

**“If We Want a Beloved Community, We Must Stand for Justice”: The Cases of Notes
and The Niteshop**

A Qualitative Analysis on Community-based Cultural Spaces and their Contribution to a
Sense of Belonging among Youth of Color in the City of Rotterdam

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ABSTRACT

The city of Rotterdam is known for its postcolonial and superdiverse nature and its ethnic and cultural diversity. However, despite this diversity, immigrant-hostile discourses and policies remain an issue that needs to be addressed. Various forms of activism are being deployed by, and for, marginalized groups to challenge the status quo. Community-based cultural spaces take on this task of activism as they provide a counter discourse to such hostility. The present study investigated how the community-based cultural spaces of Notes and The Niteshop contribute to a sense of belonging among youth of color in Rotterdam. This was done through an attempt to define the concept of community-based cultural spaces by drawing a comparison between established entities in society such as political movements, youth centers and the Third Place, and through the conceptualization of the notion of sense of belonging by means of three dimensions: ‘social connectedness’, ‘group identification’ and ‘identity formation and social identity’. The main research question answered was: *‘How do community-based cultural spaces contribute to a sense of belonging among youth of color in the city of Rotterdam?’*. The qualitative method of semi-structured interviews was used as a means of data collection. The sample consisted of 6 participants of which 3 identified as female and 3 identified as male. The retrieved data was analyzed through inductive thematic analysis, on the basis of coding in the qualitative data analysis software of *Atlas.ti*. Results showed that four themes emerged from the data: ‘perception of community-based cultural spaces’, ‘shared understanding’, ‘making connections’ and ‘personal development’. One can conclude that community-based cultural spaces contribute to a sense of belonging among youth of color in Rotterdam in a way that they distinguish themselves from other established entities in society and foster norms, values and beliefs that uplift youth of color in a superdiverse, metropolitan context.

KEYWORDS: *community-based cultural spaces, counter discourses, sense of belonging, Rotterdam, youth of color*

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1. Introduction

On the 1st of January 2023, racial slurs were projected on the famous Erasmus Bridge in Rotterdam. “White Lives Matter”, “Happy White 2023”, “Black Pete did nothing wrong” and the 14 words by White supremacist David Lane “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children” were visible on the side of the bridge (OPEN Rotterdam, 2023), portraying the persistent hostility, resentment and racism people of color face in The Netherlands in general, and Rotterdam in particular.

The Netherlands and its cities often praise themselves – and are praised – for their ethnic and cultural diversity. The city of Rotterdam even brands itself as a superdiverse, postcolonial city, meaning a city that views diversity beyond ethnicity and takes into consideration various other factors (van Eldik et al., 2019; Scholten et al., 2019; Vertovec, 2007). The complexity of the concept of superdiversity captures not only factors such as country of origin or one’s migratory history, but also one’s current social and living circumstances (van Eldik et al., 2019).

Despite aforementioned (self-)appraisal, immigrant-hostile discourses and policies based on presumed religious and cultural differences between non-immigrants and immigrants prevail in Dutch contemporary society and politics (Siebers & Dennissen, 2015). To illustrate, in 2000 Professor Paul Scheffer stated that he believed the Dutch to be too generous towards immigrants, by not insisting that they are ought to learn the Dutch language, culture and history (Vasta, 2007). In 2002, populist politician Pim Fortuyn claimed that The Netherlands consisted of too many immigrants and branded the Islam as a backward religion (Vasta, 2007). In 2009, the mayor of Rotterdam – Ahmed Aboutaleb – even held a speech at a Pim Fortuyn memorial and praised him for defending freedom of speech and democratic thinking. A more recent event of such hostility is evident in a speech by Dutch politician Geert Wilders in 2014, in which he and his supporters blatantly chanted “Less Moroccans!” when asked “Do you want more or less Moroccans in The Netherlands?”. These discourses detract from a sense of belonging in a way that they foster discriminatory and hostile attitudes towards people of color, which alienates them from society and portrays them as ‘the other’.

The existence of such discourses, however, is not to say that no organizations exist that provide counter discourse to hostility towards immigrants. Various forms of activism are being deployed by, and for, marginalized groups to challenge the status quo (English et al., 2019). Examples of such forms of activism are community-based cultural spaces (CBCS) in Rotterdam, such as Notes and The Niteshop, that create spaces for youth of color to be represented in cultural offerings in the city and to develop themselves in the process. Notes is

a Rotterdam-based platform which started out as a nightlife club event. However, currently, Notes has grown into an organization that organizes events and collectivizes and activates their peers. Their target audience mainly consists of people whose cultural needs are not catered to nor taken into consideration by the city of Rotterdam. In addition, The Niteshop is a grassroots organization, led by a collective that uses their network, agency and privileges to contest and (re)imagine contemporary society. While doing this, The Niteshop facilitates a space in Rotterdam for communities of color to connect, brainstorm and unite.

By offering and providing a ‘Third Place’ – i.e., ‘places where people gather primarily to enjoy each other’s company’ (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982, p. 269), such initiatives provide youth of color with tools to expand their network based social capital – i.e., ‘the interpersonal resources that are derived from social relationships (Dill & Ozer, 2019, p. 1615), enhance self-esteem and create an overall sense of belonging. Belonging to a community and belonging to the city of Rotterdam.

The hostility towards people of color in the Netherlands in general, and Rotterdam in particular, combined with efforts by community-based cultural spaces to contest such hostile discourses, resulted in the following research question:

How do community-based cultural spaces contribute to a sense of belonging among youth of color in the city of Rotterdam?

Social and scientific relevance

The concept of ‘sense of belonging’ plays an important role in the lives of marginalized populations and in cultural and social contexts. However, few researchers have examined the ways in which sense of belonging appears in these contexts. The majority of existing research regarding sense of belonging has been done in the context of education. Therefore, a research gap remains when it comes to sense of belonging of cultural and social contexts in general, and CBCS in particular. This indicates the scientific relevance of the current research.

Even though the majority of research regarding sense of belonging has been done in the context of education and students, one could argue that findings are applicable to immigrant youth of color as well, as the consequences of having a sense of belonging (or a lack thereof) barely differ. Those consequences include benefits to psychological and physical health, such as lower levels of stress, depression and anxiety (Allen & Kern, 2017).

In the context of education, Beckett et al. (2022) argue that sense of belonging entails students' perception of the university's social support system, students' sense of connectivity to other students and perceived appreciation by the campus community. Furthermore, Moore (2020) explains how developing a sense of belonging may be particularly of importance to underrepresented minorities, as this group may experience feelings of exclusion within institutions that are primarily white, as a result of stereotypical perceptions related to their racial or cultural origin. However, she also argues that sense of belonging transcends the ethnic or racial composition of the student population. Rather, it encompasses students' views on institutions in general and may be rooted in 'anticipated belonging' - which describes students' perception on what it would be like to be a member of a particular institution (Moore, 2020, p. 709). This can influence students' understanding of a university and its 'intended' audience, prior to enrolling. All these characteristics attached to sense of belonging in an educational context can be argued to be true for contexts apart from education.

