspapers is not very informative. The single descriptions of the different dynamics don’t create an overall picture. Reported, for example, is the awarding of BlueByte/Ubisoft as a bicycle-friendly company and the topic of subsidies, which attracted the most interest. Complemented to this picture is that the neighbourhood and its perception don’t play a role at all. Therefore, there are no statements about the neighbourhood Ubisoft was/is located.

One point mentioned in the newspapers is the importance for Ubisoft and its employees of building up networks in Düsseldorf, such as through festivals, not only with other experts but also with new recruits. The events and the Holocafé, founded by former Ubisoft employees, are the only occasions mentioned when the developers socialise and interrelate, underlined by the City of Düsseldorf.

Regarding the relation between the video game industry and Ubisoft respectively and the neighbourhood, no statements can be made. Cultural dynamics in the city play a role for Ubisoft, but unfortunately, statements about these are unspecific and without giving details. The management of Ubisoft speaks of 'internationality', 'attractiveness' and 'flair of the city', which are important, but no explanation is given. Further, no descriptions of the relation between the workers and the neighbourhoods are given. The only characterization of the video game developers given is about their passion for video games and about their passion for work, a characterisation that is given by themselves. Concluding, when it comes to the video game developers, the coverage is on their professional life or video game related activities, and these activities do not take place in the neighbourhood but in the office.

4.3 Comparison of the Newspaper Articles in the Mile End and Flingern-Nord

This research is not only about the relation of the video game industry to a selected neighbourhood but also a comparative view on the relation and the dynamics going on in Mile End and Flingern-Nord and the role of people working at Ubisoft in these dynamics. This comparative view reflects the perception of journalists or the general perception and also shows where the focus of reporting lies. Before we compare both areas it must be pointed out once again that the number of articles differ, which in itself can show a picture. In Montreal, 169 articles are published related to Mile End and Ubisoft, while in Germany there are only 63 articles related to Düsseldorf and Ubisoft in the period under review (1997-2020). So, the awareness of Ubisoft in Montreal and its connection to the Mile End is much higher than in Düsseldorf when looking at the numbers.

This observation becomes even clearer when looking at the cultural dynamics, lifestyle and amenities. In Düsseldorf the only comments about the video game developers are about their passion for video games and their patience to work on the computer for hours, a characterization given by themselves. In Montreal, these two points are addressed as well but as two points amongst many others and as a description from the outside. Thus, the description in Düsseldorf doesn't include e. g. a characterization of their clothes nor a description about their lunch time habits. In connection with Ubisoft, there is no characterisation of the neighbourhood or the City of Düsseldorf. This includes the different locations for cultural events etc. and amenities that are mentioned for the Mile End. In the Mile End, the focus is on restaurants and bars, and on Ubisoft's involvement in the cultural neighbourhood life, for example the use of the roof of the Ubisoft building as a concert venue.⁷⁵ Ubisoft Düsseldorf is also not involved in cultural activities as it is the case in the Mile End, such as the support of artists or events in the neighbourhoods.

The same picture appears when one looks at the other dynamics. For Düsseldorf, there are a few single descriptions of spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics, e.g. the establishment of a café by former Ubisoft employees where video game lovers can meet and play and the award of being a bike-friendly company. The topic of subsidies for the video game industry and the way in

⁷⁵ It should be noted here that the office buildings in Düsseldorf haven't allowed any cultural events organised by Ubisoft so far. Ubisoft shared the former building in Adlerstraße with several companies and at the new location, Ubisoft hasn't been based for long and the building was still under constructions at the time of the interviews.

which subsidies have been awarded in Germany, particularly in recent years, attracted the greatest interest in Düsseldorf newspapers. Subsidies are also widely discussed in Montreal but mainly in the beginning of the period when it comes about the location of the video game industries or Ubisoft in the Mile End. In a larger context, another point can also be found in the Mile End and Düsseldorf: commuting. In Düsseldorf, it is about biking (the bike-friendliness of Ubisoft), and in the Mile End, it is about the access to Rosemont metro station and parking fees in the area. Regarding commercial establishments, in Düsseldorf a café founded by former Ubisoft employees is worth a word in Düsseldorf newspapers, but it is also the only example given. Though, an example of this kind is not mentioned for the Mile End. Further commercial establishments that are mentioned along with Ubisoft in the Mile End, especially the restaurants and bars, are not brought up in Düsseldorf. Besides this, there are no comments about Düsseldorf regarding the area around Ubisoft as a technological neighbourhood, the spatial design of and constructions in the area, transformation of buildings, sport and leisure activities of Ubisoft employees, the development of rents in all sectors, and the offer in local stores or the local amenities in general and their development over time. So, a huge part of the regarded dynamics is not considered in Düsseldorf, or, differently said, the video game industry or Ubisoft is not seen as being connected to these dynamics in the neighbourhood and an overall picture is not given.

Neighbourhood dynamics in general are well presented for the last four decades in Mile End, showing a picture of the development and changes in the neighbourhood. A similar picture is not given at all for Düsseldorf. Only short comments for the whole city and without a time span are given, and so does not allow a picture of the city. The statements made for Düsseldorf, that it is an international and attractive city with a lot of flair, can also be found in a similar way in the description of Mile End in a more elaborated way.

In Canadian newspapers, the view on the creative milieu with social interactions and networking encompasses not only the video game developers but also neighbourhood dwellers and artists. Against this background a broad picture about the creative milieu is depicted for the Mile End, in particular the way they behave and act within their group and also between each other, e.g. the video game developers during lunch time, and the neighbourhood dwellers and their engagement in the area, as well as the events happening in the area such as the events organised by the artists and Ubisoft. This is not the case for Düsseldorf. A picture of the creative milieu is not depicted at

all. Some occasions to socialise and do networking for video game developers are reported for both places, both with the active participation of Ubisoft, but with a different target audience. While in Montreal the focus is on the people acting in the Mile End, the focus in Düsseldorf is on experts and on recruiting at special events. Networking is in the focus of Ubisoft in Düsseldorf, which is also the case of Ubisoft Montreal, but it is not as apparent because it seems as one point amongst others.

The Mile End is perceived and described mainly under spatial characteristics but also under social ones, e.g. in the context of dwellers' living environment and the area for leisure activities. Nothing in this direction is reported in Düsseldorf. Interesting is the different perception of Ubisoft in both locations. While Ubisoft in Montreal or the building in which Ubisoft is located serve often as a reference, e.g. as a reference for the location of other places, the Ubisoft building in Düsseldorf is not referenced at all. Even the neighbourhood, where Ubisoft in Düsseldorf is located, is misstated several times.

The picture of Flingern-Nord given so far reflects the relation between Ubisoft and the area. There are no comments about the relation made so far. This is different in Montreal. Throughout the years, examples are given, e.g. the efforts made by Ubisoft to build a relationship by organising and supporting (cultural) events, the interrelation between the workers and the restaurants around Ubisoft and the transformation process in the Mile End. The relationship goes along with the cultural dynamics in the areas and their role for the video game developers. In both places, cultural dynamics are seen as important for the industry. Unlike for Montreal, unfortunately no further explanations are given for Düsseldorf. For Montreal, creativity and the quality of life that exist in the neighbourhood are important for the company since the beginning of its location, and also the effects that the management (wants to) see(s) from the neighbourhood on the video game industry. However, only the relation of the video game developers and the cultural amenities of 'restaurants and bars' is reported.

A look at the individual aspects in the newspaper articles shows the differences and similarities in what is reported in both places, without forgetting that the aspects can vary in breadth and depth due to the unequal number of articles. For both neighbourhoods, the depicted picture, the dynamics going on and the groups being presented show a relation at different levels and intensity between the video game developers, the company and the neighbourhood. The picture given of Mile End in

the newspapers is diverse and includes different dynamics. It describes the neighbourhood throughout the years and shows a development over the last 40 years coined by the spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics that includes Ubisoft more and more in this covering. The interrelation of Ubisoft in the neighbourhood has become more important for the authors, though on different levels and of different importance, seen between positive and negative. This picture cannot be depicted with this intensity for Düsseldorf. Statements on cultural, socio-economic and spatial dynamics etc. are singular and only reflect a short, very limited period of time and have no connection to Ubisoft. For example, changes to shops or rents in the neighbourhood or cultural offerings and events in connection with Ubisoft are not presented, or the journalists see no connection between Ubisoft and changes in the neighbourhood.

There is one point in the context of political dynamics that is addressed in both places. It is the subsidies granted by governments to the video game industry.

The last point is to look at the relationship between people working in the video game industry and the neighbourhood, which includes their cultural participation as well as their social engagement and networking in the neighbourhood. The focus is on the video game developers because further groups mentioned in the Mile End, such as the artists, don't play a role in Düsseldorf. This also has an influence on the consideration of the creative milieu, which is described in Montreal with all its different groups and interactions, a consideration that does not play a role in Düsseldorf. In Montreal, according to the CEO and the spokesperson, the company is very keen for employees to benefit from the cultural, creative environment, which is emphasised in several articles. This environment of the Mile End was a key factor in the choice of location and continues to be a factor in the company's efforts to support the cultural environment and provide opportunities for employees to participate in it. Building and supporting relations between Ubisoft and the neighbourhood are not reported in Düsseldorf, only events for networking with people of the same field. Even looking at the level of the employees, the activities they do outside the office, such as going out for lunch or sport activities, are not reported in Düsseldorf. This is not the case for Montreal where these activities are mentioned regularly, activities they do within their group. So, noteworthy is that the video game developers are observed as a visible group in the Mile End, but not in Düsseldorf. Further, the importance of a creative environment and cultural activities in general in the neighbourhood is depicted for the Mile End though mainly by statements of Ubisoft

management, but not by statements of Ubisoft employees themselves and indirectly by their behaviour. The most commented appearance of the employees is in connection with restaurants and bars. For Düsseldorf, the importance is implied but it doesn't allow any conclusions, and there are no comments about the appearance that comes from outside the company.

Concluding, the presented picture of Ubisoft in Düsseldorf and in the Mile End in the selected newspapers differs. There is only one point that is a topic in both places in the same way, but it is not related to the neighbourhood. It is about the subsidies for the video game industry. Other similar themes also exist, but a comparison is difficult because, for example, the focus of the coverage is different.

In Düsseldorf, Ubisoft and its employees are not seen in connection with the surrounding neighbourhoods, and the company itself is not as well-known and a reference as it is in Montreal.⁷⁶ The employees are only considered in reports about the company but not as a group or individuals that are doing something outside the office building. Moreover, in the articles, a connection between employees or Ubisoft and culture and creativity is not drawn.

This is not the case for the Mile End. Ubisoft and its employees are mentioned throughout the years in different contexts and intensity in articles that are connected to the neighbourhood. They are often mentioned in the context of what is happening in the Mile End, and the changes and developments in the neighbourhood, focusing more on the company itself than on the employees. The articles also report on different links in the cultural and creative spheres, but more at the company level than at the employee one, so that no conclusion can be drawn about the importance of culture and creativity at the employee level. Regarding all aspects, the type of involvement of Ubisoft and the employees is determined between being a cause, an amplifier or simply a part of it. Hence, in the newspaper articles, a connection is seen between the Mile End and Ubisoft and its employees, but the way it is reported differs.

An overview of the most important points is given in table 25.

⁷⁶ As shown in chapter 2, the main reason in Germany to report about Ubisoft is the games it develops.

Table 25: Comparison of the most important points of the newspaper analysis in Mile End and Flingern-Nord

	Mile End	Flingern-Nord
Culture, Lifestyle and Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot and vibrant place with a cultural offer • Video game developers as a group recognised • Change over time: Buildings, Stores, Offer, Rents • Leaving of artists • Subsidies for Ubisoft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own portrait of the video game developers
Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rare socialising and interrelation of Ubisoft employees reported • Networking of Ubisoft employees only internally • Positive community feeling in the neighbourhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Düsseldorf is described as international and attractive • Networking is desired by the company
The video game industry and the neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ubisoft and the neighbourhood got intertwined • Ubisoft seen as source or part of the ongoing transformation process • Creative character of the neighbourhood still important • Creative environment has a positive effect on their work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture plays a role for Ubisoft

Source: Author

The articles about Ubisoft and the respective neighbourhoods give an insight into their relationship. In the following three chapters we go even deeper with the analysis of the interviews conducted.

CHAPTER 5: CULTURE, LIFESTYLE AND DYNAMICS

The newspaper articles analysed in chapter 4 show a first insight about the dynamics going on in the two neighbourhoods of Mile End and Flingern-Nord, since the end of the 1990s through the perception and depiction of journalists. In this and the following two chapters, the perception and depiction of these dynamics of people working at Ubisoft and of cultural actors are presented. They are based on the analysis of interviews conducted in Montreal and Düsseldorf, between February 2020 and February 2021. The analysis corresponds to the coding scheme described in chapter 2, which in turn refers to the parts of the operational framework. This chapter begins with an analysis of ‘Cultural Dynamics, Lifestyle and Amenities’ and of ‘Spatial, Socio-Economic and Political Dynamics’ (see figure 14). Chapters 6 and 7 analyse the other dimensions that are defined in the operational framework because the division of the dimensions into three chapters provides a better overview of the processes and a better comparison between the individual groups.

All chapters of the interview analysis look first at the statements of the video game developers and cultural actors in the Mile End before looking at the statements of these two groups in Flingern-Nord. Each section ends with a comparative view. This written elaboration of the comparative view concludes with a table of the most important results regarding the similarities and differences in order to get a quicker overview of the results. A comparative summarized view is only presented in chapter 7, as the concluding part of the interview analysis (7.3). The analysis of all three chapters is done in a descriptive way as a micro-analysis. The micro-analysis makes it possible to go into detail in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the video game developers, the cultural players, their relationship to the neighbourhood, and of the relation to culture and creativity (Davis 2000).

First of all, the analysis of the interviews focussing on ‘Culture, lifestyle, amenities, and dynamics’ with a closer look at the cultural dynamics and its dimensions ‘Lifestyle’, ‘Cultural participation and experience’ and ‘Cultural infrastructure and amenities’ is presented. After that, the focus is on ‘Spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics’ with a closer look at ‘Spatial design and recreational amenities’, ‘Housing and commerce’, ‘Sport and leisure’, ‘Housing and commercial: rent and value’, ‘Local amenities, facilities and services’, ‘Product range of shops’ and ‘Government policies regarding the video game industry and administrative practices’ for each interview group in both places. These two sections refer to block 1 that was defined in the

operational framework in chapter 2. Figure 14 shows the relation of block 1 (highlighted) to blocks 2 and 3.

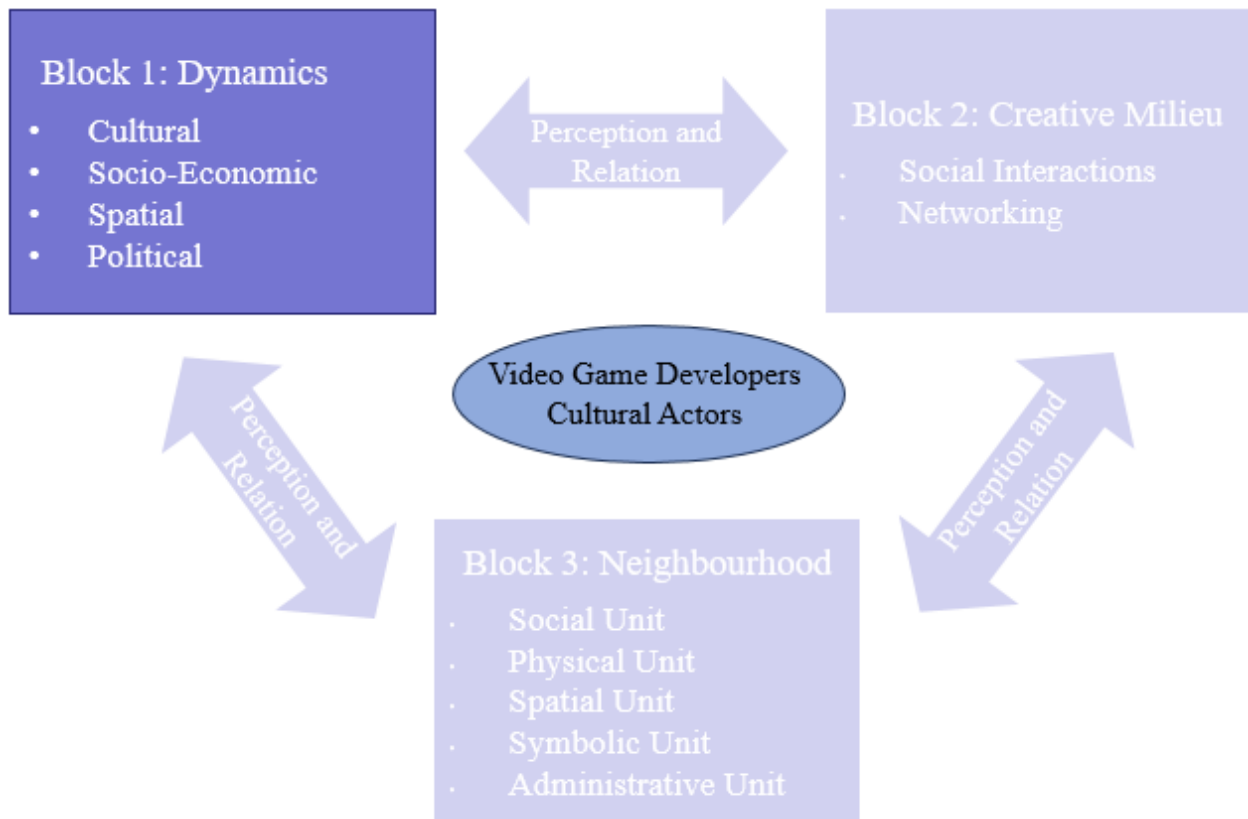


Figure 14: ‘Culture, Lifestyle, Amenities, and Dynamics’ and its relation to the operational framework

Source: Author

5.1. Mile End

The neighbourhood of Mile End in Montreal is the first neighbourhood presented in this analysis with regard to ‘Cultural Dynamics, Lifestyle and Amenities’ and ‘Spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics’. This part considers the perception and depiction of the Mile End by twelve people working at Ubisoft (5.1.1.) and by six cultural actors (5.1.2.). After presenting the perceptions of each group, this part concludes with a comparison (5.1.3.).

5.1.1. Video Game Developers in the Mile End

5.1.1.1. Cultural Dynamics, Lifestyle and Amenities

Lifestyle

Lifestyle, as considered in this work, is associated with creativity and its connection to the neighbourhood. The way the video game developers describe their lifestyle culturally differs widely. It varies between ‘not the most culturally active one’ (P20) and ‘culture is an important part of the lifestyle’ (P16, P26). A major part of the workers sees themselves in the middle, describing their lifestyles as ‘casual’ or ‘culturally open’ (P17, P19, P22, P23, P25, P27). There is only one participant who does not have an opinion about his lifestyle culturally speaking (P24), and only two participants who list activities instead of giving a description (P18, P21). It is worth mentioning that interviewee P22 sees his cultural lifestyle as similar to that of a rich teenager and who feels free about doing things. As different as their views of their cultural lifestyles are, so are the diverse things they do or see as part of their cultural lifestyles.

One third of the participants specify that their practices, music (P17, P18, P21, P26) as well as arts and museums (P17, P19, P21, P26), are central parts of their cultural lifestyle. One or two participants name books (P18), concerts (P18), cultural events (P16, P19), movies (P19, P21), drawing (P19), galleries (P19), local culture (P23), learning new things (P27), and plays or theater respectively (P21, P26) as relevant to or part of their cultural lifestyle. There is only one who mentions video games (P21). To include the cultural participation and experience in the Mile End,

the interviewees were asked another question about their cultural activities. More cultural activities came to the interviewees' mind such as dancing and playing instruments that complemented the answers about their lifestyle. Although, these points should not be seen as part of their lifestyle, which is underlined by interviewee P19 who says that he personally does cultural things but sees them not as part of his lifestyle. The own view on their cultural personality varies, though it is evenly distributed between 'definitely a cultural person' (P16, P22, P26, P27), 'culturally in the middle' (P17, P19, P23, P24), and 'not really a cultural person' (P18, P20, P21, P25). Even if they state that they are not (really) a cultural person, they can list cultural activities that they do to a different degree. These activities are usually the things they like to do. But some also list things they don't like to or don't do often. For example, participant P20 doesn't like to go to museums that much, and interviewee 22 doesn't go to movie theaters. So, looking on all these cultural activities, music (P16, P18, P20, P21, P23, P24, P25, P26) and movies (P17, P18, P21, P23, P24, P27) are the favourite cultural activities by more than half of the interviewees. Activities that are mentioned just by less than the half include reading books (P20, P21, P22, P24, P25) and going to museums and art galleries (P16, P21, P22, P23, P25). Further activities done by a third or a fourth of the interviewees are doing actively music, such as playing piano (P24, P26), drums (P23), or compose songs (P22), and going to the theater and shows (P21, P25, P26, P27) or concerts (P18, P23, P26). Only one or two respondents list games (P20), learning new things (P22, P23), dancing, such as classical dancing (P26), amateur competitions (P25), drawing, as well as going to a ceramic café (P18). For two developers (P23, P24), video games are part of their cultural activities, but not part of their lifestyle.

This picture of their cultural activities can be rounded off with two points. Three of the respondents see a connection between their current cultural participation and their childhood. Respondent P19 sees himself culturally in the middle because he did not participate much in cultural activities as a child and so they did not become a part of his cultural life. He puts these statements into perspective by adding that he has an artistic background but sees this as part of his personality and not his lifestyle. Art and creativity are important parts of respondent P26's life, as she grew up in a creative environment, and she specifies this by saying that she took dance lessons in primary school. Interviewee P22 clearly describes himself as a cultural person partly because his mother took him to museums as a child. He concludes his remarks about his cultural activities with the statement that reflects the importance of culture for him: "I like to be in the presence of something artistic

and just, I don't know, let my mind flow while looking at it, and not necessarily reflect on it, but just try to capture the emotion that is in the whatever I'm seeing whether it's a sculpture whether it's a painting, that's something that I do".

Alongside this, food is also part of lifestyle, for example the preferred type of restaurants or the favoured type of food. This is also connected with the neighbourhood, because the video game developers go regularly for food in the neighbourhood during lunch time. Not every interviewee included statements about the preferred food. The given statements display a very diverse picture. In general, the interviewees are aware of the offers they can find in the Mile End. The variety about places is reported (P17, P18, P19, P21, P22) that suits different lifestyles, which is underlined by two respondents because they could find an appropriate offer, such as for interviewee P18, who is vegetarian, and for interviewee P25 who is conscious about food. Only one interviewee (P20) hasn't found the food he likes so far, Canadian or European cuisine. One interviewee is very indifferent about food and states: "*Je peux aller chercher un truc dans un restaurant, dans un fastfood ou à l'épicerie, j'ai aucune préférence particulière. Je ne pourrais pas mettre une étiquette sur la meilleure option*" (P24). Open to different types of food and keen on trying are three workers (P17, P19, P21). Connected with the Mile End, interviewee P19 underlines the curiosity about new food and restaurants, including his colleagues and he says that "we would go about once a week after a restaurant with colleagues and try out, we always try to, to find different spots that we never tried before. So, yeah, there were some interesting experimentations in the Mile End [...] on the food side". An interviewee states that he knows and appreciates the choices in the Mile End, however, he prefers to stick with the same lunch place.

When looking at the lifestyle of video game developers, it is also about the way they describe their creativity in relation to their work and whether they describe themselves as creative workers. A minor part of the interviewees, three (P19, P21, P24), sees themselves not or not much as a creative worker. They justify this opinion e.g. by stating that "[...] Not - .. that much. I mean I'm, I work as a programmer, and my job is more to fix things than to imagine them. Although, I do participate in some design meetings. I mean it's not the bulk of my job and I would not qualify myself as an artist or creative worker" (P19) or "[...] Probably not. I guess it depends on how you describe creative worker but I'm, I'm a back-end software developer, so mostly, you know, server-side APIs. Eh. So, there is nothing like, I would like to believe it's a, it's, it's creative enough [...] but depending

on your, [...] your own selection, I would say it's probably not" (P21). Three of the interviewees (P17, P23, P25) put their type of work in relation to the other tasks that are necessary to develop a game and so they see their position as in-between. Working as a level artist or working with audio designers are described as creative and so from that point of view, they would describe themselves as creative workers. With the same token, they say that as a technical worker or engineer they wouldn't link it to creativity. This is well expressed by interviewee P17 in the following way: "Ahm, more so before. I used to, I used to work more creatively when I was working as a level artist, but these days I'm more of a technical worker and less of a creative worker". The majority, five interviewees, affirm that they see themselves as creative workers which is underlined with the statements such as "yes, I do [...] I'm a game designer and specifically in the field of video games, we are part of the most 3D creative workers of the industry, in the sense that we actually work on ideas more than on their in-, integration" (P22). So, they base the opinion on the field they are working in, such as the art department (P18) as well as on the whole process of producing a game and the different parts of it (P20, P22, P27). This view on themselves as a creative worker between a clear 'no' and a clear 'yes' is most understandable with the statement of the Ubisoft manager interviewed: "*Je pense que notre métier dans les jeux vidéo allie deux choses soit la technologie et la créativité. Un et l'autre ne peut pas, les deux doivent coexister, on n'est pas qu'une entreprise créative, on est une entreprise techno-créative. Mais on n'est pas non-plus qu'une entreprise technologique*" (P16).

Summarising the interviewees' statements about their lifestyle culturally gives a very heterogeneous picture. The view varies between 'not much culturally active' and 'culture is an important part of my lifestyle', with most seeing themselves in the middle. Music, art, and museums are most mentioned as cultural parts of lifestyle. A small number, once or twice each, mention books, concerts, films, galleries or playing video games, among other things. Broadening this view and including their view of being a cultural person, the interviewees see themselves between definitely being and not being a cultural person. The most common activities are music and movies, followed by activities such as books, museum, theater, drawing, dancing, e.g. classical dance or amateur competitions, music-making, e.g. playing the piano or composing songs, and playing video games. Three of the respondents refer to between their current activities and their childhood because what they did then culturally still influences them today. Part of the lifestyle is also food and as a consequence also restaurants. The interviewees often go the restaurants in the

Mile End especially during lunch time. They know the food offer in the area and almost all are satisfied, and they find the food that suits their lifestyle. Three interviewees state that they like to try new food and restaurants regularly. Looking at the lifestyle culturally also includes if they see themselves as a creative worker. This depends hardly on the actual work, e.g. as a programmer or game designer, or the people they work with, and is not said in general. Therefore, the opinion varies between ‘yes’ and ‘no’. This dependency to the work they do and the difference in their answers go in line with the description of the manager about Ubisoft that says that Ubisoft is a techno-creative company.

Cultural Participation and Experience

As seen above, video game developers engage in a variety of cultural activities. Looking in particular on these activities, only some of them refer to creation and production of cultural content, such as playing an instrument or dancing. Most of the activities are usually restricted to attendance in concerts, live shows, movies at movie theaters, exhibitions, and museums or, however very little, theater plays. A less diverse and specific picture emerges when their activities in the Mile End and their frequency are considered. Activities that are expressed by a maximum of three are going to art galleries, to *Aire Commune*, or to a roller derby. Attending events organised by Ubisoft came to the mind of three workers (P19, P22, P25). They went for example to an event at the *Rialto* on du Parc (P22) or to the roof top concerts (P25). Interviewee P19 states that his participation is limited to the events that are proposed by Ubisoft and adds that “most of my activities in the neighborhood are more-mostly connected with my job than my own lifestyle”. The participants do not mention many places by name. Apart from the above-mentioned locations, only *La Sala Rossa* is mentioned. *La Sala Rossa* is an event location on Saint-Laurent⁷⁷, where interviewee P21 attended some shows in the past. The frequency of participation is usually indicated with ‘sometimes’ or ‘not too much’, apart from two that work actively in the cultural field.

Participation in events requires the knowledge that they are taking place. This is underlined by interviewee P18 who states that “maybe I’d go more to those if I see more advertisement about them ‘cause they, they seem to be places that you need to know somebody that actually know this

⁷⁷ The interviewees say the street names with or without the addition ‘street’, ‘avenue’ etc. In the following, the street names are indicated without the addition except when necessary.

place to care about it, so, it's, it's a lot about mouth to mouth, or hearsay. So yeah". Seven participants (P17, P18, P20, P21, P22, P23, P25) mention how they got to know about events and things that are going on the Mile End. On the one hand, they got to know things by just stumbling upon activities that are going on, while being on the way to or from work or by having a walk in the neighbourhood in their free time (P17, P20, P21, P25). On the other hand, they got the information on different channels, such as by co-workers (P17, P21) and friends (P25), on Twitter (P17), or by Ubisoft (P18, P20, P23). Besides the events Ubisoft organised, the company pass on information about events etc. internally, such as "pamphlets that have been dropped in my mailbox and stuff like that" (P20) every month with some new cultural offer, "something new that's being tried out" (P20), or advertised on the internal website, sent by email and by flyers (P23). There is also different advertisement for events etc. within the neighbourhood, such as posters for shows or theater plays or pop-up markets (P17, P22), on e.g. telephone poles (P23), which is seen while walking in the area.

Cultural participation and experience in general also depend on the family situation as three (P16, P17, P21) state. They did participate or want to participate more but since they have a family with kids, their cultural participation changed or diminished respectively because it is more difficult to go out (P21). One of them (P16) takes the children to events etc. to bring them closer to culture, and another one (P17) participates at events when you stumble across them while walking around. So they go to events that are in a way suitable for kids. A different impression is given by interviewee P21 who doesn't see events etc. in the neighbourhood that are interesting for kids, and therefore he doesn't bring his kids to the Mile End, although he admits that he doesn't check for it. This is in line with a comment of interviewee P25 who doesn't have kids himself but states that the spatial design of the area, such in terms of parks etc. is not attractive for families, so there are no reasons for them to come to the Mile End.

All in all, cultural participation for almost all video game developers is largely limited to attending concerts and exhibitions, and in the Mile End, the frequency is described as 'sometimes' or 'not too much'. Several reasons are given, such as the knowledge about the events and what's going on in the Mile End, although they receive advertisement internally within Ubisoft or see posters in the neighbourhood, or the family situation if they have kids or not. Only a handful of venues are named in this context by the participants and those only by a maximum of three each.

Cultural Infrastructure and Amenities

It's not just about knowing the events etc. that are on offer in the Mile End, it's also about knowing the places such as galleries, venues, or restaurants to have the awareness that events, exhibitions etc. can take place there.⁷⁸ Therefore, it is also interesting to see if they are aware about the offers and amenities that might influence their attendance. In the Mile End, there are several art galleries, museums and collections, venues with live performances, as well as restaurants and bars. Most of the art galleries are located around and in the complex on de Gaspé where Ubisoft is. The event locations, restaurants and bars are located all over the neighbourhood.

Although most video game developers state that they do not do much culturally in the Mile End, they can list several cultural institutions except interviewee P24 who doesn't any. These mentioned amenities are e.g. *Aire Commune* (with music), art galleries, the expositions in the clothing store at the Ubisoft building on de Gaspé, a radio broadcast, *Cinema Moderne*, *La Sala Rossa* and *Casa del Poppolo* and the now closed event location *Green Room* with a show room on the first floor all on Saint-Laurent, *Rialto* and *Fairmount theater* both on du Parc, the sculpture part at the train tracks, and the *Ukrainian Federation* on Hutchison. Interviewee P16 could list some more actors of the cultural infrastructure and amenities, such as the *Centre Clark* on de Gaspé, *Pop Montréal* on du Parc, and *Galerie Simon Blais* and *Monstiraki* on Saint-Laurent because working with them is part of her job. This variety is underlined by interviewee P26, who states that: “*Je trouve que c'est super intéressant comme ça ça laisse les gens pour qu'ils puissent s'intégrer à la culture et avoir des activités à faire pour s'entendre du travail. Ou même revenir la fin de semaine et avoir des activités pertinentes à faire. Je trouve ça super et devrait en avoir plus. [Smiling]*”. No restaurants are mentioned by name when considering infrastructure or amenities in the Mile End, although the video game developers go regularly to the restaurants around lunch time. However, some bars and breweries are mentioned by name: *Siboire* and *Dieu de Ciel* breweries on Laurier and *Waverly bar* at the corner of Saint-Laurent and Saint-Viateur are mentioned by interviewee P23 because he goes there, and *PingPongClub* on Bernard, which interviewee P27 thinks of.

The majority is satisfied with the cultural offer and amenities in the Mile End, and nothing is really missed, a view that can be underlined with the statement of interviewee P19: “Yeah, yeah. In terms

⁷⁸ In annex 5, a list of selected places, galleries etc. in the Mile End is provided.

of satisfaction, I mean the neighbourhood is pretty interesting, and feels alive, it feels like there's a lot to do there. So, yes, I would say I'm satisfied with the options given by those places". Although satisfied, four interviewees mention that they are not (very) active in the neighbourhood and that they are there for work (P17, P23, P24, P27). This difference is pointed out by interviewee P21 who knows a lot of cultural places in the Mile End. He states that

I don't know like as somebody who works in the neighbourhood but doesn't live there, [...] I, I don't have that much of an opinion, like I find it's cool that there's these places that, that the neighbourhood is kind of trendy and culturally active. It is just that I, because I don't have much time to participate in it, it's, you know, it's kind of an unused part of, of the neighbourhood. It's cool that it's there, but otherwise if it were not there, I wouldn't know how much I would miss it.

Most of the locations etc. listed by the employees are places around Ubisoft. Cultural places and amenities further away like the Rialto on du Parc are usually remembered when they are specifically mentioned, but otherwise they don't come to mind. This might be connected with the statement of one interviewee: "Yeah, well I don't know a lot about anything west of Saint-Laurent. Like I know restaurants a lot because I got a big lunch doer, so I, I tend to eat lunch outside. So, the amenities that I know of are mostly between de Gaspé and Saint-Laurent" (P25).

To sum up, some participants know a variety of cultural amenities and infrastructures in the Mile End. Cultural places and bars are listed by name while the restaurants are mentioned in a general way. Most of these places and amenities are within a 10–15-minutes walk from Ubisoft. Regarding the satisfaction, the majority of the interviewees are satisfied with the offer and amenities.

Summary Overview

On the whole, looking at the interviewees' statements about their lifestyle culturally and being a cultural person gives a very heterogeneous picture. The view varies between 'not much culturally active' and 'culture is an important part of my lifestyle', and 'definitely being' and 'not being' a cultural person. For both, music is the most common activity. Art and museum are further most mentioned as cultural parts of lifestyle and books as part of being a cultural person. More activities are listed while thinking of being a cultural person, such as drawing, dancing, e.g. classical dance

and amateur competitions, games, active music-making, e.g. playing the piano or composing songs. Playing video games are mentioned only by a few in both spheres. Although some of the interviewees are culturally active, cultural participation in the Mile End is largely limited to going to concerts and exhibitions, and it is classified as ‘sometimes’ or ‘not too much’. Several reasons are given, such as the family situation or the knowledge about the events and what’s going on in the Mile End, although they receive advertisement internally within Ubisoft or see posters in the area. Some participants know a variety of cultural amenities and infrastructures in the Mile End, and so cultural places are listed by name. Most of these places and amenities are within a 10–15-minute walk from Ubisoft. The interviewees are not missing anything. Part of the lifestyle is also food and as a consequence also restaurants. The interviewees often go to the restaurants in the Mile End especially during lunch time. They know the food offer in the area and except for one, they are satisfied, and they find the food that suits their lifestyle. Looking at the lifestyle culturally also includes if they see themselves as a creative worker. This depends hardly on the actual work, e.g. if they work as a programmer or game designer, or the people they work with, and therefore it varies between ‘yes’ and ‘no’. Including the statement of the manager, this variety becomes clear because she says that Ubisoft is a techno-creative company.

The view of video game developers is not only limited to the aspects of culture, however; they also recognise other dynamics, which are presented in more detail below.

5.1.1.2. Spatial, Socio-economic and political dynamics

Spatial Design and Recreational Amenities

The spatial dynamics are concerned with the spatial design and leisure facilities such as parks, public squares, temporary spaces and internet access in these locations, as well as with the changes in the residential and commercial building structure. It also includes the development of areas, the reconstruction and improvements, and the enhancement of amenities. They occur in the area around Ubisoft, and it is the area where the activities mentioned earlier take place.

In the area around Ubisoft, the parks, and public places, such as the park by the arena or rink respectively, are used by most of the interviewees because they offer possibilities to sit down and

relax. The developers usually go there during lunch time, either for eating or for relaxing after lunch, which is really appreciated according to interviewees P18, P23 and P25. Into mind by four interviewees (P21, P22, P25, P26) came the green area *Champ des Possibles* that is north of Ubisoft between de Gaspé and Henri-Julien because they often or sometimes go there to have a walk (P25, P26). The opinion about it differs. It ranges between “the *Champ des Possibles* is outside of everything, is not in a, in a nice area. It’s just next to the railway, you have abandoned buildings around it” (P22), and

I, I like the idea that whatever is on the side of the railroad, this kind of abandoned places, people do with the kind of, they can just start stuff because it’s kind of a no man’s land. At some point, in the, in the park right, right behind the building, they called it the *Champ des Possibles*, the field of possibilities, so it’s kind of a, it’s a terrain with nothing there, at some point somebody just built a bread oven there and people would just walk to there, cook their bread and then go, and it was shared place. It was really, it was really a funny idea. It was, it was closed down by the city of course for health concerns, but [laughing] the fact that it happened, that it couldn’t happen there, was kind of a, I liked it. [smiling]. (P21)

Those who are generally not fond of the parks describe the situation as “parks in the Mile End [...], I would say that they feel a bit [...] abandoned areas not thought through, you know, it’s just there because we decided not to build a building there” (P22) and “I don’t feel like there is much big spaces, big parks and stuff like that [and] I walk I’ve walked a bit around and I like, maybe I found a small park” (P19), which might be connected to the fact that this participant grew up in the suburbs.

As seen, the view on parks differs broadly, but not the opinion about the number of parks. More than half of the developers say that there are enough parks, by stating for example that “there’s a few parks. I don’t think it would need really more than this” (P18) or “*donc je trouve que oui c’est, c’est bien, c’est bien placé puis il y a une bonne dose de, de place où on peut aller*” (P26). One misses a park next to the Ubisoft building and he puts this in the context of lunch breaks:

You got one place and it’s, it’s the part next to the rink, like there’s no, there’s no real place for [...] there, there’s only a handful of places that you can use to sit down, and, and have that lunch. Otherwise well, and that’s what a lot of people do at Ubisoft is you go back, and

you eat at your desk, which is a shame especially when it's nice outside. (P25)

In addition to these parks, half of the participants are attracted by the park on Laurier/Saint-Laurent and the new skate park under the Van Horne viaduct. Some would like to see more places like this, but none of them have used the skate park yet since it opened in 2019. Only three respondents mention parks not near Ubisoft where they like to go, such as Mont Royal, the park next to the viaduct (P27) or Outremont Park (P22).

Apart from these parks, there are not many other spatial amenities in the Mile End the interviewees think of. The interviewees mention, for example, improvements made during the last years like the pathway on Saint-Viateur (P17, P18), the new installed benches and seats (P17), the bike path on Clark (P25), the appreciated changes from parking lots into green spaces (P23) or the reconstruction of Fairmount and Saint-Viateur into a public space with benches and artistic stuff (P22). The overall impression about the spatial design varies widely. One of the interviewees (P20) is satisfied with the overall impression and likes the mix of different pathways, green areas to walk, bike lanes, sport facilities and cultural activities. A different vision is given by his colleagues. Their description is that the Mile End feels cramped, and it is pretty tight for outdoor activities (P19), as well as that it is a packed area with too much traffic, still too many parking lots, and hence too less space for pedestrians (P25). Not in line with the last comment is the view of respondent P26, who uses the parks a lot and who thinks that walking around, is nice, also in the *Champ des Possibles*, but however misses parking in the area. Looking at the possibilities of changes, participant P21 states that the Mile End tries to revitalise itself, but because of the old buildings there are not many possibilities to do anything.

The impression of a neighbourhood and its use is also shaped by the presence of temporary spaces, i.e. empty, temporarily used spaces. The most popular one in the Mile End is Aire Commune which is known by all interviewees except for one. Aire Commune only runs during summer and is situated one block north of the building where Ubisoft is located on de Gaspé, next to the train tracks. It is commonly described as a good location and as nice, busy, and great for social stuff, chilling, and drinking, but not for working. Aire Commune is a place that is commonly noticed on the way to or from work, and so the interviewees mostly go there after work. Only four interviewees (P20, P22, P23, P25) could think of other temporary spaces and list changing streets for pedestrians in the summer (twice), terraces in the summer at cafes, etc., benches and containers used as bicycle

parking in the summer, once each. The location of Aire Commune in summer, is used for an ice ring during winter, which one of the interviewees remembers. In general, temporary spaces are very appreciated by most of the interviewees, and as interviewee P27 adds in this context: “I think we’re we have a lot compared to other neighbourhoods, so that’s nice, yeah”.

In general, (free) Internet access is out of question today and its access might have an effect on the stay in the area because it is used, amongst others, to get information and messages, as well as post or publish content. The importance of having internet access is seen on different levels by the workers of Ubisoft: work, home, privately in the neighbourhood, or in general, and some of them distinguish between the access by Wi-Fi or by (phone) data. The usage and importance differ widely. While one third of the interviewees state in general that internet access is very important or useful for them (P16, P25, P26), because it is used for everything (P27), three interviewees (P18, P20, P21) reference to usage at work, where it is very important, and distinguish it from the usage in private where internet access is not important, although it is part of daily life. For those only talking about the private usage while being in the Mile End, internet access is not that important (P23, P19, P17). There is only one employee who states that internet access is very important also in private (P22).

To sum up, parks and public spaces are an important part of the spatial design and as a recreational amenity. Parks mentioned around Ubisoft are the park by the arena and *Champ des Possibles*, and seen overall, more than half of the interviewees are satisfied with the number of parks in the area. However, the ambience is seen very differently. It is described between nice and a look of an abandoned area. There is no park next to the Ubisoft buildings so that a lot of employees eat their lunch inside the building at their desks, according to one participant. Besides parks, there are only a few spatial amenities the interviewees think of, such as improvements made during the last years like the pathway on Saint-Viateur, more benches and seats, or the bike path on Clark. The overall impression varies between satisfaction due to the mix of different pathways, green spaces and the space for cultural activities, and the impression of a cramped neighbourhood without (a lot of places) for outdoor activities, and with a lot of traffic. A last point are the temporary spaces that are appreciated by most of the interviewees, such as Aire Commune close to Ubisoft in summer. The use and importance of internet access are very different. Referring to work, all participants state the internet access is important while referring to the private usage, the importance differs

between not and very important.

Housing and Commerce

Asking about constructions or changes in the housing sector, most of the interviewee doesn't see much or any. The new condo complex built on Henri-Julien between 2018 and 2019, right behind the Ubisoft building on de Gaspé, is only mentioned or remembered by four (P17, P21, P22, P25). This might be explained by the comment of participant P22 who states after remembering the new complex that "it is a bit outside, also, it's almost on, on Saint-Denis, so you don't notice it much". Most statements are more general, for example, like the reconstruction of triplexes into single homes (P23, P25), or like "yeah, there's a lot of construction. There's always a lot of construction going on. Ehm, yeah. It always seems like it's, it's condos or apartments or things like that" (P17), or "Yes, I know they are changing things, I don't know what. But I see, I see often works being done. And ... But I could not say what the changes were. So, if there are changes, they are not noticeable much" (P22). Interviewee P21 is the only interviewee who refers to a specific area in which he notices constructions: "in the [...] the eastern part of the Mile End, you know, between de Gaspé and Saint-Denis Street has had a lot of constructions of new condominiums", and he adds what he thinks about these new constructions:

So, yeah, I enjoy, I enjoy people adapting more than you know just tearing down and building up these new condos. Not because I don't like new condos but they, they usually kind of ugly, no, no, not ugly they're just big modern slabs of, and usually they don't, like I, I'd rather, I, I prefer having a diverse neighbourhood over, you know, these kind of long rows of they're all the same. (P21)

The building on de Gaspé where Ubisoft is located was under constructions for a while and although many of the participants are in this building, only one (P18) mentions these works. Thinking about constructions brought one point into the mind of three interviewees (P17, P18, P19): road constructions, because they are regularly on their way to work or to the daycare.

The area, the interviewees think of, is mostly limited to the area around Ubisoft. One of the interviewees included this fact by stating that he is not sure about what constructions are going on west of Saint-Laurent (P21). Only one had a broader view and included the new campus MIL in

her observation with the consequences it will have on the area, like more streets and more people travelling in the area (P26).

In short, constructions and changes in housing are not noteworthy seen by the interviewees, even when they are next to the working place such as the new condo complex on Henri-Julien. Statements are made in general and refer mostly to the area around Ubisoft. There is only one that thinks about the new campus of MIL that crosses Mile End in one corner and possible effects on the area in the future. Worth mentioning is that road constructions come to the mind of three participants while only one remembers the constructions within the Ubisoft buildings of de Gaspé.

Sport and Leisure

Sport and leisure facilities in the neighbourhood could encourage people to do sports there and could determine the time spent in the neighbourhood. The offer of sport and leisure facilities in the Mile End is good, manifold, and most of it is close to Ubisoft, which is also underlined by one-third of the interviewees who list places around their workspace like the arena, the rock-climbing center Chomsky, a bow & arrow place, a 'Sports de Combats' place on Casgrain, a boxing club, a badminton field, yoga studios, and gyms. Additionally to these places, the YMCA on du Parc is mentioned by three participants. Although they list all these facilities, only three do actively sports in the neighbourhood, like gym or group exercises. At least, six practiced already some sports in the neighbourhood, such as hockey at the arena, rock climbing, yoga, the YMCA, or they went to the Ubisoft gym. The others who do sport do their sport in other neighbourhoods. This is not connected with satisfaction because all of them are more or less satisfied with the offer, and only one mentioned that he would like to have a bigger indoor turf during winter (P17). In different contexts, half of the participants (P17, P18, P20, P22, P25, P26) tell that they (like to) do walks in the Mile End, for example during the weekend.

In brief, the manifold offer of sport and leisure facilities around Ubisoft is known by the participants. Six participants practiced and three practice actually sports in the area. Half of the participants also likes to take a walk in the area during the weekends. In general, they are satisfied with the offer.

Housing and Commercial: Rent and Value

Regarding the rents in Mile End, the common point of view is that the neighbourhood is getting more expensive or is already too expensive. This is expressed by statements such as “I know that there is an area with lofts, just next to Ubisoft, next to the public gardens [...] and I think it’s more than \$2000 a month for loft there where you have no sun, no nothing. Yes, it’s far too overpriced and a bit of overrated now” (P22). Looking at the development of rents during the last ten years, two statements underline the development. Interviewee P17 tells that “The last time I was renting [about ten years ago], I was paying \$560 a month or something like that, like it was super cheap, hum, for like a small basement apartment”, and the experience of interviewee P18, who looked for an apartment in the Mile End, is that “yeah, it was like a few \$100 more expensive than the other more residential area”. Some interviewees are also aware of the real estate situation in the Mile End which they described as expensive as well, and they notice that it is a buyer’s market (P20) and that some people own a lot of buildings (P21). Rising rents in the commercial sector are mentioned in different contexts by several participants when they talk about changes of restaurants and shops. They report, or speculate respectively, that places like the Cagibi on Saint-Laurent or Clarks on Saint-Viateur had to close because the rent rose (P17, P23). Another effect of rising rents in the commercial sector is seen in the many empty stores in the neighbourhood (P27).

Reflecting about the rents, some interviewees expressed their thoughts regarding the evolution that is going on. One interviewee (P25) mentioned Airbnb and questioned the amount of them now, because Airbnb reduces the number of available apartments for dwellers, and another one (P23) tells that he knows a lot of French people coming to the neighbourhood, and he speculates that they have euros, so the prices don’t bother them. One interviewee is of the opinion that the increase is probably justifiable because of its location (P19), and another one takes Ubisoft into account and states: “The rent, well, I know the rent went higher, has been going up and probably Ubisoft is partly to blame for that, because, when they just want bigger spaces, they can, I guess, shaft other people around or just because they can pay more money” (P21), although it is not clear if he refers to private and/or commercial rents. Interviewee P26 takes a contrary view of the development. She states that the rents are lower in the Mile End compared to downtown and Old Montreal, and the environment and the offices are good, so that other companies get probably attracted by the Mile End.

In summary, residential rents in the Mile End have reportedly increased in recent years and are now perceived as too expensive by almost all respondents. An increase in rents for commercial establishments is also reported by some respondents as they have witnessed this. Beyond that, thoughts about a potential influence on the development include the presence of Ubisoft, location, or new residents with a different pocket.

Local Amenities, Facilities and Services

Using the local amenities and services depends on the one hand largely on the place of residence, so if the interviewees live in or close-by the neighbourhood or not, and on the other hand on the type of offer, so if the offer meets the liking of the single person. Besides one interviewee (P22) who doesn't shop in the neighbourhood because it is not appealing to him, the vast majority does a little bit of shopping or use the facilities in the area. Not all of them could remember the names of the places they go to, so they describe it quite general as 'boutiques' (P27) or 'clothes' (P19), and "a board game shop" (P18). Only one, who is attached to the neighbourhood for more than ten years lists several shops he goes to, such as *Le Mac Urbain* on Saint-Laurent, *La Jolie Boutique* on du Parc, *Drawn & Quarterly* on Bernard, and *S.W. Welsch* on Saint-Viateur. This is the only shop on Saint-Viateur he likes to go because otherwise "there are strange shops like there's an oil shop that sells oils [and] there's a lot of vintage clothing stores along" (P17) that are not his style. Besides those, the store *jeans jeans jeans* on Casgrain is named (P21), and the bakery *Guillaume* on Saint-Laurent is mentioned by a quarter of the developers because they go there regularly (P17, P21, P23, P25). The only two listed services in the neighbourhood are a single visit at a hairdresser and the daycare.

The reasons for the different frequency of shopping are diverse. One said that he is no big shopping fan (P18), another one goes to the neighbourhood only for practical reasons (P21), and another reason is to go for those things that are hard to find somewhere else (P25). In this context, one, who has been working for Ubisoft for three years, remarks that "I kind of beginning to know all the little places like this [note: small shops and stores], so, it's nice" (P23). Those who use the local amenities and facilities more often, are those, who prefer to buy local. Except the two that are not attracted by the offer, the rest is satisfied or does not miss anything in the neighbourhood regarding the offer. The only thing that is missed by one, is the access from the neighbourhood to Rosemont metro station (P25) but otherwise those participants (P18, P21) that address public transit such as

the access to the metro orange line (P18) are in general pleased.

Part of the socio-economic dimension is also looking at the prices of establishments such as restaurants and bars and how the price level is perceived by those out and about. The price level of the restaurants that workers go to at lunchtime is perceived ambivalently. One of the interviewees expressed it in a general way and says that the price level varies widely, and around Ubisoft it is somehow pricier (P20). The variation is perceived by half of the employees as 'expensive' and 'overpriced', while the second half perceived it as 'fine', 'reasonable', and 'middle pricy'. "Going out for lunch is usually acceptable, because I have, have a nice job". This is how participant P21 explained his perceptions. That's in line with the explanation of interviewee P17, who got used to the prices because he's been working for Ubisoft for more than ten years. Two respondents express their experience of rising prices in the neighbourhood over the years and they give different reasons for it. One of them (P23), who has only been working there for three years, describes his experience:

Like we were going on the, like the local, like breakfast, breakfast place, like it was all of made fresh and stuff and they raised the price a lot like recently because of the rent that went high. So, we did not, not go there anymore. And there's a few, some places like this. So it, because it's [...] they're raising their prices.

The other one is interviewee P25, who has been working in the neighbourhood for thirteen years:

Uh, yeah, yeah. It is expensive going out. And I know that it's because, because of the amount of people that work there, like in, in the area, I saw, I saw the same, the same pho soup goes from \$7.00 to \$12, and now, the same place I used to go there because it was under \$10 now it costs me \$20 to get to get the same the same meal.

All in all, the vast majority of the interviewees use the local amenities and services in the neighbourhood, albeit to a very small extent. The interviewees go to the stores in the Mile End for practical reasons or they prefer to buy local. In general, they are satisfied with the offer. Shops etc. are rarely listed by name. The price level of amenities such as restaurants and bars is also considered. Prices during lunchtime are perceived differently by interviewees, ranging from 'good' to 'overpriced'. An increase in prices over the years is reported.

Product Range of Shops

Not many remarks were made about the product range of shops or a change in offer in the Mile End during the last decades, and those that are made are mostly general, such as that the offer is good and different (P21). One participant (P27) witnesses some changes in shops during the eight years she has been living in the Mile End, and three report that shops, including old and traditional ones, closed, or had to close because of rising rents (P18, P22, P23). One of them (P22) sees it positively because he likes the new offer. Most of the participants state that they prefer or like to have smaller shops in the neighbourhood and not big, commercial brands. For them it is important to have 'local stores' with 'local offers' or 'unique offers' respectively, such as clothing, which make the Mile End kind of exclusive (P16, P18, P22, P23, P25, P27). One comment about the future development is made by participant P27. She sees a shift in offer, because the Hassidic Jews, who live in the area, have their own shops and this community is growing, which probably leads to more Jewish shops to meet their needs.

In brief, there are not many comments about the product range in shops or change in offer in the area. The only thing reported are closures of (traditional) shops. Local, small shops with local and unique offerings are favoured in the Mile End by half of participants. One predicts an increase of Jewish shops because the Hassidic community in the area is growing.

Government Policies Regarding the Video Game Industry and Administrative Practices

About government policies, there is only one interviewee (P25) who talks about the subsidies, Ubisoft received during the first years. He addresses this topic while talking about the relation of Ubisoft and the Mile End: "Ubisoft wouldn't, couldn't have made it by itself, like there was a lot of incentive from the government for, for them to open up a shop in Quebec, in Montreal, so without those incentives, I don't think that Ubisoft would have invested as much in the in the Mile End".

Administrative practices are not the focus of the participants. There are only three points already mentioned. These are the change of the parking situation in the Mile End (P23), an improvement of the spatial design and the desired access to the Mile End via the railway tracks (P25).

In brief, only one thinks of the subsidies Ubisoft got during its first years of establishment. Regarding administrative practises, there is only a listing of three points mentioned in other

contexts.

Summary Overview

On the whole, looking at these different dynamics, many various aspects are addressed that give an insight into the use of the neighbourhood as well as its perception of the people working at Ubisoft. The participants see the parks and green spaces in the area such as *Champ des Possibles* and the park by the arena where they go to mainly during lunch time. Improvements or changes in spatial design are hardly mentioned, with the exception of the new path on Saint-Viateur and the cycle path on Clark. In the case of housing, changes are hardly noticed. The temporary space 'Aire Commune' in summer next to Ubisoft is known by almost all participants because they pass by on their way to or from work. It is commonly described as great for social stuff and chilling, but not for working. The overall impression of the spatial design that mostly refers to the area around Ubisoft fluctuates between satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Looking at what the workers do in the Mile End, a consistent picture is presented. Sport is practised in the area by only three participants although the offer is manifold and known. Having a walk in the Mile End, also during the weekends, is stated by half of the interviewees. The local amenities and services in the neighbourhood are used to a very small extent by most of the participants, so they hardly can tell anything about a changes in offer, etc. The participants favour local, small shops with local and unique offerings. Although they do not use the facilities and amenities much, the interviewees are satisfied with the offer of the stores and the offering of sport facilities. Life in the neighbourhood is also influenced by price levels of the amenities, in particular the price level of restaurants, bars and rents. The participants think that the prices for lunch are either 'overpriced' or 'fine', although an increase in price over the years is reported. In addition to food, there is also price development in the housing market. The rent for housing in the Mile End has increased during the last years, and during the time the interviews were taken it is seen as getting or is too expensive by almost all participants. Political dynamics are negligible. Only one briefly addresses the subsidies Ubisoft got during its first years of establishment.

5.1.1.3. Conclusion

Looking at the interviews conducted with video game developers in Montreal, the depicted pictures of the developer's lifestyle and cultural activities, as well as pictures of the Mile End's dynamics show a manifold perception.

The description of their cultural lifestyle and their view about whether they see themselves as a cultural person is contrasting. It is between not being culturally active and culture as an important part of lifestyle, as well as being and not being a cultural person. The way they see themselves as creative workers varies between 'yes' and 'no', which depends on the actual work, e.g. if they work as programmer or game designer, and on the people, they work with. The activities they engage in as part of their cultural identity and lifestyle include listening to music, art, visiting museums and reading books. Further, they do things such as drawing, dancing, active music making as playing piano or compose songs, and playing video games, which is mentioned by a few. The variety of the cultural amenities and infrastructures in the Mile End is known by the participants. These places are mostly within a 15-minute walk around Ubisoft. The participants don't miss anything in the area. The importance of the offer in the context of their cultural practices and lifestyles varies and is indicated between little and much. Cultural participation is rare in this area and is largely limited to attending concerts and exhibitions. Reasons given are the family situation and the lack of knowledge of what is going on or offered, although they are informed about events etc. by the company and by advertisement in the neighbourhood. When they are out in the neighbourhood, they enjoy the time there, such as during lunch breaks, after work or during the weekends.

The participants often go to the restaurants during their lunch break. They know the offer well in the area, and almost all are satisfied because they find the food that suits their lifestyle. The price level of these restaurants, especially during lunch time, is described as 'good' or 'overpriced' and an increase in prices is reported. All know the parks and green spaces in the area, such as *Champ des Possibles* where they spend time mainly during lunch time. They also know the temporary space 'Aire Commune' in summer, which is great for social stuff but not for work. Changes and improvements of the spatial design are only recognised in cases such as the new pathway on Saint-Viateur or the bike path on Clark. Changes in housing are hardly recognised. Connected with housing is the rent level. Almost all participants state that housing rents in the Mile End have

increased in recent years, and nowadays, rents are described as too expensive or already too expensive. The overall impression of the spatial design varies between satisfaction and dissatisfaction and mainly relates to the area around Ubisoft. There is a wide range of sports available in the Mile End and it is well-known. However, only a few people are taking advantage of this sports offer. This is similar for the local amenities and services. They are only used much by some. The interviewees prefer local, small shops with local and unique offerings. A change over time of the offerings is not reported except in the context of the hipsters that now come to the area. Some note that there are places whose offer is adapted to their demand. Although the sport facilities, the local amenities and services are hardly used, the participants are satisfied. On the political side, one briefly addresses the subsidies Ubisoft got during its first years in the Mile End.

In short, the description of the video game developer's lifestyle and if they see themselves as a cultural person is contrasting. This is like their description of being a creative worker, although this description depends on their current work task. As cultural activities, they list several diverse activities. Although the places and amenities are known in the neighbourhood, they mostly don't do these activities in the Mile End. They further perceive other dynamics in the Mile End, of which the change in restaurants and bars, and the change in rents are the most detailed ones. Although the video game developers are satisfied with the offer in the Mile End, they usually don't use it.

This is the perception of video game developers in the Mile End in terms of culture, lifestyle, amenities, and dynamics. The perceptions of the cultural players on these points are presented below.

5.1.2. Cultural Actors in the Mile End

In the following, the analysis of the six interviews conducted with cultural actors who work or have their studio in the Mile End is presented. Four live in the Mile End and two live a five-minute walk away in Outremont. This group is not as homogenous as the group of the video game developers. This group is not as homogeneous as the group of video game developers. The only thing they have in common is that they work in the creative sector in the Mile End, but their professions and what they do are different. Hence, their (cultural) offer is different.

5.1.2.1. Cultural Dynamics, Lifestyle and Amenities

Lifestyle

Lifestyle, as considered in this research, is related to creativity and its connection to the neighbourhood. A cultural lifestyle is an inseparable part of the lives of interviewee P28 and P30. They underline it by stating: “Well, I mean, I like to think, I prioritize the presence of art in my life and hopefully in the lives of people around me” (P28), and “for me, being part of culture, of the cultural community is hugely important” (P30). Two further participants reflect about their cultural lifestyle activities. Interviewee P29 sees himself more as a consumer. He reads books and newspapers and watches movies because he wants to be informed and to be able to talk about what’s going on, but he does not necessarily participate in cultural activities. This is not the case for interviewee P31 because she attends events in the neighbourhood, including family-friendly and evening events. Under a different angle, interviewee P33 describes his ‘activities’ connected to his lifestyle: he sees himself as a young professional that transformed an old neighbourhood when he moved to the Mile End more than 30 years ago.

In addition to cultural lifestyle, the look is also at how the participants perceive themselves as cultural persons, which is not necessarily the same. For participants P28 and P31, however, being a cultural person is also an integral part of their lives and personhood, because they create art (content), work with art and are part of the “cultural fabric” (P31). Expressing it with the words of participant P28:

I think. It’s fair to say that I am. I mean, I make art, I work with art, painting, and sculpture. And I [...] I’ve done that for since, you know, more than 30 years now, so that’s my life. I think if a label needs to be, you know, created that’s one of them I could apply. That’s sure.

Respondents P30 and P33 also see themselves as cultural workers. Interviewee P30 makes a living with culture, and interviewee P33 is a historian. In terms of the things they do culturally, it is only participants P30 and P32 who list some activities, such as books, movies, music/concerts (P30, P32) and museums (P30). Two participants (P29, P30) raise the question of what culture comprises in their reflections.

In short, the participants have very different descriptions of their cultural lifestyle. Two state that it is an inseparable part of their lives due to its great importance, and two others think of activities that they carry out to varying degrees as part of their cultural lifestyle, such as reading or attending events. The interviewees have also a very different description of how they see themselves as a cultural person. Being a cultural person is an integral part of the lives of two participants because they create art, and two further interviewees see themselves as a cultural person because of their profession. Few activities are listed, such as reading and going to concerts by two respondents.

Cultural Participation and Experience

The participants see themselves as creative and cultural persons that are involved in arts and/or culture. But this not necessarily says something about their (active) cultural participation and experience in the Mile End. Only three of the interviewees talk about what they do in the neighbourhood. They participate in events (P28, P29) or use the art crafts facilities in the area, so as interviewee P29, who uses the print and wood making facilities on de Gaspé which he appreciates because they are close-by. Otherwise, he is more of a person who enjoys having the cafés and restaurants around. Interviewee P31 participates in different events in the neighbourhood such as events by *Pop Montreal* or *Aire Commune* with the focus on family-friendly events as she states:

I, I really, I enjoyed that a lot because there was multifaceted programming. So, you know, it wasn't like, it wasn't just for one type of audience. I think that it was very, you know, it was intentionally designed, so that people of different ages and parents and non-parents could come and do things and, you know, there were some activities by Kid Koala, the scratch DJ musician, that were, you know, fun things that, you know, families can do, and so again, I'm more directed towards the cultural activities that are weekends and outdoors and kid friendly.

The fact that participation also depends on the family situation is indirectly confirmed by interviewee P29, who has two young children. He says that his cultural participation might be different from someone who doesn't have kids. To underline this, he gives examples of what he did before in the area, such as going to concerts. A changed participation is also noted by interviewee P28, but he refers to age. He states that when he was younger, he did more things

culturally in the area. Worth mentioning is that interviewee P31 has the feeling that there are not many cultural activities around Ubisoft, and otherwise she sees posters that advertise for different cultural institutions.

In brief, only half of the participants talk about the things they do in the neighbourhood, such as attending events or using arts and crafts facilities. The choice of events and the frequency of participation depend on age and family situation, i.e. whether they have children.

Cultural Infrastructure and Amenities

Participating in the cultural events or exhibitions is also based on the knowledge about the cultural infrastructure and amenities. All participants are aware of the cultural offer in the Mile End and can list several examples. They list for example galleries (P28, P31, P32, P33), artists' studios (P28), *Cinéma Moderne* (P29, P30, P31, P32) on Saint-Laurent, *Pop Montreal* (P30), *Aire Commune* (P31) on De Gaspé, the outdoor venue *Marché des possibles* (P30, P32), book stores (P30, P32), such as *Drawn & Quarterly* on Bernard (P30), and concert halls (P32) such as *Casa del Popolo* (P29, P30, P31) on Saint-Laurent, *Rialto* (P29, P32), *Fairmount Theatre* (P29), *Ursa*, a music venue by Martha Wainwright (P29, P30) all on Du Parc, and the *Ukrainian Federation* on Hutchison that is also used for concerts (P30). Restaurants are also included in thoughts about amenities, such as *Nouveau Palais* on Bernard (P29, P30), *Milos* (P30, P33) and *Ta Chido* (P30) on Du Parc, as well as a Polish restaurant and a burger place on Saint-Viateur (P30). Interviewee P30 adds that there is great variety.

The interviews are with cultural actors, and so they are part of cultural life in the Mile End. Only three of the six interviewees play or played an active role in the cultural life the area for the public by providing different offers and activities. Interviewee P28 was a founding member of the neighbourhood community group '*Rue Publique*'. This group advocated for better use of streets as public space between 2009 and 2017, such as street closures and festivals, or the improvement of green spots. Interviewees P32 and P33 are still active in the neighbourhood. They offer cultural things and activities, such as (diverse) films, master classes, discussions, and festivals as in the case of interviewee P32 and guided tours, lectures, and a website with historical information in the case of interviewee P33.

In summary, all of the interviewees know the cultural amenities in the Mile End. Some are also mentioned by name. As part of the cultural infrastructure, three interviewees play or played an active role in the neighbourhood by offering a different range of services for the public.

Summary Overview

By and large, all the cultural actors interviewed know the cultural institutions and offerings in the Mile End by name, and half of them participate in cultural events in the Mile End, although to varying degrees depending on their age and family situation. As far as cultural lifestyle is concerned, cultural actors associate it on the one hand with their lives, as it is an inseparable part, and on the other hand with the activities they engage in, such as reading. The description of being a cultural worker also varies. For some it is an integral part of their life because they create art, and for others it is their profession that makes them cultural creators. Only a few activities are mentioned, such as reading and going to concerts. As part of the cultural infrastructure, respondents play or played an active role in the neighbourhood by offering or providing a range of services for the public.

5.1.2.2. Spatial, Socio-Economic and Political Dynamics

Spatial Design and Recreational Amenities

When looking at the spatial design of the Mile End, several things come to mind for cultural actors. When they think of ‘green’ places in the neighbourhood, they think of parks (P30) such as the Parc Lhasa-De Sela on Van Horne (P32), the square of Pop Montreal (P31) and *Champ des Possibles* on de Gaspé (P28, P29, P31, P32), which are readily used, albeit not without reservations. Interviewee P28 describes the park situation as follows:

Even though there aren’t that many actual parks in the Mile End, there’s park Jeanne-Mance just outside, there’s park Outremont. You don’t have to walk too far just to enjoy a park. There’s also the interesting space behind de Gaspé, which is a 100% Mile End, known sort of colloquially as the *Champ des Possibles*, Hum... [...] which is not quite a park but [...] in many ways functions as a park. It’s got footpaths, and trees growing, and I think there’s still beehives there, illegal crossings for the train tracks run through. Hum... So that’s Mile

End parks which I think should be a little more formalized, but we'll see.

The only thing that interviewee P31 misses in the parks are facilities, such as bathrooms because she often goes there with her child. More parks would be appreciated by participant P28 and also by participant P29, but he knows that this is difficult because of the dense housing. The participants also think of 'ruelles vertes' (P30), and small green spaces that have been created over time all over the neighbourhood thanks to the initiative of *Projet Montréal* (P33). These former car parks usually situated at intersections are really admired because they are gathering places with benches and trees (P29, P30, P33), and they allow a chat with friends and neighbours (P33) without the need to consume (P30). Other public places are set up, mostly covered, such as containers for sitting (P30), and the (temporary) transformation of streets (P28, P30), for example, into pedestrian zones of which they would wish to have more. Besides these public spaces, interviewee P29 thinks of third places in the Mile End in this context. He wishes that these places, such as cafés and restaurants, stay in the area and remain affordable. While staying outside in these places, internet access may also be important. It is very important for all interviewees, not only outside but also for their private and professional lives (P29, P30). Of the spatial design of the sidewalk, the perception differs slightly. While interviewee P29 hopes for bigger sidewalks, interviewee P30 appreciates their wheelchair friendliness. As a temporary space, several interviewees think of *Marché des Possibles*, an outdoor venue at L'Entrepôt77 on Bernard founded in 2013 (P28, P29, P32) as bringing life to the Mile End (P32). In general, the spatial design has improved during the past years, according to two interviewees (P29, P30).

In summary, when it comes to spatial design, the respondents mainly think of parks and green spaces that are spread throughout the neighbourhood and usually equipped with benches where people can chat with neighbours or friends. In addition, the respondents think of further places, such as containers for sitting, *Champ des Possibles* or the transformation of streets into pedestrian zones as temporary spaces. In general, the spatial design has improved during the past years. All participants emphasise the importance of the internet for them, both in their private and professional lives, at home or outside in the neighbourhood.

Housing and Commerce

The cultural actors are aware of several changes in the neighbourhood during the last decades. The two most recognised changes are new buildings or condos respectively and transformations of residential buildings. New buildings and changes are e.g. the new condo-complex on Henri-Julien (P30, P31), changes on de Gaspé, Maguire and Fairmount (P28), and condos that were built for “Ubisoft millionaires” (P33), the retirement home on Maguire (P28, P30), and the transformation of a former gas station at the corner of du Parc and Fairmount into a commercial/housing complex (P30) in 2007. The transformation of residential buildings refers to the transformation of tri- and duplex to single family houses (P28, P29, P30, P31, P33) and/or extensions on the roof (P33). In this context, interviewees P28, P30 and P33 mention the heritage and protection rules that were introduced in the 1990s when the arrondissement Plateau-Mont-Royal was created and of which Mile End is part of. These heritage protection regulations apply to the exterior walls of the houses, where not even a window may be replaced without official authorisation, but not to the interior of the houses. Interviewee P33 adds that these protection rules do not apply in the same way to former industrial buildings and warehouses that are changed into residential dwellings. Changes in commerce were not considered.

In brief, the interviewees report about changes in housing during the last decades and they list several examples. The changes are of two types, first, new buildings in the residential sector, and second, transformations within buildings, such as the change from duplexes to single houses.

Sport and Leisure

Sport and leisure activities in the Mile End might have an influence on the perception and connectivity to the area. Although the participants live in the Mile End or next to it, not many sport activities are mentioned. There are the YMCA on du Parc (P29, P30) and Aire Commune (P31) as places, and as activities there are skating under the viaduct (P29, P30) and yoga in the park (P30). The mountain as a place to do sports is mentioned as the only place outside the Mile End where one interviewee does sports (P31). Parks are mentioned several times as a place for sport and leisure activities in general (P29, P30, P32). The cultural actors also think of diverse leisure activities, such as going to restaurants (P30), 5@7 and music (P31), having a coffee (P31) or meeting and seeing friends (P31, P32).

In short, the interviewees do not report much about sport and leisure activities in the Mile End. They list some of the facilities and some activities, such as yoga and parks.

Housing and Commercial: Rent and Value

The real estate market in the Mile End is described unanimously as (too) expensive for renting and buying. The Mile End turned during the last 20 years into one of the most expensive neighbourhoods (P33) due to speculation (P28). This is underlined by those participants who have been living there for more than 15 years, saying that when they moved to the area in the early 2000s it was incredibly cheap (P28, P30). The development and changes during the last two decades are well expressed by interview P30:

But obviously when we moved here in 2004, it was considered, I mean, my real estate agent didn't even know what the Mile End was. He thought I was talking about the golden mile which is on Sherbrooke. So, in 2004 the Mile End was not an entity. It was not considered particularly hip. So, I think it was much more diverse in terms of who was living here, it was also more older people and more low-income people.

Even in 2010, when participant P32 got her studio on de Gaspé, the Mile End was not considered as hip as it is today.

There are some concerns about the consequences of the high rents and real estate. Interviewee P29 sees a threat for artists such as writers, musicians and actors not being able to stay in the area. He and interviewee P32 already know artists and families that had to leave the area. Interviewee P31 summarizes her view by stating that

Because prices have gone up so much, so quickly that, you know, I think it will be interesting to see over the next like five years, how many people can stay and what kind of big shift will be as people need to leave or as landlords, you know, tell people that they have to leave and then no one can find a comparable place in the neighborhood. Yeah.

Taking the commercial establishments into this thought, interviewee P32 sees a lot of businesses closing because of rising rents and consequently also a lot of vacant places. This is in line with interviewee P28 who put it into the context of the development of Saint-Viateur. He states that it

has to do with the fact that the street has become very popular and that's the speculative real estate transactions, and commercial leases getting just up and business closing, so even though these bakeries and lunch restaurants were thriving, they couldn't handle a doubling or tripling of the rent. [.]That's sort of where Saint-Viateur and the Mile End in general is in kind of a limbo between the two.

In brief, the Mile End was not considered as expensive in the early 2000s when some of the interviewees considered to move there. This has changed during the last two decades and nowadays all interviewees state that the Mile End is one of the most expensive neighbourhoods in town for renting and buying. Some add that not all residents are able to afford to live there anymore. This development affects not only private individuals but also businesses.

