

Bridging the gap

A qualitative exploration of diversity, inclusion, and quality-debates in the cultural sector of Rotterdam

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ABSTRACT

As policies focused on increasing cultural participation have been present for decades, inclusion is one of the newest implications created by policy makers aiming to increase cultural participation in the cultural sector of Rotterdam. As structural success on the engagement of underrepresented groups in the cultural sector has been absent, questions arise on how inclusion policies will change this situation. Therefore, this thesis focuses on the following research question: *How do Gemeente Rotterdam and Grounds construct their views on inclusion in the cultural sector of Rotterdam and how are these views connected?* In this research, both Gemeente Rotterdam as well as Grounds, being a Rotterdam music venue, will be topic of research in order to shine light on the perspectives on inclusion as present in the cultural sector, as well as in the world of cultural policy. As data have been conducted through the gathering of both policy documents and individual interviews, a thematic analysis has been done to see how the perspectives on Gemeente Rotterdam and Grounds are constructed. Moreover, the theoretical paradigms of essentialism and social constructionism are used to create a deeper understanding of these perspectives. Empirical findings show how inclusion policies are created to respond to the diversification of the population of Rotterdam, since Rotterdam has one of the most rapidly diversifying populations in the Netherlands. The goal here is to create a cultural sector representative of this diverse population. However, policy implications lead to discussions on the quality of culture, as both Gemeente Rotterdam as well as Grounds seem to struggle with quality depictions as a result of inclusion policies. Since everybody in Rotterdam should be included, what is it they should be included in? Gemeente Rotterdam aspires to include the inhabitants of Rotterdam in the cultural sector which is depicted to be full of fixated ideas on the quality of culture, Grounds seems to find a more fluid way to assess culture. Resultingly, Grounds currently strives to find a more flexible definition of the quality of culture, allowing all individuals they would like to include to create their own definition of culture. This ideology could theoretically lead to cultural democracy, as the ‘what’ in which the inhabitants of Rotterdam are supposed to participate in, is free to be interpreted individually, which relates to the paradigm of social constructionism. The approach of Gemeente Rotterdam however, seems to lead to democracy of culture, as every inhabitant of Rotterdam is required to participate in the state-funded cultural sector as shaped by cultural policy, featuring cultural activities with a fixated quality definition. This thesis therefore pleads for a deeper social constructionist understanding of culture, as it calls for a re-evaluation of the definitions of culture and inclusion, as well as a deeper understanding of cultural democracy.

Keywords: *cultural participation, inclusion, artistic quality, cultural democracy, democracy of culture*

Preface

First and foremost, I would like to thank my parents and friends for offering a safe haven whenever my thoughts turned into a stormy mess. Your calmness, and trust in me have soothed me throughout this entire process.

Then, I could not be more thankful for the support I received from my supervisor Evert Bisschop-Boele. You were able to push me further into the unknown, as to guide me through it. Thank you for teaming up with me and making me feel confident enough to perform well all on my own. Lastly, thank you for your efforts, time, and all our phone calls. Who am I supposed to call from now on every Friday?

When it comes to the topic of this research, being inclusion, I have allowed myself to let my empirical findings surprise me and guide me. People who know me often refer to me as a control freak, which is why this interpretative process was scary for me. At the same time, I knew letting go was the right thing to do as the broad concept of inclusion deserved an open and unrestrained interrogation. I could not be happier with the result, as the openness of this research has painted a picture of a broad narrative in which inclusion is integrated, which I could not have thought of at the beginning of this research.

Therefore, this thesis embraces the broad and the open, as it features a broad research question, a large dataset, and an extensive and thorough analysis. However, as I will show in the end of this thesis, this has all been necessary to formulate the answer to my research question.

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1. Introduction

‘The Eritrean people started dancing and started inviting the audience for a dance party. And then there were Mazurka people. So, they were dancing there in their traditional national costumes and just inviting everyone. And then it came to me; oh yes. This is what we want. Everyone has their own party.’

1.1 An introduction to the research and the research question

Rotterdam is known to be one of the most rapidly diversifying cities in the Netherlands (Peterson, 2015). Descriptions on the diversity of the population in Rotterdam portray an ethnic focus, as the diversity of Rotterdam is mostly indicated by the numerous nationalities inhabiting the city, being a considerable number of at least 170 nationalities. (Peterson, 2015; Phinney, 1996). As this process of constant diversification indicates an almost fluent DNA of Rotterdam, the municipality depicts Rotterdam to be a majority-minority city as minorities collectively form the majority of the population (RRKC, 2019). Although the demographics deny the dominance of any particular group, a certain dominance still seems to be present in the representation of society in the cultural sector. Whereas Rotterdam is argued to only be consisting of minorities now, many of them which are unmistakably and distinctively present in the population of Rotterdam, seem to be underrepresented in the cultural sector (RRKC, 2018). In the documentary ‘‘Mijn stad is mijn hart’’¹ by VPRO (2018), the grown diversity of the population of Rotterdam is highlighted through the personal stories and perspectives of various individuals who do not always feel acknowledged by cultural policy. According to them, policy advisors seem to structurally fail to meet the cultural needs of new creators and younger generations. Cultural policy argues to acknowledge these unheard voices as both the RRKC (2018; 2019) as the municipality (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2019) itself have been urged to accept the following: not everybody is well-represented in the cultural sector. Consequently, inclusion policies are brought into life as a means to enable everybody to participate in the cultural sector, with the final goal to create a cultural sector which is representative of the population of Rotterdam in every way possible (RRKC, 2018). As these inclusion policies concern the cultural sector as a whole, individual cultural institutes are urged to address inclusion matters as well. The music venue of Grounds is very articulate about its inclusion policy, as representation of the local community of the neighbourhood in which Grounds is located is very important to Grounds (Grounds, 2019). Although both cultural institutes as well as policy makers have been focusing on the stimulation of cultural participation for decades, questions arise on how current inclusion policies will make the difference the municipality and the population of Rotterdam seem to long for (Delhaye, 2018). The willingness of policy makers and cultural institutes to respond to the diversifying population of Rotterdam does not seem to be the problem. Instead, policy makers acknowledge the importance of cultural inclusion of every inhabitant of Rotterdam, but fail to incorporate a structural, inclusive approach over a longer period of time (Berkers, Van Eijck, Enkhuizen, Koning, Lemstra, Neeleman, Sucu, Van Vuuren, Weij, 2017). Therefore, this thesis aspires to shed light on the structural difficulties that come along with the implementation of inclusion policies, by answering the following question:

¹ Meaning: ‘‘My city is my heart’’

How do Gemeente Rotterdam and Grounds construct their views on inclusion in the cultural sector of Rotterdam and how are these views connected?

As inclusion is prioritised as one of the three major policy themes for the cultural policy timeframe of 2021-2024 (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2019), and since the willingness to incorporate an inclusive approach is definitely present, I consider this research question to be socially relevant. Aside from the top-down interest in inclusion, debates around inclusion are also very much present in daily life situations, as the feeling of being unheard and underrepresented is daily reality to many people (VPRO, 2018). Therefore, this research question aspires to bridge the gap between scientific and practical knowledge on inclusion. Moreover, this research strives to bridge an additional gap between cultural policy and the empirical world. This will be done by both researching the perspectives on inclusion between the walls of a music venue called Grounds, as well as the perspectives of cultural policy advisors within Gemeente Rotterdam. Additionally, both personal opinions and policy documents will be taken into account. As the RRKC (2018, 2019) states that structural success has been absent in inclusion measures, the dualistic unit of analysis of this research allows me to research inclusion in its broadness as it illuminates both the world of a Rotterdam cultural institute and the world of Rotterdam cultural policy.

Altogether, this research aspires to add to the knowledge on structures, narratives and scenarios in policy and practice in which inclusion is interwoven. Moreover, this thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of how cultural institutes, that do not belong to the top end of highbrow culture, contribute to an inclusive cultural sector.

To construct this research, I will elaborate on the diversification of Rotterdam, policies that have preceded inclusion, and theoretically introduce the topic of inclusion. Then, I will show what debates are triggered by inclusion policies, as presented by various scholars. Next, I will provide insights in my methodology, state the most prominent results, before I conclude this research. First, I will introduce the main actors of this research, being Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam.

1.2 An introduction to Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam

The city of Rotterdam is often described as a specific spatial context in which significant diversification processes are taking place, making Rotterdam a suitable context in which inclusion can be explored theoretically (Peterson, 2015). To highlight both the policy world of Rotterdam as the world of a cultural institute, Gemeente Rotterdam and the music venue Grounds have been chosen to be specific contexts in which inclusion can be empirically researched. Grounds will be discussed first in this introduction, as well as throughout this entire thesis. This is in line with the chronological order of the research process, since I have first conducted and analysed the data derived from Grounds,

before focusing on Gemeente Rotterdam. I have made this decision, as I aspired to be open to the individuality of the inclusion policies of Grounds, avoiding a biased view that may result from first dealing with the general inclusion policies as phrased by Gemeente Rotterdam that concern the entire cultural sector of Rotterdam.

1.2.1 Grounds

In order to combine practical perspectives on inclusion with policy perspectives, Grounds has been selected as a case study. Grounds is a medium-sized music venue located in Delfshaven and is known for its world music together with an extremely diverse program in terms of musical genres (Grounds, 2016). Grounds hosts artists from all over the world, presenting world music on both a professional and an amateur level. Additionally, Grounds has a very active approach on trying to culturally engage the population of Delfshaven, as it strives to become representative of its local population. Therefore, programming is very locally minded, resulting in a very local audience (Grounds, 2019). Due to these local traits, Grounds has a very outspoken inclusion policy that strives to activate people to go out and meet the unfamiliar. Additionally, it is known for its warm, open and inclusive atmosphere by both visitors and musicians. In terms of size and content, they position themselves somewhere in between the high-end institutes and the young grass-root institutes that usually find themselves in the unsubsidized, informal circuit (Grounds, 2016). Due to its size, local approach, and specific ideas on the implementation of inclusion policies, Grounds presents itself a very suitable cultural institute to use as a case study.

1.2.2 Gemeente Rotterdam

To dive deep into how policy-level assesses inclusion, the cultural department of Gemeente Rotterdam makes up for the second part of the case study. Gemeente Rotterdam has implemented inclusion as an explicit policy goal in the last policy timeframe, as the urge to stimulate as much people as possible to participate in the cultural sector has been present for years (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2019). It is a suitable time to include Gemeente Rotterdam in a research, as the cultural policy plan of the timeframe 2017-2020 has almost come to an end. The new policy time frame of 2021-2024 is about to begin, which makes it interesting to both reflect, as to take a look at the current conditions of the cultural sector of Rotterdam, concerning diversity and inclusion.

The view of Gemeente Rotterdam is captured through both policy plans as the voices of individual policy makers. Although all of them make part of the ‘cultural department’ of Gemeente Rotterdam, some policy makers are requested to overview local areas in Rotterdam, whereas all others focus on activities related to the creative industries in Rotterdam. Despite their connection to different cultural

domains and cultural institutes, all policy makers collectively work on the cultural mission of new policy time frames, in which a general vision on the cultural sector as a whole is presented. Therefore, their professional role allows them to grant me with information on cultural policy as a whole, as well as on more specific areas of cultural policy. Their individual voices will provide this thesis with their personal reflections on the past, as well as their hopes for future developments in terms of inclusion. Another actor that should be introduced, is the RRKC, as RRKC frequently pops up in the policy plans that make part of the database of this research. The RRKC provides the municipality with objective, policy-related advises on both the general cultural vision on the cultural sector of Rotterdam, as the distribution of subsidies. For each policy timeframe, the RRKC carries out an advice to the municipality, at which Gemeente Rotterdam responds in the final version of its policy plan. Although the advisory voice of the RRKC shines through in the policy plans of Gemeente Rotterdam, this study specifically focuses on the perspective of Gemeente Rotterdam, as Gemeente Rotterdam creates the final cultural plan on the cultural sector of Rotterdam.

2. Theoretical Framework

“A place that is not dominated by merely one culture to which all other cultures are subordinate, but where equality exists. The inclusiveness is inviting for musicians and other artists as they are able to shape their expressions as freely as possible. This counteracts the dominant discourse and could potentially lead to dialogue and new connections”

In this theory section, I will elaborate on the three concepts that have proven to be important during my research on inclusion in the cultural sector. This theoretical framework is the result of an initial framework as used in the research proposal of this thesis, which has been extended and re-ordered based on the empirical data gathered during this research. In the initial framework, inclusion was the main concept, together with social constructionism and essentialism. The discussion on social constructionism and essentialism has moved a bit towards the background in this extended version of the framework, as two additional concepts have come up during the data analysis. The process through which these shifts and alterations have taken place will be discussed in the methodology chapter. Therefore, my theoretical framework presents a structure of three concepts that will have a central role in my analysis section as well. For now, I will introduce the three central concepts on which this theoretical framework will elaborate.

Diversity will be the first concept of discussion, as my empirical findings have shown that diversity is mostly seen as the social phenomenon at which inclusion policies react. Secondly, I will discuss the concept of inclusion, as the concepts of inclusion and diversity have been focus points of my research question from the very start. Moreover, both my theory as well as my empirical findings have shown how inclusion is a particular way of addressing diversity in the cultural sector, making it the second concept to be discussed. Therefore, I will place the inclusion-debate in a short sketch of a wider debate of policies to response to diversity, after which I will focus on diversity policies of the Netherlands and policies specifically implemented in the cultural sector in Rotterdam. The third subchapter entails the concept of quality, as my empirical findings have revealed how discussions on the quality of culture influence and are influenced by implications of inclusion policies. In this chapter on theory, I will point out how these concepts are theoretically connected, whereas more empirical explanation on the interrelations of these three concepts will be provided in the analysis chapter.

2.1 Diversity: a phenomenon happening in the social world

In this subchapter on diversity, I will start by showing how several scholars have defined diversity. Then, I will elaborate on the two main perspectives to asses diversity, being essentialism and constructionism. Lastly, I will explain which perspective cultural policy tends to obtain and what definitions and perspectives this research will use in order to answer the overarching research question.

2.1.1 Diversity and hyperdiversity

As diversity can be defined through various ways, I will highlight different conceptualisations on diversity as described by various scholars. At the end of this sub-chapter, I will discuss what definitions will be used for this research. As Tasan-Kok, Van Kempen, Mike and Bolt (2014) state, diversity can be defined as an accumulation of groups in a certain spatial area, that differ among each other on several scales such as a cultural, socio-economic, or sociodemographic ones. Consequently, it has become almost impossible to describe cities or nations through a single, uniform identity, as new group-formations emerge, diffuse, and come into being along with the increased diversity (Ang, 2005). Although the concept of diversity entails a wide-ranging set of indicators, debates around diversity usually focus on ethnic differences (Phinney, 1996; Tersteeg, van Kempen & Bolt, 2014). Rotterdam is only one among many cities that is becoming increasingly diverse, in which also a strong ethnic focus is present due to migration and globalization (Peterson, 2015). However, migration and globalization are not the only catalysators of diversification anymore. As this process of diversification has been going on for decades, scholars and policy makers now speak of hyperdiversity. This refers to additional changes in patterns of lifestyle, such as how young generations more often switch jobs than their parents, and how they do not commit to only one cultural genre anymore (Tasan-Kok et al., 2014). Resultingly, groups that might seem uniform on characteristics such as ethnicity, differ among each other in terms of lifestyles or cultural preferences (Peterson, 2015). Therefore, hyperdiversity does not only consider diversifying socio-demographic aspects, but also diversifying behavioural patterns (Tasman-Tok et al, 2014). Rotterdam is currently known as the second-most diverse city of the Netherlands in terms of age and ethnicity, as it frequently labels itself to be hyperdiverse (Hoekstra, 2015). To its own saying, no majority-groups can be indicated anymore with everyone being part of a minority now (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2019). As diversity is known to be expressed where people live and recreate, the hyperdiverse aspects of the population of Rotterdam become visible in contexts of recreation, such as the cultural sector of Rotterdam (Peterson, 2015). Therefore, cultural policy and cultural institutes have been concerned with diversity as long as the phenomenon itself has been present (Ang, 2005). As I have now shortly introduced diversity, I will move on to describe two opposing paradigms, being essentialism and constructionism, and describe diversity through the viewpoints of these paradigms.

2.1.2 An essentialist view on diversity

As the definition of diversity as phrased by Tasan-Kok et al., (2014) already reveals, diversity is mainly indicated by the distinction of people in groups and sub-groups. This assignment of group labels is a process which can either be done by others, or by the individual itself (Galbin, 2014). This

assignment of group labels leads to a categorization of people, which very easily steers to an approach belonging to a paradigm which has been frequently accused of overgeneralization and stereotyping: essentialism (Prentice & Miller, 2007). In the following section, I will point out three types of essentialism, together with their most prominent characteristics.

In order to divide people into categories, boundaries should be determined in order to make an accurate selection. Classic essentialism would argue that the boundaries of these categories are fixed, and remain the same over time, remaining unaffected by any external forces. The establishment of these boundaries come into being through individuals, groups and external agents including institutions and organizations, resulting in implicit knowledge that we refer to as external facts (Nagel, 1994). A classic essentialist view entails an assumption of a true form, an objective being of things, stating that this objective being is biologically determined. This practically means that a person might biologically be assigned a certain group-label based on, for example, gender. Resultingly, this person will always belong to this certain group, neglecting the possibility of change. Therefore, the fundamental characteristics of essentialism are the underlying presumptions that ignore a certain context-dependency. When applied to characteristics that pop up in diversity debates such as ethnicity, similar conclusions on the fixed nature of these labels are made, as differences also tend to be biologically explained (Nagel, 1994). As an additional step, these fixed labels are used as a means to distinguish people, and select groups based on these labels.

Since these classic essentialist and biological beliefs of human categorization are very black and white, less hardcore essentialist theories emerged. One of these softer types of essentialism is called subjective essentialism, which still maintains essentialist beliefs on group homogeneity and fixation of boundaries, without using biological explanations (Haslam, Rothschild & Ernst, 2000). The softening of classic essentialist beliefs was a response to the increasingly diversifying global population, as scholars began to acknowledge that groups and populations are not as a homogeneous as they would like to think, as they still consist of individuals in the end (Delamater & Hyde, 1998). Although subjective essentialism seems to fit the diversification of urban societies more, this could still be problematic due to the use of group-based templates to assess diversity. The depiction of groups, and the explanation of society through groups, leaves less room for individuality and individual processes of meaning-making (Waynrib, 2014).

As the critique of overgeneralization and stereotyping got acknowledged by some essentialist thinkers, essentialism also emerges through a reversed approach (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). Through this approach, which is called colourblindness, one desires to ignore personal characteristics in order to avoid the distinction through human categories (Markus, Steele & Steele, 2000). Therefore, colourblindness entails the aspiration to become literally blind, or indifferent, to personal characteristics such as ethnicity. This can be seen as a reversed type of essentialism, as it still tends to ignore context-dependency and individual processes of meaning-making. However, the underlying

goal of colourblindness is based on equality and equity, as public institutes such as governments aspire to implement colourblind policies in order to eliminate inequality (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). This can be problematic, as colourblind ideologies tend to tear personal characteristics such as ethnicity away from the power relations in which these characteristics are embedded (Markus, Steele & Steele, 2000). Although these ideologies are fulfilled with good intentions, the desired equality does not seem to actually become reality. Rattan and Ambady (2013) state that minorities will still be devalued based on their group identity due to implicit biases of the majority group (Rattan & Ambady 2013). However, these biases are ignored, as differences between individuals are argued to be non-existent. Despite all the efforts put in by public institutes, colourblindness presents itself as a barrier to inclusion, since it denies existing inequalities, prejudices and systems of structural discrimination (Markus, Steele & Steele, 2000).

2.1.3 A social constructionist view on diversity

As subjective essentialism and colourblindness have not proven to be fruitful ways of assessing diversity, subjective constructionism presents itself as an alternative paradigm. Social constructionism fights the idea that manmade knowledge is something untouchable and external, as meanings are thought of being constructed and reconstructed through communication. After various processes of construction through the means of language, meanings gradually get habituated into reciprocal roles. These reciprocal roles slowly but certainly get institutionalized, and therefore become 'common knowledge' (Berger & Luckman, 2011). Whereas essentialism perceives this knowledge to be external, social constructionism emphasizes the fluidity and subjectivity of knowledge. This understanding is crucial, as these institutionalized meaning, labels, and categories are important factors to how we assess the world around us on a daily basis (Galbin, 2014). Therefore, language is key since discourse and interpersonal interactions are the building blocks for social reality. In fact, people 'exist' in, and through language since it both shapes identities as well as concepts and thoughts we rely on in our daily lives (Berger & Luckman, 2011). Concepts are therefore conditional to ongoing processes of constant redefining and re-interpretation and do therefore not obtain a solid form. As the solid form of knowledge and concepts is denied, social constructionism does not seek to explain reality primarily through the natural world (Andrews, 2012). This is where the main difference between essentialism and social constructionism occurs, as they are usually portrayed as two conflicting paradigms. Delamater and Hyde (1998) illustrate this difference between essentialism and social constructionism in the context of sexual orientation. Although biology might decide whether you are attracted to men or women, it does not govern when, where, and with whom someone sexually engages. Additionally, the distribution of labels and the distinction between categories, such as homosexual, is something socially constructed. Therefore, social constructionism prefers to perceive these labels as the result of a dialectical process, involving both internal and external opinions (Berger

& Luckman, 2011). Internal opinions would concern one's self-identification, whereas external opinion's concern the way external agents designate ethnic labels. Therefore, labels on ethnicities and gender are not seen as traits. Instead, they are seen as processes external to the individual resulting in labels that can be assigned by the individual itself as well as by external agents (Galbin, 2014). As social constructionism emphasizes the fluidity and changeability of these concepts, as they are redefined by social actors over and over again, it displays the complexity of words such as 'groups' and 'populations' (Andrews, 2012). Accordingly, social constructionism highlights the multivocal and complex nature of groups, as essentialist beliefs in uniformity are overthrown. When talking about diversity, social constructionists very much acknowledges the diverse or hyperdiverse nature of society as something inherent to society. However, it rejects the depiction of fixed groups to describe this diversity, as groups are everything but static, and as individual agency and group identification constantly change (Delamater & Hyde, 1998).

2.1.4 The perspective of cultural policy

One of the criticisms cultural policy often receives, is the essentialist view they use to make sense of the social world. According to Prentice and Miller (2007), a struggle is depicted in trying to create a general policy that suits all and respecting each and everyone's individuality. Therefore, sometimes thoughtless assumption of categories such as ethnicities take place, which can come along with some serious risks in addressing individuals. Among these risks are the risks of overgeneralizing society, and ignoring existing presumptions and prejudices, such as stereotypes. Resultingly, existing hierarchies of power are either overlooked or ignored (Kraus & Keltner, 2013). The risk of overgeneralization and leaning too much towards an essentialist stance is a potential discrepancy between internal and external designation of group labels. As Prentice and Miller (2007) point out, this could result into a contrast on what group you would like to identify with as an individual, versus what others think you identify with. Additionally, Kraus and Keltner (2013) state that essentialist thinkers are less flexible to adapt their view to changes occurring in the social world and are intrinsically less motivated to try to avoid disparities between different groups of people. Practically, this could mean that policy makers would categorize an individual based on a personal characteristic that he or she thinks of as belonging to 'a certain group', whereas the individual does not identify with this newly assigned label. Resultingly, the individual is placed in a group in which the individual in case does not feel at home or does not identify with all of the time (Prentice & Miller, 2007). These painful discrepancies in identification processes as described above, is something that happens a lot between policy makers and the people for whom policy is made for (Markus, Steele & Steele, 2000). Especially with sensitive labels such as ethnicity or gender, this could result in a painful contrariety (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). A practical example of this is a policy-term such as 'big minorities', which is used by the municipality of Rotterdam as well (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2015, p.6). This label exemplifies how

policy tends to combine several ethnic groups through the label 'big minorities', in which ethnicity is the main focus. Various policy documents are written on how to reach these 'big minorities', but structural, long-term success has not been reached yet (RRKC, 2019).

This raises questions on how to assess diversity fittingly, as the assessment of groups has proven to be tricky and questionable (Wainryb, 2004). Social constructionism presents itself as a promising alternative, as it fights overgeneralization and promotes individual consideration. Additionally, it moves along with the same dynamics as the social phenomenon of hyperdiversity seem to move; groups and categories seem to diversify increasingly (Kraus & Keltner, 2013). Therefore, some sort of paradigm shift can be seen in how diversity is replaced by the concept of hyperdiversity, as diversity is now assessed through multiple personal characteristics, and as the fluidity of diversity gets more and more accepted. However, this paradigm-shift in the scientific world is hard to translate into policy implications, as cultural policy struggles to respond to these external changes through the means of policy. Subjective knowledge transforms into external, institutional knowledge as described above, which then makes up a paradigm. The stickiness of these paradigms are explained by the concept of path-dependency. Path-dependency describes this process, or the stagnation of this process, as it emphasizes the influence of history on future policy decisions. As institutions and nations are path-dependent, outcomes and decisions tend to be historically contingent. In other words: history matters (Setterfield, 2015). As this very much concerns institutionalized beliefs and understandings as described above, the influence of individual actors might be less big than the influence of the system as a whole. Additionally, path-dependency is mostly quite implicit, as the familiar and the well-known either unconsciously receive preference or are simply seen as the most comfortable options. As Cox (2004) shows, this comfortability is often valued more than responding to external changes in the world. As this happens in policy as well, policy makers and the municipality as an institution is sometimes reluctant to alter their current policy paradigm to external phenomena such as the diversification of society. The main risk here is that the comfortability with the old and the familiar undermines the acceptance of new phenomena happening in society. Therefore, alterations to systems are either consciously or unconsciously avoided. Practically applied to diversity, this means the municipality is reluctant to properly respond to diversity in order to safeguard its current system. Diversification entails a rapidly changing society, but a rapidly changing policy seems difficult, as the concept of path-dependency shows (Setterfield, 2015). The fixation of systems and ideas conflicts the individual consideration and context-dependency social constructionism pleads for. Additionally, a social constructivist assessment of diversity seems hard to maintain practically as fluid perceptions of individuals conflict with long-term static policy implications (Wainryb, 2004). As Prentice and Miller (2007) show, policy in itself is something general, which troubles the understanding of individuals. Summed up, social constructionism seems most able to respond to the individual considerations the increasingly diverse society asks for while avoiding prejudices and overgeneralization. Therefore, social constructionism presents itself as the main paradigm through which this thesis will assess

diversity, as I will assess the concept with an understanding for individual processes of meaning-making, accepting that group formations are fluid as group labels are redefined over and over again through interaction.