In conclusion, the scientific relevance of this research can be found in: (1) the concept of sense of belonging that is being applied to a new context, namely the context of CBCS, as this has not been done before. In this new context, sense of belonging is being researched among youth of color in Rotterdam, with a focus on how certain CBCS contribute to this sense of belonging; (2) the concept of sense of belonging that is specified in three distinguished dimensions, namely 'social connectedness', 'group identification', and 'identity formation and social identity' and (3) an understanding of what exactly is meant with the concept of CBCS. CBCS are similar to political movements, youth centers and a Third Place, however, these entities do not fully cover the complexity of CBCS. Therefore, this research will provide a better understanding of such spaces.

The societal relevance of this research lies in the fact that hostility towards immigrants and people of color remains a pervasive issue in not only Dutch society or in the city of Rotterdam, but in countries, cities and societies globally. It is, therefore, important to examine organizations that counter hostility and the ways in which they contribute to providing this marginalized population with a feeling that they matter, that they are a part of the country, society or city they live in and that they are allowed to take up space – that they belong. Therefore, insights resulting from the current research may be of importance for youth of color and CBCS in Rotterdam. Additionally, these insights may be useful for policy makers and societal institutions – such as a municipality – in Rotterdam, as they paint a picture of how notions such as diversity, inclusion, sense of belonging and – perhaps most importantly –

counter discourses towards immigrant-hostile discourses, are being guaranteed and fostered in the superdiverse city Rotterdam claims to be.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Sense of belonging

For decades the notion of ‘sense of belonging’ has been studied. From these years of research, various definitions emerged. Allen & Kern (2017) discuss some of these definitions as they mention Rogers (1951) who perceived belonging as ‘a need to be regarded in a positive way by others’ (p. 6). McClelland (1987), however, defines belonging as a motivation to affiliate with others. Furthermore Vallerand (1997) views the concept as a desire to relate with others, and Friedman (2007) argues that sense of belonging entails self-development in relation to the construction of identity. One could argue that, even though these definitions vary from each other, they all come down to the idea that having a sense of belonging is strongly related to one’s relationship with others. Allen & Kern (2017) do point out, however, that having a sense of belonging does not solely depend social relationships. Rather, it relies on perceptions about the quality of social interactions within such relationships. Therefore, according to Allen & Kern (2017) the notion of belonging ‘reflects one’s perception of his or her involvement in a social system or environment’ (p. 6).

In order to conceptualize the notion of ‘sense of belonging’, it is important to establish what is meant by the concept in this particular research, and to establish dimensions that make up the overall concept of ‘sense of belonging’, which, in this research, include the notions of ‘social connectedness’, ‘group identification’ and ‘identity formation and social identity’.

Social connectedness

People express and satiate their need for belonging early in life by identifying and engaging with the social world (Lee & Robbins, 1998). This identifying and engaging are actions that are inherent in the notion of social connectedness. Social connectedness indicates one’s internal sense of belonging and can be defined as ‘the subjective awareness of being in close relationship with the social world’, i.e., the extent to which one feels connected to others and the social world (Lee & Robbins, 1998, p. 338). Smithson (2011) adds to this definition by stating that, in addition to social connectedness being the way in which individuals connect with each other, it also comprises how they view themselves regarding these relationships.

Close and distant relationships with ‘family, friends, peers, acquaintances, strangers, community and society’ are part of the experience of interpersonal proximity in social environments (Lee & Robbins, 1998, p. 338). The combination and interplay of these interpersonal encounters progressively becomes internalized by the individual and forms the

foundation for a sense of social connectedness (Lee & Robbins, 1998). Therefore, sense of connectedness is an omnipresent experience that influences emotions, cognitions and behaviors, particularly in social contexts (Satici et al., 2016). Feeling connected to others provides various benefits including, but not limited to, ‘stronger group attraction’, ‘life satisfaction’, ‘self-efficacy’ and ‘subjective well-being’ (Satici et al., 2016, p. 306).

Group identification

Researchers from various disciplines such as psychology, sociology and anthropology are in agreement regarding the fact that being a member of social groups is a crucial component in the maintenance and enhancement of human wellbeing (Wakefield et al., 2016). As humans are born into groups – i.e., families, communities, religious groups etc. – it is clear that belonging to a group is an integral part of what makes humans human (Wakefield et al., 2016). But how does it *feel* to belong to a group? The concept of group identification provides a plausible answer to this question, as it entails one’s sense of belonging to a particular social group combined with the emotional significance individuals attach to such membership and a sense of commonality among members of a group (Jackson, 2002; Wakefield et al., 2016).

As youth of color, the research subjects in this study are part of a marginalized group in Dutch society, as people of color face a tremendous amount of hostility and discrimination. One could argue that this societal devaluation towards people of color leads to a stronger group identification. Therefore, the question arises: Does the hostility towards people of color in general, and youth of color in particular, lead to a stronger group identification? And, therefore, a stronger sense of belonging?

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1981) suggests that group identification can be deployed to manage, shield against or cope with the ‘danger’ that is psychologically associated with being a member of a marginalized group (Leach et al., 2010). This, indeed, implies that individuals may react to the societal devaluation of their group by strengthening their identification with their group (Leach et al., 2010). Jetten et al. (2001) add to this by stating that perceived discrimination may increase identification with people who face similar detriments. In addition, those who belong to undervalued groups tend to engage in social creativity by renouncing the norms and values deployed in the dominant group and, instead, highlighting how they diverge from these norms and values (Jetten et al., 2001).

Identity formation and social identity

The concept of identity formation is closely related to the concept of group identification discussed previously, as it entails the extent to which one's membership to a group and one's social interactions reinforce and affirm their identity, values and beliefs (Jetten et al., 2014). Furthermore, a concept that brings together aforementioned concepts is the notion of social identity, which refers to the extent to which one identifies with a particular group (related to group identification) and feels a sense of connectedness and commonality with other members of that group (Tajfel, 1981).

The process of identity formation starts with the act of self-categorization, in which individuals recognize and embody the roles that are projected on them (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stets & Burke, 2000). Taking on those roles, individuals will associate themselves with other individuals who they consider similar to themselves and label them as 'in-group' (Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012, p. 1124). Individuals who do not fall into this 'in-group' are considered 'out-group' persons (Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012, p. 1124). Abrams and Hogg (1988) state that, even though this self-categorization creates a sense of belonging, it also constructs the concept of the 'other', which may create tension between groups or even between individuals (Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012).

2.2 Community-based cultural spaces in comparative perspective

In order to adequately answer the research question 'How do community-based cultural spaces contribute to a sense of belonging among youth of color in the city of Rotterdam?', it is of importance to establish what these community-based cultural spaces are and how we should understand them, as aforementioned research question inherently reflects back on this ambiguity.

One could argue that CBCS possess certain characteristics that are evident in established cultural and political entities in society. To obtain a better understanding on how these entities are visible in CBCS, comparisons are made between CBCS and political movements, youth centers and the Third Place (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982). Subsequently, these spaces will be compared based on aforementioned dimensions attributed to sense of belonging.