Local amenities, Facilities and Services

The interviewees do their daily shopping in the Mile End because everything is there (P30), such as a range of independent supermarkets, e.g. Supermarché PA (P33), daycare (P32), independent bookstores (P33), restaurants (P33), and everything can be done by foot, which is a huge advantage of the neighbourhood according to interviewee P30. She further points to the retail chains that are in the Mile End, in particular the foreign retail chain Starbucks at the corner of Fairmount and du Parc and the Canadian retail chain Lululemon on Saint-Viateur. Lululemon is also mentioned on the list of retail chains by interviewees P28 and P29 besides David's Tea on Saint-Viateur. It is a sign of gentrification (P29) because those are the only ones that can afford the rising rents (P28).

Looking at the local amenities also includes a look on their price level. The focus while thinking about the price level is on restaurants. In the area, a diversity of non-expensive, super reasonable, such as *Nouveau Palais* on Bernard and *Arahuba* on Saint-Viateur (P29), and of expensive restaurants, such as Milos on du Parc (P33), exists (P28, P29, P31, P32, P33). Besides restaurants, interviewee P29 also includes the prices of further amenities. He states that the ticket prices in general got up, but that the art galleries are free. The socio-economic situation in general is described by interviewee P30. She says that the offer in the various streets are for different pockets and thus for a varying socio-economic situation. She gives the following example: "And I can literally by going down, if I wanna go up, you could go up to Bernard and have dinner with a bunch of Porsches drivers, or I can go, you know, to Saint Laurent to this Peruvian place and it's like the

complete opposite.”

In short, in the Mile End the interviewees get everything they need for their daily life on foot. Looking at the price level in the places, such as restaurants, a variety is noticed, from non-expensive to super expensive. The area therefore offers services and amenities for different budgets.

Product Range of Shops

According to four participants, the range of goods offered by the shops in the Mile End has changed. Two interviewees refer to the offer two decades ago. Interviewee P30 tells that the Mile End was different in 2000 because of special shops that could only be found there, such as the bio grocery store where people from other parts of the city came for. Interviewee P29 reflects about places in the area and states that there were

really more like obscure stores, like there was a key maker [...] was it, where it was, the tattoo bodkin is, hum..., there used to be fishing gear, and, eh, some, like all those places, that, apparently the neighborhood was filled with these places, that sort of Greek, Portuguese, or Italian immigrants who were here, would use.

These shops run by immigrants and the shops that disappeared on Saint-Viateur due to rising rents (P30) have been replaced by new shops with a different offer. This development is explained in detail by interviewee P33, which he cannot do without describing the Mile End:

I’ll give you an example, Saint-Viateur Street, which is next to Ubisoft, which is a mixed commercial residential street, used to be considered the heart of Mile End because they have many coffee shops, were meeting place for the young indie musician I mentioned, those coffee shops started as being ethnic hang out. There was one coffee shop for the Italian, another one for the Greek, another one for the Portuguese, and when the Italian agreed to move to the suburbs, the young hipsters, and I know many don’t like the word ‘hipster’ took their place, so Saint-Viateur had a strong neighborhood life, a strong proximity life, exactly like Jane Jacobs⁷⁹ said we have to protect, and, but when Ubisoft

Jane Jacobs (1916-2006) was an American Canadian urbanist, writer, journalist, activist. In her book “The Death and Life of Great American Cities” about the American city, first published in 1961, she put forward ground-breaking ideas about the functioning and development of (American) cities. In her considerations, she included the residents of the neighbourhoods and their influence on the development of the neighbourhood (Center for the Living City 2024).

came, many entrepreneur, real estate company bought everything to transform the whole street, the small neighborhood bakery was gone and replaced by a very expensive trendy bar for Ubisoft people, the small dry cleaner was gone, the smaller neighborhood Greek fish place was gone. And at one point the danger was that everything would become a bar or luxury shop.

An own experience is told by interviewee P28. He used to go to a grocery shop on Saint-Viateur, but the shop changed its offer to organic food and became, as a result, too expensive. Thus, he stopped going there. Regarding the development of restaurants and their adaptation to the lunch crowd, the two sides of the coin are stated by interviewee P30: “I mean, it has meant that there are a lot of really great lunch options, you know, on Saint-Viateur, but also means, anything else since closed down, right, nothing else stays.”

The cultural actors are not only customers but also people that offer goods and/or services to the public, to which also Ubisoft and its employees belong. Some of the interviewees offer their goods and services for a special public. Others work on order, such as the visual artist (P31). Her studio on de Gaspé is a sort of collective of ten artists that share the common spaces, but it is not open for the public. Almost similar is the situation of a sculptor and painter (P28). He works together with other artists occasionally, but his studio is open for curators or collectors who come by to see his work. Interviewee P30, the film maker, works from her office where she prepares movies, lectures etc. and welcomes clients. However, shots are usually made outside the Mile End. Interviewee P29, the designer, does work for a special public as a contract worker for other companies. In contrast, the two cultural organisations, the *Cinéma Moderne* on Saint-Laurent, and *Mémoire du Mile End*, address a different audience. They are open to the public. Both have a broad and diverse audience, and both count Ubisoft and its employees as customers, as cinema-goers or as participants of guided tours run by *Mémoire du Mile End*. However, there are no active members of Ubisoft in these organisations.

To sum up, a change in the range of goods is reported by four participants. On the one hand, it is a disappearance of old-established shops, which are replaced by new ones with a different offer, and on the other hand, although rather rarely, an adaptation of the offer to the demand. As cultural

Further books by her: Jane Jacobs (1970). *The economy of cities*. London: Cape; Jane Jacobs

actors, only two offer their services to the common public. It is the cinema and the organisation Mémoire du Mile End. Both count Ubisoft and its employees as their customers.

Government Policies Regarding the Video Game Industry and Administrative Practices

There are two comments about government policies made. They are about the tax incentives by Québec government for Ubisoft (P33) and about the Ubisoft's threat to leave the Mile End if they don't get subsidies (P29, P33).

Besides, two points regarding administrative practices are addressed. The major point is the traffic and parking situation in the area seen under different angles. Interviewee P28 sees the growing traffic in connection with Ubisoft and its employees, but he also sees that Ubisoft is dealing with this issue by participating in the "discussion of planning parking and carpooling and alternative transit" to solve it. Participant P33 also picks up on the parking situation again, but in a different context. He explains that cutting parking space to make more space for pedestrians or bikes and biking paths leads to complaints by Ubisoft employees because there is less parking available for them. When Ubisoft wanted to extend the lease, Ubisoft cited the parking situation as an example of wanting to leave. But it was just a threat because "the majority of the employee like it in Mile End" and its amenities. Further, there is a single comment about the protection of space for the artists in the building on de Gaspé made by interviewee P33.

In brief, the main points addressed are, first, the Quebec government's tax incentives for Ubisoft and its threat to leave the city if the government discontinues these incentives, and second, the increasing traffic and poor parking situation in the Mile End, albeit from different points of view.

Summary Overview

By and large, these different dynamics, the spatial, socio-economic and political one, influence the use and perception of the Mile End. The perception of spatial design is similar. The interviewees think of the parks and green spaces in the whole Mile End that invite to sit down and chat with others, and of temporary spaces such as *Champ des Possibles*. Internet access is important for all interviewees in all spheres. An improvement is stated. Not only in the spatial design are changes observed during the last decades but also in housing, such as new buildings in the residential sector and transformations within buildings. While the Mile End was very cheap to live there 20 years

ago, it has become very expensive, as all participants affirm. Besides their work and living in the area, they also do different things. They go to the neighbourhood for things of their daily life. However, they rarely do sport and leisure activities.

They notice a change of stores and offer by replacement of old stores with new ones and by an adaptation to a different demand. Regarding the price level of the restaurants, the participants indicate that they range between 'not expensive' and 'super expensive'. As cultural actors, only two offer their services to the common public: the cinema and the organisation *Mémoire du Mile End*. Both count Ubisoft and its employees as their customers.

Looking at the political issues, the interviewees only address the tax incentives by Québec government for Ubisoft and the bad traffic and parking situation in the Mile End.

5.1.2.3. Conclusion

Having a look at the statements of the cultural actors from different fields, a diverse picture is given of the current dynamics in the Mile End.

The description of cultural life and cultural dynamics in the Mile End is related to the extent to which the cultural actors see themselves as cultural and creative and to what extent they are furthermore part of the cultural offer. For some of the cultural actors, the cultural lifestyle and being a cultural person is an inseparable part of their lives, because they create art. For the others, cultural lifestyle and being a cultural person refer to the activities they do, such as reading or going to concerts. As being a part of the cultural infrastructure, interviewees play or played an active role in the neighborhood by providing a different type of service. Today, one is the *Cinéma Moderne* and the other one is the cultural organisation *Mémoire du Mile End* that offers conferences and guided tours. Both count Ubisoft and its employees as their customers.

Regarding the spatial dynamics, an improvement over the last decades is stated by the cultural actors, for example in parks and green spaces with benches that encourage people to sit down and chat. But not only the parks have changed. There are also changes in housing as observed by the interviewees, such as new residential buildings and changes within buildings. This goes along with an increase in rents during the last two decades, which is stated by all interviewees. Political issues

only refer to the tax incentives by Québec government for Ubisoft and the bad traffic situation in the area.

In short, regarding their cultural lifestyle and being a cultural person, all declare that art and being cultural is an inseparable part of their lives. The cultural actors perceive an improvement in the spatial design, a change in housing that goes along with an increase in rents.

The descriptions and perceptions of the cultural players show some similarities with those of the video game developers. These become clear when they are compared, which is analysed in more detail below.

5.1.3. Comparison of the Interviews in the Mile End

The different dynamics and lifestyles presented so far each show the viewpoint of one group. These two different perspectives are now brought together in a comparative view.

The cultural and creative aspect is the perception of what it means to see oneself as a culturally active person, a creative person, and the corresponding lifestyle. This perception is viewed differently by video game developers. It is between ‘not being culturally active’ and ‘culture being an important part of lifestyle’, and between ‘being a cultural person’ and ‘not being a cultural person’. This different view is also reflected in the view regarding if they see themselves as creative workers. They see themselves for sure as creative workers on the one hand, and on the other not. They explain this by saying that it depends on the actual work, e.g. if they work as programmer or game designer, and on the people they work with. Being a cultural person and having a cultural lifestyle is not a question for the cultural actors, but the extent and the connection differ. For some of the cultural actors, the cultural lifestyle and being a cultural person is an inseparable part of their life, as they create art. For the others, cultural lifestyle and being a cultural person refer to the activities they engage in, such as reading or going to concerts.

Nevertheless, although their perception of being a cultural person and having a cultural lifestyle varies, they do a lot of cultural activities. Activities they list are listening to music, going to museums, reading books, and art. Further, they do things such as drawing, dancing, active music making as playing piano or composing songs, and mentioned by a few, playing video games. The

personal connection to the Mile End is also determined by the activities they do there. Although the video game developers know the variety of cultural amenities and the infrastructure in the Mile End and they don't miss anything, their importance for their cultural practices and their lifestyle varies. It ranges between little and much important. Cultural participation in the area is rare and largely limited activities, such as going to concerts and exhibitions. Reasons mentioned are the family situation, so to say if they have kids or not, and the fact that they do not know what is going on or being offered, although they get information about events etc. by the company or by advertisements within the neighbourhood.

Besides the cultural dynamics, the interviewees also look on spatial ones. Both groups know parks and green spaces such as *Champ des Possibles*, and temporary spaces such as Aire Commune. The parks and their appearance are perceived in contrasting ways, especially within the group of the developers. For some there are too few, for others the number is just right, the parks are nice for walks, or their appearance is depressing. An improvement is stated by the cultural actors. They have a positive view of the benches in the parks and green spaces that encourage people to sit and chat. Broadening the view, some video game developers also include the new pathway on Saint-Viateur and the bike path on Clark in the list of spatial changes, as well as their impression of the spatial design around Ubisoft that varies between satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Spatial changes that are seen mainly by the cultural actors are changes in housing. They report of new residential buildings and changes within buildings. The video game developers hardly recognise them. However, all of them recognised an effect that is connected to housing. It is an increase in rents during the last two decades while all interviewees describe the rent level as being at the present moment (2020 and 2021, years of the interviews) (too) expensive. This consideration also leads to an examination of the restaurants and their price level. They are categorised as 'good' or 'overpriced', and some developers report about an increase in price over the last decade. These impressions regarding the price level are also shared by the cultural actors by stating that the prices are between non-expensive and super expensive.

In addition to a change in restaurants, changes in stores and their offer are also reported, mainly by the cultural actors. They describe an adaptation to a different demand and the replacement of old stores; however, they also add that there are still established places such as the Italian coffee shops Olimpico and Club Social on Saint-Viateur, that are part of Mile End's identity. Although these

two coffee places have been on Saint-Viateur for a long time, Saint-Viateur is mentioned as a street with a sometimes-frequent change of stores besides the parallel street Bernard. For the entire neighbourhood, a change is generally reported in the sense that local, long-established shops are becoming fewer and fewer and that there is a change in the context of the hipsters who are now coming to the Mile End. In this vein, some interviewees also describe the offer in some places as having (already) adapted to the demand of hipsters. In general, the video game developers prefer local, small shops with local and unique offerings. Looking at the leisure and recreational amenities, both groups are satisfied with the existing amenities regardless their use because although there is a wide range of sports available, only few developers and only some cultural actors do sports in the Mile End. Political issues only refer to the tax incentives of Québec government for Ubisoft by a single interviewee in each group.

The similarities can be summarised as follows. Looking at the cultural lifestyle, being a cultural person as well as being a creative worker is seen differently in both groups. It depends on the activities and the work they do. There are not many other similarities. It is the knowledge about the parks and temporary spaces, and the common perception that rents in the Mile End have been rising for a long time and are now too high. They have the same perception about prices in relation to restaurants. Here they all rate the price level between good and overpriced. Another thing the two groups have in common is that they are all aware of the leisure facilities and are satisfied with them, but only a few from both groups use them. They differ in all other respects. An overview of the similarities and differences is given in table 26.

Table 26: Comparison of the most important similar and different perceptions and descriptions of the analysis of the video game developers and cultural actors for ‘Culture, Lifestyle, Amenities, and Dynamics’ in Mile End

	Similarities	Differences
Cultural Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural infrastructure and amenities • Change of (and the number of) restaurants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View about themselves as culturally active, a creative person and creative worker, as well as the corresponding lifestyle • Role of the neighbourhood for their cultural practices
Spatial Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge, appearance and number of parks and temporary spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of further spatial dynamics (changes in housing by cultural actors, bike paths and spatial changes around the Ubisoft building by video game developers)
Socio-economic Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price level of rents and its development • Price level of restaurants • Satisfied with leisure and recreational amenities • Only few use the offer of leisure and recreational amenities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of offer perceived by cultural actors
Political Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax incentives from Québec government for Ubisoft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Source: Author

5.2. Flingern-Nord

The second neighbourhood regarded in this thesis is the neighbourhood of Flingern-Nord in Düsseldorf. First, the results of the ten interviews conducted with people working at Ubisoft are presented (6.2.1.), followed by the five interviews conducted with cultural actors (6.2.2.) who have their businesses in Flingern-Nord. This part concludes with a comparison of both views (6.2.3.) by looking at ‘Cultural Dynamics, Lifestyle and Amenities’ and ‘Spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics’.

5.2.1. Video Game Developers in Flingern-Nord

In this section, the analysis of the ten interviews conducted in 2020 and 2021 with people working at Ubisoft in Flingern-Nord is presented. Some of the interviewees mentioned their experiences with Montreal and so a section regarding that is added. It should also not be forgotten that Ubisoft moved to its new location a year or two before the interviews, so the immediate surroundings of the office have changed, but the distance to the centre of Flingern-Nord, where all the shops, restaurants, etc. are located, has remained roughly the same: only the direction in which they enter Flingern-Nord has changed. As a reminder, three interviews were conducted in person shortly before the start of the pandemic in March 2020.

5.2.1.1. *Cultural Dynamics, Lifestyle and Amenities*

Lifestyle

Lifestyle, as considered in this thesis, is related to creativity and its connection to the neighbourhood. The way the video game developers describe their cultural lifestyle is not uniform and not very specific. It is described on the one side as manifold (P1), and as pretty rich because the interviewee is surrounded by culture (P4), and on the other side it is described as something that has room for improvement (P10). Two interviewees (P2, P8) refer to their personality and include it in their description about their cultural lifestyle. Interviewee P2 says that she is not experimental-friendly and not very culturally open-minded in the things she does, and interviewee

P8 describes himself as not a cultural person and pretty much indifferent. The relationship to the lifestyle and the impact it has on him is described by participant P5. It is the experience he has gained, and furthermore, he knows many things that “enrich my understanding of what’s out there and what people, creative people have used as an inspiration or trying to inspire myself on those things”, though he classifies himself not as a connoisseur of culture but a curious one. Without classifying their lifestyle as cultural or not, the remaining interviewees only list activities they see as part of their lifestyle. The most mentioned activity is watching/going to movies, which is listed by four (P1, P2, P8, P9). Further activities connected with their cultural lifestyle are listening to music (P6, P7, P8), theatre (P1, P2, P3), books (P1, P8, P9), cabaret (P3), classical art (P1), cooking (P9), internet (P6), singer-song-writer events (P3) and travel (P6). Two interviewees also say what they don’t do (books) (P7) or not do much (music) (P9).

Besides the cultural activities that are related to lifestyle, there may be other activities that they do culturally. Therefore, a further question was asked about how they see themselves from a cultural perspective and what this entails. Clearer from the lifestyle considerations are the statements on the cultural perspective. Six interviewees state that they see themselves as a cultural person, of which four express it clearly with ‘yes’ (P1, P4, P5, P7, P9). Three describe themselves as indifferent and not much into culture (P2, P8, P10) and one (P6) only lists several activities without giving a statement. The descriptions of cultural activities and those of cultural lifestyle go in the same direction with the same specification, except for one participant (P7). His cultural lifestyle only includes movies and music sometimes, but his cultural activities include many visits to museums, movies, music and travelling, and he considers himself a cultural person. It is noteworthy that two of the respondents reflect on what culture encompasses, and participant P5 points out that culture is very subjective. Remarkable is the variety of things the participants list when they think about their cultural implications – they think of 23 different cultural activities. Of these activities, music (not further specified; P1, P4, P6, P7, P9, P10), books and literature (P1, P4, P6, P7, P9, P10) and museums (P4, P6, P7, P9, P10) are the most important ones. Going to concerts (P4, P6, P9, P10), travel (P4, P7, P9) and drawing (P6, P7, P8) are also pretty important. Less important and usually mentioned only once are arts (P1, P5), ballet (P4), board games (P6), board games fair, book fair (P6), British humour (P4), cosplay (P2), festivals (P6), fun fair (P6), galleries (P6), learning (P4), movies (P7), opera (P6), paintings (P4), photography (P1), shows (P9) and theatre (P6). There is one interviewee (P8) who also lists activities he doesn’t (like to) do such as theater,

operas or going to galleries although there are several galleries around his home.

These activities reflect a broad view of respondents' culture, encompassing many different areas (of interest), as well as a detailed view, as highlighted by the mention of ballet, opera, and theatre. However, they do so to varying degrees, between a lot and a little. It is worth noting that the cultural activity of travelling is more important than travelling as a lifestyle activity. The interviewees who like to travel link travelling with culture – to get to know new cultures or to experience the cultural amenities in the places they are (P4, P5, P7, P9). Some of the participants also admit that they enjoy listening to classical music or going to museums, for example, but are unable to name artists or composers (P4, P7). Worth mentioning is the explanation of interviewee P7 and his relation to culture, and why he sees himself as a cultural person. He refers to his family background when he grew up. His mother is a professor of arts and so he did much art related things when he was a kid. Two general statements about the co-workers are made in this context and are worth mentioning. They are described as quiet, as people that like to go out sometimes, and that like to play board and video games (P9). Further, interviewee P6 thinks that developers don't do much cultural stuff and are more into developing video games.

Part of the cultural lifestyle is also food, the restaurants etc. the people like and prefer. As diverse as the answers are about lifestyle from a cultural perspective, so are the answers about the food they prefer. Of the eight interviewees who give a statement about their food preferences, two (P7, P9) say that they are open to new types of food and restaurants, and two state the contrary. One says that she is not experimental-friendly and therefore she prefers the same type of food (P2), and another one tells that he is conservative and picky and that he prefers German food (P10). Between these two extremes are two interviewees who describe their food preferences as not specific, while two state that they prefer international food and specific cuisines such as Italian and French respectively.

Finally, to complete the picture of the video game developers and their lifestyle, the way they see themselves as creative workers is included in this research. All interviewees see themselves as a creative worker, however to different extents. While seven are certain of this opinion, by stating e.g. "Yes, absolutely" (P4), three limit their statement to the words "in general" (P9) "to some extent" (P10) or "yes and no" (P7). Interviewee P7 explains his two-part opinion as follows:

So, definitely as a I'm in the technical area so despite being in the games industry, I'm not directly making art for the games or what could be seen more of a creative work, but even in the technical field where I am as a programmer, I consider that you need to have creativity to solve the problem that you're faced with when taking on technical tasks. Even if a big part of that is also the training that you have from your education, in my case in computer science, you know that that training fosters the logical thinking, that train of thought to consider a problem and find solutions. I consider that as creativity. So, yes, I would think.

The statement of participant P7 reflects two points that can be found again in the justification of several interviewees. The justification that creativity is needed in their job to find solutions for the tasks and challenges is given by interviewees P1, P2, P8 and P10. So, for example, interviewee P8 says that programming is a creative profession because of creative problem solving. Creativity is seen as part of their job as narrative, level artist and game designer to solve the tasks given by interviewees P4, P5 and P6. Interviewee P4 sees different types of creativity depending on the profession, such as artists and for his case, he says that as narrative he has "to have an extreme universal approach. I have to know about movies, books, video games, any kind of media, any kind of written media, spoken media whatever. The more I know, the more creative I can be, the more easier it is to do my job". However, not all of the interviewees are of this opinion. Interviewee P9 states that there is not much of a chance to be creative at work as a software developer, and interviewee P7 states that programming is not creative. This different view on their job in connection with creativity is explained by the manager (P3):

Quite clearly, yes. I think that there is always this duality that I mentioned earlier, technology and high technology. I am quite confident that we have some of the best programmers in the world in the games industry, because we always must push the limits. So, we have high technology, and on the other hand we also have culture. But you can also see that in our staff, the art director of our new Settlers game was previously a principal dancer in the ballet. There are simply a lot of people who express themselves creatively, not only here, but culturally as a whole. And that's why it's a definite 'yes'. Of course, we also have the total tech nerd, who perhaps doesn't say at first 'I see myself as a creative person or as a cultural person', who simply wants to write the best code he can. But then he too has decided to make computer games and video games and not to write banking

software. [own translation].

Worth mentioning is that he adds that he wants to create an environment for creative working at the new location, which was not possible in the former Ubisoft building because the office layout didn't allow to build a creative atmosphere (P3).

To sum up, the respondents give hardly a description about their cultural lifestyle. Mostly, the participants only list activities of which music and theater are the most common ones. They see their cultural lifestyle differently between 'manifold' or 'pretty rich' and 'developable' or 'indifferent'. When cultural activities are included, they think of many more activities, but still, only six see themselves as a cultural person. The most common activities are music, books and museums, followed by concerts, drawing and travelling. They list travelling because it also refers to culture, in particular to get to know and experience new culture and their amenities. As different as cultural activities are, so are food tastes. There is no clear direction. The descriptions range from open-minded to picky. Regarding their work and whether they see themselves as creative workers, all of the respondents see themselves as a creative worker, though to different extents. Besides the unequivocal 'yes' from seven participants, the others qualify their positive statement. A clear 'yes', because creativity is needed for work in order to find solutions and overcome challenges, and restrictive, because the extent to which creativity can be brought to bear depends on the job. This duality is also seen and explained by the management. Ubisoft employees work in the high-tech area as programmers etc. but also in the cultural area such as dancers.

Cultural Participation and Experience

As outlined above, there are several cultural activities that video game developers engage in. These activities do not necessarily involve cultural participation and experience, such as attending cultural events, and creating and producing cultural content. Looking at their participation in general, it is usually restricted to attendances in concerts, shows, museums, theater plays and opera. But there are some interviewees who participate actively. One is a cosplay actress who also creates her own costumes (P2), and another one does cabaret (P3). Four of the interviewees include travelling in the cultural activities, and so they report travelling, for example, to the area around Düsseldorf to get to know the country and the culture of the region (P4), or to a medieval market in Dortmund (P9), a city about seven minutes away from Düsseldorf by train.

Based on what the participants do, the look should now be on Flingern-Nord and if this neighbourhood plays a role for these activities. The activities in Flingern-Nord are limited to a few things. Two types of activities stand out. These are going to restaurants or cafés, and to the different street festivals that take place during the year. Restaurants are appreciated by seven participants (P1, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9), and cafés by two (P6, P8).

The street festivals in the neighbourhood attract different participants (P1, P6, P8, P9). They went to the day of open galleries *Kunstpunkte*⁸⁰ (P1), the flea market (P6, P8, P9), Flingern by night (P8), the music festival *Internationales Straßenfest* (P6), and the Christmas market (P9). In addition to these two types of activities, there is one respondent who does more and different things in the neighbourhood (P4). He goes to board game events, a book club, and does workshops and mentoring programmes to help students with programming projects in Flingern-Nord. Beyond that, few other occasions are mentioned, such as interviewee P1 who participated in music events in bars and at movie presentations. Music events are a good reason for participant P5 to go to Flingern-Nord with friends for example.

Half of the interviewees are aware of art galleries (P1, P3, P5, P6, P8) but only two state that they have visited one (P3 – some, P5 – one gallery). Two participants admit that they only pass by and may have a look through the window (P6, P8). The reason for interviewee P6 is that “to be honest, we are aware of a lot of galleries, we pass by, but we do not enter because we know that we will not buy the art displayed there”.

Most of the interviewees are aware that they don't do much in the neighbourhood. Some of them also give a reason right away. One reason given by interviewees P7, P9 and P10 is that they don't get to know what is happening in Flingern-Nord because they don't know or doesn't hear much about it. Hence, they wish there would be more visibility and promotion. However, there are flyers and posters in the neighbourhood that announce different events, seen by participants P5 and P6. Participant P5 adds that “I think, Flingern at least to me isn't, it's yet very advertising those things broadly enough. Or I haven't known, look, where I should have actually looked”. Otherwise, there are also participants (P6, P7, P8, P10) that say that they do not look for events and activities that are going on in the neighbourhood, so e.g. interviewee P8 who states that “we don't actively take

⁸⁰ An overview with descriptions of street festivals in Flingern-Nord can be found in annex 5.

care to notice that and go there”. Stepping into events by accident is the way participants P6 and P8 get to know about them, or via social media as it is the case for interviewee P5. Another way to be up to date is given by interviewee P10. He is the only one who says that he gets recommendations from friends or colleagues. He also points out that there are events in the backyards, which are typical for Düsseldorf, that are not advertised anywhere and can only be found through recommendations. A suggestion is given in this context by interviewee P7. He suggests that “maybe that could be a good thing to promote in our new studio to make it aware”. Some of them are hesitant, even when they hear about the events (P4, P8). Interviewee P5 specifies his preferences of the offer. For him it is more “important to have a variety, not so much necessary like the high amount of quality of one thing. So, having a variety would be great because I just like to exp-experience different things”.

In general, several respondents stated that they would like to do more cultural activities than they currently do (e.g. P1, P5). Some also give reasons for this. Participation in cultural life and events can be limited by the ability not to speak the national language. The mother tongue of six of the interviewees is not German, and as they all stated during the interview, none of them speak it fluently. Participation in cultural events, theatre plays, movies etc. was therefore selected with this in mind, as participants P5 and P9 emphasise. One states that he does not go to the theatre etc. due to the language barrier and the other (P9) does not go to the cinema. In addition, the possibility of participation also depends on the family situation, in particular whether they have children or not. This is the case for three participants (P3, P4, P5). The presence of children affects the participants differently, e.g. interviewee P5, who is less outside because it is difficult to plan in advance with a small child. His colleague (P4) notes that he only meets his colleagues at lunchtime but not for dinner because he has small children. Of note are two comments relating to the seasons and their influence on attendance. Interviewee P6 explains that “it really depends on the [...] season, because in summer you feel more like going out, maybe there is something”. Similar is the statement of interviewee P7 who says that wintertime keeps people away from doing certain things outside.

In short, when participants think about active cultural activities in general, only three activities are mentioned by a few of them, of which travelling is the most popular. In relation to Flingern-Nord, two of these activities stand out. These are going to restaurants and visiting street festivals. For two participants, visiting restaurants is the most important connection to the area. Otherwise, the

participants do not do much in Flingern-Nord because they do not know what is going on there. They often only find out about events etc. by chance or don't pay attention to them. Some of the participants cite personal reasons that generally limit their participation. These are family reasons on the one hand and language reasons on the other. A general reason that can influence participation is also mentioned by two, namely the weather.

Cultural Infrastructure and Amenities

Besides the knowledge about the offer and activities in the neighbourhood as seen above, it is also interesting to see if the interviewees know the cultural infrastructure and amenities. The neighbourhood of Flingern-Nord offers a variety of cultural amenities⁸¹, such as several art galleries, a museum, collections, a cinema, libraries, and places with a broad cultural offer, but the knowledge and awareness of these places are very limited. Only seven interviewees think of amenities in the area (e.g. P1). All of them report about restaurants and/or cafés. The vegan restaurant *sattgrün* at the corner of Hoffeldstraße and Lindenstraße (P7, P8) and the café *Hüftgold* at the corner of Ackerstraße and Beethovenstraße (P3, P7) are mentioned by name twice each, because they represent a special choice, complemented with the ice-cream store *Nordmanns* on Ackerstraße (P7). Comments about the restaurants are brief, such as that there is a wide variety (P6, P10) or that there are many restaurants but with a limited variety (P9). Further they are described as great options (P7) and as “very fancy restaurants” (P6) on the one hand, and on the other as places where the quality is very basic (P4). This interviewee also misses normal lunch places in the area. Besides restaurants and cafés five of them list further amenities. These amenities are galleries (P1, P3, P6, P8), libraries (P6, P8), a ceramic café (P9), Hoffeldstraße 56 with exhibitions (P6), small places with music (P1), shops that are culturally engaged (P3), the church that offers cultural events for kids (P6), and a small backyard theater (P3).

Those, who only remember restaurants or cafés state more or less coherently that they are not aware about amenities and events in the neighbourhood, or as interviewee P7 stresses, that he never considered to participate in events etc. and that the only thing he does there is going for food. This matches the opinion of interviewee P4 who says that “to be honest, the library, I do not go in Flingern, I think, I think, really what we are focusing in Flingern is the food by different food

⁸¹ A list with selected cultural amenities can be found in the annex 5.

restaurants where we go and that's it when it comes to that. Because we don't really move outside the office, you know". Another reason is given by interviewee P9. He simply states that cultural offerings are not important to him and that he is therefore not aware of them. The fact that cultural facilities and institutions like the cinema or museums are not known is underlined by a statement. Interviewee P10 states that "and also, I'm not even sure if Flingern as an area has obvious cultural opportunities like they have museums or concert halls or anything. So, but at least once we were frequenting, they were definitely not in that area. So, my knowledge in this this part is very limited." The remaining three participants (P1, P2, P5) say that they don't know the cultural amenities and infrastructure in Flingern-Nord. Participant P1 however names the two major streets in Flingern, Acker- and Birkenstraße, where most of the places are located because he went out with friends there. Interviewee P5 explains his knowledge with the words that it is "maybe a question of not digging deep enough yet". The satisfaction of the offer is diverse. Participant P3 misses a cinema and a theater such as Theatre FLIN, a small backyard theatre formerly located on Ackerstraße (closed in 2014), and three (P1, P6, P8) are satisfied and don't miss much. Two participants (P9, P10) state that they don't know enough the area to conclude what would be missing. Remarkable is the insertion of interviewee P8 who states that he likes the events but wouldn't miss them if they weren't there.

In short, although there is a wide range of cultural offers and amenities, knowledge about them is limited. Most respondents think about restaurants and cafés. Their offer is described differently, between a wide and limited variety or basic quality and great options. Only a few other amenities are listed, of which the galleries are the most mentioned. Some of those who don't know cultural amenities in Flingern-Nord explain that they are not aware of them or never considered to look for them.

Summary Overview

Summarising the cultural aspects, the description of cultural lifestyle, cultural activities and the understanding of being a cultural person refers to some activities that the participants do, such as listening to music, reading books and visiting museums. The most common cultural activity in general is travelling. In terms of the neighbourhood, it is participating in street festivals and visiting restaurants and cafés. Restaurants and cafés and their various offerings are also what video game developers most often think of when they think of the cultural offerings in Flingern-Nord. Not

many participants go to Flingern-Nord for the rest of the cultural offerings because they are not familiar with them or do not look for them.

The comments on their culture vary between ‘diverse’ or ‘quite rich’ and ‘can be developed’ or ‘indifferent’. Although they engage in many cultural activities, not all of them describe themselves as cultural people. In all of this, it should be borne in mind that participation may be limited by family situation, language, and weather. In terms of creativity and work, everyone sees a connection. Therefore, all see themselves as creative workers because creativity is necessary for their work, but the intensity depends on the work itself.

The focus is not only on ‘Cultural Dynamics, Lifestyle and Amenities’ in this research. To complete the picture, ‘Spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics’ with their dimensions ‘Spatial design and recreational amenities’, ‘Housing and commerce’, ‘Sport and Leisure’, ‘Housing and commercial: rent and value’, ‘Local amenities, Facilities and Services’, ‘Product range of shops’ and ‘Government policies regarding the video game industry and administrative practices’ are also considered. These are presented in the following.

5.2.1.2. Spatial, Socio-Economic and Political Dynamics

Spatial Design and Recreational Amenities

The focus while thinking about the spatial design and recreational amenities is on parks. Half of participants (P1, P3, P5, P6, P8) tend to describe the parks as not (that) nice and that there are too less green or no big parks respectively in the neighbourhood. The impression of green spots in the neighbourhood is well expressed by interviewee P1 who spent time in summer there for reading and eating ice-cream by stating: “I would say, those I find pleasantly designed, hmm, but in general, I’m always rather surprised at Flingern that it’s not as green as it looks at first glance. So maybe the ones that are there are good, but it could almost feel like more” [own translation]. Only interviewee P9 states that the parks are beautiful, though, as he also underlines, he doesn’t know where the borders of Flingern are. Right next to Ubisoft, there is a bigger, newly created park which only came to the mind of interviewee P4. He describes it as “there is lot of open space in the area where we are. There are some parks there; it’s actually quite civil”, hence decent and thereby

acceptable. Only one park in Flingern-Nord is mentioned by name by participant P3. It is Hermannplatz, which is described as nice since its reconstruction in 2008. Parks of which the interviewees think that they are nice and close (but in the bordering districts of Flingern-Nord) are Hanielpark, right across the street in Düsseldorf on Grafenberger Straße, Zoopark in Düsseldorf (P3, P9), Düsseldorfstrand in Flingern-Süd (P6, P9), Grafenberger Wald in Grafenberg (P6), and Volksgarten in Oberbilk (P2, P9).

Further comments about the spatial design are about the bad traffic situation, and related thereto, the bike un-friendliness (P1), the proximity to a public swimming pool (P4, P8), the existence of playgrounds (P8, P10), and the possibility to go to outdoor fitness parks (P7, P10).

Temporary spaces that might change the appearance of an area and might make it more attractive are also identified in Flingern-Nord. They are surprising and exciting and make the neighbourhood come alive, according to the general opinion of respondents P1 and P3, though they don't mention any examples. Examples mentioned by other participants include a small, attractive gallery with changing exhibitions (P6), a shop with changing offers such as pictures or handicrafts in the shop window, and a pop-up store with changing offers (P8). Finally, interviewee P9 thinks of the Christmas and flea market. The remaining respondents are not aware of or cannot give any examples (e.g. P7).

Looking at the importance of internet access in these places, the interviewees think of access at work, at home or outside on the street, and so they distinguish the importance of it in these places. The most important place for having internet access is for almost two third the access at work (P1, P2, P4, P7, P9, P10). Less important is having internet while being in the neighbourhood (P2, P8, P9) because it is only used e.g. to find directions (P9) or to text friends (P2). The importance of having internet at home or in private differs between important (P1, P8, P9) and not important (P3, P6, P7) because it is only used e.g. for chatting with people (P6). Regardless of the place, two participants (P2, P7) state that internet access is super important.

In brief, the main point the interviewees talk about while thinking about the spatial design are parks. Most interviewees think that the parks in Flingern are not nice. In general, Flingern-Nord is seen as an area with only few green spots. Almost all parks mentioned by name are parks outside of Flingern, however, still nearby. There are some temporary spaces in the area which can be located

by a few interviewees, and they appreciate them. The importance of internet access differs according to the place, such as at work, home, and outside on the streets, depending on the things they need it for.

Housing and Commerce

Changes and transformations of buildings in Flingern-Nord are not recognised by all interviewees. An example of construction work mentioned by respondents P2 and P7 is the construction work inside and outside the Ubisoft building, complemented with the reference to construction work on the way from the station to work without further details (P2). The new housing complexes next to Ubisoft are mentioned by interviewee P4 who describes them as an improvement for the area. They look really nice when compared with the older, evolved parts. He describes it in the following way:

They [new living neighbourhoods] are really nice. So, so, they really lift up the quality of the neighbourhood like even visually and it really gives a lot of value to the, to the overall feeling of that, of that part of the neighbourhood. I am talking about the modern part where we are. Because as you go deeper into the south, it decades, it decreases the quality and the value of everything you see around, you and like, like, I don't know like public hygiene and so on, you know.

In the western part of Flingern-Nord, the changes and transformations are observed by three participants, two of whom live in the area and one who has been knowing the neighbourhood for more than two decades. While one resident (P6) only lists renovation and upgrades of houses and changes of usage around her apartment, e.g. that some stores are gone or a roof extension, participants P3 and P8 report more detailed changes. Both report on renovations and on reconstructions of houses, including the backyards, described as 'upgrading' or luxury renovations, such as new condo complexes in backyards. A change on Hoffeldstraße is stated by interviewee P6, although not through her own experience. She explains:

At some point, we googled our street and we just wanted to see like what differences are there of the street and everything and those were very old Google Photos and we saw that there used to be some shops there and we did see a bit of change in the streets and let's say that some houses they look better right now as they used to.

Summarizing, some changes in housing and commerce are reported by a few interviewees. These are changes in and around the new Ubisoft building on the one hand, and on the other single renovations of houses and new constructions of condos in the western part, the residential area of Flingern-Nord. The connected feelings differ. They vary between positive because they are seen as an improvement for the area and negative because established institutions such as the *Theatre FLIN* on Ackerstraße had to move. Changes in business are only briefly mentioned by two people.

Sport and Leisure

The use of sports facilities in the neighbourhood could have an influence on the relationship with the neighbourhood. This includes sporting activities of the participants in Flingern-Nord. Although there are several offers in the neighbourhood, they don't use the sport facilities there. Activities and places mentioned by some of the interviewees are a gym and a sports complex (P4, P5, P7), facilities for "most sports like football pitches and some rope climbing walls and stuff like that" (P4), the outdoor fitness park of which one is e.g. just outside of Ubisoft in the park (P7, P10), and the swimming pool (P4, P9). Biking (P9), board games (P6), going to the parks (P9), jogging (P8), mini-golf (P6), swimming (P4), trampoline (P6) and walking (P7, P8, P9) are mentioned as an activity done by half of the participants. Interviewees P4 and P9 are satisfied with the offer, while interviewee P5 misses a basketball field. Noteworthy is the statement of participant P4 who says that there are a lot of co-workers that go to a gym in Flingern-Nord.

To sum up, although there are several sport and leisure facilities in the area, most of the interviewees don't use them, although they are mostly known. According to a respondent, a gym in the area is used by co-workers.

Housing and Commercial: Rent and Value

A change of rents for housing is only mentioned by interviewee P6 who notes an increase because she was looking for a new place in Flingern-Nord. The other participants only describe the price level, which is between 'somewhere in the middle' (P8) and expensive (P1, P9). Comparing the rent level to the whole city, it is about the same (P2, P3, P10). Reasons for the higher rent are seen in its location close to the city centre, and in the good access to public transport as well as tranquility, so that the level is appropriated, according to interviewee P7. Although the level is seen

more on the expensive side, there are still good options in the area, as participant P9 adds. Only one interviewee (P8) includes the commercial sector in this context, citing the example of rising rents for commercial businesses that cause a supermarket to move out.

In short, the level of rents is seen as being in the middle and expensive. Only one can notice a change because she wanted to move.

Local Amenities, Facilities and Services

Using the local amenities and services depends on the one hand largely on the place of residence, so if the interviewees live in or close-by the neighbourhood or not, and on the other hand on the type of offer, so if the offer meets the likings of the single person. The main interest in local amenities in Flingern-Nord is shopping, in particular grocery shopping (P1, P2, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9). Shops mentioned in this context are the supermarkets Lidl on Bruchstraße and Grafenberger Allee next to the new Ubisoft building (P4, P7), Netto on Ackerstraße and Birkenstraße, as well as Lindemannstraße and Grafenberger Allee at the border in Düsseldorf (P8), and Metro, a wholesale company for food- and non-food, on Schlüterstraße (P4). Large retail chains where the interviewee sometimes go are MediaMarkt, a store for electronic devices on Metrostraße (P4), and Bauhaus, a hardware store on Kettwiger Straße right after the train tracks in Flingern-Süd (P8). Local shops are not mentioned by name and only few participants are aware of further stores in the area. Interviewee P1 goes to the bakeries and used to go to the hairdresser, and interviewee P3 does some shopping in the neighbourhood but without naming places. However, he lists shops like a gardening shop, magasin en vrac, concept stores, hairdresser, as well as the weekly market on Saturdays on Hermannplatz. When looking at the offer, on the one hand there are shops that offer special goods, but on the other hand there are also shops that sell everyday goods, according to respondent P3. This is not the opinion of participant P1. In his opinion there are selectively really good shops but otherwise they are too specialised, and they often offer handmade things that are nice to see but not for daily needs, such as stores that offer only one type of bike. In this sense he states that there is no wide range of offers. So, after all, he is not really satisfied. In some way this goes along with the statement of interviewee P9. He says that, except for grocery shopping, he prefers shopping downtown because there are bigger shops and there are more options, although he also states that he doesn't miss anything in Flingern-Nord. The selective view of the local amenities is explained by interviewee P7 in the following way:

[Smiling] No, so, in terms of shopping, yes, but it's like going to [the supermarkets] Lidl or REWE, just more grocery shopping. I've never actually seen what kind of other shops there were. Every time I went there, it would be to go to a specific shop like 'to this coffee shop' or 'to that supermarket'. So, no, I have to explore more.

In the context of local amenities and satisfaction, interviewee P5 reports that there is a pharmacy opposite the new office which he really appreciates.

The statements about the shops besides supermarkets reflect how the price level is perceived. Two participants comment it by saying that the shops, especially the small ones offering handmade goods, are expensive (P1, P8). The remaining comments about the price level refer to restaurants. Their price level is perceived in general as normal Düsseldorf standard or okay (P2, P3, P6, P7, P9, P10) with a variety of expensive and non-expensive places (P6, P9), although two participants think that Flingern-Nord seems a little bit pricier than the rest of the city (P4, P8). In addition to the view of the whole of Flingern-Nord, there are also two comments on the places around Ubisoft. Participant P4 thinks that the prices are lower in the new place with average lunch prices, while participant P5 says that the prices are higher.

In summary, the main interest of most respondents in local amenities and facilities is in supermarkets. Only few mention other stores in the area. The description of these stores goes in one direction. Besides some stores for daily needs, most of them are described as specialised shops, often with handmade goods, and so the offer seems limited. These shops are described as expensive ones. The price level of restaurants is mostly seen as normal Düsseldorf standard or okay and also with a wide variety.

Product Range of Shops

A change in shops and so a change in the offer is observed by two interviewees that know the neighbourhood for a longer period which gives a deep inside of the development during the last 15 years. Interviewee P1 states that there are more and more shops in the neighbourhood, but the focus changed. Before there were more shops that were culturally orientated, like cafés and galleries, and today there are more and more shops that are profit orientated. A different description of the change is given by interviewee P3. He describes the changes over time of several shops in the following

way:

So, when I say earlier, I can compare the time from 2004/2005 with the time now. I would say that things have actually developed in a very linear way. Many of the shops are still from that time. Many things are, and of course you can see that these are shops that were founded at some point by someone with a certain business idea and often the same owner is still there or the same owner, but that has then taken its course because they have then changed their assortment, have other offers. And in a certain way, I would still say that it has developed in a very evolutionary way. So there was no big destructive element, something new was built somewhere and suddenly there was actually a very evolutionary development. And I think the district has actually gained in charm over time. As I said, with the question of when the prices might become too high, but I think that the attractiveness has been enhanced by the new shops and cafés that have been added and that have established themselves. [own translation]

That this development has taken place over a longer period is underlined by the statement of respondent P9, who has not noticed any changes in the two years he has lived in the neighbourhood.

In brief, a detailed change of the product range is only given by two interviewees that have been knowing Flingern-Nord for more than 15 years. They testify a change from shops that were more culturally orientated, such as galleries and cafés, to shops that are more profit oriented on the one hand, and on the other an adaptation over time to the demands of the clientele.

Government Policies Regarding the Video Game Industry and Administrative Practices

There are no comments made that goes in the direction of government policies. For administrative practices, a single comment is made by interviewee P5 that goes in this direction. He finds that the authorities should act in relation to cycle lanes and cycling facilities. He says this in relation to the provision of bicycles by Ubisoft:

I would like to see better, not better, I, I don't know it that well, so I don't know how good it is, but bike lanes in particular. For example, it would make a lot of sense. And save biking parks, you know, like the specific spots for the bikes. I like the idea a lot, and the company gives us the option. So, it would only make sense that the neighborhood around us is

prepared for that. But not only because of us, but for everyone because we want more people to, to, be, riding on bikes, you know, it's a short distance and so on. So that would be, make sense.

In short, the only point concerning administrative practices is the desire to improve cycling infrastructure.

Summary Overview

On the whole, the view of the spatial design, especially the parks, is pretty uniform: There are too few parks and those that exist are not beautiful. Changes in spatial design are recognised in transformations in housing and commerce by some interviewees, such as the changes in and around the new Ubisoft building, single renovations of houses and building of new condos. Connected to housing is also the rent level. Flingern-Nord is recognised as medium-priced and expensive with an increasing tendency as one participant can report. Besides the above-mentioned aspects, further facilities, offers, and amenities play a role in its perception and participation. Although known, the several sport and leisure facilities in Flingern-Nord are not used by the interviewees. The local facility 'supermarkets' are more important. Further local amenities and stores in the area are only known by few. These shops are usually described as specialised, often with handmade goods, and therefore expensive. This was not always the case, as two participants confirmed. Before, there were more culturally orientated shops such as galleries and cafés, and nowadays by an adaption to the clientele, the new shops are more profit oriented. The importance of internet access varies from place to place. For work, it is considered very important, and in private it is rated differently. The prices of restaurants in the whole neighbourhood are mostly seen as normal Düsseldorf standard and okay. Administrative practices are not in the focus of the participants and so, only the desire to improve cycling infrastructure is mentioned.

5.2.1.3. Conclusion

Regarding the video game developers and their statements about Flingern-Nord, a clear picture of their perception of the dynamics is given.

First, the look is at the cultural side of the dynamics, in particular what the video game developers

do culturally and creatively and how they perceive themselves. Cultural activities they do are listen to music, reading books and going to museums, for example. Also travelling is an important part of their cultural activities. They see the intensity of their cultural lifestyle differently and describe it between manifold and that is has room for improvement. Their view of themselves as a cultural person is just as different. Not all interviewees see themselves as a cultural person. These cultural activities, they hardly do in Flingern-Nord. In Flingern-Nord, they mainly go to restaurants and cafés whose price level they describe as normal Düsseldorf standard or okay. They further attend street festivals there. Besides the cultural and creative side and lifestyle, there is also the relation to their work, so to say, if they see themselves as creative workers or not. They all declare that they are creative workers because their work and creativity are linked. However, they add that this view depends on the work itself, i.e. whether they see the work itself as creative or not. Cultural dynamics play a role in the relationship between their culture, their lifestyle, the neighbourhood and ultimately their work. Although a wide variety of cultural offer and cultural amenities exist in Flingern-Nord, the area is not important for almost all interviewees regarding their cultural practices. Reasons mentioned are that they are not aware of what's going on in the neighbourhood, that they do not look for further offers, and simply that they don't know the area. Limitations to participate in cultural offers are given as well. This might be family situation, the language, or the weather.

The neighbourhood of Flingern-Nord is perceived in a contrasting way, between positive and negative. However, looking only at parks, the opinion is similar. The people interviewed state that there are too few parks and that they are even not beautiful. As far as cycling infrastructure is concerned, there should be some improvements by the administration. This is also seen against the background of the provision of bicycles by Ubisoft. Changes in the spatial design are also reported by some interviewees. They see transformation in housing and commerce, for example the renovation in and around the new Ubisoft building, renovations of houses and the building of condos. Connected with housing is also the rent. The rent level in Flingern-Nord is seen as in the middle and expensive, and rising. However, besides the overall appearance, the offered facilities and amenities also play a role, how the developers use the neighbourhood. Sport and leisure facilities are known by interviewees but not used. More important than sport facilities are supermarkets as part of local facilities. Further local amenities are hardly known. Those stores that are seen by the interviewees are described as specialised, with a lot of handmade goods, and as

expensive. These new shops are the result of a change during the last years, as stated by two interviewees. Before, there were more culturally orientated shops such as galleries and cafés, and nowadays the new shops are more profit oriented, going along with an adaptation to the new clientele.

The focus of this study is not only on the video game developers, but also on the cultural actors who are based in the area, for example with their studio, cultural institution, or cultural organisation in the area. Their perception, which is presented below, complements the view of the dynamics, lifestyle and amenities of the video game developers.

5.2.2. Cultural Actors in Flingern-Nord

In the following, the analysis of the five interviews conducted between March 2020 and July 2020 with cultural actors who work or have their studio in Flingern-Nord is presented. This group is not as homogenous as the group of the video game developers. Their only common element is that they work in the creative field, and hence, their profession or what they exactly do differs.

5.2.2.1. *Cultural Dynamics, Lifestyle and Amenities*

Lifestyle

Lifestyle as seen in this research relates to the creativity and how it is connected with the neighbourhood. The cultural actors see their lifestyle as a creative one, and they see themselves as creative workers because of the things they do - two things that are difficult to separate among cultural actors. However, their descriptions are not distinct, except for two (P13, P15). These two have a background in art studies, and today, both work artistically and creatively. So, the cultural lifestyle is not a question for them, because art is what they have been doing all their lives for over 30 years now. The connection is seen even stronger for interviewee P15. The relevance of a cultural lifestyle is even so great for her that there is no longer any difference between work and leisure. The other interviewees describe their lifestyle and creative work differently. The majority says that they are interested in cultural issues and do a lot of cultural things, but do not create anything

themselves (P12, P14). Respondent P11 states that he attended a lot of evening events before his child was born, and he likes opera, theater, cinema, concerts, books, writing and languages. Alongside this, interviewee P12 reports that he has recently started to play the piano, and he enjoys the activities and events his organisation offers. Interviewee P14 likes to try new things and he finds inspiration in listening to (new) music. He adds that culture is an important part of life, and its participation should be possible for all.

In brief, all participants see their lifestyle as a creative one and they understand themselves as creative workers because they are active in the cultural field and do cultural things. For two participants with a background in arts, art is an important, if not an inseparable, part of their life.

Cultural Participation and Experience

Apart from their activities as cultural actors, the interviewees do not give much more information about their activities beyond that. Interviewee P11 likes going to the opera, theater, cinema, and concerts, but without indication of the place. In the neighbourhood, he goes to restaurants and cafés. Interviewee P13 states that she goes to galleries and exhibitions in the neighbourhood, as well as cafés and restaurants, but usually not in the evenings.

In short, there is very little information about what the cultural actors do culturally in the neighbourhood in addition to their work. It is limited to visiting restaurants, cafés, and exhibitions.

Cultural Infrastructure and Amenities

Most of Flingern's cultural infrastructure and amenities⁸² are known by the interviewees. The offer is diverse and thus for a different clientele, as quoted by interviewee P11, who knows most of the cultural players in the area due to his work. The diversity becomes clear when looking at the examples the interviewees think of. They list art galleries (P13, P15), of which some are also internationally known (P11, P12), galleries with professional artists and in contrast communities controlled by actors that can be considered subculture (P11). Further, the interviewees list cultural places and institutions, such as the cinema *Filmwerkstatt* (P15) and the art collection *Sammlung Philara* on Birkenstraße (P15), *Kabawil* on Flurstraße (P13, P14), *Kinderspielhaus* on

⁸² The listed examples are explained in annex 5.

Dorotheenstraße (P13), *Der Malort* (based on the concept of Arno Stern) on Hermannstraße (P13) and *Theatre FLIN* formerly located in Ackersraße (P11) in Flingern-Nord⁸³. The cultural actors also talk about festivals (P11, P13, P14), such as the *Asphaltfestival* (P13) and the *Micropop Week* (P13), whose organisers have their office in Flingern (P13). Another festival is the *Kunstpunkte* (P11), where artists open their studios in the backyards of houses. Well-known artists that come to mind of the interviewees are Ben J. Riepe (P13), who is a well-known choreographer and has his studio and company in the area⁸⁴, the German bands *Broilers* and *Toten Hosen* (P11) with their music studio in the neighbourhood and Hauschka (P11), who composed an Oscar-winning song and works in the area. In general, interviewee P11 thinks of film, special effects and virtual reality studios in the area. Cultural facilities also include restaurants, cafés, and clubs, but these are only mentioned by two people in this context. One is a vegan restaurant (P14) and the other is *Café Hüftgold* in Ackerstraße (P15).

The interviewees are part of the cultural infrastructure in Flingern-Nord and some of them offer activities and amenities for the public. Respondent P12's organisation offers free readings, concerts, and exhibitions, e.g. by artists from the symphony orchestra, at weekends. Cultural events, workshops in singing, dance, and theatre etc. for all age groups are offered by participant P13's organisation. Besides a cultural program, her organisation is co-organiser of a neighbourhood festival in autumn where they present their projects. Further, they organise a flea market in the courtyard, and they organise the Flurstraßenfest together with *Bürgerinitiative Flingern*⁸⁵, an organisation founded by dwellers to initiate social projects especially to support socially disadvantaged people. In addition to the offer in their own facilities (music, dance, theatre play for example), Kabawil e. V. perform small show programmes with a mobile stage since 2016 in the neighbourhood to bring art closer to the people living there. On a global stage, a gallery owner (P15) has her own podcast about art and her current expositions. Four of the interviewees talk about their connection to the area and to the city, such as interviewee P11, who is in Flingern to build up networks for cultural actors, or interviewee P13 who states that her organisation is recognised in

⁸³ Cultural institutions and organisations in Flingern-Süd listed by the cultural actors are: *Icklack* on Höherweg right after the train tracks (P13), *Tanzhaus NRW* on Erkrather Straße right at the border (P13), *Weltkunstzimmer* (P11, P13) and *Weltmusikzimmer* (P13) by the *Hans-Peter-Zimmer foundation* on Ronsdorfer Straße as well as *zakk* on Fichtenstraße (P11, P13).

⁸⁴ The company of Ben J. Riepe is on Engelbertstraße, which is in Flingern-Süd next to the train tracks.

⁸⁵ Web site of *Bürgerinitiative Flingern*: <https://www.buergerinitiative-flingern.de>

the area as a cultural establishment. Besides her own gallery, interviewee P15 is politico-cultural active, amongst others on the board of cultural institutions of the city of Düsseldorf.

Knowledge about the cultural actors, the offer and the institutions also depends on visibility. How the cultural actors and their offer are perceived by or presented to people is described by interviewee P11 in the following way: “It’s not immediately obvious to those who don’t know the place, but once you’re in, there’s such an incredibly good, wide range of offers”. Since they are often in backyards, they are not immediately visible from the outside. Interviewee 14 gives the example of Kabawil on Flurstraße: “Even Kabawil is not known by everyone, although it is located in Flingern. Hum, exactly, because it’s in such a backyard, you first have to go in and be interested in it”.

To summarise, it can be said that Flingern-Nord has a diverse cultural offering. Most of the venues and some festivals were mentioned by the interviewees. Some of the participants also mentioned well-known artists who are based in Flingern-Nord. Restaurants as part of the cultural infrastructure are not the focus of the interviewees and are therefore only mentioned to a limited extent. The broad cultural offering is not apparent at first glance, as much of it takes place in the back of courtyards, which can only be explored over time. Therefore, it may appear that the cultural offerings are limited if one is not familiar with Flingern-Nord. As part of the cultural infrastructure, three actors offer exhibitions, various events and workshops, such as festivals, readings and theatre plays for all age groups.

Summary Overview

On the whole, all participants consider themselves creative workers with a creative lifestyle because they are active in the cultural field and do cultural things as part of their life. Although they state that they are active in the cultural field and culturally connected to Flingern-Nord, they don’t do many cultural things in the area besides their work. It is limited to going to restaurants, cafés, and exhibitions. Two of the participants offer a cultural programme, such as readings or music, for all age groups, and one of them also organises cultural events such as festivals in the neighbourhood. It should be noted that the cultural offerings are not immediately obvious, but can only be discovered over time, as they often take place in the backyards.

This depiction is only one part of how the cultural actors perceive and describe Flingern-Nord. To complete the picture, spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics are included as well. They are presented below.

5.2.2.2. *Spatial, Socio-Economic and Political Dynamics*

Spatial Design and Recreational Amenities

The spatial design and leisure facilities relate to parks, public squares and places for outdoor activities. The participants know several parks and list parks such as *Stadtwerkepark* (Flingern-Süd; P13) and a park next to the S-Bahn station⁸⁶ with some industry in the back (P14). There also is the *Zoopark* mentioned by three interviewees (P12, P13, P15), of which two correctly add that this park is just outside of Flingern-Nord in Düsseldorf (P12, P13). Another park mentioned by interviewee P13 is *Volksgarten* or *Uhrenpark* of which she thinks it is still in Flingern but is south of Flingern-Süd. This interviewee also thinks of informal places in the area, such as the green stripes along the railway tracks, and *Märchenland*, which is a former garden plot with a square for festivals, e.g. the annual *Schützenfest*, a fair featuring shooting competition. Without mentioning names, participant P11 talks about bigger parks also with sports facilities. Sport facilities are also regarded by participant P14. He thinks of basketball fields and green spots for exercises and sport, as well as parks for families. Most of the parks in Flingern are described as unattractive, and moreover that there are too few of them (P12, P13, P15). Only respondent P11 thinks that the situation of the parks in Flingern-Nord is not too bad. Flingern-Nord has a centrally located market square, *Hermannplatz*. This place is mentioned by four interviewees (P11, P12, P13, P15) with a varying description. Participant P11 specifies its facilities, such as the basketball field, a (depressing (P15)) playground and a pretty nice farmer's market (P12). In general, interviewee P12 thinks that it is nice to have benches around in the neighbourhood where you can just sit, and that there are trees everywhere which makes it feel nice.

Temporary spaces, hence, the temporary use of empty spaces, refresh the offer in a neighbourhood regularly. They can attract people to discover new things and find out about new offers. In Flingern,

⁸⁶ The 'S-Bahn' is a local transport system that uses the railway tracks.

the perception of temporary spaces by cultural actors varies. Only two interviewees are thinking about temporary spaces in Flingern-Nord. One of them is interviewee P11, whose job at the Competence Centre Creative and Cultural Industries of the City of Düsseldorf is to network creative people in the area. He says that there are temporary spaces for certain events, but that they are “established in the sense of permanent and self-evident, and there is not much change, much visibility in the neighbourhood” (P11). He adds that the bureaucratic regulations, such as fire and noise protection, prevent the development of temporary spaces on a grand scale, and that there are only few house owners that rent the places for few monies. The existence of temporary spaces is seen differently by the gallery owner who says that there are a lot of them, such as entire Birkenstraße where spaces, exhibition spaces and pop-up galleries, open and close, and where art and artists’ projects are shown (P15). The access to internet might influence the experience at these places people are and therefore, access to it might be important. Respondents think about different places and occasions, such as use in their organisations, in public or private places and personal meaning. Interviewee P12 states that there is no need for Wi-Fi at their location, which is in the same direction as interviewee P14 states. She states that there is a mobile phone prohibition while attending their activities. The people attending shall concentrate on the activities. The importance of internet access while being in the gallery is not known by the owner (P15). Access in public places such as in the city is described as poor (P11) or non-existent (P14), and in cafés as poor (P11), but at least some cafés offer Wi-Fi (P14). For interviewee P13 and P15, internet is important, but interviewee P13 complains about the bad connection on the supply side, which is contrary to the view of respondent P11 for whom it seems not too bad.

To sum up, the participants know several parks in and around Flingern-Nord. The parks in the area are perceived by the majority as unattractive and there are too few. They also see places with sport facilities such as a basketball field and outdoor fitness parks. The central market square Hermannplatz is also mentioned by almost all interviewees, whose appearance is described either positive or negative. Temporary spaces in the area only come to mind for two interviewees who made statements to the contrary: There are not many temporary spaces, e.g. because of bureaucratic regulations, and there are many, especially on Birkenstraße. For none of the interviewees does internet access play a role at their institutions for different reasons. The public internet coverage in the area, including cafés is described as not good.

Housing and Commerce

Flingern-Nord is a dense former working-class neighbourhood with only small open spaces (P11). Therefore, the changes are mainly in the area of the remodelling of buildings, e.g. through conversion or new use (P11, P12, P13, P15), replacement and renovations of buildings (P12). Examples of major changes are given. One is the conversion of a former bunker to luxury apartments on Lindenstraße in 2009 (P11, P15), which is commented by interviewee P11 with the words that it is almost like a ‘Gated Community’ because of the contrast of luxury apartments in a working-class neighbourhood. Interviewee P13 names other examples. She thinks of former city owned buildings that were bought by investment companies, such as the former Health Department on Lindenstraße corner Ackerstraße and a convent on Flurstraße. Both buildings were used after the closure by artists for their studios. After a change of owner, they were dismissed. In addition to the decline in the number of studios, there has also been a decline in artists’ studios in general. Interviewee P11 also knows that former studios are changed to “chic lofts” for the new clientele that moves to Flingern-Nord. Although the area is densely populated, a re-densification process can also be observed (P11, P13, P15). This process is noticed in different ways, between “not much new buildings” (P13) and a lot of new construction for housing (P15). In addition to housing, participant P11 focuses on offices, where he sees changes in general. He mentions that the office buildings where Ubisoft is now based have only been there for about 10 years.

In short, in the dense former working-class neighbourhood of Flingern-Nord, the most important changes in housing consist in the remodelling of houses. The conversion of larger building complexes, formerly urban buildings and backyards into luxury flats and lofts is cited as an example. The artists residing in these buildings usually had to give up their studios there.

Sport and Leisure

Besides cultural activities, there are also sport and leisure activities that may influence the relation to the neighbourhood. Not all the interviewees talk about this relation. Activities mentioned by some are going to the parks (P11, P14), reading in cafés (P11), doing sports, such as basketball (P14), meeting friends (P12), going to the restaurants (P11, P12, P14, P15) or having a coffee or an ice-cream (P14, P15). Interviewee P11 describes the area vividly and his behaviour there: “That’s what it’s for – it’s a huge living room turned inside out. That’s how the neighbourhood

feels. In that sense, that's how we behave there too.”

To sum up, the focus of the activities in the area are not on sports but on leisure activities when people spend some time in the area besides work, such as going to cafés or restaurants, and parks.

Housing and Commercial: Rent and Value

The unanimous opinion of the respondents is that rents have risen, especially in recent years (P11, P12, P14, P15). One (P11) experienced it himself when he wanted to move back into the neighbourhood after a few years. A house owner told him that he rented an apartment for 6,50 DM/sqm (4,55 CAD) 20 years ago and today he does it for 14 €/sqm (19 CAD)⁸⁷. Reasons for this development are seen by the moving in of new companies (P14), hipsters (P15), and the modernisation of houses (P14).

In brief, the neighbourhood became more expensive in terms of rents. Reasons are seen in new companies that settled, hipsters that now come to Flingern-Nord and the modernisation of buildings.

Local Amenities, Facilities and Services

Besides the cultural and recreational amenities, there are also local amenities. There are only two comments about their usage. Interviewee P13 does not go shopping in Flingern-Nord, but in the neighbourhood where she lives, and interviewee P15 says that she goes to cafés, bakeries or for ice cream. Besides this, she rarely goes there for clothes. She tries to buy local.

Staying in the neighbourhood is also influenced by the price level that prevails there. The price level of restaurants and pubs in Flingern-Nord is perceived as rather okay (P15) and medium-priced (P11, P12). Though, a range of prices is also noted (P12), with the cheapest Asiatic place in Düsseldorf on the one hand and with expensive, posh restaurants on the other (P13). Interviewee P14 reflects on the price development over the last years. She says that it has got more expensive, which goes along with new restaurants and new cultural spaces. This corresponds with the perception of interviewee P11, who says that 20 years ago students went out for a beer or a party

⁸⁷ Exchange rate as of May 26, 2022.

in Flingern because it was affordable there (although there was less on offer).

In brief, the local amenities and services are not used, with very few exceptions. The price level of restaurants and cafés is seen as not expensive for most of the places, but a variety exists. The neighbourhood has become more expensive over time, which is also connected with the new places as testified by one person.

Product Range in Shops

The cultural players surveyed offer their services and products in the region. Their offerings are aimed at different clienteles and different interests. The two cultural organisations offer readings, music, performances, and art courses. The target audience of the Kulturzimmer on Hoffeldstraße, who offers readings, expositions and live concerts are the neighbourhood dwellers. Their activities are free of charge, so that everyone can join. Those who join are 60 years or older, but there are also younger ones from the neighbourhood or friends of the artists. Some of them have been there from the beginning, and new ones keep joining, so that their registered association now has 500 members. At the second cultural centre, the Kabawil in Flurstraße, the frequency of attendance is the same. There are some who have been there for a long time and there are always new participants. The age range at Kabawil is wider, as children and young people also take part in the activities on offer here. Besides the classes for school students, there are classes and performances for adults, poetry, and music classes. Usually, those classes are free of charge. People from Ubisoft weren't amongst their customers so far. They also organise small festivals, such as a family or neighbourhood day, where up to 100 people join. As well as the cultural organisations, the gallery on Ackerstraße is open to everyone as 'public space'. The gallery owner describes the people coming to her gallery as visitors, the casual public, education-based milieu, interested in arts that come to see an exhibition, as customers that come to buy art, and as people from the cultural field such as artists and curators. She still has the same type of customers. She states, regarding the video game industry, that "I can say quite clearly, I haven't had a single client so far in all these years who comes from the video game industry or from the tech sector. [...] They don't seem to be interested in art." She adds that they probably do not come because they may not know the galleries in the neighbourhood. The customers of the Competence Centre Creative and Cultural Industries of the City of Düsseldorf are those who are in the cultural and creative field in Flingern-Nord. The aim of this organisation is to cooperate, bring all these parties closer together and build up a

network between them. The video game industry is also one of their customers, including the marketing to attract junior talents and universities. The offer of all interviewees is subject to general change, as it is not always possible to offer the same thing over years, such as art in the gallery or courses for students.

In short, the participants offer a broad and changing range of services in their organisations. The majority of their visitors are regulars, some of whom have been taking part in events etc. for years. The age groups vary depending on the organisation and the offer. Employees of Ubisoft or from the video game sector were obviously not yet among the customers or participants. One participant suspects that the developers are not interested in art or do not know what is on offer in the neighbourhood.

Government Policies Regarding the Video Game Industry and Administrative Practices

There are no comments on policies but on administrative practices, albeit indirectly. It is indirectly addressed by a statement of interviewee P11 who looks at the biking infrastructure. He thinks that there is a need for improvement, but unfortunately, without specifying it.

Summarizing, an indirect comment regarding administrative practices is made about the bad biking infrastructure and the need for its improvement.

Summary Overview

Summarizing the different dynamics gives a picture regarding what the interviewees do in Flingern-Nord and how they perceive these dynamics in the neighbourhood. All interviewees are aware of the existence of green spaces, such as parks, and almost all are aware of spaces with sport facilities and the market square Hermannplatz. The parks are mostly perceived as unattractive, and furthermore, there are too few of them. Temporary spaces also make up part of the appearance. Many of them are seen by one participant, while bureaucratic regulations strongly hinder their existence according to another. Flingern-Nord is a dense neighbourhood and so changes in housing are mostly done by remodelling houses and converting larger building complexes into luxury flats and lofts. This development is associated with the price increase of rents, but also the new businesses that have moved in and the hipsters that are now coming to Flingern-Nord are seen as reasons for this increase. However, it is not only the outward appearance that connects one with

the neighbourhood, but also what one does there. Besides work, the focus of the activities in Flingern-Nord is on leisure activities, such as going to cafés or restaurants whose price level is described as not expensive for most places, but the prices level is increasing. Only few use the local amenities and services. Internet access is not important for their customers at their organisations nor for most of the interviewees. Administrative practices don't come to the mind of the cultural actors, except for an indirect comment about the bad biking infrastructure and the need for its improvement. The participants themselves are part of the offer and the amenities. They offer a wide and changing range of services in their organisations. The majority of their visitors are regulars, and the age groups vary depending on the place and the offer. Employees of Ubisoft or from the video game industry were obviously not yet among the customers or participants. It is suspected that the developers are not interested in art or do not know what is offered in Flingern-Nord.

5.2.2.3. Conclusion

Having a look at the statements of the cultural actors from different fields, a clear picture is given of the current dynamics, the lifestyle and the amenities in Flingern-Nord.

The description of cultural life and cultural dynamics in Flingern-Nord depends on the extent to which the cultural actors see themselves as cultural-creative and to what extent they are furthermore part of the cultural offer. The participants consider themselves as creative workers with a creative lifestyle because they are active in the cultural field. Their work is their main connection to Flingern-Nord. The participants go to restaurants and cafés as well as to exhibition of colleagues that are part of their network to some extent, but otherwise, they rarely use the local amenities and services. Two respondents offer a cultural programme, such as readings and music or classes in dancing and theater. One is organising a festival in Flingern-Nord, together with other cultural actors that are part of the local cultural network. Another respondent offers exhibitions in her gallery that are open for everyone to visit. The majority of their visitors are regulars, and the age groups vary depending on the offer. A lot of the culture, cultural institutions and amenities is not immediately apparent, and so it has to be discovered over time because it often takes place in the backyards.

Most restaurants and cafés are perceived as not expensive, but an increase in prices is observed.

Alongside these cultural dynamics, further dynamics have also been identified. This is not so much about administrative dynamics, which the interviewees do not think about, but about spatial and socio-economic one. Thus, the respondents think of the green spaces and parks that are mostly perceived as unattractive and whose number is seen as too few. They are aware of the market square Hermannplatz and spaces with sport facilities. The existence of temporary spaces is only referred to by one, who sees a lot of them. Flingern-Nord is changing from a working-class neighbourhood to a middle class one. This goes along with changes in housing. Flingern-Nord is a dense neighbourhood and therefore, changes focus on remodelling of houses and converting building complexes into luxury flats and lofts, which is stated by the interviewees. As a result, rents are rising in the area.

The separate presentation of video game developers and cultural players has now been introduced. A direct comparison of the most important points reveals the similarities that show a particular picture, which is presented next.

5.2.3. Comparison of the Interviews in Flingern-Nord

The description of the lifestyle, the amenities and the dynamics going on in Flingern-Nord by the video game developers and the cultural actors show a similar picture. Nevertheless, there are also differences.

The video game developers see themselves differently as a cultural person, fluctuating between "yes" and "no". The description of the intensity of their cultural lifestyle also differs. It varies between diverse and expandable. Cultural activities they do are listen to music, reading books and going to museums, for example. Also travelling is an important part of their cultural activities. Besides the cultural and creative side and lifestyle, there is also a relation to their work, i.e. whether they see themselves as creative workers or not. They all declare that they are creative workers because their work and creativity are related, but they add that the extent of it depends on the work itself. All cultural actors consider themselves as creative workers with a creative lifestyle because they are active in the cultural field.

All the cultural and creative activities they engage in usually take place outside Flingern-Nord.

Thus, the neighbourhood of Flingern-Nord does not play a role in cultural practices for almost all respondents. They give some reasons for this. They say that they are not aware of what's going on in the neighbourhood and they do not look for further offers, or simply that they don't know the area. This point is also seen by the cultural actors because they must admit that a lot of the cultural offer and amenities are not immediately apparent. The offer has to be discovered over time, as it often takes place in the backyards. Further limitations to participate in cultural offers are given as well by the developers. This might be the family situation, so to say if they have kids, the language because some of them are not fluent in German, or the weather. For the cultural workers, too, work is their main connection to the neighbourhood. The respondents go to restaurants and cafés as well as to exhibitions of colleagues that are part of their network to some extent, but otherwise, they rarely use the local amenities and services. Unlike for the developers, there are no restrictions on the unawareness of the cultural offer and amenities, or the language. Both groups describe the restaurants as not expensive, but the cultural actors observe an increase in prices.