2.2. Inclusion: The way cultural policy copes with diversity

As we have seen above, there are two main paradigms to make sense of diversity. Policy seems to tend mostly to an essentialist understanding of diversity, as policy focuses on ‘the whole’. In the following section, I will discuss the main policies that were developed in response to the increasing diversity of society, and how they are interwoven with the abovementioned paradigms. Then I will shed light on how the Netherlands have coped with diversity throughout recent history, after which I will introduce the concept of inclusion. Lastly, I will elaborate on which principle inclusion is based, which is the request of cultural policy for everyone to participate in the cultural sector.

2.2.1 The way policies respond to diversity

The diversity policies to be discussed will be presented in chronological order. Therefore, I will start with the early multiculturalism ideologies and end with the diversity-policies that were brought into life right before the current inclusion-policies were developed. From the 1970’s on, ideologies of Western countries have always perceived ‘diversity’ and ‘multiculturalism’ to be inherently good qualities (Harrison, 2008). One of the main reasons for this optimistic ideology is that diversity can function as a counterreaction to threats of a monoculture, being one of the risks of globalization (West, 2005). Therefore, within the cultural sector, cultural expressions belonging to individuals that were depicted to be part of ‘minorities’ slowly got more and more included in the global canon of culture. Therefore, the cultural canon expanded as more cultural expressions were included, cherishing the idea that cultural diversity equals cultural richness (Harrison, 2008). Consequently, multiculturalist policies fostering this plurality of cultural expressions came into being in industrialized countries, such as the Netherlands, during times of globalization. In the most basic definition, multiculturalism would refer to the presence, or the policy-support of the presence of several ethnic groups within a single nation (Harrison, 2008). Multiculturalism policies not only functioned to simply manage diversity, they actively promoted diversity as they embraced the presence of multiple cultures. This contrasts colourblind ideologies, as multiculturalism perceives personal characteristics such as cultural background and ethnicity as meaningful sources for individual identity-building (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). Terms such as a ‘melting pot’ were used to describe countries such as the Netherlands, referring to a cohesive society of different ethnic groups. The

adjective of melting indirectly indicates the assumption that all ethnic groups peacefully melt together as something that naturally happens (Cheryan & Zou, 2015). However, the ‘melting pot’-ideology has often been accused of concealing socio-economic inequalities and racism, due to implicit and explicit biases of policy makers and individuals belonging to groups that make up the majority of the population (Harrison, 2008; Cheryan & Zou, 2015). Another critique on multiculturalism is how it is inherent to essentialist beliefs about the distinction of people. Multiculturalism acknowledges the fact that various cultures co-exist within the same spatial frame, which means people are put into categories such as ‘sub-cultures’ and ‘minorities’ in order to make sense of society. Therefore, multiculturalism could be argued to force people to stay within the boundaries of the groups they have been assigned to, as it fails to acknowledge the agency of people to change groups over time of context (Kymlicka, 2014). As this critique is quite obvious and quite commonly heard, multiculturalism has softened through an additional, less radical approach to multiculturalism (West, 2005). As West (2005) describes, hard multiculturalism used to be the main paradigm around the year 2000, in which it is believed that all cultures are equal, and no culture is to be labelled either superior or inferior. Typical to this hard multiculturalism is the rejection of ethnical or cultural differences, since everybody is equal after all, and every culture is an equal ingredient of the ‘melting pot’ (Cheryan & Zou, 2005). However, the rejection and neglect of differences go hand in hand with the writings of Markus, Steele & Steele (2000) on colourblindness. Therefore, hard multiculturalism fails to set itself apart from colourblindness after all.

The concept of soft multiculturalism, being the second approach to multiculturalism, cherishes tolerance and prevention of unequal treatment, without claiming multiculturalism to be a goal in itself. Additionally, differences between people are made visible, seen, and acknowledged (West, 2005). Especially individuals who could be depicted to be part of minorities are more likely to support these soft multiculturalism ideologies than hard multiculturalism or colourblind ideologies (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). Accordingly, as hard multiculturalist paradigms focus on the celebration of ‘minority culture’, individuals that are depicted to be part of minorities might feel uncomfortable as the members of the majority groups concentrate too much on acknowledging and appreciating ethnic differences. This can be referred to as the minority spotlight effect, which results in a hurtful mismatch between how minorities are seen by the majority, and how they wish to be seen. This is also linked to the essentialist designation of group-labels as described by Prentice and Miller (2007). Practically, this means that policies developed to target or integrate so-called minorities could lead into a reversed effect, as minorities feel displeased by the spotlight which is targeted at them. Once again, difficulties are shown in finding balance in coping with differences, distinctions, and categorization of people.

2.2.2 The Netherlands and its policies on diversity

On a more national level, Dutch policy has attempted to implement policies on

multiculturalism for decades. As the Netherlands has been characterized by an increase in immigrants during the upcoming years of globalization, policy has tried to include immigrant culture as a means to improve and facilitate integration (Tasan-Kok et al., 2014). In the case of Turkish immigrants coming to the Netherlands, multiculturalist approaches have proved themselves to be fruitful. As the Turkish immigrants enjoyed positive ideas about their own group membership, the majority group in the Netherlands started to feel more positive towards Turkish immigrants as well (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). Although smaller, practical examples of integration seemed to pay off, debates arose around the perseverance of the identity of Dutch culture. The Netherlands therefore moved from a multiculturalist paradigm celebrating differences, to a paradigm fixated on the improvement of integration of the migrants as mentioned above. Although economic participation of these migrants in some cases worked out well, social and cultural participation to the dominant domain of ‘Dutch culture’ seemed to be lacking (Tersteeg, van Kempen, & Bolt, 2014). Therefore, the Netherlands moved towards an assimilation paradigm. In this paradigm, integration policies are critiqued and disappointment reigns as migrants did not always seem to ingrate in the way the Netherlands had hoped. At this time, the Netherlands went through fierce debates by populist voices speaking negatively about the multicultural society, which resulted in an increased focus on the typical Dutch culture and Dutch heritage instead of the diversity of culture (Delhaye, 2018). Diversity in both society and the cultural sector became less important as migrants, or the children of migrants, were requested to adapt more to ‘typical Dutch culture’. However, the diversity of the Dutch society kept increasing, which resulted in a so-called recognition-gap; people who did not identify with the dominant Dutch culture felt undervalued, underrepresented, and stigmatized (Lamont, 2018).

As debates arose around the benefits or risks of cultural diversity, financial sources for diversity management in the cultural sector was lacking, which interrupted the growth of the diversity of the cultural sector (Delhaye, 2018). Rotterdam who proudly presented itself as Cultural capital of Europe, celebrating its cultural diversity, now moved along with national tendencies in order to protect its dominant culture (Tersteeg, Van Kempen & Bolt, 2014). A second phase of renewed attempts to improve the cultural diversity of the Dutch cultural sector came into being through the emergence of the “Code Diversiteit” [Diversity code] in 2011, focusing on concrete implementation of diversity policies (RRKC, 2019). The Code Diversiteit claims for a justification of diversity measures based on the diversity of staff, program, audience and partners. The Code Diversiteit, which is still in use today, shows that a lot of work on the diversification of the cultural sector still needs to be done. Apparently, not all cultural institutes actively try to move along with the diversity of society, as not all of them work along specific goals focused on fostering diversity (Berkers, et al., 2017). This shows a discrepancy with the diverse nature of Rotterdam as depicted by several scholars (Peterson, 2015; Hoekstra, 2015).

Therefore, an additional step was taken since the Code Diversiteit became enriched with the additional Code Inclusiviteit [Inclusion code] launched in 2019 (RRKC, 2019). The Code Inclusiviteit

pleads for a cultural sector that is representative of society and for an integration of the values of diversity and inclusion in missions of cultural institutes. Additionally, cultural institutes are required to be self-aware, as they are asked to justify their actions based on diversity and inclusion (RRKC, 2019).

2.2.3 The concept of inclusion

As shown in the previous sections, multiculturalist policy plans transformed into policy plans on integration and diversity management, through which eventually the concept of inclusion came into being (Sandell, 2003). According to the RRKC (2019) inclusion differs from ordinary diversity management attempts as it leaves an ethnic or cultural focus behind since it focuses on an extremely broad scope of personal characteristics, such as age, gender, sexual preference, and so on. The concept of inclusion, however, already existed before it was implemented by Dutch cultural policies. The term originated in France through its antonym, being exclusion, as a way to portray a process of social disintegration and a weakening of ties between society, individual actors, and the state (Silver, 1995). As inclusion indeed focusses on all actors to be found within a state, the term has been accused of being ambiguous, vague, and unpractical (Sandell, 2003). However, in origins, the concept was used to shed light on disadvantages taking place in the economic sector, focusing on economic inequality and a lack of economic participation (Silver, 1995). From solely an economic focus, the concept has made its way into the cultural sector as well, referring to the urge to include everyone in the cultural sector (RRKC, 2019). The ambiguity of inclusion is, therefore, due to several reinterpretations of the term over time, as it is used in different sectors that all describe a different meaning to inclusion. As inclusion-policies are made on a governance-level, cultural institutes are required to find a practical application of inclusion-related measures. However, inclusion seems especially vague to cultural institutes, which is problematic due to the social role they play by inviting individuals to participate in the cultural sector, and therefore empower a sense of community. This results in the incapability of cultural institutes to contribute towards social inclusion at a broad societal level according to Sandell (2003). Although cultural institutes play a role in inclusion, Sasaki (2010) emphasizes how policy carries the main responsibilities to bring an end to factors that lead to social discrimination. Governances should motivate individuals to interact with one another and participate socially, economically, and culturally. These are the main principles around the topic of social inclusion that came into existence in Western-European countries around the 80's and 90's, creating a new paradigm in which economic participation is not the main variable of inclusion anymore, and in which policy aspires to invite everybody to become part of society (Sandell, 2003).

Although most scholars focus on the conceptualisation of inclusion, Labonte (2004) asks himself what characteristics of society enable structural inclusion or exclusion, to reduce the vagueness of the concept. Although policy usually focuses on what inclusion is and who is not

included yet, Labonte (2004) interrogates why people are excluded, and how this keeps happening over time. He adds to this that conceptualisations of inclusion are phrased over and over again, which means that policies and scholars are more concerned with describing the ‘what’ than explaining the ‘why’ and the ‘how’. Instead, both policy makers and scholars should be more attentive of habituated systems of hierarchy and implicit notions of power as a means to actually book progress on the debates of inclusion. In line with Labonte (2004), this thesis will dive into the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ in regard to inclusion since the ‘what’ and the ‘who’ are already often described. Moreover, the social constructionist paradigm emphasizes the subjectivity of the depiction of the ‘who’ and the fluidity of the ‘what’ in assessing inclusion.

2.2.4 The need for participation

As several scholars discuss inclusion, Sasaki (2010) captures the essence of inclusion, with its goal to stimulate each and every citizen to participate. Governances take this very seriously as they continuously try to drag disadvantaged groups ‘out of their corner’ to increase national participation. These disadvantaged groups, as depicted by policy makers, are already present, but inclusion requires more from them than just ‘being present’ namely participation. Participation therefore seems to be the key word, which is in line with trending ideas on the Netherlands being a ‘participation-society’. Although the exact definition of this concept differs between left-winged and right-winged political parties, the core of the concept comes down to an increased responsibility of citizens to participate and contribute to their own local environment and life circumstances. This notion steers away from the idea of the welfare state, in which governmental intervention is the main rule (Ballin, 2013). Through a cultural lens, inclusion entails participation in cultural practices, through both the consumption of culture as well as the production of culture (Zapata-Barrero, 2016). Inclusion is therefore frequently operationalised and measured through visitor rates and other numerical reports on participation data, as seen by Gemeente Rotterdam itself (2016; 2019). As Zapata-Barrero (2016) argues, cultural participation could be used to stimulate integration, as it is seen as a means to citizenship. Especially in hard multiculturalist paradigms, participation is seen as the key to make minorities adapt to a dominant culture, as the more cultural practices minorities are involved in, the less they will engage in cultural practices belonging to their own set of cultural values (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). In this radical paradigm, people who have been labelled to be minorities are required to participate in the native, dominant domain. This is seen as a way to guarantee unity, social cohesion, and a sense of togetherness. A lack of participation, therefore, risks being excluded from society, as it therefore disqualifies you for contributing to, and enjoying this sense of unity (Sandell, 2003). Right here is where the connection between cultural participation and integration can be found again as a lack of cultural participation equals a decreased sense of belonging (Crul & Schneider, 2010). To increase this sense of belonging, the Netherlands has always taken action to increase equal chances on participation

and therefore integration. One of the examples of multiculturalist policy implications, that were brought into life to stimulate participation, was the prevention of accumulation of ethnic minorities in certain urban neighbourhoods. This intended to stimulate diffusion in the Dutch society and to trigger ethnic minorities to take part in cultural practices that are both mentally and physically out of their comfort zone (European cities, 2013). This example illustrates how not just participation is important, but it is important to participate in a specific set of practices. After all, the goal is to increase a sense of belonging in the Dutch community instead of the community of origin. Therefore, under-engagement in both the Dutch society as well as the cultural sector is depicted as a serious problem. Resultingly, policies focus on expanding and increasing one's national participation have been present for decades (Stevenson, 2013). This desire for participation, as phrased above, refers to democracy of culture, as also the core thought to inclusion is that everybody should be able to participate culturally (Evrard, 1997). However, democracy of culture may not be mistaken for a seemingly similar term; cultural democracy. In the next section, this concept will be furtherly explained.

2.3 Quality of culture: the debates that arise as a result of inclusion-policies

As the previous sub-chapters have shown, diversity gets translated into inclusion policies. Since inclusion is based on the urge for participation, the following sections will discuss in what cultural activities one should participate according to cultural policy, as several scholars have posed questions on the quality-criteria policy makers seem to use to assess cultural activities.

2.3.1 Cultural democracy

The urge to motivate everyone to participate through the goal of inclusion seems to be a general understanding in cultural policy. However, some more critical scholars have posed questions on the necessity of participation: what is it citizens need to participate in? Cultural participation has been part of the cultural policy agendas for decades, but participation does not seem to increase to a satisfactory level. In fact, cultural policy pleads for culture for all, by all, but seems to structurally unable to include everyone in the cultural sector (Hadley, 2018). Juncker and Balling (2016) explain this through a mismatch in what cultural policy depicts as culture and what society understands as culture. As Juncker and Balling (2016) argue, cultural policy tends to entail dichotomous definitions of culture, as policies enable the constant reproduction of these dichotomies. Over time, a major distinction has been made between, on the one hand high, culture that possesses high artistic quality together with an educative function to both children and adults, and, on the other hand, low culture which is nothing more than plain entertainment. The idea that culture can be used as

an instrument originates from ideas that culture socializes people and enriches the individual, as culture seems to be great way to civilization (Mulcahy, 2006). It is argued that this instrumentalized view goes hand in hand with a dictating perception on culture, as the educated elite is in charge of policymaking, and therefore presents their taste as legitimate culture (Juncker & Balling, 2016). Only culture of ‘quality’, is able to transfer these socializing and civilizing powers (Mulcahy, 2006). Since culture has always been portrayed as something a ‘good’ in every sense of the word, it has always been a priority in cultural policy to bring this ‘good’ to the people. This top-down approach may take on a very conservative nature as well, as cultural policy sometimes perceives this good as something that must be protected from external influences (Oakley, Ball, & Cunningham, 2018). Accordingly, subsidies are distributed. An example of an external influence which may threaten the position of the high arts is the emergence of the creative industries. These industries are mainly known for their economic value, but policy pays less attention to how the creative industries merge with the daily lives of people through popular movies and music. Moreover, the artistic quality of the creative industries is left undiscussed, as cultural policy actively tries to separate the creative industries from the high arts (Stevenson, 2016). In fact, both an implicit as well as an explicit distinction has been made by cultural policy, between these simple forms of entertainments, and high-brow cultural expressions that present undebatable artistic quality. This once more shows how depictions of quality lead to certain evaluations of culture.

However, times change, society changes, and cultural institutes change, but policy still seems to rely on the same cultural dichotomies (Juncker & Balling, 2016). This refers to the concept of path-dependency as described by Cox (2004), in which external forces, such as the diversification of society, do not seem powerful enough to change the set of values of the current system, which seems to be fixed and unchangeable.

Instead of focusing on activating people to participate in what is determined to be culture by cultural policy, cultural democracy argues for everyone to enjoy the freedom to co-create personal versions of culture suitable to their own lifestyles (Hadley, 2018). In the most desirable result, culture is enjoyed by all. As described earlier, this contrasts from democratization of culture since cultural democracy entails a progressive rethinking of the concept and meaning of culture (Gattinger & Whitehorse, 2011). As the democratization of culture promotes, equal cultural access should be the standard. In this way of thinking, cultural policy is still central, as it both offers a palette of cultural offer as well as it aspires to create equal opportunities to enjoy this palette (Evrard, 1997). However, cultural democracy asks for an ideological reconsideration of the meanings and creations of culture (Gattinger & Whitehorse, 2011). In cultural democracy, cultural policy should have way less interference with the cultural preferences of individuals as it strives for personal co-creation of culture (Evrard, 1997). Juncker and Balling (2016) strive to take this concept even further as they argue for expressive cultural democracy. Expressive cultural democracy would allow people to personally assign value to cultural activities in relation to their own life, inside the walls of high cultural

institutes. In doing so, Juncker & Balling (2016) discuss several authors that describe times in which cultural participation was integrated into daily lives, and ideas of entertainment were integrated in the overall definition of culture. This acknowledgement of the importance of entertainment within cultural participation encourages the use and understanding of both high and popular culture, disputing a mere focus on 'high quality' culture only.

2.3.2 The problematisation of participation

As Juncker and Balling (2016) portray, interpretations of culture that are closer to the daily lives of people are not considered to be culture of the right quality, according to cultural policy. Stevenson (2016) takes this a step further, as he argues that the issue of non-participation presented by cultural policy can be 'solved' through a renewed focus of cultural forms that are already alive outside of the boundaries that cultural policy has drawn around the concept of culture. In fact, in order to represent the diversity of society, cultural activities should proceed the general norm of what cultural is understood to be (Bennett, 2001). Culture should be thought of as a noun instead of a static, external concept. Culture should be allowed to flow along with individual movements present in society. As Hadley (2018) explains, cultural democracy entails a progressive rethinking of cultural policy which lets go of the instrumental use of culture and focuses on individual cocreation of culture, which is in line with the ideas of Stevenson (2016) and Juncker and Balling (2016).

Stevenson (2016) shines light on the 'problem' of under-engagement in the cultural sector, as he researches the lack of participation in cultural activities depicted by Scottish cultural policy. He reviews this non-participation in a way that it only entails cultural activities that receive state support by the Scottish government. Cultural practices that receive no state-funding at all are either left out of consideration or presented as artistically less valuable. Apparently, these non-supported artforms do not portray the right kind of artistic quality. Stevenson (2013, p.8) then stumbles upon similar hierarchical dictations of culture that Juncker and Balling (2016) point out, as musicals receive the label of 'other theatre performances', being separated from high art forms such as opera. Therefore, Stevenson (2016) points out how the government, on the one hand perceives, participation to be the main issue cultural policy should be occupied with, but, on the other hand, invests most of its funding in high-brow art forms that are less likely to attract a diverse, broad audience. Apparently, the artforms portraying the right quality, as desired by the government, fail to be universally attractive. Through his research, he aspires to make the implicit more explicit as he highlights preferences of high culture by the state. This is where cultural democracy again finds its importance, as the answer to increasing participation is to redefine culture through its connection with daily life (Juncker & Balling, 2016). The narrow, instrumental, and highbrow definition of culture by cultural policy does not always correlate with culture which is already taking place. It does not correlate with culture perceived as a

noun, but rather as something which is already happening, something in which people are already participating. Stevenson, Balling, & Kann-Rasmussen (2017) add to this; in ‘reality’, there is no such thing as non-participation. However, it is true that there is a lack of participation in this external dimension created by cultural policy, which is called ‘the cultural sector’. Therefore, inclusion policies arise as a means to include everyone in this external dimension. As a result, cultural policy sometimes fails to understand less hierarchical interpretations of culture, as it prioritizes some cultural expressions over others. Moreover, the cultural sector created by cultural policy may be very representative of what policy depicts to be high culture fulfilled with artistic quality, but it is less representative of the cultural desires of society. This radical perspective therefore states that cultural policy itself is to blame for a process of consequent exclusion, since cultural forms that do not match the dictated definition of cultural are forsaken and ignored (Oakley et al., 2018).

Concludingly, all scholars above share considerations on the quality of culture, as depicted by governances, and the consequences these depictions entail.

As Rotterdam is increasingly diversifying, and the municipality is very active in terms of inclusion-policies, the RRKC (2019) also pleads for culture that is more connected to the daily lives of the population of Rotterdam. Additionally, some sort of friction is shown between the desire for an increase in participation rates and maintaining the dictated definition of culture. As Berkers et al. (2017) state, large-sized cultural institutes sometimes struggle to balance maintaining their artistic quality and coping with diversity. Once more, path-dependency proves itself to be present. Therefore, the RRKC (2018) requests the municipality to welcome new cultural preferences, new ways to consume culture, and new ways to make sense of culture. As this is one of the major advices from the RRKC to the municipality for the new cultural policy timeframe of 2021-2024, the core message is to rethink possibilities for cocreation of culture as described by Juncker and Balling (2016).

This categorization of culture, and the instrumental view with which it is associated, has a strong connection to the essentialist perspective (Juncker & Balling, 2016). The concept of cultural democracy, and especially expressive cultural democracy, fits more to the social constructionist paradigm as it encourages individual interpretations of the definition of culture. Additionally, it acknowledges how culture is constructed through people’s daily lives, instead of an external being. Moreover, it allows context- and time-dependency, as cocreation happens over and over again, each and every time one engages with culture. As a general conclusion, cultural policy seems to lean more towards an essentialist perspective in approaching diversity, inclusion, and the quality of culture, although it would benefit from a more social constructionist perspective as argued by the scholars above. Moreover, path-dependency, together with interpretations on the quality of culture, seem to play some role in the implementation of inclusion policies. In response to this, this thesis will take on a more social constructionist approach towards its research into inclusion, since literature has indicated a lack of a social constructionist perspective of cultural policy.

3. Methodology

“But then they ask me, could you incorporate more female artists in the program? If there are some good female artists, of course. If not, then I will not.”

As argued by theory, the perspective of social constructionism is the most fitting to look at my research question freshly. Connected, interpretative qualitative research in itself is the most suitable, as I aim to evaluate how meanings are constructed by social actors in both policy and daily life, instead of testing a hypothesis on whether policy is indeed inclusive or not (Bryman, 2012). As inclusion is a theoretically multi-layered concept, qualitative research allows me to explore all the layers and structures as this research aspires to do so, which means quantitative approaches are disqualified (Bryman, 2012). Additionally, this research aspires to provide a first exploration of all the theoretical layers of the concept of inclusion as perceived in the cultural sector of Rotterdam, which means no previous guidelines on how to assess this topic are available.

This thesis investigates how inclusion is handled in cultural policy as well as in cultural institutes, depicting both differences as connections between these two. Therefore, this research concerns two units of analysis, being Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam. The analysis of the data conducted from these two central groups has been done both separately as comparatively, which has allowed me to connect policy to the empirical world. This is in line with the overarching goal of this thesis: to research the connection between the worlds of cultural policy making and cultural institutes. An additional duality is shown within the two units of analysis, as I studied both institutional voices through policy documents as well as more individual voices through interviews. In the following sections, I will elaborate on my data collection gathered through both interviews as well as policy documents. Then, I will provide more insight in the samples obtained from Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam, as I will explain how I have coped with this data.

3.1 Interviews

In this study, I chose to perform semi-structured interviews. During a semi-structured interview, the researcher has a general plan of inquiry in mind, while still leaving room for unexpected follow-up questions (Babbie, 2016, p.311) The semi-structured interview presents itself as an appropriate method due to its flexibility which allowed me to freely examine how the divergent participants personally interpret inclusion. As the complete dataset consists of transcripts and policy documents, the personal interviews will both contextualize the formal policy output, as add qualitative deepness. Additionally, the interviews allow the participants to comment personally on the institutional voices as featured by the policy documents. A total of nine hours of interviews have been conducted, distributed over ten different interviews. Over a timeframe of three weeks, interviews have been conducted with five participants from Grounds and five participants from Gemeente Rotterdam. During the interviews with Grounds, the flexibility of the semi-structured interview has been extended to its maximum, as a result to the divergence of the participants in terms of work experience and

occupation. Whereas the overall director was very outspoken on the cultural sector in general and very familiar with debates around inclusion, the production manager never heard of the concept before and was very much focused on his personal tasks in between the walls of Grounds. In these cases, the interview guide functioned as a general guidance, as extremely specific questioning on inclusion proved itself to be rather pointless. As a result, all the interviews conducted with participants from Grounds differ very much in terms of structure, but still focus on the meaning-making of inclusion, the way inclusion is rooted in daily work practices, as on inter-institutional debates on inclusion. Contrarily, the interviews with the policy advisors have taken on a more uniform shape, as the backgrounds of the participants allowed me to follow the interview guide more structurally. Narrative elements have been introduced into the interview guide, as these elements enabled me to research how inclusion is interwoven with daily life practices of both the cultural workers as the policy advisors (Bryman, 2012, p.486). In particular with the policy advisors, narration allowed them to let go of complex policy-infiltrated concepts and focus more on how inclusion is incorporated in specific experiences. Additionally, this avoided the participants from simply duplicating the written language from policy documents into spoken form, without paying attention to their personal opinions and experiences.

