Creating Space Together

An Ethnographic Case Study at the Pauluskerk

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Abstract

This study explores how the Pauluskerk, in Rotterdam, aims to create a social space for those individuals who commonly find themselves in the margins of society. More specifically, this study investigates the role their community art initiative plays in the process of reaching this objective. In order to adequately study this phenomenon, the researcher spent 50 hours engaged in participant observations at various Pauluskerk settings and events. Also, twelve in-depth interviews were conducted with organizational members and visitors. The conceptual canvas of this study is primarily colored by Lefebvre's work on the production of space. This perspective facilitates a better understanding of how the Pauluskerk ameliorates the experience of marginality by creating a *place to be*. The community arts initiative is highly influenced by the ambiguous organizational setting in which it is organized. As a result, it fulfills three main functions in the production of a social space. First of all, it adds Role Flexibility. It allows individuals to escape undesired social roles, they can experiment with different roles, and thus engage differently with the world around them. Secondly, it presents an additional means of communication as of which *unnecessary silence* is broken. And thirdly, the community arts initiative offers a choice. It assures more symmetrical relationships between organizational members and visitors. Altogether, this illustrates that the Pauluskerk does not create a social space *for* the marginalized. On the contrary, they succeed in producing a social space *with* the marginalized. The visitors are part of the production process; they become co-authors of space.

KEYWORDS: Social Space, Community Art, Marginality, Faith-Based Organizations

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Acknowledgements

This research project has showed me a different side of the city I thought I knew. It was wonderful to rediscover the familiar. I want to thank the Pauluskerk for their incredible hospitality. I am truly thankful to all the people I have met at the Pauluskerk for making this a captivating, unforgettable, and thought-provoking experience.

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1. Introduction

In the city center of Rotterdam, close to the Central Station, next to a Chinese restaurant, and a few dozen meters away from the cinema, one can find the Pauluskerk. The organization resides in a futuristic looking building designed by the British architect Will Alsop. If it were not for the name, it is unlikely that one would associate the building with a church. The Pauluskerk is open seven days a week from nine in the morning till nine in the evening. The doors of the Pauluskerk are always open and then not only in the proverbial sense. A cloth tied around the door handle ensures that the door is literally always open.

In their 2013 annual report, the Pauluskerk presents a list of groups of people who they try to help. In that list alone, they report ten different target audiences. A few examples are, sexual minorities, undocumented immigrants, (ex-)drug addicts, and people without a home. What these groups have in common is that they are often marginalized in contemporary society. As a result, they are excluded from viable economic opportunities, public discussions, and also scholarly dialogues (Von Braun & Gatzweiler, 2014; Novak & Harter, 2008). It has been said that in recent years, public space has been increasingly privatized and is primarily constructed to serve commercial purposes (Mac Síthigh, 2012; Belina, 2011). Because of the privatization and commercialization of public space, there are certain actors (or groups) who are unable to comply with the expected usages of those spaces (Taylor, 2013). These groups of people occupy space in different, non-normative ways. It is exactly those people for whom the Pauluskerk tries to construct a place to be. Yet, it is unclear how they exactly aim to reach that objective. This study sets out to examine and describe that process in greater detail.

The Pauluskerk tries to help their target audiences in a variety of different ways. They for example provide shelter to those who temporarily find themselves without a home, they provide legal consultancy to undocumented immigrants, a doctor holds office hours every Thursday, and they also organize a symphony of culturally oriented activities. This study focuses particularly on the cultural activities organized by the Pauluskerk. These activities are characterized by their participatory and inclusive nature and vary from writing poetry to creating large communal paintings and sculptures. In academic literature, similar initiatives are often discussed as community art and are believed to produce positive social consequences (Madyaningrum & Sonn, 2011). The idea that the process of creating art facilitates emotional expression, promotes the development of community, and fosters meaningful interaction is not at all new. Fromm

(1955 as cited in Lowe, 2000) already regarded collective art as the key to transforming an individualistic into a communitarian society for it permits man "to feel one with others in a meaningful, rich, productive way" (p. 360). The institutionalization of collective art into an approach to foster social inclusion, develop community, and facilitate other socially desirable outcomes is however relatively new and there has been little empirical research in this area (Moody & Phinney, 2012).

Of course, community art cannot be understood in a vacuum. To understand the unique ways in which individuals experience the cultural activities, organized by the Pauluskerk, this study needs an encompassing perspective that allows the researcher to develop a holistic understanding of this social setting. Furthermore, this study does not aim to solely contribute to the academic understanding of community art. The Pauluskerk affords an interesting opportunity to explore how an organization aims to construct an inclusive social space for precisely those who are commonly excluded from society. It proves to be a unique opportunity to explore how notions such as culture, marginality, and communication are inextricably and reciprocally bound within spaces of care. The conceptual lens for understanding how the Pauluskerk functions and how it is experienced by its subjects is primarily informed by Lefebvre's book *Production de l'espace* which was published in 1974 (this study cites from the 1991 English edition). Therefore, this study approaches space not as the "passive locus of social relations", but rather as something that has an active, operational, and constructive role in society (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 11).

Putnam (2000), in his book *Bowling Alone*, presents an interesting understanding of what constitutes a church. He quotes Reverend McMullen (1994 as cited in Putnam, 2000) who says the following: "It's not a building; it's not an institution, even. It is relationships between one person and the next" (p. 66). By looking at the Pauluskerk through the concept of social space, the researcher is continuously reminded to pay attention to both the social and the material and see how they interact. Social space is not only a "concrete materiality but a thought concept and feeling – an experience" (Goonewardena, Kipfer, Milgrom, & Schmid, 2008, p. 41).

1.2 Academic & Societal Relevance

In the upcoming paragraphs, I will present four points that are meant to emphasize and articulate the academic and societal relevance of this study. It is not a surprise that in a Master's program called *Media, Culture and Society* the academic and societal relevance will always be very much interrelated and overlapping. Yet, one could still say that the first three points primarily address

the academic relevance of the study whereas the final paragraph concerns itself more with the societal relevance.

When looking at research on Faith Based Organizations (hereafter called FBOs), or other spaces of care, the populations are often described in rather homogenous terms. Herring (2014) for example is interested in the inhabitants of homeless encampments. Cloke, May, and Johnsen (2010) talk about the homeless city. Lancione (2014a) discusses the experiences of homeless people in Italian cities. As mentioned before, the Pauluskerk tries to provide help to a variety of different groups. And many different people indeed find their way to the Pauluskerk. This research aims to take a more nuanced and reserved approach with regards to defining the population. Homeless people in Rotterdam definitely visit the Pauluskerk and there are certain services specifically aimed at helping those without a home. But it is in the Pauluskerk that they encounter, and possibly interact with a lot of different people. To truly make sense of the lived experiences of homeless individuals, in the Pauluskerk, this study is required to also pay attention to other groups of people. Therefore, this study departs from the practices and experiences of an individual, allows them to find their own articulations, and consequently tries to find patterns in those accounts. This approach is methodologically challenging and is unlikely to lead to a conclusive answer. But Lefebvre (1991) argues that by describing and examining the contradictions inherent to social space and social reality one is truly able to further our understanding of these concepts. Also, it seems necessary to take such an approach because it respects the complexities and nuances of providing care to people who often find themselves in the margins of society.

Secondly, this study also aims to contribute to the understanding of community art. The terminology in which this concept is currently discussed seems to be underdeveloped. Previous research has primarily studied community art from an organizational perspective. McQueen-Thompson and Ziguras (2002) encourage scholars, interested in community art, to not only explore the needs and objectives of policymakers or organizations, but to especially focus on the participants' "ways of evaluating their experience" (p. 12). By engaging in participant observations at the Pauluskerk, and interviewing both organizational members and participants, this study is able to gather and analyze different perspectives on the cultural activities.

Thirdly, Lowe (2002) calls for future research to expand the scope of our current understanding of community art and participation in such projects by "examining multiple sites"

(p. 384). This research not only takes a more encompassing approach in studying this phenomenon, but also studies it in a truly unique context. Previous research, in this area, has not yet focused on the implementation of community art initiatives by FBOs. This study explores the notion of community art in new surroundings. In doing so, this research may be able to find different social consequences and new functions.

Finally, developing our understanding of producing places for marginalized voices is never only beneficial in academic terms. It is very much a social issue as well. It is about daily life and about the people we may encounter in the city. The social relevance of this research became especially evident at the end of April, 2015. During this period of political uncertainty, the Dutch coalition was reported to be on the brink of breaking apart. The Dutch government sought to resolve a dispute with regards to the asylum seeker policy. More precisely, the government had to agree on whether to provide basic food and shelter to undocumented or failed asylum seekers. Positions taken up by the two largest political parties, the VVD and the PVDA, were greatly opposed to each other. The Pauluskerk was often mentioned in both local and national news media because of their somewhat controversial and welcoming attitude towards undocumented asylum seekers and their persistence to provide "Bed, Bath, and Bread". It goes to show that the same social setting can also become a vessel for political activism and social resistance. Enhancing our understanding about FBOs, their practices, and the individuals who enjoy their services, is never only relevant in the academic arena, but also remains highly relevant at a political and social level.

1.3 Research Question

The Pauluskerk is quite clear in their ambition, they aim to create a space *to be* for those who find themselves in the margins of society (Stichting Diaconaal Centrum Pauluskerk Rotterdam, 2013). It remains rather unclear, however, what that precisely entails on a practical level and how they aim to achieve that objective. This study sets out to explore what role the cultural program plays in the process of creating a 'space for the marginalized'. The cultural program is the name the Pauluskerk has given to a collection of different cultural activities they frequently organize. At the moment of writing, the cultural program consists of three main activities, the Dichterscafé, the Kerkcafé, and the Open Atelier. A more detailed description of these activities will be provided in the next chapter. The overarching question this study aims to answer is the following.

Research Question: How does the Cultural Program contribute to the Pauluskerk as a social space?

In addition to the main research question, two sub-questions have been formulated. These sub-questions narrow the focus of the research and are instrumental in eventually providing an answer to the main research question. The first sub-question is primarily concerned with the context in which the community art initiative is organized.

Sub-question 1: How is the Cultural Program influenced by the organizational context?

As mentioned before, a community art initiative cannot be understood in a vacuum. Therefore, the first sub-question is designed to encourage this study to pay attention to the organizational context. The question departs from the idea that any community art initiative is influenced and shaped by the context in which it is organized. Also, the main research question may give the false impression that there is a unidirectional relationship between the cultural program and the Pauluskerk. The first sub-question, however, immediately prevents such a reading by emphasizing that the two are expected to be interconnected. The second sub-question focuses more on the ensemble of social relationships within the Pauluskerk.

Sub-question 2: How does the Cultural Program affect social relationships in the Pauluskerk?

Lefebvre (1991) argues that any space "implies, contains, and dissimulates social relationships" (p. 82). Without understanding the social activity within a certain space, one would never be able to fully comprehend the constitution of that particular social space. The second sub-question guides the study in paying attention to the different social relationships in the Pauluskerk and how they are possibly influenced by the cultural program. Together, both sub-questions will pave the way to eventually formulating an answer to the main research question.

The data was gathered by using a combination of different methodologies. The researcher spent 50 hours engaged in participant observations at various Pauluskerk settings and events. Consequently, 12 in-depth interviews were conducted. And finally, thematic analysis was used to interpret all the collected data. This triangulation of methods is believed to lead to a sound and well-informed answer to the research question.

1.4 The Pauluskerk: A Brief Historical Overview

This part of the introduction presents a historical overview of the Pauluskerk and concludes with a brief introduction to the cultural program. This information should allow the reader to better understand and contextualize the results and conclusions of this research. The information found below is based on the website of the Pauluskerk, their 2013 annual report, and my own experiences at the Pauluskerk.

After World War II, the city of Rotterdam was heavily damaged. Much of the infrastructure and buildings were destroyed during the Rotterdam Blitz on 14 May, 1940. When the war was over, the citizens of Rotterdam slowly began to rebuild their city. Slowly but certainly the city revived. In 1960, the Pauluskerk was built. The construction of the church was financed by World War II reparations. Sperna Weiland was the first official reverend of the Pauluskerk, serving a relatively small community in the center of Rotterdam.

After Reverend Weiland left, in 1962, the church had several different reverends and went on to serve a small, local community. In 1980, Hans Visser became the reverend of the Pauluskerk. Reverend Visser would change the course of the Pauluskerk completely and has made the organization what it is today. Reverend Visser developed the Diaconate of the church. The Diaconate is a common aspect of Dutch, Christian churches and concerns itself with the organization of social work. It was during this time that the Open Huis was established. An accessible meeting place, where everybody could come for a cup of coffee, to read the newspaper, or just to have a pleasant conversation. The Open Huis is an initiative that still lives on today.

During Reverend Visser's years, the Pauluskerk began to earn its reputation as a meeting place and shelter for people who lived at the 'bottom of society'. Reverend Visser is known as someone who is not afraid to go against the mainstream societal norms. At the time, drugs usage was tolerated in certain areas of the church. Today, Visser is still an outspoken advocate of the legal distribution of hard drugs.

In 2007, the Pauluskerk had to make room for the construction of a luxurious apartment building, the Calypso. The Pauluskerk was torn down but the property developers made an agreement to construct a new church on the same location. During the construction of the new building, the Pauluskerk temporarily moved across the street in a vacant building. It was this year that Reverend Visser left the church and Reverend Couvée replaced him. The departure of

Reverend Visser signified a new course for the Pauluskerk. The focus shifted from drug addicts to undocumented immigrants. The new building (see figure I) has 24 modern sleeping facilities primarily intended for undocumented immigrants and temporarily homeless individuals. During this transitional period, the cultural program arguably started to play a more significant role.

Figure I: The Pauluskerk (field note 114: photos taken on May 15, 2015).

As mentioned before, the cultural program consists of the Dichterscafé, the Kerkcafé, and the Open Atelier. From time to time, the Pauluskerk organizes cultural field trips or other activities under the same banner. The Dichterscafé is an activity where visitors have the opportunity to engage with poetry. A typical meeting usually walks through three different phases. It starts with a plenary discussion of a specific poem. Then, the participants are encouraged to write something themselves and the meeting concludes with the presentation of their own work.

The Kerkcafé is an activity that discusses current affairs and everyday experiences in relation to 'the holy books'. The Kerkcafé is organized five days a week. The Bible commonly seems to play the most significant role in these meetings, but there is also the opportunity to

discuss stories from other sacred texts. The volunteer who leads the discussion tries to encourage active and respectful participation.

Finally, the Open Atelier is an activity where participants are able to create paintings, sketches, or even sculptures. Most of the time, participants work together on a communal work of art, but there is also the opportunity to work individually. The structure of a session is typically rather flexible and largely dependent on who the instructor is and how many participants there are.

The terms discussed in this introduction will frequently recur throughout the paper. This basic description of the research context is useful in understanding and evaluating the appropriateness of the theoretical framework and the methodology. Also, it should facilitate a better understanding of the results of this study.

1.5 Thesis Outline

The next chapter presents the theoretical framework. In that chapter, I aim to position the current study in an existing body of literature. The theoretical framework is structured along the lines of the two sub-questions. I start by discussing other spaces of care and progressively try to advance to a more precise terminology. Besides considering the objectives of spaces of care, and the ways in which they try to reach those objectives, I will also pay attention to the motivations from which they operate. Before further conceptualizing the idea of community art, I present a discussion on the (groups of) people who visit spaces of care. The theoretical framework concludes with a discussion on how these different concepts are understood in terms of Lefebvre's work on social space.