Community-based cultural spaces and political movements

On the one hand, characteristics of political movements can be perceived in CBCS. The Niteshop is politically involved, which is evident in the fact that they brand themselves as the

embassy for the superdiverse city (The Niteshop, n.d.), and has ties with the municipality of Rotterdam. Furthermore, in times of national or municipal elections, The Niteshop encourages Rotterdam citizens to cast their vote and serves as a polling station where these citizens can drop off their ballot paper. On the other hand, not all criteria bound to political movements are applicable to the community-based cultural space of The Niteshop. Even though The Niteshop can be considered politically active for reasons mentioned above, they do not hold any political power, are not involved in political decision-making, are not responsible for policies that are implemented in the city and do not position themselves as political actors.

When assessing political movements based on the dimension of social connectedness within the concept of sense of belonging, it is important to explore how this dimension is evident in political movements. Individuals who affiliate themselves with certain political parties, social causes or activist organizations, often connect with people who hold comparable beliefs and cooperate to accomplish shared objectives (Stryker et al., 2000). These shared objectives are generally based on collaboratively defined hardships (Klandermans, 2002). In turn, these hardships create a sense of union, in which political institutions contributing to the hardships are often seen as the culprit and, thus, the outgroup (Klandermans, 2002). In this way, a sense of group identification is established among members of political movements.

In regard to the dimension of social connectedness, similar to group identification, being active within a political movement to obtain shared objectives enhances an internal sense of belonging and brings about a sense of purpose that is beneficial to both personal and societal well-being (Nardini et al., 2021). Individuals feel connected to others who share similar political goals and experiences, making social connectedness an integral part of political movements.

Lastly, identity formation and social identity is evident in political movements in a way that individuals often participate in or support political movements that reflect their own personal ideals and worldviews. As a result, individuals take on a political identity which, subsequently, becomes a crucial component of their social identity (McAdam et al., 1996). In this way, values and beliefs that are fostered within certain political movements contribute to the identity formation and social identity of its members.

Community-based cultural spaces and youth centers

One could argue that characteristics of youth centers are evident in community-based cultural spaces. Notes, as a community-based cultural space, has been established for the

youth of Rotterdam, and youth of color in particular. The events they host focus on youth development and creating a space for them to thrive in. Additionally, The Niteshop holds an established physical space in Rotterdam, in which workshops, documentary screenings, panel talks and other events that contribute to the self-development of Rotterdammers, are hosted. However, the concept of youth centers does not fully comprise what it is that CBCS consist of. Even though Notes was established particularly for the youth of Rotterdam, The Niteshop was not. Furthermore, Notes nor The Niteshop offer supervised activities for youth, which often is the case in youth centers (Pittman et al., 2001).

Youth centers often provide a variety of programs to cater to the interests and needs of (urban) youth (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). As youth centers provide youth with the opportunity to interact with others who have similar interests, objectives, or histories by taking part in these activities, members within youth centers may cultivate a sense of community and identification among each other, as a result of these encounters (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). In this way, group identification can find its way into youth centers and becomes an important factor in regard to sense of belonging within youth centers.

When looking at social connectedness in the context of youth centers, as mentioned before, frequently function as community spaces in which (urban) youth can come together, take part in activities, and interact with their peers. These centers provide a setting in which social interaction, teamwork and the formation of substantive connections is encouraged (Larson, 2000). In this way, youth engage a sense of connectedness is established within youth centers.

Lastly, identity formation and social identity are often evident in youth centers, as these spaces provide youth with a space to develop their sense of self, establish group affiliations and a space in which commonality among the group members is created through aforementioned social interaction, teamwork and connections (Larson & Angus, 2011).

Community-based cultural spaces and the Third Place

Perhaps the greatest resemblance that community-based cultural spaces have to established entities in society is to the entity of a Third Place. With the First Place being the home environment and the Second Place being the work environment, Third Places serve as places that individuals turn to outside of their home, work, school or other obligations, to connect and interact, but 'primarily to enjoy each other's company' (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982, p. 269). In this way, Third Places grant opportunities for meaningful interactions and connections and are suited to maintain a sense of well-being among individuals (Oldenburg &

Brissett, 1982). The resemblance can be found in the fact that both Notes and The Niteshop were established to unite people and to bolster meaningful interactions and connections. They serve as places that people visit to connect, interact and recreate with other individuals outside of their First and Second Places, and can, thus, be considered a Third Place. On the other hand, one could argue that they cannot be considered a Third Place. According to Oldenburg & Brissett (1982), the dominant activities within a Third Place are not seen as 'special' in the eyes of its members – 'it is a taken-for granted part of their social existence' (p. 270). In comparison with CBCS, as events and activities hosted by these spaces are relatively uncommon in the city of Rotterdam, it is unlikely for their target group to take these spaces for granted nor perceive them as a 'just' a part of their social existence.

Even though Oldenburg & Brissett (1982) do not specifically mention the role of ethnicity within Third Places, they do highlight that Third Places hold the ability to bring people from all walks of life together, which creates a sense of inclusivity and social cohesion. In this way, Third Places may provide a sense of group identification among its members, as they cultivate a shared feeling of belonging and provide a common ground for individuals to connect over.

Subsequently, one could argue that the notion of social connectedness is evident in Third Places as well. While connecting over common grounds in a place outside of their work and home environment, individuals may develop a sense of closeness with and attachment to other individuals frequenting the same space.

Lastly, as they often promote informality and allow for individuals to discard societal roles and expectations (Oldenburg, 1989), Third Places make space for individuals to express and explore their sense of self and identity. In this way, the notions of identity formation and social identity is evident in Third Places.

3. Methodology

3.1 Qualitative method

The current research aims to answer the following research question: How do community-based cultural spaces contribute to a sense of belonging among youth of color in the city of Rotterdam? This research question can be considered two-fold, as this study, on the one hand, makes an effort to unveil what community-based cultural spaces and their characteristics entail and, on the other hand, makes an effort to unveil how said spaces contribute to a sense of belonging among youth of color in Rotterdam. In order to adequately answer aforementioned research question, a qualitative research was conducted. An argument that adds to the justification of this study and the chosen research method is that the qualitative research process offers a comprehensive interpretation of individuals' perception, which is necessary to understand how CBCS contribute to a sense of belonging among youth of color (Babbie, 2017).

Furthermore, the cases of Notes and The Niteshop have been selected, as the concept of CBCS, and their possible contribution to a sense of belonging among youth of color in Rotterdam, can be explained on the basis of these organizations. It is fruitful to consider both Notes and The Niteshop, as these CBCS are complementary to each other. The Niteshop positions itself as a research center which facilitates a space for their target audience. Notes, on the other hand, focuses more on collectivizing and activating their peers through activations such as (block)parties, barbecues and other community-based activities. They are complementary in the fact that Notes makes use of certain research designs developed by The Niteshop and The Niteshop, in turn, makes use of Notes' ability to reach a certain audience. Even though both community-based cultural spaces have a different way of working, they have a common goal: providing youth of color in Rotterdam with a space to connect, develop and feel seen and heard.