Resultingly, the interview guide started off with a narrative style of interviewing, asking interviewees what they like about their job and whether they have specific examples to illustrate this. Then, the narrative elements were used as a way to introduce the topic of inclusion, asking them about their first experiences with the concept, and some specific events that they would classify as an occasion in which they felt like a 'sense of inclusion' was present. Moreover, the narrative style of questioning allowed stances on essentialism and social constructionism to shine through their stories. Afterwards, the interview continued with in-depth questioning on inclusion. In some occasions, second phases of narrative elements were reintroduced. This has happened when either the conversation felt constrained, or policy advisors simply reproducing policy documents out loud.

3.2 Policy documents

As my research question aspires to examine both the world of cultural policy of Rotterdam as well as a cultural institution, policy documents have been used as a source to represent the institutional voices of Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam. As Bryman (2012) argues, policy documents can be of great value for social researchers. Not only for its numerical data, but also on what, and how topics are being depicted, which matches the approach of this research. The objective here is to see how cultural policy portrays, problematises, and explains inclusion, together with how cultural policy responds to the diversity in Rotterdam. The institutional voices will be compared with the more personal voices that shine through in the interview to create a complete image of how inclusion is depicted. The

advantage of qualitative content analysis is its unobtrusiveness, as no participants are involved, which makes it a non-reactive method (Babbie, 2016). Additionally, it is an extremely transparent method which will ensure the reliability and validity of the research (Bryman, 2012). A possible drawback of a content analysis is its main focus on the ‘what’ instead of on the ‘why’, which is required for a theoretically deepening outcome of a qualitative research (Babbie, 2016). However, this research intended to reduce this disadvantage by using document analysis in combination with interviews. To start, I decided to first conduct the interviews and analyse them, before I started sampling policy documents. As this research operates from a social constructionist perspective, it operates on the conception that meaning is created through daily life experiences and communications, resulting in habituated, institutionalized perceptions. Therefore, first listening to individual voices referring to work practices and daily life experiences, before dealing with the institutional voices as featured by the policy documents, seemed only logical.

3.3 Operationalisation

Although my theory chapter and analysis chapter now present a structure based on diversity, inclusion and quality, this was not the case in the beginning of the research. At the beginning, the central theoretical concepts of this research, as included in the research proposal, have been inclusion, social constructionism and essentialism. The underlying goal of this approach was to describe the perspectives on inclusion of Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam based on social constructionism and essentialism. I will explain how the shift of the main concepts has developed itself in subchapter 3.5.2. However, since inclusion, social constructionism and essentialism were the main concepts in the beginning of the research, these were the concepts to be operationalised. After a process of data gathering, this set of main concepts was altered based on my empirical findings, which will also be explained in chapter 3.5.2.

3.3.1 Operationalisation of interviews

As this research has a very strong interpretative and qualitative character, the possibility that ‘unexpected’ data would be found has been taken into account from the beginning. I have done this by avoiding a very strict and inflexible operationalisation of the main concept of inclusion, which resulted in a flexible interview guide. Moreover, a flexible interview guide was required to do justice to the open research question as posed by this thesis: *How do Gemeente Rotterdam and Grounds construct their views on inclusion in the cultural sector of Rotterdam and how are these views connected?* This openness is favourable, as this research assesses the newly implemented policy measures on inclusion, and therefore aspires to make sense of something that has not been demarcated by previous research

yet. As literature was unable to provide me with concrete and hands-on indicators of inclusion, I decided to operationalise inclusion through the who, what, why, and how, similar to Labonte (2004). As in line with Labonte (2004), the ‘who’ and ‘what’ are seen as the mere minimum to understand the base of inclusion. As this research aspires to shed light on how inclusion influences daily tasks and discussions in both the cultural sector as the municipality, the ‘why’ and ‘how’ are added as well. These are seen as the more in-depth questions on inclusion, whereas the ‘who’ and the ‘what’ allow me to understand the more general depictions of inclusion. Therefore, the ‘who’ and the ‘what’ functioned as more narrative elements to start the interview, whereas the ‘why’ and the ‘how’ were addressed later in the interview to allow some more in-depth information to come up. The interview guide, together with its operationalisation, can be found in Appendix I.

Therefore, questioning on inclusion took on quite an explicit nature. Less explicit is the investigation on essentialism and social constructionism, as these stances are analysed through the answering of inclusion-related questions. This implicit approach has been chosen in order to avoid socially favourable answering, as no one is likely to expressively admit group assumptions or similar prejudices (Bryman, 2012). Altogether, the interview guide has been open, free and flexible as participants differ majorly in terms of background and occupation, and as the essentialism and constructivism concepts require a careful approach.

3.3.2 Operationalisation of policy documents

The operationalisation of inclusion has functioned as the start of the research to conduct the interviews which resulted in analytical findings that helped to conquer the policy documents. This specific order, in which the transcripts were analysed first, has provided me with directions and tools to get through the intangible, and very general policy texts. This is the very same reason I started with the Grounds sample instead of Gemeente Rotterdam sample; the cultural workers provided me with more explicated, clear, and hands-on information, which makes it easier to tackle the more general and theoretical expressions of policy makers. Moreover, this suits the paradigm of social constructionism, as the daily meaning-making processes of people through language are considered to be the source of general knowledge such as policy plans. One of these analytic findings was the frequent emergence of the concept of ‘quality’. Therefore, policy documents were assessed through the concepts of quality, together with the already-existing concepts of inclusion, essentialism, and social constructionism. As in the transcripts, essentialism and social constructionism refer to how inclusion and quality are depicted and have not been operationalised as separate concepts. A more elaborate explanation on this will be given in subchapter 3.5.2; methods of analysis. Next, I will explain how the data has been conducted and what the samples of Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam look like.

3.4 Research units and sampling

3.4.1 Research unit Grounds

The total dataset conducted at/from Grounds consists of four and a half hours of interview, together with 53 pages of policy documents, of which 12 pages were actually used in the process of analysis. In the following section I will elaborate on the data have been conducted. The policy documents used together with the interview transcripts can be found in an additional file to this thesis.

Participant sample Grounds

A sample of five participants has been selected, consisting of the overall director, local coordinator, production manager, floor manager, and programmer. The sampling procedure started with purposely contacting the director of Grounds, and then proceeded by approaching the participants that were pointed out by the director. This sample takes up almost the entire staff of Grounds who are taking care of music-related, policy related, and locally related activities, which makes it a very representative sample for Grounds. This is also the reason the number of participants comes down to five. Since these five individuals occupy almost every professional function found in Grounds, the sample is very diverse, which has provided this research with both practical knowledge generated in the work environment, as conceptual ideologies on inclusion. This resulted in very extensive, empirical findings both on how inclusion is practically implemented, as well as on the conceptual discussions it triggers.

Four out of five participants are men, and ages range from 31 to 60. Their personal backgrounds differ majorly in terms of education and previous work experience. At least three participants turned out to be musicians themselves. A list of participants can be found below:

Table 1. List of interview participants: Grounds

Name	Age	Gender	Occupation
Milan	50	Male	All-round director
Yara	48	Female	Local coordinator, local programmer
Sam	31	Male	Production manager
Guus	60	Male	Programmer
Willem	54	Male	Floor manager

Document sample Grounds

The two documents of use are the policy documents of Grounds that have been sent to me personally. As these documents refer to the same policy timeframes as the documents of Gemeente Rotterdam, the complete sample turns out to be balanced. The two documents combined, being the policy plan of 2017-2021 and the policy plan of 2021-2024, result into 53 pages consisting of cultural missions, marketing plans, strengths and pitfalls of Grounds, participation strategies, and management insights. In order to safeguard to feasibility of the research, the scope of the documents have been diminished to only pages and sections of texts that concern general cultural missions and visions, the quality and use of arts and culture, (local) participation plans, and strategies on both inclusion and diversity, resulting in a comprehensive sample of 22 pages. This has been done through a first phase of reading, re-reading, and very openly coding the collection of documents over a timeframe of two weeks. These themes have been carefully considered based on the analysis of the first five interviews conducted with the cultural workers of Grounds, and the theoretical framework used to determinate a theoretical angle on this research. As the interviews have shown, artistic quality of arts and culture has been an interesting theoretical factor to keep an eye on as well, which is why textual expressions on the value of culture and artistic quality have also been taken into account. In Appendix II, an overview can be found of how sections and pages of the policy output have been selected to become topic of research, based on the concepts which were at interest; being inclusion and artistic quality. As with the interviews, essentialism and social constructionism, are no explicit concepts, and have therefore been researched through the way inclusion and quality have been assessed, described, and explained by the documents. Below, a list of the documents can be found:

Table 2. List of policy documents: Grounds

Document	Year	Number of pages	Number of pages used
GROUND'S Policy Plan 2017-2020	2016	18	8
GROUND'S Policy Plan 2021-2024	2019	35	14

3.4.2 Research unit of Gemeente Rotterdam

The total dataset sampled from Gemeente Rotterdam consists of four and a half hours of interview, together with 112 pages of policy documents, of which a sample of 46 pages has been analysed. In the following section, I will elaborate on how this data has been conducted. The policy

documents used together with the interview transcripts can be found in an additional file to this thesis.

Participant sample Gemeente Rotterdam

In order to explore the views of the world of policy on the topic of inclusion, a sample of five participants has been selected. To make sure the samples of both institutions are able to be compared to one another, the sample of Gemeente Rotterdam has the same number of participants as the sample of Grounds. All the participants work for the municipality of Rotterdam on the department of culture. The sample is homogenous in a sense that it consists of five policy advisors on cultural affairs but shows differentiation on the specialized areas of the policy advisors. All of them fulfill different tasks in relation to cultural policy, as some safeguard local connections, and others focus on the social implementation of creative industries. I must mention that whereas the sample of Grounds concerns all cultural workers of Grounds, the sample of Gemeente Rotterdam only concerns a smaller part of all policy makers present. Although complete representation in the sample of Gemeente Rotterdam is impossible in terms of feasibility, some representation is still present as all participants have different specialisations.

Ages range from 40 to 62, and four out of the five participants identify as female. Similar to the participants from Grounds, backgrounds in terms of previous working experience and education differ tremendously. A method of purposely sampling has been used in order to find the first participant fitting to the following criteria: being a policy advisor on the cultural department of the municipality of Rotterdam. From there on, a snowball method has been used, as participants were asked to put other optional participants forward. In a snowball sample, a method of accumulation is used, as the researcher asks each participant to introduce another participant. This non-probability sampling method is especially valuable for studies that are interested in members of groups that are difficult to approach (Babbie, 2016, p.188). Snowball sampling was therefore the most fitting procedure, as policy-advisors qualify themselves as a very ‘hard-to-reach’-group. Once the first participant had been selected, others followed naturally, as they all introduced each other. The list of participants can be found below:

Table 3. List of interview participants: Gemeente Rotterdam

Name	Age	Gender	Occupation
Fleur	51	Female	Policy advisor
Emke	63	Female	Local coordinator, local programmer
Dylan	40	Male	Senior policy advisor
Isabella	41	Female	Policy advisor
Laura	42	Female	Policy advisor

Document sample Gemeente Rotterdam

The second set of documents that have been topic of this research, are official sources which are openly published online, deriving from Gemeente Rotterdam. These consist of cultural policy plans and cultural visions for the timeframes of 2017-2020 and 2021-2024. It is important to mention that the cultural plan of 2017-2020 is a definite plan in which subsidies have been officially distributed, whereas the 2021-2024 plan consists mainly of cultural visions, goals, and focal points for that timeframe, as the definite distribution of subsidies was absent at that point.

Therefore, both present policies as well as future policy plans will be evaluated, fitting to the timeframes in which inclusion has become one of the major themes of policy activities of the municipality of Rotterdam.

The two policy plans and two cultural visions make up for a total of 112 pages. As this document analysis is conducted along the side of interviews and not the entire document concerns inclusion and affiliated topics, a critical selection has been made, resulting in a sample of approximately 46 pages. In line with the content analysis of the policy documents of Grounds, only pages and sections that concern general cultural missions and visions, the quality and use of arts and culture, (local) participation plans and evaluations, and strategies on both inclusion and diversity have been selected. Especially for the documents of the timeframe of 2017-2020, in which inclusion was never mentioned explicitly, these sub-topics were very important. In the 2021-2024 timeframe, in which inclusion has turned into an explicit policy goal, the municipality itself has operationalised inclusion through the dimensions of audience, cultural education, and talent development. This is why these sections have been taken into consideration as well, together with the subtopics as mentioned above. An overview of which theme belongs to which subtopic can be found in Appendix III.

Together with the policy documents of Grounds, the total sample of policy documents makes up consists of 68 pages. Based on the overall the guidelines stated in the *Methodological guidelines thesis research* (Berkers, Jansen, Kersen, & Verboord, 2016), this is more than satisfactory, as a rich multi-layered sample of 68 pages on policy documents, and 9 hours of interview have been conducted.

Table 4. List of policy documents: Gemeente Rotterdam

Document	Year	Number of pages	Number of pages used
Focal points of the cultural policy of Rotterdam 2017-2020	2015	15	8
Cultural plan of 2017-2021	2016	41	12

Cultural vision: Culture supports the changes in the city	2018	12	6
Focal points for the cultural policy of Rotterdam 2021-2024	2019	44	20

3.5 Analysis

3.5.1 Methods of analysis

With the 9 hours of interview and 68 pages of policy documents, that together compose the overall dataset of this research, analysis has been completed as systematically as possible. The analysis has been split up in several parts. I first started with the data conducted at Grounds for reasons mentioned in subchapter 3.3.2. The transcripts and documents have been analysed individually, and then together, to depict any underlying differences and similarities between written and spoken words. The same approach has been used on the dataset derived from Gemeente Rotterdam, where I first analysed the transcripts, then the policy documents, and then made a final comparison of the different data sources. As a final step, the overall analysis of Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam have been compared to identify links, connections and discrepancies.

To make sense of the data, the approach of a thematic analysis has been used. This method has been used as it mainly focuses on identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns that emerge between different themes (Bryman, 2012). As this thesis strives to make sense of how both a cultural institute as the municipality make sense of inclusion, and tries to highlight the differences and similarities, thematic analysis presents itself as a highly suitable method.

As this thesis holds dualistic samples of two different institutes, it is important to focus on the whole, and to find overarching themes, which makes it possible to generate statements about the dataset altogether. Therefore, thematic analysis is very suitable as it allows the research to cope with larger amounts of data and tends to be useful when the researcher investigates not one, but various perspectives (Babbie, 2016). Additionally, thematic analysis can be applied to every textual source. In order to establish a systematic and transparent approach, Atlas TI has been used to analyse all the data. As the analysis of the data has been an extremely large-scale task, as a result of the multi-sided sample, codes have been created and merged together frequently. At its largest, the code lists consisted of 250 codes. From here on, codes have been merged over and over again, put into groups, and groups have been fused together, resulting in a list of 92 codes, divided into three groups, which can be found in Appendix III. This process of creating new codes, deleting existing codes, and fusing codes together has repeated itself frequently over the entire process of analysing the data from both Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam.

3.5.2 Development of themes

As mentioned before, inclusion started as the focal point, with essentialism and social constructionism being perspectives to assess inclusion. Essentialism and social constructionism were, together with inclusion, the three major themes at the start of this research. However, through the analysis of the documents and transcripts of Grounds, the theme of quality presented itself as valuable theme as well. Therefore, quality is embraced as an additional concept, to the already-existing concepts of inclusion, essentialism and social constructionism, during the mid-phase of the research, as this selection of concepts has been used to tackle the municipality dataset as well.

However, essentialism and social constructionism refer to a way of approaching reality and function as paradigms. Contrarily, inclusion and quality are conceptual ideas constructed by social actors, which can be assessed through these looking glasses. Therefore, these concepts felt unbalanced, as I was unable to analyse, compare, and make sense of them through the same way. However, the main point of essentialism and social constructionism has always been to research how social actors make sense of the people in Rotterdam, and how they describe diversity, as explained in my theory section. This underlying function of the perspectives as describe above, became clear during the process of data gathering and analysis. Therefore, social constructionism and essentialism merged into the theme of diversity during the process of analysis. Below, a schematic overview can be found of how themes have developed through the research.

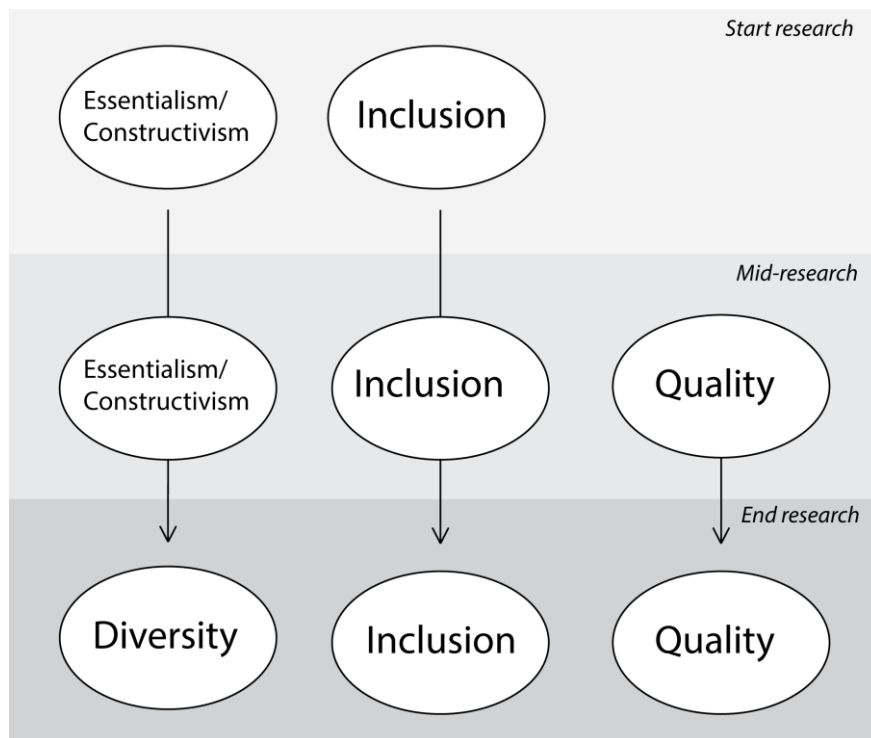


Figure 1. Schematic view of the developments of themes

As the arguments of quality emerged from discussion about inclusion, and essentialism and social constructionism refer to a way through which actors make sense of diversity occurring in the social world, these themes make up some sort of narrative. The starting point of this narrative is diversity, referring to how actors make sense of the changing population of the social world, as described by scholars such as Tasan-Kok et al. (2014). Essentialism and constructionism are incorporated in this theme, as these can be seen as perspectives to describe and categorise this diversity. The second theme is inclusion, which refers to the way these social actors cope with, and act upon, the perceived diversity. The decision to perceive inclusion this way has been made based on the found empirical data since participants themselves have defined inclusion as a way to cope with diversity. Additionally, this refers to policy implications that have been brought into life to react to diversity, similar to multiculturalism policies (West, 2005). The third theme is be quality, as the empirical data indicates that actions on inclusion trigger debates around the artistic quality of culture. Through this three-sided model, which can be found below in figure 2, both the data from Grounds as well as the data from the municipality can be analysed, which allows me to easily compare them to one another.

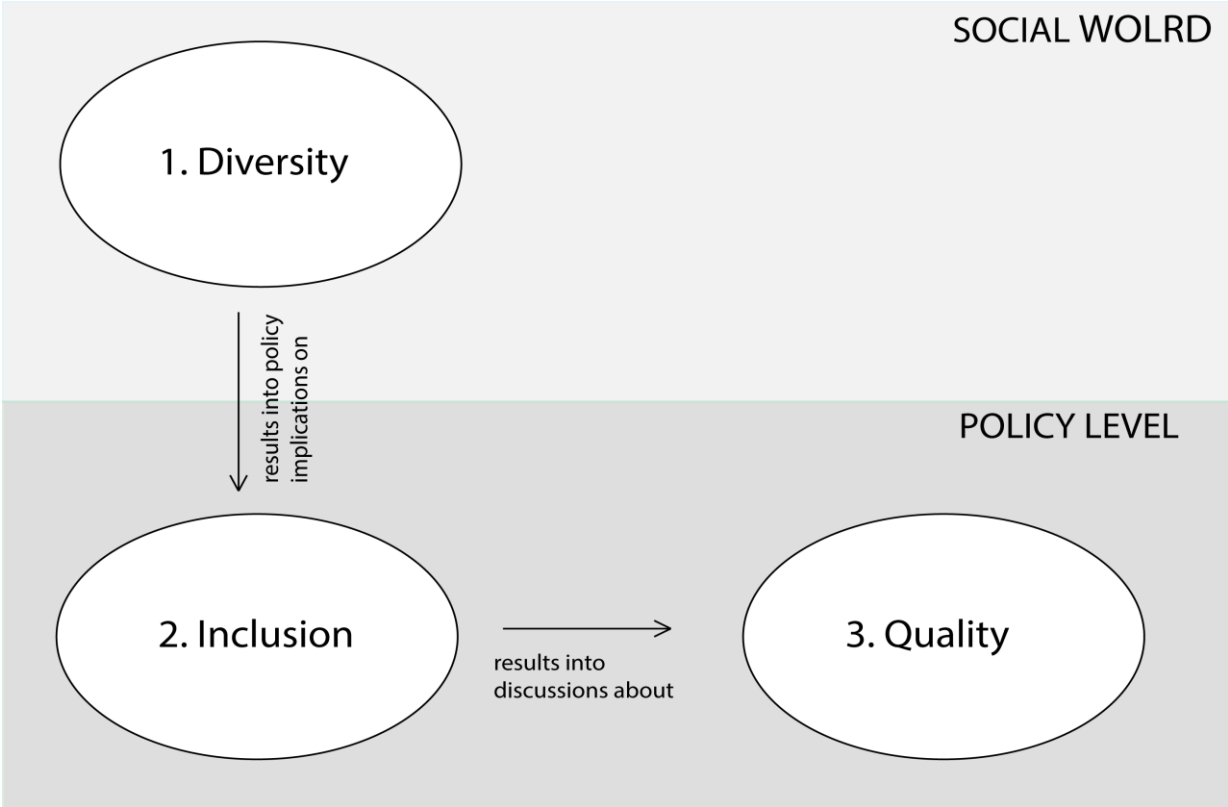


Figure 2. The three themes through which the dataset has been analysed

In the following chapters of analysis, Grounds will be discussed in a separate chapter, as similar to Gemeente Rotterdam. The transcripts of the interviews will be discussed first, after which the institutional voice of the policy documents will follow. As mentioned before, this order is based on the conceptions of social constructionism. Moreover, as mentioned in the introduction chapter, I aspired to look at the individual character of Grounds freshly, without being biased by more general inclusion policies as phrased by Gemeente Rotterdam. Similarly, I will discuss the sample of Grounds before I will discuss the sample of Gemeente Rotterdam, as Grounds finds itself in the middle of the cultural sector Gemeente Rotterdam aspires to create policy on.

3.6. Access and ethics

Access to Grounds has been granted through the personal connections of my supervisor. From there on, an informal appointment has been made with the director of Grounds in order to talk about the research in general, and what exactly this research would require from Grounds. The director has then connected me with his colleagues who became my participants for the interviews and connected me with his former colleague of the municipality of Rotterdam. His personal connection has then introduced me to several colleagues who later became the participants of the interviews. As a result of the corona-crisis, possibilities to meet up personally decreased significantly as Grounds closed down, and the municipality was extremely busy to adjust to this new reality. Since it is ethically irresponsible to endanger the participants in any way possible, interviews have been set up through the mediums of Skype and telephone. Only the interview with the director himself has been conducted in person. Although I do pity the lack of live interviews, this was the best alternative in order to proceed the process in a desirable pace, and to safeguard the health of the participants. The interview guide initially consisted of some narrative aspects as well, but it was not always perfectly manageable to keep a narrative flow going on Skype. However, I do think the effect on my thesis is small, as some very rich data emerged out of the interviews.

Permission to record interviews has been granted orally in the beginning of the interview. Moreover, informed consent forms were signed. Therefore, the participant was, both textually as well as orally, informed on his/her rights, and his/her possibility to stop the interview at any time. As anonymity is never entirely possible, confidentiality has been safeguarded by changing the names of the participants into fictional names. A summary of each interview transcript, which has been transcribed verbatim, has been made and sent to the participants in order to give them insight on what information would be used. This provided them with the opportunity to provide input and give nuance to my own interpretations of their statements, as this enlarges the credibility of the researcher (Bryman, 2012, p. 390). The research has in no way been harmful to the participants, as it only

allowed them to give deeper insight on their own perspectives and share their opinions. Other than that, the research process, with the analysis in procedure in particular, is made as transparent as possible through providing insight into the complete procedure and development of themes.

4. Analysis: Grounds

“So it is really, and that is something I see in the whole diversity debate as well, people do not let themselves be pushed away anymore. They are simply angry. They demand the right to be seen”

As explained in both my theory section as my methodology chapter, I will now first analyse Grounds based on the three themes as illustrated in figure 2. I will conclude the chapter with a brief summary.