After the theoretical framework, the thesis continues with the methodology. In the methods section, I will present the ways in which this study tries to find an answer to the research questions. As mentioned before, a combination of participant observations and in-depth interviews is used. The collected data is eventually analyzed by using thematic analysis. In that order, the different methodologies will be discussed, explained, and justified. The methodology concludes with a section in which I reflect on how my presence as a researcher, at the Pauluskerk, may have influenced the data collection process.

In chapter four of this thesis, the results of the thematic analysis will be presented. In this part, I try to present a plausible and convincing story about the data. I will do that by considering different points of view, paying attention to accounts that depart from the general tendency of a

theme, and by presenting the data in a dialogical manner. The results section consists of a total of eight themes and two subthemes.

The thesis ends with a general discussion and conclusion. In the discussion, I will clarify how the different themes are used to provide an answer to the research question. In the conclusion, I explicitly formulate an answer to the research question, reflect on the limitations of this study, and conclude with several suggestions for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is divided in five chapters. In the first two chapters, I present a discussion on other spaces of care and determine how the Pauluskerk can be situated in this body of literature. These chapters are primarily related to the first sub-question. The third chapter delves into the social relationships within spaces of care, further conceptualizes the population, and relates it to the second sub-question. The fourth chapter discusses the idea of community art. The literature on community art is used to make sense of the cultural program of the Pauluskerk. The cultural program is a concept that comes back in every research question and could benefit from some further elaboration. The final chapter presents a discussion on social space. In this chapter, the main theoretical assumptions are discussed and it should become clear what it means to look at the Pauluskerk through Lefebvre's work.

2.1 From Spaces of Care to Day Centers

The first sub-question is interested in how the organizational context may influence the ways in which the cultural program manifests itself. In order to eventually formulate an answer to this sub-question, it is necessary to explore organizations that share similarities, with the Pauluskerk, in terms of the objectives they pursue, the way they do that, and the motivations from which they operate.

Organizations always play an influential role in shaping individual lives (Lancione, 2014a). Both public and private organizations create rules, codes of conduct, and social expectations that subjects, either consciously or unconsciously, follow and challenge. This study is interested in *spaces of care*, a special category of organizations. As the name suggests, these institutions aim to provide care. Care can be concisely defined as "the proactive interest of one person in the well-being of another" (Conradson, 2003, p. 451). This definition focuses on care as expressed on an interpersonal level, which could be observed in everyday encounters between individuals who are considerate of each other's situation. Spaces of care institutionalize and structure care relations at an organizational level. The types of tasks that bring individuals together in such contexts involve both physical and emotional labor (Cloke, Johnson, & May, 2007).

"Spaces of care" is a term that I have borrowed from Cloke et al. (2010) and it is an admittedly ambiguous term, but that is precisely the reason for using it (p. 46). In order to situate the Pauluskerk in the existing body of literature, it seems desirable to steadily move from the

general to the specific. Bowpitt, Dwyer, Sundin, and Weinstein's (2014) research is helpful in advancing towards a more specific terminology. They explore the experiences of homeless individuals at day centers. According to Bowpitt et al. (2014) day centers are characterized by the provision of services on a drop-in basis, by their open accessibility, and the idea that they typically "embrace the full range of vulnerable adults" (p. 1252). Spaces like these are important to accommodate for food, shelter, and other primary needs (Bowpitt et al., 2014; Cloke et al., 2010). Of course, eating is never a mere primary need, but also very much an opportunity for sociability (Bell & Valentine, 1997). The conversations, gossip, and chitchat that often accompany eating with others serves an important social function in the daily lives of those who visit day centers.

Open accessibility was listed as one of the characteristics of day centers. It is important to note however that accessibility is not an absolute concept. Accessibility can be experienced in different ways by different people. Sotoudehnia and Comber (2011) therefore prefer to speak of physical accessibility and perceived accessibility. Physical accessibility concerns itself mainly with the distance between two given points, the amount of connections a place has, and the infrastructure surrounding a certain place. Perceived accessibility, on the other hand, is made up out of the perceptions of individuals about a certain place. The idea that accessibility is a subjective concept becomes especially evident when looking at a perhaps less obvious function of spaces of care. Cloke et al. (2010) argue that day centers serve as an important space where people can simply "hang out" (p. 68). Before expanding on what it means to have a space *to hang out*, I will describe the circumstances that lead to the importance of this function.

Mainstream public spaces (e.g., libraries or museums) are sometimes experienced to be less accessible to subjects that can be easily identified as homeless (Taylor, 2013; Cloke et al., 2010). This kind of stigmatization could result in a social-spatial exclusion of the homeless (Von Mahs, 2005). Because their mobility is restricted, they are often forced into spaces of exclusion. Contrary to more privileged individuals, the homeless cannot choose where they go but rather are contrived to those spaces that are, so to speak, left over. Typically, these are spaces where they are not experienced as a threat to the quality of everyday civic life (Schnabel, 1992). This increasingly becomes a problem when homelessness is criminalized by law (Foscarinis, Cunningham-Bowers, & Brown, 1999). Taylor (2013) explores the different discourses surrounding the homeless. She argues that homelessness is sometimes discussed as a plague in

the urban landscape against which society feels the need to defend itself. Consequently, spatial cleansing is required "in order to protect the public places from becoming infected, or from transmitting the disease of the homeless" (Taylor, 2013, p. 266). Spatial cleansing involves the removal of homeless individuals from the public spaces they inhabit. It becomes clear that the spaces where homeless people can "hang out" are scarce. It is within day centers, or other spaces of care, where the individual's homeless status becomes the norm and "where bodily appearances, odours and certain behaviours (for example, talking to oneself or sleeping under the table) that might be deemed 'odd' or 'inappropriate' elsewhere are accepted" (Cloke et al., 2010, p. 77). In most public spaces, the homeless individual will be the exception rather than the rule and consequently will be treated as such. In day centers, the homeless individual is no longer the social anomaly, but sets the standard. It is a social space where the homeless are allowed *to be*. The professionals and volunteers, in such spaces, consciously choose to be there and typically try to respect the emotional and affective states of being homeless (Cloke et al., 2007).

Herring (2014) is also interested in the spaces inhabited by marginalized populations. He discusses this issue in terms of "prime spaces" and "marginal spaces" (Herring, 2014, p. 289). Prime spaces are the spaces that are commonly appreciated and inhabited by what could be called mainstream society. The less privileged portions of the population are being expelled into marginal spaces. Herring (2014) argues that marginal spaces are, to a large extent, the results of seclusionary policies, the criminalization of homelessness, surveillance techniques, and other practices that control and structure our daily lives. Taylor (2013) touches upon a similar tendency (that is, a lack of autonomy in the choice of places inhabited by the marginalized) but refrains from using the term "prime spaces". I would argue that Taylor (2013) is correct in doing so because the use of prime spaces might suggest that it is a space positioned above public spaces. But that suggestion would be false. Precisely, ordinary public spaces, that should be accessible to everyone, are experienced as less accessible by those who find themselves in the margins of society. What complicates the status of 'ordinary public spaces', in contemporary society, is that they are increasingly privatized and intended for specific commercial purposes. Žižek (2009) argues that the market "has invaded new spheres which were hitherto considered the privileged domain of the state" (p. 144). This leads to rather ambiguous 'public' spaces that are neither fully private or public but rather contain elements of both. Kohn (2004) argues that privately owned spaces are increasingly taking over functions (e.g., political organization, protests, and plenary

discussions) that were traditionally found in public spaces rather than the other way around. These privately owned spaces are typically less restricted in denying access to certain members of a specific group while giving more room to others.

Some scholars prefer to discuss these developments under the banner of pseudo-public spaces (Mac Síthigh, 2012; Simon, 2009). Mac Síthigh (2012) argues that shopping centers are a prime example of pseudo-public spaces, because within these spaces individuals are approached as consumers rather than citizens. As a result, non-consumers may find themselves excluded from such a "private space masquerading as public space" (Simon, 2009, p. 68). As mentioned before, homeless individuals are known to occupy public spaces (or, pseudo-public spaces) in non-normative ways. They have no private space where they can exercise sovereignty or perform basic bodily functions (e.g., sleeping, urinating, washing) that are commonly considered to be private (Kohn, 2004). These activities are intrinsic to human life itself and thus have to be performed. As a result, homeless individuals are structurally unable to "comply with the expected usages of public spaces that have been established to reflect the material resources of the powerful" (Taylor, 2013, p. 267). Much of the aversion that people may feel towards the homeless "has to do with the transgression of these taboos about appropriate public behavior" (Kohl, 2004, p. 130). It is not only that public spaces become less accessible to marginalized populations, but their whole way of *being* becomes illegal.

2.2 From Day Centers to Faith Based Organizations

To situate the Pauluskerk within the variety of day centers it is necessary to not only consider the care they provide, but also to pay attention to the motivations from which they operate. This leads me to the concept of FBOs. Cloke et al. (2010) observe that, in recent years, FBOs are increasingly characterized by what they describe as "caritas without strings" (p. 47). Caritas is the Christian charity that has been particularly prevalent and influential in the European landscape of social service organizations. Charity and love (or, agape) for the less privileged is considered to be a God ordained principle and FBOs provide the opportunity to put those principles into practice (Cloke et al., 2010). The evangelism has become less apparent in modern FBOs. As a consequence, they increasingly started to function as umbrella organizations for different kinds of collaborative social activities and practices (Cloke et al., 2010; Jeavons, 2002).

Bowpitt et al. (2014) argue that FBOs nowadays are characterized by a receptive generosity "that both gives to and receives from the other person as they are, without any pre-

conceived agenda based on behavioural outcomes that derive from the giver" (p. 1254). This new approach to service provision has positively influenced rapprochement between people from different religious backgrounds (or even atheists) who nonetheless share a common attitude towards charity.

Cloke et al. (2010) and Bowpit et al. (2014) both argue that FBOs try to create an atmosphere of unconditional acceptance, where everybody is welcome. Lancione (2014b) is critical towards the idea of unconditional acceptance. He argues that love is never unconditional, it is always the condition "through which a particular form and particular content of care are abstracted and turned into sets of territorialized assemblages that relationally affect subjective experiences of homelessness" (p. 4). In his article, Lancione (2014b) also rebuts the claim that the services provided by FBOs are unreciprocated. He argues that relations of care always demand an exchange. The exchange is however not always material, but can also manifest itself in an exchange of emotions. Because an emotional exchange is less tangible, it may be more difficult to observe and analyze. This is an important dimension to keep in mind throughout the research.

Lancione (2014b) urges the reader not to be absorbed by words (or phrases) such as, love for the poor, caritas, agape, and philanthropy. The positive connotations these terms typically carry might make it difficult to critically assess the phenomena they are connected to. It could very well be one of the reasons why Lancione (2014b) starts his article with what seems to be a cautionary statement. He emphasizes that his study does not aim to "determine if this *love* is good or bad, but rather to provide a *critical* and *contextual* assessment of it" (Lancione, 2014b, p. 3 [emphasis in original]). This study is conducted from a similar position. Researching sensitive social topics can be challenging, but should not stand in the way of critically examining the phenomena at hand.

2.3 Marginality

The second sub-question is interested in how social relationships within the Pauluskerk might be influenced by the cultural program. In order to find an answer to this sub-question, it is necessary to delve into the ensemble of social relationships within spaces of care. It is difficult to explicitly discuss the populations of day centers, or FBOs, because they are typically open to a wide variety of people (Bowpitt et al., 2014; Cloke et al., 2010). The Pauluskerk is no exception, as was already touched upon in the introduction. Many different people find their way to the Pauluskerk

and to discuss its population as a homogenous mass would be a grave simplification. Consequently, conclusions drawn from such a simplification are more likely to obscure the truth rather than elucidate the phenomena this study is interested in.

Lancione (2013) is also sensitive to the terminology used to refer to vulnerable populations. He warns his reader that canonical definitions (e.g., the poor, the drunks, the addicts) are problematic because "it does not allow one to take into consideration the nuances of the people framed in the definition" (Lancione, 2013, p. 237). How then can this study conceptualize the service users of the Pauluskerk? What the visitors of day centers, or FBOs, often have in common is that they are in some way marginalized in contemporary society (Cloke et al., 2010).

Von Braun and Gatzweiler (2014) define marginality as an involuntary position and condition of an "individual or group at the margins of social, political, economic, ecological, and biophysical systems, that prevent them from access to resources, assets, services, restraining freedom of choice, preventing the development of capabilities, and eventually causing extreme poverty" (p. 3). The poverty which Von Braun and Gatzweiler (2014) list as the inevitable result of marginality should be understood as broad as possible and not only in its economic dimension (also, political, legal, and social). The definition indicates that marginality is always a relative concept. It is always understood in reference to what is considered to be normal and what passes as mainstream society.

When speaking of the marginalized, it is important to recall that it is an umbrella term used to describe different societal groups. By no means, can one speak of the marginalized as one coherent group. There is no *a priori* essential shared quality that determines one's belonging to the marginalized category (Taylor, 2013). Schnabel (1992) describes this rather poetically in his article about homelessness and marginality in the Netherlands: "Being homeless, vagrant and mostly addicted they belong to a specific social category, but they certainly are not a class, not even a group. There is hardly any solidarity among them. Beaten in the struggle for life as they may be, they have to be ready for the struggle for survival in this underworld of outcasts" (p. 60).

This study will focus on how service users are addressed, but also how they identify themselves. By paying attention to the ways in which people are addressed, this study hopes to discover what social relationships are implied. In the beginning of this theoretical framework, I used the term *spaces of care*. This could suggest a relationship between the caretaker and the caregiver. Such relationships have been associated with dependency and control (Ellefsen, 2002;

Coles, 1997). An uneven care dependency, could cause the caretaker to experience a feeling of powerlessness and helplessness (Ellefsen, 2002). It is unclear whether this remains to be true in the context of modern FBOs. These institutions commonly function on a self-referral basis, which could already, to a certain extent, balance the care dependency (Bowpitt et al., 2014).

Coles (1997) also touches upon the relationship between giver and taker and argues that insofar as "generosity does not understand itself to be deeply rooted in a receptive encounter with others, it will proliferate a blindness, theft, and imperialism despite its best efforts" (p. 3). Modern FBOs are typically less conversion-oriented and thus may display less imperialistic tendencies. But Lancione (2014b) already protested the idea that love, or any expression of care, can be fully unconditional. Any relation, he argues, is by definition interventionist and something is "*always*, even if unconsciously, demanded in return" (Lancione, 2014b, p. 4 [emphasis in original]). These nuances and complexities are important to take into account when formulating an answer to the second sub-question.

2.4 Creating Art Together

The cultural program is a concept that comes back in all the research questions. In the introduction, I already provided a basic description of what the cultural program, in the Pauluskerk, entails. The different cultural activities are not thought of as mere occupational activities, but are believed to produce positive social consequences. It is not uncommon for day centers to organize activities that encourage service users to express themselves and to foster personal change (Bowpitt et al., 2014; Cloke et al., 2010). The cultural program however not only focuses on the individual, but is also meant to facilitate the development of a sense of community. Therefore, this study will look at the cultural program, characterized by its inclusive and participatory nature, through the literature on community art.

Community is considered to be important because it fosters meaningful social relationships with other (groups of) people and it provides a network of social ties that can be relied upon to satisfy a wide variety of social needs (World Health Organization, 2007). Mulligan (2013) argues that the notion of community touches upon a "perennial and ageless desire to feel a sense of belonging within the much more diffuse notion of society" (p. 2). Some scholars have speculated that the increased availability of digital communication technologies would increase the opportunities for community engagement (Hampton & Wellman, 2003). Individuals who visit day centers, however, often lack the required literacy and resources required to access such

technologies (Cloke et al., 2010). For them, digital communication technologies are yet another example of how they are secluded from society. Cook and Wills (2012) argue that, especially when it comes to marginalized individuals, a community to fall back upon is extremely important. Not only is it important in terms of their mental and physical health, but also for the formation of an individual and collective identity.

