

Culture, well-being, and Rotterdam South

A study on cultural participation and its perceived effects on
subjective well-being in an urban, deprived area

Student Name: Juliette van der Meij

Student Number: 468373

Supervisor: Emily Mannheimer

Master Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Erasmus University Rotterdam

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Abstract

Cultural participation and subjective well-being (SWB), separately and together, are both intensively researched concepts. Scholars seem to agree on the positive influence cultural participation can have on an individual's SWB. These concepts together, however, have not been studied in the setting of an urban, deprived area which is one of the reasons why this thesis is important and fills a gap in the literature. Additionally, research on these two concepts together could aid in policymaking. This had led to the following research question: *How do young adults in urban, deprived areas participate in cultural activities and how do they perceive the effect of these activities on their SWB?*

Rotterdam South is the deprived, urban area that is used as a case study in this research. Rotterdam South is an interesting case study for this research as it is characterized by various problems of huge magnitude which can be considered unusual in the Netherlands.

A broad definition of both culture and cultural participation is used and includes daily activities. SWB consists of life satisfaction, pleasant affect and unpleasant for this thesis and is centered around the perceived emotions, feelings, and moods a young adult perceives to experience.

A qualitative research method, interviews, was used to try to answer this research question. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with young adults who are living or have lived in Rotterdam South. The collected data was analyzed by using zero-coding and subsequently, thematic analysis.

This resulted in an inventory of cultural activities that young adults in Rotterdam South participate in. It also led to an overview of how these young adults engage in cultural activities. Furthermore, it was shown that young adults have several, conflicting views of culture in mind.

Moreover, young adults perceived to experience emotions, feelings, and moods associated with pleasant affect due to cultural participation. Social interaction plays an important part as it is a motivation for young adults to engage in cultural participation as well as a reason for them to experience positive emotions and moods. Additionally, young adults perceived to experience some emotions, feelings, and moods related to unpleasant affect. Young adults perceive work-related cultural activities and cultural activities that they feel obligated to engage in as possible causes of their negative emotions and feelings such as nervousness and annoyance. Finally, young adults perceive for cultural participation to have a positive effect on their life satisfaction.

Cultural participation provides them with the possibility to gain knowledge and new perspectives, develop their skills as well as possibly improve their mental health.

KEYWORDS: cultural participation, subjective well-being, life satisfaction, pleasant affect, unpleasant affect

Preface

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Emily Mannheimer. This thesis would not be possible without her helpful feedback, guidance, and reassurance. I would also like to thank the interviewees for the interesting conversations we had. Finally, I would like to thank my brother and parents for supporting me through this process.

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1. Introduction

Opera, ballet, and museums are examples of what is traditionally considered culture (Mandel, 2019). More specifically, these examples of fine arts are usually seen as highbrow culture (Purhonen, Gronow & Rahkonen, 2011). The notion of what we consider culture, however, is rapidly changing to include all sorts of types of culture beyond highbrow culture (Mihelj, Leguina & Downey, 2019). Furthermore, the lines between highbrow and lowbrow culture are fading, everyday activities are also seen as culture and culture is becoming more commodified (Mihelj et al, 2019).

A great example of this development is street art. Street art is a type of art that relatively recently has been incorporated in the term culture and has gained popularity when well-known artists such as Keith Haring engaged in street art (Martorana, Mazza & Monaco, 2017). Research shows that street art has several benefits for a neighborhood (Martorana et al, 2017). It is a type of culture that is easily accessible for everyone, it is an innovative way for self-expression and can make an urban environment more amenable (Martorana et al, 2017).

Not only street art, but culture in general might be exactly what an urban environment could need to improve living conditions. Several studies show that culture has a great impact on well-being (Blessi, Grossi, Sacco, Pieretti & Ferilli, 2016). To be more precise, research shows that cultural participation can positively contribute to well-being (Reyes-Martínez, Takeuchi, Martínez-Martínez & Lombe, 2021). Cultural participation is a relatively broad concept and can be seen as engaging in cultural or artistic activities (Reyes-Martínez et al, 2021) as well as everyday activities or a lifestyle (Morrone, 2009). For example, research shows that participating in cultural activities can improve the balance between experiencing positive and negative emotions (Reyes-Martínez et al, 2021). Moreover, Koonlaan, Bygren and Johansson (2000) found positive evidence in their study for the relationship between life expectation and participating in cultural activities. Additionally, a more specific example is a study done by Daykin and colleagues (2018) that shows that activities related to music, such as playing an instrument, improve the subjective well-being of an individual.

Subjective well-being (henceforth, SWB) will also be the specific type of well-being that is going to be studied in this thesis. SWB is the emotional state an individual perceives her/himself to be in (Blessi et al, 2016).

SWB can consist of several components (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999) of which life satisfaction, pleasant affect and unpleasant affect will be discussed in this research.

For this thesis the main research question is: *How do young adults in urban, deprived areas participate in cultural activities and how do they perceive the effect of these activities on their SWB?* To be able to answer this question more concretely, a case study on Rotterdam South will be done. Rotterdam is one of the biggest cities of the Netherlands (Schram, Scherpenisse & van Twist, 2018). The south part is generally known as a highly disadvantaged area of Rotterdam (Oosterom, 2017). It is characterized by a high crime and unemployment rate, drug dealing, prostitution, and bad housing (Schram et al, 2018). To illustrate the poverty of the south, we will take a neighborhood located in the south, the Afrikaanderwijk, as an example. Per 2021, 10.5% of the labor force in Rotterdam was unemployed (CBS, 2021). In the Afrikaanderwijk in 2021, 16.5% of the labor force was unemployed, a difference of 6.5 percentage points compared to Rotterdam in its entirety (CBS, 2021). The labor force consists of people between 15 and 75 years of age and are either employed, recently have looked for a paid job or are instantly available (CBS, 2023).

So far, the research on the relationship between cultural participation and SWB is generally positive with cultural activities contributing in a beneficial way to the well-being of individuals (Ateca-Amestoy, V., Gerstenblüth, M., Mussio, I., & Rossi, M., 2016; Martorana et al, 2017; Blessi et al, 2016). Nonetheless, little studies have researched the two concepts in an urban setting (Blessi et al, 2016) or in a deprived area of a city. Additionally, to the knowledge of the researcher, there is little knowledge on SWB specifically in the are of Rotterdam South.

Rotterdam South is an especially interesting urban, deprived area to study since the magnitude of the problems there are considered ‘un-Dutch’ by Deetman and Mans (2011), who conducted research on the issues of Rotterdam South. The number of problems combined with the magnitude of the problems is something that is not seen in other urban, deprived areas of the Netherlands (Deetman & Mans, 2011). Rotterdam South can therefore be considered an one of a kind urban, deprived area and thus research on this area adds unique findings to the literature on disadvantaged parts of cities. Summarizing, the scientific relevance of this thesis is filling this gap in the literature and research what cultural activities young adults in Rotterdam South engage in and how that impacts their SWB.

Furthermore, the social relevance is related to SWB, because, as mentioned, cultural participation can positively contribute to SWB (Reyes-Martínez et al, 2021; Koonlaan, Bygren & Johansson, 2000; Daykin et al, 2018).

Cultural participation cannot and will not be the solution to all the problems in a disadvantaged, urban areas but it can play a role in the improvement of these areas. It is therefore important to shed light on the contribution of cultural participation on SWB, also for policy making specifically in the urban, deprived areas. In addition, the social relevance is also related to cultural participation as an inventory of cultural activities citizens of Rotterdam South engage in is created in this research. This inventory can aid policymaking in the sense of what cultural activities might need more support and which ones are already popular among the young adults of Rotterdam South.

The qualitative research method that will be used to answer the research question are semi-structured interviews. The interviews were held with young adults between 18 and 30 years old who are currently living in Rotterdam South for five years or more or who have lived there for five years or more in the past. The data resulting from the interviews will be analyzed using thematic coding.

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter two will provide an overview of relevant literature. The concept of cultural participation will be further explained in terms of its definitions and determinants as well as related theories. Literature on subjective well-being will also be analyzed in detail in chapter two. The third chapter will be about the methods used in this thesis. It will describe the research method, interviews, thoroughly in addition to providing information data collection and analysis. The chapter will end with a short overview of Rotterdam South and the problems associated with this part of the city. The results are presented in chapter four along with an in-depth analysis of these results. A conclusion will complete this thesis. Additional information such as the interview guide and the codebook can be found in the appendices.

2. Literature review

2.1 Culture

Culture is an abstract, broadly encompassing term. It can refer to lifestyles or beliefs as well as features of society (Blessi et al, 2016; Morrone, 2009). Grossi and colleagues (2011) break the concept of culture down into three different meanings.

The first meaning refers to culture consisting of several permanently ingrained socio-environmental characteristics of an individual (Grossi, Sacco, Tavano, Blessi & Cerutti, 2011). These characteristics are usually more or less permanently ingrained in an individual due to the specific context someone grew up in (Grossi et al, 2011). Grossi et al (2011) give the example of an individual's ability to sing traditional songs related to the individual's homeland.