4.1 Diversity

4.1.1 Interviews

Participants differ majorly on whether they decide to purposely see, or purposely ignore personal characteristics such as age, gender and cultural background. Whereas literature used in my theoretical framework usually refers to ethnicity, the participants of Grounds often prefer to use the term of ‘cultural background’. Milan, Sam and Yara seem to be willing to explicitly mention personal characteristics, as they tend to refer to people based on ethnicity or cultural background. As a one of the primary goals of Grounds is to be representative of the local neighbourhood, being Delfshaven, they approve of deliberately targeting people based on their cultural background or ethnicity. Therefore, acknowledging personal characteristics is only necessary in order to identify who is not being represented yet. Also, the participants tend to describe music based on ethnicity, instead of genre, as Yara shows:

‘Brazilian musicians, Moroccan musicians, Eritrean people just started dancing’²

All participants mainly refer to people as part of groups, instead of referring to them as individuals. Some take this a step further, as they use group membership to explain cultural behaviour. Therefore, these participants separate themselves from the others as they use ethnicity to explain collective affinity with culture:

‘Cape Verdean, Surinam, Antillean groups just tend to party more. Music, it is in their blood’³

Using ethnicity as a grand theory to explain cultural behaviour is linked to the criticism on essentialism as described by Prentice and Miller (2007), who state that essentialism entails overgeneralisation and stereotyping. The participants who perceive ethnicity this way, also distinguish the population of Rotterdam on their membership to either the majority group or the minority group. As four participants state, the majority entails a strong profile of the dominant, white-looking Western

² ‘‘Braziliaanse muzikanten, Marokkaanse muzikanten, en Eritrese mensen gingen dansen’’

³ ‘‘Kaaapverdiaanse, Surinaamse, Antilliaanse groepen gaan uit zichzelf meer feesten. Muziek zit meer in hun bloed’’

group, whereas the minority consists of everyone who cannot be profiled this way. According to these participants, the majority has a coloured perspective on the minority, as the minorities are associated with the unknown and the unfamiliar. Additionally, the majority group is known to be overrepresented in nearly every cultural institution. This is depicted to be a negative thing, as representation of society seems only natural. Therefore, representation is very important to all the participants. Although essentialist ways to refer to groups are seen in the depictions of Yara, Milan and Sam, it would be too black and white to state their views are simply essentialist. Instead, all of them believe in the fluidity of diversity as well as the possibility of change within society and individuals. Therefore, on a superficial level in which references are made to groups, essentialist manners may shine through, but social constructionist thoughts make up the base of their way of thinking. These essentialist references might simply be a way to address a problem, or people as clearly as possible.

Willem and Guus make up the opposing party of those who purposely highlight one's ethnicity or cultural background, as they even seem indifferent to such characteristics. Willem and Guus also depict people based on their group membership but try to minimise this as much as possible as they do not want to concern themselves with any group assumptions or potential prejudices. Sometimes they express themselves quite wilfully about things like ethnicity, but then they restrain themselves right away as they feel uncomfortable focussing on such characteristics. The neglect of ethnicity comes close to statements on colourblindness (Markus, Steele, & Steele, 2000). However, the 'colourblind' assessment of musicians by Guus and Willem is a result of prioritisation instead of a social ideology: as music is the main priority, the musician behind the music simply should not matter. Therefore, Guus and Willem mainly focus on their music-related work and on the protection of artistic quality within the walls of Grounds.

4.1.2 Documents

In the 2017-2020 document, diversity in terms of visitors and staff is still mainly explained through ethnicity or cultural backgrounds. In fact, numbers on these two indicators of diversity are the only numerical information provided to illustrate diversity. Moreover, the diversity of ethnicities visiting Grounds is frequently mentioned throughout the first policy plan, as it is almost presented as some sort of unique selling point of Grounds:

‘‘ We even reach groups far away from the regular cultural sector. Even the extremely closed Eritrean community of Rotterdam has visited Grounds several times. ’’⁴

⁴ ‘‘ We bereiken nu publieksgroepen die ver af staan van de reguliere culturele sector. Zelfs de zeer gesloten groep Rotterdamse Eritreeërs heeft Grounds meerdere malen bezocht’’

Through the display of visitor rates based on ethnicity, Grounds seems to find some sort of legitimacy for its existence. In order to fulfil the desire to be as representative as possible, the 2017-2020 document shows a very clear focus on the ‘big minorities’ of Rotterdam. Similar to the interviews, all ethnicities not belonging to the majority are put in the category of the minority. These minorities are presented in a very numerical way, with hardly any attention to personal inter-group differences, which can be seen as an essentialist assessment of people (Waynrib, 2014). The big minorities form the main target group of the audience to be included in the future, as they are presented as the ones to actively target due to their underrepresentation. As both policy documents state, minorities are hard to engage and target, since the diverse program of Grounds makes it hard to specifically target a suitable audience. Grounds experiences difficulties marketing-wise to radiate an identity attractive to all big minorities and already visiting groups they would like to attract. Therefore, especially the 2017-2020 document shows that Grounds somehow struggles to present itself in a way in which frequent visitors, new visitors, and visitors from the ‘big minorities’ find Grounds an appealing place to go. Apparently, the diversity of the program does not naturally seem to attract a diversity of visitors. At first sight, references to big minorities, as done in the policy documents of Grounds, could exemplify Prentice and Miller’s statements on how policy tends to assign labels to people, which results into a contrast between how policy perceives your group-belonging versus what groups you identify with yourself (2007).

However, as in line with the interviews; group-references are only important to identify groups, as Grounds aspires to connect different groups to one another to foster meetings with the unknown. Therefore, the approaches of the first policy document may sound essentialist, but there is still a social constructionist notion hidden underneath, as membership of groups is perceived to be dynamic. These dynamics are proven in stressing the importance of meeting the unfamiliar and mingling with people who are not like-minded.

In the second document, the dynamics of diversity are acknowledged as Grounds acknowledges the ‘diversity of diversity’, with diversity encompassing indicators that go beyond ethnicity. The policy of Grounds seems to grow more acceptive of the fact that groups are fluid, as groups are based on more ambiguous indicators such as lifestyle. This interpretation of groups moves away from an essentialist view to a more social constructionist view, as the core of the mission of Grounds was already more social constructionist in the first place (Berger & Luckman, 2011). The motivation of this change of perspective is based on the artistic approach Grounds likes to continue: the 2021-2024 document states that a more fluid depiction of groups and genres is fitting to a more artistically based way of working that Grounds would like to continue. In this way of working, focus will be on the essence of music and artistic experimentation, instead of sticking to the familiar. Consequently, meeting the unfamiliar is not just important for the audience, it has to happen in the music itself as well. This artistic approach goes hand in hand with a more social constructionist view, which allows boundaries of genres and groups to be more flexible and fluid. Therefore, in the 2021-

2024 document, the focus shifts away from big minorities and other types of seemingly essentialist group-referencing, as it moves towards a focus on groups based on musical communities, philosophy of life and lifestyle:

‘‘We noticed that it is more effective to target musical communities than communities based on solely ethnicity. Ethnicity does not tell you everything about someone’s cultural preference.’’⁵

Ethnicity is not the only determining factor anymore, as not all minorities are considered to be one collective minority anymore. Therefore, Grounds maintains a focus on group membership, with ethnicity being an important component, but stays away from explaining all cultural behaviour based on ethnicity.

However, in both documents, ethnicity is still the main factor on which diversity is based, which illustrates how debates on diversity mostly entail ethnic connotations (Phinney, 1996; Berkers et al., 2017). This stickiness of ethnic interpretations of diversity does not really seem to fit the shift of thoughts Grounds has shown throughout the two policy timeframes. However, this may be a reaction to how Gemeente Rotterdam refers to diversity in its own documents, taking into account that Gemeente Rotterdam publishes a general cultural plan on which cultural institutes respond. This consideration will be taken into account in the next chapter, in the analysis of Gemeente Rotterdam. Although audience is now targeted on multiple indicators, the diversity of the staff of Grounds is still described based on solely ethnicity. Therefore, creating a more ethnically diverse staff is depicted as an explicit goal.

4.2 Inclusion

4.2.1 Interviews

All participants agree on inclusion being a result of the numerical diversity of an audience in terms of various personal characteristics such as age and cultural background. Once the audience is mixed enough on all of these scales, inclusion is accomplished. Despite this seemingly quantitative aspect of inclusion, all of the participants speak of an intimate, free and safe atmosphere taking place whenever this mix appears. Milan and Yara mention collective participation as a precondition for this atmosphere to be established. Whatever cultural activity takes place, the present audience must actively participate, as simply being there is not enough. Both of them referred to the same event

⁵ ‘‘ We hebben gemerkt dat het effectiever is om op muzikale gemeenschappen te richten dan op etnisch afgebakende gemeenschappen. Etniciteit zeg vaak maar in een beperkte mate iets over iemands culturele voorkeur.’’

hosted by Grounds to illustrate this inclusive atmosphere established through participation and finding common grounds. Summed up, group depiction is simply seen as an entry for the overarching mission of Grounds, which has a more social constructionist feel to it.

“The Eritrean people started dancing and started inviting the audience for a dance party. And then there were Mazurka people. So, they were dancing there in their traditional national costumes and just inviting everyone. And then it came to me; oh yes. This is what we want. Everyone has their own party.”⁶

Milan describes this atmosphere as feeling like both the guest as the host of the party you are present at: you feel invited and you are willing to invite others as well.

All participants agree on the statement that a mixed audience equals the most joyful situation possible as a special and likeable atmosphere emerges as a result, although the motives for this statement differ among the participants. Both Willem and Guus speak of some sort of social control that happens when the ideal mix of audience is accomplished. For them, this means they do not have to pay attention to the audience as safety is guaranteed by the audience itself. This allows them to carelessly focus on the music without worrying about the atmosphere in the audience.

Sam, Yara and Milan refer to inclusion as a goal that needs to be chased. Therefore, as mentioned before, specific groups are targeted to visit Grounds, and other institutes are asked to nominate their local artists for co-productions with Grounds. In order to increase inclusion, Grounds fulfils a special role as ‘the middle ground’, in which Grounds invites people to go out, experience the unknown, and meet one another. Milan and Yara argue that Grounds completes a societal mission to connect cultural worlds in order to counteract segregation through the medium of music. Accordingly, they very much believe in the power of music to meet people from other cultural backgrounds. However, Grounds is convinced that people need to be actively motivated to meet the unknown, as the idealistic mix of an audience, as described above, age does not occur naturally. Some sort of management or interference is necessary, which is in line with historic thoughts on diversity management (Harrison, 2008; West, 2005, Tasan-Kok et al., 2014). Therefore, Grounds very much acknowledges and recalls to its inclusive powers as a cultural institution (Sandell, 2003). Sam recalls the same event as Yara and Milan did to illustrate how people might need external impulses to participate:

“The artists decided to perform in the middle of the venue instead of on the stage. This resulted in a

⁶ “De Eritrese mensen gingen dansen en toen gingen ze allemaal mensen uit het publiek uitnodigen voor een dansfeestje. En Mazurka mensen. Dus ze stonden met hun traditionele klederdracht te dansen en iedereen uit te nodigen. En toen dacht ik; oh ja. Dit is wat we willen. Iedereen heeft feest.”

really nice atmosphere in which the audience was allowed to participate. There was music, and people kept switching up so everybody could join and make music’’⁷

An experimental set-up in which artists take place in the middle of the venue instead of on the stage presents itself as the trigger to participate. Whether this additional impulse is initiated by Grounds, or the artists themselves, does not matter as long as the impulse is present.

Both Yara and Milan share the assumption that all individuals would enjoy participating in cultural activities. If you are not familiar with cultural expressions such as music yet, you will definitely like it once you get in touch with it. This is seemingly similar to ideas on the democracy of culture (Evrard, 1997). However, the content of this cultural activity is unrestrained and free to be interpreted in any way possible. In order to enable this cultural participation, Grounds works through processes of cocreation with local institutes in order to get as close to the daily lives of people in Delfshaven as possible. This is linked to the open and flexible interpretation of culture that Stevenson addresses in his thoughts on cultural democracy (2016). Therefore, all of the participants are extremely open towards all types of cultural expressions and musical styles.

For Yara and Milan, inclusion works as a measure of legitimation; once you are not inclusive as a cultural institution, how do you justify your work? As a similar trend, all participants agree on representation being an extremely important indicator to the legitimation of cultural institutes. Milan and Yara mention how, in their opinion, other cultural institutions seem to think of inclusion as something that ‘has to be dealt with’. Inclusion is not the main priority and there is no intrinsic motivation present to achieve inclusion.

Guus and Willem value inclusion but argue that inclusion should not be forced. You are allowed to facilitate preconditions to foster inclusion, but you should not overdo it. All participants mention how a good crew and good facilities are beneficial to inclusion; once the floor manager is kind to artists, the light crew creates technically well-executed work, and even the toilet attendant has a smile on his face, an inclusive atmosphere is much more likely to emerge. Additionally, the physical attributes of Grounds are helpful as well, as the size of the building helps to create a more intimate atmosphere. For Guus and Willem, music is the focus of their job as floor manager and programmer, so turning inclusion into the main priority feels odd and forced to them. This is shown in some recalcitrant answering of questions concerning inclusion, as they do not feel like the most important topics are being discussed. However, they do believe in inclusive values, as everybody should be

⁷ ‘‘De artiesten hadden besloten om in plaats van op het podium, midden in de zaal op te treden. Daardoor ontstond er echt een mooie sfeer, het publiek mocht meedoen. Er werd muziek gemaakt midden in de zaal en er werd telkens gewisseld van de mensen die muziek maakten.’’

treated as equals and you should never judge someone. Music presents itself as a perfect medium to foster inclusion, as music is inclusive in itself through the provision of a common goal. Therefore, once you focus on the music and a good, diverse programming, inclusion will follow naturally:

‘‘It goes wrong when you intentionally want to program more Moroccan, or more Turkish or more Surinam music. This results in a tensed situation. Then it is not about the music anymore. The music is naturally inclusive, there are hardly any boundaries. Music connects people.’’⁸

Especially Guus expresses some sort of aversion towards the concept of inclusion, as he believes it is a buzzword circling around in worlds of science and policy, far away from the empirical world. He criticizes these fields for not being in touch with the daily life, as inclusion simply cannot be learned from books. However, he states, some policy on inclusion is good, as long as you do not overdo it.

4.2.2 Documents

In both policy documents, the words of inclusion and diversity are used interchangeably: whenever inclusion is mentioned, quantitative diversity gets described. Therefore, inclusion is referred to as an external, numerical thing; once different groups in terms of age, cultural background, and gender are present, inclusion is accomplished.

However, additional inclusive matters are discussed without actually referring to the concept of inclusion. These inclusive matters are values that Grounds seems to embrace as an institution, such as looking out for one another, paying sincere attention to one another, and creating a free and intimate atmosphere. These values get discussed by the participants in the interviews as well, being preconditions for inclusion. Furthermore, statements on segregation, the desire to bring people together, and the love for broadening people’s cultural perspectives are all inclusion-linked, but are not labelled as measures undertaken to facilitate inclusion:

‘‘Through the shared experience of what happens in Grounds, people from separate worlds find the opportunity to dance and talk to one another. People go through experiences that help to erase their prejudices against other cultures and build a sense of unity’’⁹

⁸ ‘‘ Het gaat pas mis als je gaat denken; we moeten meer Marokkaans programmeren of meer Turks of meer Surninaams. Dat wordt een hele gespannen situatie. Dan gaat het niet om de muziek. De muziek is in principe gewoon inclusief van zichzelf, daar staan nauwelijks grenzen. Muziek verbindt mensen.’’

⁹ ‘‘Door de gedeelde beleving van wat er op de podia in GROUNDS gebeurt, raken mensen uit gescheiden werelden met elkaar aan het dansen en aan de praat. Men doet ervaringen op die hun vooroordelen tegen andere culturen helpen afbreken en ervaart een ‘gemeenschappelijk wij’’

Similar to the interviews, participation is described to be the key to open up and to get to know other cultures. Once people talk, and dance together, a sense of belonging emerges. This results in a deeper understanding of one another, without being blurred by any prejudices. In line with the literature, Grounds calls on the connective powers of culture, as in the most ideal situation, it can be seen as a medium to bring people together and generate a sense of belonging (Tasan-Kok, et al., 2014; Rattan & Ambady, 2013). This ideal seems to be the core thought on which the policy documents of Grounds base their overall mission on inclusion.

As mentioned before, inclusive values, such as looking out for one another, are not depicted as goals but as phenomena that simply ‘happen’ at Grounds. Despite this naturally inclusive personality of Grounds, goals towards diversity and representation are depicted as in need of an active, hands-on approach. One of these goals is the big societal mission to counteract segregation and facilitate meetings between people with different worldviews. Altogether, inclusion is depicted as a goal to be chased. This contrasts Sandell’s (2003) depiction of cultural institutes being unaware of their inclusive powers and responsibilities. Especially when it comes to overthrowing the dominant discourse and providing an alternative view on culture:

‘A place that is not dominated by merely one culture to which all other cultures are subordinate, but where equality exists. The inclusiveness is inviting for musicians and other artists as they are able to shape their expressions as freely as possible. This counteracts the dominant discourse and could potentially lead to dialogue and new connections’¹⁰

Here, the importance of both cultural as musical experiment, together with connecting different cultural backgrounds to one another, are highlighted. Additionally, inclusion is linked to innovation, as it enables new alliances to emerge:

‘For musicians this means meeting different music traditions and liberations of their own cultural restrictions. Where the musical transfers do not lead to new hybrid forms of music, it does lead to common appreciation and inspiration(...) this has led to interesting alliances.’¹¹

¹⁰ ‘Een ruimte die niet wordt gedomineerd door één cultuur waaraan andere culturen ondergeschikt zijn, maar waar gelijkwaardigheid bestaat. Deze inclusiviteit werkt uitnodigend voor musici en andere (podium)kunstenaars en stelt hen in staat om hun expressies vrijer vorm te geven. Dit biedt tegenwicht aan het dominante discours en kan leiden tot dialoog en nieuwe verbindingen’

¹¹ ‘Voor musici betekent de ontmoeting met andere muziektradities bevrijding van de eigen culturele restricties. Waar de muzikale uitwisseling niet leidt tot nieuwe hybride muziek, zorgt het in ieder geval voor onderlinge waardering en inspiratie. ... Dit heeft tot interessante allianties geleid’

The result of these alliances are improved understanding and respecting of one another. Therefore, music is again defined as a way to socially connect. Once again, meetings are cherished between both artists as well as the audience. These meetings review and reinvent the dominant discourse on culture, as they enable the connection of cultural worlds, and invite people to meet the unfamiliar. Summed up, the overall mission of Grounds is concerned with inclusion in every possible way, although the inclusive values, as described in the interviews, are not explicitly referred to as inclusive values.

4.3 Quality

4.3.1 Interviews

As the inclusion discussion shows, a mixed audience results into a self-regulative system, similar to a micro-society, in which everyone takes care of one another. Although Milan, Yara and Sam value this self-regulative system as a goal in itself, for Willem and Guus this allows them to peacefully enjoy the music. As Willem and Guus have shown in their interviews, inclusion-measures can result into debates on the priorities of Grounds. Focusing on inclusion may take away attention from the main ‘product’ created by Grounds, which is music and its artistic quality. Since Guus is the programmer, he is the one in charge of both creating and executing a varied program for Grounds. According to him, artistic quality is the mere focus of his work, as the musicians behind the work, or the audience listening to the music, leaves him indifferent. Accordingly, Guus refuses to purposely target artists based on gender or ethnicity as a means to create a more inclusive or representative program. Such actions steer away from the focus on music, which should always be leading:

‘But then they ask me, could you incorporate more female artists in the program? If there are some good female artists, of course. If not, then I will not.’¹²

As mentioned before, Guus and Willem value inclusion very much. However, Guus will not actively pursue inclusion; inclusion should simply follow from programming artists that show artistic quality. Furthermore, Guus argues that focusing on personal characteristics such as ethnicity or gender, results in a mental puzzle entailing some sort of reversed kind of discrimination. This puzzle undermines the focus on the artistic quality of music. Although the exact details of artistic quality remain undescribed, the program of Grounds should, on the one hand, be varied and therefore refreshing, and, on the other hand, be cohesive through the implementation of well-known and familiar artists and musical

¹² ‘Dan vragen ze aan mij, wil je nog wat meer dames programmeren. Als ik dames heb die ik goed vind, tuurlijk. Zo niet, nee.’

elements. For Guus and Willem, artistic quality is the reason to not let inclusion-related concerns become the main priority of their work at Grounds. Hence, all local activities of Grounds concerning inclusion are perceived as just to get subsidy, as the Willem formulates expressively:

‘‘ And it is not like it is important to me personally (...) this all gets recorded, right? But I could not care less’’¹³

Willem and Guus are not aware of the precise details of the social activities Grounds is involved in. However, both of them do express an appreciation of the social activities in some way, as they acknowledge the importance of being representative as an institution. Moreover, thanks to the social activities Yara is involved in, the music-minded production crew is able to focus even more on the artistic quality of music, which remains the focus at all times.

Yara finds herself on the other side of the spectrum; being mostly interested in the social qualities of music. As her job description requires her to connect to local organisations and to find ‘hidden gems’, she is mainly interested in showing cultural richness through music. Her goal is to bring positivity to the local community and ask local artists to enter the stage of Grounds. Yara therefore shines light on culture incorporated in the daily lives of people, as this culture is already ‘happening’, which is linked to ideas on cultural democracy from Juncker and Balling (2016). Yara has never said one word about the artistic quality of music as she prioritizes the social aspects of music; a way to connect with one another.

‘‘Music always brings people together. Everybody loves music. That is what I want to show the world so badly.’’¹⁴

All participants agree on the social power of music. The only difference is how they prioritize this social power. Milan and Sam find themselves somehow in the middle of this scale. They highly value artistic quality, as Milan speaks of quality as being the main criterium for the program of Grounds. However, he emphasises the social powers of music, as it provides one with confidence, as it makes you feel part of a something bigger than you. Sam, however, thinks staff should be diversified, collaborations with other cultural institutes should be done, and content should be altered in order to become more inclusive. According to him, quality is not an argument not to alter the program. In fact, the content of the program of Grounds is allowed to be altered in order to attract more people. Sam

¹³ ‘‘ En het is ook anders dan dat ik het persoonlijk belangrijk vind (...) ja (...) het wordt allemaal opgenomen he, maar ja het zou aan mijn reet roesten.’’

¹⁴ ‘‘Muziek brengt mensen altijd bij elkaar. Iedereen houdt van muziek. Dat wil ik zo graag aan de wereld laten zien.’’

becomes very explicit when it comes to the value of receiving the input of younger generation. As he is the youngest employee of Grounds, he gets very vocal on some improvements that could be made on the program if the input of younger programmers would be welcomed. According to Sam, this could benefit the diversification of both the program and the audience.

According to Milan, the debates on artistic quality and inclusion within the walls of Grounds go hand in hand with debates on a larger scale as well. Artistic quality is the one thing keeping the major cultural institutes in Rotterdam from becoming inclusive. As he states, they obtain a hierarchical view on culture with classical music being more valuable than RnB music. In fact, no discussion is possible, as this is simply assumed to be external knowledge. Milan's critique on the implicit assumptions on the hierarchical perspectives of cultural institutes on what is to be called 'legitimate culture', is almost an exact replication of the critique of Stevenson (2013). Milan continues, as the hierarchical view of culture reigns over subsidy systems, keeping young more diversely programmed institutes from being incorporated into the cultural policy plans of the municipality of Rotterdam. In order to create a more inclusive cultural sector, fixed interpretations on the quality of culture should be revisited:

“ A discussion on whether the criteria of quality we use nowadays does not obstruct inclusion from being realised”¹⁵

Milan obtains a pessimistic stance on this, as he does not believe that these perspectives will change naturally; an external impulse is necessary, some sort of 'reset-button' must be pressed, in order to motivate directors of established cultural institutes to reconsider their own positions. This request for a re-set refers to the difficulty to switch paradigms, as explained by the concept of path-dependency (Cox, 2004). As path-dependency exemplifies the perseverance of old values, directors of institutes that solely hold on to the past should be replaced:

“ As long as those directors and conservatives are in control, nothing will ever change.”¹⁶

¹⁵ “Een discussie over of de kwaliteitsbepaling die we nu hanteren niet belemmert om die inclusiviteit daadwerkelijk te bereiken”

¹⁶ “ Zolang die directeuren en conservatieven het hoogste woord hebben zal er niks veranderen”

4.3.2 Documents

Similar to the interviews, the documents depict artistic quality to be one of the main criteria for programming. However, this time, a definition of artistic quality is given, which is rooted in social and artistic qualities:

*“Authentic, without compromises, rooted in different worlds, and carrying out a strong, personal opinion”*¹⁷

Despite the artistic components of music, more socially-rooted components, such as counteracting segregation are formulated as well. This wraps up the somehow divergent opinions of the participants on how to prioritise social goals versus artistic goals.

According to the documents, social practices could benefit the artistic quality of music, as new collaborations and inter-cultural experiments could lead to refreshing performances. This is what Grounds calls ‘out of the box’-music; being independent of constraints and restrictions. Goals on social accomplishments are made extremely explicit though, which makes it hard to find the underlying artistic goals. At first glance, artistic quality seems to be hidden underneath social goals, as the policy documents seem to lean more towards a social side:

2017-2020:

*“Creating a platform at which divergent cultures come together, share and carry out their music to a diverse audience in terms of age and origin”*¹⁸

2021-2024:

*“Grounds offers a stage and platform for the versatility of musical genres that resonate with our hyper-diverse, urban environment and audience.”*¹⁹

The overarching goal of the two visions mentioned above is to carry out music. It seems like the priorities of enabling culturally diverse music to flourish become part of the artistic quality criteria. This indicates how these values are not conflicting and are perfectly able of being combined in theory. Music of artistic standards seems to enable people to easily connect with one another, which eases visitors to meet the unknown through the means of music. The criteria for artistic quality require

¹⁷ “Eigenzinnig, compromissloos, vaak met de benen in verschillende wereld en met een eigen sterke mening”

¹⁸ “ Een platform creëren waar uiteenlopende culturen samen komen om hun muziek uit te wisselen en uit te dragen naar een qua herkomst en leeftijd veelzijdig publiek.”

¹⁹ “ GROUNDS biedt een podium en platform voor de veelheid aan muziekstijlen die resoneren met onze hyper-diverse grootstedelijke omgeving en publiek.”

music to be ‘rooted in different worlds’, which means the goal of supporting ‘meetings’ to take place, already happens in the music itself (Grounds, 2019, p.20).

The policy documents therefore summarise the versatility of the transcripts; both the social stance of Yara and the artistic stances of Guus and Willem are brought together into one overarching mission. This indicates a gap between policy and the work floor; although policy aspires to univocally resolve a debate emerging at the work floor, stances on quality and inclusion still differ in some sense among the participants. Although the policy of Grounds sounds theoretically promising, slight conflicts still take place in daily life, as there will always be natural differences between policy documents and the actual work done.