A total of six semi-structured interviews were conducted, using a topic list, with people of color from, or residing in, Rotterdam, who are familiar with either Notes, The Niteshop, or both. The qualitative data collection of semi-structured interviews was opted for as this method explores 'feelings, emotions, experiences and values' that do not reach the surface in banal conversations (Brennen, 2017, p. 29). In the case of the current study, experiences and emotions regarding sense of belonging were explored, making semi-structured interviews a suitable data collection method. The topic list was based on concepts discussed in the literature, such as 'group identification', 'social connectedness' and 'identity formation and social identity' (See Appendix B). Subsequently, prompting questions were

established based on aforementioned concepts. These questions were used as a guide and as a checklist to see if all themes were covered, however, the main focus was put on having a flowing conversation in which the participant felt comfortable.

Four out of six interviews were conducted in person, of which two at the participants' home, one on the campus of Erasmus University Rotterdam and one at the Notes office. The two remaining interviews were conducted through Zoom due to time-management reasons at the participants' sides. In addition, the interviews took approximately one hour each, ensuring enough time for the participants to feel comfortable and for in-depth conversations. All interviews have been recorded on the researcher's phone in order to transcribe the interviews in a later stadium of the research. The recordings and all information related to the participants will be deleted once the research is completed.

3.2 Participants and sampling

For the current research, a purposive sampling strategy was employed, meaning participants were carefully identified and selected by the researcher based on certain criteria indicating whether or not they would be representative for the study (Babbie, 2017). During participant selection, the following criteria were taken into account: whether or not the participant is a person of color – meaning a person with a non-white migration background, whether or not the participant currently resides or has resided in Rotterdam and whether or not the participant is familiar with either Notes, The Niteshop, or both – meaning they have visited or participated in at least one event of either Notes or The Niteshop.

As the researcher is a Notes employee and part of the audience that Notes and The Niteshop cater to, their access to the field and participants was facilitated in a way that the researcher's direct surroundings consisted of individuals suitable as participants for this research. However, this 'easy access' brought along certain ethical considerations. As the researcher is already immersed in the scene studied, certain preconceptions regarding the research subjects may exist. However, the researcher was supervised by a supervisor who did not belong to the subjects under study, which contributed to the researcher's awareness of these biases and to their self-reflexivity. This, in turn, contributed to the reliability of this study.

The final sample consisted of six Dutch individuals with a non-western migration background, of which three identified as female and three identified as male, with an age ranging from 22 to 30 years old. In order to safeguard participants' anonymity and privacy,

they are referred to by their attributed pseudonyms. Table 1 provides an overview of the participants.

Table 1

Overview of participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Non-western migration background	Familiar with Notes and/or The Niteshop	Notes employee	The Niteshop employee
Interviewee A	Female	22	Rwandan	Both	Former	No
Interviewee B	Male	22	Filipino	Notes	Yes	No
Interviewee C	Female	22	Chinese	Both	Former	Yes
Interviewee D	Male	24	Ethiopian	The Niteshop	No	Yes
Interviewee E	Female	24	Nigerian	Both	Yes	Former
Interviewee F	Male	30	Surinamese	The Niteshop	No	Yes

3.2 Data analysis

In terms of data analysis, the obtained data was analyzed through an inductive thematic analysis. After each interview was conducted and recorded, the recordings were transcribed. This transcription was, then, uploaded to the qualitative data analysis software of *Atlas.ti*. After familiarizing with the data, the data was open coded in *Atlas.ti*. Subsequently, these open codes were grouped in categories and labeled with axial codes. The established axial codes were subjected to selective coding, which eventually resulted in all-encompassing themes. From the selective codes, a code tree was established, which was used in the process of interpreting the data and results.

4. Results

As a result of the thematic analysis that was conducted, the following interrelated themes emerged: perception of community-based cultural spaces, shared understanding, making connections, and personal development. These themes were identified throughout the coding process and are theoretically supported within the theoretical framework, in which community-based cultural spaces and the dimensions that make up a sense of belonging were discussed. Furthermore, the themes and findings are exemplified through quotes made by participants, which in some cases have been slightly altered in terms of grammar and punctuation for the sake of clarity.

4.1 Perception of community-based cultural spaces: “For the community, by the community.”

One aspect of the current study is to gain a better understanding on what CBCS entail and why they are of importance. The interviews showed that participants are in consensus about the fact that both Notes and The Niteshop facilitate a (physical) space to come together, in which mundane practices and skills that characterize the superdiversity and metropolitan context of Rotterdam are being magnified, properly valued, and made important. Interviewee E explains how she perceives this magnification and valuation:

They highlight the underexposed parts of society. So, whether it is the cultural capital of quote on quote the deprived neighborhood and what’s going on there, whether it is the small rituals that we normally take for granted that actually have a lot of social or cultural meanings or hold a lot of value, they shed light on them. I think Notes and The Niteshop both show that even if you don’t fit into the structured world, you’re still able to create something that can be considered very valuable and very contributing.

Furthermore, it has become evident that, according to the participants, the space that these CBCS take up in the city of Rotterdam is not comparable to other organizations. Interviewee B describes these as organizations that are similar to Notes and The Niteshop, such as similar event organizations or research centers, but finds the difference in the way they engage with their audience. This distinction is evident in the fact that Notes and The Niteshop are pushing unique kinds of projects, such as collaborating with cultural institutions and partners. An example of such a project is a collaborative design research between Notes and The Niteshop called Blockparty Van De Toekomst [Blockparty Of The Future]; a

multidimensional peer-to-peer project, in which urban youth with a migration background research and reflect on contemporary urban youth culture (R. Zhang, personal communication, February 1, 2023). Interviewee B, one of the co-founders of Notes, explains:

[The goal is] to make people think about themes they were never involved in [by the municipality of Rotterdam] or which they have never had a sense of ownership about. And also give them the tools to develop themselves. Participants start the project thinking they're going to design a blockparty, but at the end of the process it wasn't so much about blockparties anymore, but about themes like 'togetherness', 'ownership', 'justice' and 'what belongs to you'.

This project includes workshops and work sessions hosted in The Niteshop and led by urban researchers that are active within The Niteshop and ends in a blockparty and barbecue hosted by Notes. The outcome of the project is a manifest and a symposium in which the participants present and further reflect on their findings. In conversation with Interviewee B a notable interaction took place:

Interviewer: Yeah, I think that might be one of the biggest differences between Notes and other parties. Notes does give people the feeling of "you belong here, and you have a say in what we do." And other organizations or other parties are just like "We organize this and you..."

Interviewee B: "...have to take it or leave it" or something.

This interaction, with the co-constructive nature of Blockparty Van De Toekomst in mind, serves as an illustration as to why it is that Notes and The Niteshop cannot be compared to other organizations. Where Notes and The Niteshop make an effort to ensure a space in which urban youth culture is constructed together, other organizations facilitate events and activities, based on their *own* best interest. The audience is then expected to, as Interviewee B puts it, 'take it or leave it'. Notes and The Niteshop, thus, distinguish themselves in a field with other cultural organizations, by serving as a means to facilitate a space, events or activities with the cultural, professional and personal development of their community at heart.

Additionally, these CBCS offer certain amenities, services and benefits to their community, which, according to participants, include a space in which trial and error can take place without judgement or severe consequences. Interviewee A explains: “Before I started working for Notes, I would never see myself as a production or campaign manager. Notes really is a place where I can just try some shit.” This relates to another benefit that both Interviewee C and Interviewee D address, namely that Notes and The Niteshop allow them to occupy positions that would not be assigned to them in a context of other organizations, businesses or companies, as a result of their level of experience, gender, age and race. This illustrates aforementioned freedom in trial and error, as they are deemed capable of holding these positions despite a possible lack of experience, and the role Notes and The Niteshop play in the professional development and trust in youth of color in Rotterdam.