Secondly, the meaning of culture can be related to the formal obtaining of competencies and capabilities as a result of e.g., education (Grossi et al, 2011). It is important to note that these capabilities and competences are related to choices of an individual to invest in the development of one's human capital (Grossi et al, 2011). Participating in a formal training program to develop skills specifically related to an area of work is an example of such competency (Grossi et al, 2011).

Finally, culture can be referred to as acquiring specific traits, such as greater knowledge of specific art genres, that are related to both greater enjoyment and access to cultural experiences (Grossi et al, 2011). This third meaning may seem similar to the first. The difference, however, is that these traits mentioned in the third meaning are purposefully obtained through cultural activities whereas the traits mentioned in the first meaning can be obtained through any activity, it does not have to be cultural per se (Grossi et al, 2011).

In summary, it can be stated that culture is all traits of society or a particular social group (Grossi et al, 2011; Morrone, 2009). These traits can be abstract, affective, physical, and psychological (Morrone, 2009). Furthermore, culture does not only revolve around e.g., art, but also about daily activities, social interactions, norms, values, and traditions (Morrone, 2009). These three meanings of culture by Grossi and colleagues (2011) can be combined into one, overarching definition of culture that will be used throughout this research. Culture consists of all abstract, affective, physical and psychological traits of a society or a particular social group and includes art as well as daily life activities, social interactions and norms, values and traditions (Grossi et al, 2011; Morrone, 2009).

2.2 Cultural participation

2.2.1 *What is cultural participation*

As logically follows, the concept of cultural participation is just as complex and broad as that of culture. One can simply state that cultural participation can be defined as taking part in cultural and artistic activities (Reyes-Martínez et al, 2021), but the definition of cultural participation can be much broader than that (Yue & Khan, 2015). Participating in culture can be done formally through e.g., employment or education, and informally by engaging in cultural activities at home, for instance (Morrone, 2009). One can engage in cultural participation both actively and passively (Galloway, 2006) as well as alone or together or as part of a group (Morrone, 2009; Yue & Khan, 2015). An active way to engage in cultural participation is for example painting whereas a passive way is e.g., watching a dance performance.

Furthermore, Ateca-Amestoy (2010) makes an interesting observation regarding cultural participation activities. She explains that activities can be the primary or secondary focus of individuals and that a cultural activity must be one's primary focus for it to be considered cultural participation (Ateca-Amestoy, 2010). She adds this condition to the definition of cultural participation to distinguish cultural participation from leisure activities. A cultural activity is seen as cultural participation when an individual engages in the activity with intention of the cultural activity being the individual's primary focus. This is an important distinction to be made as cultural participation already has such a broad definition. What this means concretely is that when someone is listening to music while cleaning their house, it is not seen as cultural participation in this thesis. What is recognized as cultural participation is for example someone actively listening to a new album of one of their favorite artists.

Additionally, an individual can have several goals for engaging in cultural participation. Participating in a cultural activity can be a way to (culturally) express oneself (Mundet et al, 2017; Morrone, 2009), to create an identity (Reyes-Martínez, 2022), to practice tradition (Morrone, 2009), for enjoyment (Reyes-Martínez, 2012) or as a lifestyle (Reyes-Martínez, 2022). Next to different purposes of cultural participation, it can be reasoned that cultural participation is associated to several needs and benefits that humans have (Reyes-Martínez, 2022). These needs can be a need for distinctiveness, for socializing, for an escape to an aesthetic or symbolic need (Reyes-Martínez, 2022).

Moreover, it is important to note that the terms ‘cultural consumption’ and ‘cultural participation’ are sometimes used interchangeably in articles. According to research by Ateca-Amestoy and colleagues (2016), cultural consumption happens through the media by reading books, watching tv, listening to music or online engagement with culture. They see cultural consumption as a rather passive behavior (Ateca-Amestoy et al, 2016). Cultural participation is seen as the active ways one engages with culture by Ateca-Amestoy and her colleagues (2016). Morrone (2009) refers to cultural consumption as the activity for which an individual has paid. Where Morrone (2009) shines light on the possible monetary aspect of cultural consumption, Ateca-Amestoy et al (2016) focuses on the behavioral element. Morrone (2009), however, also provides another interesting insight on this debate. He includes cultural consumption in the definition of cultural participation by stating that cultural participation can range from activities performed in daily life to traditions and beliefs (Morrone, 2009). So, by including cultural consumption in the definition of cultural participation, Morrone (2009) sees both passive and active ways of engaging with culture as cultural participation. Important to note is that this does not take away from the fact a cultural activity has to be done with intent for it to be considered cultural participation. Concluding, for the reasons that culture is multidimensional and Morrone’s explanation, cultural consumption will be considered as part of cultural participation in this thesis.

2.2.2 Categories of cultural participation

As we look at cultural participation more concretely, several categories of cultural participation activities can be identified. A list of cultural participation activities can be seen in table 1. This list is compiled through academic literature by Ateca-Amestoy, 2010; Ateca-Amestoy et al, 2016; Grossi et al, 2021; Mandel, 2019; Martorana, Mazza & Monacao, 2017; Mihelj et al, 2019; Morrone, 2009; Reyes-Martínez et al, 2021; Reyes-Martínez, 2022; Vander Stichele & Laermans, 2006; Yue & Khan, 2015.

These articles were chosen to be used for the list for different reasons. Some articles focus on cultural participation and SWB (Ateca-Amestoy et al, 2016; Grossi et al, 2021; Reyes-Martínez et al, 2021; Reyes-Martínez, 2022), but in a different setting than an urban, deprived area. Cultural participation on its own is the focus point of some other articles, such as the articles by Martorana et al (2017), Mihelj et al (2019), Morrone (2009) and Vander Stichele & Laermans (2006). Furthermore, some articles were chosen to be included because they shine light on a cultural activity or activities that are not typically considered cultural.

For instance, the article by Ateca-Amestoy (2010) herself focuses, among other things, on cultural participation and leisure time and therefore, some of the activities presented in this article are not regarded as cultural by other scholars. An example of such an activity is listening to music (Ateca-Amestoy, 2010). Another example is the article by Yue & Khan (2015). This article presents e.g., volunteer work as a cultural activity which was not mentioned in any of the other articles.

The benefit of using all these articles is that they provide a broad overview of activities. Additionally, the fact that other scholars also view these activities as cultural, adds to the validity of this list. The list, translated in Dutch, was used during the interviews. The list in Dutch can be found in appendix D.

Cultural activities
Read a book/magazine
Go to the cinema
Make art For example: photography, pottery baking, painting, drawing, graffiti
Attend a concert
Dancing
Gardening
Sports
Listen to music
Sing
Participate in/attend an event For example: carnival, festival, circus, parade, reading

Attend a performing arts show For example: theatre, dance
Visit a historical/archeological site For example: monument
Be a member of a cultural institution
Visit a museum/exhibition/atelier
Make music
Cooking and eating
Fashion For example: shopping
Volunteer work
Attend/watch sport events
Practice religion For example: praying, go to the church/mosque/synagogue, rituals
Practice spirituality For example: astrology, readings, reiki
Other Such as:

Table 1: overview of cultural activities

2.2.3 Determinants of cultural participation

Now that it is established what cultural participation entails, the determinants of cultural participation of individuals will be discussed. The cultural participation that one engages in is dependent on multiple, different factors. Some researchers assume that cultural participation relies on one's habits, resources such as time and money available and the degree to which one is involved in culture (Reyes-Martínez et al, 2021; Ateca-Amestoy, 2010). While this can definitely be the case, there are many more dimensions to these factors that determine cultural participation.

Bertacchini, Venturini and Zotti (2021) did an interesting study on cultural participation among immigrants and found that the most quoted drivers of cultural participation are individual sociodemographic characteristics. These characteristics are age, gender, marital status, composition of the household, occupational status, level of education and income (Bertacchini et al, 2021). Income is an interesting driver of cultural participation as it can both determine as well as increase or decrease the intensity of cultural participation (Bertacchini et al, 2021).

Social class position is another sociodemographic characteristic that is often quoted (Falk & Katz-Gerro, 2015; Vander Stichele & Laermans, 2006; Bertacchini et al, 2021; Mihelj et al, 2019; Mandel, 2019). Other sociodemographic characteristics that can be drivers of cultural participation are occupational prestige (Falk & Katz-Gerro, 2015), ethnicity (Mihelj et al, 2019; Mandel, 2019), parents' level of education (Mandel, 2019; Ateca-Amestoy, 2010), illness or disability (Mihelj, 2019) and place of living (Mihelj, 2019).

A study done by Vander Stichele and Laermans (2006) expands two of these characteristics, namely education level and age. They found that frequency of cultural participation increases as the level of education increases (Vander Stichele & Laermans, 2006). Additionally, their results show that the kind of cultural activity one engages in varies with age as older groups of people that often engage in cultural activities, tend to prefer the fine arts whereas younger groups show interest in several kinds of culture, primarily popular culture (Vander Stichele & Laermans, 2006).