In the 2017-2020 documents, Grounds was struggling to present a cohesive identity as a result of the diverse program. In the 2017-2020 document, a conflict of quality is depicted due to the amateurs and the professionals who are programmed interchangeably. Apparently, this inconsistency of quality is confusing to the public:

‘Another problem would be that Grounds not only focuses on high-quality music as presented by professionals, but also focuses on local activities and talent-development (...) This results in an inconsistency in both quality and offer, as it may confuse the audience.’²⁰

In the 2021-2024 document, this problem of inconsistency is solved by the renewed concept of the acceptance of the musical spectrum as it is, as they now state that boundaries between musical genres are not even close to fixed. In real life, boundaries between amateurs and professionals are fluid and so are the boundaries between different musical styles:

‘In the Western world we have drawn an artificial boundary between amateurs and professionals, but in reality, this boundary is fluid. They are both part of the musical universe.’²¹

Therefore, this inconsistency in quality is accepted as a representation of reality. As this concept of fluidity is welcomed, the second document emphasises the need of musical experiment which Grounds supports and accommodates between its walls. Although fluidity is embraced, Grounds still speaks of a ‘layered’ programming style. This means that Grounds still acknowledges the existence of either horizontal or vertical layers but has decided to include them all anyway.

²⁰ ‘Een ander probleem is dat GROUNDS zich niet alleen op het brengen van hoogwaardige muziek door professionals richt, maar ook op wijkprojecten en het scouten en lanceren van nieuw talent. (...) Dit brengt een wisseling van de kwaliteit van het aanbod met zich mee, dat verwarring kan opleveren bij publiek’

²¹ ‘In het westen hebben we een kunstmatige harde grens getrokken tussen amateurs en professionals maar in werkelijkheid is die fluïde. Ze zijn beide onderdeel van hetzelfde muzikale universum.’

In the second document, Grounds highly focuses on ‘receiving’ instead of ‘sending out’. This means the focus of Grounds has shifted from the desire to shout from the roofs what musical treasures it has to offer, to a humbler approach of listening to the desires of the local community and the population of Rotterdam. This goes hand in hand with their more open stance towards the fluidity of culture, embracing constructionist ideals that relate to cultural democracy and open interpretations of culture (Andrews, 2012; Juncker & Balling, 2016)

4.4 Summary

Diversity: The policy documents of Grounds have made a transition from assigning group labels based on ethnicity, to a more constructionist understanding of groups, in which the determining powers of ethnicity are minimised as the importance of lifestyle, religion, and other factors are taken into account as well. However, ethnicity remains important for the policy of Grounds to assess and understand the diversification of society, from which the dynamics are very much acknowledged. Among the participants, stances on whether to highlight or neglect personal characteristics differ. Sam, Yara and Milan who pinpoint these characteristics, as this is the only way to identify and target underrepresent groups, which means they sometimes get conflicted in group assumptions. However, the deeper understanding of diversity entails a more social constructionist view. Willem and Guus avoid expressions on personal characteristics as this takes away the attention from their main priority: music.

Inclusion: Sam, Yara, and Milan think of inclusion as a goal to be chased, whereas Willem and Guus state that inclusion cannot be forced. This explains the preference of Sam, Yara, and Milan to explicitly mention personal characteristics such as ethnicity. As all participants believe in the inclusive power of music, Willem and Guus argue that inclusion results from focusing on good and diverse music. Yara, Sam, and Milan highlight the need for participation; whenever everybody feels free to participate, an inclusive atmosphere emerges. Grounds facilitates this through the focus on meeting; meeting the other, the unfamiliar, the unknown through the means of music. This specific role of Grounds, in which Grounds presents itself as the ‘middle ground’, is highlighted in the policy documents as well. Accordingly, the documents show both an explicit mission, as an intrinsic urge to become inclusive. Therefore, the documents are more univocal than the transcripts in terms of depicting inclusion to be a goal. Inclusion is very explicitly described through numerical diversity in visitor rates and artists. However, inclusive values such as ‘looking out for one another’ that refer to the inclusive atmosphere as described by the participants, are there (although in the document not directly related to inclusion).

Quality: As the early documents show, Grounds hosts both local as international, professional as amateur artists, which results into an inconsistency in artistic quality. However, Grounds has grown to

accept this inconsistency of quality through their desire to represent the diverse society. In the later documents, a constructionist interpretation of quality is shown, as culture is both brought to the daily lives of people, as allowed to be interpreted freely. In fact, the diversity of music is integrated in Ground's understanding of artistic quality. Although the policy documents seem to solve quality debates that might emerge as result from inclusion measures, Guus and Willem show how these debates are still very much present in the work environment. The artistic quality of music should always be main priority to them. Yara prioritises the social power of music over its artistic quality, whereas Sam and Milan find themselves somewhere in the middle of this debate. Therefore, strong inter-institutional differences are shown.

5. Analysis: Gemeente Rotterdam

‘And the first discussion was like: well we can only spend the money once. So, without any discussion taking place, classical music was prioritised’

In the following section, I will analyse the empirical findings that are derived from the dataset of Gemeente Rotterdam, still based on the same three themes as in the previous analysis chapter.

5.1 Diversity

5.1.1 Interviews

Society is everything but static, according to the participants. Especially Rotterdam is characterised by a very dynamic nature, as the increased diversity of Rotterdam is recognised by all participants. All of them acknowledge the ‘diversity of diversity’, in a way it could refer to all personal characteristics imaginable such as gender, level of education, age, physical, or mental handicaps. This is in line with the thoughts on hyperdiversity being present in Rotterdam, in which the diversification of the population now shows a broad palette of personal characteristics (Ang, 2005; Peterson, 2015). However, some participants still maintain an ethnic focus on diversity, which reconfirms the ruling ethnic interpretation of diversity (Phinney, 1996; Berkers et al., 2017). All participants acknowledge that diversity has been a consistent ‘problem’ for over decades. According to two participants, Dylan and Emke, inclusion is nothing more than the newest ‘label’ of diversity, after a series of various labels such as participation, emancipation and, integration:

‘We started in the 80’s and 90’s with the concepts of integration and participation, which meant that as many people as possible had to participate as they were supposed to have somewhere to go in the cultural sector. Cultural diversity became a central theme to that (...) it is some sort of emancipation of the concepts we used to call integration and participation.’²²

The policy focus on diversity has been consistently present over the years. However, the underrepresented groups which these diversity policies are supposed to target, change over the years, according to Emke.

None of the participants seemed to be hesitant to explicitly mention characteristics such as ethnicity, although some are more careful than others. Especially Emke tried to stay away from any ethnicity-related expressions or any group-based assumptions, as she strives towards a society in which no distinction will be made between a Moroccan teenage girl, and a native Dutch, middle-aged man. Her ideal assessment of people comes close to theories on colourblindness, as she prefers to

²² ‘We begonnen in de jaren 80 en 90 met het begrip integratie en participatie. Dat betekende ook dat zoveel mogelijk mensen mee moesten doen en een plek moesten hebben in de culturele sector. Culturele diversiteit werd daarin een centrale factor. (...) Het is een soort emancipatie van het begrip dat we toen integratie en participatie noemden.

literally not see any differences (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). Other participants, such as Isabella, are extremely explicit about any personal characteristics and are very likely to use these to divide people into groups, as this is the only way to identify and target underrepresented group. According to the participants, the groups that are most frequently excluded are people living in the outer neighbourhoods of Rotterdam and people with a ‘different’ cultural background. ‘Different’ refers to being different from the ‘dominant group’. All participants are aware of their own social position, as they all argue that they belong to this dominant group:

‘Well-represented people are people like me. Highly educated. Dutch’²³

As a result of their cultural preferences, the people they meet on their Friday nights out in the city are mainly other members of this dominant group; highly educated, white, and somewhere between the age of 40 and 60. Although Emke has never felt out of place as a result of her membership to the dominant group, others have. Laura sometimes feels ‘too white’, or ‘too old’, and Dylan recalls an exposition he attended at which he felt out of place due to the present audience. This audience consisted of, as he calls it, a very distinctive minority, being a highly educated Surinam audience. Although he liked the atmosphere, he was unable to connect with other people present:

‘So the atmosphere was quite good, it’s just that you do not feel like you share the same perspective as the people around you’²⁴

Exactly this seems to be the problem with diversity according to Laura, as people seem to live in their own ‘bubble’, which makes it difficult to look past one’s individual perspective. This perspective might unconsciously entail some prejudices or some fears for the unknown. Fleur, who has lived in Africa during her childhood, says the only way to overcome these prejudices is to find yourself in a completely new social position in which you have to question everything you are certain of. As she has been part of both a minority as a majority group, she argues her worldview has broadened, and her understanding of the other has significantly increased.

All participants declare that as diversity increases, integration of social groups seems to work both ways on a vertical scale. In line with previous policies on participation and integration, a top down approach is present as policy makers bring life into policy plans as a means to include unrepresented groups in society. However, a bottom-up approach is present as well since

²³ ‘Mensen als ik worden goed bediend. Hoogopgeleid. Met een Nederlandse achtergrond.’

²⁴ Dus de sfeer wat opzich goed, het was meer dat je zelf als je daar bent het gevoel hebt dat je niet het perspectief deelt van de mensen die aanwezig is.

underrepresented groups seem to stand up and claim their spot in the cultural sector. They have grown aware of their own social position and speak up about their rights to be heard as Fleur phrases:

‘So it is really, and that is something I see in the whole diversity debate as well, people do not let themselves be pushed away anymore. They are simply angry. They demand the right to be seen’²⁵

Although Dylan, Isabella and Fleur refer to this as a contemporary development typical to this specific age, Emke and Laura seem to think of this as episodes, or waves, that keep coming back every now and then. Emke recalls to Actie Tomaat as an example; a group of young theatre makers distorted established theatre companies by throwing rotten tomatoes at them as a form of critique on the established order of theatre makers. These were accused of neglecting the creative and experimental desires of younger creators. According to Emke, this inter-generational trend has repeated itself, and will probably repeat itself again in the future. This will probably result in a similar kind of cultural revolution, according to Emke:

‘I always say, we better watch out, because the new generation who wants to have a place in the cultural sector as well, will revolt at some point. I would not be shocked if that would actually happen.’²⁶

Therefore, the dynamics of society and its diversity are key to the understandings of the cultural sector, according to all participants. Fleur emphasises how some genres that can be found in the cultural sector of Rotterdam are still referred to as ‘new’, while they have been present for over years, and grown into established genres in informal circuits:

‘And we just keep calling things new, while three generations of Hip-hop artists have passed already. You cannot keep calling them new, it only shows how the sector simply fails to represent the artists and activities present in the city.’²⁷

Accordingly, the sector seems to struggle to integrate ‘the new’, which results in the underrepresentation of the diversity of creators and activities present in Rotterdam. Therefore,

²⁵ ‘Dus het is echt, en dat herken ik nu ook aan de diversiteits-dicussie, de mensen laten zich niet meer wegzetten. Die zijn gewoon kwaad [lacht]. Die eisen veel meer hun plek op’

²⁶ ‘Ik denk altijd maar, als we niet oppassen, dan komt de nieuwe generatie die een plek wil hebben in de culturele wereld een keer in opstand. Ik zou da took helemaal niet gek vinden als dat zo gebeurt.’

²⁷ ‘En we blijven maar zeggen dat bepaalde dingen nieuwe genres zijn terwijl er toch al drie generaties Hiphop-makers zijn zeg maar. Dat kun je niet blijven zeggen, en dan zie je toch dat die sector gewoon niet representeert wat er in activiteiten en makers zijn in de stad.’

diversity seems to be acknowledged and accepted, but ‘new’ genres are not adopted like classic art forms have been adopted.

5.1.2 Documents

Throughout all documents, the dynamics of society and its diversity are frequently acknowledged. This stance is taken a step further, as the cultural sector is requested to move along with the diversity of society and should therefore be representative of the population of Rotterdam. This is the core perspective on which all inclusion policy seems to be based:

‘We think it is of great importance that cultural organisations respond to the developments of society, and resemble the diversity which is distinctive for the demography of Rotterdam.’²⁸

Therefore, Gemeente Rotterdam holds on to a strong belief in the cultural sector as an external being, as this external being is required to respond to the population. Taken into account that this cultural sector consists of state-funded cultural activities, this is very much in line with ideas on the democracy of culture (Evrard, 1997).

As a main point, the freshly emerging needs of younger generations through the spontaneous eruptions of young initiatives in informal circuits are seen as empirical proof of the diversification of Rotterdam. These initiatives usually emerge out of discontentedness about existing cultural institutes, as they do not feel like their cultural preferences are represented yet. Instead, they launch their own initiatives celebrating new, hybrid disciplines, as they fight for recognition. This matches the inter-generational movements Emke referred to in the interviews. Moreover, this phenomenon shows close connections to how the definition of culture, as proposed by cultural policy, does not speak to everyone (Stevenson, 2016)

In assessing diversity, the municipality seems to obtain a more constructionist stance over the years. In the 2017-2020 documents, the municipality still mainly refers to groups based on all kinds of personal traits, such as ethnicity and age. However, ethnicity and age are not used as a ‘grand theory’ to explain cultural preferences. Cultural omnivorous behaviour is referred to as well, as taste patterns have broadened and have become less consistent. Therefore, a focus on cultural patterns together with personal characteristics is discussed, in which the acceptance of hyperdiversity is present (Ang 2005; Peterson, 2015).

²⁸ ‘‘Wij vinden het voorts van belang dat culturele organisaties anticiperen op ontwikkelingen in de samenleving end at zij zich verhouden tot de diversiteit die kenmerkend is voor de demografie van Rotterdam’’²⁸

Whereas the 2017-2020 documents mention the presence of the ‘big minorities’, the 2021-2024 documents declare that we all have become a minority now. Even the majority differs in terms of age, occupation, education and, gender, which makes us all minorities. Therefore, the individualistic tone continues, together with the desire to avoid focus on characteristics on ethnicity:

2017-2020:

‘Listening to the existing needs to make sure all people would like to stay living here. Looking at the richness of big minorities present in the city.’²⁹

2021-2024:

‘Rotterdam then becomes a majority-minority city: the majority of the population belongs to a minority (...) minorities share similarities with other minorities, and differ amongst their own group in terms of education, ethnicity, lifestyle (...) In Rotterdam, we then all belong to minorities’³⁰

In the second document, the focus on age, but especially ethnicity has weakened even more. Moreover, group-thinking is avoided at all costs, as terms such as ethnic minorities are replaced by terms as ‘every inhabitant of Rotterdam’³¹. Instead of classifying groups, the 2017-2020 documents refer to everyone as a Rotterdammer:

‘Through this manner, we make sure all inhabitants of Rotterdam, regardless of age, education level, religion, gender, or ethnicity may find something suitable in the cultural index’³²

On the one hand, this seems to be a more social constructionist, individualistic approach, but, on the other hand, a collective identity through diversity is found in everybody being inhabitants of Rotterdam. This label does not get used to explain any group behaviour; the only thing this label indicates is a common ground in the city all inhabitants live in. Moreover, it is used as a pragmatic, inclusive label, referring to everyone cultural policy is supposed to reach. Through this collective label, culture is seen as an instrument to generate a sense of belonging (Crul & Schneider, 2010). Moreover, one may ask whether this assessment of the population of Rotterdam is a way is to neglect

²⁹ ‘Luisteren naar de behoeften die bestaan om te kunnen zorgen dat mensen hier graag willen (blijven) wonen. Kijken naar alle big minorities, alle grote minderheden die de stad rijk is.’

³⁰ ‘Rotterdam is dan een majority-minority stad: de meerderheid van de bevolking hoort tot een minderheid (...) Minderheden die bovendien weer kenmerken met andere minderheden delen, maar ook binnen hun eigen groep verschillen vertonen in opleidingsniveau, herkomst, leefstijl (...) In Rotterdam behoren we dan allemaal tot minderheden’

³¹ ‘Iedere Rotterdammer’

³² ‘Daarmee zorgen we ervoor dat er voor alle Rotterdammers, ongeacht leeftijd, opleidingsniveau, religie, gender of herkomst, een cultureel passend aanbod kunnen vinden

differences between people, as the focus on unity softens the importance of differences. This shows a connection to the risks of colourblindness as portrayed by Markus et al. (2000), since power relations and debates about dominance seem to be forgotten.

Cultural diversity is embraced as a new natural state of being, and therefore inherent to Rotterdam. Diversity is simply part of the cultural identity of Rotterdam and should therefore be 'celebrated' as something positive. However, underneath this acceptance of diversity, rules the assumption that everyone needs to, and wants to participate in this celebration of diversity, which links to the 'problematization' of participation as described by Stevenson (2013; 2016; 2017). As cultural policy proposes that the cultural sector should be representative of the dynamics of society, staff of cultural institutes should be diversified. Both policy documents emphasise how this does not seem to happen enough and activate the cultural sector to pay more attention to this. Additionally, diversification of both audience and staff are depicted as actions of 'good governance', and should therefore be fundamental to management, and be unquestionable. However, diversification goals are not made explicit when it comes to the staff of the municipality itself.

5.2 Inclusion

5.2.1 Interviews

As Emke phrases, diversity is an external appearance, whereas inclusion comes down to the way policy copes with diversity. Although Dylan uses diversity and inclusion as interchangeable synonyms, others agree with Emke's formulation of inclusion. Since inclusion is depicted as an umbrella term, many internal policy implications have been brought into life as an attempt to grasp the concept of inclusion: workshops, conferences and debates. Isabella therefore suggests that the concept should be divided into subtasks, as its unclarity makes it hard to deal with practically. The one thing that is clear, is the overarching goal of inclusion: when all of the population of Rotterdam is able to find something in the cultural sector that suits them culturally, inclusion is established. Once more, the cultural sector is seen as a starting point, as everyone should have access to this cultural sector. Therefore, the definition of inclusion, as proposed by the participants, refers to ideas on the democracy of culture, as the role of the municipality is central to creating access to the subsidised cultural circuit that it presents (Evrard, 1997).

As diversity is very much a dynamic thing, inclusion is something that should always be worked on: new groups will come and will express the urge to be included. Although inclusion is clear to all participants in terms of policy-related goals, three participants struggled to recall a time at which they

experienced a sense of inclusion. Dylan responded right away how his cultural preferences keeps him from experiencing an inclusive atmosphere:

‘Well that is a tough one. I do not think I can come up with an example right away. Well, I often go to dance, theatre, music, and the audience is usually from a certain subculture, as I would like to call it’³³

Other participants, among which some were active in local cultural circuits, or less highbrow cultural circuits, found it easier to describe a moment at which they experienced a sense of inclusion. Although some describe an inclusive atmosphere as the gathering of diverse people, others describe an easy-going, joyful atmosphere in which people are open to one another:

‘Lately I went to this premiere of a documentary on a women’s project which we worked on for a while, it is called Women Connected. These women themselves were present, and they were just so spontaneous. They welcomed everyone; they made the guests food. It was not like you have to walk all the way to the bar to order coffee, no, everything was right there on the table to grab, which initiated talks around the coffee table. Then there was this music, and just a lot of contact. So happy. And everybody was part of the organisation, guests, and hosts’³⁴

The repeating wave of emerging new generations, as discussed in the previous chapter, is acknowledged as an external fact. The participants believe they should carefully listen to the needs of the younger generations, although the revolution of a new inclusive generation of creators is depicted as an inescapable development. However, difficulties will occur in making alterations to the current subsidy system, as it will take time and patience, showing once more the persistence of path-dependency (Cox, 2004). As it seems, these new genres of hybrid disciplines and innovative creators struggle to find their way into the subsidy chain. They suffer from financial prematurity as they are not financially stable enough, or do not meet other policy criteria. This is a shame, according to all participants. Fleur states:

‘So what stands out to me is, how much energy these institutes have to put in, in order to become part

³³ ‘Nou ik vind het eigenlijk lastig. Ik heb niet zo een twee drie een heel goed voorbeeld. Nee ik ga veel naar dans, theater, muziek, en daar komt toch veel publiek van een sub-cultuur specifiek laten we maar zeggen’

³⁴ ‘Laatst was er dan een première van een documentaire over een vrouwenproject wat we heel lang hebben hebben gedaan, women connected. Uhm, en die vrouwen zijn er dan zelf, en die zijn super spontaan, en, uh, die heten iedereen welkom, hadden zelf hapjes gemaakt. Dus het is niet dat je naar de bar moet lopen en een kopje koffie besteld, alles staat daar dan op tafel en dan heb je alweer contact met mensen. Er is een muziekje, en er is gewoon heel veel contact. Heel vrolijk. En iedereen maakt onderdeel van de organisatie uit, bezoekers en organisatie.’

of the system, while the system does not open up to them. How should we change this?’³⁵

These new creators are known for their innovative power, which suits one of the primary goals for the policy timeframe of 2021-2024; innovation. As a response, established cultural institutes are requested to collaborate with grassroots initiatives. However, this is usually a one-time thing, and might feel a bit forced towards both parties, as the grass root initiatives prefer to determine their own cultural path, according to Fleur:

‘Well some collaborations take place. But urban, or grassroots organisations that get forced to work with bigger institutes, that simply does not work. You just want to create your own program and design your own development’³⁶

Additionally, cultural institutes are requested to revise their current cultural program to meet the needs of new generations. The cultural program is therefore seen as the key to inclusion; a different marketing, or a ‘cooler’ visual appeal will not do the job. Instead, the program has to be changed in order to attract more diverse groups of people. However, a single institution does not have to carry the weight of attracting the entire population on its own. Several participants mention the risks cultural institutes endure to lose their identities while focusing on broadening their program. If you are known for your contemporary dance performances, should you then be forced to incorporate HipHop as well? The answer is no, according to most participants. Moreover, most institutes do not feel the intrinsic urge to become inclusive, as inclusion is seen as a mandatory assignment to be fulfilled. An intrinsic urge is fundamental to becoming inclusive; if this is absent, inclusion is a lost cause, according to Laura. These desired changes in the program, in order to create something attractive for everyone as discussed above, once more refer to the cultural sector as something external that has to adjust itself to society. As a result, every member of society should be appealed to the external sector, referring to ideas on the democracy of culture (Evrard, 1997)

Differences in identity and appeal between institutes are celebrated, as inclusion is seen as a collective mission after all. Therefore, a homogenous audience is not that bad; as long as everyone attracts another type of homogenous audience. Even the Hiphophuis, which has been mentioned in each and every interview as the epitome of inclusion, attracts a homogenous audience according to Laura. However, this may never be an excuse to not work on attracting a broader audience at all.

³⁵ ‘‘ Dus wat mij dan opvalt, is dat zij veel energie hebben moeten steken om deel uit te kunnen maken van dat systeem zeg maar. Uh, terwijl eigenlijk het systeem zich niet heeft opengesteld naar hen, van hoe kunnen we dat veranderen?’’

³⁶ ‘‘ Ja je ziet wel samenwerkingen. Maar urban, of grassroots-organisaties die gedwongen worden om met grotere instellingen te werken dat werkt ook niet, je wil gewoon je eigen lijn en je eigen agenda bepalen en je eigen ontwikkeling.’’

In terms of representation, opinions are divergent on whether there is enough cultural supply to please everyone. Some say something suitable is out there for everyone, but the sector simply fails to reach underrepresented groups despite the broadness of its cultural index. Others say the cultural offer is just not as diverse as it should be. Despite the questions on cultural supply, the lack of reach is acknowledged by every participant. Several reasons are formulated to explain this lack of reach, among which is the exclusive feel of established cultural institutes, such as the Doelen. De Doelen is depicted as the epitome of exclusion, as its atmosphere is extremely formal, extremely stiff, and restrained by unspoken rules. Another answer to both the lack of reach as the potential lack of broadness in cultural offer, is the increase of local cultural activities. As the locals from outer city areas are less likely to travel to the city centre, more local activities should be brought into life. However, various informal, local, cultural circuits already exist, but find themselves in the shadows of the formal, established cultural institutes. In fact, the municipality is not even aware of the infrastructure of these informal circuits, just like these established institutes. Laura explains:

‘In terms of inclusion, it is being argued that more should happen in outer-city areas. And there are the bigger institutes saying, you know what, I will provide local children with free music classes in the community centre around the corner. However, they are unaware of the infrastructure that already exists in their areas. There are so many cultural activities already that have been thought through many times, you cannot just interfere with that’³⁷

This links both to the idea that culture should be seen as something happening in the daily lives of people, as to the idea that policy mainly seems to focus on subsidised culture, taking away attention to already existing, ‘informal’ cultural circuits (Juncker & Balling, 2016; Stevenson, 2016).

Culture is seen as a tool, or an instrument. All participants depict both individual and collective benefits of culture, as it, on the one hand, facilitates individual growth, and, on the other hand, increases mutual understanding. It provides one with confidence; it is a way to mentally relax and it benefits the entire wellbeing of Rotterdam. The risk of not being inclusive is therefore closing people off from the fair opportunities to benefit from these aspects of culture. Another risk is a loss of legitimation, and a loss of credibility for the municipality, according to Laura:

³⁷ ‘‘ Want ja, bijvoorbeeld, er wordt nu ook, ook in het kader van inclusiviteit wordt er ook gezegd; er moet veel meer in die gebieden gebeuren, en dan heb je dus de grote instellingen, uhm, die denken; ohja ik zit ook in een gebied. Weet je wat, ik ga voor kinderen in de buurt gratis lessen aanbieden bij het buurthuis om de hoek. Maar, niet wetende dat er in zo'n gebied al een hele infrastructuur is, en een heel aanbod waar echt al over na gedacht is, en dat je dat niet in een keer maar gewoon kan doen.’’

‘‘ It will trigger some sort of aversion. I am not sure what will happen, but I think the established order of cultural institutes will then risk their credibility and lose legitimisation, so people who go there now, will not go there anymore ’’³⁸

However, the main risk to take into consideration is the social polarisation that could emerge as a result of not investing in inclusion. As culture is mainly depicted as a tool, the ideas of Gemeente Rotterdam very much relate to the historic view on the civilising benefits of culture (Mulcahy, 2006). Additionally, culture helps people to learn from each other’s different worldviews. Taking that away will result in intolerance and alienation. Access to culture could therefore hold the city together socially, as it will increase a sense of being ‘one’ (Crul & Schneider, 2010). This explains the extremely explicit focus on participation. In the most ideal situation, everybody would be able, and willing to participate in the cultural sector. Inclusion is therefore a necessity. Although some express some doubts on this statement, in general all participants assume that everybody is eager to participate in some way. However, participation should not just increase; it should increase in the cultural sector as created by cultural policy. As the core idea entails that everybody should be able to enjoy the personal and civilising benefits of culture that the cultural sector has to offer, democracy of culture becomes a very important theme (Evrard, 1997). Nonetheless, it may be that some people would like to participate culturally in a way that does not fit the cultural palette of the cultural sector, as explained by Juncker and Balling (2016) and Stevenson (2016). As many participants have argued themselves: high cultural expressions do not seem to lure everyone to participate and do not always generate an inclusive atmosphere.