Largely, Flingern-Nord is perceived by the video game developers in a contrasting way, between positive and negative while looking on single dynamics. On individual points, however, the developers have similar opinions, such as the view on parks. They say that there are too few parks and that they are not even beautiful. This is also the opinion of the cultural workers. There are too few parks, and the existing ones are unattractive. Most of the parks mentioned by name by participants in both groups are parks outside Flingern-Nord, a fact about which some participants are aware. Besides parks, there are also temporary spaces in Flingern-Nord that are more recognised by the developers than by the cultural actors. One point mentioned in the context of the political dynamics is the cycling infrastructure. There should be some improvements by the public administration as wished by the developers and by one cultural actor. Changes in housing are also reported by interviewee partners of both groups. Flingern-Nord is a dense neighbourhood and therefore, changes focus on renovations and remodelling of houses, and on construction of condos in backyards and the conversion of building complexes into flats and lofts. The developers also mention the renovations in and around the new Ubisoft building. Connected with housing is also the rent. The rent level in Flingern-Nord is seen as by all in the middle and expensive, and above all rising. However, besides the overall appearance and changes in spatial design, the offered facilities and amenities are also an important part of the neighbourhood. Sport and leisure facilities are known by the interviewees but not used. For the interviewees who live in Flingern-Nord, local

facilities such as supermarkets are important, and further local amenities are hardly known. A change in shops and its offer is recognised by some developers who have been knowing the area for a while. They report that before, there were more culturally orientated shops such as galleries and cafés, and nowadays the new shops are more profit oriented, with a specialised offer such as handmade (expensive) goods. It is a result of the new clientele, so to say an adaptation to the new customers.

In short, a commonality in perceptions is that video game developers and cultural workers see themselves as creative workers. However, the extent varies and depends on the actual work. For those who do not live in Flingern-Nord, the main connection to the neighbourhood is work. For cultural activities, the neighbourhood hardly plays a role, albeit for different reasons. Flingern-Nord also plays no role for either group when it comes to sports and leisure activities. There are also similarities with regard to the perception of the appearance of the neighbourhood, such as the perception of parks that are not viewed as beautiful and of which there are too few, the desire for improvements of the cycling infrastructure or the construction and renovation of houses. The other points are viewed differently. The differences and similarities are shown in table 27.

Table 27: Comparison of the most important similar and different perceptions and descriptions of the analysis of the video game developers and cultural actors for ‘Culture, Lifestyle, Amenities, and Dynamics’ in Flingern-Nord

	Similarities	Differences
Cultural Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative workers • Role of the neighbourhood for their cultural practices (no role, main connection to the neighbourhood is work) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View about themselves as culturally active, and a creative person, as well as the corresponding lifestyle
Spatial Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge, appearance and numbers of parks • Changes in housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge about temporary spaces

	Similarities	Differences
Socio-economic Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price level of rents and its development • Price level of restaurants • Leisure and recreational amenities known • No usage of the offer of leisure and recreational amenities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of offer perceived by video game developers
Political Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of the bicycle infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Source: Author

CHAPTER 6: INSIDE THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

After analysing the statements on “Culture, Lifestyle, Amenities and Dynamics”, the focus in this chapter is now on the ‘Creative Milieu’ and the ‘Neighbourhood’ that were defined in the operational framework as block 2 and block 3 (see figure 15 for the relation between the blocks). Alongside the consideration of ‘Neighbourhood - a global view of what is going on’, this chapter includes a look at the ‘Creative milieu’ with ‘Interdependence, mixing and sociability’, ‘Representations of relationships and behaviour within and towards other groups’ and ‘Networking’, and finally the ‘Perception of the neighbourhood’. Each section is rounded off with a conclusion. As in the previous chapter, the Mile End neighbourhood is considered first (6.1.) before turning to Flingern-Nord (6.2.).

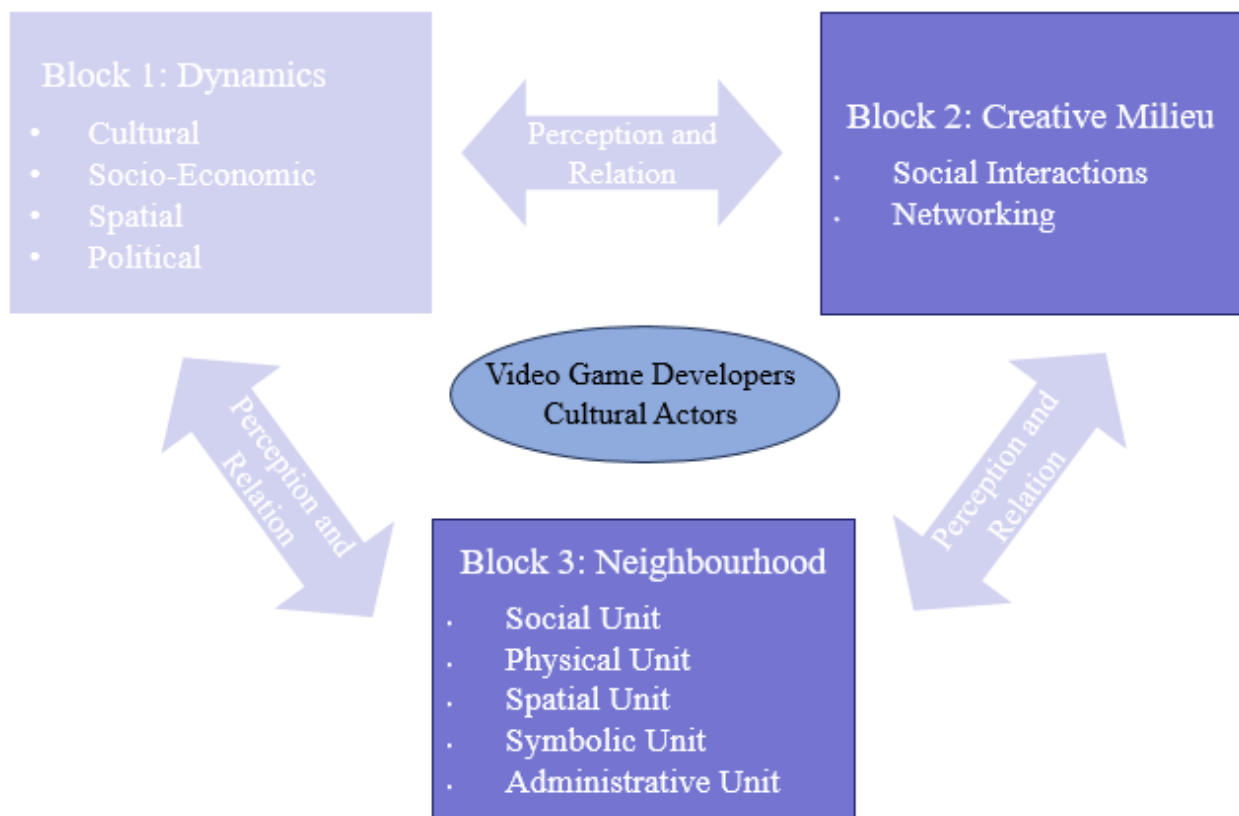


Figure 15: ‘Inside the neighbourhood’ and its relation to the operational framework

Source: Author

6.1. Mile End

First, the view is of the Mile End neighbourhood in Montreal and the twelve interviews of the video game developers (6.1.1.) before turning to the six interviews by the cultural actors (6.1.2.), and the comparison of the interviews (6.1.3.).

6.1.1. Video Game Developers in the Mile End

6.1.1.1. Neighbourhood - a Global View of What is Going On

Individual dynamics have been looked at in more detail in the previous chapter, giving a very accurate picture for these areas and the dynamics involved. But there are also global changes in the Mile End that video game developers perceive. Some of the changes were already addressed in the previous chapter, but they are taken up here again because they are mentioned in a different, broader context, such as the changes of the cultural offers or restaurants. They are regarded with the changes of the neighbourhood in general and its impression. Furthermore, the interviewees give their personal point of view regarding how the Mile End might change or how it would be like in the future.

A change of the cultural offer and amenities is recognised by four interviewees of which three are able to comment on it. Other six participants ‘didn’t really noticed’ or ‘don’t think’ that the cultural offers and amenities have changed. The fact that most participants could not name any changes in the cultural offer is not related to the length of time they have been working in the neighbourhood, which ranges from two to 13 years (with an average of six years). Thinking about the changes, interviewee P27, who is very active in the neighbourhood, states: “I don’t think so. No, it’s pretty much the same. I’ve been living in the neighbourhood for awhile, so, not really, not in the last like three years”. *Aire Commune* is mentioned as a new offer by interviewee P18, but besides this, he hasn’t noticed any other changes during the four years he has been working for Ubisoft. Interviewee P20 who has been working in the area for more than five years doesn’t see many changes as well, although, this doesn’t mean that nothing is going on as he states:

But there's a, there's always something going on. And just before the confinement started, I would receive pretty much every month a new pamphlet or something going on in the streets or. So, there's definitely, maybe not major events that are recurring but there are definitely things happening on a monthly basis, something new that's being tried out. [...] No, I wouldn't say there's, there's been any major changes. I would say, it's, it's, it's a kind of just this cycle of trying new things and yeah.

Of those who see changes in the neighbourhood, interviewee P22 definitely sees changes during the last five years. His focus is on the cultural offer and amenities, and he can list several new ones:

[..] Yes! Definitely. There were a lot of new stuff, and these are the things that I, that I went to. And I'm going to try to find the name, I don't know if you have, [...] those two events that I was mentioning the terrace in the Mile End and the festival under Rosemont bridge are two completely new events that did not exist before, and before that I was not involved in other major events in the neighbourhood anyway. I know that Ubisoft was organizing, [...] started organizing, I don't know, what they call that, but Ubisoft weekend, where there was a huge gathering of people that I, I was involved with, not organizing but as a spectator. So, yeah, the offer has grown, I would say. It did not change, yeah, it changed from a smaller to much bigger.

The fact that the offer has grown during the last years is also underlined by interviewee P25. He says that the cultural amenities changed a lot so that today there are more choices compared to six years ago, for example the cinema on Saint-Laurent and *Champ des Possibles*. This offer is seen as unique compared with other neighbourhoods in Montreal by interviewee P26. In her statement, she also includes the things that are partly responsible for this development:

Je dirais que ça [a] changé dans une échelle peut-être de 10 ans, même, mais dans 5 ans quand même qui offre plus; le quartier s'est beaucoup développé dans le coin, il y a beaucoup de d'industrie, de compagnies, bien d'entreprises qui sont venues s'installer, donc il y a une population potentielle pour que le, le, les événements culturels qui va prendre le plus de place et qui a des gens qui viennent.

According to interviewee P16 who has been working for Ubisoft for five years, however, the

change in offerings is also accompanied by a change in cultural players: *“il y a plusieurs artistes qui ont quitté le Mile End parce que les loyers étaient trop importants mais ça a fait en sorte que ça a amené d’autres artistes à vouloir s’installer, d’autres tranches du milieu culturel. Donc, c’est sûr [que c’est] un quartier qui est en pleine évolution”*.

Restaurants and bars are part of the cultural amenities. Three interviewees (P17, P22, P25) refer to the change of restaurants over time during the last decades. During the five years that participant P22 has been working in the area, he only realised this change, and he adds that this part affects him because he has to eat somewhere. Keeping in mind the whole picture of change during his years of work in the Mile End, the observations of interviewee P25 are as follows:

around that my first year, I started at Ubisoft 13 years ago, and there were mostly like restaurants, and that was it. And not even that many. [...] So seeing more, more places to hang out after after the day, or to be able to, to, to socialize and stuff like that [...] even, even five years ago there were still just a lot of restaurants that would be only opened during lunchtime, and they would be closed in the evening. So, there wouldn’t be much to do during the evening, and it was 13 years ago, it was even, even worse, like there was nothing to do in the Mile End after working hours. And it slowly, I saw, I saw that part build up, so there’s a lot of more new restaurants or pubs that are open during the evening.

However, it was not only a change in terms of a larger offer that was noted, but also an increased turnover of restaurants. For interviewee P17, who has worked in the Mile End for the longest time, this can be seen most clearly in the neighbourhood. He describes this as follows and also names some possible reasons:

Yeah. I’m not really sure the area itself I don’t think it’s changed that much. [...] Well, actually that’s not true if you’re talking about like restaurants and things like that in the area, they actually changed quite a bit. You’ll see restaurants open and then three months later they shut down. I think a lot of. It’s. A lot of the time. Because it’s, if a place opens and it doesn’t appeal to [...] to the employees, it will shut down in three months because, you know, people said ‘Ah, it’s too expensive’ or ‘the foods are not good’ or. So, I’ve seen a lot of that like I’ve seen a lot of restaurants open and close and open and close over the past 15 years.

There is also a view of the general development of the neighbourhood. This development is described differently. Interviewee P20 sees many changes in the last 15 years, which have led to a mixture of old and new, particularly due to the technology boom. Some changes or that something is going on in the Mile End is felt by interviewee P23, although he witnesses or can name only few changes. A sign of change is the closing of old, traditional shops and places (P17, P22, P23), which is negatively seen by interviewee P23 because he prefers local businesses. This phenomenon is connected with the buzz word ‘gentrification’, a term that three interviewees (P16, P21, P25) bring up. Gentrification is an inevitable consequence of a hip neighbourhood attracting richer people who drive up prices, reflects respondent P21. Although already gentrified, participant P25 amplifies that the Mile End still has a community vibe and it is still a neighbourhood with a diversity of local, evolved stores and not a commercial centre. Differently seen is this by interviewee P18. He quotes that “I feel like it’s been a bit trapped in time. I haven’t felt like it’s evolved or changed or anything, that I wished it would. I feel like it stayed the same way”. These diverse impressions are well analysed by interviewee P17:

Ah, pfff, like I said, I don’t I feel like it hasn’t, like it’s, it’s changed a bit, but, yeah, it’s hard, it’s, it’s, it’s almost like I feel like, it’s almost kind of like [...] What’s a good analogy, like, like watching hair grow or something like that, because it’s like I’ve been here and I’ve seen the changes slowly over a long period of time, so it doesn’t feel like a lot it’s changed.

After a look at the changing aspects of the neighbourhood so far, the participants’ view of the neighbourhood’s future is included as well.⁸⁸ Most of the interviewees state that the neighbourhood will stay the same or won’t change much (P16, P18, P20, P26, P27), of which one adds that the Mile End was at a saturation point due to its density and the amount of dwellers. Further opinions are that the current development will continue (P21, P22, P24). This includes an ongoing gentrification process (P16, P21, P25) which will lead to changes in the economic level of the neighbourhood (P16), and the establishment of new cafés and restaurants in the context of a hipster and counterculture (P22), as well as with new activities (P25). Interviewee P21, who has been in the Mile End for about six years, predicts that a different kind of people will move in, who may want less noise, and that the neighbourhood will change because their numbers will become too

⁸⁸ All without taking Covid-19 into account.

high. This development seems to be already underway according to participant P17. He states that the neighbourhood has become much quieter in the last 15 years. Looking at the cultural aspect, interviewee P16 thinks that the Mile End “*va garder son volet culturel, puis ne deviendra pas un quartier d'affaires*”. This coincides with the visions of another participant (P23):

In the coming years, like I said, I'd like it to stay that way, not, not with big, like in marketing stuff, just local stuff, local bakery, local pizza, local stuff. So, I'd like when it's like this. So. And I, when I tend to see it's like they, they put lot, they, they get rid of some parking spaces to make the sidewalks bigger for people to bring out there, so that, that's nice too, so that's what I see it. And I think that's the way they're going.

Differently said, the Mile End shouldn't be transformed “into a big supermarket or like the Eaton centre” (P18), a huge shopping center downtown Montreal.

Summary Overview

On the whole, general changes concerning the cultural offer, restaurants, and the neighbourhood are recognised by several interviewees during the last years. Those who see changes in the cultural offer state that the offer and the amenities have grown in recent years, also by giving examples. But in return, the move away of artists is also mentioned by one, which could have an influence on the further development of the Mile End. Overall, the uniqueness of the Mile End in terms of its cultural offer is addressed, noting that the Mile End offers a good terrain for cultural activities and that there is always something going on with a varying programme. Furthermore, they talk about the changes in restaurants and bars. One aspect is that the number of restaurants during lunchtime and bars that are open in the evening has grown over the last decades, and another one is the ever more rapid and high turnover of restaurants.

Finally, they also have a comprehensive view of the Mile End neighbourhood. Changes in the neighbourhood are witnessed by almost all participants. Some see the changes in connection with the buzzword ‘gentrification’. They connect it with the hip vibe, for example. Nevertheless, a local flair is still perceived by various participants due to the presence of long-established companies, which, however, are becoming fewer and fewer. In general, the statements are diverse and also contradictory, ranging from ‘totally changed, especially with the tech boom’ to ‘trapped in time’.

Looking at the future of the Mile End, half of the participants predicts that the current development will continue, while the other half states that the Mile End won't or shouldn't change much.

The view shown is directed globally at the neighbourhood. It focusses on the cultural aspect, the restaurants, and the spatial development. But that's not all that makes up a neighbourhood. It is also the people who are there and the creative milieu that is characterised by them.

6.1.1.2. Creative Milieu

The creative milieu regards two aspects, the social interactions with its interrelation, mixing of people and socialising, and with its representations of relations and behaviours within and to other groups, as well as networking. A clear separation is not always possible because while socializing with others, building networks can be done as well. Nevertheless, they are separated as far as possible.

Interrelation, Mixing of People and Socialising

Social interactions that take place in the neighbourhood happen with different groups of people depending on the event. One group are the co-workers. They come into the mind of almost all interviewees by thinking about with whom they spend time in the neighbourhood. The occasions to socialise with co-workers are related to work (P19, P21, P27), or for lunch and after work (e.g. P26). They meet for examples in places like the restaurants *Magpie* on Maguire, *Bibiko*, a Korean restaurant, on Saint-Viateur, *Chez ta mère* and *Drogheria Fine*, the pasta place, on Fairmount for lunch, or they meet at *Aire Commune* or at the bar *Waverly* on Saint-Viateur after work. Connected with work, interviewee P16 regularly does meetings in the neighbourhood as part of her job with, amongst others, artists. The second group of people the video game developers meet or stay with in the neighbourhood are of a private nature. They meet either with friends (P19, P20, P21, P23, P25, P26, P27) or former co-workers, stay in the neighbourhood with the life partner (P19, P21, P25, P27) or family (P23), or by themselves (P20, P22, P26). Examples of what they are doing there are given, such as walking around, attending concerts and shows, or having a meal or a drink in one of the restaurants and bars. Although interviewee P25 doesn't see any co-worker during the weekends, there are some that spend time during the weekends there, such as interviewee P26 with

friends. Interviewee P22 states about his habits that he strolls around the neighbourhood with his girlfriend or by himself, but he meets his friends in other parts of the city. Later in the interview, this participant says that he doesn't spend much time in the neighbourhood because he is already often there due to work.

Hence, as a group, social interactions are limited to some activities. These are, besides the lunch time activities, the 5@7, which take place usually on Fridays (e.g. P17, P19, P21, P25) close to the office (P19), and getting an ice-cream at Cem Koba on Fairmount in summer, having a walk, taking a coffee, or playing with the Ubisoft hockey team as a sport activity (P25).

To sum up, the workers of Ubisoft meet and socialise with two different groups in the Mile End: they spend time with their colleagues during lunch break or in the evening for an after-work beer, and with friends, former co-workers, or family in their free time in the evening or during the weekend. They don't see colleagues outside working hours there. But they see further people in the area, and these are described in the following.

Representations of Relations and Behaviours Within and to Other Groups

Although the video game developers might be the biggest group in the neighbourhood, as underlined by some workers (e.g. P21), there are also other groups that might determine of what's going on in the Mile End. Some other groups are recognised by the workers including what they are doing depending on the time of day, so during working hours or the weekend. In general, the people that are seen besides the coworkers are described as young, between 25 and mid/end of their 30s (e.g. P25). Only two workers recognise older people, between 50 and 60 (P20, P21), and one notes that he doesn't see many kids (P21). Kids and families in the area are only observed during special events such as the anniversary of Ubisoft in 2017 (P25) or during the weekend (P21)⁸⁹. The other descriptions of the people vary. They are described as male (P19), of all kinds (P21), as artistically oriented or artists (P17, P19, P22, P23), as young professionals (P20) or hipsters (P19, P23, P25). The older people seen in the neighbourhood are either seen as probably neighbourhood dwellers or as "established people who were doing there for a while that are generally very open culturally and doing things left and right, and enjoying the activities are going on there" (P20). He

⁸⁹ The statements are also underpinned by the statistical data that can be found in Section 3.1.3.2. in the part 'Neighbourhood Dwellers'.

describes the people who are culturally active in the neighbourhood and recognises that there is a variety of cultural offerings. Descriptions of people attending events at the Mile End are that they work at Ubisoft or other companies (P26), or that the people are “the classic took wearing tattoo sleeves beard type of guy, hipsterish, hum, hu, there’s a lot of younger people” (P25). Interviewee P23 sees also (known) actors in the Mile End because in one of the buildings on de Gaspé, the *Union des artistes* is located.

There are two detailed descriptions that complement and frame the overall picture of people seen in the Mile End. One is given by interviewee P27, who focused on the Hassidic Jews and the artists:

The people, I think [...] [grinning] I think it’s really special in the Mile End because like there’s two community living together, acting really different. So, there’s the Hassidic community that’s very like strong in the Mile End. So, it’s kind of special, you know, but there is [...] a many artist, I see many artists in the neighbourhood, just like in the in the in the in the cafés on the Saint-Viateur, there are or so many artists living there and young artists and older artists, and, yeah, there is also like all the people from Ubisoft that are artists too, but different, [smiling] different kind. Hum. So, it’s like very, very mixed.

Besides her, interviewee P25 also describes different groups he sees in the Mile End. including what they do at different times:

[.] Hu. [.] It’s a bit of hu, I, it’s [...], it’s, it’s a weird mix. Hum. Where you’ve got all of these really traditional Hassidic Jew families, deep into their, their culture, and they, they don’t talk to anybody, so, so they had their schools, they have their stuff and we can see them around. You always, you always bump into a family that, that speak, speaks in Hebrew and you don’t know what’s going on. And then you got a mix of, of anybody in 3D, so, not just video games but even in movies. You can, you can smell them like, okay, not smell them per say, but like you can see them like ‘Okay, these guys are, are either from Ubisoft or any other development company around, like they are tech people and we can see that’, and then there’s this, this crowd of really hipster, hum [...], younger people who are, who are, are trying to, to, because there’s a lot of, it feels a lot like, there’s a, there’s a lot of small hipster shops and stuff like that. So, there’s all this these mixes and during the weekend, there’s also like a lot of younger people, who are coming to the Mile End because

it's cool. So, they, they come to go like, there's line-ups at brunch places and stuff like that, because it's cool to go there, because the places are on Pinterest or stuff like that. So there's a, there's all this weird mix that doesn't necessarily mingle together, hum, but it depends on where you're at during the week, you know, like the crowd in the evening is not the same during the week, during the weekends, and, and during the weekends there's a different vibe also, that there during the day of the week, so, it's a weird, so weird, it's a weird mix of all of these different people that don't cross paths that much.

In a nutshell, if you look at the groups and people who are out and about in the Mile End, on the one hand there is the group of video game developers, which is considered the largest group. On the other hand, there are other groups and people, but their labels vary greatly in terms of age, profession, appearance, etc., such as artists, young professionals, residents, hipsters, or the Hassidic Jews. These different groups are seen as very mixed or as a strange mixture that is very particular to the Mile End.

Networking

The employees of Ubisoft are not allowed to work outside the company. They “have a lot of NDAs, so non-disclosure agreement”, as explained by interviewee P23. “We need to stay there. Cause if we work, I don't know, in the restaurant or little café and people see our computer, and they maybe see some little glimpse of what we're working now, they don't want that”, as interviewee P25 elaborates because “the secrecy of our work is too important when you were not allowed to work outside of the of those barriers” of the building. So, acquiring and exchanging knowledge, the sharing of resources etc. are mostly done within the team and the other co-workers of Ubisoft respectively. Some teams spend time in the neighbourhood for team building events, such as team building lunches to get to know the people who are working on the same project mentioned by interviewee P17) or team building activities such as escape rooms mentioned by interviewee P19. All of them, who talk about being in the neighbourhood with their team, state that they do not talk about work.

In short, networking is only done within the team because of a non-disclosure agreement and the ban on working outside the building. Outside, they do not talk about work.

Summary Overview

The creative milieu with its social interactions and networks is connected to various groups in the neighbourhood. Video game developers hang out with colleagues in the neighbourhood during their lunch break and sometimes during the week after work, and to a much lesser extent with family or friends throughout the week. The work takes place only in the Ubisoft building due to a non-disclosure agreement, and hence, networking only takes place with co-workers. The visibility of further groups is given. However, their description varies widely, e.g. age, dwellers, artists, hipsters, Hassidic Jews etc. These groups are characterised as very mixed, or a mixture that is very particular to the Mile End.

If the representations of the neighbourhood as a creative milieu implying social interactions and networks are important elements to consider, there are other ways of perceiving a neighbourhood. The following section addresses these.

6.1.1.3. Perception of the Neighbourhood

The perception of the neighbourhood takes place at different levels. These levels partly flow into each other. Nevertheless, if possible, this perception is assigned to the social, physical, spatial or the administrative unit. This part is rounded off with the perception of whether the Mile End is a cultural and/or a technological neighbourhood, or not.

Activities, opportunities for interaction and (neighbourly) relationships, including formal and informal ties, are one way to perceive the neighbourhood (social unit). This is also related to the people who are on the move there, which has already been described in the context of the creative milieu (however the focus there was on culturally active people). Now, the interviewees were asked about the people they see out and about in the neighbourhood, and therefore, the description could be (slightly) different. The neighbourhood now is mostly described as a fairly young popular area with a lot of young people (P17, P18, P26). These people are labelled as hip or millennials (P18, P23, P25, P26) with places whose offer is adapted to their demand, such as the restaurant *Butterblume* on Saint-Laurent that offers hipster food, as interviewee P21 calls it, and small hipster shops (P25). Furthermore, there are artists, workers of tech companies and Hassidic Jews (P22,

P23, P25). So, shortly said by interviewee P22: “Mile End doesn’t fit a description”. These groups make the neighbourhood feeling alive with a lot of activities in a nice and good atmosphere (P19, P24, P26) or in a good, cultural vibe respectively (P18, P25), a neighbourhood where people are hanging out and chilling on the sidewalks (P23), and with a nice small community with good social activities (P26). It is a good neighbourhood to take a walk and stroll around (P26).

The neighbourhood itself is described in various ways. It is seen as a young and hip neighbourhood (P22, P26), as a wealthy neighbourhood (P19), as a neighbourhood where some people try to do things the non-technological way and where dwellers “are more attached to different lifestyles that are not necessarily, you know, technologically advanced, or going towards technology” (P21), as an office district (P22), and not as a residential neighbourhood (P22), not as a big family and commercial neighbourhood, such as Mont-Royal (P25), as not that much commercial with still some residential bits (P18), or as interviewee P17 just states: a very diverse kind of area.

Looking at the perception of blocks, streets, and houses (physical unit), the Mile End is perceived as a European neighbourhood with tightly packed shops and dwellings, with cafés at the street corners (P18, P20), with a lot of old buildings (P18, P20) and some greenery (P18) that gives the neighbourhood a particular authenticity (P20). Expressing this in the words of interviewee P19: “I don’t feel like the, the neighbourhood is in ruins or like crumbling. I feel, I feel like it’s pretty new in some place and pretty old in others”. The main building of Ubisoft is the so-called Peck building on Saint-Laurent, which represents the image of Ubisoft in the Mile End. Ubisoft wouldn’t be Ubisoft without the Peck, in the opinion of participant P25.

Another way to perceive the Mile End is the proximity and the difference to the surrounding neighbourhoods (spatial unit). Interviewees P20 and P26 point to the location of the Mile End within Montreal. They describe Mile End’s location as central, from where you can easily reach other parts of the city, which is in line with the view that the Mile End is close to downtown (P18, P21, P27). It is not only the proximity to other parts of the city but also the proximity to the amenities and stores within the area that plays a role as mentioned by interviewees P17 and P21. So, the layout of the Mile End is good to get easily and fast, “kind of 15 minutes” (P17), from one point to another. Another comment is about the vibe that differs from other neighbourhoods (P25). In all the interviews, there is only one interviewee who describes the location of Ubisoft as “*dans le cœur du quartier du Mile End*” (P26).

The administrative boundaries of the Mile End are not clear, as the area is not an arrondissement with fixed boundaries, but part of an arrondissement. Therefore, some interviewees asked if some amenities are still considered being in the Mile End, such as the *YMCA* on du Parc, *Drawn & Quarterly* on Bernard (P17), or the *Sala Rossa* on Saint-Laurent (P21). Interviewee P21 talks about the *Ukrainian Federation* on the corner of Hutchinson and Fairmount and describes the location in the following way: “technically I guess it’s in Outremont, but it’s still kind of part of the Mile End”. In fact, this side of Hutchison is still part of the Mile End. Only one respondent (P22) mentions a park that he associates with the Mile End because he likes to go there, but it is not in the neighbourhood. This is Outremont Park.

That the perceptions of the neighbourhood can change over time as a result of changing involvement in activities and offers in the neighbourhood is described by interviewee P21:

So, the first time I saw the Mile End it didn’t appeal to me at all. It looked like, you know, an old neighbourhood that was going down, I just, I just wasn’t aware of, of many of the more interesting things. I still started going there for, for music shows and, hum, and then just becoming you know somebody from Montreal. Hu. I started to see things that, with different eye. I also, yeah, I was I was young, getting older, you kind of start seeing these things differently.

Culture plays a special role in this work. Therefore, in addition to the cultural dynamics, it is appropriate to take a closer look at the perception of the neighbourhood in a cultural sense. The cultural dynamics and cultural amenities, as described in chapter 5, were considered in relation to the interviewees, i.e. their personal connection to the dynamics and amenities, but not how the interviewees perceive the neighbourhood itself. All interviewees perceive the Mile End as a cultural neighbourhood. It is mostly a (clear) yes, except for two that restrict their description with the words ‘think so’ (P24) and ‘guess so’ (P25). The interviewees explain their impression with different examples. They mostly attribute it to what is on offer (P17, P18, P20, P21, P25, P26, P27), i.e. the diverse cultural offer in the neighbourhood, such as art galleries, concerts, the festival under the bridge, many cultural events, and also niche subjects (P22), or the events organised by Ubisoft (P26). Expressing it with the words of interviewee P21: “yes I think there’s, there’s enough activity there to justify it a cultural neighbourhood”. “All those cultural activities [...] they’re very, very well adapted to the kind of neighbourhood that the Mile End is” is the way participant P20

explains it. He and a colleague also come to this conclusion for another reason. Compared to other neighbourhoods, the Mile End has more to offer in the cultural sector (P18, P20). Almost as important as what is on offer is the feeling or the vibe that is exuded in the neighbourhood (P17, P18, P19, P21, P23, P27), which also includes the people that are around (P17) and the different clothing style of these people (P27). The whole is described as a mix of a cultural and industrial world (P19), and as a marriage of different backgrounds, so to say of people from different backgrounds and different interests that work in the artistic sector (P16) that coins the neighbourhood vibe. Still seeing it as a cultural neighbourhood, interviewee P23 remarks that before, the neighbourhood was more or felt more cultural, because to his knowledge, some musicians and artists moved to other neighbourhoods such as Rosemont because the rents got too expensive in the Mile End.

Besides the cultural side of the area, a closer look on the technological side is also given due to the companies in the area. The Mile End is mostly not seen as a technological neighbourhood, some participants using the words ‘not that much’, ‘not especially’, ‘not at all’ (P18, P19, P21, P22, P23, P25), or in other words: “that wouldn’t be the first words I would use to qualify” (P18) the neighbourhood. They see Ubisoft as the biggest technological player in the neighbourhood but not much other companies (e.g. P19, P23). Interviewees P18 and P25 remark a few Virtual Reality (VR) or production companies, but not enough to state that the Mile End is a technological neighbourhood. Interviewee P22 includes his feeling in his explanation. He states that in the neighbourhood around Ubisoft, there is “nothing that transpires technology”. Participant P24 as well points to the feeling and the ambience he gets in the area by referring to the activities he sees and the people he sees in the area, but he gets the opposite feeling: one of a technological neighbourhood. Besides him, five other interviewees state that the Mile End is ‘for sure’ a technological neighbourhood because there are a lot of (smaller) technological companies, such like film, commercial or TV. Two interviewees (P25, P26) also have remarked that during the last years, more and more technological companies were seen in the area. To note is, that the perception mostly refers to the area around Ubisoft, as stressed by interviewee P27 who specified her statement by adding “in the block”. Interviewee P21 broadens the view and also includes the neighbourhood dwellers in his statement and describes them as non-technological and not working much in the technological field respectively. Outside the office buildings, respondents see people working on computers in cafés etc. However, there are only detailed statements about this during summertime

and it concerns few people compared to the city centre (P27).

This section concludes with the interviewees' perception of the neighbourhood by stating whether they would move to the Mile End or will live in the Mile End in the future, which is also a representation of their perception. Several ones could or would like to move to the Mile End, but it is too expensive (P18, P19, P21, P22, P25) especially if you have children and want to have a garden to play in (P21). And those who live close or in the Mile End wouldn't move in the foreseeable future (P17, P20, P27). Three of them state that they would not move to the Mile End (P23, P24, P26), of which interviewee P26 states that she prefers the suburb, and another one that he needs some space, and renovation of houses is difficult and expensive because of their age and heritage regulations. Reasons that speak in favour of the Mile End are for interviewee P27 the proximity to everything, to downtown, the vibe, the food offer, and the amenities, which is mostly in line with interviewees P18 and P19. For interviewee P20 it is the fact that it is an area for young professionals and a quiet area, a point that is seen oppositional for interviewee P24 because for him the Mile End is still too loud and too busy to live.

Summary Overview

The perception of the neighbourhood takes place on different levels. Activities and opportunities for interactions depend amongst others on other people in the area. The participants see a lot of young people, labelled as hip or millennials, with places whose offer is adapted to their demand, as well as artists, workers of tech companies and Hassidic Jews. These groups make the Mile End feeling alive with a lot of activities in a nice and good atmosphere. The Mile End itself is mostly described as young, hip, and wealthy, as an office district and not as a residential neighbourhood. And looking on the blocks, streets and houses, the Mile End is described as a European neighbourhood with tightly packed shops and dwellings, old building, and with cafés at the street corners that makes the Mile End unique. Particular for the neighbourhood is also its location within Montreal, so its proximity to other parts in the city, including downtown, and the proximity to amenities and stores. The administrative boundaries of the Mile End are not clear, and so some respondents are not sure whether the places they are thinking of are still in the Mile End.

The cultural side of the neighbourhood, so if the Mile End is a cultural neighbourhood, is affirmed by all. They base their decision on the cultural offerings and, to a lesser extent, on the mood or

feeling that the area exudes. Some of the interviewees already live in the neighbourhood or close, and they are still satisfied with this choice. Five interviewees could imagine moving to the Mile End but for almost all of them the area is too expensive. Only three wouldn't move to the Mile End for different reasons. In this context, few interviewees list some reasons that speak for the Mile End, such as the proximity to everything, the vibe, and the amenities. The appearance of the Mile End is not that of a technological neighbourhood, which is commented on by just over half with the words 'not so much' or 'not at all'. Ubisoft is seen as the largest player, and not much other companies are seen. Just under half of the respondents have a different opinion. They state that the Mile End is 'for sure' a technological neighbourhood because there are a lot of (smaller) technological companies. These statements usually refer to the area around Ubisoft. The neighbourhood dwellers themselves are described as 'non-technological' or are not seen as working much in the technological field.

6.1.1.4. Conclusion

On the whole, the connection of the Mile End is not only formed by the dynamics analysed in the previous section but also determined by the perception of the neighbourhood itself.

As far as the cultural offering is concerned, some interviewees see a development in it. These interviewees state that the offer and amenities have grown in recent years, but two of them also know that artists have already moved away. Overall, the uniqueness of the Mile End in terms of the cultural offer is emphasised. The Mile End offers a good terrain for different cultural activities all year round. Aside, they think of the changes in restaurants and bars. Over the years, there are more and more restaurants for lunch in the area, and bars are now also open in the evenings.

The Mile End is to some extent a place to socialise and interact for the video game developers. They go there with co-workers during lunchtime, and sometimes for after-work events during the week. Some also go with their family and friends to the neighbourhood, and besides going to restaurants, some come to the area just for having a walk any day of week. The video game developers do not go to the area for work because they are not allowed to work outside the office due to an NDA clause. When they walk around the neighbourhood, they see different groups and types of people who characterise the Mile End, e.g. residents, artists, employees of technology

companies, Hassidic Jews, people of all ages, and especially many young people who are described as hip or millennials. These groups are seen as very mixed or as a strange mixture that makes the Mile End special. They help make the Mile End feel alive with lots of activities in a pleasant and good atmosphere. These different groups mean that the neighbourhood itself is variously perceived and described. The Mile End is described as young, hip, wealthy, as an office district and not a residential neighbourhood, and centrally located within Montreal.

Regarding the cultural aspect of the neighbourhood, there is no question whether the Mile End is a cultural neighbourhood or not. All confirm this point because of the cultural offer in the area, and to a lesser extent, of the mood and feeling that the Mile End exudes. The hip vibe is seen as a new phenomenon. Nevertheless, a local flair is still seen by others in various long-established companies, although these are also gradually dwindling. As a technological neighbourhood, it is seen in a contrary light. Just over half of interviewees certainly see the Mile End as a technological area and just under half as not so much, all referring to the technology companies they do or do not see in the Ubisoft area. The Mile End further appears as a European neighbourhood due to its streets and houses with tightly packed shops and dwellings and old buildings. And there are also the cafés at the street corners that make the Mile End unique. Most of the interviewees who don't live in the Mile End could imagine moving there, but the area is too expensive in terms of rent. Those participants who live there are still satisfied with their choice. Looking on all the statements, they range from two opposite points: totally changed, especially with the tech boom, and trapped in time.

This is the perception of the video game industry workers on the neighbourhood and its creative milieu. Their activities in the creative milieu are not very pronounced and their perception of the Mile End is very diverse. It will now be interesting to see how the cultural actors perceive the neighbourhood and how they are part of the creative milieu as cultural actor.

6.1.2. Cultural Actors in the Mile End

6.1.2.1. Neighbourhood - a Global View of What is Going On

The changes perceived in the neighbourhood from a global perspective complement the descriptions of the dynamics in the previous chapter (chapter 5). A change over time in the Mile End is described by several interviewees, some of whom have lived in the neighbourhood for more than 20 years. The changes addressed are changes of the cultural offers, the restaurants, and changes of the neighbourhood in general. Interviewees P31 and P28 portray a multi-faceted development of the neighbourhood during the last two decades. Interviewee P31, who has been living for more than 15 years in the area describes it as follows:

Well, I mean, definitely there's less of the kind of institutions, you know, like the, the old stores that were there for 60-80 years, that now are. There's, there's a lot more changeover of bigger names and brand stores. Especially like along Saint-Viateur. I think that's probably the street, I mean, Bernard as well, I think Bernard and Saint- Viateur, that are the streets that I've seen the biggest change, and also it seems like it's still rapidly changing all the time. Like, there's been changes on streets like Maguire and Fairmont, but those seem to have been a little slower and they've sort of settled. Does it make sense? Like, a new business opens and its stays. You know. But I feel like Saint-Viateur and Bernard it's like still rapidly changing and business is coming in and opening and then a year later they close a new one comes in, and it's like, it's a bit of a like identity crisis. Sometimes it feels like. And I think that one of the things I liked when I first moved was that it felt comfortable with itself. [grinning] There was some newer places, some older places, there was like the barbershop, there was, you know, of course the Italian coffee shops, you know, Olimpico and Social Club. Hum, and you know, I'm, I'm definitely still glad that there's a lot of those places [that] are still there 'cause those are really like the lifeline, they feel like of the community. I think as well, I mean, something that's really unique and interesting about, about the area is the Hassidic community that is still there and hopefully will stay there because it adds to the flavor and character and diversity of the neighbourhood, you know, that's also something that I think makes it unique to other places.

This impression is also given by interviewee P28 who has also been living in the area for more than 15 years. He completes the statement above by saying that

Otherwise, you know, I think [...] just in general, like when I first started living in this neighbourhood anecdotally there was basically two Italian cafés, there was the Polish restaurant and a couple of grocery stores in that corner. [...] The Italian cafés were just starting to open up to the sort of bohemian artist crowd that was realizing you could get good cheap coffee in these places. But they were otherwise pretty much these old men clubs. And slowly the Café which is now called the Olimpico is now like a tourist attraction, it became popular and [...].

And for some years later, he identifies a change of restaurants etc. described as follows:

Yeah! Definitely! The streets, I think primarily Saint-Viateur, but also Bernard and Fairmount. Hum. It's definitely the small business lunch crowd that definitely boomed and blossomed and that's 100% thanks to Ubisoft. And that's a good thing because there are some really good restaurants. More recently, there's been even more high-end restaurants, like a pretty fancy bistro just around the corner here. [...] And surprisingly some failures, but, I don't know why the pizza places never seem to take root. [...] [...] Hard to say. I mean, its, I guess, I guess maybe bars and restaurants improve significantly. Like 20 years ago there were some sketchy bars, like obvious drug operations happening, and yeah. Not exactly pleasant, and not serving the neighbourhood at all, definitely serving people from outside the neighbourhood for the most part. But I think the same is it's true, it's in a fresher direction. There are now a number of really popular fancy bars, the Waverly, is one of them, the Bishop&Bagg is another. I think a lot of the people who come to those bars are coming from outside of the neighbourhood, but maybe, I don't know maybe that's too the Ubisoft crowd during happy hour, hum. Hard to know. But I think that's, that sort of, if you want to define that as cultural, I'm not so sure, I mean there's some music that's related to some of that I guess, some opportunities for some visual artists, I guess, associated to those. There was a pretty important commercial gallery on Saint-Laurent. A ? moved in. Hard, I doubt if you could associate their success with the presence of Ubisoft. They're both elements that define the neighbourhood, for sure.

Regarding the development of restaurants, participant P29 adds that the new ones are not too bad or at least “it’s not like there’s McDonald’s or things like that” and they “have that local feel”.

These detailed descriptions can only be completed by some further aspects. Artists and the artistic flair are “what defines everyone’s idea of the Mile End” (P28) but the character of the cultural field changes because there are less available studios for young and new artists, so they move to neighbourhoods north of the Mile End because they prefer to live close to their studio (P28, P33), and only established artists are able to stay (P28). However, even the established ones have to move because they are pushed out due to rising rents, as interviewee P31 reports. In this context, some participants are thinking about other services and how they might change. Interviewee P29 thinks about what is still in the area and hasn’t changed: YMCA, concert halls, green public spaces that are not privatised, parks and schools. Participant P30 complement this list by listing the changes: Cagibi on Saint-Laurent closed, Ursa on du Parc and the cinema on Saint-Laurent opened. Interviewee P31 is happy that “some places are still there that are part of the community”. The intensity of change over time also comes up. A change in intensity from less to more and back to less has been noted by participant P30 during the 16 years she has lived in the area. In contrast, participant P29 has a different experience, and he says that the area has only changed rapidly in the last two years and only a little before that.

Part of the development is that the Mile End has become more attractive and a touristic attraction (P33). As a consequence, the cultural character of the Mile End is changing: “We kind of see it too, the cultural amenities are just a little bit different. Like, instead of having clubs and bars on Saint-Laurent where bands playing late at night, you hear more about noise complaints. [smiling]” (P28). But this also depends on the people that now move to the Mile End. There are more yuppies, wealthy families that didn’t exist before in the neighbourhood, such as Parisian family with money, on the one hand, and younger students, arts students (P28), and more hip people during the last ten years (P32) on the other. So, besides the upper middle class that coins the neighbourhood, there are still middle-class people who live in the area (P33). It is also seen as a multi ethnic neighbourhood with a strong French presence (P33). But there is also something odd that the P30 interviewee notices. She states that the Mile End is predominantly a white neighbourhood, although with a linguistic and religious diversity.

Today’s Mile End can be better understood by looking at the historical development that

interviewee P33 gives. He explains that until the 1970s the Mile End was a working class, poor, run-down area, a slum with a lot of criminal fires. Then, a new wave of immigrants came to the area because it was cheap, but unlike before, the new immigrants were educated people, such as teachers and academics, mostly from France and Switzerland. They started to request amenities and so the years 1982-1984 saw the founding of Mile End citizen committees which fought for e. g. a public library, green spaces, better garbage disposal, and safety, which was the “starting point of how it looks today”. In the 1990s there was then an influx of young Anglophone students because the Mile End was still cheap, and it was also the time the independent music scene was established in the Mile End, and the time when a lot of artists came to the neighbourhood. This wave was followed by another one at the beginning of the 2000s that brought young, professional, not poor French immigrants to the area. Small restaurants and small bio grocery stores emerged along with it that coin the area still today. So far, the Mile End has renewed itself every time, for example in the 1980s after the decline of the textile industry, the video game and multimedia industry replaced this industry. This development was unpredictable in the 1980s.

It is therefore not surprising that when asked about the future development of the Mile End, participants present several scenarios. Regarding the artistic sector, there is a chance for young artists to stay or settle in the area due to the economic downturn during Covid-19 times (P28) on the one hand, and on the other the prediction is that really interesting artistic stuff will probably migrate somewhere else (P28, P31), for example moving further north, to neighbourhoods north of the Mile End, so that there will be fewer musicians, writers and artists in the area (P29), but a “creative stronghold” (P31) will stay. This development is connected with the real estate market and rising rents. The neighbourhood will get wealthier, more sterile, a great place for families (P28), young business and people and professionals (P28, P29). So, the gentrification process will go on (P28), but interviewee P33 also sees that gentrification has its limits, which is underlined by interviewee P30. She says that at the moment, cheap apartments for rents are available, which hopefully keep a social mix and a mix of ages, because she thinks that “it’s important to keep some sort of a balance, to make sure that younger and older people can live here, and less, you know, affluent people can live here” because this is what a neighbourhood makes interesting.

Summary Overview

In short, the Mile End has changed over the last decades, as described by several interviewees, some of whom have lived there for more than 15 years. The development of the Mile End is connected to the waves of immigrants. Until the 1970s, the Mile End was a working class, poor, run-down area. The wave at the beginning of the 1980s brought immigrants to the Mile End who started to request amenities, such as the public library or green spaces. Another wave in the 1990s brought artists and musicians to the neighbourhood, which finally led to the image the Mile End has today. The last wave in the early 2000s brought professional, non-poor French immigrants to the area. With it came yuppies, hip and young people. These new groups asked for new or different services and amenities such as small restaurants and small bio grocery stores that also coin the Mile End today. The interviewees describe the sometimes-frequent change of shops in streets like Saint-Viateur and Bernard, an increase in (good) local restaurants thanks to lunch-goers from businesses like Ubisoft, and an improvement in bars you can go to in the neighbourhood. Moreover, they report that there are still established locations that are part of Mile End's identity such as the Italian coffee shops Olimpico and Club Social on Saint-Viateur, and services as well, such as the YMCA on du Parc and concert halls. The speed of change in shops and facilities is variously perceived. Further, they address the artists and the artistic flair of the Mile End. They see a change because rents are rising, and so artists (have to) leave for other places. However, they explain that the Mile End will continue to be a creative and cultural stronghold, but with a different character than before.

The view presented shows the overall picture of the neighbourhood in detail. However, there are also aspects that should be looked at more closely, such as the creative milieu, which is considered important for cultural players.

6.1.2.2. Creative Milieu

In this thesis, the creative milieu encompasses social interactions with their interrelationships, the mixing of people, socialisation and the representation of relationships and behaviours within and towards other groups, as well as networking. In the case of the cultural actors, these individual dimensions cannot be considered separately, as in their case everything is interconnected. This becomes clear when four of the participants talk about it. They live in the area and therefore interact

with the neighbourhood on a daily basis, be it for shopping, work or interactions with friends and neighbours they have met over the years.

This relationship and the way it has become connected to the Mile End is expressed by interviewee P31. She says:

I have stayed in the neighbourhood because, I guess, I guess, within the first few years, I met so many people and, you know, not so much that my existing friends were here, but I think I made a lot of new friends in the neighbourhood. And I really feel like I connected to the community in the neighbourhood. And I really, really like that and I didn't want to leave that aspect of it. So, that's probably the single biggest thing that's made me stay.

This is similar to the experience of interviewee P30 who focuses in her description on the neighbours and the place they met. She tells that "Like in our back alley, there is, I've become friends with people because we hang around in the back alleys, you know. It's a great way to meet people and hang out and you know." She further goes out with friends in the Mile End, and for her it is also important of "being part of culture, of the cultural community" that nurtures her. Noteworthy is that she also talks about the personal relation to one of the shops she goes. She really appreciates that the butcher knows her by name, which makes a special attachment to the area and "it feels like a village within a larger community".

One way to build a connection to the neighbourhood and to build up a network is to have children, which is described by two (P28, P29). One describes his experience of making roots and connections in the following way:

Everyday I was going to parks and meeting people there, other parents and children there. Hum. I just say, having children really helps meet other people. And this neighbourhood is great for that because you're sort of forced to be a bit closer because things are a bit smaller, parks are a bit smaller and public spaces are a bit smaller; you're sort of forced to interact with people. (P29)

And he adds by having the networking aspect in mind that

on the way to the daycare, you know, I'm leaving to and I meet people all the time, you

know, we pass each other and that comes from staying, from being in the neighbourhood for a while and sort of committing to it and you build up these networks of people, you know, hum, which is important to us, because it's a dense neighbourhood, there are so many people to bump into (P29).

This connection and the development over time are expressed by interviewee P28:

Yeah. Hu. Well, I mean, so my son was born in this neighbourhood, he is 13 now. There has been a lot, you know, you meet a lot of new people that way, you know, parents of other kids their age, a whole network of people I met that way. So. Hum. [...] For a time was all about local daycare, the local school. Now my son goes to school downtown, so, and he's a lot more independent, so there is less of that immediate need to be involved in his life, but some of those friendships have lasted, and so we do suppers at neighbors, and backyard parties. I think it's, I think that's probably one of the best lasting things about this neighbourhood is how chill it is for group social interactions.

These two interviewees talk also about a professional network. Interviewee P28 says that he deals with other artists, such as *Les Ateliers Créatifs de Montréal* (P28), and interviewee P29 talks about further small software companies of his field in the area that builds a community where people talk to each other and where new clients are found that way by word-of-mouth recommendation. Looking on possibilities to socialise and on teamwork, one point can be added. Participants P31 and P33 are thinking of festivals and additional programmes aimed at giving people the opportunity to go out and engage and socialise in public spaces. Regarding Ubisoft, participant P33 adds that the work at Ubisoft is based on teamwork, which includes a team-building process. This process also takes place in the neighbourhood, for example through group activities.

Part of the creative milieu are also the places to meet, socialise and exchange. These places are considered by interviewee P29. For him, places to meet are important, such as the *Cloud*, the Cafés *Olimpico* and *Club Social* on St. Viateur, *Café Felice* on du Parc, the book shop *Drawn & Quarterly* and the restaurant *Nouveau Palais* on Bernard, which is the only restaurant he would put in that group. He focuses on public places, such as cafés, because they

are easily accessible, mean they're not expensive for people to go to and meet. Hu. So, I

would consider those also important because, you don't, 'cause those are more obvious. [...] These institutions are visual reminders that [...] these people [writers and artists] exist, and this is where they gather. When it's full you can assume that a quarter of them are cultural workers or participants.

In addition to their private social interactions and networks, the interviewees were asked about other people they see in the neighbourhood. The interviewees see a lot of cultural players (P28, P29, P32, P33), who are not visible unless you know them (P28, P29). They are “under the radar and you don't see them” (P28). Cultural players are for example artists (P32) such as painters, writers and musicians (P29), actors such as Kim with her *Festival Phenomena* since about 20 years (P33), and cultural organizations (P32) such as *Les Ateliers Créatifs* and *Pied Carré* (P33), the independent music scene from the 90s such as *Pop Montreal* and *Clandestine Raves* by Dan Seligman (P33), record studios (P33), and independent venues from the 90s such as *Casa del Popolo*, that is “like a cultural institution, definitely” (P31), as well as music groups such as *Godspeed You! Black Emperor* (P33). The people are described as people of all ages whose stay in the area varies (P32). This is seen a little bit differently by interviewee P30. She states that the people grew old and that the truly cool hipsters do not live any more in the Mile End. Further groups seen are people from Ubisoft, who are described as male and about 30 years old, and who go to the lunch places on Saint-Viateur (P31), and people from the Hassidic community (P29, P31).

Summary Overview

To sum up, the creative milieu in the Mile End is the place for the interviewees to interact, socialise and network because they live and work in the area and all this is inseparably linked. They are connected with the Mile End and its community because they made friends in the area over the years, which is an argument for them to stay. Circles of friends and networks are, on the one hand, the neighbours, and for those with children, other parents they have met through the kindergarten, playground, or school. Further occasions to socialise and get to know people are festivals and events in the area, and further places to socialise and exchange are e. g. the cafés or book shops. Only two interviewees think about professional networking in their field of work. The people interviewed still see many cultural and creative actors in the neighbourhood, most of whom, however, are not obvious. Further groups seen in the area are people of different ages, people from Ubisoft, described as male and about 30 years old, as well as people from the Hassidic community.

The experiences of the creative milieu as well as how the neighbourhood is seen globally do not yet show all facets of the neighbourhood. To complete the picture, the examination of the perception of the neighbourhood with its different characteristics is needed.

6.1.2.3. Perception of the Neighbourhood

A neighbourhood is perceived on different levels, some of which merge into one another. Nevertheless, where possible, this perception is associated with the social, physical, spatial, or administrative unit. This section is rounded off with the perception of whether the Mile End is seen as a cultural neighbourhood or not.

Activities, opportunities for interactions and (neighbourly) relationships, that include formal and informal ties are part of the social unit. This is in the focus of interviewee P28. He likes the Mile End because of the social life, the cafés, the restaurants and being involved with community groups. He thinks that the Mile End is a great place for young families. This goes in line with interviewee P33 who sees it as a “live-work-play neighbourhood”, and with interviewee P30 who describes the area as very livable and human, and with a linguistic duality, which is part of the nourishing ground for artists who are footed between different cultures.

There are hardly any comments about the perception of blocks, streets, and houses (physical unit), and about the perception of proximity and difference to surrounding neighbourhoods (spatial unit). For instance, half of the interviewees perceive the Mile End as a (lovely) walkable neighbourhood (P28, P30, P33), with a lot of trees (P28) that makes the area trendy and attractive (P33), although it is a dense neighbourhood (P30). The area is also not uniform as interviewee P30 expresses. She says that “the other thing, I think is amazing about the Mile End is that we have Laurier Street down there which is kind of fancy and then you have Saint-Viateur which is not so fancy”, although Saint-Viateur is perceived as the centre and the heartbeat of the neighbourhood (P28). Interviewee P33 also thinks of the central location of the Mile End within Montreal, and the proximity to Mont-Royal.

The interviewees live in the Mile End or next to it. Therefore, there are no doubts about its borders. Only interviewee P30 is not sure if the street Saint-Joseph is still in the Mile End. She is not sure

because this street is out of the way to her workplace and back. Saint-Joseph is still in the Mile End.

All cultural actors see the Mile End as a cultural neighbourhood. Interviewee P33 gives some information about the background of its development. He says that around 1995-2005 the Mile End developed as being a very strong cultural neighbourhood. Artists and musicians mostly settled in one of the former garment factories because the rent was cheap. A strong independent music scene developed, e.g. the group *Arcade Fire* had its studio there. Today, there are still artists, musicians, or visual artists, in these buildings. Further, there are also different cultural actors as participant P33 adds: “if you consider a video game producer, like Ubisoft or Framestore, they do visual effects for the Hollywood blockbuster, they’re also Mile End based, in the large definition of cultural and artistic, they are part of it”. With this in mind, interviewee P30 says that 80% of the Canadian film industry, Denis Villeneuve (as an example), is based in the Mile End. With a look on the artists, interviewee P31, a visual artist, describe her impression over the last two decades:

Ah, yeah, I do. Ya, because there’s so many people in creative fields, you know, living and working in the neighbourhood. So, I think that just kind of makes it permeates, you know, through the kind of fabric of, of the, the neighbourhood. I mean, I have so many friends and neighbours who are, you know, musicians or writers or artists, but it’s still definitely, I mean, it feels a bit less than it used to. You know, I’ve been living in the neighbourhood for 20 years. So, I’ve seen some shifts and changes. So, I feel in some ways like it’s becoming less and less cultural, but I think it still does feel that way to me right now.

This is in line with a statement by interviewee P28, who thinks that even when a lot of (underground) artists move away, there is still a lot of culture in the area, but the character is changing because of different kind of arts and of cultural offer. Although there have been changes, the range of cultural events and organisations is still numerous and diverse and there are still many different cultural communities and businesses that attract visitors to the Mile End. Noteworthy is that interviewee P29 says that he can feel the culturality in the area, but he is not sure if this feeling is not influenced by the census published in 2006⁹⁰ that the Mile End has a high density of artists

⁹⁰ Analysis of data by Hill (2010).

because when one moves there, it feels normal.

Having a look on the cultural side also includes the view if the Mile End can be considered as a technological neighbourhood. This is seen differently. On the one hand some participants don't see the Mile End as a technological neighbourhood, although two of them state that they see a lot of people working with their laptops, especially in cafés (P28, P29). However, not all people working with their computers are in the technological field, as interviewee P28 knows. He recognises a lot of artists: "But for sure there are a lot of independent artists and workers who use café spaces as their offices. Yeah." Interviewee P29 explains his impression by stating that resident businesses don't make it a Hi-tech or a smart neighbourhood, although regarding his business he says that there are plenty of small software companies. The perception of interviewee P30 goes in the same direction, comparing it to Mile Ex, where she sees more technology companies than in the Mile End, where there is (according to her) only Ubisoft. On the other hand, the second half sees it as a technological neighbourhood (P31, P32, P33), at least the east-northeast part of the Mile End with Ubisoft and all the other companies that followed. Thus, the technological businesses in that area make it a technological neighbourhood.

As all interviewees live in the area or at the edge of Mile End in Outremont, the community of the Hassidic Jews lives around them. Therefore, some of the interviewees also include in their thoughts this community, who "see the Mile End also as their neighbourhood" (P29). Although the Hassidic are omnipresent in the western part of the Mile End, not all interviewees talk about them. This might go along with the statement of interviewee P29 who says that "I was thinking about. I totally discount the Hassidic community. I don't consider them part of the community, which I think is a mistake probably. Because they are physically, even though the interaction between them, between the Hassidic community and the non-Hassidic community is very limited."

Half of the interviewees state that the Hassidic community has grown much bigger during the last decades, and they predict that this community will still grow in the future (P29, P30, P32). Therefore, there will be a rising need for Jewish facilities and amenities, as well as housing. This ambivalence of the future development of the area is expressed by interviewee P29. He states that:

Well, exactly, so there's two sides to it. So, there is, the Hassidic community is growing, so I expect more and more, hu, public service, businesses either being taken over by them to

serve their community, hum, so sort of not being sort of fancy restaurants but more sort of like bakeries or schuls, schools, hu, hu, hum. So there's that side, that's going to change it. On the other side, it seems like fewer and fewer musicians, artists and writers will be able to afford to live here, so more and more professional types will move in. But it's, it's to be determined how that will affect sort of the day-to-day scene. I think that's going to be a slower process vis à vis the Hassidic community because they are growing exponentially. There's more pressure for that community to find spaces for themselves because they are running out of, I think they are running out of. There are only so much apartments, so many living spaces. Hu, so that's how I see the neighbourhood changing. Yeah.

On the other hand, this interviewee thinks that this community also enriches the Mile End culturally with their festivities and way of living, because “culture can also mean religion, religious activity, these kind of things”. It also makes the Mile End unique, as stated by interviewee P31: “I think as well, I mean, something that's really unique and interesting about the area is the Hassidic community that is still there and hopefully will stay there because it adds to the flavor and character and diversity of the neighbourhood”.

The final reflection relates to the respondents' opinion as to whether or not they would move away from the Mile End. All would like to stay in the Mile End because they are satisfied with their choice of living. One reason why they chose the neighbourhood was because of cheap rent, and as it was the case for interviewee P28, “it was sort of friends of friends who had the lease and they passed it on to us”. Respondent P30 as well knew people who supported her in her decision before she moved. The arguments in favour of the neighbourhood are its central location within the city (P32), the proximity within the Mile End to everything on foot (P30, P31, P33), the proximity to the studio and workspace (P31), the availability of everything you need (P30, P31), a diversified audience (P32), the presence of cultural lovers and workers (P29, P30, P31, P32), a creative environment to work in (P31), and just the feeling that it is different from other areas in the city (P29). Interviewee P28 sees the whole picture of why the Mile End is his area to live. He explains:

It was very practical. It wasn't because of anything in particular about the Mile End, but, I mean, certainly the cafés that were here were a huge plus. And, I have to say what is now Café Olimpico [...] and to some extent Club Social, one block over, were, and still are, but were especially then in the early 2000s, late nineties, early 2000s. It was a, it was a hub, it

was the place to go, like every, every, I met so many people, like friends of mine, who are good friends now, I met them there, and I met friends of friends there. That was something quite special, that was the beating heart of the Mile End at the start. And, I can't say that was the reason I moved here, but I, it's definitely the reason why people gravitated to Saint-Viateur, and it did become something of a beating heart.

The community feeling is also mentioned by interviewees P30 and P31, in particular that everyone knows each other (P30) and that by time a network could be established (P31). There is only interviewee P33 who states that he could imagine moving away one day.

Summary Overview

All in all, activities, opportunities for interactions and (neighbourly) relationships come to the mind of half of the interviewees. In the Mile End, there are a lot of good possibilities, occasions, and places such as cafés, to socialise and meet people. Further, the neighbourhood is a livable area that allows to combine living and working. This impression is supported by the perception that the Mile End is a (lovely) walkable, green neighbourhood, though the whole area is not uniform, and differences exist, e. g. in terms of stores and restaurants. The Mile End is seen as a cultural neighbourhood by all cultural actors because of the high number of artists, such as musicians and visual artists that have settled in the area since the 1990s. Now there are other cultural players, such as the film and video game industry with their different fields. And further changes are still seen that might change the character of the creative and cultural sector, but it will still be creative and cultural. However, looking at the technological side of the neighbourhood, the views differ. One half does not see it as a technological area. Their overall impression is a non-technological one because there are too few technological companies. The other half sees at least the east-northeast part as a technological area because of the number of businesses. One group that characterises the neighbourhood are the Hassidic Jews who live in the area and are therefore also part of the Mile End. The interviewees report that the community is growing bigger since the last decades, and consequently they will need more Jewish facilities and amenities, as well as housing, and so the neighbourhood will probably change as well. They also contribute to the cultural fabric of the Mile End. Considering the overall perception of the Mile End, no one is planning to move away. Everyone is still satisfied with the decision to have moved there, e. g. because of the community feeling and the proximity to everything.

6.1.2.4. Conclusion

Based on the statements of the cultural actors from different areas, a diverse picture of the neighbourhood, its creative milieu and overall perception emerges.

The way, the Mile is today must be considered against the background of its historical development since the 1970s. Waves of immigrants moved to the Mile End and coined the area. In the 1980s people with better-paid jobs who demanded amenities like green space and a library moved to the working class and poor area. Next, in the 1990s, artists and musicians moved to the Mile End, which led to the image the neighbourhood still has today. And finally, at the beginning of the 2000s, yuppies, hip, and young people, as well as the professional French, who asked for different services and amenities such as small restaurants and organic grocery stores, moved to the area. This is also about the time when Ubisoft and other technological companies settled in the area.

The creative milieu in the Mile End is part of the life of the cultural actors. It is the place for interacting, socialising, and networking on festivals or in cafés and book shops because they live and work in the area and therefore it is inseparably linked. Over the years they have made good friends, such as neighbours, other artists, or the parents of those who have children. So, the Mile End is not only a good place to socialise and to meet people but also a livable area that allows to combine living and working. These facts are, amongst others, the reason why none of the interviewees think of moving away. Besides these activities, they go to the neighbourhood for their daily life, such as grocery. In this context, they talked about changes of stores and offer, such as the adaptation to a different demand and the replacing of old stores. In particular, they talk about the sometimes-frequent change of shops in streets like Saint-Viateur and Bernard. However, they also report that there are still established places that are part of Mile End's identity such as the Italian coffee shops Olimpico and Club Social on Saint-Viateur. Overall, the Mile End is perceived as a lovely walkable, green neighbourhood, as not uniform, for different pockets, so with a lot of differences regarding stores and restaurants. The Mile End is further perceived as a cultural neighbourhood because of the cultural players of different fields that have settled during the last three decades. Most of these cultural players are not obvious, so one must know them. Further looking at the technological side of the neighbourhood, the Mile End is only perceived in the northeastern part as a technological neighbourhood by some because of the companies that settled

there. The other part is seen as residential. The people seen in the area are described as people of different ages, as people working at Ubisoft, which means male and 30 years old, and as members of the Hassidic community. This community is still growing and (will) coin the area with their shops, places of worship, for example.

The perceptions and activities of cultural players are very detailed in some respects, such as those of the creative milieu. This differs from that of video game developers. It is therefore worth taking a closer look at this and other differences and similarities.

6.1.3. Comparison of the Interviews in the Mile End

As seen in the two previous parts, in the analysis of the interviews of the video game developers and the cultural actors in the Mile End, the perception of the neighbourhood as globally seen and the perception of the creative milieu differ between the group of video game developers and cultural actors, although there are also similarities. The Mile End as it is today cannot be understood with its historical development, so in our case the development since the 1970s. None of the developers refer to the Mile End as it was in the former days, and from the cultural actors there is one who knows the historical background since those days. It is the development from a working class neighbourhood that was shaped by the several waves of immigrants such as in the 1990s when artists and musicians moved to the area leading to the Mile End's image, to the Mile End as it looks today. This is not considered in the thoughts of the remaining participants. In other words, the video game developers know and talk about the time they spend working in the Mile End and the cultural workers talk about the time they spend living there. The effect of the last wave of immigration on the neighbourhood at the beginning of the 2000s is perceived by a few from both groups. These new immigrants are professional, non-poor French immigrants. With this came yuppies, hip, and young people, who asked for different services and amenities such as small restaurants and organic grocery stores. This wave came shortly after the time when Ubisoft and other technological companies started to settle in the area.

The overall impression of the neighbourhood is also important to understand the connection to the neighbourhood. The cultural actors perceive the Mile End as a lovely walkable, green neighbourhood, as not uniform, and attractive, so with a lot of differences regarding stores and

restaurants. Different depictions are given by the developers. They describe the Mile End as young, wealthy, as an office district and not as a residential neighbourhood, centrally located within Montreal, and as a neighbourhood with a local vibe, and where you can still find local and long-established businesses. Some developers see the Mile End as a European neighbourhood due to its streets, houses, and old buildings. Further, they list the cafés at the street corners that make the Mile End distinctive. The developers also describe the neighbourhood as hip, which also indicates changes as emphasised by some.

The impression of a neighbourhood is also influenced by the people in the neighbourhood. The developers see different types of people such as dwellers and workers of tech companies. Regarding age, they see people of all ages, and many young people labelled as hip or millennials. Most of these groups are also seen by the cultural actors, such as people of all ages, and young people, but they ‘identify’ these people as persons working at Ubisoft. More specifically, the cultural actors see men who are around 30 years old. Most of the interviewees in both groups also see the Hassidic community in the neighbourhood, including their stores and places of worship. Thus, this mix of different people is described by two developers as a weird mix that makes the Mile End special. Further, these different kinds of people help make the Mile End feel alive with a lot of activities in a pleasing and good ambience.

There is also the cultural aspect of the Mile End. In this respect, all respondents share the same opinion. They see the Mile End as a cultural neighbourhood. Explanations listed are the cultural players of different fields that have settled during the last three decades seen by the cultural actors, as well as the cultural offer and the mood and feeling that the Mile End exudes by the developers. Hence, some participants in both groups talk about changes in the cultural offer, such as the increase of the cultural offer and amenities in recent years that are available all year round. This leads to the uniqueness of the Mile End in terms of culture as emphasised by developers. However, half of the developers don’t see any change in this field. The reason why the video game developers don’t list the cultural actors present in the area might be that most of these cultural players are not obvious, so one must know them, as explained by some cultural actors. The video game developers also give their overall impression of the Mile End. Statements are between that the Mile End has totally changed especially with the tech boom on the one hand, and the Mile End seems to be trapped in time on the other.

The other aspect of the neighbourhood is the technological one. The northeastern part of the Mile End is seen as technological by the cultural actors because of the companies that settled there while the rest of the Mile End is described as residential. This view is not as uniform among video game developers, although both groups point to the same issue: the number of technology companies in this part of the neighbourhood. For one half of the developers, the number of companies is sufficient to speak of a technological neighbourhood, while the other half denies.

However, the connection to the neighbourhood is not only of a cultural or technical nature. For both groups, the Mile End is a place to socialise, to interact and to network with other people. This is very important for the cultural actors at events and different places, such as cafés and restaurants, in the area because they live and work there. It has become inseparably linked also because of the relation and friendship they built with neighbours, other artists, and parents. The video game developers are connected to the Mile End as well but differently. They mainly go there for work. When they are out to the Mile End, they go there mostly with colleagues during lunch time to eat in one of the restaurants, and sometimes for after-works events. Besides colleagues, some of them come with their family and friends to the neighbourhood to go to restaurants or just for having a walk. Working outside in the neighbourhood is not an option for the video game developers because they are not allowed due to an NDA clause. The offer, amenities and the atmosphere are important for the well-being and plays a role if one wants to live in the area. The cultural actors and video game developers who live in the area are still satisfied of living there and can't imagine moving away. Most of the developers who don't live in the Mile End could imagine moving there but the rents are too high.

To sum up, there are major differences and similarities. The overall impression of the Mile End by the video game developers and the cultural actors is diverse. The developers describe it as hip and wealthy, as an office neighbourhood and not as a residential neighbourhood, while the cultural actors see it as a lovely walkable green neighbourhood. Though, in both groups there are interviewees who address the variety of (traditional) stores. A further similarity in the perception is given. Both groups mainly see the same kind of people in the area, such as people of all ages or hip people. To remark is that the cultural actors point to the group of people working at Ubisoft they see in the neighbourhood. They describe them as male and about 30 years old seen around lunchtime on Saint-Viateur. Further, looking at the cultural side of the neighbourhood, all agree

that it is a cultural one. The connection to the Mile End differs for both groups. While the cultural actors live and work in the area, the neighbourhood is therefore an inseparable part of their professional and private life. This differs for most of the video game developers who mainly come to the Mile End for work. There are only some who are out and around in their free time. They are satisfied with the offer. A multifaceted picture of the Mile End was drawn in relation to the neighbourhood, its creative milieu, and the perception of it as illustrated in table 28.

Table 28: Comparison of the most important similar and different perceptions and descriptions of the analysis of the video game developers and cultural actors for ‘Inside the neighbourhood’ in Mile End

	Similarities	Differences
Neighbourhood - a Global View of What is Going On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No knowledge about the historical development of the neighbourhood • Knowledge about the time they have been working or living in the neighbourhood • Waves of immigrants perceived (by few) • Perception of Mile End as a cultural neighbourhood • Change in cultural offer (increase) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View about themselves as culturally active, and a creative person, as well as the corresponding lifestyle
Interdependence, sociability, representations of relationships and behaviour, as well as networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections at various levels (video game developers: workspace; cultural actors: professional level and private)
Perception of the Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central location within the City of Montreal • Boundaries of the neighbourhood not clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Source: Author

Yet the Mile End is not the only focus of this thesis. Therefore, a look at Flingern-Nord from the same perspective is now appropriate.

6.2. Flingern-Nord

After looking at the neighbourhood of Mile End, the focus is now on Flingern-Nord and its creative milieu and its perception. The interviews with the video game developers (6.2.1.) and the cultural professionals (6.2.2.) are analysed first, followed by a comparison of the interviews with the two groups in Flingern-Nord (6.2.3.).