More recent research by Mandel (2019) supports these findings by also stating that the level of education has a significant effect on one's cultural participation. Mandel (2019) even specifies the Vander Stichele and Laermans' finding on the influence of age on cultural participation. She finds that 14- to 24-year-olds are increasingly paying attention to popular culture and decreasingly to traditional forms of culture (Mandel, 2019).

A final determinant of cultural participation is cultural capital. The concept of cultural capital was originally created by Bourdieu and essentially means "an asset embodying cultural value" (Throsby, 1999, p. 3). Bourdieu states that cultural capital can occur in three states (Bourdieu, 1986). Firstly, it can be in an embodied state where cultural capital is an individual's propensity (Bourdieu, 1986). Secondly, it can be in an objectified state where cultural capital is made physical through e.g., paintings or books (Bourdieu, 1986). Finally, it can be institutionalized (Bourdieu, 1986). This happens when the embodied cultural capital is acknowledged through for instance a diploma (Bourdieu, 1986).

Cultural capital can determine an individual's cultural participation because it plays a role in forming one's taste (Bertacchini et al, 2021). Yaish and Katz-Gerro (2010) even state that cultural capital is the most relevant factor for cultural participation.

2.3 Subjective well-being

2.3.1 Definition of subjective well-being

SWB is a widely researched concept with no consensus on what actually constitutes as SWB and its elements (Reyes-Martínez et al, 2021). It can be seen as an evaluation of an individual's state according to Blessi and colleagues (2016). These researchers explain that SWB is the emotional state of individuals linked to their perspectives on their environment, such as their place of work and home (Blessi et al, 2016). Moreover, SWB is defined as a broad, collective term for people's emotional reactions, contentment with several aspects of life and overall judgment of one's life (Diener et al, 1999). In other words, the subjective reactions and responses of individuals to their objective life conditions can be explained by the use of SWB (Reyes-Martínez et al, 2021).

Although these definitions of SWB are still a little vague, the concept will become clearer when the various components of SWB identified are discussed.

2.3.2 Pleasant and unpleasant affect

Pleasant and unpleasant affect make up the affective component of SWB (Diener et al, 1999). Affect is concerned with the emotions someone feels when evaluating events happening in life (Diener et al, 1999). Pleasant and unpleasant affect can refer to respectively positive and negative emotions, feelings, and moods (Diener et al, 1999). In addition, pleasant affect does not always necessarily need to refer to positive emotions, it can also be for instance the lack of depression (Diener, Suh & Oishi, 1997). The same counts for unpleasant affect which can mean e.g., lack of feelings of happiness.

Furthermore, pleasant and unpleasant affect revolve around the frequency of experiencing positive and negative emotions, feelings, and moods (Diener et al, 1997). Feeling anger or shame, emotions considered negative, occasionally does not immediately mean an individual has a negative subjective well-being (Diener et al, 1997). The keyword here is affective balance (Schimmack, Radhakrishnan, Oishi, Dzokoto & Ahadi, 2002). Balance here is not meant that an individual should feel as much positive emotions as negative ones (Schimmack et al, 2002).

It means that an individual experiences mostly positive emotions and sometimes some negative emotions, but in general no more negative emotions than positive (Schimmack et al, 2002).

One might argue that pleasant and unpleasant affect can be seen together as one component of SWB, because both affects involves emotions, feelings, and moods. This is, however, not the case. Pleasant and unpleasant affect should be considered as two separate components of SWB because the outcomes of one affect cannot be automatically applied to the other component (Reyes-Martínez et al, 2021). An event or occasion that creates positive emotions within an individual does not necessarily increases one's negative emotions when that particular event or occasion does not take place.

2.3.3 Life satisfaction

One component of SWB that is frequently mentioned and researched is life satisfaction (Reyes-Martínez, 2022). Life satisfaction refers to an individual's preferences, needs and values in life and to what extent their current life meets these preferences, needs and values (Reyes-Martínez, 2022). For instance, life satisfaction can specifically refer to an individual's contentment with material conditions or their health (Reyes-Martínez, 2022). As with all components of SWB, life satisfaction is also subjective, meaning that individuals themselves are the only ones who can state to what extent their lifestyles provide them with what they need and want (Diener et al, 1999). Also, individuals usually use standards set by themselves and evaluate their lives using their own subjective standards (Schimmack et al, 2002). How this can pose as a problem when researching SWB will be explained in section 2.3.5.

Life satisfaction and affect may seem similar. Nevertheless, affect is specifically concerned with emotions, feelings and moods felt whereas life satisfaction is considered to be a global judgment of one's life. It can also be explained in the sense that affect is more short-term than life satisfaction as emotions, feelings and moods are experienced in the moment and life satisfaction is an overall appraisal (Ash & Huebner, 2001).

Moreover, life satisfaction can be considered the cognitive part of SWB (Veenhoven, 2011). Life satisfaction is the SWB-component where an individual actively uses their mental capabilities, such as thinking and reasoning, to evaluate his/her life (Ash & Huebner, 2001). In this sense, life satisfaction can also be seen as the fundament of an individual's responses to events happening, and emotions and moods felt (Ash & Huebner, 2001).

This fundament will therefore influence an individual's behavior, social interactions, and engagement with all activities one undertakes (Ash & Huebner, 2001). To simplify, if an individual evaluates his/her life rather negatively, he/she is more likely to show negative emotions or be in a negative mood.

Additionally, life satisfaction is something an individual can control up to a certain extent (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). For example, if an individual is not happy with his/her income, he/she can ask for a raise, switch jobs, or find a side job. Life satisfaction, however, is also partly dependent on an individual's personality (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). All humans have a certain tendency included in their personality on how to evaluate their life and this tendency ranges from positive to negative (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). So, the exact same event could happen to two people, but they could react differently due to their tendencies being different.

2.3.4 Other definitions of SWB

Interesting is that scholars often use life satisfaction and happiness as synonyms for SWB (Ateca-Amestoy, 2010; Galloway, 2006; Reyes-Martínez et al, 2021; Veenhoven, 2011). If one uses life satisfaction and/or happiness as synonyms for SWB, however, it could lead to too narrow definitions of what entails as SWB. As explained before, an important characteristic of life satisfaction is that it is a cognitive concept (Veenhoven, 2011). If life satisfaction is seen as SWB, an affective component is missed and the concept of SWB is only cognitive. This is not desirable when researching SWB as SWB can be seen as an individual's subjective reactions to objective situations (Reyes-Martínez et al, 2021). Reactions include emotions and feelings which makes it hard to research life satisfaction as SWB due to the lack of the affective component.

It can be argued that happiness as a synonym for SWB is also not preferable for similar reasons as mentioned. It can be explained that happiness is a psychological state (Daykin et al, 2018). An individual can feel and experience happiness (Diener et al, 1999). If one were to use happiness as the same concept as SWB, however, the cognitive element of SWB would be missing. Nonetheless, happiness can be included in the concept of SWB (Diener et al, 1999). Happiness is generally considered a positive emotion and thus, can be seen as part of pleasant affect (Reyes-Martínez et al, 2021).

Some researchers also include quality of life (QOL) as a component of SWB (Ateca-Amestoy, 2010; Galloway, 2006).

Although the definition of QOL varies widely among scholars, in general it has a component of more objective measurement of an individual's well-being (Bowling & Windsor, 2001). For instance, a way to measure QOL is to look at to what extent an individual's life meets human needs (Bowling & Windsor, 2001). Other scholars also argue that in the world today, basic human needs are usually met, thereby creating a certain standard of quality (Andrews, 1974). By using QOL, it can then be measured to what degree humans have added quality to their lives by looking at e.g., the pleasure they experience (Andrews, 1974). So, with the explanation of Andrews (1974), QOL has as fundament an objective measurement and then complements this with a subjective measurement. QOL is not included in the concept of SWB for this thesis due to two reasons. Firstly, QOL is widely studied and debated (Bowling & Windsor, 2001), therefore too big to include 'only' as a component of SWB. Secondly, SWB in this thesis centers around the subjective reactions of individuals and has no place for the objective component of QOL.

2.3.5 Difficulties researching SWB

As mentioned before, SWB is a concept that individuals themselves only can judge. Several issues can arise due to this fact when researching it. As was explained, an individual's personality can influence how they assess their SWB (Diener et al, 1999). The processes underlying people's behavior can also pose as a problem (Diener et al, 1999). They could negatively react to a positive event happening due to a traumatic experience in the past. Additionally, an individual's mood at the time of the data collection (interview, survey, etc.) can influence how they perceive their SWB (Diener et al, 1999). Although it can be argued that the current mood is also part of one's SWB, it is important not to let the current mood influence past recollections of feelings, emotions, and moods (Diener et al, 1999).