In recent years, community art has become an increasingly popular tool in community development strategies (Madyaningrum & Sonn, 2011). The term "tool" might suggest that art is merely used as a means to reach an unattached goal. Krensky and Lowe (2008) however argue that art cannot be simply replaced by any other activity. They argue that it is precisely the inherent characteristics of art that enable the participant to interact with the world in a creative and meaningful way.

Flood (1982 as cited in Lowe, 2000) argues that community art is unique in its attempt to "engage the individual or group in the process of art, and to stir something within the individual about his individual and/or collective being" (p. 364). The process of creating art is reported to be a key characteristic of community art. Most scholars indeed seem to focus on the creative process, rather than on the works of art created in different community art initiatives (Lee, 2013; Moody & Phinney, 2012; Madyaningrum & Sonn, 2011). It is during the creative process that participants have the opportunity to socialize, express their emotions, and engage in meaningful interactions. Lee's (2013) findings suggest that the communal creation of art has the potential to promote intercultural dialogue and tolerance of difference. These findings seem especially interesting when taking into account the heterogeneous visitor groups of many day centers.

The previous paragraphs show that different scholars have underlined the positive social potential of community art initiatives. It remains rather unclear however what exactly is meant when speaking of, for example, *meaningful interactions*. On the one hand, this merely seems to indicate that more empirical research is required to further our academic understanding of community art (Madyaningrum & Sonn, 2011). On the other hand, it would be a mistake to have a rigid, preconceived notion of what *meaningful interactions* precisely entail. It would prevent the researcher from observing rich interactions that fall outside the scope of his own predefined framework. Therefore, it seems advisable to let the subject himself define what it means to have a meaningful interaction and follow patterns that emerge from those accounts.

2.5 Social Space

There is no body of literature directly analogous to the social setting and practices of the Pauluskerk. As the previous chapters illustrated, it was necessary to select a unique bouquet of concepts, from various fields of study (e.g., Communication Studies, Geography, Sociology, and Urban Studies), that altogether comprise the theoretical backbone of this research project. By pushing the metaphor a little bit, one could say that social space is the ribbon that holds the bouquet together. Lefebvre's (1991) understanding of space functions as the looking glass through which this study makes sense of the previously discussed concepts.

Lefebvre's (1991) main thesis is that social space is a social production. This means that space itself is not the passive container of social relations, but should be understood as something that plays an active role in shaping social processes. Lefebvre (1991) employs a dialectical approach to the notion of space. This way of thinking is characterized by "the recognition that social reality is marked by contradictions and can be understood only through the comprehension of those contradictions" (Goonewardena et al., 2008, p. 30). In accordance with this line of thinking, this study seeks to explore inconsistencies and counterstatements rather than ignore these tensions.

Earlier in this theoretical framework, I have discussed the social-spatial exclusion that marginalized individuals are likely to experience in public spaces. Lefebvre (1991) touches upon this issue when he describes space as an instrument of social control. He primarily relates this to state power, but Mac Síthigh's (2012) work seems to suggests that it used in a similar manner by non-governmental institutions. Lefebvre (1979 as cited in Butler, 2013) continues to argue that these "administratively controlled" spaces could lead to an alienation from everyday life (p. 85). In this view, spaces can be described even as "a policed space that acts to reconfirm the dominant social-spatial hierarchical organization" (Wright, 1997, p. 47). Herring's (2014) research shows that marginalized individuals are in an acute position to encounter and experience this form of space.

Lefebvre (1991) however describes space not only as an instrument of social control, but also as an opportunity for resistance. In his work, everyday life and the city are inextricably connected. He argues that the desire to change life, or to change society is meaningless without the production of an appropriate space. In doing so, individuals would eventually be able to claim their right to the city, which is "established through social relationships, and, once claimed, it

gains its own value affirming new ways of life, new social relations, and possibilities for political struggles" (Goonewardena et al., 2008, p. 259). This symbolic and political function of space is important to keep in mind throughout the research. It demonstrates that even day centers, or as Herring (2014) describes them, marginal space can become "vehicles of political mobilization" (p. 293).

Wiley, Sutko, and Moreno (2010) note that discussions on space often remain at a metatheoretical level. This study takes on the challenge of applying theories about space in a real social setting. Lefebvre's (1991) work is considered to be especially appropriate because of its dialectical approach to space, the emphasize on the social, and its inherent connection to everyday life. This theoretical perspective should facilitate this research to "grasp real life in all its contradictions" (Goonewardena et al., 2008, p. 32).

3. Methodology

In order to find an answer to the research question, I have used a combination of participant observations and in-depth interviews. The collected data has been analyzed by using thematic analysis. By combining these different methodologies, I hope to realize a methodological synergy that allows me to gather rich, complex data in a systematic and ethical manner.

In the upcoming chapters, each method will be discussed and justified under a separate heading. In practice, it is precisely the interdependency and interaction between the different methods that amounts to a diligent and firm research process. Triangulation is used to "overcome partial views and present something like the complete picture" (Silverman, 2011, p. 370). This may sound as if I am trying to discover an ultimate, objective truth, which is not the case. Triangulation is not used to come to an objective reality, but rather functions as a strategy "that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 5).

3.1 Participant Observation

This study aims to understand the lived experiences of marginalized individuals at the Pauluskerk. When studying non-mainstream groups, it becomes increasingly important to choose the data collection method in accordance with the sensitivity of the research topic and the vulnerability of research subjects (Li, 2008). Participant observation is considered to be an appropriate method because it allows the researcher to develop a thorough understanding of a social context that is difficult to attain in any other way (Creswell, 2012; Li, 2008). Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, and Namey (2005) accurately argue that observation and participation in a social setting "are integral to understanding the breadth and complexities of human experience" (p. 14). Another major advantage of participant observation is the possibility to also include the experiences of "individuals who have difficulty verbalizing their ideas" (Creswell, 2012, p. 213).

Over a period of six months, I have been involved in participant observations at various settings and activities at the Pauluskerk. The first two months of engagements were characterized by developing a better understanding of the history of the organization, building rapport with organizational members and visitors, and identifying areas of interest that required further attention. The fieldwork gave me the opportunity to identify, and develop positive relationships with, gatekeepers in the community. Creswell (2012) describes a gatekeeper as an "individual

who has an official or unofficial role at the site, provides entrance to a site, helps researchers locate people, and assists in the identification of places to study" (p. 211). Establishing favorable relationships with these people proved to be essential to the logistics of setting up the study. During this period of fieldwork, I gained trust and obtained important permissions that allowed me to continue the research project.

During the remaining four months, I have primarily attended activities that are part of the cultural program and periodically volunteered at the Open Huis. In order to formulate an answer to the first sub-question, it was of key importance to also attend activities that fell outside the scope of the cultural program. The sessions at the Open Huis were crucial in getting a better sense of the organizational context of the Pauluskerk. All in all, I spent 50 hours engaged in participant observations in the "life-world" I study (Castañeda, 2006, p. 84). Approximately, 60% of those hours were spent observing and participating in cultural activities and another 20% was spent at the Open Huis. The remainder of my fieldwork was characterized by attending staff meetings, visitors meetings, and for example the Sunday service.

During my fieldwork, I took concise handwritten notes in a small journal. I tried to document key phrases and fractions of conversations verbatim. The field notes also functioned as an opportunity for reflexivity. For it proved to be a place where I could reflect upon how my "own experiences, values, and positions of privilege in various hierarchies have influenced [my] research interests" (Harisson, MacGibbon, & Morton, 2001, p. 325). As Mack et al. (2005) advise, I always digitally expanded my field notes as soon as possible, before the "memory of the details fades" (p. 21). The names of individuals, or otherwise personal information by which they could be easily identified has been changed or omitted. These measures were taken in order to respect and preserve the anonymity of the informants. All the field notes, were systematically stored in a Word document. Eventually, this amounted to a 40 page document (1.5 spaced) of field notes.

At certain times, it felt too invasive to take handwritten notes. During those occasions, I made sure to retain the thought and write it down when the situation allowed me to. One can imagine that during an emotional conversation, for example, it would be highly inappropriate to continue to take notes. Robben and Sluka (2012) write that experienced ethnographers often advice novice ethnographers "not to take notes in public while undertaking fieldwork" (p. 327). In this study, I decided not to follow that advice. Partially because I am aware of the limits and

flaws of my memory. But more so, because I did not want to extensively hide my role as a researcher. When people asked me what I was doing, I always answered plainly and honestly. In my experience, this attitude was generally appreciated. If being overt in your role as a researcher stands in the way of collecting data, then there are probably more things to be concerned about than only openly taking notes.

3.2 Interviews

The fieldwork was followed up by a series of semi-structured, in-depth interviews. I conducted 12 interviews lasting between 30 minutes and an hour each. All of the interviews were face to face. The age of the interviewees ranged between 20 to 72 years, with an average age of 46. The sample consists of seven females and five males. Five of the interviewees were organizational members and the other seven interviewees were not formally related to the Pauluskerk. These seven interviewees could be described as visitors of the Pauluskerk, but this a rather loaded term in the context of the Pauluskerk. In the results section, this matter will be expanded upon. The names of the interviewees have been changed in order to respect and preserve their anonymity. An overview of the respondents can be found in appendix A. The interviews were recorded using a handheld recording device. The audio files were transcribed verbatim in Word documents to facilitate subsequent data analysis. The ultimate transcription amounted to 119 (single spaced) pages of text.

One of the interviews has not been recorded. The interviewee consented to participate in the study, but did not feel comfortable with the recording device. The interviewee is a political refugee from Ethiopia and does not have a legal status in the Netherlands. To respect his request, I paraphrased his answers and expanded on them digitally directly after the interview. Creswell (2012) argues that, in any interview, it is advisable to take notes in case the recording device displays malfunctions. During my fieldwork, I already grew more experienced with paying attention to key phrases, taking notes on interesting conversations, and transcribing them afterwards. This ethnographic practice proved to be particularly useful during this interview.

In-depths interview were a fitting addition to the fieldwork, because it gives respondents the opportunity to extensively discuss "their personal feelings, opinions, and experiences" in their own words (Mack et al., 2005, p. 30). In Lefebvre's (1976 as cited in Goonewardena et al., 2008) terms, the interviews provide the respondents their right to difference, the "right not to be

classified forcibly into categories which have been determined by the necessarily homogenizing powers" (p. 259).

The interview questions focused on one's experiences with the cultural program, one's motivations for visiting or working for the Pauluskerk, and the respondent's relationships with fellow community members. In appendix B, one can find the interview guide designed for interviews with organizational members. Appendix C provides the interview guide designed for interviews with visitors of the Pauluskerk. Before each interview, I tailored the interview guide (primarily done on the basis of my fieldwork) to fit the characteristics and position of that particular interviewee. By fine-tuning the interview guides, I was able to tap into the specific knowledge of each interviewee. During the interviews, I probed for further information, elaboration, or clarification of responses if deemed appropriate.

Except for one interview, all the interviews took place at the Pauluskerk. Broom, Hand, and Tovey (2009) argue that the situational context of an interview influences the dynamics of an interview. With that in mind, it may seem counterintuitive to conduct an interview about the Pauluskerk, at the Pauluskerk. But as mentioned before, marginalized individuals are often severely restricted in their mobility in public, or pseudo-public spaces (Von Mahs, 2005; Schnabel, 1992). Therefore, it proved to be very beneficial to have the opportunity to conduct the interviews, at the Pauluskerk, in a secluded, closed, office space which is not open to the public. In other words, considering the vulnerability of the population this study is interested in, it seems justified to conduct the interviews at the Pauluskerk.

In this study, I used a purposive sampling technique to recruit a heterogeneous group of respondents. The objective of this study is not to "generalize to a population, but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2012, p. 206). Purposive sampling is useful in reaching that objective, for it allows me to intentionally select individuals who can best help me understand the phenomena this study is interested in. Of course, the fieldwork played an essential role in this process. It was during the fieldwork that I was able to identify potential interviewees and learnt to approach them in a considerate manner.

3.3 Thematic Analysis

All the collected data was eventually analyzed by using thematic analysis. This form of content analysis was deemed appropriate because it aligns well with Lefebvre's dialectical understanding of social space. As mentioned before, Lefebvre's dialectical approach to space accentuates the

importance of recognizing and grasping the contradictory nature of social reality. In consonance with this reasoning, Braun and Clark (2006) strongly encourage the researcher not to "smooth out or ignore the tensions and inconsistencies within and across the data", but to "retain accounts that depart from the dominant story" (p. 89).

The corpus of this study consists of all the interview transcripts and all the field notes. The transcription process already proved to be an excellent opportunity to familiarize myself with the data. Before starting the actual thematic analysis, I made sure to read all the transcripts and field notes again in order to gain a holistic sense of the collected data. It must be noted that the interviews were considered to be the most important collection of texts for the thematic analysis. The field notes primarily played a supplementary role in this process. Meaning that, the field notes predominantly functioned to further contextualize the interview transcripts and were used to reinforce or clarify certain arguments.

The analysis is conducted in accordance with the six phases of thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). An advantage of this method, besides its alignment with the theoretical framework, is that it has incorporated a lot of techniques that address issues with regards to validity. By doing so, they safeguard the researcher to the potential pitfalls of qualitative research. Silverman (2011), for example, proposes several ways to improve the validity of qualitative research. One of these techniques is the constant comparative method, which encourages the researcher to inspect, compare, and contrast "all the data fragments that arise in a single case" (Silverman, 2011, p. 377). Braun and Clarke (2006) advise researchers to do the same by saying that a "constant moving back and forward between the entire data set" is required to come to sound and valid findings (p. 86).

Throughout my analysis, I seek to make note of patterned regularities in the ways interviewees account for their experiences as well as paying attention to alternative viewpoints and counter-evidence. Rather than present the themes as "monological and finalizing", I aim to present a dialogical and open-ended understanding of the research context (Bell, 2014, p. 693). Much like Novak and Harter (2008), this study tries to offer a "representation at this point in time as one move in an ongoing dialogue with participants who will continue to form their selves and their worlds" (p. 399).

3.4 The Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research in general, and with participant observation in particular, it is important to reflect on the researcher's role in the study. The researcher's biography influences the ways in which he interacts with the world and how he interprets the data. Notwithstanding the inherent biases in all methods, an often mentioned critique of ethnographic research is the persistence of the observer effect (Monahan & Fisher, 2010). The idea exists that the presence of a researcher will influence the behavior of those being studied to such an extent that the results will be invalidated.

A too close relationship with the research context, and the research subjects could arguably prevent the researcher from gathering any meaningful data. Jensen and Lauritsen (2005) dissect the idea that robust data can only be gathered through a certain distance. The traditional social scientist, they argue, seeks to keep his strength by staying distanced. But these strategies are misplaced, "the problem of the social scientist is not that his connections are too many and too strong, but that they are too few and fragile" (Jensen & Lauritsen, 2005, p. 72).