6.2.1. Video Game Developers in Flingern-Nord

6.2.1.1. Neighbourhood - a Global View of What is Going On

The global view of the neighbourhood and what is going on enlarges the view of the described dynamics in chapter 5. Besides these dynamics, most of the interviewees can't state about or don't see many further things that are going on in Flingern-Nord (P4, P6, P7, P8, P9). Interviewee P6 who has been living in the area for three years has a twofold impression. On the one hand she states: "Well, as a neighbourhood it is evolving. There are a lot more young people here than it used to be. And I see, see some graphic designers like little work then their little workspaces. And there's also a lot of restaurants opening". But on the other hand, she says that "otherwise I don't really see much improvement, to be honest, because the streets are still dirty, there are pretty much the same people over there. I really don't see that much going on. That's it". Focusing the view on the area around Ubisoft, few statements are made. This area has improved, and some parts are described as looking really nice (P4, P10). A further description is given by those who have known Flingern or Düsseldorf for a longer time by taking into consideration the historical background, such as a local Düsseldorf resident (P1) or the participant who has lived and worked in Düsseldorf for more than 20 years (P3). The image of Flingern-Nord in earlier times is that of a working class neighbourhood where people with no deep pockets (P3) could live cheaply (P1) and it was not one with the best reputations (P2). Creative and cultural people got attracted at one point according to P1, and today, he sees Flingern-Nord as a gentrified neighbourhood. However, the perception is not related to the time they have worked for Ubisoft, but to their connection with the neighbourhood, e.g. as a resident or as a Düsseldorf citizen. It is worth mentioning the statement

of participant P5, who says that he is not aware of the changes in the neighbourhood, but he has changed towards the area and is starting to take more interest in this neighbourhood.

The interviewees also think about the future of Flingern-Nord. In the future, the development that is underway in Flingern-Nord will continue, as predicted by interviewee P1. In particular, it will get more expensive, which will result in a change of the milieu because the established dwellers, such as the working class people and artists, will move away and will be replaced by people with money. This development is also seen by interviewees P3 and P8. Not taking gentrification into account, other interviewees state that Flingern-Nord is evolving in a good direction (P4), in the same way it evolves now (P7, P9). Having a look on the improvements around Ubisoft that might attract further companies (P2, P10), and shops that might attract people (P6), interviewee P10 states:

Well, I think it will evolve in the way that there is, they offer more opportunities to businesses, maybe not only to businesses. Because it will evolve along with the businesses in the end. So, I would see it, but it will increase in terms of offerings in this regard. It's true that right now, we have this situation, and you know, incorrectly, speaking of at least, it will have released definitely some upload, so let's say.

Although participant P7 hopes that Flingern-Nord will continue to develop in the same way as before, he hopes that some of its characteristics will remain: quiet, relaxing, safe and a place where people like to go for a walk and eat well.

Summary Overview

Apart from small current changes that can be named by few participants, only two participants are able to describe the development of Flingern-Nord over a longer period of time. They report that Flingern-Nord has changed from a working class neighbourhood with not a good reputation to an area that attracted artists and creative people where a gentrification process is now underway. Looking on the overall feeling and impression of its development, almost all interviewees thinks that apart from a gentrification process, Flingern-Nord is developing in a good direction. So, in the future, other companies or restaurants might get attracted which further enhances the neighbourhood.

As can be seen, there are only a few points in the participants' global perspective that are not related to the aforementioned dynamics. However, this says nothing about how the interviewees experience and describe the creative milieu, as this is the environment in which they themselves move and act locally.

6.2.1.2. Creative Milieu

The creative milieu is the place where respondents spend their time and interact in the neighbourhood. This can be viewed from two aspects, namely from the aspect of social interaction with its interrelationships, the mixing of people and the making of contacts, and from the aspect of the display of relationships and behaviours within and with other groups, as well as networking. These two aspects cannot always be clearly separated from each other, because while you are socialising with others, you can also build networks. Nevertheless, a separation is made as far as possible in the analysis.

Interrelation, Mixing of People and Socialising

Most of the participants go out or stroll around in Flingern-Nord with their life partner or family once in a while (P1, P3, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10), but almost the same numbers meet and socialise with friends in the neighbourhood every now and then (P1, P5, P6, P7, P10) in order to do some cultural activities (P4), to go to cafés and restaurants or to have an ice-cream (P6, P7), to go to a bar (P4) also during the weekend to concerts (P10) or to play board games (P6) also with colleagues (P9). Participant P5 gives a more detailed explanation of what he does in the neighbourhood:

What I do in Flingern. Sometimes, it's just going to work and back. So, I socialize. I go there with friends I would have a beer after work or maybe even in the weekend just, just go have a drink. Let's go and find maybe a nice, a new nice place, if possible, with some nice music or something. And I think we have been to a couple of these super small concerts and to like a food festival scene and I believe I have been to an art gallery; you know that you mentioned that I think [it] was in Flingern.

In relation to work, interviewee P7 states that he occasionally goes with his team to Flingern-Nord for lunch and dinner when they don't go downtown. Going out or having a drink in the

neighbourhood is also something interviewee P6 does. However, the impression that there are people from Ubisoft in the neighbourhood is not underlined by interviewee P10: when he goes out with his co-workers they go to other places in the city. Otherwise, this interviewee meets his friends in the neighbourhood of which some are former co-workers.

In brief, most of the participants go to Flingern-Nord once in a while mainly to stroll around or socialise with others. Other activities are hardly mentioned. Connected with the job, there are two participants who go occasionally with co-workers or the team to the area to eat out or have a drink. None of the participants has the impression that there are a lot of co-workers in the neighbourhood.

In addition to the few Ubisoft employees who are out and about in the neighbourhood, there are other groups in Flingern-Nord that can be distinguished from the group of video game developers.

Representations of Relations and Behaviours Within and to Other Groups

Only interviewees P4 and P7 think about occasions when they interrelate with Flingern-Nord as Ubisoft employees: it is going for lunch. Interviewee P7 particularly emphasises that he goes there with his team. He adds that in the future he could go more often to Flingern-Nord with his team, not only for food but also to the movies, for example. Worth mentioning in this context is a story from participant P9, who reports that when he was in the supermarket wearing a hoodie from Ubisoft, he was approached about it. People think it's cool that he works there.

There are various groups that are present in the neighbourhood and shape the area, but no one stands out. It is a mixed neighbourhood where people of all ages are on the way or live (P3, P8) with diverse groups of people (P4, P6), e.g. workers (P1) and office people during lunch time (P7), artists that meet and co-work (P4), young people (P4, P7, P8, P10) because of special shops (P6), young, creative, hip people from the creative industries (P1), (young) couples and families (P6, P8, P10), old people (P6, P8) and contrary to the last group less people older than 50 (P4, P10). However, the two interviewees add that the people they see depend on the time they themselves are out and about in the neighbourhood. A diversity of nationalities in the neighbourhood is also stated (P4, P8).

In connection with activities in the creative milieu, only two participants comment about different ones. Interviewee P7 doesn't see anyone doing cultural stuff, and interviewee P9 states that in the

ceramic café are mainly women and at the Christmas market are families with children and couples. Further statements in this direction are not shared. Regarding the video game developers two complementary statements are made. One participant tells that when they are in the area, “most of the time they are colleagues from, from work and I can’t say we’re very involved into, into these areas” (P10) and the second one by interviewee P9 is that there are not many people from Ubisoft in Flingern-Nord, but he limits his statement right away:

Actually, I don’t see any people of Ubisoft, [...] Here in Flingern we don’t really usually see them. [...] even I don’t really know that many people from Ubisoft and mainly my team and just a couple of others. It’s like, they also don’t live around here, so they live further away, so it’s not something that we’re used to see them here.

To sum up, as a group they are not out in Flingern-Nord except one interviewee, who goes there with his team, although not regularly. Groups and people, who they see, cannot be classified as a specific type. They see people of all ages, all classes, and different origins, also depending on the time of day. Those who are culturally active in the district are basically not recognised or defined. Most people can’t say whether Ubisoft employees are out and about in Flingern-Nord. One person gives one reason: he doesn’t know many colleagues.

These social interactions illustrate the private connection as well as the connection between the team and the creative milieu. There is also the professional level with regard to working outside in the neighbourhood and to networking, which also forms part of the creative milieu.

Networking

Working outside in the creative milieu is not possible for the employees of Ubisoft. They are not allowed to work outside (P2, P6, P7), as underlined by interviewee P6: “**Oh**, no, no, no, no. Our work is, most of the work that we do, has an NDA. We all signed contracts, and we are not allowed to show our works to anybody so it’s like going to a café and work there is not really an option”. Therefore, the only occasions mentioned are lunch meetings (P1, P5) and rarely meetings in the evening (P4) but without specifying how detailed they talk in these meetings about work. The management does business lunches with visitors in the neighbourhood, e.g. on Ackerstraße (P3).

Networking can also be seen in a different way, which is addressed by three employees. One (P10)

refers to the visibility of the products they produce and a connection that should be built with the gamer community to get feedback, a point that is already happening at events, as interviewee P1 points out. This interviewee further reports about diverse events to connect to others such as cooperation with organisations and public services, organising events such as a game jam or an exhibition with arts works of their games, and cooperation with students. The last point how this looks like is explained by interviewee P7: “I know that as a studio in particular on the games industry, we do promote activities with other entities like schools and universities in particular, where we do coding exercises or, or game development workshops”.

In short, networking in the neighbourhood with third parties is not possible because of an NDA clause in their contract. So, the only professional way is to get together with colleagues for lunch in Flingern-Nord. Two interviewees also include networking at the company level, for example organising events or jam sessions to promote the company and finally to get connected to the gamer community.

Summary Overview

Flingern-Nord is not the place for the Ubisoft employees to socialise or to network. Most of the respondents only go there from time to time for these reasons. Connected with the job, they are only out in Flingern-Nord with co-workers or the team to eat out or have a drink. Working outside the office is not possible because of an NDA clause. Besides their own team or close co-workers, the participants don't know if there are many co-workers on the way in the neighbourhood or not. Further groups and people who they see and what they do culturally cannot be classified as a specific type. They see people of all ages, classes, and different origins.

Social interactions and networks occur in the neighbourhood. But this is not the complete picture, because there are other ways of perceiving a neighbourhood.

6.2.1.3. Perception of the Neighbourhood

The perception of the neighbourhood takes place on different levels, which often cannot be separated as they partly merge into one another. Nevertheless, in most cases they can be categorised as social, physical, spatial, or administrative units. This section is rounded off by the perception of

whether Flingern-Nord is a cultural and/or technological neighbourhood or not.

Almost all interviewees think of activities and few opportunities for interactions and (neighbourly) relationships (social unit). This is also connected with the people they see in the area because those are the ones that interact. Besides the people seen in the neighbourhood already mentioned in the context of the creative milieu, interviewee P8 thinks of (slightly) different groups when he thinks about the area. He lists homeless and shop owners with Mercedes, besides young families. Interviewee P1, who has been knowing the neighbourhood for more than a decade, put the people in the context of the charm of the neighbourhood, which comes from two distinct groups:

I would say that Flingern, of course, always has a certain charm of an old and a new Flingern district, so on the one hand you have, uh, of course the old Flingern, the traditional Düsseldorf, which comes more from the working class milieu, so the, uh, the old Flingeraner workers, if you will, and of course a new young audience, often moved in, often working in the creative industry, uh, young, creative people. Hip people. [own translation]

Thus Flingern-Nord is described as a neighbourhood with diverse people (P8). However, the space in which these people act is seen differently. Participants P2, P4 and P10 see Flingern-Nord as an office or industrial district rather than a residential one. In contrast, participant P9 sees Flingern-Nord as a residential district with calm and educated parts, with a lot of grocery stores and parks, and a lot of variation and good transport, as well as with nice people around, and as a neighbourhood where you could walk around. This is in the same way as interviewee P7 describes it. It is a very wealthy and a “more relaxed and quiet neighbourhood” where he likes to walk around. Looking closer on the already mentioned aspect of shopping, there are different views on it. Although interviewee P5 recognises the area as “a place full of very small shops”, he doesn’t see it as a shopping area at all, which is contrary to the point of view of participant P3 who talks about the small owner-managed shops and shopping opportunities. Participants P3 and P1 refer to the creative, alternative scene in Flingern-Nord, which makes the neighbourhood a creative environment with cafés, start-ups, and a cultural offer, resulting in a mixed, creative, and lively neighbourhood. All this makes Flingern-Nord special. Participant P5 associates the area with a place where you can meet people for a beer or coffee and for a chat. This impression is also shared by participants P3, P7 and P10, e. g. by stating that Flingern-Nord is actually nice and a grown neighbourhood (P3), or by the statement of participant P7 who enjoys the streets with trees. In

contrast to this, respondent P5 states that “I’m not super fond of how it looks most of it”, referring to the too narrow streets and sidewalks, the dense housing, and missing trees on the streets. He specifies his impression later on and states that “yeah; I think my personal impression is a bit worse, since because, as I said, like the, the way the streets are really doubtful, and like visually it doesn’t immediately appeal. I’m like ‘Oh, this is not a nice place’, [...]. Although. Maybe from the streets it doesn’t look that well”. At the end he adds that he slowly finds out about the places and shops, and he has started to like the area. The impression of participant P5 is similar to the perception of P4 who lives not too far from the area. In his opinion the neighbourhood is not cozy and not a place to hang out because he doesn’t have a good impression of the whole neighbourhood and there is nothing to go to.

In the interviews there is one point mentioned by two interviewees that is connected with the neighbourhood: safety. Interviewee P6, who lives in Flingern-Nord, mentions this point when she talks about the time when they were looking for an apartment and checked for the neighbourhood. She explains: “I guess we just saw that the neighbourhood doesn’t look like a criminal neighbourhood. That’s good”, and so they decided to move there. Safety also comes to mind in two contexts for interviewee P7, who doesn’t live in the area. When he thinks about services in the area, that one would like to have, he lists safety besides food and (unspecified) services. He further thinks about safety in the context of what to do in the neighbourhood and so he states that “yeah, I mean I, I like it. It’s, it’s, I feel safe walking around it”.

Comments on blocks, streets, and houses (physical unit), and on proximity and differences to surrounded neighbourhoods (spatial unit) are rare. Important for those who live in the area is the proximity to work (P6, P9), to the city centre (P9), to public transport (P6, P9) and to supermarkets (P10). Proximity also plays a role for interviewee (P7), who doesn’t live in the area. For him, it is the proximity to food and services, because within a five-minute range around Ubisoft there are limited options about food. He adds that there are more options within 15 minutes, but he hasn’t had time to explore them. Without commenting on the choice of food and restaurants, interviewee P6 says that he goes with colleagues to the area for food because it is close. To note is the statement of participant P5, that the orientation in the former location was more towards the city centre (Stadtmitte) and to the neighbourhood of Düsseldorf than Flingern-Nord, although Düsseldorf, Flingern and Stadtmitte were equidistant from the office. This means that it was out of the question

for Ubisoft employees to go to Flingern-Nord, even though there is a range of restaurants, cafés etc. there. The reasons could be that the offer was not known, the neighbourhood did not seem attractive or simply that Flingern-Nord was not perceived and known as a place.

The administrative boundaries are not clear for most of the interviewees. This is emphasised by interviewee P9 when he thinks about the parks in Flingern-Nord. He locates *Volksgarten* in Flingern, but *Volksgarten* is south of Flingern-Süd. As well, interviewee P2 is not aware of the boundaries because she is also not sure if *Bürgerpark* is still in Flingern or not, which is a park in the middle of Stadtmitte. She further associates the neighbourhood with the main train station and its environment, a perception that is misleading because Flingern-Nord is like a 15–20-minute walk from the main station and separated by five train tracks. On the opposite side, interviewee P5 is pretty aware of the boundaries when he thinks about the sport complex that is in one outlying corner of Flingern. The differentiation between Flingern-Nord and Flingern-Süd is made only by some participants, so for example interviewee P8 who reflects if the swimming pool and the hardware store is in Nord or Süd, and participant P6 who refers to this part.

Cultural aspects play an important role in this thesis, and so the perception of the interviewees as to whether they see Flingern-Nord as a cultural neighbourhood shows a different picture of the cultural connection. Half of the interviewees (P2, P4, P7, P9, P10) don't perceive the neighbourhood as a cultural one. Besides the statement of a single clear 'no', there are two respondents who explain their impression. One is interviewee P5, who says that "immediately to mind, I would [...] I put one word to it, I would say probably like a meeting place not necessarily a cultural place". Clear statements that it is a cultural neighbourhood are not made. Interviewee P1 states that there are young and creative people who bring new ideas to old places, and interviewee P8 thinks that Flingern-Nord is culturally in the middle. He states: "Well, it's already cultural, but not all-round cultural. As I said, there is a lot of art, a lot of handicrafts and a lot of fashion design, for example, but [...] that's about it. So, as I said, there are a lot of galleries, but there is not so much variety" [own translation]. These two aspects of the neighbourhood are also described by participant P6. She states that on the one hand, the area is a cultural neighbourhood because of the art galleries and fancy restaurants, of which she lists the vegan restaurant *sattgrün* at the corner of Hoffeldstraße and Lindenstraße, that for her testifies to a conscious attitude of people going there, and the hipsters in the area. But on the other side, she also reports about people she sees drinking

at 8 am.

Besides the cultural side of Flingern-Nord, there is also the technological one. The perception of the participants doesn't differ much. Seven interviewees (P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, P9) don't see Flingern-Nord as a technological neighbourhood. Reasons mentioned are that there are a lot of small shops, small meeting places and restaurants (P4) or many artists and clothing stores (P8). The manager (P3) states that it is still an analogous area with not much technological industries, although he knows that there are some video game companies that are not visible. He further hopes that the presence of Ubisoft may change the area and that it will become more technological. A different opinion is shared by respondents P2, P7 and P10. They see the area around Ubisoft as a technological neighbourhood because of other big companies around, such as the technological center of the company *Metro*, a German food and non-food wholesale. The other part of Flingern-Nord is seen to some extent as technological (P7, P10), however, more residential (P10). Worth mentioning is a comment by interviewee P8. He adds to his description of a non-technological neighbourhood that “[e]m, but technologically, I think the biggest thing that is happening here at the moment is that everyone is in the home office, that's why they are sitting in front of the computer”.

At the end of this part, the look is at how attractive Flingern-Nord is as a place to live. Of the seven interviewees who don't live in the area, five (P1, P2, P3, P7, P10) think that they could move to Flingern-Nord. However, none of them really has any intentions of moving there at the moment. There are also two clear statements about not wanting to move there. The reason for participant P4 is that he is pretty satisfied with his actual place because it is one of the best spots in Düsseldorf, and for participant P5 the reason is that the area is visually not appealing to him adding that the area is however growing slowly on him with the discovery of small shops and places. The reason why three of the interviewees (P6, P8, P9) live in the neighbourhood is interesting. It is simply that it was where they first found a place to live. Interviewee P6 adds some reasons such as that the neighbourhood doesn't look criminal, and supermarkets and transport are close-by. These are almost the same reasons for interviewee P9. The facilities such as supermarkets are great, and it is close to work. They are not attached to the neighbourhood and so, they could imagine moving away, e.g. when they want to have a larger apartment (e.g. P6). In this context, interviewee P9 reports about the time when they were looking for an apartment with the help of a real estate agent.

The way the agent promoted the neighbourhood gives an insight on how it is seen and presented. The interviewee says about the talks with the agent:

Just wanting to add actually: When we moved here, one thing that happened is that the company, that Ubisoft, they actually hired this relocation company to help us find a place here. And this relocation agent, she was actually suggesting Flingern, both for the fact that it's close to the office but also because of this atmosphere here. The fact that it's not too far away from the city center, that it's, that it has many. It is not so quiet, that it's. It can be bad especially in the beginning in a new country. And also because of the things that there are in the area like there, because there are shops and restaurants and supermarkets. She was, she really considered it a really good place to live, especially when moving to a different country.

Summary Overview

All in all, Flingern-Nord as a place for interactions and (neighbourly) relationship is seen by almost all participants. People they see interacting in the area are all types of people, also from different social classes such as the former working class people and new wealthy middle-class ones as well as young, creative, and hip people. Connected with the people they see is the perception of Flingern-Nord as the place those people come and go. Therefore, only some see it more as an office or industrial area than a residential one. Mostly, Flingern-Nord is described as a residential area that is calm, relaxed, safe, with good transport connections and nice to have a walk in. It is not really described as a shopping district, although there are many small shops as mentioned by few participants. Two respondents, who have known the neighbourhood for a long time, also see it as a creative neighbourhood with the corresponding scene as well as the corresponding environment, such as a good cultural offer and cafés. For Flingern-Nord residents the proximity to amenities, services and work is important. The proximity to restaurants from the new workplace is seen differently by two participants. It varies between that there are not really some options within 5 minutes so that you must go 15 minutes to have a choice (P7), and that they don't mind going there for lunch because it is close (P6). The boundaries of Flingern-Nord are not known by most of the interviewees, which becomes clear when they talk about places such as parks that are in other neighbourhoods of the city.

The cultural aspect in the perception of Flingern-Nord, so to say if Flingern-Nord is seen as a cultural neighbourhood, is observed differently. Half of the interviewees don't see the neighbourhood as a cultural one. In part, it is seen as one by three participants because of young and creative people that are active in the area, and because of places with arts and handcraft stuff, art galleries, and fancy restaurants. However, this description does not apply to the entire area in order to be able to call Flingern-Nord a cultural neighbourhood. Looking on the technological appearance of Flingern-Nord, most interviewees don't see the neighbourhood as a technological one due to shops, artists, and residential buildings they see. The area around the new location, by contrast, is perceived by some as technological because of the companies. When asked about the attractiveness of moving to Flingern-Nord, five of the seven people who live in other neighbourhoods could imagine moving to the area. The reason why three participants live in this area should be noted. It was the first place they found, as the area seems to be good and central. They are not tied to Flingern-Nord and moving away is possible.

6.2.1.4. Conclusion

On the whole, the video game developers present a comprehensive picture of Flingern-Nord concerning the neighbourhood and their perception of it.

The perception of Flingern-Nord today might also be influenced by the image it had in former days. Only two know the neighbourhood and its image from more than two decades ago and could state about the changes. Both report that Flingern-Nord has changed from a working class neighbourhood not with a good reputation to an area that has attracted artists and creative people.

The participants see Flingern-Nord as a place for interactions and relationships, although they hardly go there themselves. Most of the participants go there from time to time in private, with co-workers or the team, and they go there for lunch or a drink. That they do not take lunch often in the neighbourhood is also underlined by one, who says that they mostly eat at the office. Furthermore, they don't go to Flingern-Nord to work because it is forbidden by an NDA clause. When they are out in the neighbourhood, they do not see co-workers, but they see people of all ages, of different origins, and of different social classes such as people from the working class and the new wealthy middle-class, as well as young, creative, and hip people. These people are out and about in the

neighbourhood and give the impression to most participants that Flingern-Nord is not so much an office district as a residential neighbourhood, one which is calm, relaxed, safe, central, with good transport connection and a good walking distance to services. It is further nice to have a walk. Although there are many small shops, it is not really seen as a shopping area.

The perception of Flingern-Nord as a cultural district also fits into this picture. Half of the respondents would not call the neighbourhood a cultural one. They partly see it that way because of the young and creative people in the area, but also because of the places with arts and crafts, art galleries and fancy restaurants. But that's not enough to call the whole neighbourhood a cultural one. Others who have known Flingern-Nord longer, on the contrary, see it as a cultural and creative neighbourhood with the corresponding scene and environment, such as a good cultural offer and cafés. Connected with this view is the perception that the interviewees do not see Flingern-Nord as a technological neighbourhood due to shops, artists, and the residential buildings they see. An exception is the area around the office of Ubisoft. This area is perceived as technological by some because of the companies located there. The boundaries of the neighbourhood are not clear, which is obvious when they talk about parks that are not in the neighbourhood, for example. They are not attached or attracted specifically by Flingern-Nord to move or to stay in the area.

The view of the video game developers is characterised by the fact that they are not often out and about in the neighbourhood, with those who live in the neighbourhood describing a stronger connection. The other group interviewed in this study are the cultural actors, who are likely to have a different connection due to their work in the neighbourhood itself and whose description is therefore likely to be more detailed.

6.2.2. Cultural Actors in Flingern-Nord

6.2.2.1. Neighbourhood - a Global View of What is Going On

Individual dynamics were considered in more detail in the previous chapter (chapter 5), which gives a very accurate picture of the dynamics in Flingern-Nord. But there are also global changes that are described by the cultural actors, such as changes in cultural offering, restaurants, etc. In addition, the interviewees give their personal view of how Flingern-Nord could change or what it

would look like in the future.

Changes in Flingern-Nord over the years have been recognised by some respondents. These interviewees can specify different changes on how the former working class neighbourhood has developed over the last four decades. The image of Flingern in the 1970s and 1980s is described by participant P15, who was a child in those days. She remembers:

Well, I know as a child, that was much longer ago, Flingern was such a district back then that you didn't go to. It was a district where people were afraid that something would happen at night or something. Whether that was justified or not, I can no longer judge from today's perspective, but that is definitely not the case today.⁹¹

Flingern-Nord was still a working class neighbourhood at the end of the 1990s, with a high average age and where people with little money lived, so it was rougher and tougher. (P11). Still not attractive in the early 2000s, some first sights of changes are however indicated by interviewee P14 who went out with friends in the area:

Hum, I can only describe, so symbolically, Flingern was, hum, a very, how shall I say, a, because by now, Flingern is a very modern district in Düsseldorf and when I used to go to Flingern, so young person, hum, and visit friends, then it was very, hu, broken somehow, in inverted commas, there were many old blocks of houses and partly it was not properly maintained and it was dark. In many places it was just dark and unlit, so when we were out in the evening. Today there is much more, it gets much more attention, much more people are out and about. People drive all the way to Flingern. That didn't exist so much in the past.

However, these changes do not affect the whole neighbourhood, because interviewee P15 still sees a few places that are reminiscent of the former working class neighbourhood. Otherwise, she describes it as gentrified, which is also the term interviewee P11 uses to describe the development. He realized a "partly brute change" in some places, where there "is simply also a clash of worlds" of jobless and SUV driver. So, it is not only the neighbourhood that changed but also the social

⁹¹ All interviews with cultural actors in Flingern-Nord were taken in German. Hence, all citations in this section are own translations.

classes. There are still some working class residents, but they are becoming fewer (P14), so it is currently seen less as a working class neighbourhood (P11).

However, the period of the 1980s and 1990s is also the time when the cultural and creative scene settled and began to establish in Flingern. Today, these creative structures that have grown over the years form the foundation of the many businesses in the cultural and creative scene and have thus made Flingern known as an artists' neighbourhood (P11). Mostly, the artists' studios are in backyards so that they are not visible from the outside (P15). With the changes described, however, this location now offers them niche spaces so that they can remain in the neighbourhood (P11). In the 1990s, this scene is described as a scene of makers with their studio or production site, so the focus of the artists was on producing art, rather than a scene of merchants or customers, so to say that the focus was not on selling arts (P11). This changed. With rising rents and new people coming to the area, a new clientele arrived. More creatives and an urban population came, working as designer or in graphics, sound studios or software, as well as people working in the video game sector. Interviewee P11 therefore concludes that today it is more about the actual creative industries and no longer about the former art scene. Although, there is still a strong art scene. There is a high density of art galleries (P11), a development that started in 1967 when the first gallery *Konrad-Fischer-Galerie* on Platanenstraße (P15) opened. Few ones followed until the 1990s (P11) and the boom in galleries and exhibition places then took place in the last decade (P13, P15). Flingern-Nord as a location for galleries was ultimately underpinned by the opening of *Sammlung Philara* on Birkenstraße in 2016 (P15), a private museum with more than 1300 exhibits. Flingern-Nord has become the center for visual arts (P13) and the new cultural offerings of the last fifteen years have permanently changed the face of Flingern-Nord (P15). One example is the cinema *Filmwerkstatt* on Birkenstraße, founded in 2016. It is in the same backyard as *Sammlung Philara*, and together they transformed the cultural sphere, according to interviewee P15. To note is that this interviewee states that the association of "Galerien in Flingern", in which the gallery owners work together actively helped to establish the cultural image of Flingern. She reports further that there is also a high fluctuation in this sector. Anyway, today, there are a lot of cultural amenities in the area, which are on a consistently good level during the last few years, according to respondent P12.

After reflecting on development of Flingern-Nord, the interviewees also consider about its future.

These thoughts are not entirely free from the first developments of the pandemic⁹². In general, Flingern will further develop (P11), will be more attractive (P12), but will also get more expensive (P14). In the cultural field, interviewee P14 sees more cultural offers in the future, which goes along with the view of interviewee P11, who sees a development and advancement especially among small makers. For example, he sees small galleries everywhere in Flingern in the future. Also, interviewee P15 thinks that there will be more galleries in the area, but she is not sure if it will be for a long term. This respondent also thinks of restaurants, bars and small shops, and the development towards an entertainment district, and so she states that “Flingern is becoming more and more of a going-out district, maybe, especially more so, not so much in the evening, but during the day, ‘Come on, let’s go to the little shop’, ‘Come on, let’s have a coffee there’ or something like that.” Looking also on shops and companies, interviewee P14 sees more young companies in the technological field and less craftsmen and manual professions. So finally, he thinks that the neighbourhood will get wealthier. Nevertheless, interviewee P11 believes that there will also be a mixing of poor and rich people in the future. This is in line with the statement of interviewee P13, who sees a socio-spatial segregation, but who also believes (or hopes) that this socio-spatial segregation will decrease through the work and activities of the cultural organisations and actors in the neighbourhood.

Summary Overview

On the whole, changes can be observed, and some examples are given for the last 40 years. In the 1970s and 1980s when Flingern was still a working class neighbourhood, its reputation was not good, and it was a place not to go to. Still in the early 2000s, Flingern is still described as an area with old blocks of houses and places not well maintained. But it was already under change because young people went out there in the night. So around 20 years later, the neighbourhood is described in some parts still as a working class neighbourhood, but it is turning in a neighbourhood for the middle class. Yet, there were already signs of change in the cultural sphere as well. In the 1980s and 1990s, the first actors of the cultural and creative scene settled in Flingern. They were artistically active and turned the neighbourhood into a well-known artists’ area over the years. This shift has continued over the last ten years. Today, however, it is more about the actual creative industry than the former art scene and the various (new) companies from the creative sector also

⁹² See chapter 7 for the thoughts about COVID-19 and the pandemic.

appeal to a different clientele than the artist scene. Today, the cultural amenities in Flingern-Nord are at a good level, and Flingern-Nord has become a center of visual arts with many galleries and exhibition places. This consolidation of Flingern's cultural image was also supported by the union of galleries. For the future, the respondents see a constant development. Looking at the cultural sector, it will be further developed, and Flingern-Nord could become a daytime entertainment district.

The cultural actors talk abundantly about the cultural character of Flingern-Nord, as well as the cultural amenities and offer in the neighbourhood. It all takes place in the creative milieu.

6.2.2.2. Creative Milieu

The creative milieu is not an entity in itself but has several aspects. These cannot always be clearly separated as shown below. However, they are kept as separate as possible.

Interrelation, Mixing of People and Socialising

Interrelation and socialising are reported on different levels by single interviewees. Regular visits to Flingern-Nord are mentioned by interviewee P14. He goes out with coworkers, friends and also alone, e.g. for lunch or in the evenings. He further does sports with friends in the area. A good relationship to the neighbours around her cultural organisation has been developed during the years by interviewee P13: "There are nice neighbours in the courtyard, graphic artists, music schools, architects, engineers, painters, so it's quite a colourful mix, but also, hum, we grow together like that". But she also must admit that it took a while until they got attached to the place. The mixing of people in general is described by interviewee P11. He sees single actors and people working in small companies in cafés to exchange because "Flingern is one of the districts where there is a lot more exchange because of the cafés, because of the proximity to each other."

In short, one participant reports relationships and social contacts on professional and private levels with colleagues and friends in Flingern-Nord, while another reports them on an organisational level with further artists and residents in the nearby area, a relationship that took a while to build. Working and professional exchange outside the office in the neighbourhood is seen by one respondent.

These people and groups are only a small part of those who are out and about in Flingern-Nord, but with whom there is a different relationship.

Representations of Relations and Behaviours Within and to Other Groups

Relationships and behaviours towards other groups also include which other groups the participants perceive as such in Flingern-Nord. There is one group that is described in the same way by everyone: It is the group of art enthusiasts, art collectors or simply those who are interested in culture. Some of them come explicitly from outside to the neighbourhood to see art. They are described as young (P14), and those who visit exhibitions are described as particular (P13), so to say they are educated, reflected, intellectual, aesthetically oriented, and they are recognisable as “a group in itself”. Another group is seen by participants P11 and P12. This is the group of university students, either edgy students of the Academy of Arts (P11) or performing students at the Cologne University for Media (P12). Interviewee P11 also knows of a small, non-commercially oriented off-scene in the neighbourhood. The off scene is made up of artists who have their art spaces outside of established galleries, mostly in the backyards, and open them to everyone on certain occasions, such as the Open Studio Day (festival *Kunstpunkte*). Besides these cultural groups, there are also other groups of “different characters” (P12) in Flingern-Nord, such as old punks (P11), young people (P14), a bit more wealthy, young families (P14) and multimillionaires (P11). Respondent P14 has the impression that many people from other neighbourhoods come to Flingern-Nord at all times of the day.

Briefly, in Flingern-Nord, everyone is aware of a group of people interested in art, from the ordinary person to the connoisseur, most of whom come to the neighbourhood explicitly to see art. Another group that is out and about in the neighbourhood are students from art and media colleges. There are also a few other groups seen in the neighbourhood at all times of the day, such as old punks or multimillionaires.

The creative milieu not only includes the aspect of socialising, but also has the component of networking. This draws a different connection to the creative milieu than social interactions.

Networking

The main part of interviewee P11's job at the City of Düsseldorf is to build up networks and cooperation between cultural actors on an interdisciplinary basis. The reason why the public authorities launched this initiative is that it is/was not common for cultural players and companies to join networks and cooperate because large companies keep/kept for themselves, and the numerous cultural actors mostly form small and very small units. So, today, he and his department at the City of Düsseldorf established networks that are used by cultural actors, in which they support and help each other. The cultural actors address the department to ask who could help them with their issues and they get information about possible people who could support them. He finally states that the cultural actors are in contact now but "not a close exchange that would somehow be cultivated or further developed". As part of his job, interviewee 11 is often in Flingern-Nord. Participant P15 as well is often on the way in the area for her job and network. So, she goes to opening events at *Sammlung Philara*, for example, and meets colleagues there. A professional network was also built up by participant P13 who knows people and other artists in Flingern-Nord due to her work. This network also leads to more social contacts in the area, she adds. The places she refers to are galleries, exhibitions, cafés, and restaurants where she goes to mainly during the day.

In short, a work task for interviewee P11 is to build a network for cultural actors. So far, a network exists but according to him, the cultural actors are not in close contact. A professional network was built up by interviewees P13 and P15 so that they participate in events organised by other cultural actors in the neighbourhood, for example.

Summary Overview

To sum up, in the creative milieu, interrelation and socialisation in Flingern-Nord are reported by some interviewees, mostly on a professional level with further artists in the neighbourhood, for example. Two interviewees built up a solid professional network. Including all the cultural actors, networks between them exist, but according to interviewee P11 they are weak. Besides the cultural actors, further groups are recognised in the area by all interviewees. One is described as a group that is interested in art. They are people with different art knowledge, most of whom come to Flingern-Nord explicitly to experience art.

To round off the picture of Flingern-Nord, the perception of the neighbourhood in terms of the activities spatially associated with it is still missing.

6.2.2.3. Perception of the Neighbourhood

The perception of the neighbourhood takes place on different levels – the social, physical, spatial or the administrative one – which partly flow into each other. Nevertheless, if possible, these perceptions are grouped into distinctive units. This view is rounded off with the perception of whether Flingern-Nord is a cultural and/or a technological neighbourhood (or not) and why the cultural actors have chosen Flingern-Nord.

Looking at the activities, opportunities for interactions and relationships (social unit) and the perception of blocks, streets, and houses (physical unit), Flingern-Nord is variously perceived. It is described as an entertainment area with a lively and diverse gastronomy (P11), as a multicultural neighbourhood with different classes and backgrounds (P14), and as a traditional working class neighbourhood with small shops, such as boutiques, convenience, and designer shops, and not the luxury boutiques like in the city centre (P15). It is also seen as unique in Düsseldorf: “It’s like a small paradise; it’s so little Düsseldorf; it’s not so fancy, it’s very organic” (P13). This also includes the people who live there and those who are out and about. An influx of wealthy people, of young couples and families with big, expensive cars, who could afford the expensive apartments is recognised by participant P14. This matches the perception of interviewee P11 who describes the people living in Flingern-Nord as middle-class people with middle-higher income and who spend money in the neighbourhood. Thus, he sees young people and families, people in their 30s, and people who have a white wine and pizza on terraces as the ‘new’ people in the area.

Regarding the proximity and the difference to surrounding neighbourhoods (spatial unit), as well as the awareness of the administrative borders (administrative unit), there is one more picture given. Flingern-Nord is a central district and can be reached in a short time from anywhere else in the city (P11, P15). As explained in chapter 3, Flingern-Nord is often seen together with Flingern-Süd, and often named only Flingern. Consequently, the interviewees sometimes refer to ‘Flingern’ and there are respondents who refer to the two different parts. The perception of Flingern-Nord also depends on the perception of Flingern-Süd, and so some interviewees explain their perception by using an

opposite representation. One is interviewee P12, who explains the differences: “Whereas Flingern is not just a term. There really is a strong differentiation between Flingern-Nord and Flingern-Süd. Flingern-Süd is the part near the railway station. There are also a lot of social hotspots in Düsseldorf, and Flingern-Nord is actually more, let’s say, the cultural focus.” More detailed is the description by interviewee P13. She describes Flingern as a heterogenic area where the northern part (Flingern-Nord) is gentrified, with a lot of posh restaurants, but also with Döner, pizza and Asiatic restaurants, and the former industrial southern part (Flingern-Süd), as still poor and not gentrified. She also remarks differences between single streets, where rich, people from the middle class, and poor collide directly. A vivid and detailed description of the different neighbourhood parts that encompasses different perception is given by interviewee P11. He describes Flingern as followed:

They are, they are, hum, versatile, overall, it’s always a bit of a question, so there are, there are two to three different Flingern. Hum. Flingern is north and south, so to speak, as it is on the city map, but there are also geographical dividing lines, there is Ackerstraße, which starts at Worringer Platz, where I have a big subcultural influence, off-locations, a little less budget, a little more initiative, like the G8, for example, where the [theater] Botschaft used to be. Around the corner on Erkrather Straße, there’s a wonderful space run by a collective, they do a lot of their own design, they do a lot of voluntary work, and they also promote T-shirt design [...]. So, there’s a creative young group nesting, some of them are a bit older, but it’s not about big business, so to speak. It’s more about community, about doing things together. And then, when I drive up Ackerstraße, I pass a few very renowned galleries, Pfab, hu, Roland Fischer is a little further up on Lindenstraße, these are the institutions where international artists are sometimes traded, hum, certainly strongly rooted here, where the new generation is perhaps also accommodated at the art academy, but a different clientele. These are gallery owners who promote or sell professional artists or operate them as a network and no longer this, hu, actor-controlled community like at Worringer Platz. If I then drive further up Ackerstraße and across Hermannplatz or something, then I relatively quickly arrive at, hu, smaller cultural offerings, in other words, there are a whole lot of, hum, so whether it’s cafés, with music offerings or just everything like ‘Flingern rollt den

Teppich aus'⁹³, these shopping events, or, hu, all the activities that take place around Hermannplatz. There used to be the Theater Flin, but it has moved a bit further out to Grafenberg.

Part of the neighbourhood perception is also if the participants perceive Flingern-Nord as a cultural neighbourhood. All the participants agree that Flingern-Nord is a cultural neighbourhood. Flingern-Nord has an absolutely cultural flair (P12), and culture is part of Flingern. Further, the neighbourhood is besides the city centre the area with the most exhibition places (P15). There are artistic centres and artists' studios, as well as book shops and street festivals (P15). A 'cultural micro cosmos' is based on the restaurants, galleries, and small shops (P12). Interviewee P11, who knows the cultural scene best describes it more in detail. The cultural market and the offerings are strong but divided into small groups with many participants. Therefore, he comes to the conclusions that it is a cultural area but not with a cultural standard. He adds that there are still culture-free parts in Flingern, e.g. the older industry parts and garden plots. Notable is a statement by interviewee P15. She says that in a place where you can find art and culture, a dynamic will develop.

In addition to the cultural view of the neighbourhood, there is also a technological one. Four of the interviewees do not see Flingern-Nord as a technological neighbourhood at all, and that for the same reasons. Technological companies are not present, and there is no start-up scene (P12, P15). Instead, interviewee P15 sees high-quality artisan businesses such as bakeries and coffee roasters that are not a fad because the owners take their work seriously. While thinking about it, participant P14 is not sure about his perception. On the one hand, he sees Flingern-Nord as a non-technological neighbourhood because the residents who are in his mind are not interested in technology. On the other hand, he thinks that there are some technological companies and therefore he also could describe Flingern-Nord as a technological neighbourhood to some extent. The one who knows the different (cultural) actors in Flingern-Nord due to his job is the only one who describes it as a technological area by stating that he sees it "as creative, creative-economic, technological, so in the sense of, hu, hu [...] digital, so ..." (P11). That it is not obvious may also relate to the fact that not many people work on their computers in cafés for example (P11).

⁹³ "Flingern rollt den Teppich aus" is an event that takes place on a Thursday night in November. Shops are open until late night. The name is an allusion to the expression "to roll out the red carpet" – "den roten Teppich ausrollen".

At the moment of the interview, none of the five participants live in Flingern. Two live in an area next to Flingern and one has lived there for a few years. If they would move to the neighbourhood also gives an insight about how they perceive the area. Interviewees P11, P12, P13 and P14 could imagine moving to Flingern-Nord if they find a good option. A reason to move to Flingern-Nord, a neighbourhood that has grown on him, is given by interviewee P12. He thinks that the area offers a good urban life. In particular, he states that “Hum, because you can combine urban life with cultural focal points and restaurants very well, and on the other hand it’s not as aloof as some other districts of Düsseldorf. So, it’s a good mix, also from the population.” Reflecting on this question of moving, some of the interviewees also explain why they have opened their organisation or business in Flingern-Nord. The common reason is that when they were looking for a location, they could find one in Flingern-Nord: by accident because there was free space available that matched their expectations (P12, P13, P15). Interviewee P15 adds that when she was looking for a location, Flingern was not the hip Flingern it is today, and at that time, in 2004, there were only two other galleries in the area. All interviewees are still satisfied with their choice, and they want to stay there for the foreseeable future. Interviewee P12 describes why he is still satisfied: “The location in Flingern-Nord is the right place because it is culture affine audience, also an audience that watches through the window, and in general it is a very creative neighbourhood.”

Summary Overview

On the whole, Flingern-Nord is variously perceived. The area is seen as an entertainment area, as an area with different social classes, as multicultural and an area with small shops. People that are there are described as being from the middle-class, wealthy, young, and with young families. Flingern-Nord is sometimes named as Flingern, a term that might also encompass Flingern-Süd. Both parts, the northern and southern ones, differ from each other. The northern part is described as gentrified where wealthier people live and are out and around, and the southern part is described in a contrary way. As far as art and culture are concerned, the northern part is the area where the cultural actors are located and where everything takes place.

All interviewees see Flingern-Nord as a cultural neighbourhood. Besides the cultural flair that the neighbourhood exudes, there are a lot of cultural actors with their studios and artistic centres. The level of the cultural offer and amenities is also very high. Flingern-Nord has the second-highest proportion of exhibition places in the city of Düsseldorf. With regard to the perception of Flingern-

Nord as a technological neighbourhood, this is only confirmed by one participant because he knows this field. For the others, technological companies are not present, the main reason being that they are not visible and known.

Although none of the participants actually live in Flingern-Nord most of them could imagine moving to the area one day when there will be the right occasion. The reason why they opened their business in Flingern-Nord is that there was free space available that matched their ideas.

6.2.2.4. Conclusion

Flingern as it is today cannot be understood without looking at its development over the last four decades. Flingern was still a working class neighbourhood with a not so good reputation in the 1970s and 1980s, today it has turned into a middle-class neighbourhood. Regarding Flingern's cultural development in these periods, it was also the time when the first artists settled in the neighbourhood in the 1980s and 1990s. By the time, they made the neighbourhood a known artists' neighbourhood. These artists create art, but with a new clientele in the area during the last decade, different businesses in the creative sector arose, so that the focus has shifted from the former art scene to the creative industries. This change also goes hand in hand with different people coming into the neighbourhood. The interviewees see hipsters, employees of new companies that have settled in Flingern-Nord on the one hand. On the other, they see people of different cultural backgrounds and different social classes, while Flingern-Nord is transforming into a middle-class neighbourhood. The people seen are wealthy, young and with families. They also identified a group of people, which is interested in arts with different knowledge about art and which comes to Flingern-Nord explicitly to experience art. Another look at the overall appearance of Flingern-Nord shows the picture of a neighbourhood described as an entertainment area, an area with small shops, and as a non-technological neighbourhood, except the one who knows the scene. All participants are of the opinion that Flingern-Nord is a cultural neighbourhood due to its number of artists and the cultural offer and amenities especially regarding the number of exhibition places.

These are the cultural players' global impressions of Flingern-Nord from various points of view and their description of the creative milieu. As noted, these only resemble those of the video game developers in some respects. A comparison of the most important points illustrates this, as will be

seen.

6.2.3. Comparison of the Interviews in Flingern-Nord

The perception and the description of Flingern-Nord by the video game developers and the cultural actors present various impressions of the neighbourhood. But before looking at the overall impression of the neighbourhood, looking on the history of Flingern-Nord may help to understand the current developments and how changes could be classified. As outlined, the historical background of the neighbourhood is mentioned by those in both groups who have been knowing Flingern-Nord for a long time. It is shared by all cultural actors but by only two video game developers. This is why most of the video game developers' perceptions and descriptions of what is happening in Flingern-Nord relate to the time when they lived in Düsseldorf. The historical background is mainly the evolution in the 1980s and 1990s from a working class neighbourhood to an area that attracted artists, which laid the foundation for Flingern's cultural image. As a result, more artists and creative people were attracted. The basis for the cultural image of Flingern-Nord was laid during this period and now the image is underlined by the cultural facilities and offerings, particularly in galleries and exhibitions, which are of a good standard. However, according to some cultural actors the artistic air or creative scene have changed. It is now more about the creative industries that have settled in the new middle-class neighbourhood over the last ten years than about the former art scene. Yet, only the cultural actors report on this.

Experiencing and perceiving the neighbourhood encompasses various aspects. This includes the people who come to Flingern-Nord. Both groups perceive the same groups and types of people. They see people of all ages, different origins/cultural backgrounds, and different social classes such as people from the working class and the new affluent middle class. They continue to see hipsters as well as young, creative people who are described by the cultural actors as employees of the new companies that have settled in Flingern-Nord, and families. One group that is only perceived by the cultural actors is the group of people interested in art and art lovers who come to Flingern-Nord specifically to experience art. No people from the video game industry are visible in the neighbourhood, which is reported by both groups, meaning that the cultural actors do not see any developers in the neighbourhood and the developers do not recognise any coworkers outside

working hours in Flingern-Nord.

These groups that are out and about in Flingern-Nord also shape the overall perception of Flingern-Nord. Although they mostly see the same groups, the impression they get is different, and thus the descriptions vary on this point. The video game developers see Flingern-Nord as a residential area and not as an office district. They also do not see it as a shopping district, although they notice the small shops, in particular shops with handicraft and artistic things. These shops are also perceived by the cultural workers, but they do not take this into account in the overall perception. The perception of the cultural actors is that of an entertainment area with a lively and diverse gastronomy. The video game developers also see Flingern-Nord as a good place for interactions and relationships. This could be in line with the description of the cultural actors who see the neighbourhood as an entertainment district, although the participants hardly go to Flingern-Nord for private occasions. Culturally, the neighbourhood is seen similarly by all cultural actors and half of the developers. Those who see Flingern-Nord as a cultural neighbourhood get to the heart of the matter. It is its number of artists and the cultural and creative scene, as well as the cultural offer and amenities, that make Flingern-Nord a cultural neighbourhood. But this is not enough for half of the video game developers who have been knowing Flingern-Nord only for a few years to claim the whole neighbourhood a cultural one because they see these points only partly. None of the interviewees sees Flingern-Nord as a technological neighbourhood based on its appearance. They see shops, residential buildings, and artists. An exception of this impression is given by the video game developers: It is the area around Ubisoft because of the companies located there. It is an area that cultural players do not think about unless they know the different spheres. Taken as a whole, the video game developers also link Flingern-Nord with several attributes. These are quiet, relaxed, safe, central, with good transport access, a good walking distance to services as well as nice for a walk.

The personal connection to Flingern-Nord is also reflected by the related activities they do in this neighbourhood. The video game developers go to the office in Flingern-Nord. This is the only place they work because it is forbidden for them to work outside the office due to an NDA clause in their contract. The cultural actors are connected to Flingern-Nord on a professional level with their businesses by offering events, creative classes, exhibitions, concerts etc. for different age groups. This is the offer that the video game developers could also take up and that could be a link

to the neighbourhood. However, this offer is not perceived by video game developers. The reason why the cultural actors have their business in Flingern-Nord, and why some of the interviewees live in the neighbourhood are similar. At the time, when they looked for free space or an apartment that suits their requirements, they found it in Flingern-Nord. So far, the cultural actors are still satisfied. However, the video game developers are not tied to Flingern-Nord, so they could imagine moving one day if they want to change their home.

When looking at the neighbourhood, one element stands out. Those who have known the neighbourhood for a long time include Flingern-Süd in their considerations, which means that when they think about places or different developments, they may also refer to the ones in Flingern-Süd. The participants who know both parts and hence also the borders of the neighbourhood are mainly the cultural actors and only a few people working at Ubisoft. For the rest of the participants, however, the boundaries are not clear.

Summing up the main points, there are differences and similarities in the perception of the neighbourhood of both groups (see table 29 for an overview). Both groups see the same people coming to Flingern-Nord such as people of all ages, hipsters, or young families. To remark is that people working in the video game industry are not obviously seen out and around in the neighbourhood as stated by the cultural actors and the developers who refer to colleagues. So, both groups see the same people, but the impression they get is different. The video game developers have the impression of a residential area, and the cultural actors talk about Flingern-Nord as an entertainment district. The impression that Flingern-Nord is a cultural neighbourhood is also not gained by all. All cultural actors but only half of the developers are of that opinion.

Table 29: Comparison of the most important similar and different perceptions and descriptions of the analysis of the video game developers and cultural actors for ‘Inside the neighbourhood’ in Flingern-Nord

	Similarities	Differences
Neighbourhood - a Global View of What is Going On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People seen in the neighbourhood • Flingern-Nord seen as a non-technological neighbourhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge about the historical development of the neighbourhood by the cultural actors, but only some video game developers • Different perceptions and descriptions of the neighbourhood • Flingern-Nord seen as a cultural neighbourhood
Interdependence, sociability, representations of relationships and behaviour, as well as networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good prerequisites to spend time in the neighbourhood besides work • Hardly go out in the neighbourhood • Connected to Flingern-Nord on a professional level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Perception of the Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundaries of the neighbourhood not clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Source: Author

The previous chapter (Chapter 5) showed which dynamics are perceived and experienced by video game developers and cultural actors in the neighbourhoods. In this chapter, this picture was completed by the global perception of the neighbourhood and its creative milieu with its social interactions and networks. However, this thesis is not only about the spatial, socio-economic, cultural, and political dynamics, but also about the relationship and mutual influence between the video game industry and the neighbourhood, in particular the relationship between the video game developers and the neighbourhood in terms of their cultural activities, which are also seen in the

context of their work. This complex connection is described in the following chapter (Chapter 7), the last chapter of the interview analysis.

CHAPTER 7: THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD – A SYMBIOSIS?

In the previous two chapters of the interview analysis, the focus was on the different dynamics in the neighbourhoods and the cultural aspects (Chapter 5) as well as on the perception of the neighbourhood in relation to its creative milieu in a global perspective (Chapter 6). In this third part, the focus is on the relationship between the video game industry, its developers and the neighbourhood, in particular how they affect each other. This is based on the perception of video game developers and cultural actors and how they experience their relationship with the neighbourhood (see Figure 16, the focus on ‘perception’ and ‘relationship’ is highlighted). This chapter is rounded off with a description of the neighbourhood’s role in the developers’ cultural activities. There is also a short paragraph on the pandemic, as all but three of the interviews were conducted during the first year of the pandemic. Thoughts on this are also included in the interviews, which are briefly presented last.

First, the look is at the Mile End (7.1.), then Flingern-Nord (7.2.). This third part of the interview analysis ends with a comparative look at the interviews done in the Mile End and Flingern-Nord (7.3.), as well as including the previous two chapters in order to have a complete picture.

The structure of the sections differs between the groups. For each interview group, video game developers and cultural actors, the focus in this section is on their description of the ‘Relationship between the video game industry and the neighbourhood’. For the video game developers, however, an important point is added: ‘Role of the neighbourhood for developers’ cultural activities’. Only the interviewees from Ubisoft can answer this question, as it relates in particular to the relationship between creativity - lifestyle - work. It best illustrates the relationship between the industry and the neighbourhood. After the section ‘Covid-19 and the pandemic’, each part ends with a conclusion. First, consideration is given to how these points appear in the Mile End.

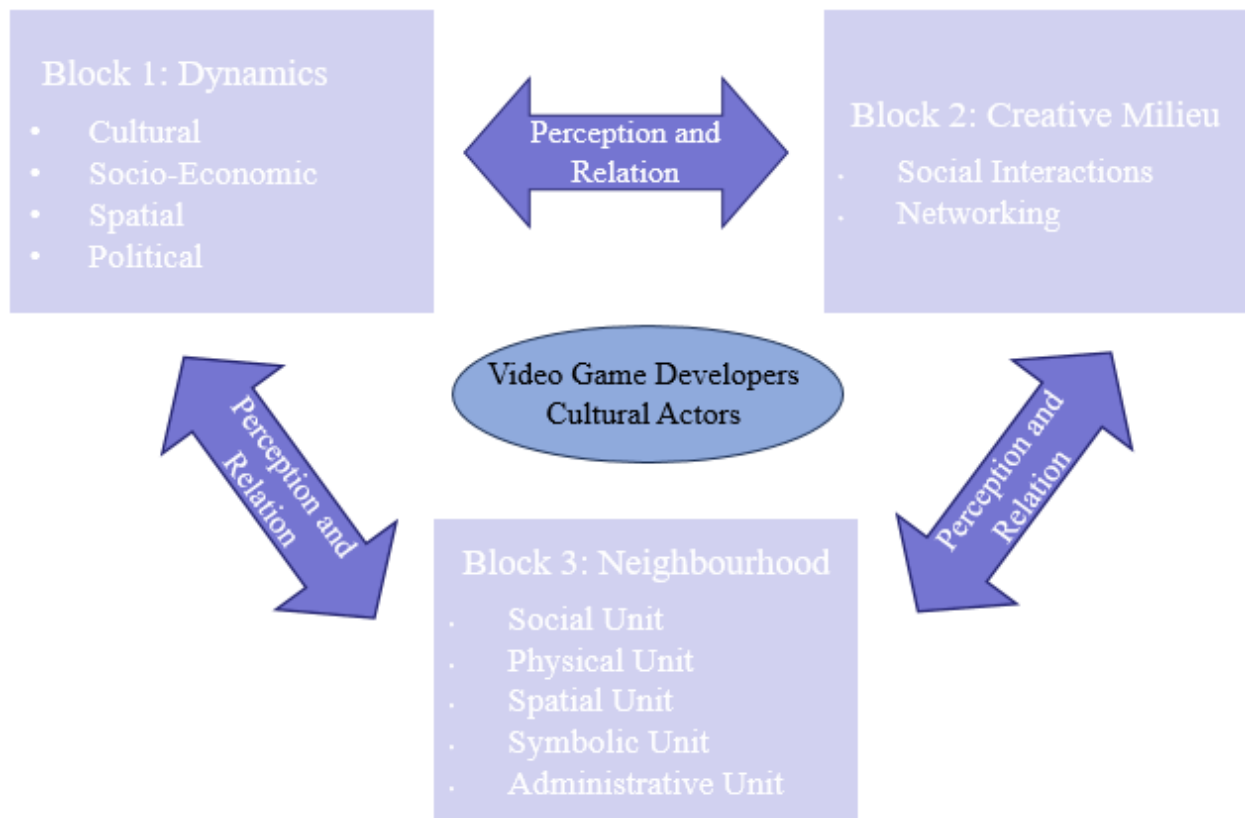


Figure 16: ‘The video game industry and the neighbourhood – a symbiosis?’ and its relation to the operational framework

Source: Author

7.1. Mile End

As in the two previous chapters, the interviews with the video game developers (7.1.1.) are considered first and then the interviews with the cultural actors (7.1.2.). A comparison of the interviews concludes this part (7.1.3.).

7.1.1. Video Game Developers in the Mile End

7.1.1.1. Relationship Between the Video Game Industry and the Neighbourhood

The way in which Ubisoft employees view the relationship between the video game industry and the Mile End and its impact i.e. the influence on each other through what happens in the neighbourhood, indicates the degree of its significance and importance. The focus is on the effects of the neighbourhood on the video game industry, the effect of the video game industry on the neighbourhood as well as the bidirectional effect.

Effects of the video game industry on the Mile End as seen by the participants refer to the neighbourhood itself, to groups present in the area and to the amenities available. They see their effect on the neighbourhood as customers and consumers. They patronise the restaurants and bars and do some shopping. This makes the neighbourhood dependent on the people working at Ubisoft (P16, P17, P18, P21). This relation is clearly expressed by two interviewees. Interviewee P17 sees that “they are really heavily intertwined. [...] Like the neighbourhood, the whole economy, I feel like it depends a lot on the people that were working in the buildings like when the people aren’t there, the, yeah”. This fact is further emphasised by interviewee P18:

I feel like the coming of Ubisoft in the Mile End maybe bloomed the neighbourhood because, because of just the influx of employees, that has to go spend their well-earned money on the lunch hour and after in the neighbourhood. Hum. So, yeah, I think a lot of restaurants really lives of the Ubisoft employees. [...] I don’t know what the Mile End would look like if it hadn’t been for Ubisoft. I can only imagine.

Besides restaurants, the presence of Ubisoft has also attracted further companies (P16, P20, P22). Ubisoft also supports the neighbourhood by organising events and exhibitions for example with local artists and commercial establishments and it is active in the cultural sector (P17, P18, P19, P20, P21, P23, P25, P26, P27). This is described by interviewee P20: “At Ubisoft, I know that we have a lot of, a lot of programs to happen since it drives and sensitizes employees to participate in cultural and shopping events and everything”. This may be in line with the statement of the manager interviewed (P16). Ubisoft knows about its impact in and on the neighbourhood and that Ubisoft tries to act responsibly. A different view is stated by interviewee P19 who focused on the visibility on the video game industry. He states that “[..] hum. [..] I mean it’s hard for the video game industry to, to be present in a neighbourhood in general because, I mean, it’s something we do on our own at home. And it’s not something that invites people to go out and participate in like neighbourhood life”. In connection with the video game industry, he further refers to a video gaming bar close to Ubisoft, a place where players could play video games. He sees this as an influence from the industry on the neighbourhood. All these reflections do not involve the residents of the Mile End. Although some of the offers are also accessible to residents, the impact on them and life in the neighbourhood is only addressed by three respondents (P16, P17, P21), e.g. that the restaurants in the Mile End serve Ubisoft but not the neighbourhood (P21).

There is also an opposite influence. This is the effect the neighbourhood as a whole has on the video game industry or on Ubisoft respectively, and so as well on the work of the employees. The opinion about the influence of the Mile End on the video game industry differs. Five persons wouldn’t say that there is an influence on their work (P18, P21, P22, P23, P24) or at least they couldn’t recognise an influence during the three to six years of working in the area. This perception is qualified by two interviewees. Interviewee P21 states that the amenities etc. offered in the neighbourhood are nice to have and really convenient, and the neighbourhood has good accessibility and good food options, but all this doesn’t really affect work. Interviewee P22 adds after acknowledging that there is an impact, but that this impact is not meaningful. He emphasises this by saying that other environments would have the same effect on the video game industry. This is not in line with three of their co-workers. They see the environment as important for the company and the influence it has because “having a nice community makes it easier for people to work there” (P25). The variety of places, such as restaurants and stores, and the proximity to them provides a good working environment as stressed by interviewee P17. This effect is even more

strongly emphasised by interviewee P19. He states that:

It goes a bit through Ubisoft. I mean I feel like the company is much more interesting to work for, because it is situated in the lively neighbourhood. [...] Yeah, I feel like, it has a, the fact that the neighbourhood is so alive and there's many things to do like activities such as going to restaurants and to parks and, hu, I remember doing an escape room in the Mile End for a job team building activity. Those, those activities make my job a bit more dynamic, and I feel like, it could, it will not be the case if the company itself was located elsewhere, like in the middle of nowhere. So, I feel like the neighbourhood has an impact on my life through my job by making it more dynamic, by offering us cultural activities like those mentioned earlier.

There are only two workers, the manager (P16) and a game designer (P22) who state that there is an influence from the neighbourhood on their daily work. The game designer gives a recent and clear example when he worked together with some colleagues on a game. They integrated what they perceived every day in the neighbourhood into this game, which meant that they did not include any female characters in the game. The neighbourhood, i.e. its perception, influenced their work. Participant P22 explains it as follows:

[..] Yes! Totally because I would, hu, yeah, I'm going to give an example. I was working on a game recently and we had a lot of icons to produce for the players to see the advancement in the game. And in those icons, we have to represent characters sometime and at some point, the artist finished their work and we realized that there was absolutely no female character represented for instance. And I think that because of the neighbourhood and, yeah, being aware of those issues through the culture of the neighbourhood, made me, yeah, raise the issue and actually there's no women like we have 30 pictures, 21 of them have characters, and there's not a single woman on there, like I, yeah, it definitely has an impact on my work as little as it is, it does.

The importance of the neighbourhood is emphasised as well by the manager interviewed (P16), who broadly states that “*Ah, oui ! Effectivement. Je pense que le quartier a un effet sur la vie des employés d'Ubisoft*” but without going into detail. Looking at the interrelation between the Mile End and Ubisoft, six participants (P16, P17, P19, P21, P25, P26) state that it is an extraordinary or

great neighbourhood for work due to all the things that are around, which are not found in other neighbourhoods but without referring to an effect on them and their work.

For bidirectional effects, respondents think more or less about the same issues as for unidirectional effects. They point to the fact of what Ubisoft has brought to the neighbourhood, such as further companies and creative workers, and to the involvement of Ubisoft in the Mile End (P20, P22, P25). Participant P22 also suspects that the area would change radically if Ubisoft were to disappear. Even though it refers to possible future developments, it draws a picture of dependency. Interviewee P25 simply says that the Mile End and Ubisoft have grown together over time and now they are really intertwined. Interdependence is also the focus of other developers, who often referring to the size of the company. There are also some that connect the two views. Interviewee P20 puts it in the context of an ecosystem. According to him, Ubisoft “has brought a lot of creativity to the neighbourhood and it’s, it’s kind of developed this ecosystem that feeds that work, feeds the neighbourhood, and the neighbourhood feeds Ubisoft back”. Two others put the focus on the intensity of the relation, and they describe it as a “strained relationship” (P21) because Ubisoft likes the world of arts and wants to participate, or as a love-hate-relationship,

because we are big and we’re getting bigger each time, so, I don’t know if people wanted us to go away to make this neighbourhood like more local again. But we, we encourage a lot of the local industries and local business over there, so I think now they’re liking us more, because we’re getting involved too in the neighbourhood. (P23)

So far, the view has only been on the development until the time the interviews were taken, in spring 2021. To conclude, the workers were asked about the future development of the relationship. The simple opinion of three interviewees (P16, P19, P22) is that the video game industry will still grow in the Mile End. Another one (P20) sees it also booming but he adds ‘probably’ because he sees changes in the industry in general which will have an impact on the relation. This statement is similar to interviewee P26’s opinion. She sees the possibility of further grow but she also sees more diversity of companies in the Mile End. As well small companies are a perspective from interviewee P20. Without making a prediction regarding if the industry will grow or not, four co-workers (P17, P18, P24, P27) see that the presence of the video game industry and Ubisoft will be still strong in the area, because Ubisoft is too involved (P23) and has invested a lot in the neighbourhood which is a reason for Ubisoft to stay (P21). This relation is strongly expressed by

interviewee P25, who states that “now, I think it’s, it’s more of a, it’s, it’s almost a symbiosis, like I don’t see Ubisoft going away anywhere else, in part, because I guess that they would lose a lot of people because the Mile End is nice to work in. The life is nice to be in”.

Summary Overview

On the whole, both the effects of the neighbourhood on the work of the Ubisoft employees and the effects of their work on the neighbourhood are seen in diverse ways, and so is the importance of and for the Mile End. The interviewees see three different effects of the video game industry on the neighbourhood. It is the neighbourhood’s dependency and links with the company, such as consumers in the restaurants and stores, as the locomotive for other companies to locate and as a supporter for (cultural) events and local artists. The effect of the neighbourhood on the participants’ work is also experienced in various ways. One half wouldn’t say or don’t feel that there is an influence in this direction while the other half sees the environment as an important factor for work. The variety of places, restaurants and stores, and the neighbourhood feeling provide a good working environment that makes the work easier. Two participants add that working in another environment would be different. Apart from these points, other effects are not mentioned when thinking about bidirectional effects. The relation is also described as a love-hate-relationship, and as an ecosystem where every side is nourished by the other.

To complete the picture, the interviewees provide an outlook regarding the future. In general, they see the video game industry as still strong in the Mile End, either growing or new companies arriving, and they see that Ubisoft will stay in the Mile End because of the strong links to the area.

This depicted relationship is the one between Ubisoft and the Mile End. The last point still missing is the role of the neighbourhood in the cultural activities of video game developers, which also creates (potential) links between them, the activities, and their work.

7.1.1.2. Role of the Neighbourhood for Developers’ Cultural Activities

Cultural dynamics play a particular role in this thesis. Therefore, this section focuses on the importance of cultural offerings and amenities to workers’ cultural practices and lifestyles, the relationship between workers’ lifestyles and their work, and the influence of the neighbourhood on

their work. It may be that some points have been mentioned before, but not in this context. Together, however, they provide a picture of the following relationship: culture - lifestyle - neighbourhood - work.

A first step in order to look at this relation is to investigate the importance of the cultural offer for the cultural practices of the video game developers in the neighbourhood and for their lifestyle. Besides the two workers (P20, P24) who couldn't answer these points or don't see an importance, there is only one interviewee (P18) whose cultural practices are not attached to the Mile End, although he goes to Aire Commune for concerts as a part of the social aspect and of his lifestyle. However, he adds that he would probably miss the offer and amenities if the Mile End change drastically. For another participant, attending events etc. in the Mile End is not part of his cultural practices but it does for his lifestyle. Without really stating what the importance for his cultural practices and his lifestyle is, interviewee P23 describes the feelings he has when he is in the Mile End in the following way:

It's good because, when we go out like after work or on the lunch when we walk in the neighbourhood, it's it feels nice, it's not just like something like, I don't know, like if you are downtown is only building like this, or Dubai that's cold. And we can see it get in history and it's nice to feel it when you go there, but I can maybe participate more. But I don't know. [laughing].

He did participate in the neighbourhood such as attending shows and events, e.g. the rooftop concerts as part of his lifestyle. The Mile End is 'somewhat important' for interviewees P19, P21, P22 and P25. The explanations are not the same. While interviewee P25 also likes going to the Mile End also on the weekends, because he appreciates more and more the good cultural offer, the vibrant community and the food offer that is connected to his lifestyle. Interviewee P22 says that he appreciates the offer in the Mile End when he is on his way to and from work and during lunch time. Regarding his cultural practices, he doesn't spend more time in the Mile End beyond that. However, he is of another opinion when thinking about the connection to his lifestyle. He sees an importance because of the young cultural offer and the young professionals, aged 20-30, he observes. This atmosphere "is echoing a lot with me, hum. But. It has transformed me, I think the neighbourhood actually transformed me, I did not come interested in those issues, or those things, but seeing them and having them at hand easily made me aware and made me like them even more.

I would say” (P22). A changed view of the Mile End is also expressed by interviewee P20 but in a more general form. He says that he started to enjoy the Mile End through time. For interviewee P21, the neighbourhood is only ‘somewhat important’ because although he likes culture, he does not participate much in it. One of the reasons he mentions is that the hip, more alternative-cultural offers in the Mile End do not fit into a parent lifestyle. The cultural activities interviewee P19 does in the neighbourhood are connected to his work such as 5@7 on Fridays, and not lifestyle related. Therefore, he doesn’t separate his own cultural practices from work. About the importance of the cultural offer he states that:

[...] a bit. I mean, it’s important in the fact that it makes my work a bit better. I feel like if my company was if I were, our space was situated elsewhere, my life at Ubisoft would be different, so it has an impact on me. But the fact is just like, is limited to the activities that will be proposed to us by the company or the places where we will go to during break times and lunch. [...] So, yeah. That’s it. Not immensely. (P19)

The three women participating in the research all declare that all the cultural offers of Mile End are important for their cultural practices and for their lifestyle. Interviewee P16 clarifies that it is part of her cultural activities, which is in line with interviewee P26 who says that she does a lot of cultural things in the neighbourhood. Another reason for the statement is given by interviewee P27. She states that it is really important for her because it is close to her home and work.

Not everyone can state the importance of cultural practices and lifestyle for work. Of those who say something about it, half say that there is no impact on their work (P17, P20, P21, P24, P25). However, for three of them (P17, P21, P25), this is connected with their actual work activity where it is difficult to find inspiration in arts as stated by P21. Two of the interviewees distinguish between the importance it has on their own work and on other aspects such as the company, on Ubisoft, but this varies between whether there is definitely an impact on Ubisoft as a whole (P20) and whether there is maybe an impact on his co-workers (P24). Interviewee P23 only occasionally sees an influence on his work that originates from the local artists and their exhibitions. Contrary to these statements are those of the three women interviewed. They clearly perceive an influence of their cultural practices on their work. One of them, interviewee P27, explains that it is very connected because she gets creativity through the environment by attending shows, theaters etc. Interviewee P16 explains the connection by stating “[c]’est, ça fait partie du travail quotidien, c’est de

l'inspiration, c'est les partenaires d'affaire, des associations, c'est de la co-cr ation".

An influence of the neighbourhood on their work is only commented on by half of the respondents. They see no direct influence on their work (P23, P24, P26, P27), but two respondents add comments. According to one person (P24) Ubisoft is influenced by the cultural activities in the neighbourhood which is evidenced by their participation in these events. Another one sees it in an opposite way because her job influences the cultural community through the events she is involved in organising in the Mile End (P16). A general statement is given by interviewee P18, which also refers to his work. He says that "the atmosphere is very warm and welcoming and prone to creativity because of all the artwork you can see on buildings through graffiti and the like".

Regarding the cultural dynamics as a reason for locating oneself in the Mile End, the manager interviewed does not mention this point. She refers to the accessibility of the Mile End and the cheaper prices compared to other places. She adds that the area was not as developed as today. However, looking at the situation today, she refers to the creative aspect and states that "*apr s  a le Mile End s'est d velopp  et est devenu vraiment cr atif. Je pense que  a contribue positivement   la qualit  de vie de nos employ s*".

Summary Overview

All in all, the importance of cultural offers and amenities to workers' cultural practices and lifestyles differs widely between 'no importance', 'somewhat important' and 'important'. The explanations they give vary. They refer to the atmosphere, the cultural offer, the community, or to the relation to their work. They enjoy the neighbourhood at different times such as during lunch, after work, or the weekends. Comments on the relation between cultural offer and lifestyle differ between 'no significance' for cultural practices but positively for lifestyle because of the events. The importance of cultural practices and lifestyle and the influence of the neighbourhood on their work is seen diversely. Almost half of the interviewees think that there is no impact on their work which is also connected with the actual work activity in which arts are not seen as a source of inspiration. However, the three women participating definitely notice an influence of their cultural practices on their work because they get creativity and inspiration by the offer in the Mile End. In terms of cultural dynamics as a reason for locating in the Mile End, the manager interviewed does not mention this point. However, looking on the situation today, she says that the creativity in the

Mile End influences the quality of life of the employees positively.

This section has shown the different links between culture - lifestyle - neighbourhood - work. These relationships are those that take place on site in the neighbourhood. As the interviews were conducted online during the pandemic, there are also comments and reflections on the possible influence of the pandemic on the relationships.