Moreover, a debate within the field of SWB is whether SWB is considered a bottom-up or top-down theory (Heady, Veenhoven & Weari, 1990). When SWB is seen as a bottom-up theory, the question is how do e.g., events or circumstance impact one's SWB? (Heady et al, 1990). So, in the bottom-up theory, the assumption is that several variables have an influence, positive or negative, on an individual's SWB (Heady et al, 1990). In their article, Heady and colleagues (1990) give a good example regarding, for simplicity, only life satisfaction. Life satisfaction can be seen as a total of satisfactions with several life domains, such as marriage satisfaction and job satisfaction (Heady et al, 1990). The satisfactions with the several domains influence the total life satisfaction, like a math equation (Heady et al, 1990).

The top-down theory is the other way around (Heady et al, 1990). The question, when SWB is considered a top-down approach is, how does one's SWB influence events or circumstances? (Heady et al, 1990). In the case of SWB as a top-down theory, how an individual feels and evaluates his/her life, influences the outcome, namely their life (Heady et al, 1990). If only life satisfaction is taken into account again, Diener (1984) explains that there is an interaction between the satisfactions with the domains. If an individual is satisfied with one domain, this satisfaction could spill over to other domain(s) (Diener, 1984). In this sense, SWB is a top-down theory (Diener, 1984). If an individual is not satisfied with his/her marriage, this may lead them to evaluate events happening at their job more negatively, as they are already dissatisfied with one domain of their life.

3. Methods

3.1 Research design and method

Qualitative research was the research design used to approach the research question *how do young adults in urban, deprived areas participate in cultural activities and how do they perceive the effect of these activities on their SWB?* Qualitative research produces non-numerical data and provides an abundant description of people's experiences, beliefs, and feelings (Naderifar, Goli, H, & Ghaljaie, 2017). Qualitative research is suitable for this research as one of the aims of this research is to investigate one's feelings and experiences with regards to cultural participation. The purpose of qualitative research is generally to contribute to already existing knowledge (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006) which is in line with this thesis's aim of exploring the relatively unknown impact of cultural participation on subjective well-being specifically in an urban, deprived area.

The specific type of qualitative research method that was used were in-depth and semi-structured interviews. This structure for the interviews was chosen because of the necessity for certain questions to be answered as well as the freedom for the interviewer and interviewee to explore subjects that come up unexpectedly. The goal of interviews for qualitative research is usually to gain a more broad and better understanding of a phenomenon (Castleberry & Nolan, 2018). This goal is typically reached through investigating the experiences of people who have a connection to the phenomenon (Castleberry & Nolan, 2018).

It is important to note that usually surveys are used to research SWB (Diener et al, 1999; Falk & Katz-Gerro, 2016; Martorana et al, 2017). Surveys usually allow to measure the SWB of a greater number of respondents and typically result in a higher level of representability (Diener et al, 1999). The chosen method of interviews, however, was selected for multiple reasons. Firstly, a qualitative method, such as interviews, is a tool to shine light on the underlying processes regarding cultural participation and SWB (Daykin et al, 2018). The goal of this research was not to get an overall view of the SWB in Rotterdam South, but to investigate how young adults perceive their own SWB in relation to cultural participation. Moreover, surveys generally do not have the room for unexpected topics to be explored as semi-structured interviews do have.

3.2 Case study: Rotterdam South

Cultural participation and subjective well-being were studied in the setting of an urban, deprived area. The area that was analyzed is the south side of the city Rotterdam. Rotterdam is one of the largest cities in the Netherlands of which the south part of it is well-known as the ‘bad’ area, the area you do not want to walk through alone at night (Schram et al, 2018).

As mentioned in the introduction, the problems in Rotterdam South are considered ‘un-Dutch’ (Deetman & Mans, 2011). The number of problems present in Rotterdam South in combination with the enormity of the problems cannot be found in other deprived areas in the Netherlands (Deetman & Mans, 2011). It is therefore intriguing to study the SWB of the citizens in Rotterdam South. They are living in an area characterized by big problems, not experienced in this magnitude in other disadvantaged parts of the Netherlands. Do these citizens experience any positive feelings while engaging in cultural participation? Or does cultural participation not have any effect due to the issues present?

In addition to SWB, it is intriguing to study cultural participation in an urban, deprived area. What cultural activities do citizens of a disadvantaged, urban area participate in? Do these citizens even participate in cultural activities? It is interesting to examine how they view and perceive culture, as this might differ from the general idea of culture.

3.2.1 History of Rotterdam South

Rotterdam South emerged in 1591 and counts around 200.000 citizens (de Jonge, 2022). The area used to be officially divided into four areas: Charlois, Feijenoord, Hoogvliet and IJsselmonde (Oosterom, 2017). Although this division is no longer official, it is still generally used by citizens of Rotterdam (Oosterom, 2017). Rotterdam South did not always have the bad reputation it has today, it once was a place of great economic and social developments (Schram et al, 2018). This changed during the seventies when the harbor was moved out of the south to the western part of Rotterdam and the municipality built homes in this area destined for social housing (Schram et al, 2018). These homes had the disadvantage of mainly attracting underprivileged people which led to an increase in problems in Rotterdam South and a decrease in economic growth (Deetman & Mans, 2011).

3.2.2 A deprived, urban area

It is difficult to determine when an urban area can be considered ‘deprived’ (Herbert, 1975). Living standards change over time, per country and even per city (Herbert, 1975).

Additionally, deprivation is specific to certain components of society (Herbert, 1975). Herbert (1975) provides the following definition of what deprivation in an urban area can mean: “deprivation implies a standard of living or quality of life below that of the majority in a particular society, to the extent that it involves hardship, inadequate access to resources, and underprivilege” (p. 362). The deprivation in Rotterdam South can be explained by looking at the problems that characterize Rotterdam South.

Housing is still, since the seventies, one of the main problems. Almost 90% of house in this area are meant for social housing (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.). People who do not qualify for social housing move to other parts of the city and thereby, out of Rotterdam South (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.).

Another issue is that a higher number of people ‘only’ have a high school degree in Rotterdam South than in other parts of the city (Westerhof, 2022). Additionally, more than half of the citizens in these neighborhoods has a low income (Schram et al, 2018). In the Netherlands, a low income is dependent on an individual’s living situation (CBS, 2023). According to the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics, a net income below 1,1130 euros per month is considered ‘low’ for a person living alone (CBS, 2023). For a couple living together without children and for a couple living with two underaged children, net incomes per month of respectively 1,590 euros and 2,170 euros are considered ‘low’ (CBS, 2023). For a single parent living with two underaged children, a net income per month of 1,720 is considered low.

Moreover, there is a significantly higher unemployment rate in Rotterdam South than in the rest of the Netherlands (de Koning, Gelderblom & de Hek, 2020). Research by de Koning et al (2020) shows that in 2020 the number of employed people in the south of Rotterdam was 14% lower compared to the rest of the Netherlands and the number of people that received unemployment benefits was 4% higher.

Furthermore, the high criminality rate in these neighborhoods is a problem (Westerhof, 2022). Shootings and fights happen on a regular basis, break-ins are often reported, and drug dealing is not unusual (Schram et al, 2018).

3.2.3 Other demographics

Table 2 shows other demographics of Rotterdam South. These demographics are important to present because they give background information and are related to the demographics of the interviewees in chapter four.

Part of Rotterdam South	Percentage of population in young adult range, 18-26 years	Percentage of population in young adult range, 27-39 years	Place of origin: Netherlands	Migrant background: Non-Western countries
Feijenoord	14.2%	21.5%	30.7%	56.7%
Charlois	14.4%	23.6%	31.1%	49.5%
IJsselmonde	11.1%	19.4%	44.0%	44.8%
Hoogvliet	10.0%	17.7%	57.5%	31.0%

Table 2: other demographics of Rotterdam South¹ (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022).

What can be seen from table 2 is that in 2022 Feijenoord and Charlois, the young adults make up more than a third of the population. In IJsselmonde and Hoogvliet, young adults are a little less than a third of the population.

The non-Western countries that people come from in Rotterdam South are in 2022 Suriname, the Caribbean, Cape Verde, Turkey, Morocco, and other countries that are not specified (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022). Feijenoord has the most citizens who are from non-Western countries and Hoogvliet the least.

3.3 Data sample, collection, and analysis

3.3.1 Sample

The sample consisted of ten interviewees. One of the main criteria was that an interviewee had to be living in Rotterdam South for at least five years or had lived there for a minimum of five years. Five years was deemed by the researcher as enough time to become well-acquainted with the area of Rotterdam South.

Another criterion was that interviewees had to be between 18 and 30 years old as this research is focused on the young adults in Rotterdam South. The reason for this age range is that young people may have a broader notion of what culture means than the older generation (Mandel, 2019). This is important as also a broad definition of culture and cultural participation (as explained in the second chapter) is used in this research.

¹ Data on the age range used in this thesis (18-30 years) could not be found. Additionally, data for Rotterdam South as a whole could not be found. Citizens with a migrant background from Western countries are not relevant for this research and therefore, not included.

3.3.2 Data collection

The data was collected through interviews by the researcher only. Interviewees were contacted through WhatsApp or by a phone call.