Furthermore, it is apparent that Notes and The Niteshop are perceived by participants as spaces separate from work, school and home. Interviewee A reflects on this by stating “I think it's nice to have such a place where you can go, apart from work and school, for your mental health, just for the sense of community and a kind of outlet in terms of going out and parties.” Interviewee E describes it as follows:

I think it has given me a bit of a home feeling in the sense that I do know that I have another home within the city to always return to and that is very nice. And also just an escape. Just a place where I can let go and not have to think... In that sense I find peace in an active way, a kind of active rest.

These quotes relate to the concept of the Third Place (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982) discussed in the literature, which argues that Third Places are spaces that subsist outside home and work environments.

The amenities, services and benefits mentioned above epitomize the importance of the existence of CBCS, as they not only contribute to the cultural, political and personal development of their audience, but also provide them with a voice. Interviewee F, who has been co-running The Niteshop since its opening in 2021, summarizes this importance by saying “I just notice that we give a voice to a group of people who can't organize that voice themselves. And that is just very valuable work.” He explains how this ‘voice’ that The Niteshop generates, represents the voice of marginalized communities in Rotterdam. It tells the story of the people living in migrant neighborhoods and shows the knowledge and cultural

capital they hold. In this way, this voice highlights the importance and value of superdiversity within a metropolitan context.

Despite the perquisites and importance attributed to CBCS, certain criticisms emerged from the data as well. Interviewee C, who is a former Notes employee and is currently active at The Niteshop, elaborates on how she experienced a decline in her sense of belonging during her time as a Notes employee. She explains how certain norms, values and ideals did no longer align with those present within Notes:

Actually, I could say that, at times, Notes didn't necessarily give me a sense of belonging, because certain ideals didn't match. Being social justice oriented is a big part of my identity, but since that wasn't considered important enough by others within Notes, it wasn't really a space of belonging anymore. In my experience, the Notes team members think community-centered work is a great idea, but when it comes to practice, I think commercial goals were often prioritized, or popularity.

From this quote, it becomes apparent that the extent to which one experiences a sense of belonging is related to the extent to which one experiences an alignment between their own norms, values and ideals and those present within a particular community-based cultural space. Another criticism arose in conversation with Interviewee C, this time regarding The Niteshop. Besides pitying the fact that The Niteshop is a male-dominated space, she explained how, as a result of capitalism, The Niteshop has a hard time remaining community-based, as the extent to which they can offer resistance to injustices is dependent on subsidy budgets. She elaborates: “The research they conduct, the knowledge they retrieve and their activist practices are now sold as a commodity. And I don’t think this is fully the case, that they conduct research or are radically active for the money, but it did eventually develop that way.”

These criticisms indicate that a certain tension exists between the contexts of politics, community and commerce, despite efforts being made by Notes and The Niteshop to assemble these contexts into one space. These contexts can be tied to the entities of political movements and the Third Place, previously discussed in the theoretical framework. As political movements are often concerned with power relations in society, a consciousness around the issue of gender inequality exists and is therefore inevitably an item on their agenda (Goetz, 2019). Compared to the Third Place, however, Oldenburg (1989) argues that the Third Place is a ‘neutral ground’ upon which people gather, indicating that there is no involvement

in politics, let alone awareness regarding gender inequality (p. 22). Within the Third Place, such inequalities are being dismissed under the notion of cosmopolitanism (Oldenburg, 1989). This illustrates that a choice is being made to actively not engage in politics, which is in direct opposition to the nature of political movements. The Niteshop is positioned between these two entities, as they are engaged in politics, however, remain a male-dominated space. In this way, one could argue that they contribute to the issue of gender inequalities and cannot always meet their audience's expectations.

Furthermore, in light of the criticism regarding The Niteshop's practices being sold as a commodity, Notes and The Niteshop make an effort to place the concept of community at the center of their existence. However, as these CBCS must meet certain requirements in order to receive funding by state institutions, commercial purposes may take precedence over community purposes. In this way, a community-based way of thinking cannot always be sustained.

Aforementioned criticisms illustrate that even community-based cultural spaces can engage in practices that might contribute to a decline in sense of belonging, despite the numerous efforts they make to foster it.

4.2 Shared understanding: “We need to feel safe, feel together, feel understood somewhere and this is a chill way to do that, because you don't have to explain anything.”

The theme of 'shared understanding' is related to the concept of group identification, which entails one's sense of belonging to a particular group and a sense of commonality among members of that group (Jackson, 2002; Wakefield et al., 2016). The interviews showed that this commonality is particularly evident in a shared understanding regarding music, race and lived experiences among members of the Notes and Niteshop community. Interviewee A explains:

The fact that we all come from a bi-cultural background, but all live in this city, is already something to identify with and to recognize in someone else, and the same goes for what you find important and your interests in music or art.

As mentioned before, within the theme of shared understanding, distinctions emerged from the data between the contexts of music, race and lived experiences. It is important to note, however, that these distinctions are not mutually exclusive and, in some cases, overlap,

as, shared lived experiences are often based on a shared understanding on race and vice versa. In terms of music, Interviewee A explains that music is a significant identity marker of her being and that the, what can be called, diasporic music genres – such as Hip hop, R&B, and afro beats – presented at Notes events in and of itself contain a shared understanding among her and other Notes visitors.

Moreover, in the context of race, the fact that the majority of the Notes and Niteshop audience consists of people of color contributes to the construction of a shared understanding. Interviewee A elaborates: “The shared understanding of the fact that we’re all Dutch people but still have roots somewhere else, and that that shapes us.” However, she later goes on to say: “If I saw a white boy or girl vibing on afro beats or whatever, then I would think “yes!” That’s just fun, it is just nice to know we share the same interests.”, indicating that, for her, shared understanding is not necessarily tied to a certain race and can be constructed with both people of color and white people. Lastly, in the context of lived experiences, all participants conclude that sharing and understanding others’ lived experiences plays a significant role in constructing a shared understanding and, in turn, a sense of belonging. For example, Interviewee C reflects on this by stating:

Everyone at The Niteshop is here because they all retrieved motivation from their lived experiences to bring about change, and to make social inequalities visible, to resist and counter them. You can share those shared experiences with each other, so in that regard, I did feel a great sense of belonging.

Additionally, Interviewee D expands on how shared experiences of marginalization that exist among people of color brought about feelings of group identification for him:

I also identify through the shared understanding of how we are seen, how we are held back. But also the knowledge that we have, the experiences and what we've learned from those experiences of always being marginalized. Basically, the shared understanding of not being understood.

Aforementioned quotes illustrate that the sense of belonging to a particular group, i.e., group identification, is often based on a shared struggle that is evident in the group’s lived experiences. Notes and The Niteshop foster group identification, and thus a sense of belonging, by facilitating a space in which people with a shared understanding on music, race

and lived experiences can come together and find common ground amongst each other. According to Interviewee F, “lived experiences ensure that you can connect with The Niteshop”. This quote illustrates the interplay that exists between the ways in which community-based cultural spaces facilitate a space for the construction of shared understanding and how these shared understandings, in turn, bring about a stronger connection to community-based cultural spaces.