7.1.1.3. Covid-19 and the Pandemic

The interview phase in Montreal was during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic. These circumstances affected the interviews in two ways. First, the participants state that it is difficult to remember names of places etc. or what they did in the neighbourhood because they hadn't been there for several months by the time of the interview (P19, P21, P23, P26, P27), and the depiction of the Mile End might be influenced by this. Secondly, making a prediction about the future of the Mile End was between 'with' and 'without' an influence of the pandemic which was sometimes mixed in the statements. The predictions of the future of the Mile End taking the pandemic into concern is mostly about the fact that with home office getting more popular in the video game industry, there will be less people coming to the Mile End (P20). As a consequence, they see fewer customers for the restaurants and shops (P17, P18, P19, P23, P25, P26), and also that the company will need less physical space (P17, P19, P21). Other possible impacts of the pandemic are seen, such as a drop in rents because there will be less demand (P18, P23) and a slowdown in gentrification (P21). Interviewee P26 also sees an impact of the pandemic on culture, artists, and cultural events in the Mile End, as events etc. are not possible to the same extent during the pandemic and it is more difficult for artists and organisers to survive. And about the neighbourhood she states that "*Mais sinon, s'il avait pas la Covid, le Mile End été reconnu comme un de quartier où les gens peut vraiment y aller et que c'est une place où ce inspirer, ou avoir des activités comme les activités culturel et social et tout là-bas*". However, she also predicts that the neighbourhood will eventually recover from the pandemic.

Summary Overview

In short, the pandemic influenced the interviews, because some of the participants had not been out and about in the neighbourhood for months, as they themselves admit. This may influence the statements regarding details. It is also difficult to predict the future development of the neighbourhood and the video game industry, as these turn out differently depending on how the pandemic is taken into account.

7.1.1.4. Conclusion

The video game developers' link and awareness of the Mile End are also echoed in their representation of the relation between the video game industry and the neighbourhood. Both the impact of the neighbourhood on the work of Ubisoft employees and the impact of their work on the neighbourhood are seen to vary, and thus the importance of and for the area. Effects recognised from Ubisoft on the neighbourhood are Mile End's dependency on and links to the company, such as consumers in restaurants and shops, the reason for other companies to locate in the Mile End, and Ubisoft as a supporter of events and local artists. The opposite effect, the effect from the neighbourhood to the company, is either not perceived or confirmed, or oppositely it is considered important for work. For those who state that it is significant, it is the environment because it makes work easier by offering a variety of places, restaurants, and stores, as well as a good neighbourhood feeling. Working in another environment wouldn't be the same as stated by some. This is indirectly said by Ubisoft management who says that the creativity in the Mile End positively influences the quality of life of the employees. The whole nexus is described as an ecosystem where every side is nourished by the other. No further bi-directional effects are mentioned.

In addition to the mutual influence between the video game industry and the neighbourhood, there is also the relationship between the video game players, their cultural lifestyle and the neighbourhood. The cultural offer and the amenities for the cultural practices and lifestyle of the workers are of varying importance. They depend on the importance of the atmosphere, the offer, and the relation with work. A connection between the cultural practices, lifestyle and neighbourhood and the work of the participants is seen contrary. Almost half of the respondents are of the opinion that there is no connection and that it therefore has no influence on their work.

The three women who took part in the study, on the other hand, see a strong influence of their cultural practices on their work, because they get creativity and inspiration from what is on offer in the neighbourhood. Some of the participating men do not see any influence because they do not see art as a source of inspiration in their actual work activities.

Future evolution of the Mile End is seen either as a continuation of the current development. Consequently, the interviewees see the video game industry still strong in the Mile End, whether it is Ubisoft and/or further video game companies. The cultural and artistic sector is not the focus of almost all developers, and it is therefore rare to make predictions about the future development of the cultural sector. The few commentaries see the cultural sector with its diverse offerings continuing to be in the Mile End.

It should be noted that some of the participants claim an influence of the pandemic on their views because they haven't been to the Mile End for some months, and that could have an impact on their memory. Some also state that the future development of the Mile End is difficult to predict under these circumstances.

This is the representation of the relationship between the video game developers and the neighbourhood. The attention now turns to the cultural players' understanding of how they see this relationship as part of the 'other (cultural) side'.

7.1.2. Cultural Actors in the Mile End

7.1.2.1. Relationship Between the Video Game Industry and the Neighbourhood

The way the cultural actors of the Mile End understand the relationship and effects between the video game industry and the Mile End provides insight into the importance of the area to video game developers from an outsider's perspective. It is a consideration of the unidirectional effect neighbourhood – video game industry, as well as the bidirectional one. The view on the relation is completed by their view on the video game industry and their personal relation to this industry.

A pronounced effect of the Mile End on the video game industry is not seen. Interviewee P28

supposes that there has to be one but for him this is just another world with no overlapping. Participant P30 hopes that there is an effect because “they come outside and see reality”, or in other words, the video game developers leave the office and are outside, where they come into contact with people other than their colleagues and see what happens outside the video game world. Taking the creative side into account, interviewee P31 thinks that

Ahm, [...] I don't know. I mean. [...] I don't know if they moved to a whole other neighbourhood. I don't know what would change with that-them and their thought process or creative process. Ahm, [...] I mean I can only assume that the company likes to stay where they are because employees also like it [grinning] and it's maybe like a draw for employees to live and work in the neighbourhood. Ya.

This leads to thoughts about why Ubisoft has chosen the Mile End. Participant P33 explains: “It's also because Mile End was sold as a kind of neighbourhood where people who work in the video game and the Web and everything, they would like to work here because of the vibe of the neighbourhood instead of working in an industrial suburb.” Moreover, it is also the walkability of the area.

Comments on the effects of the video game industry on the neighbourhood are given as well, such as the consequence of the location of Ubisoft described by interviewee P28:

Hum, I can't say why Ubisoft ended up moving in, but once Ubisoft did move in, not only did they start frequenting that café, they [...] created an obvious need for more lunch venues. So. Yeah there were a couple of bakeries too, they did sandwiches. And then I guess, after that, after someone put two and two together, the businesses started opening up. And. Not all of them succeeded but I think most of what works on Saint-Viateur, thanks to the lunch crowd of Ubisoft. I think that's a positive thing in many ways. Hum.

The effect of new lunch places that have pop up due to the Ubisoft lunch crowd is also commented upon by interviewees P29, P30, P31, P32 and P33. Interviewee P30 describes it as follows:

Well, I mean, I do feel, for me personally, the biggest impact of Ubisoft in the neighbourhood has and that has increased is, the more people are working there, the more people are running around at lunch time. Like, it's literally at 12:01, the floodgates open

and a bunch of mostly white, mostly male geeks pour out onto the streets. So, we have gotten more food options, lunch food options on Saint-Viateur and Saint-Laurent.

How impressive this is, is underlined by interviewee P31 and her experience. She describes it like: “There’s just sort of this like wave of people who go get lunch [laughing] and then they all go back to work. It’s sort of my, I mean, it’s, it’s simplistic and naive but it’s basically my experience of Ubisoft employees.” According to the impression of interviewee P30, the ‘lunch crowd’ doesn’t go that far, e. g. they don’t go the Nouveau Palais, a restaurant on Bernard where she knows the owner, or to the places on du Parc.

Participant P28 looks on the available spaces in the area for artists, something that also affected him because he had to leave his studio and to look for a new one. He explains the development in the following way:

Well, [...] I would say, the availability of studio spaces has changed a lot because of the presence of Ubisoft. I remember in the late nineties or early 2000s, there were still quite a lot of cheap studios for rent just off Saint-Viateur East all the way to de Gaspé. Hum. I knew a number of people who had live-in studios in the building that is now the sort of flagship Ubisoft building right on the corner of Saint-Laurent and Saint-Viateur. Hum [...]. So that has changed.

Although he sees Ubisoft as a player in this development, he adds that he can’t blame the company for this development because it is only one “part of this new puzzle that’s being pieced together”. That Ubisoft is only a part of the whole dynamics that are going on is also the opinion of interviewee P29: “So. And it’s, [...] Yeah, so, ja, I mean, I guess they’ve been their part of it, but, hu, part of the change, but not, I don’t think as much as I thought it would be. Yeah.”, and of interviewee P32 who thinks about the effect on rents: “I don’t think it has much to do with Ubisoft” (that real estate prices increased).

This is described differently by participant P33. He states that Ubisoft has in impact in different ways. He thinks of an indirect effect felt in the area. According to him, “Ubisoft perhaps created the buzz in France, but now you have thousands of younger French people [who] come here to study, to become artists or to work, and their presence is felt”, and these new people are also

changing the area culturally, for example by opening galleries such as *Café Resonance* on Parc, which is a café and art gallery. He adds that all the companies in that area are a major factor, but the impact on the neighbourhood and the community is not clear. He further reflects on direct impacts in terms of gentrification and in terms of the changed commercial offers around Ubisoft and added briefly: “What has changed the Mile End the most since 20 years, the answer is Ubisoft”. He adds that Ubisoft is aware of it, and in this context, Ubisoft has “a very strong will to develop links with the neighbourhood, so, with us, but not only with us with the citizen community, with community groups.” Thus, the presence of Ubisoft in the area “is controversial today”, which is well summarised by interviewee P31:

I mean; I would say there’s a mix. You know, there’s been some positive things with them being in the neighbourhood as well. So, you know, in some sense, you know, yes, the neighbourhood changed. There’s this, you know, huge influx of people that don’t necessarily live in the neighbourhood. Kind of just come for work, but, you know, they have sponsored street festivals and they’ve also like done revitalizing things in the neighbourhood that I think were good, so, I don’t know, I think there’s been like pros and cons with their involvement.

She further presumes that many employees of Ubisoft live in the neighbourhood and are part of it, which is in line with interviewee P30 who thinks that Ubisoft employees can afford the rents and so are part of the change. This statement is denied by participants P28, P29 and P33 who state that most do not live in the area, and P33 who remarks that younger employees of Ubisoft can’t afford to live in the Mile End although they are well paid. So, briefly said, the employees of Ubisoft commute to the area (P28), eat out during lunch time, and spend money in the businesses around (P29), that is also supported by the company that encourage the employees to buy local in the neighbourhood for example (P33). But this linking of what they can do, such as supporting the shops and artists in the Mile End, has its limits (P33).

So far, the view about the relation between the video game industry and the neighbourhood was depicted. Finally, there is a description of the personal relationship and the view of the cultural players on the industry, which could differ. The central point is the perception of Ubisoft and its employees as creative and cultural actors. Most of those who express their opinion don’t see them in the same cultural and creative way as they see themselves. According to his understanding of

culture and creativity, participant P28 wouldn't define them as cultural actors or creative workers. He explains:

Well, it's like [...], I don't know. It's like, muzak and rock n' roll. It's like, they're both genres of music, right? But. Can they jam? Can they get together? And it's, it's like oil and water as far as I'm concerned. It has absolutely nothing to do with my artistic practice. I do admire some artists who are involved in digital media and even use the same kind of animation as in video games, but when it comes to consuming video games, I don't see much overlap at all. In my opinion it's more like [...] with a certain distance, like, I want to say graphic design, but I also like graphic design, but it's more like advertising design or something. I don't know if it is. For me it's a different universe. It's not, that's my prejudice, I don't relate to it. I see these people coming in at lunch time and waiting, filling the restaurants, and disappearing for the rest of the day.

Interviewee P31 also sees differences between the people working at Ubisoft and cultural players as well. She has her studio in the same building as Ubisoft, and so she explains it differently:

It feels like you walk into the lobby, and you sort of can just tell like who's gonna go to that elevator and who is going to go to that elevator. [laughing] So there's just kind of a, you know, vibe in a sense of like separation. I don't feel any like mixing of culture. [laughing]⁹⁴

She adds that she wouldn't consider them as cultural actors.

Interviewee P29 sees video games as a commercial product and not an artistic or cultural one. This is similar to interviewee P32 who sees video games closer to entertainment than culture and therefore she sees them not as "indie artists". This is seen differently by interviewee P30. She sees video games as films and so she emphasizes that "Yeah, sure. I mean, games are part of, they create an environment that people engage within. So, you know. I think, it's like film makers. It's a cultural thing. It's just not something that I personally engage in".

The cultural actors also look on the integration of Ubisoft as an organization in the area. Interviewee

⁹⁴ There are separate elevators for the artists and for the companies in the complex on de Gaspé, where Ubisoft has also rented offices. The artists have to walk past the elevators for the companies to get to 'theirs'. The complex houses visual artists, among others.

P31 thinks that they are not really integrated in the neighbourhood, although it is their desire to get linked to the Mile End (P33). Ubisoft does some cultural programming and activities, such as organising the festival on Saint-Viateur or during Saint-Jean Baptiste respectively, not only for their employees but also for the neighbourhood (P28), and they work together with cultural organisations such as *Pied Carré*⁹⁵, but still, they are not part of the cultural fabric. This is in line with the perception of interviewee P29. He broadens his view in the following statement:

I don't, I don't consider Ubisoft culturally part of the neighbourhood, hu, because what they produce is a, hu, is a commercial product not an artistic product or a cultural product, according to me. So, as an organisation I don't consider themselves as part of the neighbourhood outside of the physically, just physically, the physical presence. And the workers are, hu, they are only linked, as far as I'm concerned is, is sort of spending eating lunch here. And maybe individually here and there. They are obviously interesting artistic people that might be drawn to or become part of the community but not as a Ubisoft representative. It's just as an individual. That this makes sense. [laughing]

Looking on the relation of the video game developers to culture, the Mile End and/or to the interviewees, the cultural actors describe them as passive participants, as spectator, (P29) and equally interested in culture and arts, and crafts from Mile End, such as music and books. That is in line with interviewee P30. She thinks that "So, you know, there must be, like, you know, I am very sure if you are really good at it, at developing games, you're probably also engaging in other cultural activities because, you know, they cross feet, like with music". The view of interviewee P32 is the opposite. She sees them as geeks that are not really interested in cultural activities. This is underlined by interviewee P33. He says that besides the tours they do for Ubisoft, the employees are not engaged in the area. At this point, some descriptions of the video game developers can be mentioned that complement the picture about them, although they could be stereotypes and prejudices. They are seen as mostly male, young, white, very geeky (P30) with long working hours that come in the morning and leave right after work, and not sitting in the coffee shops (P31), and who consume online, including culture, and who live in the suburbs (P29, P33).

⁹⁵ *Pied Carré* is an association of creative people founded in 2009. The artists, craftspeople and cultural workers are committed to preserving and improving the creative spaces in the Mile End (Regroupement Pied Carré 2024).

There is also a personal relationship to Ubisoft reported. Interviewee P28 was an active member of the organisation *Rue Publique* that “advocated for better use of streets as public spaces” such as street closures and festivals in the Mile End between 2009 and 2017. In those days, they received financial aid from Ubisoft. This ‘cooperation’ increased the visibility of their activities. In a professional way, Ubisoft doesn’t have a direct impact on interviewee P30 and P31.

The future of the neighbourhood and the video game industry can’t be predicted by interviewee P31 and P33, although for different reasons, such as that there is not much space left (P31), and that the industry itself might change because of more opportunities to have home office and the changed need for physical space (P33). The other interviewees also see the video game industry in the area in the future (P28, P29, P30, P32), because Mile End has a name to attract employees (P29). Taking the cultural aspect into account, participant P31 hopes “that Ubisoft continues to do activities in the neighbourhood, you know, to kind of enlive[n] it more, and give public space more, more prominence for, for cultural activities. Yeah”.

Summary Overview

On the whole, effects of varying strength are seen between the video game industry and the neighbourhood. A pronounced effect of the Mile End on the video game industry is not reported by anyone, although some of the cultural players suppose that there should be one. It is an influence on the thinking or creative process of video game developers because they are in the neighbourhood and out and about. In contrast, there are many examples of how Ubisoft influences the Mile End. The major point is the growing number of restaurants, bars, and cafés because the employees created a need for these places. Some see the ‘lunch crowd’ as the biggest impact on the area. It is also the only experience with this group for some of the participants. A second point is the availability of free and affordable space for artists that has become less and less because Ubisoft needs space for their own offices. Ubisoft’s involvement in the whole development is viewed differently. Some cultural actors think that Ubisoft is only a part of the dynamics going on in the Mile End, but there is also one who states that the major changes are because of Ubisoft’s arrival. Thus, positive and negative things are connected with Ubisoft’s presence. Ubisoft and its employees are part of the Mile End. However, most of the participants think that the company Ubisoft is not integrated culturally in the neighbourhood although the company tries to build up links by supporting e. g. artists and stores. They further see the employees as passive consumers,

as spectators, and (maybe) interested in culture on a personal level but not particularly in the Mile End.

The view of the video game industry is also influenced by personal views of creativity. The central point is the creative and cultural aspect of the video game developers' work. Both, the developers and the products they produce are usually not seen in the same cultural and creative way as the cultural actors see themselves, due to a different understanding of culture and creativity. Only one sees their products as a cultural and creative thing. The cultural actors are also considering where the employees could live. There is no consensus here, since half of them think that the employees can afford the rents in the neighbourhood and so live in the Mile End, while the other half is not in agreement.

The future of the neighbourhood and the video game industry can't be predicted by all interviewees. Most see the video game industry around in the future.

The interviews with the cultural actors were taking during the first months of the pandemic. Thoughts and comments about it were already part of their statements and give an impression about that period.

7.1.2.2. Covid-19 and the Pandemic

Some of the comments made are related to the pandemic. They are presented separately here because they might have been different without the pandemic. The comments mainly relate to the different offers and changes in the region as well as the development of the real estate market and its consequences.

Most of the interviewees mention an impact on the cultural offers and activities and the closing of shops in connection but in different contexts (P28, P29, P30, P31). Interviewee P28 refers to the outdoor venue *Marché des possibles* which can't take place that year, and interviewees P30 and P31 refer to the different or non existing offer of cultural activities at the moment. One of them, participant P30, adds that the "pandemic put a stop to everything", referring to cultural places and businesses closing and opening. A link between business closures and Covid is seen by P28, and interviewee P29 notes that the rate of turnover of businesses has changed, or in other words it

slowed down, although he is not sure if it is connected with the pandemic. This impression regarding the development of stores gets clearer with the explanation of interviewee P33. In his view, Mile End was on the verge of becoming a neighbourhood with shops that were no longer for domestic needs but for tourists. With the start of Covid, this development was interrupted.

Regarding the cultural sector, the view of interviewee P31 is different. She talks about her friends that have to leave the neighbourhood and the reasons for it. She explains:

There are some places that are, that are leaving which is partially from Covid, but I feel like Covid was just the final straw that like push things over the edge. You know, like I have friends who have a kind of small gallery and cultural entities that have had to leave the neighbourhood. Hum, partially just because of changing dynamics and increasing rents and then Covid sort of pushed it over the edge. So, it's, it's fairly recent that I think there's kind of more changes that are happening. So. Yeah.

Another point raised by several respondents is the development of the neighbourhood, focusing on the real estate market and its consequences. They hope or wish that the Mile End will develop in a different direction after the pandemic because the pandemic will put an end to the way things have been going (P28, P32, P33). Interviewee P32 makes the difference here between two cases. She thinks that rents will increase for houses regardless of the pandemic, but she doubts that this will also be the case for commercial rentals. Connected with the real estate market is a development two participants think of. The pandemic paved the way for home office, which was previously impossible in the video game industry as in many other sectors due to security concerns (P29, P33). As a consequence of the pandemic, working from home became established, and now, "because everything is set up [now] and if companies can offload a lot of their rent costs onto, onto individuals and just say 'Well, you just work from home and we won't give you an office', and then they save on space" (P29). According to interviewee P33, the management is already thinking about a hybrid solution which entails working some days at home and some days in the office. This might have an impact on the real estate market and the neighbourhood.

In general, interviewee P29 thinks that the impact of Ubisoft and its employees on the neighbourhood is not as obvious. Therefore, he states that

sometimes I feel like Ubisoft uses their presence, they think they're more valuable to the neighbourhood than they think they are. And maybe the shut down has shown that that, even though it's short lived, so we can't really see the economic impact maybe until later, if the workers being here really had a big effect on the local community. I'd be curious to see how much their absence affected local businesses.

An intertwining of Ubisoft and neighbourhood businesses is also addressed by participant P33, but from a very different point of view. In the summer of the first pandemic year, Ubisoft encouraged their employees to buy local, supported with vouchers from local shops offered by Ubisoft.

Besides these comments, there is another original one. The way people are dressed during the pandemic is seen as important for interviewee P30. She explains: "even just walking around and seeing people and seeing the way people dress, and the different masks worn in the way they choose to express themselves, it's a joy, for me. And it's nourishing. I need that as a creator of stuff, that's for sure."

Summary Overview

To sum up, taking Covid-19 into account, several statements were given about the current and future development. Most of the interviews mention an impact on the cultural offer and activities that couldn't take place or the closure of cultural places. They also report about the closing of shops in connection with the pandemic. Looking especially at the real estate market, they think that the pandemic put a stop to the development in this sector and the cultural actors hope that after the pandemic, the direction of the development will be different because e. g. of the changed demand or space in the area due to home office of the employees. In addition to these two points, the pandemic and the closure of Ubisoft could also show the real impact of Ubisoft on the Mile End, as one participant notes.

7.1.2.3. Conclusion

The relationship between the video game industry and the Mile End is seen with varying degrees of intensity depending on which point of view. An effect of the neighbourhood on the video game industry is only suspected by some, and by the fact that there should or could be one. Examples

given by respondents include an influence on their thoughts or their creative process because they are outside in the neighbourhood. In contrast, participants definitely see an influence of the video game industry on the Mile End. Examples are the increasing number of local cafés and restaurants for the ‘lunch crowd’, as well as the improvement of bars due to the need that was created by Ubisoft employees. This is seen as the major influence in the area. Besides this, they also see an impact on the artistic sector because Ubisoft needs space for their offices, and they can pay a higher rent. Therefore, there is less and less space available for the artists and they have to move away. The involvement of Ubisoft in this development is seen controversially as ‘they are a part of it’, and ‘they are one of the sources of it’. Although Ubisoft is part of the Mile End and tries to connect to it by supporting the artists, the cultural actors think that the company is not culturally integrated in the neighbourhood.

The view of Ubisoft and the video game industry is also affected by personal interaction. The interviewees have hardly any contact with the people working at Ubisoft. The only point is when they see them, the ‘lunch crowd’, on their way to restaurants at lunchtime. Regarding the cultural and creative aspect of developing a game and the developers themselves, almost all cultural actors are of the opinion that it is different from what the cultural actors are involved in because of a different understanding of culture and creativity. The developers are recognised as consumers and interested in culture but not in the Mile End. Further, thinking about where the developers live is speculative. Half of the participants think that the employees live in the Mile End because they can afford the rent, other ones guess that they live in other neighbourhoods.

Prediction about the future development of the Mile End is given as well. A prediction about the presence of the video game industry in the Mile End is only seen as to whether this industry will still be around. How this plays out in the future depends on the change in demand for office space due to the pandemic and the now socially acceptable home office practice in this industry. Further, looking at the artistic sector and the artistic flair of the Mile End, the cultural actors state that there will still be a creative and cultural stronghold in the Mile End but somewhat altered due the current changes.

The perception of the cultural actors, especially with regard to the connection between video game developers and the Mile End, coincides in some parts with that of the video game developers. A comparison will show more precisely what these are.

7.1.3. Comparison of the Interviews in the Mile End

The interviewees' awareness of and their connection to the neighbourhood are reflected in their depiction of the relationship of the video game industry and the Mile End. The video game developers and the cultural actors describe it with different intensity, and hence, with a different impact depending on the direction. An influence from the video game industry on the neighbourhood is seen by all. The effects recognised by Ubisoft employees are Mile End's dependency on the company and links to it. Examples given are that Ubisoft employees are consumers in shops and especially in restaurants that depend on them, that Ubisoft is the reason for other companies to come to the Mile End, and that Ubisoft is a supporter of events and local artists. The effects noticed by the cultural actors are similar. They list one and the same point but mostly from a different angle and including consequences. They see Ubisoft employees as consumers in the neighbourhood who go to the restaurants and bars. Therefore, many new places have opened in the area for the so-called 'lunch crowd' to meet their needs, which is seen by the cultural actors as the major influence in the neighbourhood. The cultural actors also consider the artistic sector but besides the support of local artists by Ubisoft as referred to by video game developers, they further think of another aspect. They think of an impact on the artistic sectors in the sense that Ubisoft needs for office space that is 'taken' from the artists because it can pay a higher rent. However, this involvement in the rising rents is seen controversially. It varies between Ubisoft being part of it, and Ubisoft as one of the sources of it.

The opposite effect, the impact of the neighbourhood on the video game industry, is viewed comparatively similarly by developers and cultural actors. An effect is either not perceived or confirmed by most or suspected by cultural actors in the case for the video game developers. However, the developers who do see one do not consider it important for their work. Some video game developers say that the neighbourhood has an impact on the thoughts or the creative process of developers when they are in the area outside the office because the environment makes work more enjoyable by offering a variety of places, restaurants, and stores, as well as a good neighbourhood feeling. This fact is pointed out by some interviewees who punctuate that working in another environment wouldn't be the same. The entire connection is described by few developers as an ecosystem in which each side is nourished by the other. Although Ubisoft is part of the Mile End and tries to connect to it, the cultural actors think that the company is not integrated culturally

in the neighbourhood.

A closer look at the relationship between the cultural practices, lifestyle, the neighbourhood, and the work of the video game developers highlights that it is seen variously. It differs between the perception that there is no influence on the developers' work because art is not seen as a source of inspiration in the actual work activity, and the perception that there is a strong influence of cultural practices on their work because they get creativity and inspiration from what is on offer in the neighbourhood. The cultural actors also look at the cultural and creative aspect of developing a game and the developer's role. Almost all cultural actors think that the creativity of the developers differs from their own practice because both groups have a different understanding of what creativity and culture are.

Part of what the neighbourhood offers comes from the cultural actors, for example the cinema owner and the organiser of conferences and guided tours. Their professional connection of these players to the video game industry influences their view of it. Although both count Ubisoft and its employees among their clients, the same points are mentioned in reference to the developers, their relationship to culture and their lifestyle. Developers are mostly, if not exclusively, perceived as a group when they go out to lunch at lunchtime, as the so-called 'lunch crowd' recognised by a similar age (between 25-30 years) and as male (P30, P32). When these cultural professionals see developers at cultural events, etc., they see them as spectators and interested in culture, but necessarily not in the Mile End.

The future of the video game industry in the Mile End is seen by both groups as given. This industry, either Ubisoft and/or further video game companies, will stay in the neighbourhood. How much space they will take up, however, depends on the developments after the pandemic, as some participants note. Home office, which was not possible before but is accepted now, could reduce the demand for office space in the video game industry, and therefore more free space for offices and studios could be available in the future. Besides the video game industry, the cultural actors also think about the artistic sector and the artistic flair of the Mile End. They state that there still will be a creative and cultural stronghold in the Mile End but different due to the current changes. The artistic sector is not a consideration in the mind of the VGD when they think about the future development of the Mile End. They only make general statements such as that the current developments will continue or that they will stop in the sense that there won't be changes or only

few changes in the future.

Regarding the pandemic it should be noted that the cultural actors were still present in the neighbourhood during the pandemic, while some of the video game developers claim that they weren't in the Mile End during this period and therefore probably see an influence on their memory and thus on the statements.

As seen, the perceptions are pretty similar by the video game developers and the cultural actors. Some points are mentioned, but the emphasis may differ between both groups. Major differences are not given. It should only be noted that, unlike the cultural actors, the video game developers say nothing about the artistic sector, such as anything about the situation with the studios or anything about the future of this sector in the Mile End. The similarities and differences are shown in table 30.

Table 30: Comparison of the most important similar and different perceptions and descriptions of the analysis of the video game developers and cultural actors for ‘The Video Game Industry and The Neighbourhood - a Symbiosis?’ in Mile End

	Similarities	Differences
Relationship Between the Video Game Industry and the Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of an influence from the video game industry on the neighbourhood (by all) (artistic sector only mentioned by cultural actors) • No perception of an influence from the neighbourhood to the video game industry • Presence of the video game industry in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of an influence by the video game developers on them (atmosphere) • Influence known only in the direction from the video game industry to the neighbourhood (by the cultural actors) • Perception of the relationship between the cultural practices, lifestyle, the neighbourhood, and the work of the video game developers • Presence of artists and the artistic sector in the future (by cultural actors)

	Similarities	Differences
Interdependence, sociability, representations of relationships and behaviour, as well as networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No statements possible because this part doesn't apply to cultural actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No statements possible because this part doesn't apply to cultural actors
Perception of the Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence in the neighbourhood during the pandemic • Influence on the perception of the development in the neighbourhood

Source: Author

7.2. Flingern-Nord

The look is now at the statements of the video game developers (7.2.1.) and the cultural actors (7.2.2.) regarding their views of the relationship of the video game industry, of the video game developers and the neighbourhood. As well is included the statements about Covid-19 and the pandemic. This part is completed with a comparison of the interviews (7.2.3.).

7.2.1. Video Game Developers in Flingern-Nord

7.2.1.1. Relationship Between the Video Game Industry and the Neighbourhood

Looking at how the people working at Ubisoft see the effects of the relationship between the video game industry and those of Flingern-Nord do provides an insight into the importance of the neighbourhood for their work. Particularly important is the view on the effect of the neighbourhood on the video game industry and the effect of the video game industry on the neighbourhood.

Although Ubisoft has moved to a different location, the distance to the centre didn't change significantly, but the axis to the new location shifted. Because of this, the perception of the neighbourhood could have changed. Still, all statements given show an insight about the relationship of the neighbourhood, the company and how the neighbourhood is perceived.

A direct effect from the video game industry on the neighbourhood is not perceived (yet) by most of the participants and so comments about it are e.g. "no impact yet" (P6) or "don't realise it" (4). There is one point that three respondents consider. This is how the company can be involved in the neighbourhood. Suggestions are through cooperation or special events (P1, P7, P10). Interviewee P7 explains his idea and the aim of a cooperation by referring to former cooperation as well:

That's hard to say. Since I don't know this, the neighbourhood so well, I'm not sure what we can do in that sense, but I know that as a studio in particular in the games industry, we do promote activities with other entities like schools and universities in particular, where we do coding exercises or, or game development workshops. So, we could do that in the neighbourhood if there are schools, for example we could do something like that. We didn't

had the time for it yet, but it could promote those opportunities, in particular to attract new talent to the games industry. We could explore exactly around the neighbourhood.

P7 not only thinks of cooperation with schools but also “with other companies in the neighbourhood or with other services”. Further examples are not given.

An effect from Flingern-Nord on Ubisoft is not yet seen by several interviewees (P2, P5, P6, P9) as well. Two interviewees, who have been working for Ubisoft for more than six years, see an effect to some extent (P7) or probably yes (P10). They describe in detail what a neighbourhood effect on a company may look like. Interviewee P7 says:

To some extent, yes, [there is an effect] again, as any other company, the people that go there, they need to take a break from work, they need to go out for lunch or for a snack or for a beer after work with friends or something like that. And in that sense, it’s good if you have those services close to you. So, yes, it could be in the sense of providing good services and well-being to the people that go there for work. So, they could enjoy the neighbourhood to relax and maybe also, for example, as you mentioned, if there’s a musical festival, if there’s an art gallery and I’m an artist in the games industry, I could go and be exposed to different art styles and bring that back to my own perception and apply it in my work to some extent.

He adds that Ubisoft provides bikes which are used during lunch break to go for lunch in the area or just to explore the neighbourhood. He interprets this as a first step to connect with Flingern-Nord. In the same vein, but from a different angle, is the comment of interviewee P10. His considerations include the company and the indirect effect on it of the atmosphere generated by the happy and cheerful young people in the neighbourhood. He states:

It’s not like a critical factor to influence it, but a positive atmosphere can help, and it can propagate even inside companies, so, that can definitely be a point where the influence can come from the neighbourhood into the company itself. I was thinking that maybe another point would be in terms of facilities like providing areas for different types of activities. Maybe that can also influence in some regards how we’re working and how we actually collaborate with each other, you know, like internal collaboration is in between, of course,

the company's hall, and the neighbourhood's and its facilities.

Interviewee P2 sees an influence of the surrounding large companies rather than the neighbourhood.

For the management, the choice of Flingern-Nord as location was important: "Well, here is simply an immediate environment that is good, and this proximity to Flingern, it is really noticeable and that has surprised us, well, if I had to say now, what has surprised us most positively about this whole move" [own translation] (P3). However, the description remains superficial in contrast to the statements of the employees. Noteworthy is the thought of one interviewee (P4), who links the neighbourhood, the creativity found there and video games. He states that "I am unsure. With time, it might have some influence in terms of like 'How will games look or some sort of feeling of a [...] cultural busy places Flingern has to have'".

The relationship is not only one-way, but also bidirectional. This bidirectional relationship often cannot be clearly separated from the perception that the interviewees have of the one-sided relationship which is not always clear/obvious to the interviewee when they discuss it. The relationship should be improved (P10), but a co-worker doubts if there will be an effect (P4). He refers to with the former location of Ubisoft. He saw no connection there in the six years he has already worked for the company, except for a café, the *Holo-Café* on Am Wehrhahn. It is a gaming café founded by former Ubisoft employees, a ten-minute walk from the former location in Stadtmitte. This comparison is also given by interviewee P8. He states that "so, according to my feeling, I don't think that there is any mutual influence. Especially because Ubisoft was not so much influenced by the city before, when they still had another location and did not have so much influence on the city" [own translation]. That this might change in the future is seen by interviewee P1 who recognised first evidence of an effect. He states:

Well. [...] I think mutual influences are just emerging; it is difficult for me to say whether that is already the case. I think they are certainly emerging. [...] So when our employees go to Flingern, even if it's just for their lunch break, it naturally has an effect on the employees, but I don't know exactly what it is yet. I would also try to make sure that the creativity that lives in the neighbourhood somewhere, uhm, probably that would tie in with this. [own translation]

The situation about lunch time and restaurants is also commented by some participants, such as by interviewee P7, who simply wishes that “having good access to food and services would be good”, because he misses restaurants close-by. That is the same for interviewee P5, who also compare the restaurant situation with the former location. He states that

actually, where the company is at the moment, I’m a bit surprised that the actual offer of restaurants actually is smaller [here] than where we used to work. So, when we used to work, everything, maybe we will be a little bit spoiled, like, but I remember like things here we had, to go to an Italian, a Thai place, a Mexican, and a Vietnamese within five minutes of the office. Right now, in Flingern I think we have one pizza place and one Chinese place and everything else that is further out. So, I, I think this area around where our offices is in Flingern, the variety of food, it could be better.

This aspect is underlined by interviewee P4, who states: “I think really, what we are focusing in Flingern is the food by different food restaurants where we go, and that’s it, when it comes to that. Because we don’t really move outside the office, you know”. The situation described calls for change, which, according to participant P5, should also come from the company. He states:

I think; it is as an interest in employees to, to give us the best work experience, if possible. I’m sure they’re looking to pay how can we get more food variety for our employees, how can we, and that will probably trigger some sort of domino effect where ‘cause there’s a pull from Ubisoft, oh say, can we bring food trucks over here. I don’t know whatever my examples are a bit wired maybe. And then, that could in turn have people who have a business and see a goal and opening and start to sort of cater to our kind of interesting in our groups. But I, Ubisoft won’t directly shape Flingern but it would indirectly shape it because it’s it does pull for, for, for us, the employees.

According to the manager (P3), there is a relationship between the video game industry and the neighbourhood because Ubisoft is here now. However, the existence of just one company, Ubisoft, is not enough for three participants (P4, P5, P6) and they conclude that there is no connection.

Points that are mentioned several times are the visibility of Ubisoft in the neighbourhood and the knowledge of its location. These points are seen as important as having an effect regardless of their

direction (P6, P8). One measure would be to present their work primarily in the neighbourhood (P10) or more advertising in the city centre, where a larger public can be reached (P9). This perception emphasises the statement of the manager who says that Ubisoft will show its presence in Flingern-Nord (P3). The statements of interviewee P7 and P8 can be seen in this context. They both mention the support, funding, and organisation of events by Ubisoft which support its awareness in Düsseldorf or Flingern-Nord respectively. To show a presence also includes showing visibility. This fact is pointed out by two interviewees, who suggest that the company should put signs on the building (P6, P9, who also remark that this was not the case at the former building). Perhaps the presentation of the company will be better when the renovation inside and outside the Ubisoft building is completed, according to two other participants (P2, P6). One participant (P10) points into the direction of the visibility of the products they make and how to get feedback from the gaming community in the area, describing the connections as follows:

So, I think even at the company level it, there can be initiatives or events to promote the company itself but I'm thinking more into the direction of actually showing what is happening in the industry and inside the company, you know. And trying to [...] popularize a little bit the products we are actually doing even on the local studio, it would be a good and interesting thing to do because, I am imagining that there are plenty of gamers everywhere. But there might [be] a certain type of projects which are developed by the studios in this case, by the Düsseldorf studio in Flingern and which might not have the same type of visibility as the other, more commercial marketed products. So, we can showcase what we are doing, and we can even get a first feeling from the audience. If they like the direction or not.

The significance of getting feedback from events is also underlined by interviewee P1.

In addition, interviewee P6 looks at the future relation between the video game industry and the neighbourhood, but unfortunately only in a general way, that Ubisoft might get the chance to connect with it, and that the type of connection will change. Five other participants (P1, P2, P5, P7, P10) have also thought about future developments, some of which focus on other aspects that are best stated by interviewee P10: "But I would like to think that actually it will progress towards this direction like evolving along with the neighbourhood in the end. I mean, we are holding it a little bit together". P10 is also of the opinion that Ubisoft wants to stay in Flingern-Nord. Participant

P5 assumes that the neighbourhood will become more lively when there will hopefully be more video game companies. The hope that Ubisoft will grow, and its presence will attract further video game companies is also expressed by interviewees P2, P3 and P7, because there are at the moment not many other companies in the area, according to interviewee P8. The attraction of further companies is however seen ambivalently by interviewee P4. He explains:

I don't, I don't; so, usually when you have a video game company, it don't really want [to] move to another one really close by, you know, because, one of the most general believes is that if people meet from other companies during lunch, you know, or they spent time together like they go outside and smoke, there is going to be a conversation about, you know, trying to get that person to quit and come and work for us, and because Ubisoft is considered one of the biggest German video game developers, other companies really try to keep their people away from Ubisoft, because they always feel that they are going to get fished. [...] [smiling/laughing] that's most of the time true, you know.

Some interviewees also think of the development on the consumer side, such as game shops that sell games or places where you can play video games which was identified for the former place. Interviewee P4 explains: “no, there are no shops or clubs where you can play video games. There is nothing. It's really nothing” and so interviewee P2 hopes that in the future, there will be some video game shops because of the presence of Ubisoft and its employees. But according to participants P1, P6 and P9, there is at least one shop that sell video games for different consoles.

Summary Overview

Overall, a direct influence of the video game industry on Flingern-Nord is not perceived. Also, an effect from the neighbourhood to the video game industry is not seen by almost half of the interviewees. Therefore, only two, who however have been working for Ubisoft for a longer time, note that there is an effect to some extent. This effect is however perceived in a general way. It is based on workers going out for food and drink and spending time in the neighbourhood during their breaks or after work. Afterwards, they bring the positive atmosphere and new impressions back to the office, which can influence their work. Nevertheless, a prerequisite for this is the existence of an appropriate offer. A (future) connection of this kind was decisive for the choice of location, for Flingern-Nord. A bi-directional effect is not perceived as well by the interviewees.

One interviewee refers to the former location where he can't see any effect from Ubisoft on the surrounded area and vice versa.

In this context, some say that the culturally creative neighbourhood will have an impact on their work on the one hand, and on the other that more services and amenities will develop with their presence, especially in terms of restaurants, as they are in high demand. Some hope that a relationship will develop in the future and that now is only the beginning. Therefore, some interviewees also think about what Ubisoft can do to get more connected to Flingern-Nord so that a bi-directional effect can be established. One point is that Ubisoft needs to become more visible in the future, for example by putting signs on the building. Further, Ubisoft must get better known in the area. Suggestions made are organising and supporting events, promoting their products in the area, getting connected to the local gamer community, and starting cooperations with schools and companies. General thoughts about the future are that Ubisoft and Flingern-Nord will develop along and there will be positive effects, such as the settling of further game companies or the presence of gamer shops.

This depicted relationship is the relationship between Ubisoft and Flingern-Nord. To complete the picture, the role of the neighbourhood in the cultural activities of video game developers is still missing, which also creates a link between them, the activities, and their work.

7.2.1.2. Role of the Neighbourhood for Developers' Cultural Activities

Cultural dynamics are of particular importance in this work. These are related to the importance of cultural offerings and amenities for the cultural practices and lifestyles of employees. In addition, the relationship between workers' lifestyles and their work and the influence of the neighbourhood on their work are also considered. In this context, some of the aspects already mentioned are brought together. Together they form a picture of the relationship 'culture - lifestyle - neighbourhood – work'.

A first step in understanding this relation is to find out about the importance for the video game developers of the cultural offers for their cultural practices and for their lifestyle in the neighbourhood. Not important or without an impact on cultural practices is stated by interviewees

P6 and P8. Having a variety of cultural offers for cultural practices is important for participant P5, but he doesn't refer to Flingern-Nord specifically because he hasn't explored the neighbourhood fully enough to make a comment about the area and the importance for him. The fact that the neighbourhood hasn't been discovered yet (enough), is also mentioned by interviewees P4, P7 and P10. As a consequence, Flingern-Nord is not important. This is well expressed by interviewee P10, by his statement:

I think it's a matter of aligning the interests, the type of interests, I would have in this sort of events and what Flingern offers. And probably to answer this question would be first to discover what Flingern offers. But since that the main focus being somewhere in between museums or art galleries things like that and maybe some interesting concerts probably that what I would focus. You know my, my view or my, my receptive thing in order to discover if, if there is something interesting there. So, I would tend to, to lean into this direction for sure. There might be other points of interest for sure but it's a matter of discovery.

A similar importance of the cultural offer, the facilities and the neighbourhood on cultural practices is attributed to lifestyle. Without further specifications the interviewees state 'yes' (P9) or Flingern-Nord has offers that suit the lifestyle (P1), and 'not at all' or don't know respectively (P8, P10). There is only one who elaborates his statement. He (P6) sees "THE" [emphasised in the interview] connection between the neighbourhood and his lifestyle in going to restaurants with his coworkers, but otherwise he is not very often there.

The relationship between workers' lifestyles and their work, in contrast, is experienced in different ways. Three participants (P1, P7, P8) report no or little influence and relation, so e.g. interviewee P1 states that "Well, [...], yes, I see, but I would rate it rather low, hum, I would say the common denominator then is this feeling of creativity" [own translation]. Respondent P7 justifies it with his background. At school he was interested in both art and science and even though he chose science, art was always a part of his life; so it is difficult for him to see any influence. Besides them, there are three who claim a direct influence on their work (P2, P4, P6), and three who claim an indirect one (P4, P9, P10). A direct influence is explained as follows by interviewee P4:

Yes, I would say some of them are absolutely connected. So, for example, when we play board games, right, we play with different cultural people, right, we play board games for

different cultures as well with thematic of different cultures and because they are games that really help me with my work.

Interviewee P6 states: “I really love Grafenberger Wald, I really like nature, that is the closest, the biggest connection to nature for me. I find some inspiration when I connect with the nature and beauty. This is like an inspiring place for me”. Participant P2 explains that she integrates the things she gets out of her free time or personal interest into her work. Interviewee P9 cannot identify any direct influence, but he sees an indirect one and explains:

On my side, I wouldn't say so. I mean, I don't see any way to, ah, that it influences my work with my cultural practices. The only influence like indirect influence that I would say, is the part that I can actually relax during these activities, and that's good also for work because you come back relaxed, more motivated, and it's also always great. But not that on a directly influenced level, not that I could apply on that, at work.

This is the same for interviewee P10 who feels relaxed while listening to music, for indirect but important reasons. He adds that

Well, a little bit forced and a little bit very indirectly I would say that 'yes'. Because if I'm, I find participating in certain events and you know the overall feeling afterwards is excited or, I know, if I foster the events the feeling is good then that feeling we carry those into the work part and this pretty much helps being more relaxed during the work times, and, you know, looking at the problems with different perspectives. So, actually it can actually offer a different view, solving the problems, or actually dealing with the day-to-day parts. So, but when I'm saying that I think it has an influence, I tend, I like to think that it has an influence, but I, I see it a little bit indirect because it is not like 'Okay, if I'm doing that cultural activity, it will have an obvious and immediate impact over on what I am doing at work'. So...

Participant P5 expresses this in general terms. He tries to be inspired by the things he does. He says that “I think it's a, it's a sum of things. It does make sense. Again, I, I can't point to 'I have done this' because I consume this piece of culture. But I think without it, my work will probably be in a bit more difficult”.

The role of the neighbourhood for their work is also seen variously. Flingern-Nord and its relation

to work is described as not or not much linked (P6, P7, P8). Participant P5 sees a relation but not in a cultural way. For him, the neighbourhood “needs to provide a certain mindset” so that he can relax while being there. This also corresponds to the comment of interviewee P9, for whom Flingern-Nord is a good working environment because it “is really nice, so, it’s not too quiet and not too agitated” so that he can focus on his work in a way that is good for him. Interviewee P1 sees a probable relation because the young, creative thinking might influence the work. A contrary view is expressed by respondent P6 who sees the area around Ubisoft more industrialised with its buildings etc. and so she states that “I wouldn’t say it inspires you”.

According to the manager (P3), the points ‘nice area’, ‘good working environment’ and ‘the young and creative thinking in the area’ were reasons why Flingern-Nord was chosen as the new location for Ubisoft. However, these points are not (yet) seen by most of the employees. The manager states that Flingern is important, because,

I found the cultural aspect or the Flingern aspect even better. It fits even better with the people who work here [...], it’s more of a classic office building, but we’re still in an environment in which this, in which a creative, a creativity can also be there. We have also tried to design the building from the inside in such a way that it simply makes creativity and, in this respect, the Flingern environment has already been our absolute best address in Düsseldorf. [own translation]

And including the employees in this view, the proximity is important:

of course, the employees we have, who are ultimately the creators of culture, in the sense that sometimes they are, sometimes they probably wouldn’t call themselves that. Every programmer doesn’t necessarily say that he creates culture, but that nevertheless these young and creative people that we have here, of course also through, you go out here, walk once over Cranachstraße, and are really in the heart of Flingern. That played a big role. [own translation]

Summary Overview

Overall, the relationship culture - lifestyle - neighbourhood - work primarily considers the importance of the cultural offerings and practices in the neighbourhood as well as the cultural lifestyle. Although Flingern-Nord has a wide range of cultural offerings, the area is not important for cultural practices for almost all respondents and the cultural offerings are not used. One reason mentioned is that they are not aware of the offer, or they don't know the neighbourhood because they haven't discovered it yet. The same statements are made about the relation to their lifestyle, except for one, who sees the only relation between his lifestyle and Flingern-Nord in going to restaurants with his co-workers.

Looking at the relation 'lifestyle – work', this relation shows more diversity. Three interviewees see no or little relation but six claim a direct or indirect relation between their lifestyle, cultural activities, and their work. A direct influence is linked to the things they do, such as board game nights with different cultures or walks in the nearby forest to get inspiration. The indirect influence is seen in the relaxation they get from things like listening to music or attending events. So, as depicted, they take this relaxed attitude to work, and they work more motivated. Moreover, as pointed out, the relaxation helps to see and solve problems from a different angle. Finally, the relation between the neighbourhood and work is considered. So far, the participants don't see a relation. The rare comments are general ones about the good working environment and the young and creative thinking in the area but without stating a real influence on them. In the future, the Ubisoft management wants to strengthen the relation. They see a creative potential in Flingern-Nord that shall influence them and their work. This was decisive for them to settle there.

The fact that the environment plays a certain role in the creative process and in feeling comfortable at work is mentioned by several interviewees who spent some time in Montreal as part of a project. There are some points that they really appreciated.

7.2.1.3. The Montreal Experience

Half of the interviewees in Düsseldorf know Ubisoft Montreal, and during the interviews they talk about their experiences. They not only speak about the working environment at Ubisoft but also

about the Mile End, that are both “just two completely different worlds” [own translation] compared to the office and its surroundings in Düsseldorf, as interviewee P8 describes it. The most impressive thing is the working environment and atmosphere. It is not only the historical Peck building, which exudes a certain atmosphere (P3) but also the offices themselves. The offices in Montreal are inspiring (P6) and they are described as followed:

Well, Ubisoft in Montreal is much more creative than Ubisoft here, I would say. [...] Hum, [...] yes, first of all that and secondly much more creative in, let’s say, the office space. If you look at the office space in Montreal at Ubisoft, it’s a completely different kettle of fish than here in Düsseldorf. [...] In Montreal it was more like a creative centre, where people could move around and be influenced by other teams, by all kinds of scenarios. [own translation] (P8)

Interviewees P6 and P8 add the wish or prediction that the new office in Düsseldorf shall be the same after the constructions. According to the manager (P3), this is also a goal of the renovation. So, they “have also tried to design the building from the inside so that it simply makes creativity” [own translations].

There are also some statements about the neighbourhood that give an insight into the differences. One interviewee (P4) talks about the development in the Mile End with the focus on the offer of restaurants and events. He points out that the offer has increased over time and he would like to see a similar development in Flingern. Also impressed by the “lot of cool options” of restaurants is interviewee P8. He is further impressed by Boulevard Saint-Laurent because there is a lot to discover such as the graffiti. Also, interviewee P7 is impressed by the area because of the kind of Pop-up block parties, temporary events that may last for a couple of hours to few days, in unique, empty spaces. He adds that he would like to see these cool things in Flingern-Nord. Although these two examples are not directly in the Mile End, there are worth mentioning because they are cultural events and amenities that impressed the interviewees and things that they wish to happen in Flingern-Nord.

Summary Overview

Summarizing the Montreal experiences, those participants, who know Montreal and the office there, are impressed and they state that the working environment is better in Montreal because of the atmosphere and the creativity it exudes. They would like to have the same environment in Düsseldorf.

These impressions are not influenced by the pandemic like most others. The extent to which the interviewees think about the pandemic during the interview is shown below.

7.2.1.4. Covid-19 and the Pandemic

Three interviews in Düsseldorf were taken in person before the pandemic at the beginning of March 2020. The remaining seven were taken at two different times: two at the end of March 2020 and five in February 2021, almost a year after the start of the pandemic. Consequently, there are some comments referring to the situation. The comments refer mainly to the things they would like to do or have planned to do such as board game events (P4) with Ubisoft colleagues (P9), going out to have a drink or food (P4, P8, P9), going to museums, art galleries etc. (P6), attending cultural events (P9, P10), travelling, and exploring places (P7, P9), bowling (P6) or going to a gym (P9). Most of these elements refer to cultural activities and participation. The situation is well expressed by one interviewee referring to his lifestyle culturally speaking with the words “Currently a bit lacking. [Smiling]” (P9).

Further comments regarding the effects of the pandemic relate to the remodelling in and around the Ubisoft building. Interviewee P7 is not able to comment on them because he has worked at home for almost a year now. According to participant P6, Ubisoft planned something at the new building that couldn't happen without giving details. One respondent, P10 also looks at the consequences of the pandemic on the neighbourhood and cultural scene and states at the end of the first year of the pandemic:

I would say that it definitely changed because with the whole situation, with all kinds of limitations, so to say, in what we are actually be, what we can do grandly. So, this maybe reflect all the domains within the cultural arts. So, I can see that for example in the past

year, I would say, I am working from home one hundred percent. So, but even in this situation, meaning that I don't have a day-to-day contact with Flingern due to remote work, I still would imagine that all the life aspects are influenced for better or worse. You know.

Besides this remark about the neighbourhood, respondent P7 noticed during the interview that "now that we're talking about it, and it made me realize that I really didn't get to explore much because of the pandemic. I didn't even think about it". None of the interviewees remarks that they have difficulties remembering the time before the pandemic.

Summary Overview

In short, in those interviews conducted during the pandemic, the participants mainly refer to the things they are not able to do (anymore) because of the restrictions. Comments about a possible influence on Flingern-Nord, are rare and refer to a general influence without going into detail.

7.2.1.5. Conclusion

The video game developers' connection and awareness of Flingern-Nord are also reflected in their representation of the relation between the video game industry and the neighbourhood. The video game developers do not perceive any direct influence of their industry on Flingern-Nord. The opposite influence, of Flingern-Nord on the video game industry, is only seen by some. Two of them have been working at Ubisoft for some time and they see a general influence when Ubisoft employees go to the restaurants and cafés to eat and drink during their breaks; they afterwards bring back to the office some positive atmosphere and new impressions, which might influence their work. For this, however, the appropriate offer must also be available in the neighbourhood. This point is also addressed by some participants when they think about a bi-directional effect. Services and amenities should develop because of their presence, with a focus on restaurants especially around the new Ubisoft building. So far, they criticize the limited offer of restaurants around the new Ubisoft location. They also think of a general influence of the cultural-creative neighbourhood on work. Looking at the current situation, however, they do not see a bidirectional influence. Some add that this fact also applies to the former Ubisoft location. The interviewees also think a lot about the way Ubisoft could get connected to the neighbourhood to build a relationship between the

company and Flingern-Nord. Suggestions for the company to become more visible in the area are putting up sign at the building, organising events or starting cooperations with schools and companies in Flingern-Nord.

A relation between lifestyle and the neighbourhood is only stated by one; it is going out with co-workers to restaurants. More connections are seen by the interviewees between their lifestyle, cultural activities, and work. Most claim a direct or indirect connection, e.g. a direct influence through board game evenings with different cultures or walks in the nearby forest for inspiration, or an indirect influence through the relaxation they experience through activities such as listening to music or attending events. They take this back to the office and so they are more motivated in their work. This relaxed attitude might also help them to see and solve problems from a different angle. But all this is not connected to Flingern-Nord as stated by the interviewees, so there is no relation seen between Flingern-Nord and their work.

Some of the interviewees also report about their experiences of their trips to Ubisoft Montreal. They are impressed, and they state that the working environment is better in terms of atmosphere and the creativity it exudes. They would like to have the same environment in their studio in Flingern-Nord.

Looking at the future development of Flingern-Nord, the interviewees think that the neighbourhood is developing in a good direction which may result in further companies or restaurants that locating there. Including Ubisoft in these considerations, the developers assume that Ubisoft and Flingern-Nord will develop further together with the establishment of other game companies. In the future, the company wants to strengthen the relation to the neighbourhood so that the creative potential of Flingern-Nord can influence them and the developer's work.

As seen in this last part of the interviews in Flingern-Nord with video game developers, the link between them and Flingern-Nord is not very pronounced. For most of them, this is because the neighbourhood is not known or does not play a role, although a certain interest in the neighbourhood is noticeable. It now remains to be seen what view the cultural players, whose offerings are part of what the video game developers could do, have of this.

7.2.2. Cultural Actors in Flingern-Nord

7.2.2.1. Relationship Between the Video Game Industry and the Neighbourhood

The cultural players are part of the neighbourhood with their offer and their work and know the area very well. Therefore, their depiction of the relationship between the video game industry and Flingern-Nord gives an insight into the importance of the neighbourhood for video game developers from an outsider's perspective. The cultural players are also part of the neighbourhood and therefore their personal relationship with the industry is also presented.

The common perception of the video game industry in the neighbourhood is that it is unknown, invisible, not important in the area or that the cultural actors are not aware of the industry, except of interviewee P11. Visibility is important, as interviewee P15 explains. She states: “Even if they were to take up a whole block, they are not so visible to the outside, because they don’t have any open spaces, they don’t have an exhibition, they just sit in their offices in front of their computers and develop something”. A further possible reason why the video game industry isn’t perceived so far is that there is no point of contact (P14, P15). Interviewee P14 adds that he knows the company by name and would recognise someone from Ubisoft by the logo but he didn’t know that Ubisoft was in Flingern-Nord or even in Düsseldorf. Interviewee P13 sees smaller companies for graphics, animations, or movies, e.g. Studio Rabotti by Max Fiedler that she cooperates with, but she hasn’t noticed the video game industry. Interviewee P11 is aware of this (non-)perception due to his work experience. He has worked together with Ubisoft for some years, and he knows the area as well as the cultural and creative players and companies in Flingern-Nord. So, he understands the relationship, which he describes as follows:

It’s not very present, you have to dive in a bit, hum, there are certainly close connections between the employees, video game or games industry and many freelancers, creatives, many illustrators, above all also composers, there are, there are various, also sound studios that actually create the soundtracks. There are many smaller graphic design, advertising and marketing agencies, there are certainly many, many relationships. There’s just a bit of a lack of small-scale ones on the video game industry side. That means, of course, that Ubisoft is the top dog far ahead of all the others.

As is obvious, there is only one person who sees and knows the video game industry and what it entails. He also believes that Ubisoft will help shape the neighbourhood and links this to Ubisoft's ambition to connect with the neighbourhood. Ubisoft wants to connect to Flingern-Nord, the local scene, and the creative companies there. They have already built-up strong exchanges with illustrators and graphic artists, such as Max Fiedler of Studio Rabotti. The interviewee also thinks of a different kind of connection between the video game industry and the area such as shops and places where people can talk about video games or even play them. He mentions the Holo-Café on Am Wehrhahn, a gaming location for video games. The Holo-Café was founded by former Ubisoft-employees close to the former location of Ubisoft and therefore close to Flingern-Nord.

Noteworthy is the statement of participant P11 about Montreal. He heard about the video game industry there, and so he describes or compares Düsseldorf and Montreal in the following way:

Flingern is, generally speaking, not such a, hummm, [...] mentality. For me, Düsseldorf embodies an unbelievably great joy of playing, there is a lot of, how should I put it, a lot of joie de vivre, from carnival to the course of the Rhine. Let's say it's all very [...] mobile, flexible, but it's not a city where you can just do something like that. But it is very saturated, set, and, um, when, well, I haven't been to Montreal yet, but when I hear how a whole neighbourhood is being shaped, how it is more noticeable, how maybe one or the other impulse from the games industry plays into the city, into urban planning, um, that's not where we are yet, the connections, the links are too [...] not too small, they are good the way they are.

In this context, interviewee P15 reflects about the importance of the location, and she concludes that the location is not of such importance:

But even then, I think, it doesn't matter at all to a company like that whether they are in Flingern or in Bilk or at the Hafen. The important thing is perhaps that they are in Düsseldorf. Okay, maybe that makes a difference, but I don't know about the district. I don't believe that.

It is worth mentioning another of her reflections on the influence of an industry on the surrounding neighbourhood, which reflects her perception of the industries in Düsseldorf. She refers to the long-

established company *Henkel* (a cleaning products supplier), which with more than 5500 employees is the second largest employer in Düsseldorf after *Daimler-Benz* with more than 6500 employees (Breitkopf 2017). She gives her impressions by stating:

There are also big employers here, I think Henkel, or something is a big employer and yet it doesn't really appear in the city. So, you don't have the feeling that Henkel is so insane here, although it certainly is. But when I walk through the city now, I don't have to think, 'oh yes, everything's clear, it's all Henkel here'. No, no, it's not like that. Well, Düsseldorf is also [...] not so tied to one big company anyway. We have relatively many companies here.

When she further looks at the employees of Ubisoft and her customers, she states that "Not at all. I don't know a single video game developer either, I don't know any video game developers in Düsseldorf at all, if I'm completely honest. It doesn't matter here **at all**. [emphasized]. [short laughing]". Hence, she cannot give a picture of the developers of video games and their cultural practices, just as participants P12, P13 and P14. It is, however, only interviewee P11 who describes them as creative, enthusiastic, and artistic, with a will to create, and with a familial and collegial lifestyle, uncomplicated, on the same social level, friendly, enthusiastic, open, and emotionally positive. Their community he describes as strong. He adds that he sees some Ubisoft employees in Flingern-Nord, e.g. at cultural events because he knows them. Otherwise, they are not recognisable because "it's not like there's any presence whatsoever, that's recognisable as the Ubisoft group around it" (P11).

Two respondents give comments about 'video game developers and creativity' which reflect their thinking about them and their work. While interviewee P15 thinks that the developers 'only' sit in front of their computers, she also thinks that the video developers are creative and some of them are even artists. Interviewee P11 is of the same opinion. He adds that it is a different kind of creativity and art the developers produce, and he is able to give a lively example about the different types of art:

It was an exhibition of game art, so with all the designs and styles from, I think it was

mainly *Assassins Creek*, but I'm not quite sure, maybe also *Die Siedler [The Settlers]*⁹⁶, something like that. Hum, and there it became a bit of a more or -, there the differences became more conscious, because the, it was very artistic-avant-garde next-level festival with experimental stories that came very much from the university context, from the art academy, hu, didn't necessarily stand, hu, and I don't want to judge that, but that was a different artistic level, a different approach, a different expectation than what Ubisoft-Blue Byte brought, which was popular with gamers who, on the other hand, didn't understand all the other things or didn't find any access to them, and those who were more interested in experimental art, in the pure sense of art, couldn't do anything with the game art things, so, sure, it's a cultural art form, but there are different worlds that meet there. That's what I found at the, hu, at the Indie-Lou-, hu, at the Indie-Arena for example at GamesCom as very, very different approaches.

Regarding the future of the video game industry in Flingern-Nord, it is interviewee P11 who gives a detailed statement. He knows that Ubisoft wants to become an event location for up to 200 people. This would bring Ubisoft and the neighbourhood closer together. In general, it is difficult to attract developers to Düsseldorf, which will also have an impact on further development, as companies cannot grow as much as they would like. Promoting and increasing the attractiveness of a neighbourhood that "actually offers all the prerequisites" for people from the video game industry to come to Flingern-Nord or Düsseldorf should be the city's task which starts with the offer of relevant subjects at universities and other educational institutions. He also includes the single employees in his reflection. He thinks that since the new location is not directly next to a S-Bahn station anymore, the employees have now the possibility to discover Flingern-Nord and to build a relation on an individual level. On this level, he already sees encounters in the area. Besides him, there is also participant P14 who has an opinion about the future of the video game industry in the neighbourhood; he thinks that Flingern has a good potential for this industry. He states:

I think, I think it's one of the neighbourhoods where I can imagine it well. So, video games make, it makes sense, it's smart, I think, if they've built their company there now, it's a smart move, so to speak. I think they will, um, they will flourish there. So, I can imagine. I

⁹⁶ *Assassins Creek* and *Die Siedler [The Settlers]* are both successful games of Ubisoft. *Assassins Creek* is mainly programmed in Montreal, *Die Siedler* in Düsseldorf (Girard 2013; Wiefels 2010)

think the employees will, hu, they have a good neighbourhood now. So, they are in a good neighbourhood for such an interest like that. And I believe that there is a lot of potential and that there is also a lot of flexibility that can bear fruit, so that this company 'Ubi' can be successful. Yes, exactly. Whether I think that's particularly great, I don't know at all, so that's another question. [laughing]

Summary Overview

All in all, almost all interviewees don't really notice the video game industry in Flingern-Nord because it is unknown or invisible. This invisibility is underlined by one interviewee who states that Ubisoft doesn't have an open space or exhibition, and that the developers are not outside in the neighbourhood where they are visible but only sit in front of their computers. A further possible reason is that there are no points of contact. Other, smaller companies for graphics etc. are seen and known but not the video game industry. Only interviewee P11 can give a description of the relation because he has dealt with all parties involved for some years now. He confirms the impression of the other participants, but he also confirms cooperation of Ubisoft with other small companies, e.g. in the field of graphics. He adds that Ubisoft wants to connect to the neighbourhood on different levels. Worth mentioning is that one respondent (P15) doubts that there is any industry influence on a neighbourhood at all. Developers are known only to respondent P11 who describes them as creative, artistic, enthusiastic, uncomplicated, and open, for example. Looking closer on the creativity of the developers, another interviewee thinks that they are creative, and some are even artists, although it is a different kind of art as interviewee P11 explains. The future of the video game industry in Flingern-Nord or Düsseldorf respectively depends on the attractiveness of the city and if further developers can be attracted. The prerequisites for this industry in the neighbourhood are in place.

The interviews with cultural actors also contain statements on the pandemic and its influence on the current and future situation, which are presented here at the end.

7.2.2.2. Covid-19 and the Pandemic

All interviews were taken during the first months of the pandemic in 2020. Therefore, some comments are already given related to Covid-19. The statements are about two main points. One is the effect on and the future development of Flingern-Nord, also taking the cultural sector into account, and the other is related to the cultural organisations and what they (have to) do.

Some of the interviewees talk about the effect on the neighbourhood and the cultural sphere and what this could mean for their future development. Interviewee P11 generally wonders whether the current development will be stopped by the pandemic or whether it will continue to develop, as there is still a lot of potential in the economic and cultural field. Thinking similarly, interviewee P15 cannot say which direction the progress will take after the pandemic, i.e. whether it will continue to develop as before or completely differently. Both further include the effect on the cultural field in their thoughts. Interviewee P11 mentions the venues that are currently experiencing financial difficulties because no events are allowed to take place and he sees a change of their offer (such as the classes in arts, theatre and dance, or the concerts, readings, and vernissages) in the future. Interviewee P13 thinks of something completely different connected with the cultural field, which also influences its future development. Due to contact and travel restrictions, it is not possible to establish and maintain contacts and networks. This could also possibly have an influence on future international cooperation in the cultural field, which mostly thrives on personal exchanges. Besides cultural organisations, interviewees P11 and P15 also think about restaurants and if the variety will be the same after the pandemic: “Flingern is one of those neighbourhoods where there has really been a very lively, multi-layered, broad gastronomy so far, let’s see what it looks like after Corona” (P11). He also includes in this thought the people that don’t come to the neighbourhood anymore, mostly those who went out in the area, e. g. to restaurants, and what that would mean for the gastronomy and the rents.

The second point is the effect on the cultural organisation the participants own or work for. The effect is described twofold by interviewees P12 and P13. On the one hand, they report that they have to deal with a limited number of people they can host at events, and dance, theatre or art classes, and on the other hand they talk about the things they did to pass the time during the first lockdown. Interviewee P12 says that they asked artists who are friends to donate paintings etc. to

sell them online; they then donated the money to local aid organisations. The head of the second cultural organisation (P13) talks about their special program during the first lockdown and months of the pandemic. During the lockdown, they offered thirteen free concerts in their backyard for the people who lived around (also available on their webpage later on) and they did special events, such as cooking shows and discussion rounds with kids, adults, and professional artists also available online. A brief comment on participation in cultural life comes from interviewee P15 who states that she is not currently taking part due to the lockdown.

Summary Overview

To sum up, some comments related to Covid-19 were already given shortly after the beginning of the pandemic. Two interviewees wonder how Flingern-Nord will develop in general and in the cultural sphere under the influence of the pandemic. Two organisations talk about the things they did during the first lockdown such as events that were broadcasted online and charity sales of donations, such as paintings, in aid of local charities.

7.2.2.3. Conclusion

A relation between Flingern-Nord and the video game industry is not seen by the cultural actors. The fact that Ubisoft settled in Flingern-Nord is not known by almost all interviewees. One reason is that Ubisoft is not visible to the outside because there are no signs, an open space or exhibition places. Other companies related to video games are hardly known as well, if they do not cooperate with the cultural actors. Therefore, only one participant confirms at least a cooperation within this sector, and who knows that Ubisoft wants to build up a cooperation with the neighbourhood. For the other cultural actors, Ubisoft employees are not among their clients and participants so far. The suspicion is that they are not interested in art or do not know what is offered in Flingern-Nord, and that they only sit in front of their computers. The interviewee who works together with Ubisoft knows the employees and describes them for example as creative, artistic, enthusiastic, uncomplicated, and open. While reflecting about video game developers, one participant assumes that they are creative and that some of them are even artists, but it is a different kind of art as explained by another one.

Looking at the future of Flingern-Nord, the interviewees see a constant development, also in the cultural sphere. If the video game industry will be present in the future in Flingern-Nord depends on the attractiveness of the place (amongst others) for further developers. An influence of the pandemic on the future is not given because reflections only refer to the situation during pandemic time with the focus on the cultural sphere.

Some of the points raised by the cultural players, such as Ubisoft's visibility, are also addressed by the video game developers. But this is not the only common ground, as can be seen in the following comparison.

7.2.3. Comparison of the Interviews in Flingern-Nord

As seen in the previous chapter, none of the participants sees Flingern-Nord as a technological neighbourhood, with the exception of the part around Ubisoft's location by some developers. This fact is also reflected in the considerations on the relationship between the neighbourhood and the video game industry which is after all part of the technology sector. Almost no one sees a relation or an effect between Flingern-Nord and the video game industry, neither one way nor bi-directional. This reflection also encompasses the video game developers' former location of Ubisoft on Adlerstraße, where they also haven't recognised effects. The reasons for this are the same. The majority does not know each other. The cultural actors do not know the video game industry and the video game developers do not know the neighbourhood with its amenities and cultural offers. Yet, in each group, there are interviewees who know the opposite sphere because it is part of their job, or they have known Flingern-Nord for more than 15 years. Two interviewees from Ubisoft state about some influence from the neighbourhood to their company but on a general level. When Ubisoft employees go to the restaurants and cafés to eat and drink during their breaks, they bring the positive atmosphere and possible new impressions back to the office, which might influence their work. However, this point is not yet sufficiently given, as evidenced by most of the respondents. They complain about the limited offer of restaurants and cafés around the new location of Ubisoft. Thus they want the offer to be better and broader in the future.

The reasons why the cultural actors don't see any effect are twofold. They do not see the video game developers because they are not amongst their clients and participants so far, and they are

not aware of companies in the field of video game, including Ubisoft. Ubisoft is not known because it is not visible from the outside. There are no signs, exhibitions or an open space that would indicate the presence of Ubisoft. This point was also taken up by the video game developers who then thought about what a mutual relationship could look like. They suggest that Ubisoft should become more visible in the area by putting up signs on the building, organise events or start cooperation with schools and companies. Looking at these suggestions, it becomes clear that Ubisoft employees are aware of the company's invisibility and therefore also aware of that they are not (very) well known in the neighbourhood. The employees' suggestion that Ubisoft should build a neighbourhood collaboration is confirmed by the cultural actor. By working with Ubisoft management, he knows that such a process is already underway. So far, companies related to video games are rarely known by the cultural actors, except when they collaborate on projects. In this context, it is worth noting that both sides, i.e. Ubisoft and a cultural actor, cooperate with *Studio Rabotti*, an illustration studio on Ackerstraße but do not notice each other beyond that.

For the developers, putting these aspects in the context of the relation between their lifestyle, cultural activities and work a differentiated picture is given. Most claim a connection – either a direct or an indirect one. Examples for a direct influence are boardgame nights with different cultures or walks in the nearby forest to get inspiration, and for an indirect influence, examples are the relaxation they get from activities like listening to music or attending events that they take back to the office and so they work more motivated. This relaxed attitude might also help to see and solve problems from a different angle. But all this is not connected to Flingern-Nord, as pointed out by the interviewees. Therefore, they see no connection between Flingern-Nord and their work in this context.

Looking at the future development of Flingern-Nord, both the video game developer and the cultural actors think that the neighbourhood will continue to develop positively. Both groups think of the same points, but from a different angle. The focus for the video game developers is on further companies in the technological sectors such as video game companies and restaurants and cafés that might get attracted by the presence of Ubisoft in the neighbourhood. This is expressed by the cultural actors differently. They see the attractiveness of Flingern-Nord as important to attract further video game companies. Both groups therefore see the presence of businesses as a reason for other businesses to locate there. The reversal is what attracts whom. The developers think that

Ubisoft and Flingern-Nord will develop, and in one point in the future the relation will be so strong that the creative potential of Flingern-Nord will influence them and their work. These points are also addressed by the cultural actors. They see a constant development, also in the cultural sphere. But for some developers it is not only the neighbourhood that should develop in a positive direction to make their work more comfortable und supportive. Some of the interviewees know Ubisoft Montreal and so they hope to have the same working environment in their studio in Flingern-Nord as in the Mile End because they think that the working environment in the Mile End Ubisoft office is better in terms of atmosphere and the creativity it exudes.

This comparative view once again shows the differences and similarities. The (non-)visibility of Ubisoft and its consequences is not the only opinions shared by video game developers and cultural players. Also important is the fact that the two groups do not know each other. The interviewees also see no connection between the neighbourhood and the video game industry. However, with regard to the future development of Flingern-Nord, both the video game developers and the cultural players are of the opinion that the neighbourhood will continue to develop positively. An overview of the similarities and differences is given in table 31.

Table 31: Comparison of the most important similar and different perceptions and descriptions of the analysis of the video game developers and cultural actors for ‘The Video Game Industry and The Neighbourhood - a Symbiosis?’ in Flingern-Nord

	Similarities	Differences
Relationship Between the Video Game Industry and the Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of no influence (regardless the direction) • No knowledge of each other • No visibility of Ubisoft • Positive development of the neighbourhood (different aspects) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

	Similarities	Differences
Interdependence, sociability, representations of relationships and behaviour, as well as networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No statements possible because this part doesn't apply to cultural actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No statements possible because this part doesn't apply to cultural actors
Perception of the Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wondering about the future of the neighbourhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Source: Author

In this and the previous two chapters, the dynamics in the neighbourhood, the relationship of the video game developers to the neighbourhood, the perception of the neighbourhood and the cultural and creative side of the developers from their point of view and from the point of view of the cultural actors were presented. A comparison between the two groups was previously only available at the neighbourhood level. What now rounds off these presentations is a comparison of the two locations across all points that were previously only considered at the local level.