The interviews were in-depth and semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews are organized around a certain number of predetermined questions but allow for the interviewer and interviewee to discuss topics that emerge during the interview (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Moreover, the interviews were held in person and were conducted individually, since individual interviews create more opportunities to dive deeper into the answers of the individual than a group setting would allow for (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

A combination of three sampling strategies was used to recruit interviewees, namely convenience sampling, snowball sampling and criterion sampling. Convenience sampling is a form of non-random sampling where the people of the target group either comply with certain practical criteria such as availability at a certain date and time or are easily accessible for the researcher (Etikan, Abubakar & Alkassim, 2016). In the case of this research, a few of the interviewees are friends or acquaintances of the researcher which makes it relatively easy to reach them.

As the number of interviewees recruited by convenience sampling that both met the criteria and were willing to be interviewed was limited, snowball sampling was also used. Snowball sampling happens when the research subjects that are already participating in the study, find other possible research subjects among their network to join (Naderifar et al, 2017). Snowball sampling is also a type of nonrandom sampling method (Naderifar et al, 2017). For this research, the friends and acquaintances found by convenience sampling recruited others until a sufficient number of interviewees was gathered.

Finally, criterion sampling was used in combination with both convenience and snowball sampling. Criterion sampling refers to choosing participants on the basis of pre-established criteria (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2015). The interviewees were not only chosen for their relatively easy access to the researcher, but also due to the fact that they met certain criteria such as age and place of living. Criterion sampling was used to ensure that the collected data would be suitable to answer the research question.

3.3.3 Data collection process

The data collection process went as planned for the most part. The age criteria was met for all interviewees, except for one. Nine out of ten interviewees were between the ages of 18 and 30, one interviewee was 31. The criteria that an interviewee had to live or have lived in Rotterdam South for at least five years was met by all interviewees. All ten interviews were conducted in Dutch and took place in person between 6th of April 2023 and 1st of May 2023. One of the interviewees chose for the interview to take place at Erasmus University. All other interviews were either at the interviewee's house or the interviewer's house, all by choice of the interviewees. A total of 10,5 hours of interviews was collected. All ten interviewees signed the consent form and agreed to have the interview recorded.

3.3.4 Data analysis

The data was analyzed by using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method where themes or patterns that emerge from the data are identified and analyzed (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017). The thematic analysis was a helpful tool for analyzing this data as it was important to identify emerging themes regarding the ways interviewees perceive cultural participation to affect their SWB. To identify these themes, the data was coded. The data was coded using the coding software Atlas.ti and the interviews were transcribed with the help of Amberscript.

As mentioned, the data resulting from the interviews was coded. Coding is a means to organize data and reduce the amount of data (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen & Snelgrove, 2016). More specifically, zero coding was used in this research. What this means concretely is that no codes are created prior to the data analysis, they are created during the reading of the transcripts (Vaismoradi et al, 2016) which was also the case for this thesis. Additionally, zero coding is therefore a reiterative and cyclic process (Vaismoradi et al, 2016). This is also the case for this thesis. Codes that were created while reading the transcript of one interview would also be applied to data from interviews read before.

During the coding process, several categories of codes emerged. Each category consists of multiple codes that revolve around the same subtheme. The following categories came up during the coding process: about activity x (codes specifically about activities), consequences (consequences of engaging in a cultural activities), demographics (of interviewees), feelings/emotions, motivation (for engaging in cultural activities), new cultural activity (when an interviewee presented a cultural activity not included in the list), obligatory (codes about obligatory cultural activities), reasons (for engaging in cultural participation),

Rotterdam South, unable (codes about interviewee who were unable to participate in a particular cultural activity), interviewee's view of culture and finally, work-related activity. For a full list of the codes, see appendix E.

3.4 Operationalization

The concept of cultural participation was operationalized by asking questions regarding the extent to which an interviewee engages in a cultural activity or activities. A list of cultural activities found in the literature was provided to the interviewee during the interview. This list can be found in chapter two. The goal of providing this list was to help the interviewees think about cultural activities they had not considered to be 'cultural' before or had not thought about before.

The concept of SWB was operationalized by using its three components: life satisfaction, pleasant affect, and unpleasant affect. Important to note is that SWB is subjective and dependent on an individual's personal evaluation. What this means concretely is that interviewees may experience the same events, but have different feelings, emotions, or thoughts about it which can result in different outcomes.

Life satisfaction was measured by asking the interviewee questions regarding the influence of cultural activities on their overall evaluation of their life. An example of a question regarding life satisfaction is: How does a particular cultural activity changes your evaluation of your life? How do you feel about your life in general before, during and after participating in cultural activity x?

Pleasant and unpleasant affect were operationalized by asking respondents questions regarding their emotions, feelings, and moods. Generally speaking, the interviewees were asked if and how participating in a cultural activity influenced their feelings, caused any emotions to come up and/or changed their mood. An example of a question regarding pleasant and unpleasant affect are whether participating in a particular cultural activity changes the mood of the interviewee or brings up any emotions and/or feelings.

3.5 Biases

Several biases can affect the validity and reliability and therefore, the quality of the data before, during and after the data collection and analysis. Biases can broadly be divided into participant biases and researcher biases.

The researcher biases existent in this research are observer bias, confirmation bias and question-order bias. Observer bias refers to the divergence from the objective truth during the collection and analysis of data (Mahtani, Spencer, Brassey & Heneghan, 2018).

The divergence happens due to the subjective state us humans are in and is hard to fully remove (Mahtani et al, 2018). A practice run of the interview questions with someone who was not part of the research was used to minimize the observer bias. The observer bias, however, was still present in this research as it is almost always (Mahtani et al, 2018).

Confirmation bias is the tendency of researchers to give priority to information found in data that confirms a predetermined belief, assumption, or idea and thereby, ignoring information that could question the belief, assumption, or idea (McSweeney, 2021).

Confirmation bias was also especially present in this research. The research done for chapter two prior to the interviews led to the emergence of certain expectations such as the expectation of positive feelings to arise when engaging in cultural activities. This led to questions asked during the interviews such as ‘what positive emotions or feelings did you experience while engaging in activity x?’ instead of a more neutral question such as ‘did you experience any emotions or feelings while engaging in activity x and if so, which ones?’.

Question-order bias refers to associations with previous questions that interviewees might have and that influence their answers to further questions (Bradburn & Mason, 1964). Question-order bias was minimized as much as possible by starting the interview with general questions before asking more focused questions. Yet, this solution did not always work out as expected. Some interviewees often referred to the answers they gave for the general questions instead of focusing on answering the more specific questions.

The participant bias present in this research is social desirability bias. Social desirability bias happens when researcher subjects give answers that they believe are more socially desirable or acceptable than their true answers (Grimm, 2010). According to Grimm (2010), social desirability bias can happen specifically in individual interviews due to the presence of another human, namely the interviewer. A way to reduce social desirability bias is to assure anonymity of the interviewees (Grimm, 2010) which was also done in this research. Social desirability bias was also especially present in this research. Some of the interviewees were friends or acquaintances of the interviewer and had thus, heard about the focus of this thesis prior to the interview. Even though anonymity of the interviewees was guaranteed and emphasized before and during the interviews, interviewees still gave answers that they thought would probably be helpful for the purpose of this research.

3.6 Consent

To ensure the most comfortable experience for the interviewees, a few measures were taken. First and foremost, the interviewees were promised anonymity from the moment of contacting with the question to participate in this research on. They were informed about the content of the research, the expectations of them for the interview and their rights, such as the ability to not participate in the research and the option to withdraw from the research at any point in time. Secondly, they all signed consent forms, clearly stating their rights, and received a physical copy of the signed consent form. The consent form can be found in appendix F. Since all interviewees were above the age of 18, no parents or guardians were required to also sign a consent form.

Because the interviews were held in person, the interviewee was given a few options of possible locations for the interview. These options consisted of their own or the interviewer's place of living if they were comfortable with that, the Erasmus university, or a coffee place of their choice. The interviewees chose which location they preferred and were able to change the location anytime they wanted to.

At the start of each interview, the interviewees were reminded of their chance to stop and withdraw themselves from the research at any point before, during or after the interview. Additionally, the interviewees were reminded of the fact that their participation was completely voluntarily. Only the audio of the interview was recorded, per the consent form, and no videos or photos of the interviewees were taken or included in the research.

Moreover, informal language was used during the interview. This was to ensure the best possible chance for interviewees to understand the interviewer's questions. Informal language also helped with making the interviewees feel comfortable expressing themselves as they would not have the pressure to use any academic language.

The collected data, such as the recordings and transcriptions of the interviews, are not shared with anyone other than the supervisor and second reader of the thesis and have been safely stored on the researcher's computer.

4. Results and analysis

4.1 Demographics of interviewees

A total of ten people were interviewed, see appendix B for a full list of the interviewees. Six of them identify as male and four as female. All interviewees are between the age of 22 to 30, which is within the age range that was set, except for one interviewee who is 31. Six interviewees are in a relationship of which five are also living together with their partner and if applicable, child(ren). Four interviewees are single and are living either alone, with roommates or with their parent(s) and sibling(s). Six interviewees have a Dutch nationality, four a non-Dutch nationality. Three interviewees have completed university education, five higher professional education and two secondary vocational education.