From the data, it does not become clear what it is that does not need an explanation within CBCS. One could argue that, perhaps, it is best not to specify it, as specification may result in a loss of commonality. It has become clear that participants experience a sense of not being understood by people outside of the Notes and Niteshop community. The reason as to why this feeling prevails, however, has not become clear. One could argue that once this notion of shared understanding is specified, it will no longer be considered a shared way of being understood, as explanation and specification now lay at the core of this understanding. It is the absence of this explanation and specification that make a shared understanding possible – no explanation is needed, which makes individuals feel understood. In other words, perhaps the commonalities between individuals need to remain abstract in order for a feeling of shared understanding to exist.

4.3 Making connections: “I think they try to create an open, informal atmosphere in which it is easy to approach other people and to just have a chat.”

As explained by Lee & Robbins (1998) in the context of social connectedness, connecting with other human beings as a means to satiate a need for belonging and identify and engage with the social world is an integral part of what makes humans human. The data confirm this as all participants responded in the affirmative when asked whether they feel a sense of connectedness with other visitors at Notes and The Niteshop. Interviewee E explains how The Niteshop facilitates a space to connect with others:

At The Niteshop you connect with the visitors because their events are often focused on talking and conversing with each other so... I've had a lot of times where they hosted a talk and then afterwards people just stuck around to talk to each other, so that's where I literally engage in conversation with people about certain subjects.

Interviewee D explains that apart from events that were organized by The Niteshop to connect, there are also spontaneous encounters with other visitors that spark a sense of

connectedness in him: “That’s why it is not only a research center... but also a night shop.” Linking the research center aspect of The Niteshop to the organized events or talks, and the fact that they are also ‘just’ a night shop to the spontaneous encounters that take place in a night shop.

In addition to feelings of connectedness present in the environments created by Notes and The Niteshop, the data showed the ways in which participants feel like Notes and The Niteshop stimulate and encourage connectedness. Interviewee F provides his perspective on this:

We stimulate the making of connections very directly with the activities that we host. We always seek dialogue. We assume primary and secondary groups. That means that the neighborhood and system-world always come together in some way. And then in between we also have the creative and cultural field that we also very much depart from. We bring them together through our activities and expression on social media. In fact, everything we publish is accessible for those groups. As a result, we indirectly or directly provide the incentive to reach out to each other. That's what this space is for.

This quote illustrates that The Niteshop stimulates connectedness by bringing people from all walks of life – i.e., the cultural, creative scene, the neighborhood and the system-world, which includes institutions, the corporate world and (political) organizations – together to connect and converse. Furthermore, by stating that The Niteshop brings these diverse groups together, Interviewee F positions The Niteshop as a bridge between the worlds in which these groups operate. This view on The Niteshop’s position in the city was shared by Interviewees A, D and E, where Interviewee E includes a comparison between Notes and The Niteshop in her reflection:

I think the Niteshop is a bit in between two worlds and that Notes is actually already one of those worlds and operates in that specific world. The Niteshop is a sort of bridge between the system-world and that Notes-world. I also think they take pride in the fact that they are closer to society, than they are to the system-world, but that is also because they want to work in a different way than a system-world. They really distance themselves from that world while still serving as a bridge. Whereas the neighborhood is what they are trying to be close with and where they try to find a lot of connections.

Within the theme of ‘making connections’, it becomes evident that different kinds of connections are formed. Firstly, the formation of connections between visitors. These connections are present, however seem to remain rather superficial as they come about as a result of spontaneous encounters and casual conversations that occur in and around CBCS. Secondly, the connection that Notes and The Niteshop, the latter in particular, facilitate between different kinds of worlds. This connection seems to appear deeper in comparison to the aforementioned connection, as people from different segments in society are brought together in order to co-construct a Rotterdam in which everyone has a sense of belonging.

4.4 Personal development: “I became more secure in my identity, being a woman of color.”

All participants expressed that Notes and The Niteshop, in some way, contributed to their own personal development, or – from Interviewee B’s and Interviewee F’s perspectives as (co-)founders – to the visitors’ personal development in general. Within this theme of personal development, the participants especially highlighted the positive impact Notes and The Niteshop have had on their self-esteem in terms of their identity. Interviewee E explains:

I think I’ve become prouder of a part of my identity that I often kind of hid from the rest of the world, because showing that part of my identity is very much discouraged by most spaces I find myself in. Whether that is the university, the workplace, or wherever. And I think I’ve become prouder of it and show more of it now, even beyond Notes and The Niteshop.

Interviewee A and C had a similar reflection on the development of their self-esteem within Notes and The Niteshop. Interviewee C indicates that Notes and The Niteshop have positively contributed to her self-esteem in a way that, as a woman of color, her physical features were deemed the status quo, which gave her a sense of (self-)acceptance. She says: “It’s okay to be who I am, in terms of certain beauty standards.”

Apart from personal development in regard to self-esteem, the data also showed that Notes and The Niteshop contribute to members’ personal development when it comes to their (professional) network. Interviewee E elaborates: “Notes and The Niteshop have brought me a network because they’ve connected me with other like-minded people in the community that I didn’t even know existed.” In addition, Interviewee A reflects on this contribution to her network by stating that she met a lot of people through Notes and The Niteshop, which, in

turn, exposed her to new kinds of cultures, customs and food, which she viewed as an enrichment of her network.

Lastly, three out of six participants indicate that Notes and The Niteshop have contributed to believing in their own abilities. Whether these abilities included social or cultural capital being valued, tasks they can perform within an organization or seeing the value of their qualities.

The aforementioned contributions by Notes and The Niteshop to their audience's personal development can be linked to the concepts of identity formation and social identity, discussed in the literature. These concepts indicate the extent to which one's group membership and social interactions reinforce and affirm their identity and beliefs (Jetten et al., 2014). From the data, it becomes evident that being a member of the Notes and Niteshop community, reinforces and affirms members' identity and beliefs in terms of personal development, self-esteem and believing in their own abilities.

5. Conclusion and discussion

This study explored how community-based cultural spaces contribute to a sense of belonging among youth of color in Rotterdam, based on the cases of Notes and The Niteshop, and made an effort to clarify what it is that community-based cultural spaces exactly entail. This was done with the following research question in mind: *How do community-based cultural spaces contribute to a sense of belonging among youth of color in the city of Rotterdam?* The themes ‘perception on community-based cultural spaces’, ‘shared understanding’, ‘making connections’ and ‘personal development’ that emerged from the data indicate how community-based cultural spaces are perceived and how they contribute to a sense of belonging, related to the associated dimensions of ‘group identification’, ‘social connectedness’ and ‘identity formation and social identity’.

Participants perceive CBCS as a (physical) space, in which they can come together and in which banal practices inherent to the superdiverse and metropolitan character of Rotterdam are celebrated and valued. Furthermore, the participants believe that the community-based cultural spaces of Notes and The Niteshop cannot be compared to other party organizations, cultural institutions or research centers, due to their engagement in unique, co-constructive projects. Moreover, CBCS provide their audience with certain amenities, services and benefits, which include providing the community with room to experiment in terms of job positions, but also trusting in their ability to hold certain positions within Notes or The Niteshop.