5.2.2 Documents

All documents express goals similar to the goals from the transcripts, in terms of the need for representation for the cultural sector as a whole. Therefore, collaborations should be intensified and be held more frequently. Focus on participation is made very explicit, as the municipality would like to stimulate citizens to meet the unfamiliar:

‘‘ In which everyone can enjoy his/her participation of culture, and most of all can be introduced to the new and the unknown ’’³⁹

³⁸ ‘‘ Dan ontstaat er een afkeer denk ik. Uhm, ik weet het niet zo goed wat er dan gebeurt, maar ik denk wel dat het gevaar is dat ook de gevestigde orde dan zo ongeloofwaardig wordt, dat daar ook geen draagvlak meer voor is, dus dat dan juist de mensen die daar nu heen gaan daar ook niet meer heen gaan.’’

³⁹ ‘‘ Waarin iedereen plezier kan beleven aan de deelname aan culturele activiteiten en bovendien wordt uitgenodigd kennis te maken met het ‘nieuwe en het onbekende’’’

As the transcripts have shown, culture is depicted as a social tool to create a deeper understanding of one another, together with an increased tolerance and a sense of being a community. This is depicted as the higher goal of culture, which means culture is definitely anything but independent. Culture is also portrayed as the base of societal inclusion, which reconfirms the importance of participation. This explains the urge for participation, as a socially healthy, inclusive society is the result:

‘Arts and culture help a diverse city to meet one another and find your own personality. Through your own identity, culture enables you to meet other people. Through this, culture forms the base of inclusion. The base of a city in which people respect each other’s being, work together and live together’⁴⁰

Diversity and innovation find themselves in a circular model. Diversity is linked to innovation, as diversity ensures the emergence of hybrid art forms, interdisciplinary collaborations, and reinvented genres. Therefore, responding to diversity facilitates innovation, which is one of the primary goals of the policy timeframe of 2021-2024. Therefore, cultural policy asks the established cultural institutes as part of the cultural sector to innovate in order to represent the diversity of society, and its younger generations. However, the 2017-2020 documents describe a lack of innovation, in both audiences reach policies as well as internal innovation plans:

‘The RRKC acknowledges the focus on the broadening of audience in many applications. At the same time, these plans are temporary and singular, and therefore not very convincing.’⁴¹

Additionally, new institutes who have known to be very innovative, have not always made it to the subsidised circuit, as they lack artistic quality or professionalisation. The municipality detects the inflexibility of the subsidy system, as it must be altered to include new initiatives and ensure innovation. However, within the second policy frame of 2021-2024, innovation is seen as something that happens naturally through the gathering of diverse people in the ‘citylab’ of Rotterdam. In line with previous documents, light is shed on the grass root initiatives embodying innovation through their diverse nature:

‘Young cultural creators, grassroots initiatives and entrepreneurs find a fruitful way to express their

⁴⁰ ‘Kunst en cultuur helpen in een diverse stad om jezelf te herkennen en elkaar te leren kennen, begrijpen en respecteren. Vanuit de eigen identiteit maakt cultuur het mogelijk open te staan voor anderen. Daarmee legt cultuur de basis voor inclusiviteit. De basis voor een stad waarin bewoners met respect voor elkaars identiteit samen leven, wonen en werken.’

⁴¹ ‘De RRKC ziet in de aanvragen veel aandacht voor het publiek. Tegelijkertijd constateert hij dat de plannen vaak intentioneel zijn en meent hij dat de aanvragen weinig overtuigend zijn op dit punt.’

*creativity, authenticity and innovation. Connect with them. Invite them.*⁴²

These initiatives are detected as a way to increase inclusion, as the cultural visitors that are attracted by these initiatives embody divergent subgroups that have emerged as a result of hyperdiversity. Additionally, the municipality is willing to alter their own view to meet the needs of these initiatives:

*“Thinking less conservatively about audience reach, presentation styles etcetera, will lead to a stronger connection between both the new creators and talents, and established cultural institutes. This is beneficial and an enriching experience to all actors and the audience.”*⁴³

Strikingly, the significance of the informal cultural circuit is expressed as a source of innovation, but still the informal circuit seems only able to enter the formal circuit on the terms of the formal circuit: through collaborations with established institutes, as well as making sure they meet the policy criteria for subsidies.

Moreover, the policy documents differ alternately and internally on whether the current supply on cultural activities is sufficient or not. Some documents indicate that the cultural index should be expanded, other documents point that the cultural index in itself is sufficient, but its reach should be expanded. Whereas critiques of the RRKC on the insufficiency of strategies created to diminish this lack of reach are mentioned in the 2017-2020 documents, the 2021-2024 documents argue that established institutes have developed various advanced methods to take away barriers that obstruct participation. Anyhow, both the expansion of cultural supply as ways to carry this out, have remained the main points of focus through both policy frames. Similar to the transcripts, local cultural activities have been mentioned as a solution to solve this lack of reach, together with the inclusion of grassroots initiatives. The Hiphophuis is mentioned again, as it exemplifies how grass root initiatives are characterised by a strong sense of community, together with a free and open atmosphere. This eases access and creates an atmosphere in which it is easy to participate, which is the complete opposite of the exclusiveness of the Doelen as described in the transcripts. This community approach to an institution is cherished as new way to look at cultural institutes. However, it seems hard to realise this approach in established institutes which do not seem to be eager to change intrinsically.

⁴² “ Jonge cultuurmakers, grassroots en ondernemers vinden hier een vruchtbare bodem voor hun creativiteit, eigenzinnigheid en innovatie. Zoek ze op. Nodig ze uit.”

⁴³ “Minder klassiek denken over publieksbereik, presenteren van programma’s enz. zal leiden tot een sterkere verbinding tussen de nieuwe makers en talenten enerzijds en de bestaande culturele organisaties anderzijds; een verrijking voor alle partijen én het publiek.”

5.3 Quality

5.3.1 Interviews

Although opinions differ about the way inclusion should be implemented, one thing is certain; it triggers discussions on the quality of arts and culture. All participants argue to be open to any changes in regard to the subsidy system, as changes are required to open up to grassroots initiatives and underrepresented groups in society. However, all of them state that their colleagues tend to be less open and flexible. As Fleur describes, the idea of arts and culture being used in a way to meet the needs of underrepresented groups of society or to bring people together, is pushed away as it does not fit the classic category of what art should be:

‘Yes, and then the discussion emerges: it is not supposed to be ‘wellbeing’, it is supposed to meet artistic quality’⁴⁴

The dictation of the definition of culture as Stevenson describes seems to be a constant issue in how Gemeente Rotterdam addresses culture (2016). As the previous statement of Fleur shows, the dictation of culture not only entails vertical fixation in terms of high and low culture, but also horizontal fixation in terms of culture being a separate sector from social sectors. The very same debate revolves around budget on the creative industries, as these industries have to fight for their artistic existence since only the economic value receives acknowledgement, according to Isabella. The overarching argument of this perspective is that art should always have a certain artistic quality (Juncker & Balling, 2016). However; the definition of artistic quality remains ambiguous:

‘It is always easy to talk about quality, but it is an extremely subjective concept’⁴⁵

Nonetheless, artistic quality usually entails a distinction between high arts and low arts, as high arts are known for their profound artistic quality. In this perspective, art is seen through a very hierarchical lens through which the highbrow arts take in a prominent and fixed position in the subsidy system as they never have to second guess their own cultural program. As the participants state, this practically means no actions have to be taken by cultural institutes to expand their societal reach or broaden their audience, as they simply rely on their artistic quality. Instead of responding to the diversifying population, they seem to make up for a fight to protect their artistic content from the outside world. In

⁴⁴ ‘Ja, en dat zie ik bijvoorbeeld, dan krijg je de discussie van; het moet geen welzijn zijn, en het moet wel voldoen aan artistieke kwaliteit’

⁴⁵ Precies. Het is altijd makkelijk om het over kwaliteit te hebben, terwijl dat een extreem subjectief begrip is.

fact, some colleagues say high art should be protected from any external forces society throws at them. This results in an implicit rule that highbrow institutes receive the most subsidies:

‘And the first discussion was like: well we can only spend the money once. So, without any discussion taking place, classical music was prioritised’⁴⁶

Some nuance is needed, as some institutes do undertake actions to spread their reach, but these actions are mostly singular and temporary. As three participants describe, there is only a certain amount of money. Therefore, spending more on grassroots initiatives means that established institutes will receive less subsidies.

The criteria for high art seem to be very fixed and consistent over time. Therefore, it does not seem possible for grassroots initiatives to create content that can be qualified as high art. However; high art goes hand in hand with many unwritten formal rules. As three participants describe, these rules, such as on what to wear to the opera, result in exclusive habits that may obstruct the growth of participation rates. Moreover, the content produced by the highbrow institutes simply do not attract the underrepresented groups in society. As Isabella says, cultural non-visitors such as those who have enjoyed lower level of education are frankly not allured by high arts:

‘But I do not believe that the average Dutch with a lower level of education will become very enthusiastic about a high art exposition. I do not think that is going to happen’⁴⁷

Although municipalities have tried for years to motivate underrepresented groups to participate in highbrow art activities, it is now accepted as a lost cause. This acceptance shines through in their policy implications as well, as they shift their focus away from high arts towards local cultural activities and grassroots initiatives, which are more likely to reach the people who do not seem to be very active in the cultural sector as featured by cultural policy. Despite the fact that some grassroots initiatives have made it to the established order of institutes, such as the Hiphophuis, the majority does not make it that far. This is where the main conflict emerges; all the participants see and emphasise the necessity of the inclusion of new genres and new institutes in order to increase participation rates, but the system simply does not allow their entrance since a hierarchical view on culture rules over the subsidy system. This once again exemplifies path-dependency, as the opinions of individual actors do

⁴⁶ ‘En de eerste discussie was zo van; ja we kunnen het geld maar een keer uitgeven. Dus zonder het te benoemen, werd klassiek eerst’

⁴⁷ ‘Dus, het kan zijn dat het een kwestie is van een lange adem maar ik geloof er niet in dat je een laagopgeleide Nederlander heel erg enthousiast gaat krijgen voor een hoge kunsttentoonstelling. Dat gaat volgens mij gewoon niet gebeuren’

not seem to provoke actual changes in the fixated systems (Cox, 2004). All of them agree on the worth of newer genres such as urban arts and the creative industries, as Isabella shows:

‘That is something we have invested in as the municipality. Art from high quality is very important as well, but there is more to art. There is art as an instrument. And then there is art, other art, other than what we think of as ‘high art’, which is worth it as well’⁴⁸

This means that the critique on the dictating nature of cultural policy as phrased by Stevenson (2016) and Juncker and Balling (2016) is acknowledged by everyone. Yet, these believes are apparently not enough to change the nature of the system. All participants agree that subsidies should be based more on the desires of society, and to support culture in places where it already lives. Subsidies could be used to enlarge and boost informal cultural circuits in order to get as close as possible to what kind of cultural activities people actually want to participate in. As Dylan phrases, current subsidies are mainly meant to keep artforms alive that cannot survive on their own. His perspective on the function of subsidies entails protection and preservation, which matches more conservative views on subsidies as described by Oakley et al. (2018). Therefore, one should always seek balance between subsidising non-lucrative forms of art, such as opera, and subsidising the cultural desires of individuals in Rotterdam. Once again, artistic quality needs to be kept in mind, as Dylan states:

‘For all people of Rotterdam, because all people of Rotterdam pay taxes. They would like to see something in return for the taxes they pay. That does not mean we should subsidise Toppers concerts⁴⁹, but you are required to think about how to create something for everybody, and not just a selective group of people⁵⁰

Revising the subsidy system means revising the value of culture. According to Laura, this is a sensitive issue in which no rushed decisions should be taken:

⁴⁸ ‘Daar hebben we als afdeling ook ons heel lang op ingezet. Kunst van hoge kwaliteit, en dat is ook heel belangrijk, maar je hebt meer. Je hebt kunst als middel. Je hebt kunst, andere kunst, anders dan wat wij verstaan onder hoge kunst en wat ook de moeite waard is.’

⁴⁹ ‘The Toppers’ is a popular music group from the Netherlands, known for their exuberant style as well as for the countless tickets sold for their concerts. Their musical repertoire consists of Dutch songs that are easy to sing along with and easy to relate to.

⁵⁰ ‘Voor alle Rotterdammers, want alle Rotterdammers betalen mee. De belastingen die ze betalen willen ze natuurlijk ook op een bepaalde manier terugzien. Dat wil niet zeggen dat we nu Toppers concerten moeten gaan sponsoren, maar je moet er wel over nadenken hoe je iets kan creëren voor allen, niet alleen voor een klein groepje’

*“Yes and that should be divided more fairly. And I am not sure whether that is even possible. Because money is limited, and you are just not going to take away a few million from the Philharmonisch orkest”.*⁵¹

Altogether, it seems like the quality criteria of art present themselves as a conflicting force in terms of inclusion. Inclusive cultural institutes lack artistic quality, which remains a vague concept. Moreover, all participants argue to be open to adjust their own criteria for artistic quality but seem to struggle with conservatively minded colleagues, or the inflexible subsidy system. Therefore, the desire for the cultural sector to move along with the diversifying trends of society gets undermined by the underlying criteria of legitimate art. Whenever goals on participation are made explicit and solutions are proposed, debates on the quality of culture emerge. As high culture does not seem to attract underrepresented groups, the depiction of artistic quality does not seduce cultural non-visitors to culturally participate, as the subsidised circuit only entails this legitimate art.

5.3.2 Documents

As the documents explicitly formulate inclusion to be the main goal, the subsidy system should change in order to include the ones who have not been included yet. Especially in the 2017-2020 documents, the municipality highlights the critiques from RRKC on the restrictions that the current subsidy system entails. As a result, more flexible procedures have been implemented in the 2021-2024 policy time frame, as not enough institutes have been incorporated in the subsidy system:

*“The desired opportunities for innovation seem hard to realise: there is limited space for new entrants, the renewal of the cultural policy plan is limited. And: lack of motion leads to stagnation”*⁵²

In line with the transcripts, grassroot initiatives have been highlighted frequently over the 2021-2024 documents, as a source of innovation and as an entry to a more inclusive cultural sector. Innovation is together with inclusion one of the main quality criteria of the 2021-2024 policy frames. Since RRKC has criticised the lack of intrinsic innovation of subsidised cultural institutes in the policy documents of 2017-2020, all hope is fixated on the grassroot initiatives in the 2021-2024 documents. Nonetheless, the quality criteria of art seem to interrupt the entrance of these grassroot initiatives. In

⁵¹ “ Ja precies, en dat moet eerlijker verdeeld worden. En ik weet niet of dat kan. Want zoveel geld is er niet, en je gaat ook niet zomaar bij het Rotterdam Philharmonisch orkest een paar miljoen eraf halen”

⁵² “ De gewenste ruimte voor vernieuwing blijkt echter lastiger te realiseren: er is maar weinig ruimte voor nieuwe spelers, de doorstroom binnen het cultuurplan is beperkt. En stilstaand water leidt tot zuurstoftekort”

the 2017-2020 document, RRKC justifies their distribution of subsidies based on the criteria of artistic quality, business operations, audience reach and, innovation.

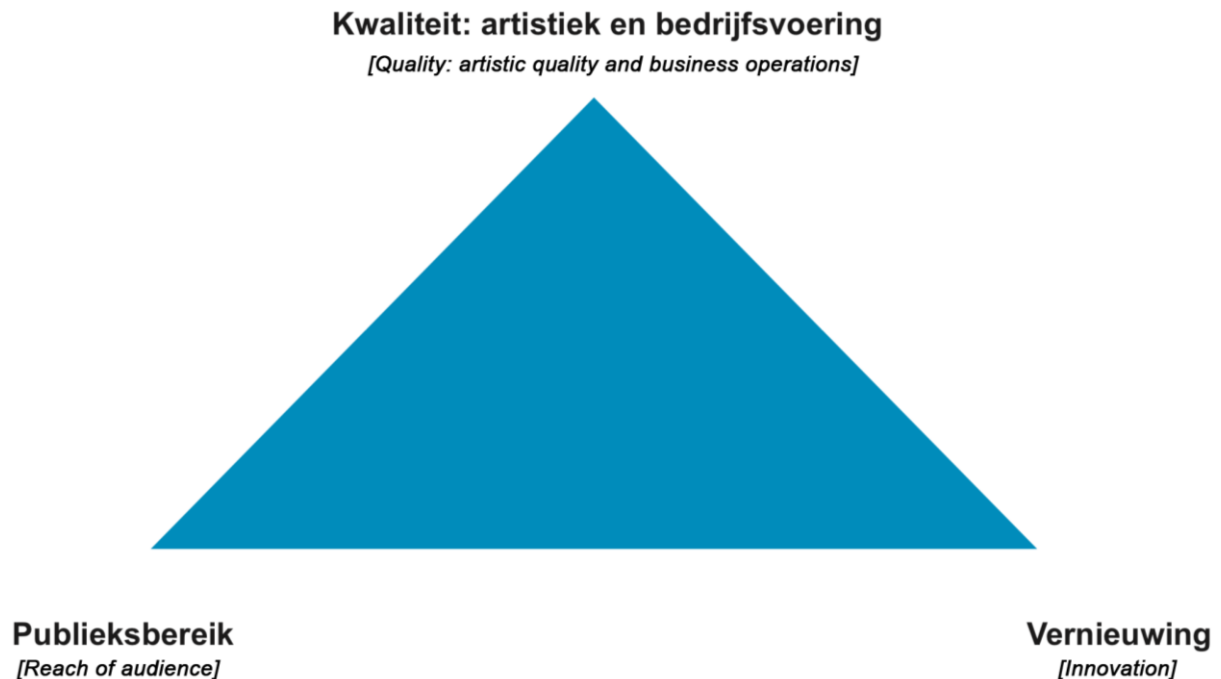


Figure 3. RRKC subsidy criteria, derived from Cultural Policy Plan 2017-2020

Although grassroots initiatives score high on the scale of innovation and audience reach, they seem to come short of the prior criteria: artistic quality and business operations. According to the municipality, grassroots initiatives have not professionalised well enough as they fail to show economic health. Although economic instability seems to be a problem inherent to the cultural sector as even highly established institutes undergo similar struggles, this is one of the main reasons to disqualify grassroots initiatives for subsidies. Throughout both policy timeframes, it is made clear that business operations should be stable and in service of artistic performances. Although economic aid in the form of subsidies could potentially help cultural institutes establish this economic stability, the fixed criteria for subsidies keeps the included institutes included, whereas the excluded remain excluded. Aside from financial quality, artistic quality once more hinders grassroots initiatives in entering the subsidised system. In the 2017-2020 documents, artistic quality has been the absolute precondition of granting subsidies:

“The artistic quality of an organisation is an absolute precondition to carry out positive advice for

*subsidies. Institutes with unsatisfactory artistic quality have not received a positive advice form RRKC.*⁵³

Artistic quality, as defined by the RRKC and the municipality in the 2017-2020 document, is seen as the top of the pyramid as shown in figure 3, in which audience reach and innovation are supporting elements of artistic quality. What this quality entails, remains unclear. However, the prioritisation of artistic quality shows how artistic quality, as defined by cultural policy, is used as a fixed absolute to grant subsidies, which is in line with the ideas of Stevenson (2016). In the cultural vision of 2017, the municipality expresses how the several criteria the subsidy system argues for, might come off as restricting:

*‘ ‘ The government strives for certain goals through the means of cultural subsidies and has therefore formulated several objectives and criteria. These guidelines have been depicted as constraining by the cultural sector. These criteria have been taken as an absolute truth, whereas there is not always reason to interpret them this way ’ ’*⁵⁴

Through this statement, the municipality seems to acknowledge, but also seems to soften, the impact its formulated criteria have on the cultural sector. According to the municipality, the criteria proposed by the municipality do not have to be conflicting nor restricting. However, in case of neglecting some of the criteria, institutes disqualify themselves from getting incorporated in the formal system. Although the need for artistic quality is made very explicit in the first policy time frame, it obtains a more implicit nature in the second time frame. Audience-related goals have been labelled as focal points and main priorities, but artistic quality seems to colour these goals:

*‘ Culture supports changes in the city, as we have formulated culture’s contribution through the concepts of inclusion, innovation and interconnection. These concepts make up for the base of cultural policy in the upcoming years: cultural policy provides culture for everybody, together with care for innovation. Besides, a cultural policy in which artistic quality and intrinsic meaning of culture are always the important. If not, the most important aspects ’ ’*⁵⁵

⁵³ ‘ ‘ De artistieke kwaliteit van een organisatie is voor de RRKC een absolute randvoorwaarde geweest om een positief advies uit te brengen. Instellingen met onvoldoende artistieke kwaliteit hebben van de RRKC geen positief advies gekregen.’ ’

⁵⁴ ‘ ‘ De overheid streeft bepaalde doelen na met haar cultuursubsidies en heeft daartoe allerlei wensen en Eisen geformuleerd. Deze richtlijnen worden door de cultuursector soms echter als knellend ervaren. Deze criteria worden nog wel eens als algemeen geldend opgevat, terwijl daar niet altijd een rede toe bestaat’ ’

⁵⁵ ‘ ‘ Cultuur ondersteunt de veranderingen in de stad hebben we die bijdrage van de cultuursector aan de stedelijke ontwikkeling samengebracht in de begrippen inclusiviteit, innovatie en interconnectiviteit. Deze begrippen vormen wat ons

The 2021-2024 documents do not formulate artistic quality to be the main goal, but depict it is a precondition to inclusion-related goal:

*‘‘A cultural sector in which talent is allowed to flourish and present itself, a sector which embraces all people of Rotterdam. Moreover, quality and intrinsic worth of culture are the primary focal points in this’’*⁵⁶

Although the second policy time frame is more expressive on inclusion than on quality, the need for quality of the first policy time frame still shines through, indicating once more the persistence and resoluteness of old values, as explained by the concept of path-dependency (Cox, 2004). Although it is not acknowledged by the policy itself, a conflict emerges between inclusion and quality. Apparently, the cultural institutes representative of strong inclusive values do not always meet the persistent quality-criteria as proposed by the municipality. Another conflicting situation can be seen in how, on the one hand, stability of the subsidy system is pursued, and how, on the other hand, innovation is cherished. Apparently, the stability is doing excellent according to the 2017-2020 document:

*‘‘The stability has been excellent: various institutes have almost been guaranteed of a permanent position in the cultural palette of Rotterdam, as they have become the fixed building blocks of the cultural plan’’*⁵⁷

However, innovation still seems to be lacking, which is why stability has lost prioritisation in the second policy timeframe. Consequently, innovation has grown into one of the three pillars of cultural policy for the cultural plan of 2017-2020. Yet, artistic quality can still be seen as a source of stability, as it ensures the safe position of highbrow institutes and complicates the arrival of more experimental institutes.

Altogether, all quality criteria present results in a situation in which innovation and conservation seem to clash, just like inclusion and artistic quality. Once again, participation rates should increase as

betreft de uitgangspunten in het cultuurbeleid voor de komende jaren: cultuurbeleid in Rotterdam zorgt voor cultuur voor iedereen, met elkaar en met aandacht voor vernieuwing. Een beleid waarin overigens artistieke kwaliteit en intrinsieke betekenis altijd belangrijke, zo niet de belangrijkste aspecten zijn. ‘

⁵⁶ ‘‘ Een sector waarin talent zich kan ontwikkelen en presenteren, een sector die alle Rotterdammers omarmt. Kwaliteit en de intrinsieke waarde van cultuur zijn daarbij overigens het primaire uitgangspunt.

Kwaliteit en de intrinsieke waarde van cultuur zijn daarbij overigens het primaire uitgangspunt. ‘‘

⁵⁷ ‘‘ Met die stabiliteit gaat het uitstekend: diverse instellingen hebben een haast vanzelfsprekende rol in het Rotterdamse culturele palet ingenomen en zijn vaste warden van het cultuurplan geworden’’

inclusion goals are made explicit, but inclusive grassroots initiatives, which are thought of being the key to increasing participation, are rejected by the subsidy system as a result of the definition of artistic quality. On the one hand, the ‘problematization’ of participation as depicted by Stevenson (2016) re-appears, but on the other hand, solutions to the problematization are rejected. Additionally, participation is mostly perceived through subsidised culture, whereas culture that already takes place, does not seem to get included in the cultural sector, as it does not entail artistic quality. Lastly, questions arise on subsidy criteria such as innovation or artistic quality: who gets to decide what is artistic? The individual participants seem to blame the subsidy system for fixed definitions of these terms. Stevenson (2016) poses similar questions, as these depictions of quality become part of hierarchical systems in which power relations between cultural policy and society may result in an exclusive effect for some cultural expressions that do not meet the proposed quality criteria. This tendency is problematic, as inclusion should be one of the main goals of the policy timeframe of 2021-2024. However, quality depictions as they are today, as how they are translated in criteria for subsidies, make sure the excluded institutes remain excluded, despite how they are cherished for their diversity and innovation. Small alterations to the system are made according to all the documents and participants, but great impact is lacking.

5.4 Summary

Diversity: The dynamics of society are very much acknowledged by all the participants, although they differ among each other in their explicitness to address this diversity based on personal characteristics such as ethnicity. Moreover, nearly all of them very much think in group-distinctions such as minorities and majorities. The need for inclusion emerges from the waves in which inclusion readdresses itself over time, as new generations emerge who are discontent about the current interpretations over culture. A revolution will follow anyway, the only thing cultural policy can do is to listen to them as soon as possible. Whereas the early documents very much refer to groups based on age and ethnicity, the later documents show a more constructionist understanding of group assessment. Despite the acceptance and cherishment of hyperdiversity, unity is found through being inhabitants of Rotterdam, which allows the newer documents to reject group labels. Policy aims for a representative cultural sector just as diverse as society.