The occupations of the interviewees vary widely. One interviewee is a student. Three interviewees work in education, two as a high school and elementary teacher, one as an in-school counselor at an elementary school. Three other interviewees work in the corporate world as a communications advisor, business analyst and as a visual designer for payment systems. Additionally, one interviewee is enrolled in a traineeship at the municipality of Rotterdam and working on a project specifically related to the improvement of Rotterdam South. Two interviewees hold two or more jobs. One interviewee is a photographer, exam coordinator and supervisor. Another interviewee is both movie maker and customer service employee.

There is an equal division between interviewees who are currently living in the south of Rotterdam and interviewees who have lived there for five or more years but are now living in another part of Rotterdam. Five of the interviewees live or have lived in Feijenoord, two in IJsselmonde and two in Charlois. One interviewee has lived in both IJsselmonde and Charlois. None of the interviewees come from Hoogvliet

4.2 Culture

Besides questions regarding SWB, interviewees were asked questions related to their view of culture and the cultural activities they engage in. An example of the interview guide can be found in appendix C. After demographic questions, interviewees were first asked to name some of the activities they do and see as cultural. Interviewees were then asked what grade they would give themselves on how culturally active they are. The final part of the interview was done with the help of a list with cultural activities found in academic literature. This list can be found in English in chapter two and in Dutch in appendix D.

For the specific questions of the interviews, interviewees had to highlight cultural activities they engage in the most and subsequently, rank these activities based on how often they do these.

4.2.1 Cultural activities and participation

As mentioned, interviewees were first asked to highlight all the activities that they engaged in. This resulted in frequency table 3 below. This table shows the number of times an activity on the list was marked which means it is activity interviewees engage in. To clarify, seven out of ten interviewees marked reading a book/magazine, meaning that seven out of ten interviewees read books or magazines.

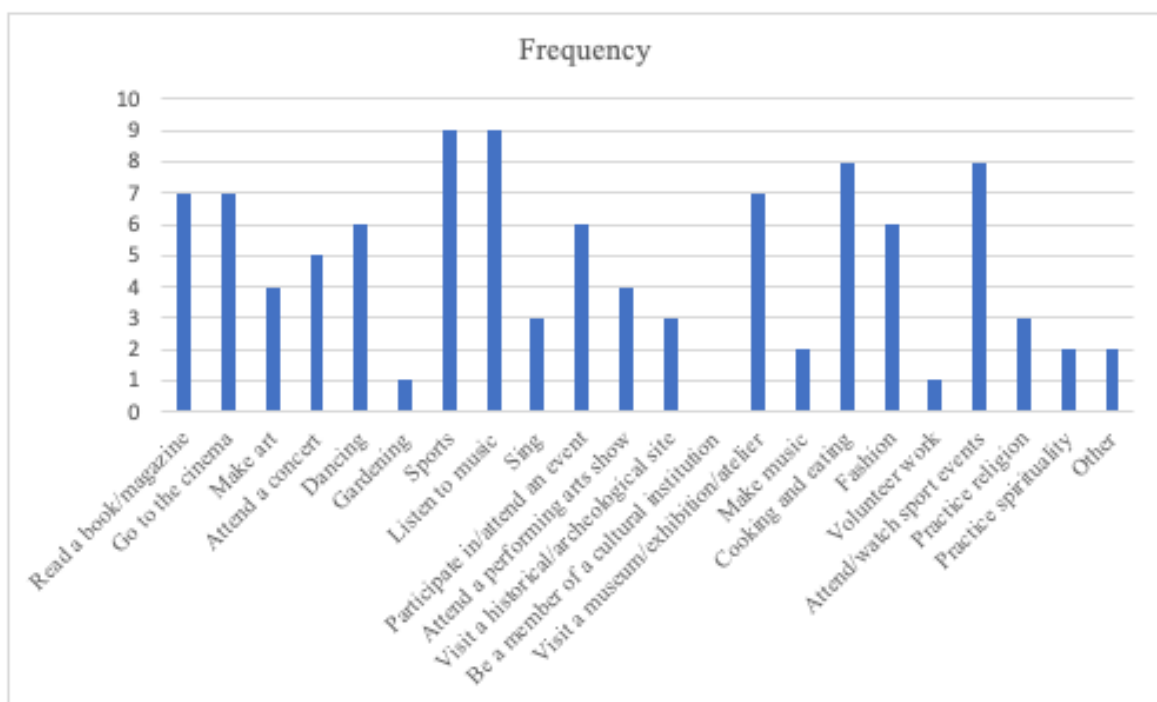


Table 3: number of times an activity was highlighted

Moreover, table 3 shows that sports and listening to music are done by the most interviewees, namely nine out of ten interviewees. Cooking and eating and attending or watching sport events are the second most highlighted activities. Gardening and volunteer work are both done by only one interviewee. Being a member of cultural institutions is done by none of the interviewees.

Additionally, interviewees had the opportunity to provide extra cultural activities that they engage in but were not mentioned on the list under the option of 'Other'.

Two interviewees used this option and added the activities ‘listening to a podcast’ and ‘going out to nightclubs’ to the list.

Interviewees engage in cultural activities in a formal and informal way. Some cultural activities that interviewees engage in are work-related activities and thus, formal. For instance, interviewee H is photographer, interviewee D was a personal trainer and J is a movie maker for festivals. Other activities are more informal, like reading and gardening.

Interviewees engage in cultural activities both alone and together. It is interesting to see that interviewees find a way to engage with others in cultural activities that are typically done alone, such as reading. Interviewees do so formally by e.g., forming book clubs or informally by having a conversation with friends or colleagues about a book they have read. When an activity is done together, it is often with one friend, multiple friends, with a partner or with family members.

Furthermore, interviewees engage in cultural activities at several places such as at home, outside, at places specifically meant for culture (such as museums) and at places meant for sports. Besides, interviewees engage actively in cultural activities by e.g., singing, and passively by, for instance, attending theatre shows.

In addition, the goals that individuals can have as discussed in chapter two emerge in the answers of the interviewees. The goals of practicing tradition (Morrone, 2009) and lifestyle (Reyes-Martínez, 2022) will be discussed in section 4.2.2. The goal of enjoyment (Reyes-Martínez, 2022) will be discussed in section 4.3.1. Creative expression (Mundet et al, 2017; Morrone, 2009) is a goal for cultural participation mentioned by four out of the ten interviewees.

“I also took photo’s there, because I wanted to show people what I saw there”. Interviewee H about photography.

A goal that is also mentioned in the literature is the goal of creating an identity, which was also brought up by one of the interviewees. Interviewee G explains that his identity is partly related to how he dresses which can be related to the cultural activity of fashion.

“I think how I dress myself also has to deal with identity, but also a little bit with culture” (interviewee G).

4.2.2 Interviewees' view of culture

Interviewees were asked what grade they would give themselves of how culturally active they are. The scale ranged from one, not culturally active at all, to ten, extremely culturally active. The grade interviewees gave themselves ranged from a four to a nine. One interviewee provided the following reason for giving himself the relatively low grade of a four:

“Technically speaking, in whole south, everyone has another culture, and you automatically get sucked into it, through which it becomes an automatism” (interviewee H).

This is an interesting aspect because this interviewee sees himself as not that culturally active which is a common statement among some of the interviewees. Interviewees give different reasons for not giving themselves a high grade. Interviewee H sees the cultural activities he does as an automatism. Interviewee A gives herself a six and provides as argumentation that she does not actively focus on cultural activities, they are just part of her lifestyle. This is related to the lifestyle part of the overarching definition of culture (see chapter two). The cultural activities of interviewees are ingrained in their lifestyles.

Moreover, interviewees seem to have several definitions of culture. These definitions do not only differ between interviewees, but interviewees themselves also have more than one definition in mind when it comes to culture. One definition that is brought up by six of the ten interviewees is the definition of culture related to nationality and ethnicity and is evidenced by the following quote:

“I always thought culture was tied together with nationality” says interviewee C about his view of culture.

Additionally, four of these six interviewees see hanging out with people from different nationalities and ethnicities as a cultural activity. This cultural activity is an activity that is mentioned by these four respondents when answering the first question of the interview related to culture, namely what activities interviewees engage in see as cultural.

“I do not of if this counts, but with other non-Dutch or with Dutch people who are not white, I gain quite a lot of knowledge from them, with another ethnical background” (interviewee D).

What is also interesting is that some interviewees do not consider themselves culturally active with this definition in mind. This relates back to the explanation of low grades that interviewees give themselves of cultural activities being part of their lifestyles. This finding adds validity to the general definition of culture given in chapter two which includes daily activities and social interactions (Grossi et al, 2011; Morrone, 2009). Cultural activities have become part of some interviewee's lifestyles so much that they do not even recognize anymore that these activities can be, in fact, considered cultural. Additionally, interviewees indicate to also see social interaction with others as a cultural activity, as mentioned in the definition. Social interaction will be further explained in section 4.3.3.