In fieldwork, the boundaries between researcher and informant become increasingly less important. The social practices of the research context, on the other hand, begin to play an increasingly important role. Through the research process, the ethnographer "comes to realize that his or her project is – and always was – subordinate to the relations, functions, and logics of the community being studied, and that communities find places for researchers and assign meaning to their activities" (Monahan & Fisher, 2010, p. 362). The informants have the agency to make sense of, and influence the role of the researcher. These responses however do not invalidate the gathered data. On the contrary, the responses of the community to the researcher should be understood as data in and of themselves. These responses are often very revealing and tell a great deal about the research context. The idea that an informant who reacts to a researcher is merely staging a performance, which would make the data invalid, is fundamentally untrue. Informants are not fixed in their social setting until a researcher steps in. This idea severely undervalues "the *constant* reconstruction of cultural meanings and group identities that occurs through engagement with a steady stream of outsiders and insiders, policies and practices, technologies and symbols, and so on" (Monahan & Fisher, 2010, p. 362 [emphasis in original]).

There is no doubt that my personal biography has influenced the ways in which I have performed the fieldwork, conducted the interviews, and interpreted the data. This should be

acknowledged, but should not necessarily be regarded as a limitation. One's preexisting knowledge and interests can lead to an insightful and unique account of the data. By using a rigid theoretical foundation, a combination of different methodologies, a systemic approach to the data, and an altogether reflexive attitude throughout the research process, I aim to present results that are convincing, plausible, and to be seriously considered.

4. Results

This part of the paper presents the results of the thematic analysis. Throughout the results, I have tried to present vivid examples that capture the essence of the points I am demonstrating. The different excerpts are as much as possible presented in their original context and are embedded in an analytic narrative that supports the story I construct about the data. The analysis yielded a total of eight themes and two subthemes that altogether make it possible to formulate an answer to the research question.

4.1 There Are Visitors & *Visitors*

It is difficult to adequately describe the population of the Pauluskerk. In the theoretical framework, I already touched upon this issue. The Pauluskerk, like many day centers, opens their doors to a wide variety of vulnerable adults. Apart from their presence at the Pauluskerk, there is no clear common denominator by which one can *group them*. At times, it can however be useful to categorize people. If one has to create a policy, communicate a message, then it is valuable to know who the audiences are. It is clear that in the Pauluskerk, people also feel the need to make some mental categorizations. These mental shortcuts simplify the world and help people make sense of the world around them.

In nearly every interview, the challenge to conceptualize *the visitors* emerged in different ways. A prime example can be found in an interview with Marja (63 years old) who volunteers twice a week at the Pauluskerk's Welcome Committee. The main task of the Welcome Committee is to navigate new visitors through the organization and make them feel welcome.

> Wander: You just mentioned "visitors". Could you please tell me, who are the visitors of the Pauluskerk?
>
> Marja: Well, these visitors are not *the visitors*, the way we speak of *the visitors*. These people are often tourists. Or people who have never heard of the church before. But *the visitors* are of course the people use the services and accommodations of the Pauluskerk every day. And that is a wide variety of people. Uhm.. Those are individuals without a residence, who walk on the streets at night, people who are addicted. People who live alone in a room but don't want to be alone and simply long for some company.

The word "visitors" carries a special meaning within the context of the Pauluskerk. It implies a certain helplessness. When one talks about *visitors*, he refers to people who are incapacitated in a certain way. Because of this new meaning the term carries, in the Pauluskerk, the conventional meaning is lost. The conventional meaning would be something like: "a person visiting someone

or somewhere". Since one cannot use the term visitors anymore in the conventional way, a new term – to refer to the traditional meaning – is required.

Later on in the interview, Marja habitually uses the term "touristic visitors" (in Dutch: *toeristische bezoekers*) to describe those people who visit out of curiosity or interest rather than *need*. In English, one might simply call them tourists. It seems desirable however to preserve the word "visitors" in the translation, because it refers to a subcategory of visitors. They are still visitors, but a *different kind of visitors*. When Caroline (48 years old), the Communications Director of the Pauluskerk, is asked to describe her main target audiences, we encounter the same issue.

> Caroline: What people are we talking about? The visitors or the people from outside? Just the,.. everybody?
>
> Wander: Interpret it as you like..
>
> Caroline: See, we of course have the visitors. In the Pauluskerk, we have the visitors and we have *the visitors*, that is a bit confusing at times. Those are the people who we try to help, homeless people, refugees, illegal immigrants, those are *the visitors*. Of course, everybody is welcome here. If you're interested and you just want to look inside, that's alright as well.

Within the Pauluskerk, this new meaning of the word *visitors* has become well-known. It is taken for granted. And if one uses, the word *visitors* nearly everyone will understand what is meant. In this thesis, I have to write it in italics, but within the community one could safely write: visitors.

The excerpts above discuss the meaning of the term *visitors* explicitly. But the theme is also supported by a more customary usage of the word *visitors*. One example comes from Paul (42 years old), who originally came to the Pauluskerk because he found himself in financial adversity, now he is a frequent participant of various cultural activities at the Pauluskerk.

> Wander: And when you attend the service, on Sunday, do you commonly encounter the same people who you see during the week?
>
> Paul: No. There are a few people who come from outside. At the moment, there is a new guy. He comes from outside. But generally you just see the visitors. But yeah,.. there are a few people from outside.
>
> Wander: What do you mean with "outside"?
>
> Paul: Uhm,.. Well, just people who are not visitors.

It is interesting to briefly speculate upon the origins of the new meaning. Categorizing people in general, and marginalized people specifically, can be problematic. In the theoretical framework, Lancione (2013) already advised to refrain from the use of canonical definitions. For these definitions do not allow us to understand the nuances and complexities of the people framed in these definitions. Besides that, the categorizations might cause one to overlook important details about what it means to be marginalized. It obscures the truth and could result in troublesome perceptions that are hard to change. And finally, these categorizations are important to take into account because they are *acted upon*. Lancione (2013) argues that policies are often "constructed around frames that reduce, rather than unfold, complexity, they are not usually able to deal with the specificity of each case" (p. 238).

The Pauluskerk seems to understand the dangers of social stigma and the harmful consequences of inappropriate categorizations. The fact that some categorizations are uncalled for and produce negative consequences, does not invalidate the use of *any* categorizations. The Pauluskerk still feels the need to conceptualize their audience. That allows them to better understand them, communicate with them, and talk about them with other parties. Not only is a term useful in creating policy, but also very much in every day conversations (see next excerpt). When Caroline expands on a point she is making on why some people decide not to participate in cultural activities, she says the following:

> Caroline: […] They are not here to talk about their own problems. They are here to find a solution. And they won't find that with their own kind of people, [laughs] that's what I'll call them for now, that's not entirely correct maybe, but more with the social workers, I mean.

One can see, that Caroline, in this case, is searching for an adequate terminology. She excuses herself for what she thinks might be an inappropriate use of language. The excuse signifies that she is sensitive to the issue. But the excerpt also shows that it is convenient to have categories. To be able to group "seemingly unrelated objects, behaviors, or people, and make them hang together as a coherent category" can be useful in the pursuit of a common goal, the creation of policies, and to communicate effectively with a large number of people at once (Kunda, 1999, p. 38).

Visitors is a term that seems relatively neutral. It does not tell a lot about an individual, except that he or she visits a certain place. In the Pauluskerk, one could add that it also entails a certain helplessness. It indicates a *need*, that can be taken care of by the Pauluskerk. But the term does not specify what that *need* might be. The individual can be homeless, longing for company,

searching for spiritual guidance, or the individual might require legal help regarding his immigration process. The only way to find out is to talk to that person. By using the term visitors, one is encouraged to communicate, to find out more about that individual; the term purposely provides limited information, only to prompt you to look for more.

In an ideal situation, a categorization would exhaust its object. This categorization (visitors & *visitors*) is certainly not exhaustive. Far from it, in fact. But I believe that Kierkegaard (n. d.) is correct when he argues that an accidental categorization "is preferable in every way, because it sets the imagination in motion" (as cited in Mazur, 2005, p. 8). It invites the listener (or user of the word) to ponder the terminology himself and it is an invitation to action.

4.2 Constructing Accessibility & Making Choices

The Pauluskerk is highly committed to creating a welcoming and accessible space for everyone. In early December, when I started my field work, I already observed several efforts to *construct accessibility.* On December 2, I mentioned the cloth tied around the door handle of the front door, which ensures that the door is literally always open. In field note 76, I wrote that "it is the perfect illustration of how materialistic features can facilitate the creation of an accessible social space". Below one can find a photograph of the situation.

Figure II: The front door of the Pauluskerk (field note 77: photo taken on April 17, 2015).

Accessibility is a theme that appeared, in different forms, in many interviews. Before continuing this discussion, it is interesting to show how the Pauluskerk tries to present itself.

> Caroline: I would like to communicate it as a place where everyone is welcome. As the reverend nicely puts it, *without respects of persons* [refers to Book of Proverbs 24:23]. And uhm,.. that the door is open seven days a week from 09:00 AM to 09:00 PM. And that you can be who you are.

Just because one *can* walk into to a certain place, does not mean that he or she *will* do so. Accessibility is often mentioned, because it might actually be somewhat of a stumbling block the Pauluskerk deals with on a daily basis. The Pauluskerk has a rather ambiguous reputation which could explain, to some degree, why they have to put so much effort into creating an accessible space. Ferdinand (69 years old) is a retired Dutch citizen and a frequent visitor of the Pauluskerk. Ferdinand used to work in Rotterdam and walked by the Pauluskerk nearly every day. But he says that he "never had the courage to go inside [laughs loudly] because of the image". The following conversation ensues:

> Wander: You talk about the image, why would you have never gone inside?
>
> Ferdinand: Well, back then.. that was the old Pauluskerk, with drugs and all those things. I mean,.. I'm not saying that people can't use drugs, but I don't like the idea of sitting next to them.
>
> Wander: Mhm.
>
> Ferdinand: And well, it more or less had a Sodom and Gomorrah reputation, undoubtedly unjustly, but that was the reputation. And that played along, you know. It was like, it's better not to go there. And I never had the ambition to go there. But when you are finally inside – things have changed, as well, there is no more drugs, so that's different as well – but then you notice, that you can actually feel quite at home. And you know, the Pauluskerk is a place where you can always go to. I mean, I can also sit at home all by myself, become a couch potato, but here you can always come inside, you know?

Ferdinand's evolving relationship with the Pauluskerk is interesting, because it shows that being accessible to a certain group of people (in this case drug addicts) might make it less likely that other groups (e.g., elderly citizens) will come inside. The excerpt illustrates that accessibility is indeed always *perceived*. By speaking of perceived accessibility, rather than accessibility in general, the reader is explicitly reminded that it is a phenomenon that can be experienced differently by different (groups of) people (Sotoudehnia & Comber, 2011). Another telling case of perceived accessibility appears in an interview with Mirjam. Mirjam (69 years old) is a loyal

volunteer and visitor of the Pauluskerk. She is associated with the Pauluskerk for already more than thirty years. An interesting perspective arises when she discusses how the Pauluskerk has changed throughout the years:

> Mirjam: […] in the old Pauluskerk, there primarily came elderly, lonely people from the neighborhood. But then, the new shelter opened. And then, all of a sudden a lot of drug addicts came inside. And well, then the elderly, lonely citizens more or less disappeared. I say lonely, but I just mean people who like to have a place where they can go to. It was kind of a living room. But yeah,.. those people were more or less driven out.
>
> And we used to say, we are very accessible, everybody is welcome, including the homeless, drug addicts, and so on. But that turned out to be real hurdle for those people from the neighborhood. Those elderly people, well,.. Let me put it like this, they lost their living room.
>
> That's something you always have to deal with, right. Accessible, approachable, and welcoming to one group might mean something else to another. And then you have to make choices.

Sotoudehnia and Comber (2011) differentiate between physical and perceived accessibility. The interviews suggest that physical accessibility is not really experienced as a problem when it comes to the Pauluskerk. That should not come as a surprise, taking into account the prominent (physical) location of the Pauluskerk. Perceived accessibility, on the other hand, regularly arises as a matter of concern. The data shows that the Pauluskerk is often experienced as a step down on the (imagined) social ladder. I will illustrate more clearly what I mean by using two examples from different interviews. The first example comes from an interview with Paul. I ask him to tell me the story about when he first came into contact with the Pauluskerk.

> Paul: Yeah. Well.. uhm. Then I have to talk about myself of course.. I think that there are a lot of people in Rotterdam who are just like me. Who move around easily. Because, yeah.. from which class do you come, right? I come from a working class family. I am low-educated, so to say, I went to the LTS [*Lagere Technische School*, which literally translates as: Lower Technical School. The LTS is a Dutch form of education that does not exist anymore. At the LTS, students, primarily boys were prepared for different forms of manual labor]. I worked in construction. So I'm coming from a certain segment, you know. For me, personally, it wasn't really a step downwards to go to the Pauluskerk, you know. It never was. And well,.. there are undoubtedly people who look down, uhm.. who look differently towards that, so to say. They,.. uhm, [sighs] they might find it difficult to go to the Pauluskerk or something like that.

Paul intuitively relates the places one occupies to social class. Lefebvre (1991), on a similar note, argues that one's position in society becomes manifest in the ways in which he *interacts with*

social space. Besides that, Paul's answer also illustrates a certain class consciousness. He does not only position himself in society, but also shows an awareness of how his position is perceived by others. The slip of the tongue, towards the end of the excerpt, can almost be understood as a parapraxis, revealing the idea that people may indeed look down on the Pauluskerk.

The second example comes from an interview with Erica (20 years old). Erica is an intern at the Pauluskerk. Before this exchange, she told me a little bit about her current education. Her internship, so she told me, falls in the "domain *Society*", I ask her to elaborate on that.

> Wander: Could you tell me what the domain *Society* means, and why the Pauluskerk belongs to that domain?

> Erica: The domain *Society* means that you are really going to work with the bottom of society. That means, drug addicts, illegal immigrants, criminals, refugees. And that you eventually try to help those people. Particularly, mental care. Trying to engage with those people, talk with them. So really, the bottom of society, you know.

The strength of this example comes from the habitual way in which she talks about it. It is *clear* that the Pauluskerk belongs in the domain *Society*. Her school has institutionalized the social position of the Pauluskerk. And thus implicitly, also the people who visit the Pauluskerk. Assuming that "drug addicts", "illegal immigrants", and the other groups she lists, belong to the bottom of society is problematic. By framing (and institutionalizing) the social position of vulnerable populations in this way, it becomes increasingly more difficult to challenge this position (Lancione, 2013). They are restricted in their social mobility because their position is assumed to be fixed rather than flexible and open to change. It is only fair to point out that, later on in the interview, Erica said to have developed a more nuanced understanding of individuals who find themselves in the margins of society. The internship was very much a learning experience for her.

Sotoudehnia and Comber's (2011) differentiation between physical and perceived accessibility is useful, because it allows one to more clearly address problems and difficulties regarding accessibility. As mentioned before, the physical accessibility of the Pauluskerk does not really emerge as a dilemma. The Pauluskerk is within walking distance from the Central Station, is located in the center of Rotterdam, and a cloth tied around the door handle materially expresses their welcoming attitude. Perceived accessibility however proves to be a prominent challenge that the Pauluskerk has to address. At the moment, internships and guided tours are some of the tools that are used to try to improve the perceived accessibility. It seems that people

who *experience* the Pauluskerk usually seem to develop a more nuanced understanding of it and a more favorable attitude towards it. Ferdinand's case is a compelling example of this idea. Therefore it only seems appropriate to conclude this theme with his words:

> Ferdinand: [...] Painting is another thing, I never did that before. And then I started visiting the *Kerkcafé*. And then you think by yourself, it is actually quite fun here. It has gradually changed from Sodom and Gomorrah to – well, I won't say Paradise haha – but it is definitely something special!

Ferdinand's remark shows how much perceptions of a certain place can change. Even a place described as Sodom and Gomorrah bears the potential to one day become a Paradise.