Inclusion: Whereas Dylan and Emke found it hard to recall a moment at which they experienced an inclusive atmosphere, the other participants paint a picture of an atmosphere in which everybody feels part of the experience, through participation and mutual understanding. Culture is therefore seen as a medium to provide one with a sense of belonging, and increase tolerance, which illustrates this importance of inclusion. The lack of participation in the cultural sector is depicted to be unfortunate. Although the opinions differ on whether there is plenty of cultural supply for everyone, everybody

agrees on grassroots initiatives and more local cultural activities being the solution to increase participation rates. However, policy mainly focuses on already subsidised culture, and seems to be inflexible to the incorporation of new creators and genres. In line with the transcripts, the documents once again highlight the importance of participation, together with the problems that grassroots initiatives endure in trying to enter the subsidised system. This conflict both the urge for inclusion, as the urge for innovation. Similar to the transcripts, statements on whether the cultural index of supply is satisfactory differ within, and among the policy documents.

Quality: Fleur exemplifies how culture with inclusive power does not always meet the needs for artistic quality, which is in line with Laura's statements on the creative industries not being artistic enough. All participants state that other colleagues sometimes express more conservative ideologies on culture, as artistic quality should always be maintained. All participants agree that this could obstruct inclusion. Additionally, both the documents as the participants state that this keeps grassroots initiatives from being incorporated into the subsidy system and decreases the focus on local cultural activities. The functions of subsidies are contested, as some think it should serve the cultural desire of people, and others think it should ensure preservation of high culture. This conflict of artistic quality and inclusion is highlighted in the policy documents as well, as high culture is not the way to fix the lack of participation. Although the early documents position artistic quality as a main priority, the later documents depict artistic quality to be a precondition for inclusion. Inclusion might be the main priority, but artistic quality will always be the determining factor, exemplifying path dependency. Moreover, cultural participation is very much perceived through the subsidised cultural system, as through high quality as defined by policy. In this context, inclusion might lead to the democratisation of culture. As a result of quality depictions, exclusion of new creators and genres remains structurally present, conflicting desires for an increased sense of inclusion.

6. Comparison

“Yes and that should be divided more fairly. And I am not sure whether that is even possible. Because money is limited, and you are just not going to take away a few million from the Philharomisch orkest”

In the following chapter, the data derived from Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam will be shortly compared to one another, as a means to indicate connections and differences.

6.1 Diversity

Both Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam have undergone a shift from the depiction of separate groups based on their ethnicity and assigning labels such as ‘big minorities’, towards a more constructionist perception on group membership as described by Berger and Luckman (2011). Membership is determined on several indicators, as both personal agency and the fluidity of groups is acknowledged. Ethnicity, however, remains a prominent point of focus throughout both policy time frames for both actors, as both Phinney (1996) and Tersteeg et al. (2014) depict to be inherent to diversity. Since both Gemeente Rotterdam and Grounds seem to show the same trend, Grounds’ depiction of ethnicity may be a reaction to the depiction of Gemeente Rotterdam, as the municipality proposes a cultural plan to which cultural institutes have to respond. The dynamics of society are acknowledged, as the main goal of both Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam is to be representative of this dynamic in each and every way possible. Therefore, both Gemeente Rotterdam as well as Grounds allow themselves to actively target people based on their group membership, although this approach displeases some individuals within Grounds. This entails a seemingly essentialist way of referring to people, as identifying them pragmatically is seen as a necessity to inflame a process of inclusion.

The participants of Gemeente Rotterdam think of the diversification as something that develops through episodes of revolution, as the cultural sector seems to fail to adapt quickly enough to the diversification of society. Therefore, the cultural sector struggles to keep up with newly emerging groups of people who are thought of as being underrepresented and unheard. As a way to cope with this, inclusion-policies are brought into life.

As the hyperdiversity as described by Ang (2005) seems undeniable for both institutes, a colourblind approach seems to be avoided by most policy documents and individuals in order to honour this hyperdiversity (Kraus & Keltner, 2013). However, as Gemeente Rotterdam recalls to all its population as inhabitants of Rotterdam, no attention is given to differences between individuals and individual meaning-making, in which some colourblindness is shown after all (Markus et al., 2000). Both between Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam, as well as between the policy documents and the transcript, are different opinions to be found on whether to highlight or ignore personal characteristics, such as ethnicity. Therefore, opinions differ between participants, as well as between the institutional voices as personal voices. This softens the absolute expressions of policy documents and emphasises the multivocality of actors present in both institutes.

6.2 Inclusion

Both Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam state a bottom-up movement is currently going on: new creators, generations, and genres are knocking on the doors of established cultural institutes as they are displeased about how their personal interpretations of culture is not featured by established cultural institutes. As people feel unheard, policy shifts its focus to local circuit and grassroots initiatives. These initiatives are presented as the answer to inclusion, but they seem to struggle to become part of the formal system of the subsidy plans.

An inclusive atmosphere may take place whenever everyone feels like their part of the whole, as they are both the guest at the party as well as the host of the party. This feeling of being included is frequently mentioned by both the participants of Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam. However, as some participants from Gemeente Rotterdam show, this atmosphere is not very likely to take place at very exclusive, high-brow cultural institutes, which often receive the most subsidies.

Grounds obtains a strong local approach through its local coordinators, as Yara is the key between local actors and the institution of Grounds. Therefore, Grounds hosts both local artists as well as amateurs, and it finds a way to adopt forms of culture that are already happening in the social world, as they are incorporated in the daily lives of people. This is very much linked to social constructionist perceptions of culture as described by Berger and Luckman (2011), together with the free interpretation of culture and cocreation of culture, as part of the concept cultural democracy (Juncker & Balling, 2016). Although the policy documents mostly focus on this local character of Grounds, only two participants seem to be occupied with this local approach. In fact, the other participants are not very concerned with this local character, as the local program of Grounds only makes up half of the cultural program Grounds presents. The other half is put together by a programmer who values high quality music over an explicit inclusive approach. Once more, multivocality and inter-institutional differences are shown, together with the differences between the policy documents and the perspectives of the participants.

A distinction is made between numerical diversity resulting in inclusion, and an 'inclusive atmosphere'. This atmosphere is acknowledged by all actors within Grounds, and by some actors within Gemeente Rotterdam that participate in cultural activities that do not always qualify as 'high culture'. To these individuals, inclusion entails more than just diverse visitor rates, as to them inclusion is experienced by doing and participating.

Grounds fulfills a special position in the cultural circuit through its strong focus on facilitating meetings between its visitors as a way to cross cultural boundaries. According to Gemeente Rotterdam, culture in itself is depicted as a strong medium to form unity and connect different worlds, whereas Grounds offers a neutral ground at which all individuals are invited to meet one another. Grounds' approach originates from an intrinsic urge from the director and local coordinator to become

inclusive, which is sometimes lacking in established cultural institutes according to both Grounds as well as Gemeente Rotterdam. As both Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam show, there is a strong need for people to participate. Inclusion is seen as the drive to activate everybody to participate culturally. Whereas Grounds as an institute perceives cultural participation in itself to be valuable, as it does not prefer one cultural activity over the other, Gemeente Rotterdam refers to participation in subsidised activities. This fits theoretical considerations of Stevenson (2016) on the problematisation of participation, as participation merely focused on the cultural sector as defined by cultural policy. This is where the major difference between Gemeente Rotterdam and Grounds occurs: whereas the overall ideology of Grounds mostly finds connections with ideas of cultural democracy as described by Juncker and Balling (2016), Gemeente Rotterdam prefers to focus on equal access to, and increased participation in the cultural sector. Grounds, in general, seems to be more open in cultural content, and Gemeente restrains cultural content by keeping it to the cultural sector only, a difference is displayed between cultural democracy, and the democracy of culture (Evrard, 1997). Accordingly, Grounds promotes inclusion as meeting the unfamiliar is simply good for everyone, whereas ideas on inclusion as featured by Gemeente Rotterdam mostly steer to meeting the unfamiliar within the boundaries of the subsidised cultural sector. However, this black and white difference between Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam should be nuanced, as personal opinions differ from general cultural visions as phrased in the policy documents.

6.3 Quality

At first sight, solutions to inclusion seem to be given: the incorporation of the informal through the entrance of grassroot initiatives, and the incorporation of the local through focusing on culture that happens in daily lives of people. However, this leads to discussions on the artistic quality of culture, which seem to be a strong priority of both Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam. At Grounds, discussions on quality are triggered as music experts are confronted with debates on the prioritisation of both artistic quality and inclusion, as inclusion-measures should not take away from the main priority of a music institution: programming high quality music. Hosting local music groups and amateurs leads to inconsistent artistic quality and targeting underrepresented groups leads to a lack of focus on artistic quality. However, Grounds has accepted the subjectivity of artistic quality, as it simply wishes to be representative of the musical spectrum which is already present in the social world. Therefore, 'inconsistent' artistic quality seems only logical. Additionally, inclusive components are part of the flexible definition of artistic quality, as music is supposed to bridge gaps between people and be rooted in different worlds. Therefore, social and artistic quality seem to be interwoven with one another, according to the policy documents of Grounds of the second policy timeframe. Nonetheless, policy does not actually seem to solve the debate on inclusion and quality, as individual

opinions on the prioritisation of quality and inclusion still seem to differ within the walls of Grounds. At Gemeente Rotterdam, discussions on artistic quality concern hierarchical interpretations of culture in which grassroots initiatives do not seem to carry a satisfactory amount of artistic quality, or in which new genres are seen as a threat to highbrow institutes. This matches historic notions of high art as depicted by Behr and Brennan (2014). An implicit notion of high arts being ‘legitimate’ culture seems to be present, although each and every one explicitly mentions the need for innovation and inclusion. Inclusion refers to inclusion into the existing cultural sector, as everyone is assumed to be willingly to participate culturally. Participation should therefore happen in the external formal sector created by Gemeente Rotterdam, featuring subsidised culture that fits the criteria of ‘legitimate’ culture, which is in line with theories of Stevenson (2016). Therefore, the definition of artistic quality as phrased by Gemeente Rotterdam seems to obstruct the urge to increase participation, whereas Grounds seems to formulate a much more flexible definition of quality, as it is more open towards more daily lives cultural expressions and culture which is already happening. However, the approach of Grounds does not equal a solution to the quality debate, as internal discussions on inclusion and quality are still staking place. As Grounds’ overall missions emphasises the importance of offering a neutral ground at which individuals with divergent worldviews are allowed to meet, differences in opinions within the staff of Grounds seems only natural as well.

Whereas the policy documents Grounds seem to embrace the diversity of quality in the second policy timeframe, as quality is naturally as fluid as the society of Rotterdam is, Gemeente Rotterdam as a whole seems to stick to fixated quality criteria. Although individual participants of Gemeente Rotterdam not always seem to agree with these criteria, these are the criteria on which subsidies are granted. These fixed criteria make sure the stability of the cultural sector is maintained, obstructing implications on inclusion. As participation rates should increase, inclusion refers to inclusion in the cultural sector, as this is the place where participation should happen. Eventually this may lead to the democracy of culture, as everybody should have access to the cultural sector as created by the municipality (Evrard, 1997). Grounds does not seem to let its cultural content be restrained by the cultural sector and promotes participation in a broader sense, as everybody is invited to meet the unfamiliar in the broadest sense possible, cultural democracy seems to be the goal (Juncker & Balling, 2016).

6.4 The interconnections of the concepts

The stickiness of quality depictions once more show the appeal of holding on to old ideals, and the difficulty to provoke a paradigm shift, as the concept of path-dependency describes (Cox, 2004). As inclusion is valued as a response to diversity occurring in the social world, quality is valued as it has always been valued. Figure 4.1 shows how inclusion arises out of the phenomenon of

diversity, whereas quality seems to be an external thing that does not get backed up by phenomena happening in reality, as described through path-dependency by Cox (2004). This perspective seems to be present in the policy documents of Gemeente Rotterdam, as both the documents as the individual participants refer to the ‘floating’ concept of quality, that seems unwilling to respond to diversity. As inclusion is able to dynamically respond to diversity, a dynamic nature is lacking in the concept of quality. This is shown in how Gemeente Rotterdam has maintained the same quality criteria for decades, as artistic quality is the main interpretation of quality, exemplifying path-dependency. In this scheme, a choice has to be made between pursuing inclusion-related goals and quality-related goals, resulting in a conflict between these two concepts. However, quality has always been the main priority, which means inclusion-policies are often overshadowed by quality ideals.

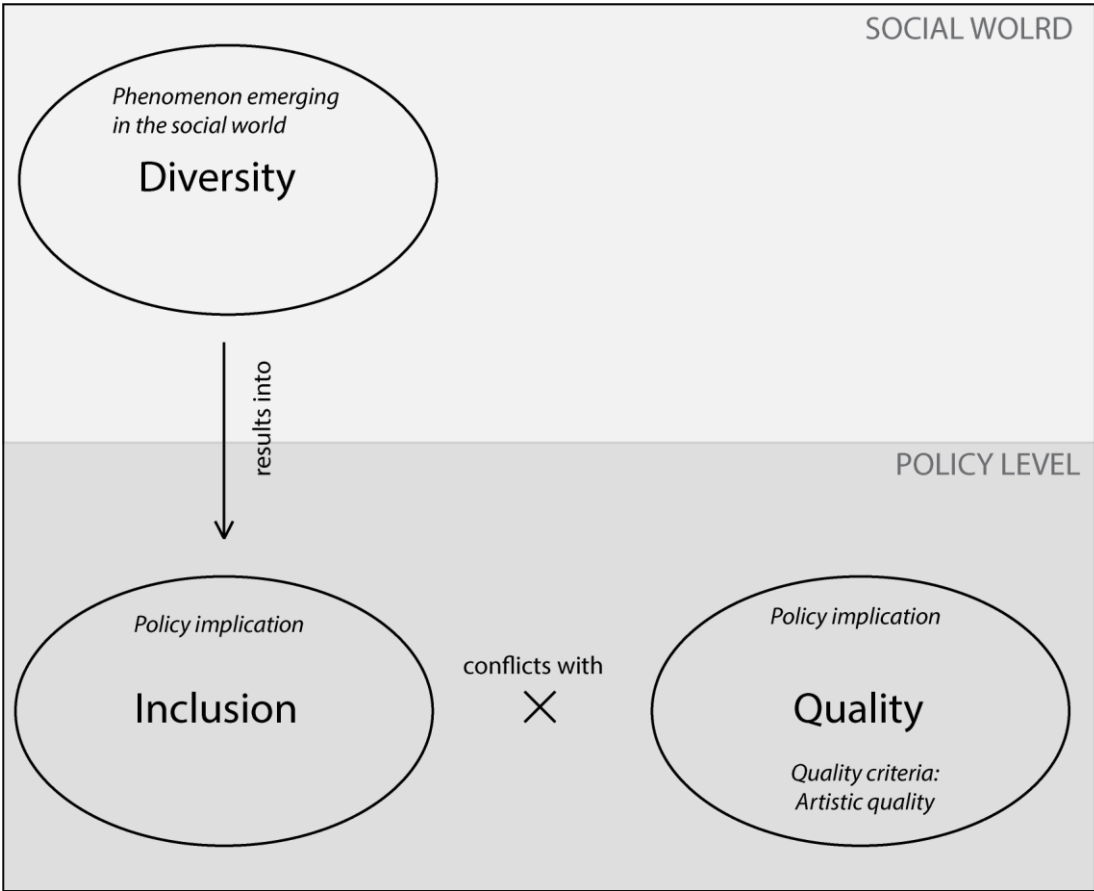


Figure 4.1. The interconnection of diversity, inclusion and quality as ruled by path dependency

Figure 4.2 shows how diversity and quality are allowed to interact, as quality can be altered based on diversity happening in the social world. Accordingly, the concept of inclusion influences quality criteria. Quality criteria as phrased by Grounds sometimes foster inclusive values as well, as Grounds strives to present music rooted in different worlds. Inclusive matters are therefore allowed to alter quality-criteria. Quality also influences inclusion, as to some extent an inclusive atmosphere is seen as the result of good quality music. However, this relationship is made less explicit. The

discrepancies between the interviews and the policy documents show how these quality criteria are still very much under construction, as no consensus is reached yet on the definition of quality. Although it is clear that Grounds is looking for a more social and a more fluid interpretation of quality, quality depictions of Grounds are still under development, which is why they are presented as ‘adapted’ in scheme 4.2. I would like to stress that this concerns the general view of Grounds, as Willem and Guus are less fond of allowing inclusion to influence quality-criteria. Figure 4.2 might portray the ideal situation as phrased by several participants and documents, but path-dependency is still present through the explicit focus on quality. Therefore, change happens slowly.

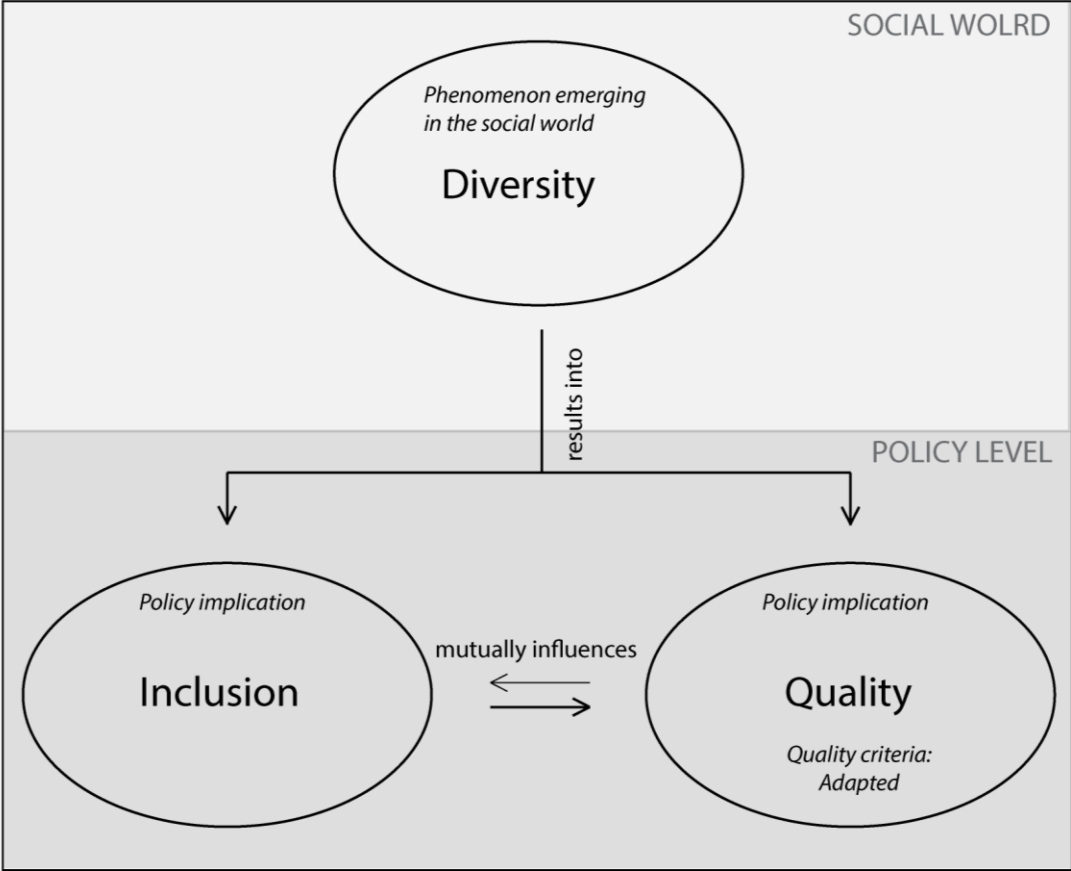


Figure 4.2. The interconnection of diversity, inclusion and quality as depicted by the policy vision of Grounds

7. Conclusion

“So what stands out to me is, how much energy these institutes have to put in, in order to become part of the system, while the system does not open up to them. How should we change this?”

In the following sections, I will first provide a general conclusion, after which I will reflect on both the methodological decisions made as well as propose some suggestions for future research. I will conclude by discussing some personal reflections on my role as a researcher within the process of this thesis.

7.1 Overall conclusion

How do Gemeente Rotterdam and Grounds construct their views on inclusion in the cultural sector of Rotterdam and how are these views connected?

7.1.1 The narrative of diversity, inclusion and quality

As attracting an audience representative of society is a main goal of both Grounds and Gemeente Rotterdam, inclusion-policies are brought into life to represent the diversity of the population of Rotterdam. Diversity is therefore the starting point of the design of inclusion policies. Inclusion is based on the principle that everybody is invited to, and willing to participate, which leads to discussions on what citizens are supposed to participate in. Grounds' inclusion-implications motivate participation in cultural activities that are, on the one hand, close to the daily lives of people, and, on the other hand, are out of the comfort zone of people to enable meetings with the unfamiliar and the unknown. Through this approach, Grounds aspires to create a cultural program connected to, and representative of local, cultural desires as well as it aspires to invite individuals to broaden their perspective by meeting individuals with other worldviews. As the link between participation and daily lives seems to be significant, Gemeente Rotterdam acknowledges the importance of grassroots initiatives and local cultural activities. However, this triggers debates on the quality of culture, as the solution to inclusion seems to conflict with the prioritisation of artistic quality. This matches earlier findings on diversity in the cultural sector of Rotterdam (Berkers et al., 2017).

However, whenever inclusion-policies emerge from the desire to represent the diversity of society, debates about artistic quality are triggered as artistic quality seems to be an ever-present condition through which culture is assessed. A conflict of quality is seen at Gemeente Rotterdam, as it depicts the current cultural sector to be full of artistic quality but seems to struggle to motivate non-participants to participate in this cultural sector.

7.1.2 Fixed definitions of culture

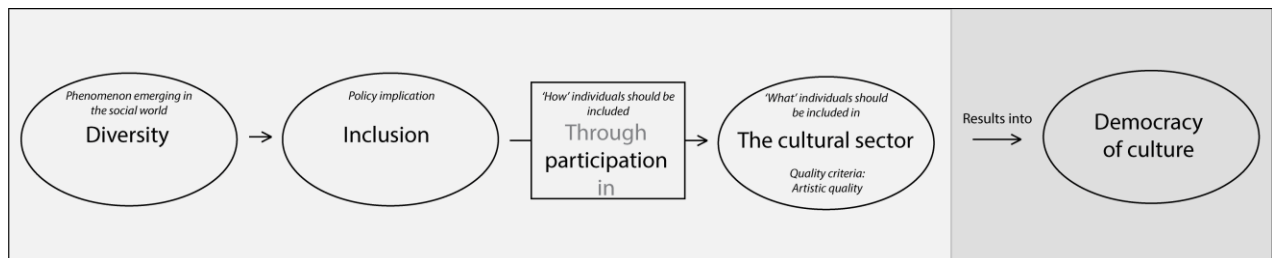


Figure 5.1. The interrelation of concepts resulting in democracy of culture

As figure 5.1 shows, Gemeente Rotterdam very much acknowledges the dynamics of diversity, translating it into the policy implication of inclusion. As the cultural sector as an external body is the starting point of creating cultural policy, the cultural sector is supposed to become representative of the diversity of the population. Inclusion is the policy-implication created to work towards this representation, with participation in the cultural sector being the main instrument to realise this. Through focusing on enabling cultural participation in the cultural sector, democracy of culture will be the highest achievable result, as in the most ideal situation everyone is granted access to the state-funded cultural sector. However, this cultural sector in which everyone should be included seems to be full of excluding depictions of quality, solely focusing on artistic quality as phrased by the municipality, resulting in various conflicts. On the cultural production side, a conflict emerges in how the subsidy system is built upon fixated and hierarchical notions of artistic quality, which results in an inflexibility to new creators and genres. This obstructs the inclusion of cultural creators. On the cultural consumption side, a conflict is shown in how the municipality aspires to increase the cultural participation of underrepresented groups in the cultural sector, whereas the cultural activities as offered by the cultural sector do not always match individual interpretations of culture. Moreover, policy makers tend to focus on subsidised cultural circuits, whereas informal cultural circuits might offer cultural expressions closer to the daily lives and understanding of culture of these ‘underrepresented groups’ as mentioned above.

This readdresses the problem of the ‘external’ cultural sector as given shape by cultural policy (Stevenson, 2016). Questions arise on whether this external cultural sector, in which dictations on the definition of culture seem to be present, will ever be able to answer to the goals as phrased by cultural policy: increasing participation, enabling inclusion, and being representative of society. As path-dependency is strongly present in systems such as the cultural sector, an essentialist tendency is shown as quality-criteria seem to have become external, fixated, and unaffected by time and changes in society. Questions on who has formulated these quality-criteria remain neglected. Individual policy makers seem to question notions on the fixated quality of culture but feel overpowered by the strict subsidy system. Resultingly, new creators remain excluded, whereas the included established institutes

seem to maintain included, even despite a lack of response to the diversifying society of Rotterdam. As the stickiness of old values is unmistakably present in the system of the cultural sector as subsidised by Gemeente Rotterdam, questions arise on whether this cultural sector will ever be able to reach a state of inclusion. Since the actions of Gemeente Rotterdam conceptually link to ideas on the democracy of culture, inclusion would literally mean inclusion in the cultural sector. This view on inclusion can be questioned, as inclusion policies have not proven to be very successful yet (Berkers et al., 2017).