Finally, the idea of interviewees that culture is associated with nationality and ethnicity is connected with the holidays interviewees celebrate. Two interviewees bring up holidays they celebrate as answer to the question what activities they engage in, they see as cultural. Even though these holidays are celebratory days in religion, these interviewees explain that they are not religious and that for them, these days revolve mostly around being with family and eating together.

"I think for sure Easter and Christmas and those kinds of things, we always celebrate that with family, by doing something special with that.... It is for us actually just coming together and eating" (interviewee F).

This finding is related to the part of the definition of culture that revolves around tradition (Grossi et al, 2011; Morrone, 2009). Interviewees indicate to celebrate these holidays each year for no other reason than spending time together and therefore, it can be considered a tradition.

A second definition that interviewees have in mind of culture is a definition related to the cultural activities they do. Five out of the ten interviewees mention specific activities they do when answering the first questions regarding the activities they do that they consider cultural. The activities they mention are not specifically related to nationality, ethnicity, or religion. These activities vary widely and are e.g., visiting historical/archeological sites, reading, and going out to nightclubs.

A contrasting outcome is that some interviewees do not consider themselves culturally active regarding the definition of culture associated with nationality and ethnicity. Interviewee D gives the following explanation of what grade he would give himself.

“If I can take into consideration that [hanging out with people] of other ethnical backgrounds, if I would calculate that into it, I would give myself a high grade. But if I, I don't know, only can take into account reading literature, looking at art, then I would give a much lower grade”.

Nevertheless, interviewees then do give themselves a higher grade when they take into account the cultural activities they participate in. What could be concluded from this finding is that interviewees do not have the overarching definition in mind (see section 2.1) and have several definitions of culture in mind that they do not combine.

4.3 Pleasant affect

Interviewees experience feelings, emotions and mood changes related to pleasant affect. Social interaction seems to play a big part in relation to cultural participation and the pleasant affect that is experienced.

4.3.1 Positive emotions and feelings

Interviewees expressed to experience several positive emotions and feeling which will be discussed below.

Firstly, positive emotions and feelings that were specifically stated by the interviewees are joy, (increased) happiness, enthusiasm, and contentment. Happiness can either emerge as a new emotion when interviewees were not feeling happy before the cultural participation or interviewees can experience an increase in happiness in the case they did feel happy prior to cultural participation. Joy was also mentioned as a goal of cultural participation in chapter two.

Happiness and joy could seem the same emotion. This is due to the translation of the interviews from Dutch to English. Joy is in this case related to savoring the experience, taking all aspects of a cultural activity in. Happiness can be seen in this case as more primary emotion. One could say that happiness is experienced because an individual simply likes participating in the cultural activity.

Additionally, it could be argued that contentment is more a mental state than an emotion. In the case of the interviewees, a feeling of contentment is implied. A feeling of contentment is meant in the sense that an individual experiences the realization that in this moment, everything is good.

It is understandable that feeling of contentment is seen as a mental state, it was however mentioned quite often by interviewees and therefore, important to include.

There are also other findings related to pleasant affect that are significant enough to discuss. Listening to music is an interesting cultural activity to discuss in relation to pleasant affect. Interviewee C is the only interviewee who expressed that music can change his mood positively, but most interviewees indicate that listening to music does not change their moods for the better to a large extent. It should be pointed out that it also does not change their mood for the worse. Music can have some influence as interviewees do indicate that the music they listen to and their feelings can be related, but not a lot.

“It does not influence me that much, but I do enjoy listening to music” (interviewee A).

“If I am feeling sad, then I can really listen to, not sad music, but more calm music, but I can also handle up-tempo” (interviewee I).

Nevertheless, the little influence that listening to music can have, is not what is interesting about this activity. For the interviewees, listening to music seems to have the function of enhancing other cultural activities. In this case, listening to music can be considered a secondary activity of interviewees. It was explained in chapter two that a cultural activity has to be an individual’s primary activity for it to be considered cultural participation (Ateca-Amestoy, 2010). So, listening to music in these examples is not considered cultural participation, but an element that interviewees add to other cultural activities to create a more positive experience.

Interviewee E puts on music while cooking, which helps him relax more. Interviewee I also put on music while cooking, but with his friends and with the goal of creating a certain, lively vibe. Interviewees indicate that music adds an extra element to the cultural activities and increases the positive emotions and feelings that they experience.

“Without music, I would find it really boring, it all just an extra something” (interviewee I).

Furthermore, interviewees indicate that they experience positive emotions and feelings before the cultural activity takes place due to anticipation. Some interviewees experience anticipation for an occasional cultural activity, others for cultural activities that are part of their daily or weekly routine.

"Then you have more anticipation of course, if you know at the beginning of the season that you have tickets for four, five shows, that you think how nice, we are going to attend this one and that one". Interviewee B about attending theatre shows.

"I would say the joy of looking forward to something". Interviewee J about cooking and eating.

So, it could be argued that not only the cultural activity itself can cause positive feelings and emotions, but also the anticipation. What might follow from this argument is that the top-down theory of SWB can be applied to pleasant affect. An interviewee experiences emotions and feelings related to the pleasant affect component of SWB, namely anticipation, before the cultural activity. It is a possibility that these anticipatory emotions and feelings then influence the experience of the actual cultural activity. This is an example of top-down theory as SWB influences the outcome (Heady et al, 1990), in this case the outcome is how one feels during the cultural activity.

Yet, there is also always the situation in which an individual gets his/her hopes up and ends up being disappointed by the actual cultural activity. It is, however, an interesting example to mention as top-down theory was only discussed in relation to life satisfaction in chapter two.

4.3.2 Positive mood changes

Pleasant affect does not only consist of positive feelings and emotions, but also of positive mood changes. Often, interviewees do not state specific positive emotions they are feeling but indicate to experience an overall better feeling. This overall better feeling positively changes their mood. A quote by interviewee C gives an impression of the overall better feeling:

"But if I put on a few particular songs, I cannot feel bad anymore. I just feel better immediately" (interviewee C).

What is intriguing is that interviewees involve only themselves when it comes to the overall better feeling. They do not credit any others, such as family or friends, for the overall better feeling they experience.

In this case, it seems to be that the cultural activity itself is also an important factor that provides an overall better feeling and not aspects that are related to the cultural activity, like spending time with others.

Furthermore, the better feeling interviewees feel is strongly related to the relaxation interviewees can experience during or after engaging in cultural activities. Simply stated, one of the reasons interviewees get an overall better feeling is because the cultural activity relaxes them. Relaxation is a motivation for interviewees for cultural participation as well as an outcome of cultural participation.

4.3.3 Social interaction

A common theme among the answers of interviewees is the role social interaction plays in the relation of positive feelings and emotions while engaging in cultural participation. The fact that social interaction plays such a big role for pleasant affect adds validity to the social interaction element that is included in the overarching definition of culture given in chapter two

Firstly, interviewees indicate that one of the reasons they experience positive feelings and emotions during cultural participation is because they experience a feeling of togetherness. The feeling of togetherness is experienced with friends and family as well as with strangers. Interviewees who experience togetherness with strangers indicate that the reason for this feeling is the fact that everyone came to the cultural activity with the same purpose of enjoying themselves.

“That is a feeling I really carry with me. I think yes, it is really nice to be in a place where everyone wants to be” says interviewee B about attending theatre shows.

“Togetherness or something... yeah, I do really enjoy eating together. I think it is sort of community vibe” (interviewee G).

Secondly, social interaction is not only one of the reasons interviewees experience positive emotions and feelings, but it is also one of the main motivations of interviewees to engage in a particular cultural activity. Interviewees often see cultural participation as a way to spend time with a friend or family member. This is not only expressed by the interviewees, but also evidenced in the descriptions they give of the activities they engage in.

Interviewees explain that there is often something done together before or after the cultural activity, such as drinks or dinner.

“It has become a social thing, not just solely for the horseback riding” (interviewee A).

“With my brother I saw a theatre show recently... but that is super fun, because then you get to spend some time together, have dinner and do something fun after” (interviewee B).

Nevertheless, social interaction is also one of the reasons why interviewees feel obligated to participate in a particular cultural activity. Interviewees express to feel pressure from friends or family to join them in a cultural activity. Two interviewees feel obligated by friends to join them for festivals or going to a party or club. One interviewee expresses to feel obligated to watch a Feyenoord match at home with her family and neighbors whenever her family invites others to come over to watch the game together. It is the social aspect of the cultural activity that eventually convinces these interviewees to join.

“It does feel more like a task, but I joined, because I thought it is nice to socialize for a bit” said interviewee A about watching the Feyenoord game with her family and neighbors.

“In the end it is fun... if I go with fun people, it always ends up being a good time” says interviewee I about feeling obligated to attend festivals with her friends.