7.3. Mile End and Flingern-Nord: A Comparative Look

In this and the previous two chapters, the various dynamics in the neighbourhood, the connection between the neighbourhood and the video game industry, the neighbourhood with its opportunities for cultural activities, the creative milieu and the video game developers and their cultural-creative nature were presented, just to mention a few points. These perceptions and interpretations by the interviewees show a great diversity. So far, only a comparison has been made between the video game developers and the cultural actors at the neighbourhood level. The two neighbourhoods – Mile End and Flingern-Nord – will be now compared to see how the two places differ but also have similarities.

Before looking at the similarities and differences, the starting point should be considered again. The present picture depends on the historical development, which is emphasised by the statements and explanations of some interviewees. The historical development of both places follows a similar path. In the 1990s, both neighbourhoods were still working class neighbourhoods. It was the time when artists and creators were attracted by the environment of the area, which gradually led to the artsy reputation of both places. That was also the time when Ubisoft opened in both places, in Düsseldorf in 1995 and in Montreal in 1997. Since that time, more people have been attracted to these areas and they have started to change the face of the neighbourhoods. Formerly in Montreal, this neighbourhood was populated by waves of different immigrants and in Flingern-Nord by Germans from different social classes. Presently, both neighbourhoods have become middle class, and a gentrification process is underway in both neighbourhoods. Looking at the references the interviewees make about the former days of the neighbourhood, it becomes clear that only few know its historical development in both places and hence, most of the statements made refer to the time the interviewees work or live in the area.

As depicted, the historical development in both neighbourhoods shows similarities until today. Yet, it is important to consider if the impression and perceptions of the neighbourhood by the interviewees are similar. Looking at the neighbourhood, the developers focus on different points to describe the neighbourhood. The adjectives and words the developers use for Mile End are young, wealthy, not a residential neighbourhood, with a local vibe and different from other neighbourhoods. The adjectives for Flingern-Nord are quiet, relaxed, safe and central. Further the

developers see it as a residential and not as a shopping area. Looking at the people who are out and about, the developers see people of all ages, residents, and different social classes in both neighbourhoods, but also a group they call hipsters. As reported by the cultural actors, the video game developers themselves are seen in the Mile End but in Flingern-Nord they are not present at all. Looking further at the perception of the neighbourhoods as a whole regarding the cultural and technological aspects, the interviewees have the same perception. The Mile End and Flingern-Nord are seen as a cultural neighbourhood because of the cultural offer and the artists, however with a different emphasis and different references. It is worth mentioning that the cultural actors in both cities describe the same perception of the cultural scene. They say that the cultural players and artists in the neighbourhood are not obvious to those who don't have some connection or involvement with them. Both neighbourhoods are uniformly not seen as technological ones, except for the area around the Ubisoft site.

Besides the whole perception, it is also the perception of single dynamics that shapes the picture of the neighbourhood. Most of the perceived and described dynamics are similar in both neighbourhoods, i.e. without remarkable differences or similarities. Similar in both places are the changes in housing construction or the (high) rent level described, for example. A mixed perception exists in contrast, for example in the description of the parks. The developers in Flingern-Nord describe the parks unanimously as not nice. In Mile End, half of the developers describe the parks as not nice, the other half speaks positively about them.

Regarding the relation between the video game industry and the neighbourhood, a contrary description in both places is given. In Flingern-Nord, none of the interviewees see a relation. In the Mile End, it is exactly the opposite. There, all interviewees see a relation between the video game industry and the neighbourhood. Especially, the impact of the video game industry on the neighbourhood is reported by all interviewees. The developers talk about a dependency of the Mile End on the company, and that the video game industry attracted stores and amenities. This dependency is not mentioned at all by interviewees in Flingern-Nord. In this context, it is interesting to have a closer look at the 'lunch crowd' and the development of restaurants. As reported for the Mile End by some developers and cultural actors, the number of restaurants has increased during the years due to a higher demand. Therefore, the need and wish for a good food option nearby is appreciated and granted, and the high number of employees that go to the

restaurants and places around is an indication of that. In Flingern-Nord, the situation is different. Some interviewees take their lunch outside their workplace, but they complain that the offer is very limited and that they would like more options. They hope that more restaurants shall open around the Ubisoft building, but they also want the company to support this development. The opposite effect, the one from the neighbourhood to the video game industry, is not reported in Flingern-Nord and is either not recognised or considered important in the Mile End. Some participants comment about the atmosphere of the Mile End. They state that it has a positive impact on their feelings and so on the creative process and working in another environment would be different. Globally seen, some interviewees see the relation between Ubisoft and the Mile End neighbourhood as an ecosystem, a perception that doesn't exist at all for Flingern-Nord.

Alongside the relationship between the video game industry and the neighbourhood, which in both places is regarded as contrary, there is also the respondents' individual relationship to the neighbourhood. The focus of this study is on culture and creativity and thus on the culture and creativity of the interviewees. The way the interviewees see themselves as cultural persons and creative workers and how they describe their cultural lifestyle is the same in both neighbourhoods. All video game developers see themselves to different extent as cultural and creative people, and with different cultural lifestyles regarding their activities, while all cultural actors affirm that they have a cultural lifestyle, are cultural people and especially that they are creative workers. Remarkable is that all developers refer to their actual work when they think about being a creative worker. Hence, with a different work task their view and description change. Also, there are few cultural actors in both places that refer to the work of the video game industry as art. They state that their art differs from the kind the video game industry does.

Before looking at their personal relationship to the neighbourhoods, it is interesting to see what cultural activities the video game developers engage in as part of their cultural lifestyle and as part of their cultural practices, as developers in both places see themselves in similar ways. As can be seen, views on their cultural lifestyle and cultural self-image vary from 'none' and 'little' to 'very much' and 'for sure'. Irrespective of this, however, all respondents mentioned several activities that they engage in. Looking at these activities for each group, a very different picture emerges. As part of their lifestyle, the developers list around ten activities, but there are only three activities that are mentioned in both neighbourhoods. These activities are going to/watching movies, reading

books and music. There are some points where they differ. In the Mile End, going to museums and art galleries as well as playing video games for the developers are mentioned, and in Flingern-Nord, going to the theatre, cooking, and travelling. The differences in cultural activities become more apparent when the developers think about their cultural activities they do in the broader sense. In both places, the developers think of almost the double number of activities. Activities such as music and books are popular amongst most interviewees but there are also remarkable differences. The situation is different with museum visits: For the Mile End developers, these visits are important as part of their cultural lifestyle and for the Flingern-Nord developers they are not at all popular as a cultural activity.

Further differences are in activities that come only to the mind of the developers in one neighbourhood. For the Mile End, some of these activities are playing video games, dancing, even on a professional level in the past, and activities related to music, such as playing the piano and drums and composing songs. For Flingern-Nord, some of these activities are going to fairs such as the book and board game fairs, as well as the fun fair. For the interviewees in Flingern-Nord travelling is also important. They link travelling with culture – to get to know different cultures or to experience the cultural amenities in the places they visit. Some of these activities, the interviewees do at home. Others, however, are practised outside, of which the developers do this to varying degrees in the Mile End. As an area to do cultural activities Flingern-Nord has almost no importance for the developers. While reflecting on this point, the reasons they mention are the same in both places. They are not aware of the offer in the neighbourhood and/or the situation is different for those having kids. But in Germany, these are not the only reasons. For some it is the language barrier that doesn't allow them to participate in certain events because they are not fluent in German, a point that is not critical in Montreal. Another point mentioned in Germany is the weather – participation at cultural events etc. depends on the weather. To complete the picture of the relationship, the relationship or significance of the neighbourhood in relation to the work of the interviewees is considered. Here, too, there is a difference between the two places. The Mile End is important as a place to work for some of the interviewees and for some not. Those who state an importance talk about the creativity and inspiration they can get in the neighbourhood. This is not the case in Flingern-Nord. They get the inspiration and creativity they need for their work elsewhere.

As can be seen, the neighbourhood around Ubisoft is not important for cultural activities in either place. But the video game developers are out and about in the neighbourhood to get to the office. Besides cultural activities, there are other things one can do. So, looking at sport activities and the places they go to such as stores, the picture in both places is similar. They go there for work and to the restaurants during lunch time, though to a different extent in the Mile End and in Flingern-Nord, as already outlined. They don't do many sports in the area although in both places there are different sport facilities that are known to the participants. Shopping and going to different stores are similar. Those who live in the neighbourhood go to the supermarkets and some local stores, and others once in a while; besides this they go to stores in other neighbourhoods. This has little to do with the offer, because they are satisfied with the offer.

Considering the cultural players' relationship to the neighbourhood, it can be said that they are all connected to both places on a professional level. On a personal level, however, they are only connected to the Mile End because they also live there. The cultural actors in the Mile End know the video game industry and its workers, while in Flingern-Nord the industry is completely (except but one person) unknown by the cultural actors and therefore the Ubisoft employees are not recognised.

On the whole, for all the differences and similarities between video game developers in Montreal and Düsseldorf in the way they see themselves culturally and creatively, how they perceive the respective neighbourhoods and how they see the connection with the Mile End and Flingern-Nord, some remarkable points are to be mentioned. The neighbourhood around the office space is not the area where most of the developers stay after work or during the weekend. So, there are only a few that are out and around and use the offer and amenities in the area. During that time or when they are on their way from or to work, in both neighbourhoods they see similar people such as people of all ages, with different backgrounds, and hipsters. During lunch time, the cultural actors in the Mile End see another group being present: the video game developers on their way to the restaurants to have lunch, a group that the cultural actors named the 'lunch crowd'. In Flingern-Nord, taking lunch outside the office is only the case for some developers because there are not too many restaurants close to the office. Connected with this point is the relation between the video game industry and the neighbourhood. In this case, the statements in both areas are contradictory. While in the Mile End all interviewees confirm an influence from the video game industry on the

neighbourhood, none of the interviewees in Flingern-Nord do so. The opposite influence from the area to the video game industry is only seen to a small extent in the Mile End. Regarding similarities, one point stands out. It is the way the video game developers see their cultural lifestyle, see themselves as a cultural person and as a creative worker. In both places, the statements are similar – including the variety between little/not much and very/much. Only the things they do as cultural activities vary.

To sum up the main differences between the Mile End and Flingern-Nord it is noticeable that the developers are recognised in the Mile End, though almost entirely during lunch time as the so-called ‘lunch crowd’, while in Flingern-Nord they are not recognised at all. Connected with this is the relation between the video game industry and the neighbourhood. An influence from the industry to the neighbourhood is seen in the Mile End, mainly in the development of restaurants, cafés and bars, an influence that is not a factor at all in Flingern-Nord. The main differences and similarities are also presented in the overview table 32.

Table 32: Comparison of the most important similar and different perceptions and descriptions of the analysis of the video game developers and cultural actors in the Mile End and Flingern-Nord

	Similarities	Differences
Cultural Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural infrastructure and cultural participation and experience in the neighbourhood not important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of (and the number of) restaurants in Mile End • Role of the neighbourhood for their cultural practices • View about themselves as culturally active, and a creative person, as well as the corresponding lifestyle
Spatial Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions taken by the cities to improve the neighbourhood not perceived 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of changes in housing and actions done by the cities

	Similarities	Differences
Socio-economic Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price level of rents and its development • Price level of restaurants • Leisure and recreational amenities known • No usage of the offer of leisure and recreational amenities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of offer
Political Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples addressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [#] None
Neighbourhood - a Global View of What is Going On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No knowledge about the historical development of the neighbourhood, knowledge about the time they have been working or living in the neighbourhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [#] Different perceptions and descriptions of the neighbourhood • Different perceptions of the people seen (albeit similar descriptions)
Interdependence, sociability, representations of relationships and behaviour, as well as networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection at various levels (video game developers: workspace; cultural actors: professional level and private)
Perception of the Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundaries of the neighbourhood not clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Relationship Between the Video Game Industry and the Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of an influence from the neighbourhood on the video game industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of an influence from the video game industry on the neighbourhood • Visibility of each other

	Similarities	Differences
Interdependence, sociability, representations of relationships and behaviour, as well as networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The neighbourhood doesn't play a role for the video game developers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Perception of the Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughts about the future of the neighbourhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Source: Author

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

In this concluding chapter, the research results collected and produced in this thesis are presented. The results of the newspaper article analysis and the interview analysis, which were previously separately analysed in a descriptive way, are now combined.

A motivation for this research was to examine the relationship between the cultural and creative industries that develop video games and their neighbourhoods, in particular how these video game companies are connected to neighbourhood dynamics. This kind of impact has not yet been in the focus of academic research. A further and major motivation was to include the people involved or affected by these dynamics and how they perceive these processes initiated by interactions that might lead to change and transformation. The focus is on the people working in the video game industry and cultural actors as part of the locals in the neighbourhood. This topic is integrated into a cultural and creative context. Of particular interest is therefore the culture and creativity of these people and their associated (cultural) lifestyle and consequently considered in this research as well.

The aim of this study was to identify four different dynamics that occur in a neighbourhood and their relationship to the video game industry and its employees. In particular, the focus was on spatial, socio-economic, cultural and political dynamics. A further point was to find out the significance of the neighbourhood from a cultural point of view for the people working in the video game industry. In order to achieve these objectives, research questions were developed on this basis, which led to the corresponding hypotheses (see figure 17). These were analysed and answered on the basis of interviews and newspaper articles.

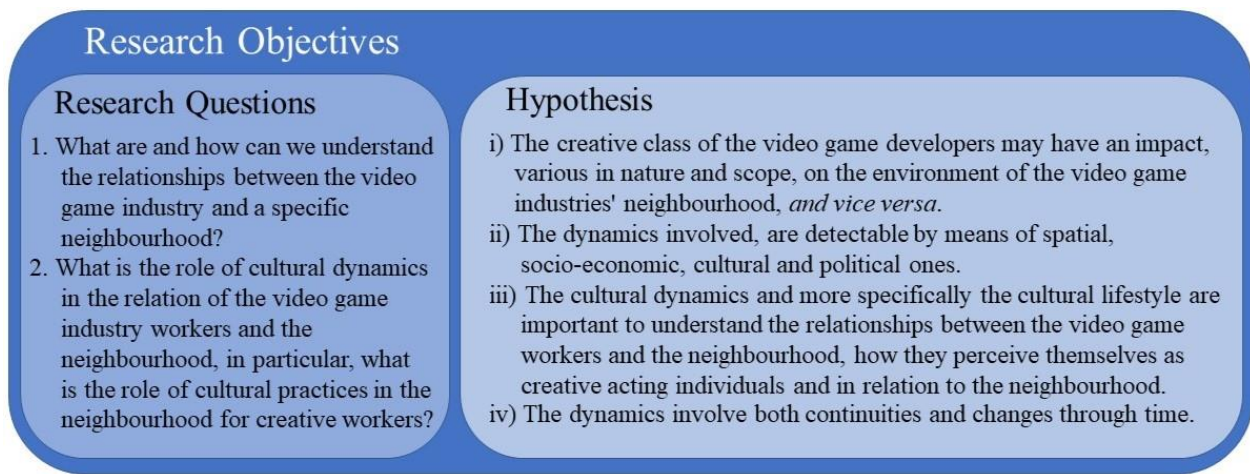


Figure 17: Overview of Research Questions and Hypothesis

Source: Author

The analysis of the interviews and the newspaper articles conducted has revealed a broad and detailed picture of the dynamics with different facets. In addition, the interviews also show a comprehensive and detailed picture of the interviewees themselves and the neighbourhood and their relationship to each other. As the newspaper articles cover a longer period of time, from the location of Ubisoft in the cities until 2021, it also addresses points that the participants are not aware of or have already forgotten. As has been shown in the previous chapters, the relationships and their consequences in both neighbourhoods differ in many respects, although there are similarities. Despite or perhaps because of these differences, assumptions can be drawn about the development in both neighbourhoods and the characteristics of the video game developers. All in all, the interviews and the newspaper articles provide a comprehensive picture and complement each other.

The discussion first deals with the hypotheses and the research questions. The research questions are answered on the basis of the results of the hypotheses (8.1.). In this thesis, two neighbourhoods – Mile End and Flingern-Nord – were researched. Therefore, a look at these neighbourhoods is appropriate in order to consider a comparison of the results (8.2.).

While analysing the interviews and newspaper articles, there is one point that runs like a red thread through everything. It is, so to speak, the framework in which all the cultural and creative activities take place and in which the interviewees move. It is the atmosphere and ambience that is mentioned

again and again. This shows their importance and is therefore considered in more detail (8.3.). One focus of this study is culture and creativity. Here, too, the analysis produced results that should be considered in more detail. One point is the understanding of creativity and art, or more precisely, how the creativity of the video game developers and video games as a product are viewed by cultural actors (8.4). Another point is the understanding of the cultural and creative work and activities of video game developers from the various perspectives. This also includes a look at the cultural lifestyle and the cultural practices of the video game developers (8.5.).

8.1. Return to the Hypotheses and Research Questions

After analysing the interviews and newspaper articles, it is now time to consider the hypothesis (8.1.1.). The research questions will then be answered on the basis of these results (8.1.2.).

8.1.1. Return to the Hypothesis

This thesis is based on four hypotheses, as shown in figure 17 above. These hypotheses are now examined in detail and the extent to which these hypotheses were confirmed by the results or proved to be false is analysed.

Hypothesis 1

As already mentioned, the aim of this thesis was to examine the connection between the video game industry and the neighbourhood on the basis of selected dynamics. Hence, the assumption was that the creative class of the video game industry workers may have an impact, various in nature and scope, on the environment of the video game industries' neighbourhood, and vice versa to include also the opposite effect (Hypothesis 1) because both shape each other (Lippard 1997, 9; Cano-Kollmann et al. 2016, 260), with possible consequences such as new types and places of consumption and spectacle (Hutton 2008, 4) or the presence of new recreational facilities (Floeting 2007, 373) in the case of cultural industries.

Through the various statements, it has become clear that there is a relationship between the video game industry and the neighbourhood surrounding its location in the Mile End, to an extent and in a direction that varies greatly, and that there is no relationship in Flingern-Nord so far. In particular, an influence of the video game industry on the neighbourhood is seen by both video game developers and cultural actors in the Mile End, a fact that is also underlined by the newspaper articles. These very obvious impacts in Mile End are not identified at all in Flingern-Nord. An important reason for Flingern-Nord is that the video games industry is unknown and therefore the developers are not recognised – either as individuals or as a group. This is different in the Mile End where they are recognised by the cultural actors and by the journalists with terms such as 'lunch crowd' and 'Ubisoft demographic'.

There is also the opposite effect, which will be discussed in more detail later in connection with the neighbourhood. In this case the effects are mostly not backed up with tangible examples. They are also almost only mentioned by the developers. As will be seen below, the intangible effects are mainly connected with the atmosphere and ambience of the neighbourhood. These intangible effects can also be identified by interviewees in Flingern-Nord, albeit not clearly in the statements, but indirectly in the descriptions, and not directly connected with the neighbourhood.

The impacts are evidenced by several examples when looking at the individual dynamics, the cultural, spatial, socio-economic and political ones, that are regarded more closely in hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2

As seen, this research confirms our hypothesis 1 that the creative class of video game developers has an impact on the surrounding neighbourhood, but to varying degrees. To investigate these effects in more detail, different dynamics were considered. The assumption of hypothesis 2 is that these impacts can be determined with the help of four dynamics: cultural, spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics. In other words, the focus was on the process that is initiated through interactions and that can lead to change and transformation.

Cultural dynamics

In the Mile End, these four dynamics are detectable to different extents, underlined by the statements of the different interview groups and journalists. Focusing on the most reported characteristic in the Mile End, it is the impact on the sector of restaurants and bars. Over the years there are more and more restaurants and bars in the area going along with longer opening hours for bars in the evening but also with a high turnover. This development is stated by several video game developers who have been knowing the area for a longer time, but also by the cultural actors and the journalists who see a connection with the presence of Ubisoft. The new offer is for the ‘lunch crowd’ or the ‘Ubisoft clientèle’ as the cultural actors and journalists describe it. If the changes in restaurants as part of the cultural dynamics are obvious, there are no further cultural amenities whose appearance could be connected with the existence of Ubisoft in the Mile End. The same is true for the cultural infrastructure and can also be seen for the cultural participation and experience in Mile End, as Ubisoft’s events are almost exclusively mentioned in the newspaper articles and

also date back some time. Only the last two points are the same for Flingern-Nord.

Spatial dynamics

Although the interviewees talk about the spatial dynamics, such as the measures taken by the authorities or the new buildings in the area, none of these measures could be directly linked to the video game developers. The measures taken by the authorities started shortly after the establishment and could be seen in the context of the urban regeneration of the neighbourhood for the dwellers in Flingern-Nord, such as the project *Soziale Stadt* [Social City] to reduce the vacancies at Birkenstraße, one of the major shopping streets, at the beginning of the millennia, and regeneration programs for the industrial part in the Mile End around the former garment factories for the location of companies, such as Project St Viateur Est. However, the aim of some of the regeneration projects in Mile End was to attract further tech companies and to establish a centre in the technological-creative field (Gélinas and Bélanger 2018, 150), which can be seen as a consequence of the location of Ubisoft in the area as one of the first techno-creative companies.

Socio-economic dynamics

A different picture, which is not so clear-cut, is given with the socio-economic dynamics, their dimensions and their relation to the video game industry. In the areas of sport and leisure and local amenities, no statements can be made that are seen in connection with the presence of the video games industry. Nevertheless, a connection is seen with the development of rental values and a change in the product range. An increase in rents for flats and houses has been reported by all groups (and substantiated by statistical data) since the 2010s, and all see it in connection with the Ubisoft company and its employees. This is also reflected in the newspaper articles because until 2011 the development of rent was not connected with the presence of Ubisoft. However, the perception of the consequences varies. While cultural actors and journalists are generally of the opinion that video game developers can afford the 'new' rents, video game developers who want to move to the Mile End explain that the rents are so high for them too and they can't afford it. This is underlined by several participants who could think of moving to the Mile End but can't find an affordable place they like. One of the cultural actors mentions that it is the management people that can afford to live in the Mile End but not the 'normal' employee. Others who can afford the higher rents, according to one participant in each group, are educated French immigrants. Nevertheless,

the age distribution in the Mile End has remained more or less constant between 2006 and 2016, as has the proportion of immigrants. This suggests that young people up to 34 years old move to the area to some degree. In addition to the rise in rents as part of the general increase in the city, the higher increase compared to other neighbourhoods is probably due to a change in image that attracts young people. As some journalists and participants see it, Ubisoft is not entirely innocent of this development. Besides rent, changes in shops and in the range or offer are also reported in connection with the video game developers but only at the beginning of Ubisoft's establishment in the Mile End. The other changes that cannot be separated from the presence of Ubisoft is reported and perceived by interviewees from both groups. They see further people and groups of people coming to the neighbourhood. This is probably the case because the video game developers hardly go to the shops in the Mile End. For Flingern-Nord, there is no connection between the video game industry and socio-economic dynamics such as the development of leisure, sports and local amenities, as well as the change in the product range and a change in rental prices reported.

Political dynamics

The last dynamic regarded is the political one. Only at the beginning of Ubisoft's arrival in the Mile End are political dynamics mentioned by one cultural actor and one developer and widely discussed in the newspapers. These were the subsidies that Ubisoft received. Other political dynamics that could be linked to the video games industry are not mentioned. Subsidies are also a topic in Flingern-Nord, but this is the only topic that is addressed.

Summary

A summarised look at the dynamics examined here shows that there are a number of occurring dynamics in Mile End that can be linked to the presence of the video games industry. Of these dynamics, it can be clearly said that it is the development of restaurants, cafés, and bars in the area, in particular a rise in numbers accompanied with longer opening hours. Another relationship is described in the early years by journalists who write about shopkeepers adapting their offerings to the new people now working in the neighbourhood. Also connected with the presence of Ubisoft is the increase in rents. No connection is determined by the remaining dynamics in Mile End. In Flingern-Nord, no connection between the occurring dynamics and the video game industry and its employees is reported.

Taking another look at all the individual dynamics, it can be said that not all dynamics have the same contribution to the changes, or their contribution is perceived differently. On the one hand, this may be due to the fact that their significance is actually different, or on the other hand because other dynamics could play a role that were not considered in this study, such as population dynamics which describe “how populations change in size, composition and spatial distribution over time” (own translation) (Schuster et al. 2018, 12), and urban dynamics, which deal with changes in public space. This includes changes to the transport system in urban areas, for example.

Hypothesis 3

As shown above, in both neighbourhoods a change is observed by participants of both groups and the majority of the researched dynamics perceived and described in the neighbourhood cannot be directly connected with the video game industry and its developers. A particular relation this research focus on is the cultural one between the developers and the neighbourhood, either by actively doing cultural things or by participating in cultural events and using the cultural infrastructure and amenities that are offered. This is related to the lifestyle of the developers because lifestyle influences the type and intensity of the individual activities. Research was therefore conducted from the perspective of the hypothesis that the cultural dynamics and lifestyle are important to understand the relationship between the video gamers and the neighbourhood, how they perceive themselves as creative individuals and in relation to the neighbourhood (Hypothesis 3).

In this context that the cultural dynamics and more specifically the cultural lifestyle are important to understand the relationship, how the video game developers perceive themselves as creative acting individuals and in relation to the neighbourhood, it is inevitable to look at the conditions under which these activities can take place. They determine the nature of the activities and the extent to which they can be carried out: the creative milieu. A creative milieu is according to Landry (2000, 133) the place that “contains the necessary preconditions [...] to generate a flow of ideas and inventions” (p. 133). This is determined in both places. The creative milieu in both locations offers cultural facilities, cultural organisations and venues, and social meeting places such as cafés and bars for connections and human interactions, as well as good public transport connections and facilities such as parks offered by the neighbourhood or business, that Landry (2000, 133) sees as a prerequisite.

Therefore, the focus is on the accompanying characteristics such as a special atmosphere and amenities as well as the concentration and mixing of different people. As shown, amenities are not mentioned in the context of creativity. However, the atmosphere plays a role, although it is not measurable and can be only explained or described indirectly. It is also the case for its effects. In this point, the views differ between the wish or the imagination that the atmosphere supports the work of the developers, and the perception of the developers. Montreal Ubisoft management expresses in several newspaper articles throughout the years that their employees are influenced by the local environment in the Mile End because they are out and about (A181), and “[i]l y a vraiment là un écosystème créatif, un écosystème de vie, et un équilibre parfait qui fait que le tissu créatif qu’on trouve à l’intérieur des murs trouve son écho à l’extérieur” (A142). As a result, Ubisoft and what it is and does are “also a product of the hyper-creative Mile End ‘eco-system’” (A62).

In the context of the company’s location, the company states that the Mile End is a creative neighbourhood where they can find creative talent and artists and where there is a good quality of life for the employees that built a creative ecosystem (A163, A189, A225, A142). This is similar in Düsseldorf, though not as directly said as in Montreal. The management implies it in two articles (A134, A173) by referring to the air and attractiveness of the city, and in the interviews by referring to the good environment in Flingern-Nord. In other words, the management in both places sees a connection between creativity, the neighbourhood, and its employees. They further see creativity as an important part for the work of the employees. These points are not seen in the same way by all other interviewees in both places. Although a good atmosphere with a vibe is detected by the interviewees in general in the Mile End and a good atmosphere is seen as important for work and creativity in Flingern-Nord, there are only a few who talk about an impact on themselves related to one’s own creativity and work. They state that when working in a good and relaxed environment you bring back a relaxed attitude that fosters solution finding etc. in work. In this case, talking about the importance of the place and its environment, the statements of those participants in Montreal that worked at different companies in different neighbourhoods are significant. They state that working in the Mile End fosters the creative process, and work and working in another environment would be different, less supporting. Still, these are intangible facts that are not explained with examples. As seen, the creative environment and atmosphere are an important component for the success of the developers’ work, which is also supported by a study done by Garcês et al. (2016, 169) who found out that a creative environment has an influence on the creative

processes. This is discussed again in the course of this chapter, as the points ‘atmosphere’, ‘inspiration’ etc. come up regularly and thus become a central element.

In addition to the atmosphere in the creative milieu, there are other features that should be examined to see whether they have the same importance as the atmosphere. One of these characteristics is the ‘concentration and mixing of different people’, so the people who are out and about in the neighbourhood and not working at Ubisoft and what they are doing there because the people who are in the neighbourhood could influence (the development of) a relationship between the video game developers and the neighbourhood.

Concentration and mixing of different people can be on a private or professional level and therefore also represents a relationship with the neighbourhood. Of particular interest in this work is the connection on a professional level. One reason why video game developers interact with each other is to exchange ideas with others, share their knowledge and learn from each other (Hoose 2016, 121). This takes place not only within the company, but also outside in close proximity, i.e. in the neighbourhood itself (Darchen and Tremblay 2015, 327; Cohendet, Llerena and Simon 2010, 165). According to Cohendet and Simon (2018, 123) and Ruggill et al. (2017, 2), the video game developers exchange information with other members of the same profession, even if the company could see this as a breach of the confidentiality clauses. For Weststar (2015, 1240), however, this is the reason why this exchange and the formation of a network do not take place. In my research, everyone referred to this last point, why they do not work outside the office and exchange ideas with colleagues. This was also emphasised when it came to going out with the team in the neighbourhood, whether for lunch or team building. For example, interviewees P17 and P19 underlined that they do not talk about work during this time. This would be in line with Weststar’s statement. Nevertheless, an exchange with others cannot be negated. It is possible that they do not do so in the immediate vicinity of the work, but in other neighbourhoods that are not the subject of this study. An exchange with others is desired by the company, as they emphasise : “*[f]aut prendre le temps de se changer les idées si on veut rester productif*” (A219), and “*[l]es gens ont souvent leurs meilleures idées chez eux en prenant un café, quand ils discutent avec d’autres ou même quand ils joggent*” (A79). According to the results this means that they do it within their own group, inside the company.

On a private level, respondents go out in both neighbourhoods and some respondents even take

part in events such as board game evenings in Flingern-Nord and concerts in Flingern. However, these are only sporadically mentioned activities by a small number of people and do not take place regularly. Between the private and the professional level, there is another level. It is privately doing something with colleagues in the neighbourhood. However, none of the participants explicitly mentioned this. Statements such as ‘with colleagues’ can also refer to an after-work beer or 5@7, which is taken directly after work. This is mentioned by some.

Besides singular events that were organised by Ubisoft in the Mile End, there are no further occasions mentioned in the newspaper articles when the video game developers take the opportunity to mix with other people in the neighbourhood. This corresponds with the statements of the developers. They only report about these events in the Mile End. For Flingern-Nord, no events are mentioned. Hence, on this level no relation is built. That doesn’t mean that the developers in both places have a negative impression of the people in the neighbourhood. Some of the interviewees go to the neighbourhoods in private, and here as well, they stay with the people who joined them, and they don’t come especially for the people who are out and about. The behaviour is best underlined by interviewee P31 who states about the video game developers in the Mile End that “so there’s just kind of a, you know, vibe in a sense of like separation. I don’t feel any like mixing of culture. [laughing]”. In Flingern-Nord there are no comments like this because the video game developers are not recognised.

As can be seen, the people who are out and about in the neighbourhood have no influence on the behaviour of video game developers, for example, how often they are out and about in the neighbourhood and what they do there.

Looking again at the hypotheses, one assumption is that the cultural lifestyle is important to understand the relation between the video game workers and the neighbourhood. In particular, it is about the activities that the developers engage in and which of these activities they can perform in the neighbourhood to build a relationship. An activity that is labelled as one of the natural interests of developers is considered: playing video games as part of the developers’ leisure time activities. Scientists who researched the video game industry describe this behaviour as well, so for example Wimmer and Sitnikova (2012, 161) who state that “[c]omputer games (both playing and making) were naturally mentioned as the main leisure-time pursuit. Although some of respondents don’t game that much anymore because of lack of time, games still take an important place in the spare

time”. Differently presented is this fact in Canadian newspapers where the developers are described as nerds (e. g. A195, A229) with a passion for computer games which is a precondition for their work. In German newspapers a similar picture is given, this time by the developers themselves. They describe themselves as video gamers who don’t care to sit for hours in front of the computer (A16), and as nerds who have made their passion for playing their profession (A120). This is the presented view from research and newspaper articles but looking at the statements of the developers a different picture is given. Only in Montreal, there are three interviewees who report that they include playing video games in the things they do in their leisure time. This number is surprisingly low regarding the depiction in the newspaper articles. One reason for this could be that the interviewees see it as part of their work or it is an inseparable part of their lives that is not worth mentioning or seen as a cultural, creative activity. This perception is also mentioned by Wimmer and Sitnikova (2012) who state that “[d]espite these characteristics, interviewees do not comply with stereotypes, which are often prevalent in public discourse, indicating that most of gameworkers (as well as gamers) are nerds only dealing with games all the time. For most of the interviewees there is naturally an equal mark between work and hobby” (p. 161). They add that “they like to do a lot of other things not connected with their work” (p. 162). This would mean on the one hand that the video game developers could spend some time in the neighbourhood and on the other that they do different things during their leisure time. This is confirmed by the statements of the interviewees.

The video game developers interviewed do a variety of things as part of their cultural lifestyle and as a cultural person in their leisure time. In both neighbourhoods, the developers list activities they do: going to the/watching movies, reading books and music. In the Mile End, the developers list further activities such as going to museums and galleries, as well as dancing and playing music instruments, and in Flingern-Nord they list activities such as cooking, travelling, and going to the theatre as well as book and board game fairs. The activities they do encompass two dimensions of my research. One is if these activities are connected with the neighbourhood and might have an influence on it and vice versa, and the other one is how these activities shape the process of developing a game or influence the creativity of the developers. Taking all activities into mind, some developers do them in the Mile End to varying degrees, but Flingern-Nord as the place to do these activities is not important. Looking at the second one, a further picture is given. As described in the literature, “there is a clearly observable connection between creativity of the gameworkers

and their consumption of media – media products broaden the minds of the gameworkers and give them new ideas” (Wimmer and Sitnikova 2012, 163). This is not confirmed by everyone, as some refer to their actual work. In the Mile End, this is confirmed by three employees, whereas creativity and art are important to their work, and by two developers in Flingern-Nord, such as the one who works as a narrative who needs this input to get inspiration for this job work.

In this context should be remembered that the video game developers in both places see themselves as creative workers, though to a varying degree depending on their actual work, and that they describe themselves as creative and cultural persons to different degrees between much and not much.

Looking at the activities and participation, it must be borne in mind that there are restrictions for some participants. These are the family situation, so if a participant has kids, and the knowledge of events etc., which is surprising because all interviewees receive information about this in different ways. For Flingern-Nord, there are two more limitations of participating: the language barrier and surprisingly the weather. Although the winter is milder and shorter than in Montreal, few say that their participation also depends on the weather. These are the constraints mentioned by respondents in relation to participation in general, but in addition there are other specific constraints relating to participation in Mile End or Flingern-Nord. Some activities are activities one does at home such as listening to music or reading. Therefore, of all the activities they list, it is necessary to consider what they can do in the respective neighbourhood or whether they need to go to certain places such as operas and museums and at certain times such as for attending plays. This restricts the activities they can do in the neighbourhood as part of their cultural lifestyle or as part of their activities as cultural workers. Although there is a large offer accessible to everyone in both neighbourhoods, both neighbourhoods are not the favourite places where they do these activities, a fact that is also confirmed by the cultural actors offering a wide range of cultural activities. This is not connected to the offer, because the interviewees don't say that they miss something regarding the cultural offer and amenities.

Regarding hypothesis 3, the conclusion is that most of the video game developers see themselves as a cultural and creative person with a corresponding lifestyle to different degrees. But the assumption that the cultural dynamics and the cultural lifestyle are important to understand the relationships between the video game workers and the neighbourhood, how they perceive

themselves as creative acting individuals and in relation to the neighbourhood cannot be proved. There is no significant relationship between the majority of the video game developers, their cultural lifestyle, cultural dynamics and the neighbourhood. Although there are many cultural amenities and a broad cultural offer that is known by most interviewees in the Mile End, both neighbourhoods don't play a noteworthy role in the cultural private life of the interviewees. This leads to questions such as 'Why is the neighbourhood around the office not important or attractive for the video game developers to express their cultural lifestyle?' or 'How can we understand the relationship between the video game developers and the neighbourhood if it is not a cultural one?'

Hypothesis 4

The relationship and dynamics between the video game industry and the neighbourhood is an ongoing process that has continued over the years under study. In this work, a period of about 25 years in both neighbourhoods is regarded. Although only a few from each group know the neighbourhood for a longer period of time and only some know the historical development, it is interesting to see what patterns this development and the connected dynamics follow. In particular, if the change and activity of the dynamics vary in speed and intensity, i. e. if they can occur as a crisis, as an abrupt change or as a gradual change or transition, for example (Hypothesis 4).

For both neighbourhoods the development and the dynamics follow a regular path, in other words, it is largely a common development of the life cycle of a neighbourhood. Both were working class neighbourhoods that have been shaped by the people that moved there. In the case of Mile End, it was the waves of immigrants and the artists and creatives, and in the case of Flingern-Nord it is the moving in of different social classes, young families, and artists and creatives. As a consequence, there were changes in buildings and renovations of buildings, as well as a change in the offer of stores that has been adapted to the new demand. In this cycle, creative workers attract amenities such as restaurants and cafés, as Bereitschaft states (2014, 161), places that are appreciated by the creative workers (Heebels and van Aalst 2010). This development is described by the interviewees and by the journalists in the Mile End, such as the example of new businesses replacing old ones (e.g. A13, A97, A127, P22, P28, P30) or in general about a change of vibe or neighbourhood feeling (e.g. A28, A34, A157, P28), and to a lesser degree in Flingern-Nord by the developers (e.g. P1, P3). The way the interviewees describe the development of the area is a gradual change or transition over the last 25 years in both neighbourhoods. This processual nature also means that it is not easy

to perceive changes correctly or witness them. All in all, the interviewees see the development as a natural process in the changing neighbourhood, especially in the Mile End.

Responses to the Hypotheses

As was seen, the hypotheses were confirmed to varying degrees. Hypothesis 1 was confirmed. The creative class of the video game industry workers may have an impact, various in nature and scope in both directions, on the environment of the video game industries' neighbourhood. The second hypothesis is that these effects can be determined with the help of cultural, spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics. In the Mile End and Flingern-Nord, change is observed by participants from both groups. Most of the dynamics, however, that are perceived and described in the neighbourhood cannot be directly linked to the video game industry and its developers. Hence, this hypothesis is verified only partly. Nevertheless, as there are dynamics in the neighbourhood, the question arises as to what has an influence on the development. It should not be forgotten, of course, that only four dynamics were analysed here. It is therefore possible that other dynamics play a greater role that were not the focus of this study. These points will be considered in more detail later on. Not verified at all is hypothesis 3 that the cultural dynamics and the cultural lifestyle are important to understand the relationship between the video game industry workers and the neighbourhood and how they perceive themselves as creative acting people and in relation to the neighbourhood, a point regarded below more closely. The last hypothesis about the development of dynamics over time, in particular that they include continuities and changes, is verified.

After verifying and falsifying the four hypotheses on the basis of the interviews and the newspaper articles, these results form the basis for a deeper reflection to answer the research questions.

8.1.2. Return to the Research Questions

The hypotheses considered above were made to answer the research questions on which this thesis is based. Now that these have been examined using the results of the interview and newspaper article analyses, the next step is to look at the two research questions and see how the results from the hypothesis help to answer the research questions.

The relationship Between the Video Game Industry and the Neighbourhood

The first research question is “What are and how can we understand the relationships between the video game industry and a specific neighbourhood, in particular the relationship between the video game industry workers and the neighbourhood around their workspace?”.

The relationship relates to the different areas that were analysed based on the dynamics, i.e. what they do in the neighbourhood and which facilities they use. As became clear when looking at the hypotheses, the relationship between the neighbourhoods and the company in terms of dynamics is not strong, with a few exceptions. The neighbourhood where Ubisoft has its studio is primarily the place where people work and rarely the place for cultural or private activities.

However, this is mostly not connected with the offer and the amenities in the neighbourhoods. For some it is the attractiveness of the neighbourhood which is linked to the perception of whether the neighbourhood is inviting to spend time there. It is also related to attention and behaviour in the space, i.e. how people walk through the neighbourhood. In the case of cultural amenities, this is not related to satisfaction, as nobody complains about a poor range of options. But of all these amenities there is one exception. It is the range of restaurants in Flingern-Nord, the participants are not satisfied with. However, the period of time should be considered here, as the offer in the Mile End has also evolved over time with the increased demand. Local amenities are of a certain importance. They play a role above all for those who live in the neighbourhood. Not everyone is aware of what is on offer in the individual neighborhoods, and hence, this might influence the relationship.

As seen in the discussion of the hypothesis, the video game developers do not have a relation to the neighbourhood on a professional level. There are no meetings and no exchange with others about their work in the neighbourhood because it is forbidden by the company. There is only a relation on a private level for some, besides those who live in the neighbourhood.

The Role of Culture for Video Game Developers

“What is the role of cultural dynamics in the relation of the video game industry workers and the neighbourhood, in particular, what is the role of cultural practices in the neighbourhood for creative workers?” is the second question asked.

In this research, the cultural dynamics, in particular cultural infrastructure and amenities, such as museums, art galleries, cinemas etc. in the neighbourhoods of Mile End and Flingern-Nord do not play a significant role for the video game developers. They are hardly used. The same applies to the role of cultural practices, cultural experience and participation in the neighbourhoods.

That does not mean at all, however, that they are not culturally active or do not participate culturally. They are very culturally active and do a variety of things, such as listening to music, going to museums and watching films. Regarding the activities that are only done by a few, there is a very wide spectrum and the participants report that they play music, dance, take part in board game nights and cosplay events and travel. But these activities are not connected to a specific neighbourhood. As culture plays a special role in this work, the role of culture for video game developers is discussed in detail in section 8.5.

Although the neighbourhood doesn't play a role regarding the cultural activities, it plays nevertheless a role: it is the atmosphere that is relevant and has an (indirect) effect on video game developers, as shown below. But first we look at both neighbourhoods to compare the conditions on the sites again.

8.2. Mile End and Flingern-Nord - The Two Neighbourhoods

When considering Mile End and Flingern-Nord and the findings of this research, the initial situation should be pointed out again. Ubisoft has had a studio and office in both locations for more than two decades and both studios had the same development opportunities at the beginning. The starting position for both neighbourhoods is therefore comparable. However, the further development differs. While the studio in Montreal grew strongly (more than 3,000 employees in 2018 (Company Profile : Ubisoft Entertainment S.A 2018)), the number of employees in Düsseldorf only grew slowly (300 employees in 2017 (Blue Byte GmbH 2017)).

In the development process, political dynamics play a role. In Montreal, subsidies supported the employment of developers, especially in the early years. This was reported intensively by journalists in the early years (e.g. A108, A149, A204, A226-232) and also mentioned by interview participants (e.g. P25). This is not the case for Düsseldorf. Over the years, the government and other responsible parties have repeatedly been accused of a lack of funding and support, which is emphasised by newspaper articles or statements by CEO Benedikt Grindel (e.g., A19, A32, A72). The video game industry in Germany receives less support because the cultural reputation of video games is low, and the maximum amount of subsidies is set by the state and the European Union. One effect of the different funding possibilities is the different growth of the company in the places.

At first glance, the difference in size seems to be a problem for a comparison in this study in order to be able to draw conclusions. However, this difference in company size allows the relationship between the video games industry and the neighbourhood to be contrasted.

The development of Mile End and Flingern-Nord follows a comparable path - new people are seen in both neighbourhoods and there is talk of an adjustment in the range of goods on offer and an increase in rents. In the Mile End, especially at the beginning, this development is attributed solely to the presence of Ubisoft, which is an opinion that changed later. In the Mile End, they are part of it and may also have initiated the development. In Flingern-Nord, however, the same process is underway but Ubisoft does not have this influence (yet).

Both neighbourhoods are regarded by the majority as cultural neighbourhoods, with the exception of Flingern-Nord, where half of the respondents do not share this opinion. Local cultural actors

from various sectors and the cultural offerings were cited as reasons. For some participants in the Mile End, however, this perception may be influenced by the census published in 2006 (Hill 2010) and not by their own experience, as noted by participant P29. According to this census, the Mile End has the highest concentration of artists in Canada.

Although both neighbourhoods are seen as a cultural neighbourhood by the majority, both neighbourhoods are not important for cultural activities, as was made clear in the previous section. In addition to the activities that are not (or cannot be) done in the neighbourhood, availability must also be considered. There is a wide and varied range of cultural activities and amenities in both neighbourhoods. Although the offer is spread across the neighbourhoods, there are areas where it is concentrated, for example in the Mile End area where the company is based. For Flingern-Nord it is described in such a way that there are still culture-free areas, such as, for example, the older industry parts and garden plots, and the offer is concentrated in the areas of Ackerstraße and Lindenstraße. There is a large number of galleries in both places, and most people take notice of them. However, these are rarely visited. Other cultural activities that can be done in both neighbourhoods are a visit to the repertory cinema or to the museums. There is also a municipal library in both neighbourhoods, but only very few people know about it and it is not used. There is a difference in venues. There are several ones in the Mile End where concerts and other events take place. This is not the case in Flingern-Nord. However, some cultural organisations offer concerts, readings and performances, among other things, which are organised by themselves, and several venues exist in Flingern-Süd close to Flingern-Nord. Nevertheless, an offer exists in both places where the interviewees can participate.

Even though a wide range of offers is obvious some areas remain hidden as it is divided into small sections with a lot of actors at both locations. This became apparent during a walkabout in both sites. During these walks through all the streets of the neighbourhoods, all cultural facilities and amenities as well as businesses active in the cultural sector were noted. However, these facilities were only discovered through active searching. It is therefore a matter of perception and willingness to discover what is on offer. Without knowing what is hidden behind the name on the outside of the wall, it will not be recognised.⁹⁷ This also applies to the offers that the participants

⁹⁷ From my own experience, here is just one example from Flingern-Nord. It is not obvious that a private collection with more than 1000 exhibits of contemporary art is hidden behind the ‘*Sammlung Philara*’ sign at the entrance to

receive within the company. Some of the participants are aware that they do not pay attention to offers, and some admit that they haven't been looking at what is offered.

For Ubisoft's popularity and related statements about the relationship between the company and the neighbourhood, there is one point of importance. It is 'visibility' that plays a role. Ubisoft in the Mile End is visible, if not omnipresent. People know Ubisoft and also have their opinion about the company Ubisoft whether justified or not, which becomes clear in the newspaper articles. This is not the case in Flingern-Nord, as both employees and cultural actors report. Visibility of a company is important, as it is "directly related to the public's knowledge of that company and its perception in relation to specific core issues" (Bittner-Fesseler and Häfeling 2018, 113). Some of the video developers in Flingern-Nord are aware of this situation and make suggestions how to promote the visibility of the company in the neighbourhood.

This might lead to the different perception of the relation between the industry and the neighbourhood. In Mile End, descriptions about an 'ecosystem' between the industry and the neighbourhood are given by interviewees and can be found in newspaper articles. The interviewees also describe it as '(heavily) intertwined' or as that Ubisoft "has brought a lot of creativity to the neighbourhood and it's, it's kind of developed this ecosystem that feeds that work, feeds the neighbourhood, and the neighbourhood feeds Ubisoft back" (P20). Hence, each side depends on the other. This is not the case in Flingern-Nord.

As seen, the main differences between the two places in terms of the company are size and visibility. The employees at Ubisoft in both locations do not differ fundamentally regarding their cultural and creative activities, but only in details. The opportunities for cultural activities are given in both places, however, not used much. But when they are out and about in the neighbourhood, there is one thing that has a certain significance for the video game developers, as we will see in the next section.

a backyard (see also Annex 3, Impressions of Flingern-Nord). It was only during further research that the significance of this collection became clear. This collection is known far beyond the city limits, which was underlined by examples from the interviewees when they reported which other known artists from Germany could be spotted there.

8.3. The Neighbourhood and its Atmosphere

There is one theme that runs like a red thread through the newspaper articles, the interviews and the supplementary data and which plays a particular role in the consideration of this research: atmosphere and ambience. Even though it has already been described in the consideration of the hypotheses, this point requires a closer look, because the atmosphere is around the participants and may have an influence on what they do in the neighbourhood or play a role for their cultural practices. Further, the interviewees use the terms atmosphere and ambience to describe the neighbourhoods and how they feel while being there.

Atmosphere and ambience are often used interchangeably, but they are slightly different. “Both are related to something around us” (Friberg 2012, 671), but they differ in the way they are around us. Ambiance, which is more commonly used in French-speaking countries, is something that is around us and which “tends to emphasise the situated, built, and social dimensions of sensory experience” (Thibaud 2015, 40). Atmosphere, which is used more in English-speaking countries, is more affective and felt “more directly in the air than it is the case with ambiance” (Friberg 2012, 672), and it is independent of geometric space, but possible in social space (Friberg 2012, 671; Rauh 2014, 1; Rolshoven 2021, 174; Thibaud 2015, 40). In the context of the interviewees’ statements, “[t]he primary ‘object’ of perception is atmospheres. What is first and immediately perceived is neither sensations nor shapes or objects or their constellations, [...] but atmospheres” (Böhme 1993, 125) and the atmosphere and ambience “can influence or evoke moods that are perceived in certain places or locations” [own translation] (Rolshoven 2021, 174). Furthermore, ambience “is an undefined, vague object, ambience does not appear to be something that is easy to analyse or to circumscribe” (Thibaud 2015, 40), and it is something that becomes fixed in the moment and in the place. These characteristics are reflected in the statements made in this study.

The atmosphere of the neighbourhood plays a special role for many interviewees in making them feel comfortable in the neighbourhood and in taking this feeling with them. This has been described by Richards and Wilson (2007, 8) who also attach importance to intangible factors such as the atmosphere during the visit and the atmosphere of places in addition to the tangible cultural experience such as visiting museums and festivals.

Many interviewees talk about atmosphere, but they refer to various things. For some of the interviewees, it is the people who are out and about in the neighbourhood, for example the artists and the workers at the tech companies, who bring the neighbourhood to life with their activities and thus create a good atmosphere. Others refer to the neighbourhood, which offers a good atmosphere thanks to the amenities available and thus makes life in this neighbourhood pleasant. Parks as part of the neighbourhood are perceived in different ways, and their ambience is described as different. Some details in the area also have an influence on individual participants, as the following example about the Mile End shows: “The atmosphere is very warm and welcoming and prone to creativity because of all the artwork you can see on buildings through graffiti and the like” (P18). And yet, others focus on the influence that the atmosphere of the neighbourhood has:

It’s not like a critical factor to influence it, but a positive atmosphere can help, and it can propagate even inside companies, so, that can definitely be a point where the influence can come from the neighbourhood into the company itself. I was thinking that maybe another point would be in terms of facilities like providing areas for different types of activities. Maybe that can also influence in some regards how we’re working and how we actually collaborate with each other. (P10)

So it is the time that employees spend in the neighbourhood and then bring the positive atmosphere and the new impressions they have gained during this time back to the office, which can have an impact on their work. However, the atmosphere not only has an impact on work, as one participant (P22) reported: This atmosphere “is echoing a lot with me, hum. But. It has transformed me, I think the neighbourhood actually transformed me, I did not come interested in those issues, or those things [events, theater plays etc.], but seeing them and having them at hand easily made me aware and made me like them even more. I would say”. Some interviewees from Düsseldorf went to the studio in Montreal for a business trip. They point to a difference in atmosphere of the Mile End and the office. They state that the working environment is better in Montreal because of the atmosphere and the creativity it exudes.

As has been seen, the ambience or atmosphere of the neighbourhood plays a special role alongside some cultural activities. It was also shown that the feelings of the video game developers in the neighbourhood are transferred to their work. But it is not only the feeling, but also the inspiration they get in the neighbourhood that is important for their work. Some of the participants confirm

that they find inspiration through cultural activities and being outside. Inspiration is “a sudden insight or leap in understanding that produces new, creative ideas or approaches to a problem” (APA 2024). There are cultural things, such as working with creative people (P16), listening to music (P14), or generally referring to culture (P5), which are a source of inspiration. This is also underlined by a research of Wimmer and Sitnikova (2012, 162). They found out that “reading books, watching movies [...], can serve as a source of inspiration for a gameworker [...], then for gameworkers their pop-cultural and media likes and habits make them more open-minded and also serve as a source of creative input”. Further, places are mentioned and their influence on inspiration, such as the Mile End (P26) and nature (Grafenberg Forest for P6). Both have a positive influence. Besides the environment, there is also art that some interviewees see as a source of inspiration for their work. Inspiration can be found outside, but also at home, for example when listening to music, as participants attest.

In addition to these words and descriptions, there is another word that the participants often use in this context. It is the word ‘relax’. It is used to describe the surroundings or the neighbourhood. This invites interviewee P7 to go for a walk in the neighbourhood, for example. This respondent also wishes that more people learn to appreciate this attribute and come to the neighbourhood. In addition, it is also used to express the feeling one gets there. But it can also be the neighbourhood as such with its ‘mindset’ that has a relaxing effect, as described in an interview.

‘Relax’ is also a feeling that participants have when they do something. They relate to it when they do cultural things, such as listening to music or attending events. Ultimately, they take this relaxed attitude with them to work, which has a positive impact on their work. They work more motivated and the relaxation helps to see and solve problems from a different perspective. It is an indirect influence, as the participants emphasise: “The only influence like indirect influence that I would say, is the part that I can actually relax during these activities, and that’s good also for work because you come back relaxed, more motivated, and it’s also always great” (P9). What can already play a role is made clear by the statement from participant P5: “I think it’s a, it’s a sum of things. It does make sense. Again. I, I can’t point to ‘I have done this’ because I consume this piece of culture. But I think without it, my work will probably be in a bit more difficult”.

However, it is important not to forget how ideas are created. Krätke (2011, 134) describes the development of a creative idea and says that an artist’s creative idea or inspiration cannot be

rationally planned in advance. Furthermore, a creative environment fosters creativity, but it does not necessarily influence the work, as the influence of the environment depends on both the person and the task (Harrington 2011, 264). The fact that creativity, the influence of atmosphere, cannot be planned is also emphasised by one participant who says that “I see it a little bit indirect because it is not like ‘Okay, if I’m doing that cultural activity, it will have an obvious and immediate impact over on what I am doing at work’” (P10).

Even though the atmosphere is particularly important in terms of inspiration and creativity, there are other descriptions of the neighbourhoods that contribute to the atmosphere and have not yet been considered in detail. Although these are single descriptions, they complete the picture of the neighbourhoods and give a special impression.

In Flingern-Nord, the interviewees use descriptions that express a certain mood. The most striking is the description of interviewee P11. When he thinks of Flingern-Nord, he goes into raptures and compares the neighbourhood to a living room and the feeling one has there: “That’s what it’s for – it’s a huge living room turned inside out. That’s how the neighbourhood feels. In that sense, that’s how we behave there too”. He also talks about a scene, a subculture in the neighbourhood and about the concerts in back courtyards that you only come across by chance. All of this contributes to the atmosphere in the neighbourhood.

There are other descriptions for the Mile End. For example, in a newspaper article about Saint-Viateur, the street is praised by the word “zeitgeist”, which gives the street that special something (A184). ‘Zeitgeist’ refers to a kind of supra-individual spirit that operates in the world and that expresses itself in the cultural worldview that exists in ideas, attitudes and feelings of a particular society at a particular time, and that is sometimes also associated with creativity (APA 2024). A similar description in connection with the stores in the neighbourhood is also given in Flingern-Nord. Glebe (1997, 155) also points to the exotic atmosphere that are exuded by the different stores, restaurants etc. run by immigrants.

These are descriptions of the neighbourhood, how the neighbourhood and its atmosphere were shaped, without naming those who are responsible for it, such as the communities and the dwellers. The newspaper articles address the community feeling several times for Mile End. The community feeling was described as strong and that it counts for a lot (A90). This community, held together

by feeling, has also brought about many improvements in the neighbourhood, as one interviewee reports. However, this feeling has changed due to new residents and people coming to the neighbourhood (A34, A157), although part of the community feeling is also the different groups in the neighbourhood (A101) that are partly “à l’origine de son atmosphère conviviale, créative et ouverte” (Rantisi and Leslie 2017, 143). Responsible for the atmosphere are groups such as bohemians, artists and further creative people, although the impact of the bohemians is discussed (Currid 2009; Florida 2002a; Tiruneh, Sacchetti and Tortia 2018). These groups are addressed in newspaper articles in both neighbourhoods (e.g. A34, A157). The artists with their studios and art galleries in Flingern-Nord led to a creative and young atmosphere (Haselbach, Gerecht and Hempel 2010:45). These groups are not mentioned by the video game developers. They are only mentioned by the creative actors, such as interviewee P28 who knows the “bohemian artist crowd”. The reason is that you have to be part of the community to know them.

In all these considerations, it should not be forgotten that spatial design, so how people flow between different locations, still plays a role, as Ellard (2009) emphasises. He writes that the organisation, size, shape and appearance of spaces can have a direct and measurable impact on how we feel when we are in them (p. 188-189, 223). This means that spaces can also hinder the emergence of cultural creativity (Suwala 2014, 186) and have an impact on inspiration. If the spatial design is not appealing, this can lead to people not wanting to spend time in the neighborhood. This is confirmed both for the Mile End by participant P21, who says that he did not do anything in the neighbourhood at the beginning because “the first time I saw the Mile End it didn’t appeal to me at all. It looked like, you know, an old neighbourhood that was going down, I just, I just wasn’t aware of, of many of the more interesting things” as well as for Flingern-Nord. When describing the impression of Flingern-Nord, participant P5 thinks of narrow streets and pavements and the dense development and says that “I’m not super fond of how it looks most of it [...] I think my personal impression is a bit worse, since because, as I said, like the, the way the streets are really doubtful, and like visually it doesn’t immediately appeal”. These are examples how the spatial design hinder engaging in the neighbourhood and finally creativity. There is however an example about how the spatial design of the Mile End might foster creativity: “It’s good because, when we go out like after work or on the lunch when we walk in the neighbourhood, it’s it feels nice, it’s not just like something like, I don’t know, like if you are downtown is only building like this, or Dubai that’s cold. And we can see it get in history and it’s nice to feel it when you go there” (P23).

Atmosphere, ambience and inspiration have an influence on video game developers, but to varying degrees, as the participants report. Although they all work at Ubisoft, they have different tasks and projects. This is in line with Harrington (2011, 271), who states that

[c]reative people differ from one another in many important respects. They have different personalities, motivational profiles, and work styles, for example. Furthermore, the conditions, settings, and environments conducive to one type of creativity (e.g., writing a novel) may not be most conducive to other types of creativity such as producing a series of multimedia canvases [...]. As a consequence, the exact environmental conditions most helpful to any particular creative person working on any particular project may not be the most helpful to other people working on other projects.

In addition, there are different phases in the production of a computer game that place different demands on video game developers. As a rule, these phases require a different input of creativity, which can be found in different places (Daikoku et al. 2021).

All in all, the Mile End and Flingern-Nord both have a special atmosphere which is reported by the video game developers, the cultural actors and the journalists. This atmosphere and ambience that the neighbourhoods exude are appreciated by the developers and seen as positive because the positive attitude they find there, they take back to work. However, they cannot give example, such as the (creative or artistic) people or certain amenities in the neighbourhood.

Besides the described relation between the neighbourhood and the video game industry workers there is also the look on the cultural and creative side of the developers. In addition to video game developers, cultural actors are also part of this work. They are all part of the cultural and creative industries and are involved in 'art'. However, each group's perception of art is different, as will be shown below.

8.4. Creativity and the Arts – the View on the Video Game Industry and its Workers

In the previous section, it was shown where the developers of video games get their inspiration from and what influences their creative work. However, the look at the creative and artistic part of their work or product and the perception of art have not been addressed. Yet, the video game developers and the cultural actors talk about art in different contexts and as will be shown with different meanings.

The term ‘art’ is ambivalent. “‘What is art?’ is one of the classic questions that philosophy has addressed over the ages, from the ancients to today” (Andina 2017, 1), and a question that is still discussed today. Without going into this discussion, such as the discourse about ‘highbrow’ and ‘lowbrow’ art because it is not part of this thesis, a selection of recent literature is listed here to give an overview of the different ways to define it and the views on it, for example Andina (2017), Davies (2015), Escuder González (2017), Isrow (2017) and Zaaïman (2012). These essays were published as new types of art emerged with the advent of information and computer technologies. In these essays there are reflections on the topic “‘What is art?’”. One is that is “[a]rt is the revelation, by means of presentational media, of perceptual realms characterised by otherness and difference. [...] Presentational media are crafts such as painting, sculpture, architecture, music, poetry, dance, theatre, photography, film, performance, digital media, literature, and so on.” (Zaaïman 2012, 13).

These views are also reflected by the participants. The creative product of video game developers, a video game, is seen differently in both Montreal and Düsseldorf than the product created by cultural workers. This view also includes the view of the computer game developers on the part of the cultural actors. The perception and opinion of creative artists when thinking about the creative work of video game developers has to do with the perception of art. While video game developers do not address the different types of art and usually only talk about art in general terms, it is the cultural actors who point out the different forms of art. The cultural artists make it clear that their type of art is different. This view is completely independent of location. Interviewee P28, a cultural actor, describes this difference in detail by stating: “Well, it’s like [...], I don’t know. It’s like, muzak and rock n’ roll. It’s like, they’re both genres of music, right? But. Can they jam? Can they get together? And it’s, it’s like oil and water as far as I’m concerned. It has absolutely nothing to

do with my artistic practice.”. And although he recognises (graphic or advertising) design as a kind of art, he adds that “[f]or me it’s a different universe. It’s not, that’s my prejudice, I don’t relate to it” [to video games]. As he does have a different understanding of art and creativity, he also does not see the work of video game developers as art and he also does not see video game developers as creative workers or artists. Another example that underlines the differences about art is given by interviewee P11, another cultural actor (in Flingern-Nord). He witnesses at a fair the perception of the exhibited art of art students and computer game developers. According to his observation, neither group was able to do anything with the other’s art because it is a different kind of art, as he explains:

It was an exhibition of game art, so with all the designs and styles from [a game][...] there the differences became more conscious, because the, it was very artistic-avant-garde next-level festival with experimental stories that came very much from the university context, from the art academy, [...] but that was a different artistic level, a different approach, a different expectation than what Ubisoft-Blue Byte brought, which was popular with gamers who, on the other hand, didn’t understand all the other things or didn’t find any access to them, and those who were more interested in experimental art, in the pure sense of art, couldn’t do anything with the game art things, so, sure, it’s a cultural art form, but there are different worlds that meet there. That’s what I found at the, hu, at the Indie-Lou-, hu, at the Indie-Arena for example at GamesCom as very, very different approaches.

Similar statements are given by further cultural actors. Video games are a commercial product and not an artistic or cultural one (P29) or video games are closer to entertainment than culture (P32). Consequently, the video game developers are “indie artists” (P32). This is the view of the majority of the cultural actors interviewed. There are only some interviewees who have a different point of view. Interviewee P30, who is also a film maker, sees video games as films and so she emphasizes that “games are part of, they create an environment that people engage within. So, you know. I think, it’s like film makers. It’s a cultural thing”. Creativity is also attributed to developers by interviewee P15, who also sees some of them as artists, but not all. In short, the majority of the cultural actors are of the opinion that their art is different from that of video game developers, if they consider it to be art at all. The origin of this difference in opinion lies in the fact that the artistic components of a video game are not clear, according to Smuts (2005). He explains that “[v]ideo

games combine elements from narrative fiction film, music and sports. They are arguably an art or sister art of the moving image, specifically, a form of digital animation. The code is like musical notation that is performed by the computer, and the games are played like sports” (Smuts 2005). Robles (2014, 126) sees video games similarly and he explains why the position is so difficult:

Every form of art originates from entertainment. Paintings were meant to decorate a room, music filled the void with appeasing melodies, literature engaged readers intellectually, and movies turn what lies in our imagination into a tangible reality. Of course, there are a plethora of variations on each of these categories, but all of these mediums have been solidified throughout the ages as forms of artistic expression. However, a relative newcomer to the world of entertainment, the video game, has not yet been recognized as worthy enough to take its place in the world of art.

However, that is not perceived by all. These views reflect the discussion in science. It represents the debate that has been going on for over 20 years as to whether video games are art or not (see: Brett (2007); Ebert (2010); Keukelaar (2019); Robles (2014); Smuts (2005)).

In the above statements, the cultural actors combine the art that the video game developers practise with their view of the video game developers as creative individuals. This means that the view of the product and the developers and the creative part is not separated.

A difference between the cultural actors and the video game developers is not only described when they think about the different kind of arts. It is also a feeling. One participant in the Mile End finds the words to express it. It is a separation that she feels when she crosses the path with the developers in the building she works: “It feels like you walk into the lobby, and you sort of can just tell like who’s gonna go to that elevator and who is going to go to that elevator. [laughing] So there’s just kind of a, you know, vibe in a sense of like separation. I don’t feel any like mixing of culture. [laughing]” (P31).

In the interviews, it was not only the view of the cultural actors that addressed the aspect of the creativity of the developers. It is also an issue for the management of Ubisoft. In the interviews, the management in Flingern-Nord states that their employees are young and creative, and that “the employees we have, who are ultimately the creators of culture, in the sense that sometimes they

are, sometimes they probably wouldn't call themselves that. Every programmer doesn't necessarily say that he creates culture" (P3).

The cultural actors are aware of the video game developers in Mile End but not all of the video game developers are aware of the cultural actors in it. Hence, the artists are mentioned by few developers in Mile End in the context of the renting situation and that artists have to leave the neighbourhood because of rising rents (P16, P23). Apart from very few comments, such as that in the artistic sector work people from different backgrounds and with different interests (P16), they say nothing about the artistic sector. There is only one statement regarding the difference between the artists and the artists of Ubisoft. Interviewee 27 states that

there is, are many artists, I see many artists in the neighbourhood, just like in the in the in the in the cafés on the Saint-Viateur, there are or so many artists living there and young artists and older artists, and, yeah, there is also like all the people from Ubisoft that are artists too, but different, [smiling] different kind.

Although no further comments are made on the artists, this does not mean that the video game developers have no connection to culture. There are few video game developers that talk about their relation to culture. One participant (P23) occasionally sees an influence on their work coming from local artists and their exhibitions. Another participant (P7) explains it: "If there's a musical festival, if there's an art gallery and I'm an artist in the games industry, I could go and be exposed to different art styles and bring that back to my own perception and apply it in my work to some extent.". He particularly refers to "artist in the game industry". No further comments are given.

Although there have been several occasions to mingle and to get in contact with people from the other group, such as the opening of artists studios in Montreal (so-called 'Open Days' between 2008 and 2017) and in Flingern-Nord (Festival Kunstpunkte from 1997 on) or the festivities organised by Ubisoft in Mile End, no video game developer took up the offer and connected. Besides this occasion their ways do not cross except for those who work with them as part of their job. This actually means that the perception relates to what they see from the outside but is not based on direct (personal) experience. However, Ubisoft has chosen the neighbourhoods because of their cultural environment and the intention of the management is that the employees take advantages of this environment. The neighbourhood should have "greatly contributed to stimulate

and inspire the employees, by giving them the opportunity to actively take part in the local creative communities [...], and frequently meet together in the different concert halls, bars, clubs, art galleries and trendy stores” (Cohendet, Grandadam and Simon 2010, 102), as it is described for the Mile End. The reason is that

[w]hen creating video games, most development studios aim at creating an environment that supports the creativity of the people working in the organization, i.e. one that provides a place where this creativity can grow and thrive. This framework serves the function of organizing people and technology in the process by which the game is developed. (Zackariasson and Wilson 2010, 114)

In the Mile End, there are several cultural actors who broaden their statements and include Ubisoft. They say that Ubisoft as an organisation is not (culturally) integrated in the area, although the company tries to connect to the Mile End (P31), or that they are not part of the cultural fabric (P28). They are just physically there (P29). However, Ubisoft has built up relationships with the artistic sector:

The company has also invested a lot in its neighbourhood to support the development of informal links between artists and local artisans and employees of the company – by revitalising the neighbourhood through events (such as the Ateliers du Mile End) [...]. From this entanglement with the local, a large number of partnerships with local artisans (for the construction of luxury figurines, for example), and many more artists and entities such as the National Theatre company have emerged. (Cohendet and Simon 2018, 127)

This also applies to Flingern-Nord. Ubisoft is not yet integrated in Flingern-Nord and would like to connect with the neighbourhood in the future, as was said in the interviews.

As seen, the majority of the cultural actors do not see the video game developers as artists and their work as art as well as the company as part of the cultural fabric. Also, the video game developers do not see a pronounced relation of their work with art. However, the managers see a relationship between art and their work. This representation can be seen in the context of the discussion about the position of the video game industry within the cultural and creative industries. The video game industry is one of the new sectors that represents “a new cultural industry that emerged from

digitalization, rather than a cultural industry that digitalization affected” (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 358). It is further a new sector where media is based on new technology and which is located “at the crossroads between the arts, technology and business” (UNCTAD 2004, 4), combining “truly artistic and creative content with emergent and novel technologies” and offering “a fascinating intersection between arts and technology” (Breznitz and Noonan 2014, 597). The production of a video game also combines these aspects because “the processes that are involved when producing a video game range from technical competences to artistic skills” (Zackariasson, Styhre and Wilson 2006, 419).

Against this background, the statements of the managers are clear. One of the managers interviewed states:

Quite clearly, yes. I think that there is always this duality that I mentioned earlier, technology and high technology. [...] So, we have high technology, and on the other hand we also have culture. But you can also see that in our staff, the art director of our new Settlers game was previously a principal dancer in the ballet. There are simply a lot of people who express themselves creatively, not only here, but culturally as a whole. And that’s why it’s a definite ‘yes’. Of course, we also have the total tech nerd, who perhaps doesn’t say at first ‘I see myself as a creative person or as a cultural person’, who simply wants to write the best code he can. But then he too has decided to make computer games and video games and not to write banking software. [own translation]. (P3)

And the second manager expresses it more briefly by stating that

Je pense que notre métier dans les jeux vidéo allie deux choses soit la technologie et la créativité. Un et l’autre ne peut pas, les deux doivent coexister, on n’est pas qu’une entreprise créative, on est une entreprise techno-créative. Mais on n’est pas non-plus qu’une entreprise technologique. (P16)

Further looking at the product, video games “are based on the innovative fusion of digital technologies and cultural creativity; as a media industry they exploit global networks of production and distribution” (Kerr 2006, 1). This relation, that the video game industry is at the crossroad of arts and technology, is not seen in this pronounced way by the interviewees. This is explained by

Gélinas and Bélanger (2018, 153): “*Un quartier labellisé technocréatif ne signifie pas qu’il est vécu comme tel par les gens qui l’habitent et l’animent. Pour cela, il convient de distinguer la production culturelle qu’est le Mile End technocréatif des formes culturelles qui s’y déploient quotidiennement.*”

After looking at the different ways in which art is considered, the final section of this chapter takes another look at video game developers and how their cultural lifestyle is linked to their cultural practices.

8.5. The Video Game Developers, their Cultural Lifestyles and Practices

The perception of the video game industry, the work the video game developers do and the relation to arts and creativity by the cultural actors continues up to the perception of the video game developers and their cultural lifestyle and practices.

Lifestyle in the cultural sense includes cultural practices. Lifestyle is therefore determined by cultural practices that refer to consumption and participation activities in the cultural sphere that are expressed in different ways. They are linked to intellectual and artistic life (Coulangeon 2016, 3-4). Cultural participation is not only listening to music or visiting museums for example, but also creation such as drawing and writing, as well as interpretation such as playing a musical instrument or sharing cultural contents and discussing about them. Cultural activities and consumption have many forms of expression, which are also reflected in video game developers. Even if only a few are aware of it and can put it into words, cultural activities and the associated lifestyle play a role.

As seen in the interviews, the video game developers and the cultural actors see themselves as cultural people who do different cultural things but this varies widely between the single interviewees. In the case of video game developers, everyone, even those who only see themselves as cultural people to a limited extent, mention many different activities. However, only some video game developers are aware that they are culturally active or see the things they do as cultural activities. Besides the mostly mentioned activities ‘listen to music’, ‘going to/watching movies’ and ‘going to museums’, there are single activities that are worth to take a look at.

One point worth mentioning is the musicality of the respondents. While there is only one respondent in Flingern-Nord who mentions singer-songwriter festivals as a cultural activity, there are more in the Mile End. The situation is similar for dancing. Dancing is mentioned as an activity in the Mile End, and not occasional dancing, but ballet and competition dancing, which requires regular training. These activities go beyond the consumption of culture. The participants’ openness to new things is particularly evident in Flingern-Nord. Here, learning and travelling to broaden their horizons are cultural activities. Some participants are also active in cultural creation. They draw and compose songs. However, these cultural activities, the openness towards cultural activities, or a cultural image of video game developers are not seen by the cultural actors. In fact,

a description of how they see video game developers creates a completely different image.