7.1.3 Flexible definitions of culture

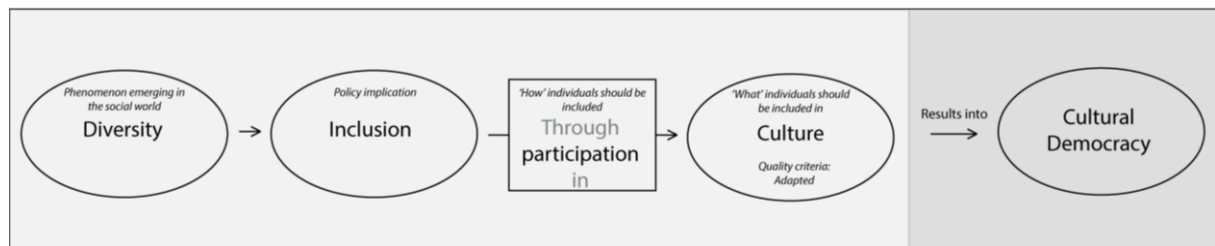


Figure 5.2. The interrelation of concepts resulting in cultural democracy

As figure 5.2 shows, Grounds also operates through inclusion-implications in order to respond to the dynamics of the diversification. As in line with Gemeente Rotterdam, Grounds highly values cultural participation as a way to establish a sense of inclusion. However, Grounds obtains a more flexible view on participation, as individuals are allowed to decide for themselves what cultural activity they would like to participate in. Cultural participation is therefore unrestrained by the boundaries of the cultural sector, as co-creation of culture is promoted. This approach, which values cultural participation in itself does not get limited by depictions on what cultural activities are thought of presenting ‘high artistic quality’, matches ideas on cultural democracy (Juncker & Balling, 2016). Therefore, figure 5.2 presents an ‘adapted’ perception of the concept of quality. The concept of inclusion thus refers to inclusion into whatever the individual to be included defines as ‘culture’. This open interpretation of inclusion entails an a more flexible understanding of quality, stressing its subjectivity as well as the individuality of cultural preferences.

In conclusion, the fluidity, subjectivity, and individuality that are emphasised by this approach to inclusion, very much relate to the overarching paradigm of social constructionism (Berger & Luckman, 2011).

As with Gemeente Rotterdam, quality debates emerge between the walls of Grounds as well, but they seem to be resolved through the acceptance of the fluidity of quality, together with the interwovenness of social and artistic goals. Grounds therefore shows willingness to adapt its quality criteria, moving away from the static dictations on artistic quality as rooted in the cultural sector. The

goal here is to embrace the diversity of quality, in the same way as the diversity of the population of Rotterdam is embraced. The openness to embrace the fluidity of both diversity, inclusion, as quality shows a more social constructionist perspective, as in this case concepts are allowed to be ‘updated’ and re-defined. However; whether the interpretation of quality is depicted to be fluid or not, the concept of quality still remains an important criteria for music hosted at Grounds. Artistic quality, together with an artistic urgency remain important. Therefore, the conception of quality might change, but ‘quality-thinking’ remains present in the assessment of music. Moreover, differences in perceptions occur as the differences between the individual interviews and the policy documents on how to assess, prioritise, and cope with inclusion quality are significant. Therefore, this research shows the variety of opinions and personalities present in institutes such as Grounds, which leads to divergent work ethics on inclusion and quality, that mostly do not correspond with the overarching institutional voice of the policy documents. Embracing the diversity of quality might, as phrased in the policy documents of Grounds, sounds like a quick fix to quality-debates, but discussions still take place in the work environment. This divergence in perceptions does not have to be a bad thing. Instead, it once more allows individuals to meet, talk, and discuss their worldviews, which apparently not just happens within the audience of Grounds. Instead, it happens between staffmembers as well, which could be seen as a strengthening power of Grounds to stimulate their mission to invite people to meet the unfamiliar.

7.1.4 The way forward

As these two cases have shown, a social constructionist view helps to understand the fluidity of diversity, the changeability of inclusion, and the constructed idea of quality. Since quality appears to be the argument to obstruct inclusion measures, a deeper understanding of cultural democracy might help both cultural institutes as governances to re-evaluate perceptions on both quality as well as on the cultural sector as an external being. This, once more, urges the importance of understanding culture as part of the daily lives of people, as Gemeente Rotterdam now mainly depicts inclusion to be a policy implication to attract people to the cultural sector, aiming for democracy of culture (Evrard, 1997). Instead, progressive rethinking of the definition of culture, relying on ideas of cultural democracy, questions the cultural sector as we know it today as it is full of fixated values and dichotomies. Through a re-evaluation of the definition of culture, inclusion will have a totally different meaning and purpose as well. Although both Gemeente Rotterdam as Grounds agree on ‘how’ people should be included, being through participation, they majorly differ on ‘what’ individuals should be included in. For now, the definition of ‘what’ as seen in the subsidised system of Gemeente Rotterdam, seems to enable structural exclusion. The mostly implicit focus on artistic quality, obstructs the explicit focus on inclusion, exemplifying path-dependency through the reliance on old values. Although depictions of quality as phrased Gemeente Rotterdam have remained unaffected by

the means of time, Grounds currently goes through a process of re-evaluation and re-interpretation of the concept of quality. As this thesis has shown, and as exemplified in figure 5.2, the definition of quality from which Grounds operates has not taken a clear shape yet. Therefore, only time can tell how the internal discrepancies on the definition and prioritisation of quality will develop in the future. However, as Grounds operates from a broad understanding of culture instead of a focus on the cultural sector, showing a more social constructionist worldview, Grounds seems to work towards a more fluid understanding of quality.

The narrative of diversity, inclusion and quality has shown how fixated values become rooted in the understanding of culture and by both Gemeente Rotterdam as well as Grounds. Resultingly, their perspective on inclusion is constructed through this narrative. Moreover, this thesis shows how Grounds in general has already moved towards a more fluid understanding of culture, whereas the concept of the cultural sector, as cherished by Gemeente Rotterdam seems to trouble this transition. Although these fixated values cause friction, they are so deeply rooted in the system of the cultural sector and the understanding of culture, that it seems hard to reconsider them in order to inflame change. Therefore, this thesis exemplifies the importance of making the implicit explicit, as it calls for a re-evaluation.

7.2 Limitations and suggestion for future research

This thesis has shown how the cultural institute of Grounds currently goes through a transition in terms of the interpretation of their quality criteria. As Grounds has a very outspoken inclusion-policy, its definition of quality gets influenced by this policy. Therefore, it would be interesting to see how other cultural institutes currently assess the concept of quality, and how this interrelates with perspectives on inclusion.

Moreover, a thorough exploration on the ‘inclusive atmosphere’, that seems to emerge between the walls of Grounds, would be interesting. What does an ‘inclusive atmosphere’ actually mean, and can this be established in highbrow cultural institutes as well?

In terms of methodology, my flexible operationalisation has made it, on the one hand, harder to start the process of analysis as I had little to no guidance, but has, on the other hand, allowed me to let the empirical data take over, as I had no guidelines to follow but the data emerging in front of me. As stated before, this research is the first to dive into the debates that emerge around inclusion in the cultural sector of Rotterdam. Therefore, a flexible research ethic was required, as the empirical findings were in many ways unexpected.

Other than that, measures to control the extension of the corona virus, forced me to conduct nine out

of the ten interviews digitally. Although I do feel like this has troubled the narrative elements of the interview, the eventual impact of this measure came down to a bare minimum, as the data turned out to be rich after all.

7.3 Personal reflections

As mentioned in the preface, the openness of this research was challenging for me. The challenge continued throughout the entire research process, as the more I researched, the more I had to accept that I would never be able to know everything about inclusion in the cultural sector of Rotterdam.

The process of this research also influenced the way I look at my professional future. Family and friends often asked me what kind of career I wanted to pursue after graduation, but I could never properly answer the question. And still, the answer remains vague, but I have found a great pleasure in finding connections between seemingly divergent worlds: the world of social science and the empirical world, the world of cultural policy and the world in which culture actually ‘happens’. Connecting individuals as well as connecting different worlds have always been central topics throughout my studies, which has resulted in this thesis as presented today. Although Grounds has ‘spontaneously’ popped up as a potential case study, the core beliefs at which Grounds operates turn out to be extremely similar to my own beliefs.

Also, this research has made me question my own social position, as I come from a small village in the south of the Netherlands in which inclusion has never been an issue. Diversity as described in this thesis, is something that citizens from my former village associate with big cities such as Rotterdam. Accordingly, I have always felt included throughout my childhood, and I still feel included today. Therefore, I have been able to theoretically elaborate on the definition and implications of inclusion and exclusion, but I have always been privileged enough to never have experienced the feeling of being excluded. Therefore, this thesis broadened my perspective and taught me more about my own social position.

Before talking to the policy makers during the interviews, I expected them to have somewhat essentialist worldviews, depicting high art over low art, struggling to cope with change. As I saw myself as a part of the ‘new generation’, being way more open to change, I was eager to find out how different these policy makers would be from me. However, they turned out to be less different than I expected. Way less. In fact, I very much identified with the policy makers. We shared similar cultural backgrounds, similar educational backgrounds, and some of them showed a similar personal willingness to inflame change. Realising this change however, seemed rather hard as they sometimes felt their personal opinion was unable to influence the subsidy system. This was a humbling experience, as I had to re-evaluate my own criticisms, which had emerged out some sort of naivety.

However, these insights have provided me with a deeper understanding of the power of institutions and path-dependency, and therefore a more realistic worldview. This does not make me less critical: just a bit more realistic.

As Milan stated in his interview: “nothing will change as long as the current directors of the established cultural institutes are still in charge”. He added: some external impulses are needed to provoke change. As the corona virus has overruled the year of 2020, the cultural sector currently suffers from tremendous financial difficulties. I personally hope that this might be the external stimulant needed to reconsider the way financial resources are granted, and therefore reconsider the value of culture. However, only time will tell.

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VPRO (2018) '*Mijn stad is mijn hart*'

Appendices

Appendix I – Interviewguide

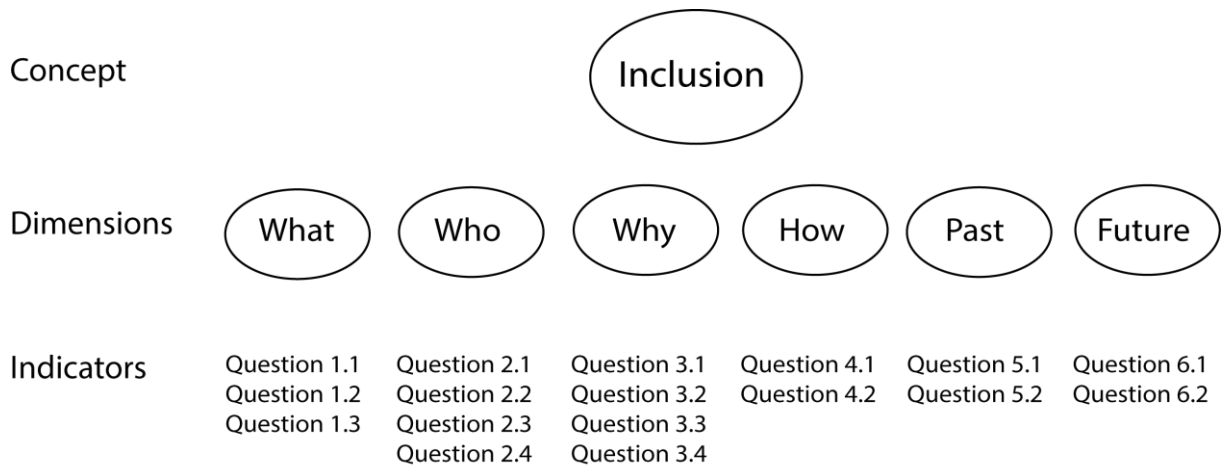


Figure 6. The operationalisation of inclusion

0 Introductionary questions

0.1 What is your current position (at Grounds/Gemeente Rotterdam)

0.2 Could you tell me something that you like about your work?

→ Is there any specific moment that illustrates this?

→ What happened exactly at that moment?

1.0 What does inclusion mean to you?

1.1 When did you first encounter the concept of ‘inclusion’?

1.2 Could you recall as specific moment at which you truly experienced a sense of inclusion?

→ What happened exactly at that moment?

→ How did that make you feel?

1.3 What is your most important experience with inclusion?

→ What happened at that moment?

→ How did that make you feel?

2.0 Who should be included and who is responsible for this?

2.1 Could you come up with examples of people who have not always been included in the cultural sector? Why is it hard to include them?

2.2 Could you come up with examples of people who have always been well-included in the cultural sector? Why is it easy to include them?

2.3 Whose responsibility is it to create a more inclusive cultural sector?

3. Why should the cultural sector be more inclusive?

3.1 What are the risks of not being exclusive enough as a cultural sector?

→ Could you give me an example in which these risks have already become visible?

3.2 What are the benefits of an inclusive sector?

→ Could you give me an example in which these benefits are already visible?

3.3 Why do you think the topic of inclusion seems so urgent at this time?

4. How should an inclusive cultural sector be accomplished?

4.1 What could there be done in order to make the sector more inclusive?

→ Could you give an example in which these actions have already been taken?

4.2 What is the role of culture in the debate of inclusion?

5. How do you evaluate on **past** actions taken to increase inclusion?

5.1 Have you ever experienced discrepancies between you and your colleagues on your perspective on inclusion?

5.2 How far has Rotterdam come already on its road to get a more inclusive cultural sector?

→ Could you name an example of a development you are (not so) happy with?

6. How will the issue of inclusion develop in the **future**?

6.1 When do you think inclusion is 'reached'?

6.2 Could you paint a picture of where the cultural sector is heading in terms of inclusion?

Appendix II – Overview of the selection of pages based on the concepts of inclusion and quality

Appendix II consists of an overview of how sections and pages of the policy output have been selected to become topic of research, based on the concepts of inclusion and artistic quality. As with the interviews, essentialism and constructivism are no explicit concepts, and have therefore been researched through the way inclusion and quality have been assessed, described and explained by the documents. Each table presents a separate document, along with the two main concepts on which sections and pages are selected. Underneath the two main concepts, the page numbers of the sections that belong to these concepts can be found.

1. Grounds: policy plan 2017-2020

Inclusion	Quality
P.2 Cultural mission	P.2 Cultural mission
P.4 Design policy plan	
PP.5-6 ‘‘Grounds is located in a unique building	
P.7 ‘‘Grounds provides artistic middle ground’’	P.7 ‘‘Grounds provides artistic middle ground’’
PP.7-8 ‘‘Grounds provides a public middle ground’’	
PP. 10-11 ‘‘Grounds is locally active’’	
P. 13 Marketing complications	P. 13 Marketing complications
P.14 Not all big minorities have been reached	
P. 16 Renewed focus to underrepresented big minorities	
P. 17 Optimisation of marketing	P. 17 Optimisation of marketing

2. Grounds: policy plan 2021-2024

Inclusion	Quality
P.3 Introduction	
PP.6-7 Cultural mission and vision	PP.6-7 Cultural mission and vision
P.8 Strategy	P.8 Strategy
P.12 Program	P.12 Program
P.14 Local program	
PP. 20-21 Audience	
P. 22 Renewed marketing & communication strategy	P. 22 Renewed marketing & communication strategy
P.26 Code cultural diversity	
P. 31 Inclusion	

3. Gemeente Rotterdam: outline of cultural vision 2017-2020

Inclusion	Quality
P.3 Introduction	
PP.6-7 Cultural mission and vision	PP.6-7 Cultural mission and vision
P.8 Strategy	P.8 Strategy
P.12 Program	P.12 Program
P.14 Local program	
PP. 20-21 Audience	
P. 22 Renewed marketing & communication strategy	P. 22 Renewed marketing & communication strategy
P.26 Code cultural diversity	
P. 31 Inclusion	

4. Gemeente Rotterdam: cultural policy plan 2017-2020

Inclusion	Quality
PP.6-7 Evaluation	PP.6-7 Evaluation
P.10 Collaboration plans	P.10 Collaboration plans
	P.10-12 Quality
PP.12-14 Audience reach	
P.14 Innovation	P.14 Innovation
PP. 15-16 Cultural education and talent development	PP. 15-16 Cultural education and talent development
PP. 22-24 Submitted applications	PP. 22-24 Submitted applications
P.28 Singular subsidies and new financial aid structures	P.28 Singular subsidies and new financial aid structures

5. Gemeente Rotterdam: outline of cultural vision 2021-2024

Inclusion	Quality
P.2 Introduction	
P.3 Mission and vision cultural department	P.3 Mission and vision cultural department
PP.3-5 “Through culture we meet – towards an inclusive cultural policy”	PP.3-5 “Through culture we meet – towards an inclusive cultural policy”
P.5 “The city as a lab for innovation and experiment – innovation as a central theme”	P.5 “The city as a lab for innovation and experiment – innovation as a central theme”
PP.11-12 Summary	

6. Gemeente Rotterdam: cultural policy plan 2021-2024

Inclusion	Quality
PP.2-3 Preface	PP.2-3 Preface
PP.6-11 What will change in the cultural policy of 2021-2024?	
PP.12-15 The worth of arts and culture	PP.12-15 The worth of arts and culture

PP.16-17 Where do we stand, and where would we like to go?

PP.16-17 Where do we stand, and where would we like to go?

PP.22-25 Cultural visitors

PP.34-35 Inclusion

PP.34-35 Inclusion

PP. 36-40 Culture for everybody

P.41 Cultural participation during leisure time

PP. 42-45 Arts and culture in the local infrastructure

PP.50-54 Innovation

PP.50-54 Innovation

PP. 55-56 Talent development

PP.67-68 The changing dynamics between the sector and the municipality

PP.75-76 Code cultural diversity

Appendix III – List of codes

Original code name (Dutch)	Translated code name (English)
<p>◊ Diversiteit</p> <p><u>29 Codes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 'big minorities' ○ 'colourblind' ○ Behoefte aan experimentele, jonge makers ○ Culturele sector is hoort diverse samenleving te weerspiegelen ○ culturele-nietbezoekers ○ Cultuur dicht bij dagelijks leven brengen ○ Cultuurvoorkeur verklaard aan meerdere persoonskernmerken ○ De ‘dominante groep’ ○ Diversiteit als gegeven ○ Diversiteit als inherent aan Rotterdam ○ Diversiteit publiek als verkooppunt ○ Diversiteit veelal verklaard via ethniciteit ○ Diversiteit programmering -> lastig met marketing ○ Eentonigheid in publiek ○ Ethnisch bepaald of je cultureel actief bent ethnicity ○ Focus op persoonskenmerken ○ Gekleurd kijkvenster ‘dominante groep’ ○ Groepen eisen inclusiviteit -> bottom up ○ iedere Rotterdammer ○ Inclusiviteit =/ ≠ diversiteit ○ Inclusiviteit is bereikt als er voor iedereen wat te halen valt ○ Inclusiviteit kun je niet leren op school ○ Inclusiviteit leidt tot verrijking; je leert van elkaar ○ Inclusiviteit zou vanzelfsprekendheid moeten zijn ○ Intrinsieke waarde cultuur 	<p>◊ Diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘big minorities’ ‘colourblind’ Need for young experimental creators Cultural sector should represent diverse society cultural-nonvisitors Bringing culture close to daily life Cultural preference explained through multiple personal characteristics The ‘dominant’ group Diversity as given Diversity as inherent to Rotterdam Diversity audience as a ‘unique selling point’ Diversity mostly explained through ethnicity Diversity program -> marketing struggles Homogenous audience Cultural behaviour explained through Focus on group traits Coloured perspective of ‘dominant group’ Groups insist inclusion -> bottom up approach Every inhabitant of Rotterdam Inclusion =/ ≠ diversity Inclusion is accomplished when there is cultural offer for everybody Inclusion cannot be taught at school Inclusion leads to enrichment Inclusion should be logical/natural Culture has an intrinsic worth

- Leeftijd als diversiteit
- Mix publiek als ideaalbeeld
- Open perspectief leidt tot inclusiviteit
- Samenleving is dynamisch

- Age as an indicator for diversity
- Mixed audience as the most ideal situation
- Open perspective leads to inclusion
- Society is dynamic

◊ Inklusiviteit

◊ Inclusion

51 Codes:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ○ Aanbod maar afstand | Plenty of cultural offer, but distance from cultural sector |
| ○ Behoefte aan experimentele, jonge makers | Need for young experimental creators |
| ○ Bereik groeit | Cultural reach is growing |
| ○ Criterium: artistieke kwaliteit | Criterium: artistic quality |
| ○ Criterium: bereik | Criterium: audience reach |
| ○ Culturele communities/thuishavens | Cultural communities/havens |
| ○ Cultuur als middel: collectief | Culture as an instrument: collective |
| ○ Cultuur als middel: individueel | Culture as an instrument: individually |
| ○ Cultuur dicht bij dagelijks leven brengen | Bringing culture close to daily life |
| ○ Cultuur is inclusief | Culture is inclusive |
| ○ Cultuur staat niet op zichzelf | Culture is not independent |
| ○ Diverse programmering als doel | A diverse program as the main goal |
| ○ Diverse programmering als verfrissend/vernieuwend | A diverse program as refreshing/innovative |
| ○ Diversiteit als iets positiefs | Diversity as something positive |
| ○ Diversiteit zorgt voor innovatie | Diversity leads to innovation |
| ○ Doel om wel/niet representatief te zijn | Goal to be/not to be innovative |
| ○ Drempel voor participatie ligt te hoog | Barrier to participation |
| ○ Geen eentonig kwaliteitsbepaling | No singular interpretation of quality |
| ○ Geen inclusiviteit->geen legitimering/draagvlak | No inclusion-> no legitimation |
| ○ Groepen eisen inclusiviteit -> bottom up approach | Groups demand inclusion -> bottom up |
| ○ Grounds biedt ruimte voor experiment | Grounds provides opportunities for |
| ○ Hoop op participatie | Hope for participation |
| ○ Huidige aanbod is goed en divers | Current cultural offer is good enough/diverse |
| ○ Inclusieve/intieme sfeer | Inclusive/intimate atmosphere |
| ○ Inclusiviteit \neq niet diversiteit | Inclusion \neq diversity |

- | | |
|---|--|
| ○ Inclusiviteit als 'hot topic' | Inclusion as a hot topic |
| ○ inclusiviteit als alomvattend begrip: weinig focus | Inclusion as an umbrella term: lack of focus |
| ○ inclusiviteit als doel/prioriteit | Inclusion as a goal/priority |
| ○ Inclusiviteit als een missie in samenwerking | Inclusion as a collaborative mission |
| ○ Inclusiviteit heeft tijd nodig | Inclusion needs time |
| ○ Inclusiviteit is bereikt als er voor iedereen wat te halen valt | Inclusion is accomplished when there is cultural offer for everybody |
| ○ Inclusiviteit kun je niet leren op school | Inclusion cannot be taught at school |
| ○ Inclusiviteit zou vanzelfsprekendheid moeten zijn | Inclusion should be logical/natural |
| ○ Intrinsieke drang om inclusief te worden/moetje | Intrinsic urge to become inclusive |
| ○ Lokale culturele behoeftes | Local cultural needs |
| ○ Mix publiek als ideaalbeeld | Mixed audience as an ideal |
| ○ Mix publiek leidt tot zelf-regulatie | Mixed audience leads to self-regulation |
| ○ Muziek als verbinder | Music connects people |
| ○ Nieuwe makers komen systeem wel/niet binnen | New creators (do not) struggle to enter the system |
| ○ Ontmoetingen | Meetings |
| ○ Oog voor de ander staat centraal | Eye for the other |
| ○ Oog/geen oog voor informele participatie | Attention for/neglectence of informal participation |
| ○ Open perspectief leidt tot inclusiviteit | Open perspective leads to inclusion |
| ○ Participatie is key voor inclusiviteit/inclusieve sfeer | Participation is key to inclusion/an inclusive atmosphere |
| ○ Praktische maatregelen die inclusiviteit verbeteren | Practical measures that improve inclusion |
| ○ Programmering als sleutel | Programming as key |
| ○ Regie nodig om werelden te mengen | Direction needed to connect different worlds |
| ○ samenwerkingen moeten beter | Collaborations should be better |
| ○ Subsidies -> behoefte samenleving | Subsidies -> cultural needs of society |
| ○ Talentontwikkeling/moestuyn | Talentdevelopment |
| ○ Verschillen tussen instellingen zijn goed | Differences between institutes are desirable |

◊ Kwaliteit

31 Codes:

- 'Colourblind'
- Artistieke kwaliteit als impliciet doel
- Beleidscriteria conflicteren wel/niet

◊ Quality

- 'Colourblind'
- Artistic quality as an implicit goal
- Policy criteria (do not) conflict

○ Collega's zijn conservatief/exclusief/hokjesdenkers	Colleagues are conservative/exclusive/close-minded
○ Criterium: artistieke kwaliteit	Criterium: artistic quality
○ Criterium: bedrijfsvoering	Criterium: business operations
○ Criterium: innovatie	Criterium: innovation
○ Cultuur als middel: collectief	Culture as an instrument: collective
○ Cultuur als middel: individueel	Culture as an instrument: individual
○ Cultuurplan structuur is vastgeroest en exclusief	Cultural plan as restraining and conservative
○ Diverse programmering als verfrissend/vernieuwend	Diverse program as refreshing
○ Diversiteit zorgt voor innovatie	Diversity leads to innovation
○ Geen eentonig kwaliteitsbepaling	No singular interpretation of quality
○ Grounds biedt ruimte voor experiment	Grounds provides opportunities for experiment
○ Hoge kunst <-> lage kunst	High art <-> low art
○ Identiteit kwijt raken vanwege inclusiviteit	Losing identity because of inclusion
○ Individuele kwaliteitsbepaling als leidend	Individual quality criteria as leading
○ Intrinsieke waarde cultuur	Intrinsic worth culture
○ Klassieke kunsten -> dominante groep	Classical arts -> dominant group
○ Kwaliteit muziek is leidend	Quality music is leading
○ Kwaliteitsbepaling cultuur als tegenwerkende kracht inclusiviteit	Quality criteria culture as counteractive to inclusion
○ Lokale culturele rijkdom laten zien	Showing local cultural richness
○ Muziek als verbinder	Music connects people
○ Nieuwe makers komen systeem wel/niet binnen	New creators (do not) struggle to enter the system
○ Open-minded houding tegenover programmacontent	Open-minded attitude towards cultural content
○ Probleem inclusiviteit -> subsidiesysteem	Problem inclusion -> subsidy system
○ Ruimte maken flexibeler systeem	Creating room for a more flexible system
○ Stabiliteit subsidiesysteem	Stability subsidy system
○ Subsidie -> conservatie	Subsidy -> conservation
○ Uitbreiding van het een gaat ten koste van het ander	Expansion of one thing at the costs of something else
○ Urban culture als meest inclusief	Urban culture as the most inclusive
○ Vastgeroeste culturele sector	Conservative/fixed cultural sector