Despite these advantages, certain criticisms toward CBCS exist as well. These criticisms include a decline in sense of belonging due to unaligned norms and values, The Niteshop being a male-dominated space and how their knowledge is being sold as a commodity. These criticisms indicated the existence of a tension between commerce, community and politics, in which The Niteshop is positioned in the middle. This all indicates that even though community-based cultural spaces make a great effort to foster a sense of belonging, a community-based way of thinking cannot always be maintained.

Furthermore, CBCS contribute to a sense of belonging through a cultivation of shared understanding, making connections and fostering their audience’s personal development. In regard to shared understanding, it became apparent that shared understandings cultivated through CBCS are often based on the entities of music, race and lived experiences. It did not become clear, however, what makes these entities a base for shared understanding. Participants indicated that inherent to forming a shared understanding is the fact that there is no need for explanation or specification, as members of the community have a common

understanding of what is being understood. It does not become clear what it is that does not need explaining and why this is the case. The conclusion one can draw from this is that, perhaps, the existence of a shared understanding needs to remain abstract in order for its existence to sustain.

In terms of making connections, the data showed that various kinds of connections between various worlds are facilitated by CBCS. Firstly, connections that remain rather superficial come about through spontaneous encounters and casual interactions that occur in and around CBCS. Secondly, in contrast with superficial connections, it became apparent that deeper connections between individuals are facilitated by CBCS as well, as a result of The Niteshop's position as a bridge between the cultural, creative world, the neighborhood and the system-world. This position cultivates deeper connections as it ensures a co-construction, in which various kinds of individuals participate, of a Rotterdam that serves all Rotterdammers.

Lastly, CBCS to a sense of belonging through fostering personal development among its audience. Participants indicate that Notes and The Niteshop have a positive impact on their self-esteem and identity formation in terms of appearance, race and self-acceptance. Furthermore, apart from self-esteem and identity, Notes and The Niteshop provide their audience with a (professional) network with like-minded individuals and encourage them to trust in their own abilities.

In the theoretical framework, a comparison was made between CBCS and the established entities in society of political movements, youth centers and the Third Place (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982). As argued in the theoretical framework, the data confirm that Notes and The Niteshop indeed hold the greatest resemblance to the entity of the Third Place, as it serves as a place individuals visit apart from home and work. However, the argument remains that CBCS cannot entirely be classified as a Third Place, neither as a political movement or a youth center, despite sharing certain characteristics.

The difference between CBCS and the Third Place can be found in the fact that such spaces address what the Third Place does not, namely injustices and inequities that are present in society. The Third Place remains a neutral space in which societal and political issues are not given prominence, which is the case in CBCS. Perhaps, this shifts the greatest resemblance to the entity of political movements, with which Notes and The Niteshop share certain characteristics as well. However, CBCS cannot be entirely classified as such either as the difference lies in the fact that Notes and The Niteshop are also concerned with amusement and entertainment, which makes them, inevitably, commercial entities – something political movements are not characterized by. Does this, then, mean that community-based cultural

spaces can be classified as commercial organizations? The answer to that question is, in all probability, in the negative as well. Despite the commercialization of community-based cultural spaces, being community-based will always lie at the core of their existence, at least to the extent they are able to. That is, the extent to which the municipality and other institutions on which they depend for funding, let them do so.

The current research brings valuable societal insights, as it provides an illustration of the added value CBCS bring to the city of Rotterdam. This can be taken into account by policy makers and the municipal council when developing policies concerned with cultural and social entities in the city.

6. Limitations and further research

As the current study was conducted on a small scale, certain limitations exist. Firstly, as sense of belonging can be considered a rather abstract concept, the dimensions attributed to the conceptualization of this concept may not fully cover its scope. This leads to an argument for future research, in which a more extensive set of dimensions could be considered to conceptualize the concept of sense of belonging more comprehensively.

Moreover, the position of the researcher in this study can be considered a limitation as well. As the researcher is a part of the subjects under study, certain blind spots were inevitably present in the analysis process. Certain unwritten rules and shared understandings that exist within the community under study were understood by the researcher, however, this understanding may complicate adequately reporting it to others who are not a part of that community.

For further research, a suggestion could be to conduct a comparative qualitative analysis between Notes, The Niteshop and community-based cultural spaces in other Dutch cities, or perhaps even other countries, to gain a deeper understanding of their presence and impact on a national scale.

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Appendix A: Ethics and privacy form



CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Bonnie French, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Sense of belonging among youth of color in Rotterdam

Name, email of student: Sofia Hussein, 507698sh@student.eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: Freek de Haan, f.dehaan@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: February 2023, duration: 5 months

Is the research study conducted within DPAS

YES

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. YES

If 'NO': skip to part V.

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? NO
Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act ([WMO](#)) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects ([CCMO](#)).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? NO

2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? NO

3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? NO

4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? NO

Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).

5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? NO

6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)? YES

7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? NO
8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? NO
9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? NO
10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? NO

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

As the research will be conducted among youth/adolescents of color, participants will be selected based off of their racial/ethnic origin

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

As participants' racial/ethnic origin is recorded, it is important to safeguard this information and the participants who provide it. In order to do so, certain measures will be taken. Firstly, participants will be informed on the role racial/ethnic origin plays in the current research. They will also be informed on the fact that they have been selected based on their racial/ethnic origin and why this is the case. Furthermore, participants are given the opportunity to opt out of the research at any time, no matter the reason. This includes reasons regarding their racial/ethnic origin. Moreover, all information provided by the participants will be handled and stored with utmost care and will not be shared with any parties that are not concerned with the current research. Participants' racial/ethnic origin may be mentioned in the thesis, but cannot be traced back to the participant, as the participant will be anonymized and referred to as 'Interviewee A', for example.

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

No

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

The city of Rotterdam

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

7-8 interviewees

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

The entire population of Rotterdam is approximately 655.468 people. I seek to find the youth of color in Rotterdam.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

On my laptop

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

Me, Sofia Hussein

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

I will make sure the data will be backed-up on a hard drive.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

By referring to interviewees as, for example, 'Interviewee A' instead of their real names.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

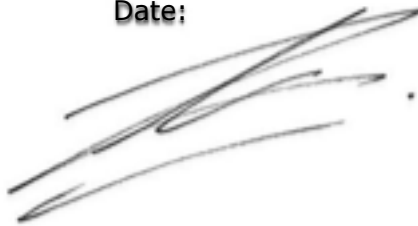
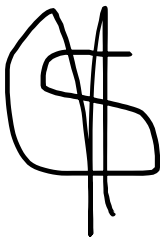
Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Sofia Hussein

Name (EUR) supervisor:

Date: 25/03/2023

Date:



Information and consent form

Sense of belonging among youth of color

Introduction

Dear participant, my name is Sofia Hussein. I am a Master student in Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. Thank you for participating in my research regarding sense of belonging among youth of color. If there are any words or concepts that you do not understand or if you have any additional questions later on, please do not hesitate to contact me at 507698sh@student.eur.nl.