4.2.1 Accessible Activities & The Ambiguities of Participation

The previous theme explored the Pauluskerk's efforts to construct an accessible organization and the challenges that come with it. Even inside the Pauluskerk, however, the notion of accessibility continues to be a topic of concern. One could say that the previous theme primarily examined *accessibility* on a societal level, whereas this subtheme explores the concept *within the community*. In this section, I seek to explore the relationship between the notion of accessibility and the cultural program. It is preferable to present this as a subtheme, because (a) it is considerably informed by my field notes, (b) it is something that primarily comes back in interviews with volunteers, and (c) because it cannot exist without the foundation of the previous theme.

During my fieldwork, it became apparent that it is a challenge, for the Pauluskerk, to ensure and encourage participation in the cultural program. There commonly is an enthusiastic core of participants, but there also is a significant amount of frequent visitors that seemingly never joins any of the activities. For some reason, they seem rather uninterested in what the cultural program has to offer. In the interview with Leny (39 years old), she tells me that, every now and then, she walks through the Open Huis to invite people to come and join them at the Open Atelier. This is how the conversations continued:

> Wander: And how do people react to that?
>
> Leny: Well, some people are simply not interested. They are sleeping, for example. They don't want anything to do with things that are supposed to activate them. They have other problems, you know. And I understand that. So, I just let them be. But at least I've said it, at least they're aware that they have the possibility to go there.
>
> Wander: Should it be an objective to get everyone involved?

> Leny: No!! No! Absolutely bollocks! I mean,.. it's fun of course to stimulate people, to challenge them, but it's just not for everybody. I mean some people don't come because they prefer to make music. And there are other opportunities for that..

In the beginning of this study, I wanted to explicitly research the idea of non-participation, but as my study developed, I noticed that it is as unfeasible as it is senseless. Leny's answer illustrates that, in a way, everyone is a non-participant. Even people who may be frequent participants of the Dichterscafé, could be considered non-participants when it comes to the Open Atelier. Another thing Leny's answer shows is that, the Pauluskerk will never demand people to participate. It goes against the philosophy of the Pauluskerk (touched up in the previous theme) as a place where people can simply *be*. To demand participation, would most likely be detrimental to the perceived accessibility of the organization as a whole. Most literature on community art projects examines rather organized settings. Moody and Phinney (2012) for example conduct research on how older people experience a community art program that "followed a consistent pattern each week" (p. 58). In this domain, the cultural program does not quite fit the existing literature. Participation, in the Pauluskerk, is often fluctuating and the activities are characterized by their flexibility to adapt to whatever circumstances they encounter. In the interview with Caroline, we touch upon this issue. The following excerpt is a continuation from a more general discussion on the low turnouts.

> Caroline: [...] I truly believe that for them, uhm.. for our target group, the arts are very important. A certain creativity. But if you really expect something, like making a play together, that's when they drop out. Making appointments is very difficult. Very difficult. Because they really don't know what the next day will bring them. Whether they feel like it.

Caroline's answer almost functions as a thought-experiment: imagine if you do not know where you would sleep tonight, would you still care about some arts program? Primary needs prioritize over other activities. By having a flexible program and being stimulating but reserved, the Pauluskerk aims to remain open and accessible to precisely those people who find themselves in such a situation. Another thing this excerpt immediately underlines is that it would be mistake, in this context, to measure success merely in terms of turnout.

The attendance did however prove to be a recurring topic of conversation. When looking at all the interviews, there were four visitors who made note of the low turnout in cultural activities. Two volunteers also discussed the low turnout and one volunteer surprisingly discussed

an abundance of participants. Before discussing this deviant case, I would like to explore one more 'strategy' of stimulating and inviting somewhat reluctant visitors.

In my field notes, I describe two similar occasions of how the Pauluskerk (or perhaps more accurately: some volunteers) tries to stimulate participation and draw more people to the, in this case, Open Atelier. The situation is as follows, a co-instructor of the Open Atelier comes inside and brings along a box of mandarins. As soon as he placed the box on the table, "a lot of visitors (who were not participating) joined the group, grabbed some fruit, and left shortly after" (field note 23). This is interesting for several reasons. One must be aware that, during the Open Atelier, they purposely leave the door open. That way, they hope (similar to the cloth tied around the front door) to make it a more accessible activity. People can walk in anytime they want and are free to leave whenever they feel like. The box of mandarins, first of all, speaks for the generosity of that particular volunteer. Besides that, it also shows how food is used to stimulate people to join an activity. Depending on your notion of success, you could either describe this attempt as a success or a failure. It brings otherwise reluctant visitors to the Open Atelier, but they were also quick to leave again. At the beginning of my interview with Oscar (41 years old), in the room where normally the Open Atelier takes place, something similar occurred.

> Wander: Alright, I want to start with somewhat more general questions and then.. [door opens and Fouad walks in]
>
> Fouad: Sup guys? Wait.. no coffee today?
>
> Oscar: Haha, no man..

Fouad is frank and forthright about his intentions. During the Open Atelier, coffee is commonly free. And apparently, for some visitors, that is reason enough to join them. The two occasions, described in my field notes, and this example exposes some of the motivations (of visitors) to come to the Open Atelier. This study does not necessarily aim to determine the efficiency of food (or coffee) as an incentive to participate. More importantly, this research tries to understand and to map the current practices of the Pauluskerk.

As mentioned before, there was one volunteer whose account countered the general tendency of this subtheme. Mirjam is one of the moderators at the Kerkcafé. For some reason, her meetings are very popular and well-visited.

> Wander: On Thursdays it's always quite busy,.. does it all fit in the studio?

Mirjam: No, actually not. But that's actually the max. When there are too many, then I just say, 'guys, we're full'. And full is full, right.

Wander: And do you have to say that at times?

Mirjam: So far, I haven't said it often. But once we were with sixteen people, that's when I thought: no, this is not what I want. And definitely not when halfway through a few more people show up. No, no, no. Actually, a group of twelve is more or less the max. This morning, there were eight, that's actually quite nice.. Then you can really create a conversation.

This excerpt is interesting because, once again, it shows that one should be cautious not to overvalue numbers. There are seven interviews in which visitor turnout is mentioned. Six of those interviewees discuss it in terms of how low it is. And exactly the one account that contrasts this trend, experiences it as a drawback. It has indeed been observed that in larger groups, participants seem less likely to engage in forms of self-disclosure (Taylor, De Soto, Lieb, 1979). It stresses that high turnouts, do not necessarily make the cultural program qualitatively better.

Let me summarize this subtheme by restating the three most important points. First of all, this theme shows how the cultural program, in the Pauluskerk, deviates from the community art programs discussed in previous literature. It is stands out in its flexibility and, to a certain degree, it shapes itself to fit the people who happen to be there. Secondly, it underlines that a high turnout should never be an objective in itself. And finally, it shows that participation is always optional. It is always up to the visitor to participate, or not. And this may be the most important thing, the Pauluskerk offers their visitors a choice. Precisely those people (*the marginalized*) who are typically deprived of choices and opportunities, get to choose what they want to do.

4.3 Diversity

Diversity is a recurring word when one speaks about the Pauluskerk. But diversity in itself does not mean much. The continuous repetition of this term (or phrases with a similar connotation), in nearly all interviews, requires me to elaborate on it and examine it more critically. It is usually mentioned when one aims to describe who visits the Pauluskerk. A more colorful description of the visitors of the Pauluskerk is given by Leny, who works as an instructor at the Open Atelier.

Leny: [...] It is kind of a salad bowl. It is a jar of confetti. Yeah, it is just a jar of confetti.

Her description clearly has a positive connotation and speaks to the imagination, but is also exemplary of the vagueness in which descriptions usually remain. Another, more elaborative example, that I would like to mention comes from the interview with Erica.

> Wander: How would you describe the visitors of the Pauluskerk?
>
> Erica: Haha! Diverse, haha! It is of course very diverse. People come here from all over the world. All kinds of languages. All kinds of faiths,.. or, all kinds of religions, you know. Truly diverse. But you do see a lot of similar faces. I've been here for five months now, and it's almost strange when you notice someone who you haven't seen before. It's often the same group of people.

The question is formulated in a very broad way. This is done purposely so that the respondent can interpret it freely. As an interviewer, I tried to be cautious not to close possible avenues at an early stage. Erica's gut reaction reveals a lot. She laughs, almost as if to say *everybody knows that, it is diverse!*, but in the course of formulating an answer she already becomes more cautious. She feels the need to nuance her initial statement.

Erica lists a few domains in which the diversity of the Pauluskerk is visible. A city, an organization, or a group of people can be diverse in many domains but also very similar in others. Respondents often discuss diversity in relation to the Pauluskerk, but scarcely specified in which aspects the Pauluskerk is diverse. Instead, the organization is just labeled as diverse. One has to look more closely at the data to find that, in terms of gender for example, the community is exceptionally similar. The following example illustrates that diversity is not visible in all aspects of the Pauluskerk. Anais (29 years old), is an undocumented immigrant from Armenia, in the excerpt below she describes her experiences when she first sought for help at the Pauluskerk.

> Anais: In the beginning, it was very difficult. When I started at the Pauluskerk. I started at other side of the street, so to say. Now, I'm almost three or four years at the Pauluskerk, so I started at the old Pauluskerk, you know. And well, that was horrible, yes.. I was afraid that something would happen to me. It was a different kind of people, you know, they were.. different. Well, yes,.. I didn't feel safe, you know. I was still quite young back then, so every time I said something,.. there are only guys, so ehm.. And then one fancies you, you know. You get all kinds of reactions, that was really horrible..

When something is marked as *diverse*, it may become difficult to argue the opposite. Although, that could be true and necessary, as the example above shows. Diversity in certain respects should not overshadow an absence of diversity in others. A more refined use of language, is necessary to truly understand (and talk about) the Pauluskerk as a community. In many respects,

it would be justified to describe the Pauluskerk as a diverse community. But at the same time, it is important to be critical and reflect upon those domains in which this diversity is absent. Failing to do this could lead to what one could call *marginality within marginality*. This means that within a community of largely vulnerable and marginalized individuals, another dimensions of marginality emerges. Clearly, this is something that an organization should seek to avoid.

4.4 Mind the Motive

In the theoretical framework, it has been discussed that to truly understand spaces of care, one should not only look at their objectives, or the ways in which they try to reach those objectives, but one should also pay attention to the motivations from which they operate. This theme seeks to expand on that notion.

 To make sense of this theme, it is useful to revisit Immanuel Kant's understanding of morality. It is Kant who famously argues that the "moral worth of an action consists not in the consequences that flow from it, but in the intention from which the act is done" (Sandel, 2009, p. 111). A utilitarian thinker would primarily look at the consequences an action produces to assess its moral worth. For Kant, that is not enough. One could summarize (and inadvertently, simplify) Kant's theory by saying that *one has to do the right thing for the right reason*. A similar kind of thinking can be observed at the Pauluskerk. In the following excerpt, I ask Marja to expand on what she calls the social and spiritual function of the Pauluskerk.

> Marja: Well,.. I think, ehm.. you have to do the social work. There is nothing wrong with that. But it has to be inspired. If it is not inspired,.. then you might as well be,.. then you could be *any* organization that just likes to do some charity. That's where I miss that *little bit more*. […]

The motives from which the Pauluskerk operates are important. It distinguishes them, for example, from other organizations who may also try to help illegal immigrants. The motives from which they do their work are part of their identity and apparently provide them with that "*little bit more*". To be fair, Marja is not explicitly saying that those who operate from different motives do not deserve moral appreciation. But there is a parallel with Kant's idea of morality. It is about *doing the right thing for the Christian reasons*. Helping the poor might be OK, but it is better to help the poor based on Christian motives.

 At the end of the interview with Ferdinand, we touch upon a similar way of thinking. Just like Marja, Ferdinand also distinguishes between a social and a spiritual function. The following exchange takes place just before the interview was concluded.

Wander: Is there anything that you would like to mention or add? Something that you think is important, but that we haven't discussed yet?

Ferdinand: Well, we actually briefly talked about it, but you have.. You have the social and the more spiritual function of the church. And I think that it's quite interesting how that works together. I am someone who mainly comes for the spiritual side. I would like to see that that becomes a little bit more visible. But you can't stage it either. If you're going to create a policy, - I don't really believe in that – it has to *come into being*. But I would regret it if it comes to a point where it's nothing more than merely playing games, sitting behind the computer, and things like that.. That's why I keep visiting the Sunday services, even though it's only the three of us.. That way you keep the flame alive, right?

The fact that Ferdinand is eager to bring this up again, even though we "briefly talked about" it before, shows that he is passionate about it. It is so important to him, that he uses the opportunity, at the end of the interview, to emphasize and reiterate his perspective.

It is worth noting that this theme did not emerge in every interview. And in a way, that makes sense. It is the (Christian) worldview which lies at the basis of being able to *perceive* the absence or presence of that "*little bit more*". One who does not know what Christian values are, would logically be unable to recognize (or care) about them. Therefore, it is primarily a Christian concern within this community. In the Open Huis, I worked with five different colleagues and I always asked them whether they ever attended Sunday service at the Pauluskerk (to steer the conversation to the religious motivation). Four out of five volunteers said that they did not particularly care about the religious aspect. Ahmed, one of the volunteers, quite strikingly said: "yes it's a church, but it's nothing like a real church" (Field note 60). He volunteered from a humanitarian motivation rather than an outspoken Christian motivation. From an organizational perspective, this flexibility is interesting. The pool from which they can recruit volunteers seems to substantially increase in size. It allows the Pauluskerk to not only attract Christian volunteers, but also invite 'Good Samaritans'.

I would like to point out that, although this theme it is not unanimously supported, neither is it necessarily negated or contradicted in other interviews. Those interviewees, who deem the religious aspect of the Pauluskerk less important, simply do not mention it. In my interview with Bert (72 years old), one can find a telling example of this attitude. Bert is a frequent, and long-time, visitor of the Pauluskerk who does not really participate in any of the cultural activities. In the following excerpt we talk about the religious motivations of the Pauluskerk.

> Wander: The Pauluskerk, of course, operates from a religious motivation. Is the religious aspect also important to you?
>
> Bert: Hah! No, no, no, no. I've had a religious upbringing, right. So I know the stories. But uhm,.. it just doesn't do it for me. It could work for others,.. that's fine. I come here for my coffee, for the conversations, and.. just things like that.
>
> Wander: Mhm,.. so do you ever experience the religious aspect as a hindrance?
>
> Bert: Uhm,.. well. As a hindrance, huh? No, I don't think so. Not really. As I said, if it works for them, that's fine, right? But don't push it in my face, you know, haha.

This excerpt does not support the general idea of *Mind the Motive*. But neither is it contradicted. Bert simply does not really care about the religious aspect (as long as they do not push it in his face). The interviewees who do talk about that "little bit more", however, are truly passionate about it. They experience that the *inspiration* or *the spiritual* is sometimes lacking. Towards the end of the interview with Marja, she had to turn away for a bit, because she got too emotional. It is an issue that she feels strongly about. And so do others. The passion with which it is discussed, and how it is experienced, by some interviewees, oblige me to discuss it in a separate theme. The motive makes them who they are. If the motive is not taken into consideration, they might as well be "any organization".

4.5 Different Worlds

In an interview with RTV Rijnmond (2013), reverend Dick Couvée said that he wanted the Pauluskerk to be an extension of the public space. He aims to create the opportunity for a natural encounter between the "world of the favored and the unfavored". In Dutch this is a relatively common expression that does not really translate well. A more literal translation would be "those with a lot of chances" and "those without many chances". One could almost describe it as political correct terms, used to discuss differences in education, income, or plainly social status. The discussion about "bridging the gap between the rich and the poor" is similar but different. The terms "favored and unfavored" are more encompassing and more nuanced. The words accentuate that it is more than *only an economical issue*.