In the eyes of the cultural actors in both places, the video game developers sometimes participate culturally. Interviewee P30 thinks that “[s]o, you know, there must be, like, you know, I am very sure if you are really good at it, at developing games, you’re probably also engaging in other cultural activities because, you know, they cross feet, like with music”. The contrary view is that they are not interested in art (P15, P32) and only interested in their computer. These are the views of those who do not know video game developers or only perceive them as a lunch crowd. When the cultural actors recognise the video game developers, the cultural actors describe them as passive participants, as spectators (P29), who are not really engaged in the neighbourhood (P33). So the description of the cultural actors in Mile End and Flingern-Nord about the cultural behaviour of video game developers does not seem positive. In addition to the reason that they do not know them and are therefore only guessing, another reason must be added. For most cultural actors, art is an inseparable part of their lives, as it is their profession, and art therefore has a different status in their lives. Of course, this also relates to the question of whether the work of video game developers is art, as explained in the previous section.

Also, cultural participation is often linked to the knowledge of the cultural offer. The video game developers state that they are not aware of what is on offer. With some exceptions, they do not keep an eye on the cultural offerings and facilities in the area. For some of the interviewees in Flingern-Nord, the language barrier could be a reason to get to know or participate in the offer. The participants who have children and do not take part in cultural activities also state that they do not look for offers. There is also some offer for children.

That interviewees are not aware of the offer in the neighbourhoods became clear during the interviews when they enquired about the offer. However, there are also those who are aware of the offer. They have already used it and, according to them, they have positive memories of it. Nevertheless, they are not actively interested in the current offers. Advertising for cultural events of all kinds, i.e. art exhibitions, vernissages, concerts or theatre performances, is done in both neighbourhoods. After all, they do the cultural activities they listed somewhere. It is therefore only possible that they do them in other places. Reasons for this could be that these places are closer to their place of residence, that the people they participate with are more connected to these places or that the offer in the neighbourhoods surveyed is good, but better in other neighbourhoods. These

would be reasons for activities that they can do (more or less) in different neighbourhoods. However, there are also activities and an offer that is only available in certain places, such as going to the opera, and might explain the difference between the different activities the interviewees list and the fact that they do it not in the neighbourhood under research. That is also suggested by Coulangeon and Lemel (2010:91):

[M]easures of taste might make more sense when actual consumption is subjected to exogenous constraints, such as geographic accessibility. These constraints are very important for, say, museum visits or concert and theatre attendance. But they might be less important in the case of listening to recorded music.

There are some activities that participants prefer to do at home, such as listening to music or reading. There are also some activities that the participants could do in the neighbourhoods: going to museums, to the movies, to art galleries, to (small) concerts and shows and to local festivals. In other words, participants may find the variety of facilities and offerings in other neighbourhoods more attractive, so that they prefer to do their cultural activities elsewhere. Nevertheless, the participants say that they are satisfied with the offer in the researched neighbourhoods.

Worth mentioning is one point that came up two times and that depicts how a relation to art can be built. It is the relation that these interviewees have to art since childhood. One interviewee (P22) explains that as a child his mother took him to museums and still today, being around of culture is important for him. In the same line is the explanation about the relation to art by interviewee P7 who built up a relation when he was a child because his mother is a professor of arts and so they did much art related things when he was a child.

Summarising this chapter, in this discussion, the hypotheses were discussed and the research questions answered. The research questions were answered on the basis of the results of the hypotheses. These findings led to some topics being looked at in more detail after another look at the two neighbourhoods studied to reiterate the differences and similarities between these two locations. One topic that was then examined in more detail was the atmosphere and ambience in the locations, which play an important role for video game developers. Other topics were the different view of art as well as the cultural lifestyle and cultural activities of video game developers. Overall, the major findings of this research are that the role of the neighbourhood, so to say the

creative milieu, for creative workers such as the video game developers is minor, that the atmosphere and ambience, especially around the workplace, is important for the video game developers and influences the work, and finally that a cultural lifestyle of the video game developers is given but is expressed differently and practiced in different places.

CONCLUSION

This research about the relationship between the video game industry and the neighbourhood, in particular the relationship between the video game developers and the neighbourhood in which this industry is located, and the role of cultural dynamics and the role of cultural practices of the video game developers in the neighbourhood, shows a precise and multifaceted picture of these topics. The microsociological study provides a very detailed picture of the computer game developers and their perception, especially with regard to their cultural behaviour and their cultural lifestyle, as well as the relationship of the computer game developers to the neighbourhood. The video game managers, cultural actors and newspapers are also considered thoroughly.

Contribution of this research

This thesis contributes to the scientific literature on the video game industry and hence to the literature about the cultural and creative industries. It also pushes the research of the group of employees in the video games industry, which has not been as much at the centre of research as the industry itself. However, this thesis could not have been carried out without including other concepts. For example, the concepts of the creative milieu, the (cultural) lifestyle or amenities and their importance for video game developers also yielded results that can contribute to this area.

This research, which combined a hypothetico-deductive approach and a micro-analysis of inductive nature, is very complex because it covers many areas, such as the different dynamics, lifestyles, the creative milieu and the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, or perhaps precisely because of this, the study has succeeded in connecting many different areas that may otherwise be considered in isolation. But it is not only the connection alone, but also the mutual effect on each other that was the focus of this study. This has not been investigated to this extent before. This connection is the connection between the various interfaces of art and technology, of the art of video game developers and the art of artists, but also the interface of various dynamics, the lifestyle and the dynamics located in specific places. This was presented in detail in the chapters analysing the newspaper articles and, above all, in the chapters analysing the interviews. Different views emerged, particularly with regard to atmosphere, to the significance of the creative milieu in the neighbourhood and of social interactions and networking, and the importance of (cultural)

amenities in the neighbourhood for the video game developers. Furthermore, various views emerged about the cultural lifestyle of video game developers and their cultural activities and involvement. These different types of understandings are related to perception. This emphasises that the thesis is based on the perceptions and interpretations of the participants.

The research also compares two neighbourhoods in different countries. The comparison shows that while the video game industry is different in location, the workers in the video game industry are similar in terms of their cultural lifestyle and cultural activities. A comparison of this kind has not been made before, regardless of whether it is Montreal and Düsseldorf. For Düsseldorf, there has also not yet been a study of the video game industry or a study of video game developers.

Limitations

Qualitative research has its limitations, and this study is no exception. The limitations relate to the personal situation of the interviewees in connection with the design of the questionnaire as well as external factors. This research did not consider how much time they are able to spend on cultural and creative activities, and how important these are to them. It is also possible that respondents may have given answers that they thought I wanted to hear (confirmation bias), such as in the case of the cultural and creative activities they engage in.

Another point that could not be investigated within the scope of this thesis is the topic of gentrification. This topic was raised by some participants and mentioned in newspaper articles, as they see the development of neighbourhoods and the changes taking place in this context. The topic of gentrification was mentioned at some point but was not pursued further as it would have gone beyond the scope of this study.

It should also be noted that the theoretical framework was established before the pandemic and the implementation, i.e. the interviews, took place in the first year of the pandemic. The questionnaire was drawn up before the pandemic and has not been adapted to the new situation and, as some of the interviewees said, the perception could be influenced by not being in the neighbourhood for a while or not being able to do the activities they were used to.

Future Research

Even though this study was able to answer the research questions and produce new scientific findings that broaden the picture of the video game industry and its workers in scientific literature, the results leave gaps that can form the basis for further research. In this study, four dynamics were selected. These dynamics cover different aspects but cannot capture everything that is going on in an area. This was also the case in this study, as can be seen in the statements on the dynamics in the neighbourhood, which some cannot be assigned to any of the selected dynamics. A look at other dynamics would complement the picture presented here, such as population dynamics which describes “how populations change in size, composition and spatial distribution over time” (Schuster et al. 2018, 12) (own translation), and urban dynamics which deals with the changes in public space. This includes, for example, changes in the transport system in urban areas.

Another starting point for future research is the video game developers themselves. Even though they are increasingly becoming the focus of academic attention, they offer a broad field of research. One question would be the relationship between the technological aspect and the creative work. Another question would be the type of places the video game developers prefer to express their cultural lifestyle.

As this study has shown, atmosphere and ambience play a special role. It is therefore interesting to find out more about them. It would be worth finding out what characteristics these special ambiances and atmospheres have and how these are in the media, institutionally, urbanistically, etc. constructed.

And finally, the pandemic and its impact must not be forgotten. After the end of the pandemic, questions arise that can form the basis for new research and for which the present results can serve as a basis since the interviews and newspaper articles regarded in this research only cover the beginning of the pandemic, at a point when enough data for this research was available. At this time an enduring influence of the pandemic was not yet reported. An example for future research would be how the pandemic has affected the connection between the neighbourhood and the video game developers, as well as the cultural lifestyle of the developers.

Future of the neighbourhood, Ubisoft and its workers

Before the pandemic, a prediction, even modest, of the future development of the neighbourhood would have been quite possible in a straight manner. But now, some preconditions have changed, and home office has been established. In the video game industry, it was not possible to work from home before the pandemic but with need of home office this has changed. Once possible, Ubisoft didn't return to the philosophy that all workers must be back at the office. Now, the workers need to be less often at the physical workspace, a situation which may have an impact on the neighbourhood around. This does not necessarily mean that the working spaces will get empty, but it might be that other companies will move in and as a consequence will coin the future development in their own way. That might also influence the 'symbiosis' of the video game industry and the neighbourhood in the Mile End. Today, the Mile End cannot be imagined without Ubisoft, for better or for worse, depending on if they are seen as the source of the dynamics or if they are a part of it. From this point, the branch in Düsseldorf is still far away. If they will be prominent in the future depends on the further development of Ubisoft and their visibility, something that is not given at all. This development also has an influence on the workers and their relationship to the neighbourhood. If they spend less time in the area, the connection to the neighbourhood may become less strong. This is especially true for the Mile End. However, it is not possible to make a prediction.

Finally, as this research found out, the video game industry workers are in general very interested in art and culture and they like to do a variety of cultural things. But this is not connected with the place around their workspace. However, this research also found out that most of the participants are not aware of the offer and amenities in the neighbourhoods. It was also shown that their interest must be aroused so that they explore the offer. This is up to the individual participants themselves and in turn depends on the perception and atmosphere of the neighbourhood.

These findings help to paint a more nuanced picture of some of the literature on the cultural and creative industries and their employees, as well as their requirements and needs in relation to their (cultural) environment due to its microsociological approach. In particular, with regard to the sector analysed here, they help to understand how different factors play a role in the relationship between the video games industry and its location, or do not play a role, or play a role to varying degrees by the perception and interpretation of the workers in the video game industry, the cultural actors

and the perspective of the newspapers. With regard to the people working in the video game industry, they help to understand their view and relation to culture as well as their cultural lifestyle.

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ANNEX

Annex 1: Interview Formalities

A. English Version

B. French Version

C. German Version

D. CER

A. Interviews – English Version

I. Letter

- a. Video Game Developers
- b. Managers
- c. Cultural Actors

II. Information Letter

III. Informed Consent Form

IV. Questionnaire

- a. Video Game Developers
- b. Managers
- c. Cultural Actors

The Video Game Industry and the Mile End

Invitation email

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a doctoral student at the INRS-Urbanization Culture Society and my research is on the dynamics associated with the presence of the video game industry in the neighbourhood of Mile End. More precisely I research the effects of the presence of this industry on the neighbourhood, as well as the role played by the neighbourhood with regard to people working in the video game sector.

I'm contacting you because I'm looking for managers at Ubisoft to participate in this research.

If you are interested and available, I would like to meet you for an interview of about forty-five minutes. Please find attached a detailed description of the project.

The interview will be recorded, but your participation will remain anonymous: your name will not appear in any of the research reports and publications resulting from this research.

Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents are guaranteed, although indirect identification is potentially possible. You will also find a consent form that ensures the confidentiality of your participation and your answers. This form may be signed during the interview.

Thank you for the interest in this research!

Sincerely,

Melanie Groh
INRS-Urbanization Culture Society
385 Sherbrooke Street East
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3, Canada
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

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I'm contacting you because I'm looking for Ubisoft employees who work in video game development to participate in this research.

If you are interested and available, I would like to meet you for an interview of about forty-five minutes. Please find attached a detailed description of the project.

The interview will be recorded, but your participation will remain anonymous: your name will not appear in any of the research reports and publications resulting from this research.

Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents are guaranteed, although indirect identification is potentially possible. You will also find a consent form that ensures the confidentiality of your participation and your answers. This form may be signed during the interview.

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I am a doctoral student at the INRS-Urbanization Culture Society and my research is on the dynamics associated with the presence of the video game industry in the neighbourhood of Mile End. More precisely, I research the effects of the presence of this industry on the neighbourhood, as well as the role played by the neighbourhood with regard to people working in the video game sector.

I'm contacting you because I'm looking for people who own businesses or are responsible for an organisation or institution around Ubisoft to participate in this research.

If you are interested and available, I would like to meet you for an interview of about forty-five minutes. Please find attached a detailed description of the project.

The interview will be recorded, but your participation will remain anonymous: your name will not appear in any of the research reports and publications resulting from this research.

Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents are guaranteed, although indirect identification is potentially possible. You will also find a consent form that ensures the confidentiality of your participation and your answers. This form may be signed during the interview.

Thank you for the interest in this research!

Sincerely,

Melanie Groh
INRS-Urbanization Culture Society
385 Sherbrooke Street East
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3, Canada
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

Information Letter and Informed Consent Form

The Video Game Industry, Cities and Neighbourhoods: Spatial, Socio-Economic, Cultural and Political Dynamics in Montreal and Düsseldorf

Research conducted by Melanie Groh, doctoral student under the supervision of Christian Poirier at the Urbanization Culture Society Research Centre of INRS.

Dear participant,

Here is information about the research you are invited to participate in. The purpose of these documents is to inform you of your rights as a participant in the research.

1. The purpose of the research is to understand the dynamics between the video game industry and the neighbourhoods of Mile End (Montreal) and Stadtmitte (Düsseldorf).
2. Your participation in the research will consist of an interview of approximately forty-five minutes. This interview will focus on your perceptions of cultural, socio-economic and spatial dynamics related to the presence of the video game industry in the Mile End. The data will be used for my doctoral dissertation, as well as for scientific papers (articles in specialized journals, conferences in academia).
3. By participating in this research, you will contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics between the neighbourhood and the video game industry. Moreover, the interview does not expose you to risks different from those to which you expose yourself in your everyday life. The main disadvantage is the time spent participating in the project.
4. If there are questions that you can not or do not want to answer, you are free to choose not to answer without giving reasons and without any inconvenience or negative consequences. Please note that as a voluntary participant in this study, you have the option to withdraw at any time.
5. The confidentiality of the results will be ensured as follows: All information collected will remain strictly confidential. The interviews will be recorded and the names of the people will be replaced by an identification code at the time of transcription to preserve your anonymity.

Nothing in the dissemination of the results of the research will directly trace your identity or that of people you have spoken to us. However, despite all the precautions taken to this end, it remains possible to be identified indirectly.

6. Once transcribed, the interviews will be kept in password-protected files. The transcripts will only be accessible to the student conducting this research and her research director. Confidential information and audio recordings will be destroyed after the study. The anonymized data will be kept for use in other similar studies conducted by the same researcher.

Attached you will find two (2) copies of the consent form that we ask you to sign if you agree to participate in this research. Before signing the form, you can, if you wish, ask me for any additional information on the research. You can also contact my research director, whose contact details appear at the bottom of the page and you can also contact the INRS Research Ethics Committee Chair, Ms. Isabelle Plante, who can inform you about your rights as a participant in this research.

We thank you for your collaboration.

Sincerely,

Melanie Groh
PhD student
INRS-Urbanization Culture Society
385 Sherbrooke Street East
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3, Canada

Telephone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

Research Director :
[REDACTED]
Associate Professor
INRS-Urbanization Culture Society
385 Sherbrooke Street East
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3, Canada

Telephone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

External resource person to the research team:

[REDACTED]
President of the Ethics Committee in Research with Humans
INRS
531 boulevard des Prairies
Laval (Québec) H7V 1B7, Canada

Telephone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

Consent form

“The Video Game Industry, Cities and Neighbourhoods:
Spatial, Socio-Economic, Cultural and Political Dynamics in Montreal and Düsseldorf”

I was informed of the research described in the project information letter.

I was informed, in both oral and written form, about the research objectives, data collection methods, and how I participate in the project.

I have also been informed about:

- a) how the researcher will ensure the confidentiality of the data and protect the information collected;
- b) my right to terminate the interview or its recording, if I wish, or not to answer certain questions;
- c) my right, as a voluntary participant in this project, to withdraw at any time if I consider it necessary;
- d) my right to communicate, if I have questions about the project, with the project manager.

I am confident that comments made during this interview will be kept confidential and treated anonymously. However, I am aware that despite all the precautions taken to this end, it remains possible for me to be identified indirectly.

I hereby agree to participate in the research. I will sign two copies of this form and keep one copy.

Signature of the participant

Date

Signature of the researcher

Date

Melanie Groh
PhD student
INRS-Urbanization Culture Society
385 Sherbrooke Street East
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3, Canada

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

This project has been approved by the INRS Committee on Ethics in Research with Human Beings: December 10, 2019

Questionnaire - Developers

Dynamics/Creative Milieu

Cultural Dynamics

1. You work at Ubisoft. Do you see yourself as a creative worker?
2. How would you define yourself from a cultural perspective? Do you consider yourself as a cultural person?
3. What kind of cultural/creative activities do you do? In the neighbourhood? With whom?
4. Do you participate actively or passively in cultural events in the neighbourhood? With whom?
5. Who else do you see in the neighbourhood acting culturally?
6. Do you know the cultural offers and amenities in the neighbourhood? (show map/list examples)
 - a) Do you use them
 - b) Are you satisfied with the offers and amenities? / What do you think about them?
7. How do you describe your neighbourhood? Do you see it as a cultural neighbourhood?
8. How important is the neighbourhood, are the cultural offers, for you and your cultural practices?

Lifestyle

9. How do you define your lifestyle, culturally speaking?
 - a) In connection with your cultural activities?
 - b) In connection with, for example, your taste of music, arts and food?
10. The cultural activities you do in the neighbourhood, the cultural offers and amenities you use, how are they connected/suits to your lifestyle?
11. Are these cultural dynamics connected with your job? Is there an influence on your work? (in way of communication, due to ambiance, etc.)?
12. For you, are there any connections (or not) between your cultural practices, your job at Ubisoft and the neighborhood? Explain.
13. Have the cultural offer and amenities changed during the last years? Do you miss cultural amenities in the neighbourhood?

14. Besides cultural activities within the neighbourhood, what else do you do in the neighbourhood? (follow-up questions if mentioned)
- a. Working
 - i. Why? With whom? How often?
 - ii. In what degree is working or networking in the neighbourhood a point for you?
 - b. Meeting people
 - i. With whom? (People with the same interests (lifestyle)?)
 - ii. What do you do?
 - c. Shopping (what type)
 - i. The offers in shops, do they meet your needs? If not, why/what is missing?
 - ii. Do you use the local amenities/facilities/services in the neighbourhood? Why/why not? Have they changed over the last years? Are you satisfied today?
 - d. Leisure, Hobby, Sport, Family Activities
 - i. What do you think about the offers for sport and leisure? Do they require your needs?

Technological, spatial and socio-economic dynamics

- 15. How important is internet access within the area and the places you are?
- 16. Do you perceive your neighbourhood as a “technological” one (e.g. one in which many people use technological/digital devices for their work, cultural or other activities)?
- 17. What do you think about the spatial design/recreational amenities, such as parks and places for outdoor and indoor activities? Do you use them?
- 18. What do you think about the temporary spaces?
- 19. Are there changes due to building measures? If, what do you think about them?
- 20. What do you think about the economic standard in the neighbourhood, such as in terms of rents?

Connection to the neighbourhood and Neighbourhood

1. Do you live in the neighbourhood under research? If, how long? If, why did you choose this neighbourhood?

Follow-up question: Could you imagine to move to/away from the neighbourhood?

2. What do you think about the neighbourhood? How would you describe it, also compared to the first time you came here?

3. How would you describe the relation between the video game industry and the neighbourhood?

a) Are there impacts on each other?

b) What do you think about your position in this?

4. Where do you see the neighbourhood in coming years? (positive/negative)

a) The video game industry (in the neighbourhood)?

b) And yourself?

Complemented Information

1. Age (age range) -24 / 25-34 / 35-44 / 45-

2. Sex

3. Personal status

4. Occupational status

Concluding question

Are there other things that come to your mind that you would like to address?

Questionnaire - Managers

Dynamics/Creative Milieu

Cultural Dynamics

1. You work at Ubisoft. Do you see yourself as a creative worker?
2. How would you define yourself from a cultural perspective? Do you consider yourself as a cultural person?
3. What kind of cultural/creative activities do you do? In the neighbourhood? With whom?
4. Do you participate actively or passively in cultural events in the neighbourhood? With whom?
5. Who else do you see in the neighbourhood acting culturally?
6. Do you know the cultural offers and amenities in the neighbourhood? (show map/list examples if not) What do you think about them?/Do you use them and are you satisfied with the offers and amenities?
7. How do you describe your neighbourhood? Do you see it as a cultural neighbourhood?
8. How important is the neighbourhood, are the cultural offers, for you and your cultural practices?
9. How do you define your lifestyle, culturally speaking?
10. The cultural activities you do in the neighbourhood, the cultural offers and amenities you use, how are they connected/suits to your lifestyle?
11. Are these cultural dynamics connected with your job? Is there an influence on your work? (in way of communication, due to ambiance, etc.)?
12. For you, are there any connections (or not) between your cultural practices, your job at Ubisoft and the neighborhood? Explain.
13. Have the cultural offer and amenities changed during the last years? Do you miss cultural amenities in the neighbourhood?
14. Questions about the worker/employees
 - a) Do you see the employees of Ubisoft (also) as cultural/creative actors?
 - b) In what degree is this important for their work?

15. Besides cultural activities within the neighbourhood, what else do you do in the neighbourhood? (follow-up questions if mentioned)
- a. Working
 - i. Why? With whom? How often?
 - ii. In what degree is working or networking in the neighbourhood a point for you?
 - b. Meeting people
 - i. With whom? (People with the same interests (lifestyle)?)
 - ii. What do you do?
 - c. Shopping (what type)
 - i. The offers in shops, do they meet your needs? If not, why/what is missing?
 - ii. Do you use the local amenities/facilities/services in the neighbourhood? Why/Why not? Have they changed over the last years? Are you satisfied today?
 - d. Leisure, Hobby, Sport, Family Activities
 - i. What do you think about the offers for sport and leisure? Do they require your needs?

Technological, spatial, socio-economic and political dynamics

16. How important is internet access within the area and the places you are?
17. Do you perceive your neighbourhood as a “technological” one (e.g. one in which many people use technological/digital devices for their work, cultural or other activities)?
18. What do you think about the spatial design/recreational amenities, such as parks and places for outdoor and indoor activities? Do you use them?
19. What do you think about the temporary spaces?
20. Are there changes due to building measures? If, what do you think about them?
21. What do you think about the economic standard in the neighbourhood, such as in terms of rents?
22. Why did you/your company decided to settle in this neighbourhood? (Political reasons? Support by the city/administration?)
23. Are the reasons to stay here still the same?

Connection to the neighbourhood and Neighbourhood

1. Do you live in the neighbourhood under research? If, how long? If, why did you choose this neighbourhood?
2. Follow-up question: Could you imagine to move to/away from the neighbourhood?
3. What do you think about the neighbourhood? How would you describe it, also compared to the first time you came here?
4. How would you describe the relation between the video game industry and the neighbourhood? Are there impacts on each other? What do you think about your position in this?
5. Where do you see the neighbourhood in coming years? (positive/negative) The video game industry (in the neighbourhood)? And yourself?

Complemented Information

1. Age (age range) -24 / 25-34 / 35-44 / 45-
2. Sex
3. Personal status
4. Occupational status

Concluding question

Are there other things that come to your mind that you would like to address?

Questionnaire – Cultural Actors

Dynamics/Creative Milieu

1. What type of business/organization/institution do you run? For how long?
2. Why did you/your company/organization/institution decided to settle in this neighbourhood?
(Political reasons? Support by the city/administration?/ Cultural reasons?)
3. Are you/Is your company/organization/institution still satisfied with this choice?
4. In your business/organization/institution - what are people doing while staying/acting in your business/organization/institution?
5. Are those regular customers?
6. Do you still have the same type of customers since you have opened your business/organization/ institution? If not, in what sense has it changed? Are some of your customers working at Ubisoft?
7. The things you offer, are they still the same since you have opened your business/organization/ institution? If not, why?
8. What do you think about the cultural activities and amenities in the neighbourhood?
(show map/list examples if they cannot think about activities and amenities)
9. Do you see the neighbourhood as a cultural neighbourhood?
If,
 - a. How do you see your role/your company's/organization's/institution's role in this?
 - b. Who/what type of people do you see as cultural actors in the neighbourhood?
 - c. Do you see the employees of Ubisoft as cultural/creative actors? How would you describe their lifestyle?/Is this part of their lifestyle?/Do you see it as a part of their lifestyle?
 - d. Do you see yourself as a cultural person? How do you define your lifestyle culturally speaking?
10. Have the cultural offers and amenities changed during the last years? If so, what do you think about it, also in relation to your business/organization/institution? And in relation to Ubisoft and its workers?
11. How important is internet access for people coming to your business /organization/institution?

12. Do you perceive your neighbourhood as a “technological” one (e.g. one in which many people use technological/digital devices for their work, cultural or other activities)?
13. What do you think about the spatial design/recreational amenities, such as parks and places for outdoor and indoor activities and temporary spaces in the neighbourhood?
14. Are there changes due to building measures? If, what do you think about it?
15. What do you think about the economic standard in the neighbourhood, such as in terms of rents?

Connection to the neighbourhood and Neighbourhood

1. Besides working in the neighbourhood, do you live in the neighbourhood? If, how long? If, why did you choose this neighbourhood?

Follow-up question: Could you imagine to move to/away from the neighbourhood?

2. What else do you do in the neighbourhood?
3. What do you think about the neighbourhood? How would you describe it, also compared to the first time you came here?
4. How would you describe the relation between the video game industry and the neighbourhood? Are there impacts on each other? What do you think about your position in this?
5. Where do you see the neighbourhood in coming years? (positive/negative) The video game industry (in the neighbourhood)? And your business?

Complemented Information

1. Age (age range) -24 / 25-34 / 35-44 / 45-
2. Sex
3. Personal status
4. Occupational status

Concluding question

Are there other things that come to your mind that you would like to address?

B. Interviews – French Version

I. Letter

- a. Video Game Developers
- b. Managers
- c. Cultural Actors

II. Information Letter

III. Informed Consent Form

IV. Questionnaire

- a. Video Game Developers
- b. Managers
- c. Cultural Actors

L'industrie du jeu vidéo et le Mile End

Courriel d'invitation

Bonjour,

Je suis étudiante au doctorat à l'INRS-Urbanisation Culture Société et je réalise une recherche portant sur les dynamiques associées à la présence de l'industrie du jeu vidéo dans le Mile End, plus précisément sur les effets de la présence de ce secteur d'activités sur le quartier et le rôle joué par le quartier concernant les personnes qui travaillent dans le secteur du jeu vidéo.

Je vous contacte car je suis à la recherche de personnes qui travaillent chez Ubisoft au développement de jeux vidéo pour participer à cette recherche.

Si vous êtes intéressé et disponible, j'aimerais vous rencontrer pour un entretien d'environ une heure. Vous trouverez en document attaché une description détaillée du projet.

L'entretien sera enregistré, mais votre participation restera anonyme : votre nom ne figurera dans aucun des rapports de recherche et des publications issus de cette recherche.

La confidentialité et l'anonymat des répondants sont assurés, bien qu'une identification indirecte soit potentiellement possible. Vous trouverez également un formulaire de consentement que je vous demanderai de signer si vous acceptez de m'accorder une entrevue. L'objectif de ce formulaire est de démontrer mon souci à protéger le droit des personnes qui participeront à ma recherche. Avant de signer le formulaire, vous pourrez me demander toutes les informations supplémentaires que vous jugerez importantes concernant mon projet de recherche. Ce formulaire pourra être signé lors de l'entretien.

J'espère que ce projet vous intéressera et que vous accepterez d'y participer !

En vous remerciant,

Melanie Groh
INRS-Urbanisation Culture Société
385, rue Sherbrooke Est
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3, Canada
Téléphone : [REDACTED]
Courriel : [REDACTED]

Courriel à Ubisoft

Bonjour,

Je suis étudiante au doctorat à l'INRS-Urbanisation Culture Société (<http://www.ucs.inrs.ca/ucs>) sous la direction du professeur Christian Poirier.

Je réalise une recherche portant sur les dynamiques associées à la présence de l'industrie du jeu vidéo dans le Mile End, plus précisément sur les effets de la présence de ce secteur d'activités sur le quartier et le rôle joué par le quartier concernant les personnes qui travaillent dans le secteur du jeu vidéo :

Qu'est-ce qu'être culturellement créatif en tant que développeur/manager au sein de l'industrie de jeu vidéo et ce dans le Mile End ?

Je vous contacte car que je suis à la recherche de managers et développeurs dans le secteur de jeux vidéo pour participer bénévolement à cette recherche et je voudrais vous demander de transmettre cette demande de participation à vos managers et développeurs.

Au centre de cette recherche sont des personnes qui travaillent dans le secteur du jeu vidéo et leur perception de la dynamique et effets dans le quartier du Mile End, donc la recherche n'est pas une recherche sur votre entreprise ni sur le travail de vos employés.

Les données collectées font partie de ma thèse de doctorat, dont l'analyse et la publication dans un contexte scientifique est de ma responsabilité. Les renseignements sont traités confidentiellement et l'anonymat est assuré par l'anonymisation des données a lieu après l'entretien. Les documents utilisés dans la recherche sont approuvés par le Comité d'Éthique en Recherche (CER) de l'INRS (CER-19-539, 10 décembre 2019).

En p.j. vous trouverez la lettre d'invitation en français et anglais pour diffuser aux managers et développeurs. Les questionnaires qui seront utilisés ainsi que la lettre d'information pour votre propre information.

Je me tiens volontiers à votre disposition si vous avez d'autres questions.

En vous remerciant de votre précieuse collaboration et en espérant que ce courriel vous trouve en santé,

Melanie Groh

INRS-Urbanisation Culture Société
385, rue Sherbrooke Est
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3, Canada

Téléphone :

Courriel :

L'industrie du jeu vidéo et le Mile End

Lettre d'invitation

Bonjour,

Je suis étudiante au doctorat à l'INRS-Urbanisation Culture Société et je réalise une recherche portant sur les dynamiques associées à la présence de l'industrie du jeu vidéo dans le Mile End, plus précisément sur les effets de la présence de ce secteur d'activités sur le quartier et le rôle joué par le quartier concernant les personnes qui travaillent dans le secteur du jeu vidéo.

Je vous contacte car je suis à la recherche de personnes qui ont un commerce ou sont responsables d'une institution ou organisation autour de l'entreprise Ubisoft pour participer à cette recherche.

Si vous êtes intéressé et disponible, j'aimerais vous rencontrer pour un entretien d'environ une heure. Vous trouverez en document attaché une description détaillée du projet.

L'entretien sera enregistré, mais votre participation restera anonyme : votre nom ne figurera dans aucun des rapports de recherche et des publications issus de cette recherche.

La confidentialité et l'anonymat des répondants sont assurés, bien qu'une identification indirecte soit potentiellement possible. Vous trouverez également un formulaire de consentement que je vous demanderai de signer si vous acceptez de m'accorder une entrevue. L'objectif de ce formulaire est de démontrer mon souci à protéger le droit des personnes qui participeront à ma recherche. Avant de signer le formulaire, vous pourrez me demander toutes les informations supplémentaires que vous jugerez importantes concernant mon projet de recherche. Ce formulaire pourra être signé lors de l'entretien.

J'espère que ce projet vous intéressera et que vous accepterez d'y participer !

En vous remerciant,

Melanie Groh
INRS-Urbanisation Culture Société
385, rue Sherbrooke Est
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3, Canada
Téléphone : [REDACTED]
Courriel : [REDACTED]

Lettre d'information sur la recherche et formulaire de consentement

L'industrie du jeu vidéo, les villes et les quartiers: dynamiques spatiales, socio-économiques, culturelles et politiques à Montréal et à Düsseldorf

Recherche menée par Melanie Groh, étudiante au doctorat sous la direction du Christian Poirier au Centre Urbanisation Culture Société de l'INRS.

Madame, Monsieur,

Voici de l'information sur la recherche à laquelle vous êtes invité à participer. L'objectif de ces documents est de vous informer de vos droits en tant que participant à la recherche.

1. L'objectif de la recherche est comprendre les dynamiques entre l'industrie du jeu vidéo et les quartiers de Mile End (Montréal) et Stadtmitte (Düsseldorf) ; plus précisément sur les effets de la présence de ce secteur d'activités sur le quartier et le rôle joué par le quartier concernant les personnes qui travaillent dans le secteur du jeu vidéo.
2. Votre participation à la recherche consistera à accorder une entrevue d'environ une heure. Cet entretien portera sur vos perceptions des dynamiques culturelles, socio-économiques et spatiales liées à la présence d'une industrie du jeux vidéo dans le Mile End. Les données seront utilisées pour ma thèse de doctorat, ainsi que pour des communications scientifiques (articles dans des revues spécialisées, conférences dans les milieux universitaires).
3. En participant à cette recherche, vous contribuerez à une meilleure compréhension des dynamiques entre le quartier et l'industrie du jeu vidéo. Par ailleurs, l'entretien ne vous expose pas à des risques différents de ceux auxquels vous vous exposez dans votre vie de tous les jours. Le principal inconvénient est le temps passé à participer au projet.
4. S'il y a des questions auxquelles vous ne pouvez pas ou préférez ne pas répondre, vous êtes tout à fait libre de choisir de ne pas répondre sans avoir à fournir de raisons et sans inconvénients ou conséquences négatives. Sachez par ailleurs qu'à titre de participant volontaire à cette étude, vous avez la possibilité de vous en retirer à tout moment.

5. La confidentialité des résultats sera assurée de la façon suivante : Tous les renseignements recueillis demeureront strictement confidentiels. Les entretiens seront enregistrés avec votre consentement. Les noms des personnes seront remplacés par un code d'identification au moment de la transcription afin de préserver votre anonymat. Aucun élément dans la diffusion des résultats de la recherche ne permettra de retracer directement votre identité ou celle de personnes dont vous nous aurez parlées. Cependant, malgré toutes les précautions prises à cet effet, il demeure possible d'être identifié de manière indirecte.

6. Une fois retranscrits, les entretiens seront conservés dans des fichiers sécurisés par mot de passe. Les retranscriptions ne seront accessibles qu'à l'étudiante menant cette recherche ainsi que son directeur. Les informations confidentielles et les enregistrements audio seront détruites après l'étude. Les données anonymisées seront conservées pour servir à d'autres études du même genre, menées par la même chercheuse.

Vous trouverez ci-joint deux (2) exemplaires du formulaire de consentement que nous vous demandons de signer, si vous acceptez de participer à cette recherche. Avant de signer le formulaire, vous pouvez, si vous le désirez, me demander toutes les informations supplémentaires que vous souhaitez sur la recherche. Vous pouvez aussi contacter mon directeur de recherche, dont les coordonnées apparaissent au bas de la page. Vous pouvez également contacter la présidente du Comité d'éthique de la recherche de l'INRS, Mme Isabelle Plante, qui peut vous renseigner sur vos droits en tant que participant à cette recherche.

Nous vous remercions de votre collaboration.

Melanie Groh
Étudiante au doctorat
INRS - Urbanisation Culture Société
385, rue Sherbrooke Est
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3, Canada

Téléphone : [REDACTED]
Courriel : [REDACTED]

Directeur de recherche :

[REDACTED]
Professeur agrégé
INRS - Urbanisation Culture Société
385, rue Sherbrooke Est
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3, Canada

Téléphone : [REDACTED]
Courriel : [REDACTED]

Personne ressource extérieure à l'équipe de recherche :

[REDACTED]
Présidente du Comité d'éthique en recherche avec des êtres humains
INRS
531, boulevard des Prairies
Laval (Québec) H7V 1B7, Canada

Téléphone : [REDACTED]
Courriel : [REDACTED]

Formulaire de consentement

« L'industrie du jeu vidéo, les villes et les quartiers : dynamiques spatiales, socio-économiques, culturelles et politiques à Montréal et à Düsseldorf »

J'ai pris connaissance du projet de recherche décrit dans la lettre de description du projet.

J'ai été informé(e), oralement et par écrit, des objectifs du projet, de ses méthodes de cueillette des données et des modalités de ma participation à celui-ci.

J'ai également été informé(e) :

- a) de la façon selon laquelle les chercheurs assureront la confidentialité des données et en protégeront les renseignements recueillis ;
- b) de mon droit de mettre fin à l'entretien ou à son enregistrement, si je le désire, ou de ne pas répondre à certaines questions ;
- c) de mon droit, à titre de participant volontaire à cette étude, de m'en retirer à tout moment si je le juge nécessaire ;
- d) de mon droit de communiquer, si j'ai des questions sur le projet, avec le responsable du projet.

J'ai l'assurance que les propos recueillis au cours de cet entretien seront traités de façon confidentielle et anonyme. Cependant, je suis conscient que malgré toutes les précautions prises à cet effet, il demeure possible que je sois identifié de manière indirecte.

J'accepte, par la présente, de participer à la recherche. Je signe ce formulaire en deux exemplaires et j'en conserve une copie.

Signature du participant

Date

Signature du chercheur

Date

Melanie Groh
Étudiante au doctorat
INRS-Urbanisation Culture Société
385, rue Sherbrooke Est
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3, Canada

Téléphone : [REDACTED]

Courriel : [REDACTED]

Ce projet a été approuvé par le Comité d'éthique en recherche avec des êtres humains de l'INRS :
10 Décembre 2019

Questionnaire - Développeurs

Dynamique / Milieu créatif

Dynamiques culturelles

1. Vous travaillez chez Ubisoft. Vous considérez-vous comme un travailleur créatif dans le sens culturel ?
2. Comment vous définiriez-vous d'un point de vue culturel ? Vous considérez-vous comme une personne active culturellement ?
3. Quelles activités culturelles/créatives faites-vous ? Dans le quartier ? Avec qui ?
4. Participez-vous activement ou passivement aux événements culturels dans le quartier ? Avec qui ?
5. Qui d'autres voyez-vous dans le quartier qui pourraient être considérés comme des acteurs culturels ?
6. Connaissez-vous les offres, les espaces et lieux culturels de ce quartier ? (montrez carte/faites des listes d'exemples si non) Les utilisez-vous ? Que pensez-vous de ces offres, espaces et lieux ?
7. Comment décrivez-vous votre quartier ? Pensez-vous que c'est un quartier culturel ?
8. Quelle est l'importance du quartier, des offres culturelles, pour vous et vos pratiques culturelles ?
9. Comment décrivez-vous votre style de vie, culturellement parlant, votre lifestyle, ?
10. Est-ce qu'ils (les offres, espaces et lieux culturels) correspondent à votre style de vie/lifestyle. À quel degré ?
11. Ces activités culturelles sont-elles liées à votre travail ? Y a-t-il une influence sur votre travail ; on a tout ou pas (dans le sens de la communication, en raison de l'ambiance, etc.) ?
12. Pour vous, y a-t-il (ou non) des liens entre vos pratiques culturelles, votre travail chez Ubisoft et le quartier ? Expliquez.
13. Les offres, espaces et lieux culturels :
 - e. Ont-ils changé au cours des dernières années ? Comment ?
 - f. Manquez-vous de certaines offres, espaces et lieux culturels dans le quartier ?

14. A part ces activités culturelles, quelles autres activités faites-vous dans ce quartier ? (Questions de suivi, si mentionné)

a. Travailler

- i. Pourquoi? Avec qui? Combien de fois (par semaine)?
- ii. Dans quelle mesure est-il important pour vous de travailler ou de réseauter dans le quartier?

b. Rencontrer des personnes

- i. Avec qui? (Personnes partageant les mêmes intérêts (style de vie/lifestyle) ou pas ?)
- ii. Que faites-vous ?

c. Magasinage (quel type)

- i. Êtes-vous satisfait des produits ou services offerts par les commerces/les magasins ? Si non, pourquoi/ Qu'est-ce qui manque ?
- ii. Utilisez-vous les espaces, lieux et services locaux dans le quartier ? Pourquoi/Pourquoi pas ? Ont-ils changé au cours des dernières années ? Êtes-vous satisfait aujourd'hui ?

d. Loisirs, hobby, sport, activités en famille

- i. Que pensez-vous de l'offre de sport et de loisirs ? Êtes-vous satisfait de cela ?

Dynamiques technologiques, spatiales et socioéconomiques

1. Quelle est l'importance de l'accès à Internet dans les lieux dans lesquels vous demeurez/êtes ?
2. Pensez-vous que le quartier est "technologique" (par ex. un quartier dans lequel beaucoup de gens utilisent appareils technologiques et audionumériques pour leur travail, activités culturelles ou d'autre activités) ?
3. Que pensez-vous des parcs et des espaces pour des activités intérieures et extérieurs ? Les utilisez-vous ?
4. Que pensez-vous des espaces temporaires ? (Donner exemples si non)
5. Y a-t-il des changements dûs aux mesures de construction, au contexte immobilier (condos, etc.) ? Si, qu'en pensez-vous ?
6. Que pensez-vous du niveau économique dans le quartier, comme le loyer, les coûts d'habitation

et logement par exemple ?

Liens avec le quartier et Quartier

1. Habitez-vous dans le quartier ? Si oui, depuis combien de temps ? Pourquoi avez-vous choisi ce quartier ?
Questions de suivi : Pourriez-vous imaginer vous déplacer vers / hors du quartier ?
2. Que pensez-vous de ce quartier ? Comment le décririez-vous, comparé avec la première fois où vous y êtes venues ?
3. Comment décririez-vous la relation entre l'industrie de jeu vidéo et le quartier ? Ont-ils des impacts l'un sur l'autre ? Quelle est votre position par rapport à cela ça ?
4. Où voyez-vous le quartier dans les années à venir ? (positif/négatif) L'industrie de jeu vidéo (dans le quartier)? Et vous-même ?

Informations Complémentaires

1. Âge (groupe d'âge) -24 / 25-34 / 35-44 / 45-
2. Sexe/Genre
3. État civil
4. Profession

Clôture de l'entretien

Y a-t-il d'autres aspects qui vous viennent à l'esprit et que vous souhaiteriez aborder ?

Questionnaire - Managers

Dynamique / Milieu créatif

Dynamiques culturelles

1. Vous travaillez chez Ubisoft. Vous considérez-vous comme un travailleur créatif dans le sens culturel ?
2. Comment vous définiriez-vous d'un point de vue culturel ? Vous considérez-vous comme une personne active culturellement ?
3. Quelles activités culturelles/créatives faites-vous ? Dans le quartier ? Avec qui ?
4. Participez-vous activement ou passivement aux événements culturels dans le quartier ? Avec qui ?
5. Qui d'autres voyez-vous dans le quartier qui pourraient être considérés comme des acteurs culturels ?
6. Connaissez-vous les offres, les espaces et lieux culturels de ce quartier ? (montrez carte/faites des listes d'exemples si non) Les utilisez-vous ? Que pensez-vous de ces offres, espaces et lieux ?
7. Comment décrivez-vous votre quartier ? Pensez-vous que c'est un quartier culturel ?
8. Quelle est l'importance du quartier, des offres culturelles, pour vous et vos pratiques culturelles ?
9. Comment décrivez-vous votre style de vie, culturellement parlant, votre lifestyle, ?
10. Est-ce qu'ils (les offres, espaces et lieux culturels) correspondent à votre style de vie/lifestyle. À quel degré ?
11. Ces activités culturelles sont-elles liées à votre travail ? Y a-t-il une influence sur votre travail ; on a tout ou pas (dans le sens de la communication, en raison de l'ambiance, etc.) ?
12. Pour vous, y a-t-il (ou non) des liens entre vos pratiques culturelles, votre travail chez Ubisoft et le quartier ? Expliquez.
13. Les offres, espaces et lieux culturels :
 - a. Ont-ils changé au cours des dernières années ? Comment ?
 - b. Manquez-vous de certaines offres, espaces et lieux culturels dans le quartier ?
14. Questions sur les travailleurs/employés
 - a. Voyez-vous les employés d'Ubisoft (donc) comme des acteurs culturels / créatifs ?
 - b. Dans quelle mesure est-ce important pour leur travail ?

15. A part ces activités culturelles, quelles autres activités faites-vous dans ce quartier ? (Questions de suivi, si mentionné)

g. Travailler

- i. Pourquoi? Avec qui? Combien de fois (par semaine)?
- ii. Dans quelle mesure est-il important pour vous de travailler ou de réseauter dans le quartier?

h. Rencontrer des personnes

- i. Avec qui? (Personnes partageant les mêmes intérêts (style de vie/lifestyle) ou pas ?)
- ii. Que faites-vous ?

i. Magasinage (quel type)

- i. Êtes-vous satisfait des produits ou services offerts par les commerces/les magasins ? Si non, pourquoi/ Qu'est-ce qui manque ?
- ii. Utilisez-vous les espaces, lieux et services locaux dans le quartier ? Pourquoi/Pourquoi pas ? Ont-ils changé au cours des dernières années ? Êtes-vous satisfait aujourd'hui ?

j. Loisirs, hobby, sport, activités en famille

- i. Que pensez-vous de l'offre de sport et de loisirs ? Êtes-vous satisfait de cela ?

Dynamiques technologiques, spatiales, socioéconomiques et politiques

16. Quelle est l'importance de l'accès à Internet dans les lieux dans lesquels vous demeurez/êtes ?

17. Pensez-vous que le quartier est "technologique" (par ex. un quartier dans lequel beaucoup de gens utilisent appareils technologiques et audionumériques pour leur travail, activités culturelles ou d'autre activités) ?

18. Que pensez-vous des parcs et des espaces pour des activités intérieures et extérieurs ? Les utilisez-vous ?

19. Que pensez-vous des espaces temporaires ? (Donner exemples si non)

20. Y a-t-il des changements dûs aux mesures de construction, au contexte immobilier (condos, etc.) ? Si, qu'en pensez-vous ?

21. Que pensez-vous du niveau économique dans le quartier, comme le loyer, les coûts d'habitation et logement par exemple ?

22. Pourquoi vous avez/votre entreprise a choisi s'installer dans ce quartier ? (Raisons politiques ? Support par la ville/administration ?)
23. Sont les raisons de rester ici encore les mêmes ?

Liens avec le quartier et Quartier

1. Habitez-vous dans le quartier ? Si oui, depuis combien de temps ? Pourquoi avez-vous choisi ce quartier ?
Questions de suivi : Pourriez-vous imaginer vous déplacer vers / hors du quartier ?
2. Que pensez-vous de ce quartier ? Comment le décririez-vous, comparé avec la première fois où vous y êtes venues ?
3. Comment décririez-vous la relation entre l'industrie de jeu vidéo et le quartier ? Ont-ils des impacts l'un sur l'autre ? Quelle est votre position par rapport à cela ça ?
4. Où voyez-vous le quartier dans les années à venir ? (positif/négatif) L'industrie de jeu vidéo (dans le quartier)? Et vous-même ?

Informations Complémentaires

1. Âge (groupe d'âge)
2. Sexe/Genre
3. État civil
4. Profession

Clôture de l'entretien

Y a-t-il d'autres aspects qui vous viennent à l'esprit et que vous souhaiteriez aborder ?

Questionnaire –Acteurs culturels

Dynamique / Milieu créatif

Dynamiques politiques, culturelles, technologiques, spatiales et socioéconomiques

1. Quel type d'entreprise / organisation / institution avez-vous ? Combien de temps ?
2. Pourquoi vous avez/votre entreprise / organisation / institution a choisi s'installer dans ce quartier ? (Raisons politiques ? Support par la ville/administration ?)
3. Sont les raisons de rester ici encore les mêmes ?
4. Dans votre entreprise / organisation / institution – que font les personnes pendant ils sont dans votre entreprise / organisation / institution ?
5. Est-ce que ce sont des clients réguliers ?
6. Avez-vous le même type de clients depuis vous avez ouvert votre entreprise / organisation / institution ? Si non, dans quel sens a-t-il changé ? Certains clients travaillent-ils chez Ubisoft?
7. Votre offre, est-il toujours le même depuis que vous avez ouvert votre entreprise / organisation / institution ? Si non, pourquoi ?
8. Que pensez-vous d'activités culturelles et d'espaces et lieux culturels dans le quartier ? (montrez carte/faites des liste d'exemples si inconnu)
9. Pensez-vous que c'est un quartier culturel ? Si,
 - a. Comment décrivez-vous votre rôle/le rôle de votre d'entreprise / organisation / institution dans cela ?
 - b. Qui/Quel type de personnes voyez-vous comme des acteurs culturels dans le quartier ?
 - c. Considérez-vous les employées d'Ubisoft comme des personnes active culturellement ? Comment décrivez-vous leur style de vie/lifestyle ?/ Cela fait-il partie de leur style de vie/lifestyle ?/ Voyez-vous cela comme une partie de leur type de vie/lifestyle?
 - d. Vous considérez-vous comme une personne active culturellement ? Comment décrivez-vous votre style de vie, culturellement parlant, votre lifestyle, ?
10. Les offres, espaces et lieux culturels, ont-ils changé au cours des dernières années ? Comment ? En relation avec votre entreprise / organisation / institution ? Et en relation avec Ubisoft et ses employés ?
11. Quelle est l'importance de l'accès à Internet pour les personnes qui sont chez vous, dans votre entreprise / organisation / institution ?

12. Pensez-vous que le quartier est “technologique” (par ex. un quartier dans lequel beaucoup de gens utilisent appareils technologiques et audionumériques pour leur travail, activités culturelles ou d’autres activités) ?
13. Que pensez-vous des parcs et des espaces pour des activités intérieures et extérieures et des espaces temporaires ? (Donner exemples si inconnu)
14. Y a-t-il des changements dûs aux mesures de construction, au contexte immobilier (condos, etc.) ? Si, qu’en pensez-vous ?
15. Que pensez-vous du niveau économique dans le quartier, comme le loyer, les coûts d’habitation et logement par exemple ?

Liens avec le quartier et Quartier

1. En plus de travailler dans le quartier, habitez-vous dans le quartier ? Si oui, depuis combien de temps ? Pourquoi avez-vous choisi ce quartier ?
Questions de suivi : Pourriez-vous imaginer vous déplacer vers / hors du quartier ?
2. Que faites-vous d’autre dans le quartier ?
3. Que pensez-vous de ce quartier ? Comment le décririez-vous, comparé avec la première fois où vous y êtes venues ?
4. Comment décririez-vous la relation entre l’industrie de jeu vidéo et le quartier ? Ont-ils des impacts l’un sur l’autre ? Quelle est votre position par rapport à cela ça ?
5. Où voyez-vous le quartier dans les années à venir ? (positif/négatif) L’industrie de jeu vidéo (dans le quartier)? Et vous entreprise / organisation / institution ?

Informations Complémentaires

1. Âge (groupe d’âge) -24 / 25-34 / 35-44 / 45-
2. Sexe/Genre
3. État civil
4. Profession

Clôture de l’entretien

Y a-t-il d’autres aspects qui vous viennent à l’esprit et que vous souhaiteriez aborder ?

C. Interviews – German Version

I. Letter

- a. Video Game Developers
- b. Managers
- c. Cultural Actors

II. Information Letter

III. Informed Consent Form

IV. Questionnaire

- a. Video Game Developers
- b. Managers
- c. Cultural Actors

Die Videospiegelindustrie und Düsseldorf-Flingern-Nord

Einladungsschreiben

Ich bin Doktorandin am Urbanization Culture Society Research Centre des Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS) in Montreal, Kanada. Im Rahmen meiner Doktorarbeit untersuche ich die Dynamik, die mit der Präsenz der Videospiegelbranche in Düsseldorf-Flingern-Nord verbunden ist, genauer gesagt die Auswirkungen des Vorhandenseins dieser Branche und ihrer Aktivitäten in Bezug auf das Stadtviertel und die Rolle des Stadtviertels in Bezug auf die im Videospiegelsektor tätigen Personen.

Aus diesem Grund kontaktiere ich Sie, da ich Personen suche, die bei Ubisoft in der Spieleentwicklung arbeiten und die an diesem Forschungsprojekt teilnehmen möchten.

Die Teilnahme beinhaltet ein Interview von etwa einer halben Stunde. Eine detaillierte Beschreibung des Projekts finden Sie im Anhang.

Das Interview wird aufgezeichnet, aber Ihre Teilnahme bleibt anonym: Ihr Name erscheint in keinem der Forschungsberichte und Veröffentlichungen, die sich aus diesem Forschungsprojekt ergeben.

Vertraulichkeit und Anonymität der Befragten sind gewährleistet, eine indirekte Identifizierung ist jedoch möglich. Das Einverständnisformular zur Interviewteilnahme, das zu unterschreiben ist, werde ich Ihnen vor dem Interview zusenden. Der Zweck dieses Formulars ist es, mein Anliegen zu demonstrieren und die Rechte derjenigen zu schützen, die an meiner Forschung teilnehmen werden. Bevor Sie das Formular unterzeichnen, können Sie mich nach weiteren Informationen zu meinem Forschungsprojekt fragen, die Sie für wichtig erachten. Dieses Formular kann während des Interviews unterschrieben werden.

Ich hoffe, dass ich Ihr Interesse an diesem Forschungsprojekt geweckt habe und freue mich, wenn Sie sich für die Teilnahme entscheiden.

Für Rückfragen stehe ich Ihnen jederzeit gerne zur Verfügung. Für Ihre Teilnahme möchte ich im Voraus recht herzlich danken.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Melanie Groh
INRS Urbanization Culture Society
385 Sherbrooke Street East
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3, Kanada

Telefon: [REDACTED]
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Die Videospiegelindustrie und Flingern-Nord

E-Mail an Ubisoft

Sehr geehrter Herr X,

Ich bin Doktorandin am Institute National de la Recherche Scientifique-Urbanization Culture Société (INRS-UCS: <http://www.ucs.inrs.ca/ucs>) in Montreal, Kanada, unter der Leitung von Professor Christian Poirier.

Ich untersuche die Dynamik, die mit der Präsenz der Videospiegelbranche in Flingern-Nord verbunden ist, insbesondere die Auswirkungen des Zugewesens dieses Sektors auf das Stadtviertel und die Rolle, die das Stadtviertel für die Menschen spielt, die in der Videospiegelbranche arbeiten:

Was ist für einen Entwickler / Manager in der Videospiegelbranche kulturell bzw. kreativ in Flingern-Nord?

Ich kontaktiere Sie, weil ich Manager und Entwickler im Videospielesektor suche, die freiwillig an diesem Forschungsprojekt teilnehmen möchten, und ich möchte Sie bitten, diese Anfrage an Ihre Manager und Entwickler weiterzuleiten.

Im Zentrum des Forschungsprojekts stehen Personen, die in der Videospiegelbranche tätig sind, und ihre Wahrnehmung der Dynamik und der Auswirkungen im bzw. auf. das Stadtviertel. Es handelt sich daher nicht um ein Forschungsprojekt über Ihr Unternehmen oder die Arbeit Ihrer Mitarbeiter.

Die erhobenen Daten sind Teil meiner Dissertation, für deren Analyse und Veröffentlichung im wissenschaftlichen Kontext ich verantwortlich bin. Die Informationen werden vertraulich behandelt und die Anonymität wird gewährleistet, indem die Anonymisierung der Daten nach dem Interview erfolgt. Die für die Forschung verwendeten Dokumente wurden vom INRS Ethics Research Committee (CER) genehmigt (CER-19-539, 10.12.2019).

Im Anhang finden Sie das Einladungsschreiben, das Sie an die Manager und Entwickler in Ihrem Haus weiterleiten können. Die Fragebögen, die verwendet werden, sowie das Informationsschreiben dienen Ihrer eigenen Information.

Bei weiteren Fragen stehe ich Ihnen gerne zur Verfügung.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Zusammenarbeit,

Melanie Groh

INRS-Urbanization Culture Society
385 Sherbrooke Street East
Montreal, Quebec H2X 1E3, Kanada

Telefon: [REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Die Videospiegelindustrie und Flingern-Nord

Einladungsschreiben

Ich bin Doktorandin am Urbanization Culture Society Research Centre des Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS) in Montreal, Kanada. Im Rahmen meiner Doktorarbeit untersuche ich die Dynamik, die mit der Präsenz der Videospiegelbranche in Düsseldorf-Flingern-Nord verbunden ist, genauer gesagt die Auswirkungen der Präsenz dieser Branche und ihrer Aktivitäten in Bezug auf das Stadtviertel und die Rolle des Stadtviertels in Bezug auf die im Videospiegelsektor tätigen Personen.

Aus diesem Grund kontaktiere ich Sie, denn ich suche Personen, die ein Geschäft in der Nähe von Ubisoft haben bzw. die verantwortlich für ein Unternehmen in der Nähe von Ubisoft sind und die an diesem Forschungsprojekt teilnehmen möchten.

Die Teilnahme beinhaltet ein Interview von insgesamt etwa einer halben Stunde. Eine detaillierte Beschreibung des Projekts finden Sie im Anhang.

Das Interview wird aufgezeichnet, aber Ihre Teilnahme bleibt anonym: Ihr Name erscheint in keinem der Forschungsberichte und Veröffentlichungen, die sich aus diesem Forschungsprojekt ergeben.

Vertraulichkeit und Anonymität der Befragten sind gewährleistet, eine indirekte Identifizierung ist jedoch möglich. Das Einverständnisformular zur Interviewteilnahme, das zu unterschreiben ist, werde ich Ihnen vor dem Interview zusenden. Der Zweck dieses Formulars ist es, mein Anliegen zu demonstrieren und die Rechte derjenigen zu schützen, die an meiner Forschung teilnehmen werden. Bevor Sie das Formular unterzeichnen, können Sie mich nach weiteren Informationen zu meinem Forschungsprojekt fragen, die Sie für wichtig erachten. Dieses Formular kann während des Interviews unterschrieben werden.

Ich hoffe, dass ich Ihr Interesse an diesem Forschungsprojekt geweckt habe und freue mich, wenn Sie sich für die Teilnahme entscheiden.

Für Rückfragen stehe ich Ihnen jederzeit gerne zur Verfügung. Für Ihre Teilnahme möchte ich im Voraus recht herzlich danken.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Melanie Groh
INRS Urbanization Culture Society
385 Sherbrooke Street East
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3, Kanada

Telefon: [REDACTED]
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Informationsschreiben

"Die Videospiegelindustrie, Städte und Nachbarschaften: räumliche, sozioökonomische, kulturelle und politische Dynamik in Montreal und Düsseldorf"

Forschungsprojekt durchgeführt von Melanie Groh, Doktorandin unter der Leitung von asso. Prof. Christian Poirier am Urbanization Culture Society Research Centre des INRS, Montreal, Kanada

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

Hiermit möchten wir Ihnen einige Informationen zum geplanten Forschungsprojekt geben. Diese Informationen sollen Ihnen Transparenz vermitteln und sie über Ihre Rechte als Teilnehmer an dem Projekt informieren, um Ihnen eine Entscheidungsfindung zur Teilnahme an dieser Studie zu ermöglichen. Bitte nehmen Sie sich Zeit, um das Ihnen vorliegende Informationsblatt durchzulesen.

1. Ziel des Forschungsprojekts ist, die Dynamik zwischen der Videospiegelbranche und den Stadtteilen Mile End (Montreal) und Flingern-Nord (Düsseldorf) zu verstehen; insbesondere die Auswirkungen des Vorhandenseins dieses Sektors auf das Stadtviertel und die Rolle, die das Stadtviertel in Bezug auf die im Videospiegelsektor tätigen Personen spielt.
2. Ihre Teilnahme an dem Forschungsprojekt besteht aus einem etwa einstündigen Interview. Dieses Interview konzentriert sich auf Ihre Wahrnehmung der kulturellen, sozioökonomischen und räumlichen Dynamik im Zusammenhang mit der Präsenz der Videospiegelbranche in Flingern-Nord. Die Daten werden für meine Dissertation sowie für wissenschaftliche Arbeiten (Artikel in Fachzeitschriften, wissenschaftliche Tagungen) verwendet.
3. Durch die Teilnahme an diesem Forschungsprojekt tragen Sie zu einem besseren Verständnis der Dynamik zwischen dem Stadtviertel und der Videospiegelbranche bei. Darüber hinaus setzt das Interview Sie keinen Risiken aus, die sich von denen unterscheiden, denen Sie in Ihrem täglichen Leben ausgesetzt sind. Der Hauptnachteil ist die Zeit, die Sie für die Teilnahme am Projekt aufwenden werden.
4. Wenn es Fragen gibt, die Sie nicht beantworten können oder wollen, können Sie ganz frei entscheiden, diese ohne Angabe von Gründen und ohne Unannehmlichkeiten oder negative Konsequenzen nicht zu beantworten. Bitte beachten Sie, dass Sie als freiwilliger Teilnehmer

dieses Projekts die Möglichkeit haben, jederzeit zurückzutreten.

5. Die Vertraulichkeit der Ergebnisse wird wie folgt gewährleistet: Alle gesammelten Informationen werden streng vertraulich behandelt. Die Interviews werden mit Ihrer Zustimmung aufgezeichnet. Die Namen der Personen werden zum Zeitpunkt der Transkription durch einen Identifikationscode ersetzt, um Ihre Anonymität zu wahren. Durch die Veröffentlichung der Forschungsergebnisse wird weder Ihre Identität noch die der Personen, über die Sie mit uns gesprochen haben, direkt erfasst. Trotz aller Vorkehrungen ist eine indirekte Identifizierung weiterhin möglich.

6. Nach der Transkription werden die Interviews in passwortgeschützten Dateien gespeichert. Die Transkriptionen sind nur für die Studentin, die dieses Forschungsprojekt durchführt, und für ihren Betreuer zugänglich. Vertrauliche Informationen und Audioaufnahmen werden nach der Promotion vernichtet. Die anonymisierten Daten werden zur Verwendung in anderen ähnlichen Studien, die von derselben Forscherin durchgeführt wurden, aufbewahrt.

Im Anhang finden Sie zwei (2) Kopien der Einverständniserklärung, die Sie unterschreiben müssen, wenn Sie der Teilnahme an diesem Forschungsprojekt zustimmen. Vor der Unterzeichnung des Formulars können Sie mich auf Wunsch um zusätzliche Informationen über das Projekt bitten. Sie können sich auch an meinen Betreuer wenden, dessen Kontaktdaten Sie unten auf der Seite finden. Des Weiteren können Sie sich auch an die Vorsitzende der INRS-Forschungsethikkommission, Frau Isabelle Plante, wenden, die Sie über Ihre Rechte als Teilnehmer an diesem Forschungsprojekt informieren kann.

Wir bedanken uns für Ihre Mitarbeit.

Melanie Groh
Doktorandin
INRS-Urbanization Culture Society Research Centre
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Betreuer

[REDACTED]
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Telefon: [REDACTED]
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Externe Person für das Forschungsteam:

[REDACTED], Präsidentin der Ethikkommission für Forschung mit Menschen
INRS

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Telefon: [REDACTED]
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Einverständniserklärung

"Die Videospiegelindustrie, Städte und Nachbarschaften: räumliche, sozioökonomische, kulturelle und politische Dynamik in Montreal und Düsseldorf"

Ich bin auf das im Informationsschreiben beschriebene Forschungsprojekt aufmerksam gemacht worden.

Ich wurde mündlich und schriftlich über die Projektziele, Datenerhebungsmethoden und meine Teilnahme an dem Projekt informiert.

Ich wurde auch informiert:

- a) wie die Forscherin die Vertraulichkeit der Daten gewährleisten und die gesammelten Informationen schützen wird;
- b) über mein Recht, das Interview oder die Aufnahme jederzeit beenden zu können, oder bestimmte Fragen nicht zu beantworten, wenn ich dies möchte;
- c) über mein Recht, als freiwilliger Teilnehmer dieses Forschungsprojekts jederzeit zurücktreten zu können, wenn ich es für notwendig erachte;
- d) über mein Recht, mit Projektleiterin Melanie Groh zu kommunizieren, wenn ich Fragen zum Projekt habe.

Mir wurde versichert, dass die während dieses Interviews abgegebenen Kommentare vertraulich und anonym behandelt werden. Mir ist jedoch bewusst, dass es trotz aller Vorkehrungen möglich ist, mich indirekt identifizieren zu können.

Ich erkläre mich hiermit einverstanden, an der Forschung teilzunehmen. Ich unterschreibe dieses Formular in zwei Exemplaren und behalte ein Exemplar.

Unterschrift des Teilnehmers

Datum

Unterschrift der Projektleiterin

Datum

Melanie Groh, Doktorandin
INRS-Zentrum Urbanization Culture Society
385 Sherbrooke Street East
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3, Kanada

Telefon: [REDACTED]
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Dieses Projekt wurde vom INRS-Ausschuss für Ethik in der Forschung mit Menschen genehmigt: 10. Dezember 2019

Fragebogen Computerspielentwickler

Dynamik / Kreatives Milieu

Kulturelle Dynamik

1. Sie arbeiten bei Ubisoft. Sehen Sie sich als kreativer Arbeiter/als kreative Arbeiterin?
2. Wie würden Sie sich aus kultureller Sicht definieren? Betrachten Sie sich als einen kulturellen Menschen?
3. Welche kulturellen / kreativen Aktivitäten machen Sie aktiv? (Kreieren Sie etwas für sich oder andere?) Im Stadtviertel? Mit wem? Das ganze Jahr (Sommer wie Winter)?
4. Nehmen Sie aktiv oder passiv an kulturellen Veranstaltungen im Stadtviertel teil? Mit wem? Wie finden Sie diese Veranstaltungen?
5. Wen sehen Sie dort sonst noch? Welche Gruppen von Menschen?
6. Kennen Sie die kulturellen Angebote und Einrichtungen im Stadtviertel? (Zeichnen/Karte zeigen/Beispiele auflisten, wenn nicht)
 - k. Nutzen Sie sie? Wenn ja, mit wem?
 - l. Wann ja, sind Sie mit diesen Angeboten und Einrichtungen zufrieden? /Wenn nein, warum nicht?
7. Wie würden Sie das Stadtviertel beschreiben? Sehen Sie es als ein kulturelles Viertel?
8. Wie wichtig ist das Stadtviertel, sind die kulturellen Angebote für Sie und Ihre kulturellen Unternehmungen/ Aktivitäten (aktiver und passiver Art)?

Lifestyle

9. Kulturell gesehen, wie definieren Sie Ihren Lebensstil/Lifestyle?
 - a. Im Zusammenhang auch mit Ihren kulturellen aktiven Aktivitäten?
 - b. Im Zusammenhang mit zum Beispiel Ihrem Musik-, Kunst-, Essensgeschmack?
10. Wie hängen die kulturellen Aktivitäten, die Sie im Viertel unternehmen, und die kulturellen Angebote und Einrichtungen, die Sie nutzen, mit Ihrem Lebensstil zusammen?
11. Stehen diese (kulturellen Aktivitäten) im Zusammenhang mit Ihrem Beruf? Haben diese einen Einfluss auf Ihre Arbeit? (in der Kommunikation, aufgrund des Ambientes, etc.)?
12. Gibt es für Sie Verbindungen (oder nicht) zwischen Ihren kulturellen Praktiken/dem, was Sie

kulturell machen, Ihrem Job bei Ubisoft und dem Stadtviertel? Erklären Sie.

13. Haben sich das kulturelle Angebot und die Einrichtungen in den letzten Jahren geändert?

a. Vermissen Sie kulturelle Einrichtungen im Viertel?

14. Neben den bereits genannten kulturellen Aktivitäten, was machen Sie noch im Viertel?

(Anschlussfragen, falls angegeben)

a. Arbeiten

i. Warum? Mit wem? Wie oft?

ii. Wie wichtig ist es für Sie, im Stadtviertel zu arbeiten oder sich zu vernetzen?/Networking zu betreiben? Mit wem?

b. Leute treffen

i. Mit wem? (Menschen mit den gleichen Interessen (Lebensstil)?)

ii. Was machen Sie zusammen?

iii. Treffen Sie sich auch mit Leuten im Viertel, die nicht Ihre Kollegen sind?

c. Einkaufen (welcher Typ)

i. Sind Sie mit dem Angebot in den Geschäften zufrieden? Wenn nicht, warum/was fehlt?

ii. Nutzen Sie die lokalen Geschäfte, Einrichtungen und Dienstleistungen im Viertel? Warum/warum nicht?

iii. Haben sich diese in den letzten Jahren verändert? Sind Sie mit dem heutigen Angebot zufrieden?

d. Freizeit, Hobby, Sport, Familienaktivitäten

i. Was denken Sie über die Freizeit- und Sportangebote? Sind Sie damit zufrieden?

Technologische, räumliche und sozioökonomische Dynamik

1. Wie wichtig ist Internetzugang, WiFi, an den Orten im Viertel, an denen Sie sich aufhalten?

2. Würden Sie das Stadtviertel als ein „technologisches“ Viertel beschreiben (z. B. eins, in dem viele Menschen technologische/digitale Geräte für ihre Arbeit, kulturelle oder andere Aktivitäten verwenden)?

3. Was halten Sie von der räumlichen Gestaltung/den Freizeiteinrichtungen wie Parks und Plätzen für Outdoor- und Indoor-Aktivitäten? Nutzen Sie diese?

4. Was denken Sie über die temporären Räume im Viertel? Also Plätze, die leer/vakant sind und die für eine bestimmte Zeit für kulturelle Dinge oder als Treffpunkt für Aktivitäten genutzt werden (und einem Motto unterstehen).
5. Gibt es Änderungen aufgrund von Baumaßnahmen? Wenn ja, was denken Sie darüber?
6. Wie beurteilen Sie den wirtschaftlichen Standard im Stadtviertel, etwa in Bezug auf die Mieten, Häuserpreise etc.?

Verbindung zum Stadtviertel und Stadtviertel

1. Leben Sie in diesem Stadtviertel? Wenn ja, wie lange? Wenn ja, warum haben Sie sich für dieses Viertel entschieden?
Anschlussfrage: Könnten Sie sich vorstellen, in dieses Viertel zu ziehen/wegzuziehen?
2. Was denken Sie über das Stadtviertel? Wie würden Sie es beschreiben, auch im Vergleich zum ersten Mal, als Sie hierher kamen?
3. Beziehung Videospiegelbranche und Stadtviertel:
 - a. Wie würden Sie die Beziehung zwischen der Videospiegelbranche und dem Viertel beschreiben?
 - b. Gibt es gegenseitige Einflüsse?
 - c. Wie sehen Sie Ihre Position in dem Ganzen?
4. Zukünftige Entwicklung
 - a. Wo sehen Sie dieses Stadtvierteil in den kommenden Jahren? (positiv/negativ)
 - b. Die Videospiegelbranche (im Viertel)?
 - c. Und sich selbst?

Ergänzende Informationen

1. Alter (Altersgruppe): -24 / 25-34 / 35-44 / 45-
2. Geschlecht
3. Personenstand
4. Beruf

Abschließende Frage

1. Gibt es noch etwas, was Sie ansprechen möchten?

Fragebogen Manager

Dynamik / Kreatives Milieu

Kulturelle Dynamik

1. Sie arbeiten bei Ubisoft. Sehen Sie sich als kreativer Arbeiter/als kreative Arbeiterin?
2. Wie würden Sie sich aus kultureller Sicht definieren? Betrachten Sie sich als einen kulturellen Menschen?
(Als einen Menschen, den kulturelle Aktivitäten interessieren, der Kunst erschafft, künstlerisch tätig ist oder Kunst präsentiert.)
3. Welche kulturellen / kreativen Aktivitäten machen Sie aktiv? (Kreieren Sie etwas für sich oder andere?) Im Stadtviertel? Mit wem? Das ganze Jahr (Sommer wie Winter)?
4. Nehmen Sie aktiv oder passiv an kulturellen Veranstaltungen im Stadtviertel teil? Mit wem?
Wie finden Sie diese Veranstaltungen? /Was denken Sie darüber?
5. Wen sehen Sie dort sonst noch? Welche Gruppen von Menschen?
6. Kennen Sie die kulturellen Angebote und Einrichtungen im Stadtviertel? (Zeichnen/Karte zeigen/Beispiele auflisten, wenn nicht)
 - m. Nutzen Sie sie? Wenn ja, mit wem?
 - n. Wann ja, sind Sie mit diesen Angeboten und Einrichtungen zufrieden? /Wenn nein, warum nicht?
7. Wie würden Sie das Stadtviertel beschreiben? Sehen Sie es als ein kulturelles Viertel?
8. Wie wichtig ist das Stadtviertel, sind die kulturellen Angebote für Sie und Ihre kulturellen Unternehmungen/ Aktivitäten (aktiver und passiver Art)?