If you want to participate in the study, you can indicate this at the end of this form.

What is the research about?

This research is about how certain community-based cultural spaces in Rotterdam, such as Notes, The Niteshop and Hiphophuis, contribute to a sense of belonging among youth of color in Rotterdam.

Why are we asking you to participate?

We ask you to participate because your experiences help to understand the concept of sense of belonging and how it comes about among youth of color.

What can you expect?

The interview lasts approximately 1 hour.

If you do not want to answer a question during the interview, you are not required to do so.

I will make an audio recording of the conversation.

At the end of the interview, you will have the opportunity to comment on your answers. If you disagree with my notes or if I misunderstood you, you can ask to have parts of them amended or deleted.

You decide whether to participate

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can stop at any time and would not need to provide any explanation.

What do you get for participating?

No compensation is available for participating in this research.

What data will I ask you to provide?

I will store your data so that I can be in contact with you. For the study, I will also need other data from you. During the interview, the following personal data will be collected from you: Name, age, gender, audio or visual recordings, occupation, cultural background, ethnic background, sentiments about / feelings about / opinions about sense of belonging.

I also need your email address to send the results of the study to you by email.

Who can see your data?

- I store all your data securely.
- Only persons involved in the research can see (some of) the data. Only the principal investigator has access to your data such as your name and personal information.
- Recordings are transcribed. Your name is replaced with a number/made-up name.
- Data such as your direct personal data, i.e. name and contact details, will be stored.

How long will your personal data be stored?

Your data will be retained for a minimum of 10 years. We retain the data so that other researchers have the opportunity to verify that the research was conducted correctly.

Using your data for new research

(Part of) the data we collect may be useful in anonymized form, for example for educational purposes and future research, including in very different research areas. We will make the data publicly available after proper anonymization. We ensure that the data cannot be traced back to you/we do not disclose anything that identifies you.

What happens with the results of the study?

At the end of the interview, you may indicate if you would like to receive the results.

Do you have questions about the study?

If you have any questions about the study or your privacy rights, such as accessing, changing, deleting, or updating your data, please contact me.

Name: Sofia Hussein

Email: 507698sh@student.eur.nl

Do you have a complaint or concerns about your privacy? Please email the Data Protection Officer (fg@eur.nl) or visit www.autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl. (T: 088 - 1805250)

Do you regret your participation?

You may regret your participation. Even after participating, you can still stop. Please indicate this by contacting me. I will delete your data. Sometimes we need to keep your data so that, for example, the integrity of the study can be checked.

Ethics approval

This research has been reviewed and approved by an internal review committee of Erasmus University Rotterdam. This committee ensures that research participants are protected. If you would like to know more about this RERC/IRB, please contact [add contact information or website].

Declaration of Consent

I have read the information letter. I understand what the study is about and what data will be collected from me. I was able to ask questions as well. My questions were adequately answered. I know that I am allowed to stop at any time.

By signing this form, I

1. consent to participate in this research.
2. consent to the use of my personal data;
3. confirm that I am at least 18 years old¹.
4. understand that participating in this research is completely voluntary and that I can stop at any time; and
5. understand that my data will be anonymised for publication, educational purposes and further research.

Check the boxes below if you consent to this.

Required for research participation,

Audio recording

I consent to [the interview] being audio recorded.

¹ GDPR permits 16 years old in the EEA to consent. From an ethics perspective, holding on to the age people become an adult may be preferable. Different countries may handle a different age for becoming an adult.

Visual recording

I consent to [the interview] being filmed.

My answers in the article

I give permission for my answers to be used in papers, such as an article in a journal or book. My name will not be included.

Use for educational purposes and further research

I hereby consent to having my personal data, namely name and contact information, stored and used for educational purposes and for future research, also in other areas of research than this research.

New research

I give permission to be contacted again for new research.

Name of participant:

Participant's signature:

Date:

You will receive a copy of the complete information and consent form.

Appendix B: Interview guide

Topic/theme	Examples of questions and probes
<p>Introduction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thank you so much for participating - I invited you because I'm curious about how community-based spaces, such as Notes and The Niteshop, contribute to a sense of belonging among youth of color in Rotterdam - I hope in the end that I will better understand how your sense of belonging, as a person of color, comes about in the city of Rotterdam and what role Notes and The Niteshop play in this process - The interview will take approximately 30-60 minutes, is that okay for you? - There are no right or wrong answers to the questions asked in this interview, I just want to know your perspective - Everything you tell me will be confidential, which means it will stay between you and me. If you're okay with it, I will record the interview – only for me to remember what is said in the conversation - The results of the research will be generalized, so the information cannot be tracked back to you, which means you will remain anonymous - Do you have any questions for me?
<p>General questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could you tell me a bit about your life in Rotterdam? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupation, age, interests? • Did you grow up here? • If not, why did you move here? - Who of your close relationships live in Rotterdam? (family, friends, co-workers etc.)
<p>Notes/The Niteshop Community-based cultural spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does the term 'community' mean to you? - Could you tell me how you became familiar with Notes and/or The Niteshop? - Could you tell me your general view on Notes/The Niteshop? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From your perspective, what is it that these spaces do?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would you say characterizes these community-based spaces? • If you are familiar with both, how would you compare the two? • How important is the existence of such spaces for you? → What is the added value of their existence? - Could you tell me about what kind of events you attended that these spaces organized? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you choose to attend these events? - How did you experience these events?
Immigrant-hostile discourses	<p>The city of Rotterdam brands itself as a superdiverse, post-colonial city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superdiversity = ... • Post-colonial = ... - What is being a person of color in Rotterdam like for you? - As a person of color in Rotterdam, how do you experience Rotterdam's superdiversity? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the past year, have you experienced hostility coming from...? - How do you feel Rotterdam secures/fosters this superdiversity? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What efforts do you feel like the city makes to make you feel 'at home'? - How do you feel Rotterdam plays a role in your sense of inclusion/exclusion within the city? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you say your non-Western immigrant background/being a person of color has anything to do with this? • If yes, in what way? • If not, why not?
Sense of belonging	
Social connectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At Notes/The Niteshop events, do you connect with other visitors?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, in what ways? / based on what? (racial/ethnic origin, age-group, interests?) • If not, how come? - In what ways do you feel like Notes/The Niteshop have contributed to your connection with other Notes/The Niteshop visitors? - Do you feel like Notes/The Niteshop encourage you to connect with others? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, in what way? • If not, why not? How could they improve?
Group identification	<p>Notes and The Niteshop cater to people from all kinds of backgrounds, but especially people of color/people with a non-Western migration background.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain concept of identity - Do you identify with other Notes/The Niteshop visitors? - Do consider yourself part of the Notes/Niteshop community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, what makes you feel part of the community? What is it like to be part of the community? • If not, how come? What do you miss? - Would you say that being a person of color contributes to a greater connection to Notes/The Niteshop and its visitors?
Identity formation + social identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What kind of individuals do you feel are part of the Notes/Niteshop community? (in-group/out-group conversation) - How do Notes/The Niteshop contribute to your personal development? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job-opportunities, mental health, self-confidence, communication skills etc. <p>Notes core values = ... The Niteshop core values = ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you relate/identify with these values? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they represent your own?