The website of the Pauluskerk features several videos. The video that I mention above is one of them. I watched this video in an exploratory, early stage of my research process (primarily to familiarize myself with the history and identity of the organization). And to be fair, it is unlikely that I would have returned to the video, if it were not for the fact that the same idea,

quite prominently, came back in the interviews. Some interviewees used strikingly similar terms as the reverend. A clear example can be found in the interview with Caroline. This exchange follows shortly after a discussion about the visitors and *the visitors* of the Pauluskerk.

> Caroline: […] We definitely try to narrow the gap between poor and rich. And we try to do that by inviting people who [laughs] don't live at the bottom of society. Just to create that encounter with different kinds of people..
>
> Wander: And do you believe that you succeed in that?
>
> Caroline: Slowly. Very slowly. People come inside, but are also very quick to leave again.

Bourdieu (1989) notes that "agents who occupy a higher position in one of the hierarchies of objective space" are likely to deny the social distance between themselves and others (p. 18). By denying the social gap, it is very unlikely that the social distance will cease to exist. After all, if one believes that there is no gap, why then worry about the gap. Bourdieu (1989) calls this phenomenon "strategies of condescension" (p. 16). A situation first has to be recognized as problematic, before one can start looking for a solution. In the Pauluskerk, as the interviews demonstrate, people are quite comfortable in acknowledging the existing social distances between different societal groups. That would be the first step; acknowledging the distance. Not everybody, however, agrees on what the desired solution should be, as the following excerpt shows.

> Marja: […] At the Kerkplein, we try to bring the favored and the unfavored, as the reverend puts it, together. But to be honest, I don't believe that we will succeed. Because there lies a world between them. And I am not quite sure even if *the unfavored* really want that..

Marja, just like Caroline, is prepared to acknowledge the social distance. She is however not sure whether this is the best way of addressing the issue. She says that, because "there lies a world between" the favored and the unfavored, the initiative will fail. In other words, the reason why the initiative is set up, will cause it to fail. Caroline and the reverend seem slightly more optimistic and say, *precisely* the fact that there lies a world between them, is what makes it important to create an encounter.

It could of course be the case that different interviewees have different parameters of success. And therefore, one is more optimistic than the other. It would not be fair to expect the Pauluskerk to eradicate social distances entirely. All it can aim for is making a step in the right direction and hoping to inspire others to do the same.

The excerpts above, quite explicitly discuss the social distance. This theme is however also backed up by more implicit mentions of *different worlds*. One example can be found in an interview with Karin (21 years old). Karin is a student at the Academy of Art and Design in Breda. She is currently working on an art project with several visitors of the Pauluskerk.

> Wander: Can I ask you this, what was the image you had of the Pauluskerk before you first came here?
>
> Karin: Uhm,.. I didn't expect it to be so lively, so vibrant.. I used to walk by every now and then, but you can't really see much from the outside. But if you come inside, you really enter into a different world, you know..

This excerpt is interesting because it supports the theme differently than the previous examples. The reverend, Caroline, and Marja explicitly discuss the idea of *different worlds*. Karin, on the other hand, does not address it directly like the others, but *experiences* it. What this theme shows is that, people who are situated in the same geographical space, not necessarily also inhabit the same social spaces. That could either be by choice or necessity. There is nothing wrong with having different social spaces. Also, it is quite inevitable. It could however be problematic, as Bourdieu (1989) suggests, to deny the existence of differences between social spaces. The Pauluskerk sees potential benefits in creating an encounter between subjects from different social spaces. The organization seems willing to acknowledge the social distances between some of these spaces, the challenge now will be to find a realistic way of reaching their objective.

4.5.1 The Reach of the Reverend

In the interviews, the reverend is mentioned quite a lot. One has to bear in mind, that I did not have any specific questions regarding the role of the reverend. The word "reverend" was mentioned however in nine out of twelve interviews. In three interviews, the "reverend" was mentioned more than four times. In the table below, one can see the exact number of mentions per interview.

Amount of times "reverend" mentioned:	
Leny	7
Caroline	5
Paul	5
Marja	4
Isaias	2

Ferdinand	2
Oscar	1
Erica	1
Mirjam	1
Anaïs, Karin, Bert	0

Table I: Amount of times *reverend* mentioned in interviews.

Counting words is commonly associated with quantitative content analysis, but counting continues to be a valuable tool in qualitative content analysis as well (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). It is important however to not stop the analysis by counting alone. It is interesting to also take into account the different ways in which the same term is used. Interviewees commonly refer to either Reverend Couvée or Reverend Visser. When the latter is mentioned, it is often used to present a historical overview of the Pauluskerk and to describe how the organization has changed throughout the years.

When speaking of Reverend Couvée (or simply *the reverend*), the accounts are more varied in what they precisely mean. The most interesting context in which the term is used has already been mentioned (but not discussed) in the previous theme. In the excerpt from Marja's interview, one can see the line "as the reverend puts it". Marja directly quotes, or paraphrases, what the reverend has said. And she is not the only to do so. In chapter 4.2 (*Constructing Accessibility & Making Choices*), Caroline did something similar.

> Caroline: I would like to communicate it as a place where everyone is welcome. As the reverend nicely puts it, *without respects of persons* [refers to Book of Proverbs 24:23]. And uhm,.. that the door is open seven days a week from 09:00 AM to 09:00 PM. And that you can be who you are.

In the interview with Paul, he also directly refers to the words of the reverend. What is interesting about this, is that it shows that the reverend's words are remembered, spoken, and eventually also acted upon. It illustrates how the reverend's words echo through the organization. In this way, his words are amplified and extended in their reach.

Also, it underscores the authority of the reverend in the Pauluskerk. By saying that, I do not mean Reverend Couvée specifically, but rather the role he currently occupies. Even if certain visitors will not attend Sunday service, or if they did not have the chance (or desire) to speak to the reverend directly, it is not unlikely that these visitors, at a certain point, will still be exposed to the words of (or actions derived from those words) of the reverend. The reverend has an

influential role in shaping the *mission* or *values* of the organization. These discourses consequently present significant ethical bases for involvement and action (Cloke et al., 2007).

4.6 Should Conflict Be Cherished?

Conflict seems unavoidable. One could say that, where there are people with varying cultural backgrounds, values, and needs, there will most likely also be conflicts. The Pauluskerk is no exception. In every interviews, *conflict* naturally emerged as a topic of conversation. It would however not be fair to understand all these mentions as contributing to a uniform understanding of conflict. This theme will develop a more nuanced understanding of conflict in the Pauluskerk. I will use only the most illuminating excerpts and, for the sake of brevity, leave out accounts that contribute to this theme by merely mentioning that there are "disputes", "conflicts", or "occasional fights". The following excerpt is a continuation of an exchange about the diverse visitors of the Pauluskerk.

> Paul: It also depends on the intention with which you come here. If you use the accommodations because you're an illegal immigrant. Or ehm,.. if you are a refugee. Well, then you might be a little bit more irascible than someone volunteering here. I have to say, I think it is quite remarkable, eh.. that there is so little physical violence in the Pauluskerk.
>
> Wander: Are there other kinds of violence?
>
> Paul: Yes! Verbal violence, haha! Yeah..
>
> Wander: Why is that?
>
> Paul: Well,.. incomprehension, right. People often think that their situation is worse than others. That is their perception. For a lot of people, it is difficult to break out of that perception. That the other is in a worse situation than you, you know.. even though you can't always see that, because he has luxurious pants for example. That he still is in a worse mental state than you.

The excerpt is interesting for several reasons. First of all, Paul apparently assumed there to be *more* physical violence. Secondly, the emphasis and certainty with which he states that there is indeed verbal violence is revealing. It probably tells us that there not only is verbal violence, but that there might be *a lot of verbal violence*. Finally, I believe, that Paul is correct in mentioning the different roles subjects perform at the Pauluskerk. One's behavior is indeed influenced by whether you are a refugee, a person without residence, or a volunteer.

It is necessary to regard swearing not only as a form of misbehavior or an offence. There is a well-documented connection between swearing and expressing emotions. Vingerhoets,

Bylsma, and Vlam (2013) define swearing as the use of taboo language (not intended to be taken literally) to express strong emotions or attitudes. In field note 51, I observe that swearing is explicitly prohibited in the Pauluskerk. In the Open Huis, there is a small plaque on which the rule is written. Vingerhoets et al. (2013) argue that by frequent usage swearing seems to "have lost some of its power over time and has become more diluted with the increased frequency of its use" (p. 288). In the Pauluskerk, however, it remains effective precisely because it is prohibited. The ban reinforces the message. It is important to think about how one wants to interpret the use of swearwords. By merely understanding it as an offence, the *swearer* will logically be regarded as an offender. If one is willing to adopt a broader understanding of swearing and, for example, acknowledges the link between swearing and emotions. It becomes easier to think about that particular individual as someone who has strong emotions and struggles to express them. The language not only reflects our actions, but also influences our actions.

I want to explore another interesting perspective on conflicts which comes from an interview with Ferdinand. Ferdinand tells me about his experiences at the *Kerkcafé*. It turns out that there frequently are heated debates during the Kerkcafé. He specifically discusses one instance where a participant decides to leave because of a dispute with other participants. The following exchange ensues:

Wander: What then is your motivation to keep going there [*Kerkcafé*]? If it's so..

Ferdinand: Well, I don't mind it too much. I actually think it's quite interesting, to be honest. Interesting as a phenomenon, you know? To see that people still care at all, that is,.. it's charming in a way. As Nietzsche wrote, religious wars are positive in a way, for they prove that the masses still care about details,.. Hahah!

Wander: I see..

Ferdinand: Apathy or indifference is worse, right? As long as there are no casualties..

It is an original approach to conflict. Ferdinand sees conflict as a byproduct, or a consequence of, passion. One's attitude completely changes by thinking of conflict as the signifier of passion. Conflict cannot, and should not be avoided, because that would imply avoiding passion.

The different accounts suggest that it is impossible to completely rule out conflicts in a social space, without losing something valuable. Therefore, it is beneficial to have multiplex perception of, and approach towards, conflicts. What one might read as conflict or verbal

aggression might be read as a passionate exchange of viewpoints by someone else. The excerpt below is exemplary of that.

> Erica: […] Something that you see quite often is that they,.. Well, sometimes I really think these guys are gonna get in a fight. But then you walk outside, and there they are, just talking to each other, shaking hands. Then they usually say something like, no, no, that's just how we talk, it's very common in our culture. But most of the times everybody leaves as friends..

The cultural diversity at the Pauluskerk might complicate things with regard to conflicts. Inter-cultural communication is no easy subject and they have to deal with that on a daily basis. Erica's words show how one could easily misread a situation. Therefore, it seems important to have a nuanced understanding and cautious approach to conflict at the Pauluskerk.

4.7 Communicating Through Art

The Tower of Babel is a famous story which can be found in the Book of Genesis. In the story, everyone on earth spoke the same language. To make name for themselves, the people built a mighty city and a tower with its top in the heavens. The Lord watched on and said "now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them" (Genesis 11:6). To prevent them from continuing the construction of the tower, the Lord confounded their speech which consequently made effective communication impossible. In 1563, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, a Dutch painter, represented this story in three oil paintings. Two paintings survived the passage of time and are known all over the world. In the original story, people were divided by different languages, but it seems as if the visual representation of the story is understood and appreciated by people worldwide. In a way, the cultural activities in the Pauluskerk can be understood as a search for a new language. Perhaps a more unifying language. In an organization, where there are people from different cultural backgrounds, who speak different languages, and subscribe to different religions, it is well worth looking for a language that transcends those differences. The interviews show that a substantial part of the people is willing to regard art as a means to achieve that. Some interviewees are however more hesitant, it is interesting to explore both perspectives. I will start by discussing some of the more favorable opinions towards this matter. The first example comes from Leny (39 years old). As mentioned before, Leny works as an instructor at the Open Atelier.

> Wander: On Thursday, you work - with the visitors - on a communal project. Why did you decide to do that?

> Leny: Uhm. I tried to,.. I like to work on something big! That's something that I personally prefer to do. But also, if you work together.. the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Actually, it is a dialogue on canvas. People react to each other. People work together and it's very satisfying to see that big picture. Everybody contributed to that. That's what I like.

Lark (2005) explores the use of (visual) art as language in large group dialogues. She understands language as something that is deeply embedded in the individual's biography. Verbal language is only one way to express internal, perceptual, and sensual experiences. Often verbal language is indeed the dominant mode of expression, but depending on solely verbal language can be confining. Lark (2005) argues that an emphasis on the "verbal may be unnecessarily confining and silencing nonverbal thought processes within the group" (p. 25). She goes on to argue that this is especially true in intercultural groups.

Leny is an artist herself and definitely acknowledges the potential art has to offer. She describes the communal work of art as a "dialogue on canvas", which I believe is a fitting expression. This kind of dialogue gives 'silent' group members (in the verbal sense) the opportunity to participate and to engage with the others. It is a form of dialogue that is not word dependent and which can explore themes and emotions that may be less accessible for words alone. Lark (2005) praises art because it has the potential to break *unnecessary silence*. Silence that is not caused by a lack of thoughts, emotions, or experiences, but by a "lack of access to language" (Lark, 2005, p. 26). Providing a new means of expression can be beneficial on an individual level (it gives a sense of inclusion), but could also produce beneficial effects for the group itself.

Before discussing a few opinions that are not in line with Leny's perspective, I want to present one very practical example of how art can be used. This excerpt comes from the interview with Ferdinand. I should mention that Ferdinand is discussing individual works rather than the communal project.

> Wander: Do you think it's important to expose the works you create in the Pauluskerk?
>
> Ferdinand: Well, my works.. the funny thing is, I have a few drawings.. I copied them from images of Jesus, different images, for example the empty tomb,.. And I use those drawings during the Kerkcafé, for example, I just put them behind me so that everybody gets to see them haha!
>
> Wander: Sure, why not!

Ferdinand: Yeah, it's kinda funny.. I'd like to think that, when things get a bit out of hand, Jesus is there to watch over us, you know, haha!

For various reasons, this is a very interesting excerpt. First of all, it shows on a very practical level how art can be used to convey a story. Bruegel told the story of Babylon, Ferdinand tells the story of Easter and the empty tomb. And secondly, it shows how works of art, produced in the Open Atelier, remain relevant outside of the context where they were created. The activities in the Open Atelier thus reach and influence people who may not even participate. Leny touches upon something similar when she shows me a photograph, on her laptop, of the first communal project.

Leny: This is a sculpture of the world, Omnipresent, and this is also.. this was our first communal work of art with the visitors. We started with creating masks and we covered those in maps of the world. The idea behind it was to give the world a face

Wander: How did the people, who did not participate, react to this sculpture?

Leny: They think it's a bit odd. But well,.. sometimes they think it's interesting, fun, exciting, weird.. they don't always quite get it, but that's not really my goal. My goal is not that everybody *gets it*. My goal is to challenge somebody, to stimulate them.. Every reaction is a good reaction. Either positive or negative.

Later on in the interview, Leny said that this sculpture, for her, represents the Pauluskerk.

Leny: [...] For me, this basically represents the Pauluskerk [laughs], with different cultures, the world with different worlds beneath it, and flags – the messages we convey,.. You can interpret it in many different ways, and some visitors like to do that.