Lifestyle

9. Kulturell gesehen, wie definieren Sie Ihren Lebensstil/Lifestyle?
 - c. Im Zusammenhang auch mit Ihren kulturellen aktiven Aktivitäten?
 - d. Im Zusammenhang mit zum Beispiel Ihrem Musik-, Kunst-, Essensgeschmack?
10. Wie hängen die kulturellen Aktivitäten, die Sie im Viertel unternehmen, und die kulturellen Angebote und Einrichtungen, die Sie nutzen, mit Ihrem Lebensstil zusammen?

11. Stehen diese (kulturellen Aktivitäten) im Zusammenhang mit Ihrem Beruf? Haben diese einen Einfluss auf Ihre Arbeit? (in der Kommunikation, aufgrund des Ambientes, etc.)?
12. Gibt es für Sie Verbindungen (oder nicht) zwischen Ihren kulturellen Praktiken/dem, was Sie kulturell machen, Ihrem Job bei Ubisoft und dem Stadtviertel? Erklären Sie.
13. Haben sich das kulturelle Angebot und die Einrichtungen in den letzten Jahren geändert?
 - a. Vermissen Sie kulturelle Einrichtungen im Viertel?
14. Fragen zu den Videospielentwicklern des Unternehmens
 - a. Sehen Sie die Videospielentwickler von Ubisoft (auch) als kulturelle/kreative Akteure?
 - b. Inwieweit ist das für ihre/deren Arbeit wichtig?
15. Neben den bereits genannten kulturellen Aktivitäten, was machen Sie noch im Viertel?
(Anschlussfragen, falls angegeben)
 - e. Arbeiten
 - i. Warum? Mit wem? Wie oft?
 - ii. Wie wichtig ist es für Sie, im Stadtviertel zu arbeiten oder sich zu vernetzen? /Networking zu betreiben? Mit wem?
 - f. Leute treffen
 - iv. Mit wem? (Menschen mit den gleichen Interessen (Lebensstil)?)
 - v. Was machen Sie zusammen?
 - vi. Treffen Sie sich auch mit Leuten im Viertel, die nicht Ihre Kollegen sind?
 - g. Einkaufen (welcher Typ)
 - iv. Sind Sie mit dem Angebot in den Geschäften zufrieden? Wenn nicht, warum/was fehlt?
 - v. Nutzen Sie die lokalen Geschäfte, Einrichtungen und Dienstleistungen im Viertel? Warum/warum nicht?
 - vi. Haben sich diese in den letzten Jahren verändert? Sind Sie mit dem heutigen Angebot zufrieden?
 - h. Freizeit, Hobby, Sport, Familienaktivitäten
 - ii. Was denken Sie über die Freizeit- und Sportangebote? Sind Sie damit zufrieden?

Technologische, räumliche, sozioökonomische und politische Dynamik

16. Wie wichtig ist Internetzugang, WiFi, an den Orten im Viertel, an denen Sie sich aufhalten?
17. Würden Sie das Stadtviertel als ein „technologisches“ Viertel beschreiben (z. B. eins, in dem viele Menschen technologische/digitale Geräte für ihre Arbeit, kulturelle oder andere Aktivitäten verwenden)?
18. Was halten Sie von der räumlichen Gestaltung/den Freizeiteinrichtungen wie Parks und Plätzen für Outdoor- und Indoor-Aktivitäten? Nutzen Sie diese?
19. Was denken Sie über die temporären Räume im Viertel? Also Plätze, die leer/vakant sind und die für eine bestimmte Zeit für kulturelle Dinge oder als Treffpunkt für Aktivitäten genutzt werden (und einem Motto unterstehen).
20. Gibt es Änderungen aufgrund von Baumaßnahmen? Wenn ja, was denken Sie darüber?
21. Wie beurteilen Sie den wirtschaftlichen Standard im Stadtviertel, etwa in Bezug auf die Mieten, Häuserpreise etc.?
22. Sie sind gerade umgezogen, warum haben Sie sich/hat Ihr Unternehmen sich für dieses Stadtviertel entschieden? (Politische Gründe? Unterstützung der Stadt/Verwaltung?)

Verbindung zum Stadtviertel und Stadtviertel

1. Leben Sie in diesem Stadtviertel? Wenn ja, wie lange? Wenn ja, warum haben Sie sich für dieses Viertel entschieden?

Anschlussfrage: Könnten Sie sich vorstellen, in dieses Viertel zu ziehen/wegzuziehen?

2. Was denken Sie über das Stadtviertel? Wie würden Sie es beschreiben, auch im Vergleich zum ersten Mal, als Sie hierherkamen?

3. Beziehung Videospielebranche und Stadtviertel:

d. Wie würden Sie die Beziehung zwischen der Videospielebranche und dem Viertel beschreiben?

e. Gibt es gegenseitige Einflüsse?

f. Wie sehen Sie Ihre Position in dem Ganzen?

4. Zukünftige Entwicklung

d. Wo sehen Sie dieses Stadtviertel in den kommenden Jahren? (positiv/negativ)

e. Die Videospielebranche (im Viertel)?

f. Und sich selbst?

Ergänzende Informationen

1. Alter (Altersgruppe): -24 / 25-34 / 35-44 / 45-

2. Geschlecht

3. Personenstand

4. Beruf

Abschließende Frage

Gibt es noch etwas, was Sie ansprechen möchten?

Fragebogen - Kulturakteure

Dynamik / Kreatives Milieu

Politische, kulturelle, technologische, räumliche und sozio-ökonomische Dynamik

1. Für welche Institution arbeiten Sie? Wie lange schon?
2. Welche Verbindung gibt es zum Stadtviertel? (Politische Gründe? Unterstützung durch die Stadt / Verwaltung? / Kulturelle Gründe?)
3. Ist diese Verbindung immer noch die gleiche?
4. Mit wem agieren Sie im Stadtviertel? Regelmäßig?
5. Haben sich die Leute, mit denen Sie im Stadtviertel zu tun haben im Laufe der Zeit geändert?
 - a. Wenn ja, inwiefern hat sich das geändert?
 - b. Arbeiten einige bei in der Videospieleindustrie/Ubisoft?
6. Haben sich die Aufgaben im Laufe der Zeit geändert? Wenn ja, warum?
7. Was halten Sie von den kulturellen Aktivitäten und Einrichtungen im Stadtviertel?
8. Sehen Sie das Stadtviertel als ein kulturelles Stadtviertel? Wenn ja,
 - a. Welche Rolle spielt Ihre Institution darin?
 - b. Wen/welchen Typ von Menschen sehen Sie als kulturelle Akteure im Stadtviertel?
 - i. Mitarbeiter von Ubisoft?
 - ii. Sehen Sie die Angestellten von Ubisoft als kulturelle/kreative Akteure?
 - c. Wie würden Sie deren Lebensstil beschreiben? / Ist das Teil ihres Lebensstils? / Sehen Sie das als Teil ihres Lebensstils?
 - d. Sie selbst
 - i. Sehen Sie sich selbst als ein kultureller Mensch?
 - ii. Wie definieren Sie Ihren Lebensstil, kulturell gesehen?
9. Haben sich das kulturelle Angebot und die Einrichtungen in den letzten Jahren geändert?
Wenn ja,
 - a. Was denken Sie darüber, auch im Zusammenhang mit Ihrem Geschäft/Ihrem Unternehmen/Ihrer Institution?
 - b. Und im Zusammenhang mit Ubisoft und seinen Mitarbeitern
10. Wie wichtig ist Internetzugang, WiFi-Zugang, im Stadtviertel für Sie (und für andere)?

11. Würden Sie das Stadtviertel als ein „technologisches“ Viertel beschreiben (z. B. eins, in dem viele Menschen technologische/digitale Geräte für ihre Arbeit, kulturelle oder andere Aktivitäten verwenden)?
12. Was halten Sie von der räumlichen Gestaltung/den Freizeiteinrichtungen wie Parks und Plätzen für Outdoor- und Indoor-Aktivitäten sowie temporären Räume im Viertel?
13. Gibt es Änderungen aufgrund von Baumaßnahmen? Wenn ja, was halten Sie davon?
14. Wie beurteilen Sie den wirtschaftlichen Standard im Stadtviertel, etwa in Bezug auf die Mieten, Häuserkauf etc.?

Verbindung zum Stadtviertel und Stadtviertel

1. Neben der Arbeit in diesem Stadtviertel, leben Sie hier? Wenn ja, wie lange? Wenn ja, warum haben Sie sich für dieses Viertel entschieden?

Anschlussfrage: Könnten Sie sich vorstellen, in dieses Viertel zu ziehen/wegzuziehen?

2. Was machen Sie sonst noch im Viertel?
3. Was denken Sie über das Stadtviertel? Wie würden Sie es beschreiben, auch im Vergleich zum ersten Mal, als Sie hierherkamen?
4. Beziehung Videospiegelbranche und Stadtviertel:
 - a. Wie würden Sie die Beziehung zwischen der Videospiegelbranche und dem Viertel beschreiben?
 - b. Gibt es gegenseitige Einflüsse?
 - c. Wie sehen Sie Ihre Position in dem Ganzen?

Letzte Frage:

5. Zukünftige Entwicklung
 - g. Wo sehen Sie dieses Stadtviertel in den kommenden Jahren? (positiv/negativ)
 - h. Die Videospiegelbranche (im Viertel)?
 - i. Und sich selbst (Ihre Institution)?

Ergänzende Informationen

1. Alter (Altersgruppe): -24 / 25-34 / 35-44 / 45-
2. Geschlecht
3. Personenstand
4. Beruf

Abschließende Frage

1. Gibt es noch etwas, was Sie ansprechen möchten?

D. Comité d'Éthique en Recherche (CÉR)



Québec, le 10 décembre 2019

Mme Mélanie Groh
Centre – Urbanisation Culture Société
385, rue Sherbrooke
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3
Canada

CER-19-539 : The Video Game Industry, Cities and Neighbourhoods: Spatial, Socio-Economic, Cultural and Political Dynamics in Montreal and Düsseldorf

Madame,

Après examen de vos réponses aux questions et commentaires du comité d'éthique, j'ai le plaisir de vous confirmer l'acceptation de votre demande et l'émission du certificat.

La présente lettre constitue l'acceptation officielle du CER sur la dimension éthique de votre projet de recherche.

Vous recevrez sous peu une copie des documents Certificat d'éthique et Déclaration des responsables dûment signés. Une copie sera également transmise au service à la recherche et à la valorisation de l'INRS qui pourra autoriser l'accès aux fonds (le cas échéant), mais il est de votre responsabilité de transmettre votre certificat d'éthique à votre organisme subventionnaire, le cas échéant.

Ce certificat a une validité d'une durée d'un an. Avant qu'il soit échu, vous recevrez un court formulaire de renouvellement que vous devrez remplir et retourner dûment signé au secrétaire du CER dans les trois semaines suivant sa réception. Les chercheurs qui ne respecteront pas cette obligation verront leur certificat d'éthique suspendu, ce qui entraînera automatiquement le gel des fonds liés au projet de recherche pour lequel le certificat a été émis.

En terminant, il vous est rappelé qu'il est également de votre responsabilité d'informer le comité des modifications qui pourraient être apportées à votre projet, en cours de réalisation, et qui ont trait à la participation de sujets.

Les membres du comité vous souhaitent le plus grand succès dans la poursuite de vos travaux de recherche.

Veillez agréer, Madame Groh, l'expression de mes salutations distinguées.

Laurence Charton
Vice-Présidente du CÉR
Professeure-chercheure au Centre Urbanisation Culture Société

Service à la recherche et à la valorisation
490, rue de la Couronne
Québec (Québec) G1K 9A9 CANADA
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INRS.CA

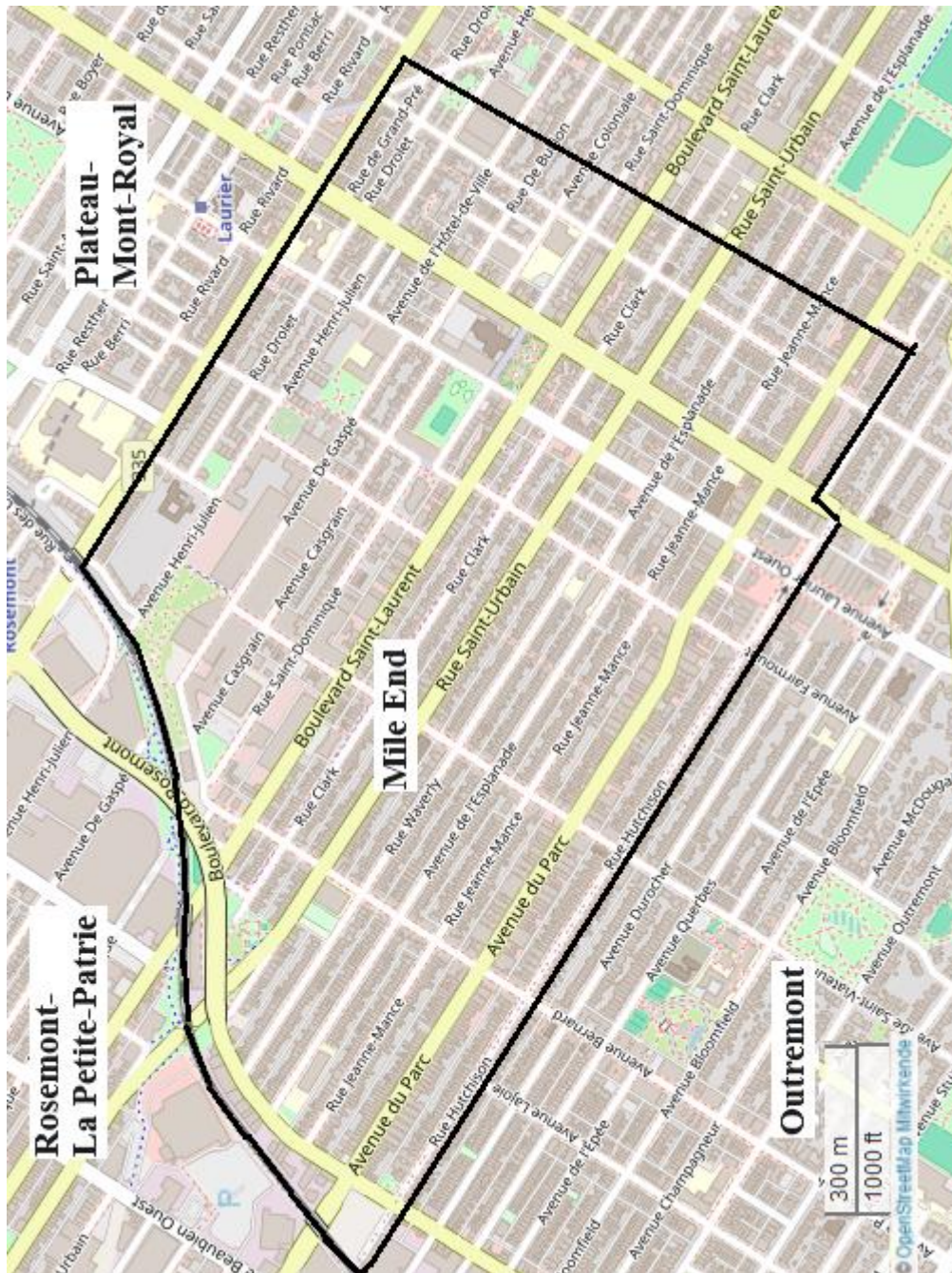
Annex 2: Overview of Interviews Conducted

Neighbourhood	Group	Employment	Working at Ubisoft / in the neighbourhood	Gender	Age range	Native language	Language Interview
Mile End	12 Video Game Industry	11 Developers 1 Manager	0-4 years: 5	9 Male	25-34: 5	10 French	9 English
			5-9 years: 5	2 Female	35-44: 7	1 English	2 French
			10- years: 2	1 Female	45- : 0	1 French	1 French
Flingern-Nord	6 Cultural Actors		0-4 years: 0	3 Female	25-34: 0	3 English	6 English
			5-9 years: 2	3 Male	35-44: 2	2 French	
			10- years: 4		45- : 4	1 German	
	10 Video Game Industry	9 Developers 1 Manager	0-4 years: 3	7 Male	25-34: 4	3 German	6 English
			5-9 years: 5	2 Female	35-44: 5	3 Portuguese	3 German
			10- years: 2		45- : 1	2 Romanian 1 Latvian	
5 Cultural Actors			0-4 years: 2	1 Male	25-34: 1	1 German	1 German
			5-9 years: 1		35-44: 1		
			10- years: 2		45- : 3		5 German

Source: (Own representation)

Annex 3: Mile End and Flingern-Nord – Maps and Impressions

Map of the Mile End



Source: Map of Mile End (Title: OpenStreetMap, Authors: Contributors, Source: www.openstreetmap.org, Licence (CC BY-SA 2.0)), modified by the author

Impressions of the Mile End



Bernard corner de l'Esplanade



Saint-Viateur



Store at Saint-Viateur



Saint-Viateur, East of Saint-Laurent
Area of Ubisoft location



Constructions in the area around Ubisoft,
corner de Gaspé and Maguire



Café Olimpico on Saint-Viateur, corner
Waverly



Waverly



Mural at the corner of de Gaspé and Bernard



September 2020: (private) music street festival on Waverly



Portugues restaurant at the corner of Saint-Viateur and Saint-Urbain

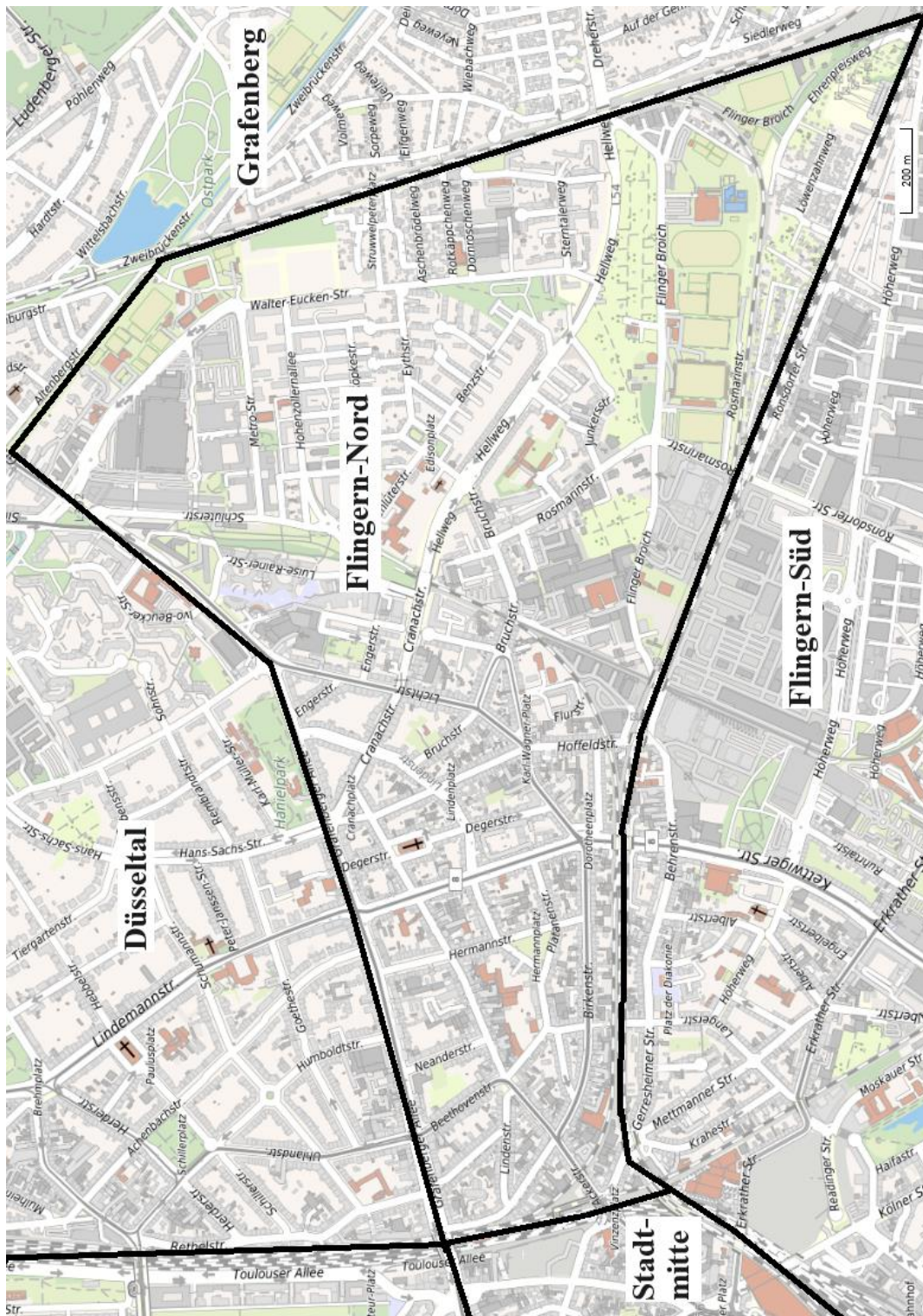


Ice-cream store on Fairmount (corner Clark), in front along the street benches to relax and to gather



'Mile End en fleurs' (May 2023), Saint-Viateur

Map of Flingern-Nord



Source: Stadtplanwerk 2.0 © Regionalverband Ruhr und Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf (Lizenz: dl-de/by-2-0),
Datengrundlagen: ALKIS, ATKIS - Land NRW/Katasterämter (Lizenz: dl-de/zero-2-0) und OpenStreetMap -
Mitwirkende (License: ODbL), modified by the author

Impressions of Flingern-Nord



Official neighbourhood street sign: D-Flingern (Düsseldorf-Flingern) when coming from Grafenberger Allee onto Lichtstraße



Park along Luise-Rainer-Straße, next to Ubisoft office



Corner of Ackerstraße and Lindenstraße
Café Hüftgold on the right corner.



Ackerstraße between Lindenstraße and Hermannstraße



Concept store at Ackerstraße



Corner of Ackerstraße and Hermannstraße



Backyard of Flurstraße 13; on the right side: Kabawil e.V.



Entrance to the backyard where the cinema and Sammlung Philara is located, Birkenstraße



Wall painting when entering Flingern-Nord on Ackerstraße from Stadtmitte



Painting with monuments of Düsseldorf at a garage door on Flurstraße



Offer at the weekly market at Hermannplatz: Flowers and home made pickled cucumbers



Concept store on Ackerstraße between Neanderstraße und Hermannstraße

Source: Melanie Groh (2017-2023)

Annex 4: List of Newspaper Articles

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- 3 Dunlevy, T'Cha. 2020. « Rainbow Six Siege gamers head to Place Bell. Ubisoft event to draw 4,500 paying fans to watch teams play video games. » Montreal Gazette, 2020.02.14, A7.
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- 19 Reich, Marcel. 2019. « Das Paradoxon des deutschen Spielemarktes [The paradox of the German game market]. » Die Welt, 2019.08.24.
- 20 RPS. 2019. « Mietminderung hat Grenzen [Rent reduction has limits]. » Rheinische Post, 2019.04.13.
- 21 sten. 2019. « Spiele-App für das Fitness-Training / Erstes Spielkonzept mit 20 Jahren geschrieben [Games app for fitness training / First game concept written at the age of 20]. » Rheinische Post, 2019.08.24.
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- 24 Cormier, Sylvain. 2018. « Le festival qui n'a pas peur de rapetisser. » Le Devoir, 2018.08.31, B4.
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- 32 Jovanovic, Ludwig. 2018. « Entwicklungs- statt Entwicklerland / Größte Spielemesse startet am Dienstag [Developing country instead of developer country / Biggest game fair starts Tuesday]. » Rheinische Post, 2018.08.15.
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- 35 Lavoie, André. 2018. « Critique cinéma - "Playing Hard": l'honneur en jeu. » Le Devoir, 2018.09.21, B2.
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- 79 Paré, Isabelle. 2016. « Ma maison au boulot. » Le Devoir, 2016.12.10, A6,A7.
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Annex 5: Cultural Institutions in the Mile End and Flingern-Nord

Cultural institutions, events, and festivals in the Mile End

Cultural institutions

There are several cultural institutions and organisations in the Mile End which are presented briefly to give an overview about the cultural activities in the neighbourhood. The list was compiled on the basis of an inspection of the neighbourhood between September and December 2019 and was supplemented by internet research. This list can only be a selection, especially for the studios in the artist complexes on de Gaspé and de Casgrain there are more artists and exhibition venues than mentioned below. The following list is intended to give an impression.

- Art Galleries
 - Galerie D'Avignon, 88 Laurier O
 - Galerie D'Art Gala, 5157 Saint-Laurent
 - Galerie Simon Blais, 5420 Saint-Laurent
 - Galerie Noël Guyomarc'h, 4836 Saint-Laurent
 - Galerie Youn, 5226 Saint-Laurent
- Artists and their art galleries
 - Article, 262 Fairmount O.
 - Atelier Galerie Alain Piroir, 5333 Casgrain #802
- Artists, their galleries, and cultural associations in the complexes of de Gaspé
 - Atelier Circulaire | Centre d'artistes en arts imprimés, 5445, de Gaspé #105
 - Ateliers Créatifs, 5445, de Gaspé # 304
 - Centre D'art et de Diffusion Clark, 5455, de Gaspé, #114
 - Dazibao, 5455, de Gaspé #109
 - Diagonale Centre des arts et des fibres du Québec, 5455 de Gaspé, #110
 - Elektra – BIAN, 5445 Avenue de Gaspé, #104
 - Occurrence / Mandate espace d'art et d'essai contemporains, 5455 de Gaspé, #108
 - Optica, centre d'art contemporain, 5445 de Gaspé #106

- Theatre and event locations
 - Fairmount Theatre (ex-cabaret Du Mile-end), 5240 du Parc (corner Fairmount)
 - Théâtre Rialto, 5723 du Parc
 - Casa Del Popolo and La Sala Rossa, 4873 Saint-Laurent
 - Bain Saint-Michel, 5300 Saint-Dominique (1998-2014)
- Cinema
 - Cinema modern, 5150 Saint-Laurent
- Museums and collections
 - Musée des pompiers de Montréal, 5100 Saint-Laurent
 - Musée Romeo's, 5445 & 5455 de Gaspé
 - Twilight Sculpture Garden, van Horn
- Music
 - POP Montreal, 5585 du Parc
- Public Libraries and Archives
 - Mordecai-Richler Library, 5434 du Parc

Cultural events and street festivals

Like the presentation of the cultural institutions, the presentation of cultural events and street festivals can only be a selection (see table 33 and 34).⁹⁸

Table 33: Cultural events in Mile End

Name of event	Years	Description
Atelier Portes Ouvertes (APO)	2008 - irregular	Up to 300 artists located in the buildings on the de Gaspé and around open their studios to the public during three days in spring or fall. The interested public can talk with the artists or take guided tours. The artists also offer a special program for kids. The event is organised by the Centre d'art et de diffusion CLARK, in cooperation with Ubisoft. ⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Selection in alphabetical order.

⁹⁹ Source and for more information see: <https://centreclark.com> (last seen 2024.02.10.)

Name of event	Years	Description
Mémoire du Mile End	2003-	This non-profit historical society and active community group organises conferences during winter and guided tours during summer in the neighbourhood to introduce the history and the development of Mile End to interested parties. ¹⁰⁰
Mile Ex End Music Festival	2017-2019	The Mile Ex End music festival took place below an overpass on the border of Mile End and Mile-Ex. On two days during a weekend in September different local and international artists performed. So far, the last event took place in 2019. ¹⁰¹
Phenomena	2012-	This festival is organised by <i>Les Filles électriques (LFE)</i> and takes place every year in fall from the end of September to October. During four weeks several events take place, such as performances, cabarets, theatre and dance. The festival includes guided tours to see the exhibition of light frames displayed in the showcases of local shops, cafés, and restaurants. ¹⁰²
POP Montreal - POP Montreal International Music Festival	2002-	During five days in fall, local and international newcomers and independent artists can perform on stages mainly in the Mile End and on Boulevard Saint-Laurent. The Music Festival is organised by <i>POP Montreal</i> , a non-profit organisation whose office is in the Mile End. ¹⁰³

Source: Own representation

¹⁰⁰ Source and for more information see: <http://memoire.mile-end.qc.ca> (last seen 2024.02.10.) and Bur et al. (2017)

¹⁰¹ Source and for more information see: <http://milexend.com/en> (last seen 2024.02.10.)

¹⁰² Source and for more information see: <https://electricques.ca> (last seen 2024.02.10.) and Bur et al. (2017)

¹⁰³ Source and for more information see: <https://popmontreal.com> (last seen 2024.02.10.) and Bur et al. (2017)

Table 34: Street festivals in Mile End

Name of street festival	Years	Description
La fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste	1986/88-2001	St-Jean-Baptiste Day celebrations took place on rue Saint-Viateur on June 24, the Quebec national holiday. It was organised by the Mile End Citizens' Committee (MECC). At the festival, participants could listen to music, dance and enjoy the various foods on offer. The festival was cancelled by the organisers in 2001 because the large number of visitors overwhelmed those responsible and the City of Montreal refused permission to close the street. ¹⁰⁴
Mile End en fleurs	2014-	<i>Mile End en fleurs</i> is a street festival on Saint-Viateur held one Saturday in May. It is organised by the non-profit organization <i>Les Amis du Champ des Possibles</i> . The main part is the distribution of flowers to the neighbourhood dwellers, and it also gives the occasion for local shops to sell their products. ¹⁰⁵
San Marziale	1971-	This street festival in honour of San Marziale, the patron saint of the Calabrian village of Isca Sullo Ionio, takes place on a Sunday in July. The attraction is the parade, during which a statue of the saint is carried through the street. Later there is music, marching bands and stage performances, dancing, dance groups and free dancing as well as a free spaghetti dinner. ¹⁰⁶
St-Viateur festival de rue	2007	St-Viateur festival de rue was initiated by Ubisoft for their 10-years celebrations in “honour” of the La fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. The festival was held on a weekend in June between Saint-Urbain and Avenue du Parc on rue Saint-Viateur. In addition to live music, there were various activities such as workshops for children and craft workshops, an art exhibition with art for sale and the creation of new murals. Local stores, cafés, restaurants offer food etc. and groups and institutions like the YMCA du Parc and Memories of Mile End presented their work. ¹⁰⁷

Source: Own representation

¹⁰⁴ For more information see: Desjardins (2017, 292,298-299)

¹⁰⁵ For more information see: Annual Reports of *Les Amis du Champ des Possible* (<https://champdespossibles.org> (last seen 2024.02.10.))

¹⁰⁶ For more information see: Desjardins (2017, 11)

¹⁰⁷ For more information see: Poulot (2017)

Cultural institutions, events, and festivals in Flingern-Nord

Cultural institutions

There are several cultural institutions and organisations¹⁰⁸ in Flingern-Nord which are presented briefly to give an overview about the cultural activities in the neighbourhood. These are taken from a list of cultural institutions presented by the Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf (2020), but some others are added as well, named ‘cultural centers’, that were identified during a site inspection of the neighbourhood between January and April 2020, because they offer cultural and artistic events for everyone and hence, they contribute to the cultural life in Flingern as well.

Cultural institutions in Flingern-Nord (Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf 2020b):

- Art galleries (selection)
 - Cosar HMT, Flurstraße 57
 - Galerie Conrads, Lindenstraße 167 (until end of 2020)
 - Konrad Fischer Galerie, Platanenstraße 7
 - Galerie Ruth Leuchter, Hermannstraße 36
 - Linn Lühn, Birkenstraße 43
 - Galerie Rupert Pfab, Ackerstraße 71
 - Petra Rinck Galerie, Ackerstraße 199
 - SCHÖNEWALD, Lindenstraße 182
 - Van Horn, Ackerstraße 99
- Artists and their galleries
 - Konsortium, Ackerstraße 65
 - plan.d., Dorotheenstraße 59
- Cinema
 - Filmwerkstatt Düsseldorf, including Flingernlichtspiele, Birkenstraße 47
- Museums and collections
 - Sammlung Philara, Birkenstraße 47a

¹⁰⁸ For the definition of cultural institutions used in this thesis see Annex ‘Cultural institutions, events, and festivals in the Mile End’.

- Theatre and event location
 - None in Flingern-Nord at the moment
 - Theatre *Flin* (1999-2014), Ackerstraße 144
- Music
 - None in Flingern-Nord
- Public Libraries and archives
 - District library at the corner of Flurstraße and Hoffeldstraße
 - Stiftung imai - inter media art institute, Birkenstraße 47 (in the backyard)
- Cultural Associations
 - BBK Kunstforum Düsseldorf e. V., Birkenstraße 47
- cultural centres (not listed in the list of the city of Düsseldorf)
 - Kabawil e.V., Flurstraße 11
 - Kulturzimmer Flingern, Hoffeldstraße 27

Three cultural institutions that are located in Flingern-Süd are included. They can be easily reached on foot within a couple of minutes from Flingern-Nord and some interviewees list them as institutions in Flingern or Flingern-Süd respectively.

Cultural Institutions in Flingern-Süd:

- Capitol Musiktheater, Erkrather Straße 30
- tanzhaus nrw - die werkstatt e. V. düsseldorf, Erkrather Straße 30
- Zakk Zentrum für Aktion, Kultur & Kommunikation, Fichtenstraße 40

Cultural events and street festivals

In the following, cultural event and street festivals are listed that were held in Flingern during the last twenty years, of which some of them only took place during a certain period¹⁰⁹. Five street festival are included, because in these festivals the creative businesses are involved as well with the aim to promote their work. In total, up to 80 businesses in Flingern participate in these events

¹⁰⁹ In the description, the disruption, cancellations, and rearrangements, caused by COVID-19 is not included.

(see table 35 and 36).

Table 35: Cultural events

Name of event	Years	Description
Acoustic (Winter) Festival	2015 -	The Acoustic Festival is a festival taking place twice a year, one in Summer, one in Winter. The target audience are friends of the softer sound in the genre Country, Folk, Pop, and Rock. The number of attendees is limited to 500 people. In August 2023, the last Summer Edition of the Acoustic Festival was held. ¹¹⁰
Flingern Open Air	2006 -	Flingern Open Air is a privately organised two-day festival in an outmost corner of Flingern-Nord. On the stage perform artists and groups from Düsseldorf. There is an entrance fee to cover expenses, but free tickets for people who can't afford one. ¹¹¹
Flingern ohne Strom	2003 -	Flingern without electricity is a privately organised festival by the same person as Flingern Open Air to promote local bands. During the two-day festival up to 20 (young) musicians and groups can perform. There is an entrance fee to cover expenses, with free tickets for people who can't afford one. ¹¹²
Kunstpunkte	1997 -	<i>Kunstpunkte</i> is an event that takes place throughout the city of Düsseldorf. One weekend a year, all the studios in one neighbourhood are open until late. It gives artists the opportunity to present their work to a wide audience. ¹¹³

Source: Own representation

¹¹⁰ Source and for more information see: <https://acoustic-festival.de/de> (last seen: 2024.02.10)

¹¹¹ Source and for more information see: <https://www.lokalkompass.de/tag/flingern-open-air> (last seen: 2024.02.10)

¹¹² Source and for more information see: https://rp-online.de/nrw/staedte/duesseldorf/kultur/flingern-ohne-strom-festival-fuer-akustische-musik_aid-17589299 (last seen: 2024.02.10)

¹¹³ Source and for more information see: <https://kunstpunkte.de> (last seen: 2024.02.10)

Table 36: Street festivals in Flingern-Nord

Name	Years	Description
Flinger Flausen	2005 May	Flinger Flausen was initiated as an art and studio festival to promote the location of creative small businesses (and retail) in the neighbourhood. ¹¹⁴
Flingern in love	2016 September -	This event takes place on one Saturday in the daytime to give the shops the possibility to present their (self-made) products to families and others in a special atmosphere. The shops present their products outside the store and booths sell food and beverages. ¹¹⁵
Flingern Nacht / Flingern at night	2007 May -	This event was initiated to promote shops, studios, and galleries. People should walk around eat and drink in a special atmosphere and to buy in the shops etc. The event takes place on a Thursday day in May/June. Shops are open until midnight. ¹¹⁶
Flingern rollt den roten Teppich aus	2007 November -	This event was initiated together with Flingern at night with the same aim but takes place one Thursday in November in a Christmassy atmosphere. Shops are open until midnight. ¹¹⁷
Internationales Straßenfest (International Street Festival)	May/June, over 42 years	The international street festival takes place once a year on a Saturday from 8 am to 6 pm on Flur-, Bruch- und Schwelmerstraße. It is a flea market with about 200 booths and the festival includes a stage event where local organizations and artists can present themselves and their work. Locals call this event 'Flurstraßenfest' (Flur Street Festival). ¹¹⁸

Source: (Own representation)

¹¹⁴ Source and for more information see: Promotion of the local economy. Case study as part of the evaluation of the integrated action program "Social City NRW" (Neumann, Schmidt and Trettin 2007, 77)

¹¹⁵ Source and for more information see: https://rp-online.de/nrw/staedte/duesseldorf/flingern-in-love-findet-am-samstag-21-september-in-duesseldorf-statt_aid-45769463 (last seen: 2024.02.10.)

¹¹⁶ Source and for more information see: https://rp-online.de/nrw/staedte/duesseldorf/stadtteile/flingern/duesseldorf-flingern-nacht-loest-flingern-at-night-ab_aid-39362445 (last seen: 2024.02.10.)

¹¹⁷ Source and for more information see: https://rp-online.de/nrw/staedte/duesseldorf/flingern-rollt-den-roten-teppich-aus_aid-13937299 (last seen: 2024.02.10.)

¹¹⁸ Source and for more information see: <https://www.buergerinitiative-flingern.de> (last seen: 2024.02.10.)

Annex 6: Traduction de l'Introduction et de la Conclusion

Cette annexe contient une traduction de l'introduction et de la conclusion de la version anglaise de cette thèse.

Introduction

Les jeux vidéo sont entrés dans les foyers depuis les années 1980 et les jeux en ligne font désormais partie intégrante de nos vies depuis l'avènement des jeux sur smartphones. Les médias parlent beaucoup des jeux, des joueurs et du temps passé à jouer. La fascination exercée par les jeux et le comportement des joueurs sont également régulièrement examinés. Toutefois, ce faisant, l'accent est perdu sur l'industrie et les développeurs qui, avec leurs idées et leur créativité, créent de nouveaux mondes dans lesquels les joueurs peuvent s'immerger. Cette thèse se concentre sur cette industrie et sur les travailleurs de l'industrie des jeux vidéo.

Tout comme le monde à l'intérieur des ménages change, le monde à l'extérieur change également. Le quartier, l'arrondissement ou la ville ont également changé au cours de cette période. Ces changements font également l'objet de reportages dans les médias et d'analyses des causes et des conséquences. L'accent est mis sur les industries culturelles et créatives, qui ont pris de plus en plus d'importance ces dernières années. L'industrie des jeux vidéo en fait partie. Les changements peuvent être perçus comme positifs, comme l'élargissement de l'offre dans les magasins ou l'embellissement des parcs de quartiers pour inciter les gens à s'y attarder, ou comme négatifs, comme l'augmentation des prix des appartements (rénovés). Quoi qu'il en soit, tout le monde participe à ces changements, même si la nature et l'ampleur de l'influence varient.

Dans cette thèse, ces deux points sont réunis : l'industrie du jeu vidéo et les changements dans le quartier. Elle explore la relation entre les deux et, pour mieux comprendre l'influence, les dynamiques identifiables et compréhensibles.

Objectifs de la recherche

Depuis les années 1980, les industries culturelles et créatives, y compris l'industrie du jeu vidéo, ont connu un changement notable. D'une position de niche initiale, elles sont devenues un sujet

plus largement discuté, non seulement dans les sciences, mais aussi dans la politique et l'économie (Hesmondhalgh 2013). Les industries créatives « supply goods and services that we broadly associate with cultural, artistic, or simply entertainment value » (Caves 2000, 1). Ces industries culturelles et créatives comprennent ce que l'on considère généralement comme les médias traditionnels, le cinéma, l'édition, la musique, la télévision et d'autres comme le design et l'architecture. En outre, les médias basés sur les nouvelles technologies sont devenus un domaine populaire dans les industries créatives et ont donné naissance à de nouveaux secteurs, tels que l'industrie du jeu vidéo. Ces nouvelles industries se situent « at the crossroads between the arts, business and technology » (UNCTAD 2004, 4). Dans ce contexte, les industries culturelles et créatives désignent « to those industries in our society which employ the characteristic modes of production and organization of industrial corporations to produce and to disseminate symbols in the form of cultural goods and services, generally although not exclusively, as commodities » (Garnham [1987] 1997, 55). Cette évolution s'inscrit dans le contexte de l'émergence de la nouvelle économie, des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication, de l'évolution des conditions de travail et de l'importance accrue de la créativité. L'intérêt majeur des industries culturelles et créatives réside dans la mise en place des bases de la croissance économique et de la prospérité futures. De nombreux gouvernements ont mis en place des programmes de soutien pour bénéficier de ce développement, qui comprennent des subventions et des aides fiscales. Cela a fortement influencé le développement des industries créatives.

L'industrie du jeu vidéo, qui fait partie des industries culturelles et créatives, mérite d'être étudiée car elle est l'une de ces nouvelles industries, combinant « truly artistic and creative content with emergent and novel technologies » et offrant « a fascinating intersection between arts and technology and an area with seemingly greater potential for economic impact and innovation » (Breznitz and Noonan 2014, 597). Comme le souligne O'Donnell (2012, 18), « [g]ame development is a creative collaborative process involving numerous disciplines rooted in a particular culture producing creative, artistic and culturally important works », aboutissant à un produit différent de tous les autres existants. L'industrie du jeu vidéo représente « a new cultural industry that emerged from digitalization, rather than a cultural industry that digitalization affected » (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 358). Elle s'est développée au cours des trente dernières années et est devenue, grâce à une croissance économique considérable, un facteur économique important dans le monde entier. L'industrie du jeu vidéo reflète la capacité et la réalité de l'innovation liée à

l'art de jouer un rôle substantiel dans l'économie (Breznitz and Noonan 2014, 597). C'est pourquoi la recherche sur l'industrie des jeux vidéo se concentre généralement sur les aspects économiques (p. ex. Anderie 2023). En outre, d'autres points focaux peuvent être repérés dans la recherche académique, tels que le développement historique des jeux et de l'industrie (p. ex. Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Smith and Tosca 2013; Wolf 2008a), ou le processus de développement d'un jeu, le travail et la culture du travail (e.g. Hoose 2016; Kerr 2006). L'industrie du jeu vidéo en tant qu'industrie créative, ses interactions avec son environnement et ses relations avec d'autres industries créatives ont fait l'objet de moins de recherches à ce jour (à l'exception de Keogh 2015; Roy-Valex 2010).

Dans le cadre des industries culturelles et créatives, la classe créative, telle qu'elle a été définie par Florida en 2002, avec ses travailleurs créatifs et le milieu créatif, doit être prise en compte. Florida (2002b, 8) postule que la classe créative, avec les professionnels créatifs et les bohèmes, est considérée, en raison de leur créativité, comme une force motrice clé pour la croissance économique, qui est stimulée par l'innovation. Outre sa discussion (critique) (Gadrey 2003; Krätke 2011a; Richards and Wilson 2007; Shearmur 2010; Rolf Sternberg 2012), la théorie souligne l'importance de l'interdépendance entre les travailleurs et les quartiers en tant que lieux de vie et de travail.

Cette approche englobe donc les deux points que sont la 'culture' et la 'créativité'. Elle peut être envisagée dans le contexte du développement des quartiers, où la culture est considérée comme un facteur d'attractivité et d'image permettant d'attirer et de retenir les entreprises, les habitants et les visiteurs (Krajewski 2022, 435-436). Cependant, elle peut également être considérée dans le contexte de l'offre et des personnes qui y passent du temps, plus précisément ce que ces personnes font culturellement dans le quartier et comment cela les influence, car « engaging with culture also encourages creativity and innovation » (Krajewski 2022, 436).

Les travailleurs créatifs ne se définissent pas seulement par leur travail ; ils partagent certaines normes, valeurs et modes de vie. Ils sont devenus un groupe qui peut être considéré, du moins en partie, comme une unité relativement fermée. Les membres de ce groupe interagissent les uns avec les autres pour partager leurs connaissances, apprendre les uns des autres et construire un réseau (professionnel). Ce partage ou transfert d'informations et de connaissances est considéré comme faisant partie d'un processus d'innovation permanent. Le milieu créatif est un lieu qui contient les conditions préalables nécessaires en termes d'infrastructure pour générer un flux d'idées et

d'inventions (Landry 2000, 133). Le milieu créatif représente également l'environnement permettant aux travailleurs d'interagir culturellement, d'utiliser les offres et les équipements culturels ou de participer culturellement au sein du quartier associé à leur mode de vie. Les travailleurs n'agissent pas seulement à l'intérieur de leur lieu de travail, mais aussi à l'extérieur, dans le quartier, en utilisant l'infrastructure et les lieux environnants pendant leur temps de travail et leur temps libre. Par conséquent, les lieux où ils s'installent ne demeurent pas nécessairement les mêmes, car les groupes modifient leur emplacement, au sens étroit ou large, en fonction d'interactions pertinentes, telles que les interactions culturelles, spatiales, socio-économiques et politiques. Ces interactions sont généralement initiées par la perception et l'interprétation subjectives de chaque membre du milieu créatif, tout comme la perception de la dynamique de ce qui se déroule dans le quartier.

Toutefois, ce champ d'application ne peut être étudié seul. Les effets dans un quartier ne sont pas seulement unidirectionnels, des travailleurs créatifs vers le quartier, mais aussi bidirectionnels. Le lieu où les travailleurs créatifs interagissent influence également leur travail en leur offrant, par exemple, un environnement de travail stimulant. Selon Merkel (2012, 694), les chercheurs n'ont pas encore accordé beaucoup d'attention à l'importance des lieux et du contexte spatial par rapport à la créativité. Les interactions bidirectionnelles sont incluses dans cette recherche, intégrées dans le contexte de la dynamique du quartier et représentées du point de vue des travailleurs, afin de couvrir les différents aspects d'un quartier en évolution.

Jusqu'à présent, l'attention s'est également portée sur les industries culturelles et créatives et sur leur localisation dans des zones et des quartiers attrayants. Les chercheurs ont par exemple examiné où et pourquoi ces industries se sont installées à certains endroits (Evans 2009a; Heider 2011; Tomczak and Stachowiak 2015), et quels sont les avantages économiques des industries culturelles et créatives dans les communautés (Krätke 2011a; Potts and Cunningham 2008; Thiel 2011). Les approches traditionnelles des changements dans les quartiers se concentrent généralement sur les questions de gentrification et de ségrégation en mettant l'accent sur les inconvénients pour les habitants dans la vie quotidienne, mais ne tiennent pas compte des habitants et de leur comportement, qu'ils favorisent ou non le processus, ni de la façon dont ils assistent aux changements et de ce que cela signifie pour leur vie quotidienne (Whiting and Hannam 2017, 319). En outre, elles ne tiennent pas compte des effets de l'évolution des conditions de travail dans la

nouvelle économie sur le mode de vie des travailleurs (Floeting 2007, 371), ni de la question de savoir si certaines entreprises ou branches industrielles sont à l'origine des processus de transformation. Les recherches portant sur l'impact de ces industries sur leur quartier sont donc limitées. Les chercheurs n'ont pas étudié la manière dont le lieu change et se développe lorsque certaines entreprises s'y installent. Plus précisément, notre analyse de la littérature révèle que les dynamiques culturelles sont souvent considérées comme allant de soi dans ces processus, comme si elles les accompagnaient 'naturellement' dans une sorte d' 'arrière-plan'. Par conséquent, leur rôle (nécessairement de nature diverse et en fonction des différents contextes) n'est pas vraiment considéré et elles ne sont pas vraiment comprises dans toute leur complexité, notamment dans la manière dont elles sont interprétées par les différents acteurs impliqués.

Afin de combler ces lacunes, cette recherche vise à identifier les dynamiques culturelles, spatiales, socio-économiques et politiques des industries créatives dans le quartier et l'influence qu'elles exercent. En outre, elle se concentre sur la dynamique culturelle et le lien entre les travailleurs des industries créatives et la culture et la créativité. Elle s'appuie sur une étude de cas du secteur des jeux vidéo à Montréal (Canada) et à Düsseldorf (Allemagne). Ce choix de villes s'explique par l'importance économique de ce secteur. Montréal est l'un des plus importants centres de jeux vidéo au monde. En raison de sa situation entre l'Amérique du Nord et l'Europe, de son bilinguisme avec des communautés francophones et anglophones, d'une culture de l'animation numérique et de spécialistes bien formés, Montréal a attiré de nombreuses entreprises qui y opèrent. De grandes entreprises comme Ubisoft, Electronic Arts et WB Games Montréal ont ouvert des succursales à Montréal, ce qui a contribué à la croissance d'une grappe liée à l'industrie du jeu vidéo dans la ville. Pour Montréal, le secteur des jeux vidéo est l'un des secteurs de haute technologie qui a contribué à la diversification de la base économique de la métropole. Néanmoins, ce statut n'a pu être atteint sans politiques locales et nationales. L'établissement de la grappe des jeux vidéo à Montréal a fortement bénéficié du soutien du gouvernement du Québec. Depuis 1997, le programme de soutien du gouvernement du Québec offre des subventions publiques et des subventions fiscales pour la création de chaque nouveau poste ainsi que des programmes de formation. De plus, en 1998, le gouvernement du Québec a financé la Cité du Multimédia dans des bâtiments industriels du dix-neuvième siècle abandonnés et réaménagés à proximité du centre. La Ville de Montréal a également encouragé le développement de cette industrie (Britton, Tremblay and Smith 2009, 221; Grandadam, Cohendet and Simon 2013, 1706; Tremblay and Rousseau

2005).

Düsseldorf est l'un des principaux centres de jeux vidéo en Allemagne. Une scène de développement solide, d'importants éditeurs internationaux, des installations d'enseignement et de formation spécifiques aux jeux vidéo et des événements de jeux vidéo de renommée mondiale sont autant de facteurs qui incitent les entreprises de jeux vidéo à s'installer à Düsseldorf et dans la région Rhin-Ruhr qui l'entoure (GTAI 2016). Düsseldorf a attiré des entreprises telles qu'*Innogames*, une société fondée en Allemagne, et, comme c'est le cas à Montréal, une succursale d'Ubisoft, comprenant un studio et un bureau d'affaires. Au cours des deux dernières décennies, l'industrie du jeu vidéo est devenue un pilier important de l'économie de la ville. Comme à Montréal, cela n'aurait pas été possible sans les subventions de la ville ou de l'État et le financement de programmes spéciaux de soutien à l'industrie du jeu vidéo, comme l'initiative CREATIVE.NRW du Land de Rhénanie-du-Nord-Westphalie, lancée en 2009 pour soutenir l'implantation de nouvelles entreprises de logiciels.

Montréal et Düsseldorf sont des villes importantes pour l'industrie des jeux vidéo, et pour ces deux villes, l'industrie des jeux vidéo est un pilier économique important. Bien qu'elles aient pu bénéficier de politiques de financement, soutenues par des subventions et des fonds locaux et nationaux, Düsseldorf n'a pas réussi à attirer des entreprises dans la même mesure que Montréal. Cependant, aucune étude comparative de l'industrie des jeux vidéo dans les deux villes n'a été réalisée jusqu'à présent. Les recherches précédentes se sont concentrées sur le regroupement et les développeurs de jeux dans le cas de Montréal (Darchen and Tremblay 2015; Grandadam, Cohendet and Simon 2013; Pilon and Tremblay 2013) et pour Düsseldorf, l'industrie du jeu vidéo n'a pas fait l'objet de recherches.

L'étude parallèle de la dynamique de l'industrie du jeu vidéo dans les quartiers des deux villes nous permettrait de mettre en évidence les similitudes et les différences.

Outre le fait que l'industrie du jeu vidéo fait partie des industries culturelles et créatives, cette thèse se concentre sur les personnes qui travaillent dans cette industrie parce que ces personnes sont dans le voisinage et peuvent initier des dynamiques ou en faire partie par leur présence quotidienne. Ces travailleurs sont éclipsés et ont rarement fait l'objet de recherches jusqu'à présent ou, pour reprendre les termes de Wimmer and Sitnikova (2012, 153) : « The different game cultures have

been drawing attention of the researchers for many years already, whereas until quite recently the people who stay behind video games – the so-called gameworkers – were undeservingly staying in shade ». Jusqu'à présent, la recherche s'est concentrée sur les consommateurs de jeux vidéo et sur le contenu de ces jeux.

Les développeurs de jeux vidéo travaillent dans un environnement qui combine les capacités artistiques, créatives et technologiques :

Creativity in the video game industry is present throughout the entire structure. This means that it drives the industry, creating endless opportunities, at the same time as it creates great pressure. One would, at a first glance, think that this was a highly technological environment. This is true, to some extent. But [...] technical logics and perfection may not have that much to do with successful video games. One has to look at it from artistic and creative perspectives in most parts of the process of developing and publishing a video game. (Zackariasson and Wilson 2010, 110)

Bien que les développeurs de jeux vidéo travaillent dans le secteur créatif, ils sont le plus souvent considérés comme des « nerds only dealing with games all the time » (Wimmer and Sitnikova 2012, 161). En outre, la partie créative ou artistique de leur travail est reconnue mais ne reçoit pas l'attention qu'elle mérite dans la recherche. On accorde encore moins d'attention aux développeurs de jeux vidéo eux-mêmes, à leur propre créativité et à leur relation à la culture qui pourrait être à l'origine de leur travail.

L'examen de l'aspect culturel et créatif des développeurs de jeux vidéo permet de mieux connaître un groupe spécifique de travailleurs actifs dans les industries culturelles et créatives et dont le domaine professionnel combine les mondes technologique et créatif du travail. Il permet également de comprendre à quel point ces personnes sont culturelles et créatives et comment cela influence leur travail en tant que développeurs de jeux vidéo. Ces aspects culturels et créatifs sont particulièrement importants. L'accent mis sur la culture et la créativité concerne également le quartier, qui représente l'espace des offres et des activités. Il se concentre également sur leur relation avec les activités qui peuvent avoir lieu au niveau social, entre autres.

Démarche de recherche

Sur la base de ces aspects, nous nous concentrons à présent sur les thèmes qui jouent un rôle dans cette thèse. Il s'agit de l'industrie des jeux vidéo, du quartier dans lequel elle est implantée, des diverses dynamiques entre les deux, et des travailleurs de l'industrie des jeux vidéo et de leurs activités culturelles et créatives. L'objet de l'étude est le lien qui les unit. La première question de recherche est donc la suivante : « Quelles sont et comment pouvons-nous comprendre les relations entre l'industrie du jeu vidéo et un quartier spécifique, en particulier les relations entre les travailleurs de l'industrie du jeu vidéo et le quartier autour de leur espace de travail ? » Par ailleurs, l'accent est également mis sur la créativité et les activités culturelles des développeurs de jeux vidéo. Le quartier se trouve à proximité immédiate et offre un large éventail d'activités et d'événements culturels qui sont utilisés. En relation avec le lien entre les développeurs de jeux vidéo et le quartier, une autre question de recherche se pose : « Quel est le rôle de la dynamique culturelle dans la relation entre les travailleurs de l'industrie des jeux vidéo et le quartier, en particulier, quel est le rôle des pratiques culturelles dans le quartier pour les travailleurs créatifs ? »

Des hypothèses ont été développées pour répondre à ces questions de recherche. Ces hypothèses se concentrent chacune sur un point différent lié aux dynamiques. Quatre hypothèses se dégagent de ces points : La classe créative des travailleurs de l'industrie du jeu vidéo peut avoir un impact, de nature et de portée diverses, sur l'environnement du quartier de l'industrie du jeu vidéo, et vice versa (hypothèse 1). Les dynamiques en jeu sont détectables selon leurs déclinaisons culturelles, spatiales, socio-économiques et politiques (hypothèse 2). Les dynamiques culturelles et plus spécifiquement le style de vie culturel sont importants pour comprendre les relations entre les travailleurs du secteur des jeux vidéo et le quartier, la façon dont ils se perçoivent en tant qu'individus créatifs et en relation avec le quartier (hypothèse 3). Les dynamiques impliquent à la fois des continuités et des changements dans le temps (hypothèse 4).

La thèse

Le chapitre 1 'Domaine de recherche et littérature' propose un aperçu de l'état actuel de la recherche. Les trois grandes sections de ce chapitre constituent la base des différents domaines sur lesquels porte cette thèse. La première section traite de l'aspect culturel, en particulier des industries culturelles et créatives. La seconde traite de la localisation, du quartier, de ce qui s'y

passé et s'y déroule, et de ce qui est entendu sous le terme de 'dynamique' dans cette thèse, ainsi que de ce que l'on peut y trouver, comme les commodités. Les deux sections s'inscrivent dans le champ de la nouvelle économie, à travers ou pendant lequel le cap a été mis sur l'industrie dont fait partie l'industrie des jeux vidéo. Ce chapitre se termine par une description des personnes qui font l'objet de cette thèse : les développeurs de jeux vidéo. Afin de mieux comprendre le travail des développeurs de jeux vidéo, cette section comprend également un aperçu de l'industrie elle-même.

L'objectif de cette thèse est ensuite précisé au chapitre 2. Les questions de recherche et les hypothèses qui en découlent sont développées dans la première partie de ce chapitre. Ce sont elles qui guideront l'étude dans la suite. Sur cette base, le cadre conceptuel et opérationnel est développé. La mise en œuvre de cette étude est ensuite décrite dans la deuxième partie, méthodologique, qui traite de la conduite des entretiens et de l'analyse des articles de journaux.

Le chapitre 3 examine de plus près les deux quartiers. Il ne s'agit pas seulement de localiser les deux lieux dans l'espace, mais aussi de les décrire plus en détails. Après la description du quartier, on retrouve une description de la relation entre le quartier et Ubisoft ainsi que des données supplémentaires afin de compléter la relation.

Une partie de cette recherche consiste à analyser des articles de journaux. Les résultats de cette analyse sont présentés au chapitre 4. Les articles de journaux constituent la première partie de l'analyse. Des articles de trois journaux canadiens et de trois journaux allemands liés aux quartiers et à Ubisoft sont analysés. Il s'agit du point de vue des journalistes qui ont rendu compte de l'implantation d'Ubisoft dans les quartiers depuis le début. Il s'agit d'une vision continue de l'évolution des quartiers par différents journalistes et de ce qui s'y déroule. Bien que les articles doivent être liés à Ubisoft, ils couvrent un large éventail de sujets. En examinant les 25 dernières années, ils abordent également des sujets que les développeurs de jeux vidéo interrogés ne connaissent pas (ou ne peuvent pas connaître), puisqu'ils ne travaillent pas dans le quartier ou n'y sont pas associés depuis si longtemps. En bref, les articles de journaux permettent d'élargir la vision de ce qui se passe dans les quartiers. Les deux quartiers sont examinés indépendamment l'un de l'autre et les résultats sont ensuite comparés. Chaque quartier est analysé à l'aide des dimensions présentées dans le chapitre présentant le cadre opérationnel. Trois sections ont été ajoutées aux dimensions puisque toutes les informations pertinentes des articles ne pouvaient être attribuées à

une seule dimension, c'est-à-dire à une seule section. Les sections supplémentaires complètent le tableau et donnent une impression globale de la relation entre l'industrie des jeux vidéo, les développeurs, les quartiers et ce qui s'y déploie.

Après l'analyse des journaux, les chapitres 5, 6 et 7 sont consacrés aux entretiens et à leur analyse. Il s'agit d'entretiens avec des personnes qui travaillent dans l'industrie du jeu vidéo, plus précisément chez Ubisoft, et avec des acteurs culturels qui travaillent ou ont leur studio dans le quartier étudié. Tant les personnes qui travaillent chez Ubisoft que les acteurs culturels proviennent de différents domaines. Cela permet d'avoir une vision large et variée du sujet étudié. L'analyse des entretiens s'étend sur trois chapitres, menés selon une approche hypothético-déductive ainsi qu'une micro-analyse de nature inductive. Les résultats des entretiens sont très complets et fructueux. Ils donnent une vision en profondeur des développeurs de jeux vidéo et de la relation entre l'industrie des jeux vidéo et le quartier. En outre, l'analyse est descriptive mais, dans certaines sections, un aspect analytique est intégré. En divisant les chapitres en trois, la structure du cadre opérationnel a été conservée et demeure analogue aux sections du chapitre 4, l'analyse des articles de journaux. Le chapitre 5 traite des quatre dynamiques choisies – les dynamiques culturelles, spatiales, socio-économiques et politiques – ainsi que de la dimension culturelle de ce travail, c'est-à-dire le mode de vie culturel des personnes interrogées et des organisations culturelles dans le quartier. L'accent est donc mis sur ce qui se déroule dans le quartier et qui pourrait être en rapport avec les dynamiques choisies. Le lieu où tout se déroule et ce que l'on y trouve, c'est-à-dire le quartier en tant que tel avec son milieu créatif, et sa perception, font l'objet du chapitre 6, 'Dans le quartier'. La dernière partie de l'analyse, le chapitre 7, porte sur la relation entre l'industrie des jeux vidéo et le quartier et sur le rôle des quartiers dans les activités culturelles des développeurs de jeux vidéo. Ce chapitre examine les aspects de la question de recherche qui n'ont pas encore été pris en compte. La question de recherche elle-même ne peut être résolue que sur la base des trois chapitres d'analyse.

Après la présentation descriptive des résultats des analyses des articles de journaux et des entretiens dans les chapitres 4 à 7, tous ces résultats sont ensuite examinés de façon intégrée dans la discussion du chapitre 8. Sur la base des résultats et de données complémentaires, les hypothèses sont vérifiées ou falsifiées et des réponses sont apportées aux questions de recherche. Certains points apparus comme significatifs au cours de l'analyse sont examinés plus en détail. Pour conclure ce chapitre,

les résultats sont analysés au regard de la littérature pertinente afin de déterminer s'ils confirment ou non les conclusions.

Ce travail se termine par la conclusion, qui jette un nouveau regard sur l'ensemble du travail, c'est-à-dire sur ce qui a été réalisé, sur ses limites et sur les questions qui se posent pour la poursuite de la recherche.

Une dernière remarque avant l'examen de la littérature : Le sujet de cette thèse a été choisi en 2016. La réalisation du projet de recherche a cependant pris davantage de temps que prévu, la conduite de la phase d'entretiens et l'analyse ultérieure ayant été (entre autres raisons, incluant la pandémie) particulièrement chronophages. Nous estimons cependant qu'une image détaillée des développeurs de jeux vidéo, de leur vie culturelle, créative et sociale, de leurs perceptions et représentations ainsi que de leur lien avec le quartier à différents niveaux de dynamiques, à l'époque où les entretiens ont été menés, a pu être déployée.

Conclusion

Cette recherche a porté sur la relation entre l'industrie des jeux vidéo et le quartier, en particulier la relation entre les développeurs de jeux vidéo et le quartier dans lequel cette industrie est implantée, et le rôle de la dynamique culturelle et des pratiques culturelles des développeurs de jeux vidéo dans le quartier. D'autres dynamiques, spatiales, socioéconomiques et politiques, ont aussi été analysées. Notre étude montre une image précise et multidimensionnelle de ces sujets, l'approche microsociologique fournissant une image particulièrement détaillée des développeurs de jeux vidéo et de leurs perceptions, en particulier en ce qui concerne leur comportement culturel et leur mode de vie culturel, ainsi que la relation des développeurs de jeux vidéo avec le quartier. Les questionnaires de jeux vidéo, les acteurs culturels et les journaux font également l'objet d'un examen approfondi.

Contribution de cette recherche

Cette thèse contribue à la littérature scientifique portant sur l'industrie des jeux vidéo et, ce faisant, à la littérature plus générale portant sur les industries culturelles et créatives. Elle approfondit également la recherche sur le groupe des employés de l'industrie des jeux vidéo, qui n'a pas été autant au centre de la recherche que l'industrie elle-même considérée plus globalement. Cependant,

cette thèse n'aurait pas pu être réalisée sans inclure d'autres concepts. Par exemple, les concepts de milieu créatif, de style de vie (culturel) ou d'équipements et d'infrastructures et leurs liens avec les développeurs de jeux vidéo ont également produit des résultats qui peuvent contribuer à ce domaine.

Cette recherche, qui combine une approche hypothético-déductive et une micro-analyse de nature inductive, est très complexe car elle couvre de nombreux domaines, tels que les différentes dynamiques, les modes de vie, le milieu créatif et le quartier. Néanmoins, ou peut-être précisément à cause de cela, l'étude a réussi à relier de nombreux domaines différents qui pourraient autrement être considérés de manière isolée. Mais ce n'est pas seulement le lien, mais aussi l'effet réciproque qui était au centre de cette étude. Cet aspect n'avait jamais été étudié à ce point auparavant. Ce lien est celui entre les différentes interfaces de l'art et de la technologie, de l'art des développeurs de jeux vidéo et de l'art des artistes, mais aussi l'interface de différentes dynamiques, le style de vie et les dynamiques situées dans des lieux spécifiques. Ceci a été présenté en détails dans les chapitres analysant les articles de journaux et surtout dans ceux analysant les entretiens réalisés. Différents points de vue ont été exprimés, notamment en ce qui concerne l'atmosphère, l'importance du milieu créatif dans le quartier, des interactions sociales et de la mise en réseau, ainsi que l'importance des équipements (culturels) dans le quartier pour les développeurs de jeux vidéo. En outre, des points de vue différents ont été exprimés concernant le mode de vie culturel des développeurs de jeux vidéo, ainsi que sur leurs activités culturelles et leur participation. Les différentes manières de comprendre sont liées à la perception. Cela souligne bien que cette thèse est basée sur les perceptions et les interprétations des participants.

L'étude compare également deux quartiers dans différents pays. La comparaison montre que si l'industrie des jeux vidéo est différente en termes de localisation, les travailleurs de l'industrie des jeux vidéo sont similaires en termes de styles de vie et d'activités culturelles. Une telle comparaison n'a jamais été réalisée auparavant, qu'il s'agisse de Montréal ou de Düsseldorf. Pour Düsseldorf, il n'y a pas encore eu d'étude portant sur l'industrie des jeux vidéo ou sur les développeurs de jeux vidéo.

Limites

La recherche qualitative a ses limites, et cette étude ne fait pas exception. Ces limites sont liées à la situation personnelle des personnes interrogées, à l'élaboration du questionnaire et à des facteurs externes. Cette étude n'a pas tenu compte du temps que les personnes interrogées peuvent consacrer à des activités culturelles et créatives, ni de l'importance qu'elles leur accordent. Il est également possible que les personnes interrogées aient donné des réponses qu'elles pensaient que je voulais entendre (biais de confirmation), comme dans le cas des activités culturelles et créatives qu'elles pratiquent.

Un autre élément qui n'a pu être étudié de façon approfondie dans le cadre de cette thèse est le thème de la gentrification. Ce sujet a été soulevé par certains participants et mentionné dans des articles de journaux, constatant le développement des quartiers et les changements qui s'opèrent dans ce contexte. L'approfondissement de ce thème s'avérerait pertinent, notamment sous l'angle des trajectoires propres aux différents types d'acteurs, mais aurait dépassé le cadre de la présente étude.

Il convient également de noter que le cadre théorique a été établi avant la pandémie et que sa mise en œuvre, c'est-à-dire les entretiens, a eu lieu au cours de la première année de la pandémie. Le questionnaire a été établi avant la pandémie et n'a pas été adapté à la nouvelle situation, comme l'ont dit certaines des personnes interrogées, la perception pourrait être influencée par le fait de ne pas avoir été dans le quartier pendant un certain temps ou de ne pas avoir pu faire les activités auxquelles elles étaient habituées.

Recherches futures

Même si cette étude a pu répondre aux questions de recherche et produire de nouveaux résultats scientifiques qui enrichissent la compréhension de l'industrie du jeu vidéo et de ses travailleurs dans la littérature scientifique, les résultats comportent des lacunes pouvant constituer la base de recherches ultérieures. Dans cette étude, quatre dynamiques ont été sélectionnées. Ces dynamiques couvrent différents aspects, mais ne peuvent pas rendre compte de tout ce qui se déroule dans un domaine. C'est également le cas dans cette étude, comme le montrent les déclarations sur les dynamiques dans le quartier, dont certaines ne peuvent être attribuées à aucune des dynamiques

sélectionnées. Un regard portant sur d'autres dynamiques viendrait compléter le tableau présenté ici, comme la dynamique des populations qui décrit « comment les populations changent de taille, de composition et de distribution spatiale au fil du temps » (Schuster et al. 2018, 12) (own translation), et la dynamique urbaine qui traite notamment des changements dans l'espace public. Cela inclut, par exemple, les changements dans le système de transport dans les zones urbaines.

Les développeurs de jeux vidéo eux-mêmes constituent un autre point de départ pour de futures recherches. Même s'ils sont de plus en plus au centre de l'attention académique, ils offrent un vaste champ de recherche. Une question pourrait être la relation entre l'aspect technologique et le travail créatif. Une autre question serait le type de lieux que les développeurs de jeux vidéo préfèrent pour exprimer leur mode de vie culturel.

Comme l'a montré cette étude, l'atmosphère et l'ambiance jouent un rôle particulier. Il est donc intéressant d'en savoir davantage à leur sujet. Il serait pertinent de savoir quelles sont les caractéristiques de ces ambiances et atmosphères particulières et comment elles sont construites médiatiquement, institutionnellement, urbanistiquement, etc.

Enfin, il ne faut pas oublier la pandémie et son impact. Après la fin de la pandémie, des questions se posent qui peuvent constituer le socle de nouvelles recherches et pour lesquelles les résultats actuels peuvent servir de base puisque les entretiens et les articles de journaux pris en compte dans cette recherche ne couvrent que le début de la pandémie, à un moment où l'on disposait de suffisamment de données pour cette étude. À cette époque, aucune influence durable de la pandémie n'a encore été signalée. Un exemple de recherche future serait la manière dont la pandémie a affecté le lien entre le quartier et les développeurs de jeux vidéo, ainsi que le style de vie culturel des développeurs.

L'avenir des quartiers, d'Ubisoft et de ses travailleurs

Avant la pandémie, il aurait peut-être été possible d'effectuer une prédiction, même modeste, concernant l'évolution future des quartiers considérés. Mais aujourd'hui, certaines conditions préalables ont changé et le travail à domicile a été mis en place. Dans le secteur des jeux vidéo, il n'était pas possible de travailler à domicile avant la pandémie, mais la nécessité d'un bureau à domicile a changé la donne. Une fois que cela a été possible, Ubisoft n'est pas revenue à la

philosophie selon laquelle tous les travailleurs devaient être de retour au bureau. Désormais, les travailleurs sont moins souvent sur leur lieu de travail physique, une situation qui peut avoir un impact sur le voisinage et le quartier. Cela ne signifie pas nécessairement que les espaces de travail deviendront vides, mais il se peut que d'autres entreprises s'y installent et, par conséquent, influencent le développement futur des quartiers à leur manière. Cela pourrait également influencer la « symbiose » entre l'industrie du jeu vidéo et le quartier du Mile End. Aujourd'hui, le Mile End ne peut être imaginé sans Ubisoft, pour le meilleur ou pour le pire, selon que l'entreprise soit considérée comme la source de nombreuses dynamiques ou qu'elle en fasse partie. La succursale de Düsseldorf est loin d'un tel cas de figure. Son importance à l'avenir dépendra de l'évolution d'Ubisoft et de sa visibilité, ce qui n'est pas du tout acquis. Ce développement a également une influence sur les travailleurs et leur relation avec le quartier. S'ils passent moins de temps dans le quartier, le lien avec celui-ci risque de se distendre. C'est particulièrement vrai pour le Mile End. Il n'est toutefois pas possible d'effectuer de prédictions.

Enfin, comme l'a montré cette étude, les travailleurs de l'industrie du jeu vidéo sont en général très intéressés par l'art et la culture et aiment réaliser diverses activités culturelles. Mais cela n'est pas lié à l'endroit où se trouve leur espace de travail. Cependant, cette étude a également révélé que la plupart des participants ne sont pas conscients de l'offre et des équipements dans les quartiers. Il a également été démontré qu'il fallait éveiller leur intérêt pour qu'ils explorent l'offre. Cela dépend aussi des participants mêmes ainsi que de la perception et de l'atmosphère du quartier.

Grâce à une approche microsociologique, nos résultats permettent d'enrichir une partie de la littérature portant sur les industries culturelles et créatives et leurs employés, ainsi que sur leurs pratiques et représentations par rapport à leur environnement (culturel). En particulier, en ce qui concerne le secteur analysé ici, ils aident à comprendre comment différents facteurs jouent un rôle dans la relation entre l'industrie des jeux vidéo et sa localisation, ou ne jouent pas de rôle, ou jouent un rôle à des degrés divers selon la perception et l'interprétation des travailleurs de l'industrie des jeux vidéo, des acteurs culturels et de la perspective des journaux. En ce qui concerne les personnes travaillant dans l'industrie des jeux vidéo, elles aident à comprendre leur vision et leur relation à la culture ainsi que leur mode de vie culturel.