Creating art together can have positive social effects on the realization of a community (Madyaningrum & Sonn, 2011; Lowe, 2000). As Leny's interpretation of the sculpture shows, it arguably not only facilitates the creation of a community, but it also, quite uniquely, provides the symbols through which this community is expressed. Sharing the same signs and symbols can reinforce the sense of imagined community, because it tangibly shows that a group of people subscribe to the same 'reality' (Anderson, 1983). But as mentioned before, not everybody subscribes to this way of thinking about art. Mirjam is somewhat skeptical with regards to the potential of the Open Atelier.

Wander: [...] You said that, the Kerkcafé falls under the religious part [of the Pauluskerk], what then constitutes the non-religious part?

Mirjam: Well, you could say that the religious part concerns itself with *meaning*, a sense of direction, to talk about that, to think about that, and to discuss that. And well. You could for example put the Open Atelier in that same category but,.. No, no, actually not. It's about talking to each other, about meaning, well.. that's the way I see it.

Initially, Mirjam wanted to attribute the same capacity (to discuss and think about meaning) to the Open Atelier, as she did to the Kerkcafé. But she backed away from that. She thought twice and she decided not to do that. Her hesitation however shows that the (imagined) boundaries are blurred. One could speculate on several explanations for her unwillingness to do so. She might not recognize the work, created in the Open Atelier, as *true art*. She may be very comfortable expressing herself in words and therefore does not recognize the need to use another means of expression. Or she might be afraid to categorize it under the religious denominator because it might devalue *true religious activities*. Whatever the explanation might be is actually not very important. What is important to take away from this, is that people are divided in their views of what the Open Atelier can and cannot do.

Early on during my field work, I already heard people referring to the Open Atelier as the "Crea-Club" (field note 2). Dutch people commonly use the same term to refer to creative activities in kindergarten. It carries a similar meaning as *Tinkering School*. The use of this term suggests that people do not take the Open Atelier completely seriously. Drawing, coloring, and painting is something for children, they seem to suggest. At best, they recognize it as a fun way to kill time. It is interesting to see that members of the same organization do not have a shared understanding, or attitude, towards the same activities. Opposite to the people who speak of the "Crea-Club", one finds organizational members who are willing to think of art as a language that adds something to the spoken or written word.

The confusion of the tongues, in this organization, is not only a Biblical story but also something that can be experienced in everyday life. In a multilingual, and multicultural community like the Pauluskerk communication can be challenging. It makes sense that people are looking for a means of expression that may complement verbal communication. The search is still in process. And not everybody agrees on where exactly to look. A substantial part of the data shows that people are willing to look for it (and find it) in the domain of the (visual) arts. Even though not everybody participates in the creative activities, and not everybody holds them in high esteem, there is no way of ignoring them. And maybe it is best to conclude with an image of the sculpture. Because at the end of this theme, I find myself in a paradoxical situation. I try to

explain – in words – why people might turn to art. Sometimes words are deemed insufficient to explain, or communicate something. And here I am, making sense of that phenomenon in the tools that are deemed inadequate. Therefore, it only seems reasonable to conclude this theme the sculpture Omnipresent (see figure III).

Figure III: Omnipresent: A communally created sculpture (field note 116).

4.8 Unconditional Acceptance

On January 10, I attended a Social Talkshow at the Pauluskerk. This event was organized by two (former-homeless) men who currently run a media company that aims to share stories from the streets with a larger audience. The talk show host interviewed a sacristan, Mark, who already worked at the Pauluskerk for nine years. They had a conversation about the people who come to the Pauluskerk. Mark said that, for some reason, he is not really interested in who comes to the Pauluskerk:

> Mark: […] Everybody is welcome. It's a place for everybody. The Pauluskerk is characterized by unconditional acceptance. (Field note 19).

It is important to point out that the interview took place *at the Pauluskerk* while the daily activities were going on. It is thus understandable that Mark was careful in his choice of words. I believe that the notion of "unconditional acceptance" is still very interesting however. The term is very encompassing and welcoming. The idea of unconditional acceptance came back, in different ways, in seven out of twelve interviews (Caroline's excerpt in section 4.2 also contributes to this idea). On a practical level, the notion of unconditional acceptance does however not persevere. The Pauluskerk does not accept everybody unconditionally, which is understandable in light of organizational concerns. There are rules (no drinking, no drugs, no swearing) and through continuous violation of these rules the individual in question can indeed be suspended. There are even gatekeepers at the Pauluskerk. Note that these are not the same gatekeepers that have been discussed in the methodology of this thesis. By gatekeepers, in this section, I refer to Isaias and Teiki who commonly stand at the entrance of the Open Huis to keep an eye on things. In my interview with Isaias (43 years old and a temporal resident of the Pauluskerk) I ask him about his role as a gatekeeper:

> Wander: Why is it necessary for the Pauluskerk to have a gatekeeper?
>
> Isaias: You know, sometimes people drink, or take drugs, whatever.. You have to see those things. They can be annoying, get mad at other visitors. Nobody really likes that. It's not good for us and it's not good for the other visitors. Especially in the weekends. In the weekends there are often drunks. They drink at the toilet. We find bottles of wine there, for example. They drink before they come here. Or they use drugs in the rookhok [smoking area, Isaias speaks English but often integrates Dutch words in his sentences], you know. It's annoying. But you can't rule it out completely.

Wander: Mhm.. so, uhm. What do you have to do when such things happen?

Isaias: I ask them to leave! Simple. I ask them to leave. They have to go. We can schors [suspend] them, right. They can't come for a while. Sometimes this leads to nasty situations, not often, but it happens. If it's too much.. we call the police. But that doesn't happen a lot. We've had some fights here. That's not fun. This is not a place for fighting, right. We call the police, they come.. but often then the fighters are already gone.

Isaias' experiences clearly illustrate that not everybody is welcome. He says that conflicts and fights are "not good for us and it's not good for the other visitors". The ambiguities of conflicts have already been discussed. It makes sense that in order to protect a community, to guarantee a safe social space, one sometimes has to enforce exclusionary measures directed at those who threaten the production of such a space. In the theoretical framework, Lancione (2014b) already criticized the idea of unconditional acceptance. In the Pauluskerk, it seems as if "unconditional acceptance" is primarily used as a slogan, but not really as a policy. To call it a slogan may be to banal, maybe one should call it an organizational value. Even though it may sound vague, and it turns out not to be completely true, there are potential benefits in using such ambivalent terms. It is not uncommon for values to be expressed in this "form because their equivocal expression allows for multiple interpretations while at the same time promoting a sense of unity" (Eisenberg, 1984, p. 8).

5. Discussion & Conclusion

In the final part of this thesis, I will discuss how the eight central themes are used to answer the sub-questions and the main research question. Altogether, the results lead me to identify three primary functions of the cultural program. Those three functions will be discussed in relation to the sub-questions. In the conclusion (5.2), I will present an answer to the main research question, reflect on the limitations of this study, and identify areas for future research.

5.1 Discussion

This study set out to explore how the Pauluskerk tries to create a space for those who find themselves in the margins of society. Within this research objective, I focused particularly on the role of the cultural program. Based on the results from the thematic analysis, three main functions of the cultural program can be identified. Figure IV presents a tentative visualization of how these three functions are informed by the different themes. In this part of the paper, I will discuss each of these functions and argue how they can be used to answer the sub-questions.

4.1 There Are Visitors & Visitors
4.2 Constructing Accessibility & Making Choices
4.3 Diversity
4.4 Mind the Motive

4.5 Different Worlds
4.6 Should Conflict Be Cherished?
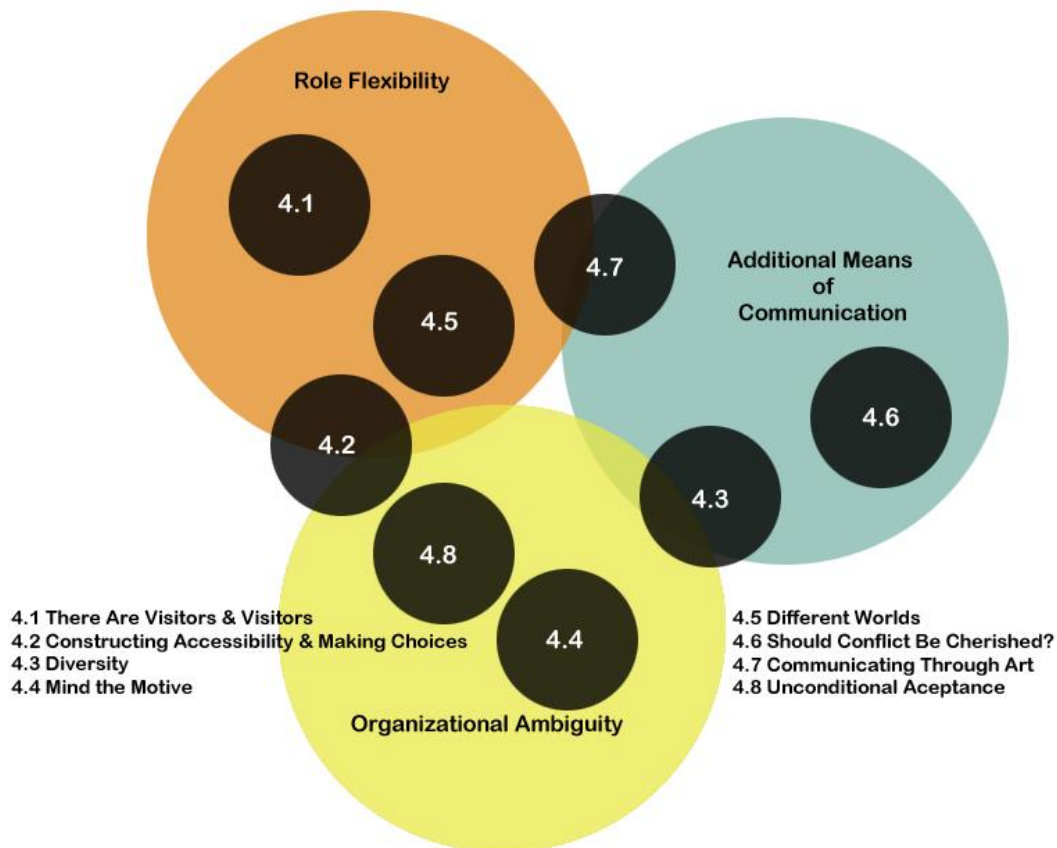4.7 Communicating Through Art
4.8 Unconditional Aceptance

Figure IV: Visual Exemplification of How Different Themes Support the Main Functions.

5.1.1 Organizational Ambiguity

The first sub-question concerns itself with the ways in which the organizational context shapes the cultural program. The Pauluskerk, at an organizational level, is characterized by its ambiguity. In chapter 4.7 (*Communicating Through Art*), I already noted that it is interesting how members of the same organization have such varying attitudes towards the same activities. Traditionally, the reduction of uncertainty and ambiguity has been regarded as a key factor in organizational communication (Strongman, 2011). But cultivating inconsistency among goals and employing ambiguous communication can potentially also foster creativity, flexibility, and adaptability (Eisenberg, 1984).

Day centers are typically open to a wide variety of vulnerable adults. In chapter 4.2 (*Constructing Accessibility & Making Choices*), I critically discussed the efforts of the Pauluskerk to create a welcoming and open space. The cloth tied around the front door is a material expression of their welcoming attitude. The idea of unconditional acceptance (chapter 4.8) can be understood as yet another way of expressing this attitude. As mentioned before, unconditional acceptance is never fully true on a practical level and accessibility is always a subjective experience. But both notions indicate a strategic usage of ambiguity in organizational communication. Organizational values, because of their ambiguous nature, remain open to many different interpretations. Different people, both organizational members and visitors, can have different readings of similar phenomena. This can potentially foster a sense of community within a seemingly, miscellaneous collection of people.

Chapter 4.4 (*Mind the Motive*) however shows that ambiguous communication is not without risks. It can also lead to tensions within the community. The lack of a clearly defined stance towards the degree of religious liberalism in the Pauluskerk causes a sense of frustration among some people. At times, it can be difficult to determine to what extent the ambiguity, at the Pauluskerk, is actually *strategic*. Eisenberg (1984) demonstrates that strategic ambiguity can have many positive organizational effects, it is unclear however if the same holds true for *coincidental* ambiguity.

Of course, the organizational ambiguity should not really be understood as a function of the cultural program, but rather as a condition that shapes the cultural program. A simple example of how it shapes the cultural program can be found by looking at the way it is organized. Volunteers, who guide the different activities, are very much expected to fulfill their functions in

their own distinctive way. There is room to approach the same activities from different perspectives. As a result, there is a high degree of plurality within the same activity. This kind of openness and flexibility leaves room for independent initiatives. It is good to mention that, the possibility to come up with new initiatives is not an exclusive right for organizational members. In my interview with Oscar, he told me that he is currently working (in the Pauluskerk) on a children's book with another visitor. Oscar writes the poems and his friend creates matching illustrations. It goes to show that initiatives by the visitors are also given a chance to be pursued and cultivated.

It is certain that the ambiguous context in which the cultural program is organized contributes to its unique identity. It stands out from other community art initiatives by its flexibility, adaptability, and absence of clearly defined procedures. It provides a choice to those who are typically deprived of choices. I think the opportunity to refuse something is important in this context. The idea of *agape*, and maybe of charity in general, is to give something "with no expectation of a return" (Outka, 1972, p. 208). By refusing (to participate), the giver is unable to give. The relationship between giver and taker is not only altered, but vanishes. Žižek (2014) argues that debt is an instrument to control and regulate the debtor. Agape typically leaves an individual (the receiver) with a debt that he is, by definition, unable to repay, for nothing is expected in return.

At the Open Huis (and also at the Eethuis), small prices are charged for coffee, tea, and dinner. These measures assure that the visitor is not left with an irredeemable debt. It shows that visitors are addressed as citizens rather than only as *people in need*. This may be a rather unanticipated function of the cultural program, it disperses power within the organization and leads to (in combination with other measures) to more symmetrical relationships. This discussion not only provides an answer to the first sub-question, but also already touches upon how social relationships are influenced by the cultural program.

5.1.2 Additional Means of Communication

In the previous section, it already became clear that one cannot draw sharp boundaries between the answers to the different sub-questions. In this part, I will argue how the activities of the cultural program can function as an additional means of communication. Figure IV shows that this function of the cultural program is particularly supported by the themes 4.3, 4.6, and 4.7.

One could say that theme 4.3 (*Diversity*) primarily shows why additional means of communication are deemed necessary. In a highly diverse community, effective communication can be a serious challenge. An example can be found in my interview with Caroline, the Communications Director at the Pauluskerk. She tells me that informing the visitors about events and activities already proves to be a real challenge. As mentioned before, digital communication technologies are scarcely used because the target audiences of the Pauluskerk often lack access (or have very limited access) to devices with a reliable internet connection. At the moment, the Pauluskerk primarily depends on word-of-mouth and pamphlets as a ways of sharing information with their visitors. These pamphlets are printed in three different languages, contain visual representations of the activities, and present the time and date in different ways. Despite all these measures, it remains difficult to effectively share information. More so because, Caroline tells me, illiteracy is a prevailing issue among marginalized individuals. It thus makes sense that people are willing to look for additional means of communication.

In theme 4.6 (*Should Conflict Be Cherished?*), I have explored the ambiguities of conflict at the Pauluskerk. Conflict can be understood as a consequence of the inability to effectively communicate. But violence (a more aggressive form of conflict) can also be understood as a means of communication itself. Andersen and Guerrero (1997) for example urge the reader to think of aggressive behavior not only as the result of difficulties in communication, but also as a way of communicating per se. Their work illustrates that the "inability to express emotion increases the likelihood of using aggression as a default option to communicate one's anger" (Andersen & Guerrero, 1997, p. 202). When one is willing to understand this kind of behavior as a means of communication, then at least the 'instigator' is (also) thought of as somebody who wants to *say something*. Of course, it is still fair to argue that violence is a less desirable means of communication compared to some of the alternatives. Anderson and Guerrero's (1997) work promisingly shows that when one is able to facilitate different ways of emotional expression, the likeliness of violent behavior in a community is expected to diminish. Therefore, we turn to theme 4.7 (*Communicating Through Art*).

In 2003, David Foster Wallace did an interview with the German television station ZDF. In this interview, he said the following: "[…] most of the stuff that we think we are writing about in books is very difficult to talk about straight-up. You know, question and answer. And in some sense, it probably cannot be talked about directly and that is why people make up stories about

it". I believe that he touches upon an important function of art. Art allows individuals to talk about emotions and things, that seem incredibly important to us, but are often very difficult to discuss in everyday conversations. Of course, Wallace primarily talks about literature in this interview, but I would attribute the same function to art in general. In chapter 4.7, some of Lark's (2005) findings have already been discussed. She is prepared to skip the discussion on whether art can function as a language or not. She is certain that does and argues that it just happens to be that "our society simply does not utilize those languages with the same zeal with which we utilize verbal language" (Lark, 2005, p. 26).

At the Pauluskerk, the cultural program does not replace verbal communication, but complements it. Art functions as an additional means of communication. This way of expressing emotions, can even lead to less violent behavior within the community. Besides that, it also increases the inclusionary nature of the community, because those who feel less comfortable expressing themselves in the verbal sense are now also able to participate. It breaks an "unnecessary silence" (Lark, 2005, p. 26).

On November 28, 2014 the theatre play *L'Histoire d'un Placard* premiered. This play is a joint production between Werkplaats Participatief Drama and the Pauluskerk. In the very first week of my fieldwork, I received a pamphlet about this play (this was after the premiere). The play was characterized by the fact that it did not use any verbal language. The actors completely relied upon gestures, facial expressions, and music to express their personal story. At the time, I just took notice of it and made sure to archive the pamphlet. By now, I believe that this play is the epitome of the Pauluskerk's search for a universal and an inclusive means of communication. It shows that words are sometimes deemed inadequate to capture the complexities and breadth of human experience. The Pauluskerk needs more than just words and hopes to find it in art.

5.1.3 Role Flexibility

The role one performs in everyday life influences what one is capable of doing, how others perceive him, and what spaces he has access to (Goffman, 1959). To a certain extent, individuals are commonly able to choose how they want to perform themselves. Within social roles there is often a degree of flexibility to challenge and disagree with notions of normative behavior and expectations. Maintaining a show for others (think of, impression management) is not necessarily problematic. But the issue grows in complexity when individuals are severely restricted in their ability to counter, challenge, and negotiate social roles. Performing a role that the individual

himself does neither appreciate nor accept can lead to a "special kind of alienation from self and a special kind of wariness of others" (Goffman, 1959, p. 229). Žižek (2009), for example, discusses the case of the illegal immigrant worker who "has no legal status, so that, if he is noticed at all, it is as a dark external threat to our way of life" (p. 118). The only way in which the *undocumented* can make himself visible is as a threat to society. All the opportunities for participation in civic society are taken away. The illegal immigrant worker, to stick with Žižek's example, may be able to utter words of resistance, to attempt at political organization, but by virtue of his *being* he is unable to make himself heard in any meaningful way. One could call this illocutionary disablement. The illegal immigrant remains his capacity to speak, but is silenced in the sense that society is preventing "those utterances from counting as the actions they were intended to be" (Langton, 2009, p. 50).

The cultural program, in the Pauluskerk, allows individuals to experiment with different roles. Visitors are provided with the opportunity to express themselves as a poet, a painter, a musician, or a philosopher. They are able to escape their confining role as a *drug addict*, *homeless person*, or *illegal immigrant*. It actually seems close to unethical to only address somebody in terms of what they do not want to be. By providing the opportunity to take on different roles, individuals are able to engage with their surroundings in different ways.

In chapter 4.5, I have discussed the efforts of the Pauluskerk to create an encounter between *different worlds*. They aim to bring people together who may live in the same geographical space, but are unlikely to engage with each other because they inhabit different social spaces. This is an ambitious goal and not everybody agrees on how to reach this goal. In Bourdieu's (1989) terms, one could argue that they are trying to overcome spatial segregation. The cultural program should increase the chances of an encounter by allowing people to engage with other people as poets or painters and not only as *drug addicts* or *homeless people*. The canonical categorizations are no longer used in the Pauluskerk.

In general (not only within the cultural program), the Pauluskerk is cautious in their manner of addressing and approaching individuals. Without that careful attitude, it seems unlikely that the cultural program (or any community art initiative) could lead to the idea of role flexibility. In chapter 4.1, the term *visitors* has been extensively discussed. The Pauluskerk does not have a fixed, preconceived idea of who their visitors are. That is not to say that they do not know their visitors. Chapter 4.1 concludes with the statement that the term visitors sets the

imagination in motion and functions as an invitation to action. By the latter I mean that, precisely because the term is ambiguous, one is encouraged to take action, to engage with a certain individual and get to know him. In the Pauluskerk, knowledge about the visitors is not stored in databases, but it is dispersed among the minds of its members. The path that leads to knowledge (engaging with visitors etc.) is essential and should not be disregarded. The organization believes in *relational knowledge* and rejects the "disembodiment of information" (Lyon, 2014, p. 29).

5.2 Conclusion

The discussion, in the previous part of this paper, has answered the two sub-questions. It has been shown how the organizational context of the Pauluskerk shapes the cultural program. Also, it has been discussed how social relationships within the Pauluskerk are influenced by the cultural program. At the end of this study, I believe that the main research question can be answered as following: The cultural program contributes to the Pauluskerk, as a social space, in three main ways. First of all, in its ambiguous organizational context, the cultural program offers a choice. It assures more symmetrical relationships between organizational members and visitors. Secondly, it presents an additional means of communication that complements the spoken (and written) word. In doing so, unnecessary silence is broken. And finally, it adds role flexibility. It enables visitors to escape undesired social roles (often imposed on them), they can experiment with different roles, and thus engage differently with their surroundings.

Altogether, these findings give rise to an interesting way of creating space. Let me explain that by going back to when I started my fieldwork. During the participant observation, I always carried around a small journal. At the cover page, I had written: "What we speak becomes the house we live in". It is a quote from the Iranian poet Hafiz and to be frank, I do not remember how I stumbled upon it. At the time, it just felt appropriate. By now, I believe that I can explain *why* it felt appropriate.

Inherent to the quote is the idea that language constructs our social reality. It is redundant to describe the connection to Lefebvre's (1991) work. If one accepts the claim that language constructs reality, or that speech can build houses. Then, it becomes interesting to see who is allowed to speak and who is not. The Pauluskerk tries to engage with those people who, in contemporary society, typically experience restrictions in what they can say. Or they can speak, but they are not heard (illocutionary disablement). The Pauluskerk creates a space where *the*

marginalized are allowed to speak, where they are heard, and where the understanding of speaking is pushed to include poetry, theatre, paintings, and other art forms.

There is an analogy between how Žižek (2009) envisions what Hugo Chavez did in Venezuela and what the Pauluskerk is doing in Rotterdam. Žižek (2009) argues that Chavez is not "including the excluded in a pre-existing liberal-democratic framework; he is, on the contrary, taking the 'excluded' dwellers of favelas as his *base* and then reorganizing political space and political forms of organization so that the latter will 'fit' the excluded" (p. 102 [emphasis in original]). In a similar way, the Pauluskerk is not creating a space *for* the marginalized, but they are creating a space *with* the marginalized. The visitors are incorporated in the process of producing space; they become co-authors of social space.

5.2.1 Limitations & Future Research

In many ways, this research was an interesting and valuable exploration. It has explored the functions of a community art initiative in a truly unique social setting. It shed light on how an organizational context shapes the outlines of a community art program and it discovered previously unnoticed social consequences. It is important however to also reflect on the possible limitations of this study.

A limitation of the current study is the fact that it was undertaken at a period that was convenient (for the researcher) rather than consciously considered. It just happened to be the case that, within this period of time, I was able to spent time at the Pauluskerk, collect the data, and finalize my report. Therefore, I would like to suggest that future research projects may benefit from a deliberate choice with regards to temporal involvement. This consideration should be made in cooperation and discussion with the organization, but also the participants in question.

Another limitation that I experienced was related to the cultural diversity of the community. I conducted two interviews that were not in the interviewee's native language. This can make it more difficult to express certain nuances and complexities that would otherwise add to the understanding of human experience. Also, I was unable to engage (in the verbal sense) with visitors who spoke (for example) French or Arabic. Therefore, it seems desirable that future research projects create a team of researchers that reflect the cultural diversity of the population they are interested in. When researchers of different cultural backgrounds work together, to study

these phenomena, they also may be able to venture into new and challenging interpretations of the data that go unnoticed by less culturally diverse research teams.

My theoretical framework borrowed concepts from a variety of different fields of study. Social settings, such as the Pauluskerk, seem to be located at the crossways of many different fields of study. Therefore, it would not only be interesting for future researchers to comprise a culturally diverse research team, but also very much an interdisciplinary research team. For it seems beneficial for our understanding about these places to combine knowledge and efforts form different fields of study.

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Appendix A

Below one can find descriptive information about each of the interviews. The information is presented in chronological order. In the results, the interviewees are always introduced and the excerpts are embedded in enough information to make sense of the data.

Interviewee: Paul (Male), visitor of the Pauluskerk.
Country of Origin: The Netherlands
Age: 42 years old
Date of the interview: April 13, 2015.
Location of the interview: At the Pauluskerk.

Interviewee: Ferdinand (Male), visitor of the Pauluskerk.
Country of Origin: The Netherlands
Age: 69 years old
Date of the interview: April 13, 2015.
Location of the interview: At the Pauluskerk.

Interviewee: Marja (Female), volunteer at the Welcome Committee.
Country of Origin: The Netherlands
Age: 63 years old
Date of the interview: April 14, 2015.
Location of the interview: At the Pauluskerk.

Interviewee: Anais (Female), visitor of the Pauluskerk (used to live at the Pauluskerk).
Country of Origin: Armenia (resides in the Netherlands without legal status)
Age: 29 years old
Date of the interview: April 16, 2015.
Location of the interview: At the Pauluskerk.

Interviewee: Leny (Female), employee of the Pauluskerk (instructor at the Open Atelier).
Country of Origin: The Netherlands
Age: 39 years old
Date of the interview: April 16, 2015.
Location of the interview: At the Leny's own studio.

Interviewee: Mirjam (Female), volunteer at the Pauluskerk (Kerkcafé).
Country of Origin: The Netherlands
Age: 69 years old
Date of the interview: April 20, 2015.
Location of the interview: At the Pauluskerk.

Interviewee: Caroline (Female), employee of the Pauluskerk (Communications Director).
Country of Origin: The Netherlands
Age: 48 years old
Date of the interview: April 21, 2015.

Location of the interview: At the Pauluskerk.

Interviewee: Erica (Female), intern at the Pauluskerk.
Country of Origin: The Netherlands
Age: 20 years old
Date of the interview: April 22, 2015.
Location of the interview: At the Pauluskerk.

Interviewee: Bert (Male), visitor of the Pauluskerk.
Country of Origin: The Netherlands
Age: 72 years old
Date of the interview: May 1, 2015.
Location of the interview: At the Pauluskerk.

Interviewee: Karin (Female), visitor of the Pauluskerk.
Country of Origin: The Netherlands
Age: 21 years old
Date of the interview: May 7, 2015.
Location of the interview: At the Pauluskerk.

Interviewee: Isaias (Male), temporary resident of the Pauluskerk.
Country of Origin: Ethiopia (resides in the Netherlands without legal status)
Age: 43 years old
Date of the interview: May 13, 2015.
Location of the interview: At the Pauluskerk.

Interviewee: Oscar (Male), visitor of the Pauluskerk.
Country of Origin: The Netherlands
Age: 41 years old
Date of the interview: May 13, 2015.
Location of the interview: At the Pauluskerk.

Appendix B

Below one can find the default interview guide used for organizational members and/or volunteers. Before each interview, I tailored the guide to fit the particular position/persona of that specific interviewee. This was especially necessary because individuals are able to perform different roles within the Pauluskerk. The interviews were always structured in a way that it went from the general to the specific. In the first phase, we often talked about the Pauluskerk as a whole. Then, we continued to talk about the interviewee's role/function at the Pauluskerk and their own experiences. And all the interviews ended with some basic demographic questions. Also, before I ended the interview, I always granted interviewees the opportunity to add something if they liked and ask me questions.

- Could you tell me the story of how you came into contact with the Pauluskerk?
- (Was that the old location? Was that different from how it is now? How was it different?)
- How would you describe the visitors of the Pauluskerk?
- How do you think the Pauluskerk is perceived in society? (Is that in line with your own experiences?)
- What was your motivation to work/volunteer at the Pauluskerk?
- Could you describe the role you fulfill at the Pauluskerk?
- (If there the host of a cultural activity, ask them to describe that particular activity in their own words)
- Why is valuable, for the visitors of the Pauluskerk, to have the opportunity to participate in the Open Atelier/Dichterscafé/Kerkcafé?
- Sometimes people tell rather personal stories in the Open Atelier/Dichterscafé/Kerkcafé. What do you think makes them willing to share those stories in a group?
- The Pauluskerk operates from a religious motivation. Is the religious aspect important to you? (Why so/why not?/Do you sometimes experience the religious aspect as an obstacle?)
- Do you ever attend any other (not directly related to your own function/role) activities at the Pauluskerk? (What kind of activities? Why/why not?)
- Before we end the interview, is there something that you would like to add? Something that might be interesting, but that we haven't yet discussed?
- Demographic questions: age/nationality.
- Do you have any further questions about this interview? (End)

Appendix C

Below one can find the default interview guide used for non-organizational members. Before each interview, I tailored the guide to fit the particular position/persona of that specific interviewee. This was especially necessary because individuals are able to perform different roles within the Pauluskerk. The interviews were always structured in a way that it went from the general to the specific. In the first phase, we often talked about the Pauluskerk as a whole. Then, we continued to talk about the interviewee's role/function at the Pauluskerk and their own experiences. And all the interviews ended with some basic demographic questions. Also, before I ended the interview, I always granted interviewees the opportunity to add something if they liked and ask me questions.

- Could you tell me the story of how you came into contact with the Pauluskerk?
- (Was that the old location? Was that different from how it is now? How was it different?)
- How would you describe the visitors of the Pauluskerk?
- How do you think the Pauluskerk is perceived in society? (Is that in line with your own experiences?)
- What are some of the cultural activities (explain term) that you like to attend? (Why particularly those activities? Is it important to you to expose the work that you make in the Open Atelier? Why/why not?)
- Could you tell me (in your own words) what the Open Atelier/Dichterscafé/Kerkcafé actually is? (What do you commonly do at the Open Atelier/Dichterscafé/Kerkcafé?)
- Sometimes people tell rather personal stories in the Open Atelier/Dichterscafé/Kerkcafé. What do you think makes them willing to share those stories in a group?
- The Pauluskerk operates from a religious motivation. Is the religious aspect important to you? (Why so/why not?/Do you sometimes experience the religious aspect as an obstacle?)
- Are there any other places, in Rotterdam, that serve a similar function, to you, as the Pauluskerk?
- Before we end the interview, is there something that you would like to add? Something that might be interesting, but that we haven't yet discussed?
- Demographic questions: age/nationality.
- Do you have any further questions about this interview? (End)