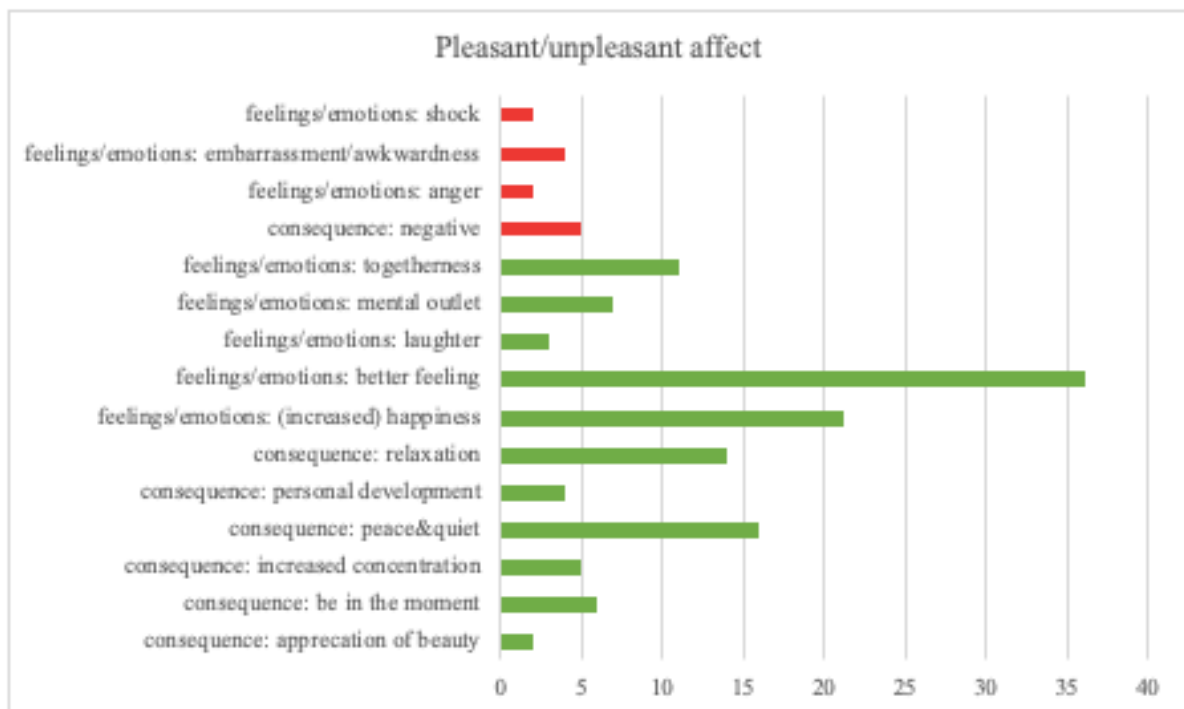
This finding can be linked to determinants of cultural participation. Because what is interesting about this finding, is that these three interviewees who feel obligated to participate due to the social aspect of the activity, are all three single. None of the interviewees who are in a relationship mention feeling obligated to participate in a cultural activity due to social relationships. Marital or relationship status is one of the most cited drivers of cultural participation (Bertacchini et al, 2021). It could be that in this case, the relationship status of the three specific interviewees plays a role in in the choice and/or frequency to participate in cultural activities. Two other interviewees also mention to feel obligated to participate in some cultural activities, such as sports and volunteer work, but are both in a relationship and feel obligated due to other reasons than social pressure. The chance that it is a coincidence is always present, but it is a too intriguing finding to not mention.

Furthermore, the social aspect seems to be one of the elements interviewees would miss the most if they were unable to participate in particular cultural activities. Interviewees were asked about or presented with a situation in which they would be unable to participate in cultural activities which they enjoy the most or participate in frequently. Five out of ten interviewees indicated to miss the social aspect of the cultural activity. This could be an indication of the importance of engaging together in a cultural activity instead of alone.

This argument is strengthened by the fact that social interaction seems to play such a big role in cultural activities. In short, it is one of the reasons interviewees participate in cultural activities in the first place. It is a reason why they experience positive emotions and feelings during and after participating in cultural activities. Finally, it is a reason for them to feel obligated to participate in social activities.

4.4 Unpleasant affect

Interviewees did indicate to experience negative emotions, feelings, and moods, but not to such an extent as there is evidence for pleasant affect. Graph 1 below shows the number of positive emotions, feelings, and moods (in green) in comparison with the number of negative emotions, feelings, and moods (in red) that interviewees have expressed to experience.



Graph 1: pleasant vs. unpleasant affect.

As can be seen, more positive emotions, feelings and moods are mentioned by interviewees than negative. It should be noted that the descriptions on the left are the codes that are used for the analysis of the data. See appendix E for the codebook. Additionally, it is important to point out that not all codes are included in this chapter. This is due to the fact that there are certain constraints for this thesis and not all themes and patterns can be explained. Finally, some codes are incorporated in bigger themes of this chapter. An example is the code of laughter. The answers of interviewees that were related to this code, were incorporated in the section on pleasant affect.

4.4.1 Negative emotions and feelings

Interviewees did indicate to experience negative emotions, feelings, and moods, but not to such an extent as there is evidence for pleasant affect and life satisfaction.

One interviewee, interviewee G, expresses to feel anger while participating in a cultural activity, namely reading. He mostly reads non-fiction books, for example about historic events, of which e.g., the unfairness makes him angry. So, it is not reading itself that leads him to feel anger, but the content of what he reads. What is interesting about this finding is that two other interviewees also read non-fiction books, but do not experience the same feelings of anger as interviewee G. For instance, interviewee A also reads non-fiction books and explains how she feels while reading a book about a historic genocide.

“I was shocked by it, but then also, I am never really heavily affected” Interviewee A.

It was explained in chapter two how life satisfaction is partly dependent on personality (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). This example, however, could show that maybe the affective component of SWB could also partly depend on personality. A genocide is typically also an unfair event, but interviewee A does not feel as affected by this unfairness as interviewee G expresses to be. This finding is, however, beyond the scope of this research, but too intriguing not to mention.

Secondly, one interviewee expresses to feel nervousness before participating in a particular cultural activity. This is a fascinating finding because it involves interviewee H who is a professional photographer and experiences this feeling before and during a work-related cultural activity. Interviewee H explains how he gets nervous when he works with new people, which is quite often, and what thoughts come into his mind at that point.

“How am I going to approach this? Does everything seem alright for the other person? Is he/she having fun and comfortable?” Interviewee H.

Interviewee H is the only interviewee who mentioned to feel the emotion nervousness and he does not express this emotion for any other cultural activities he engages in. Besides that, photography for interviewee H is generally a work-related activity, which could be the reason why he experiences nervousness because ultimately, it is part of how he generates an income. It should be pointed out that the nervousness of interviewee H and the anticipation discussed in the section regarding pleasant affect, are different. Anticipation in this thesis is implied in the sense of looking forward to something, a positive feeling, whereas nervousness is considered a negative emotion in this case.

Thirdly, frustration is a feeling that comes up in the answers of four interviewees for different reasons. Interviewee A is frustrated because horseback riding is taking up too much time and effort for her liking. Interviewee E, however, is only frustrated when his favorite soccer club loses a match. The difference here in these results is of importance. Interviewee E only feels frustration when participating in the particular cultural activity of watching/attending a soccer game under certain circumstances. The explanation of interviewee A seems to imply that she feels frustration more often than occasionally.

One could wonder then about the affective balance of interviewee A with regards to the cultural activity of sports, namely horseback riding. Chapter two explained how affective balance means that an individual mainly experiences positive emotions and feelings with sometimes some negative emotions (Schimmack et al, 2002). An individual should not have more negative emotions than positive, because then the affective balance is out of order (Schimmack et al, 2002). The fact that horseback riding takes up too much of interviewee A’s time and effort is something she is confronted with almost every day as she has her own horse and is the primary caretaker of this horse. So, in this example, it could be possible that the negative emotions she feels, such as frustration, regarding her horse are too much compared to the positive emotions she feels when she is with her horse. Nevertheless, the affective balance of an individual takes into account all emotions and feelings one feels, not just related to one particular emotions. Still, frustration is an emotion interviewee A seems to be feeling quite often, so it should not be ignored.

Furthermore, annoyance is a negative feeling that two interviewees express to feel, but only in the case that they feel obligated to participate in a cultural activity.

Interviewee C and interviewee I feel annoyance when participating in a cultural activity they feel obligated to do due to factors they have control over. Interviewee C feels obligated to do sports to improve his physical health. Interviewee I feels obligated to engage in gardening because she wants her terrace to look nice. In both cases, it is not actually an obligation for the interviewees to engage in gardening or sports, but they themselves feel as if it is necessary.

The feeling of annoyance is a good example of SWB in practice. As explained, SWB revolves around how individuals perceive their own well-being. Interviewee C and I perceive for themselves that it is necessary to participate in these activities, because no other individual, rule, law or even norm is forcing them to do so. It truly is their own perception of how they feel as though they need to engage in these activities. What can even be implied is that these interviewees perceive they need to engage in these activities to improve their SWB. After all, it is implied that interviewee C will feel better if he works out due to his improved health and interviewee I will feel better once her terrace looks nice.

4.4.2 Negative mood changes

Interviewees only indicate to experience any negative mood change when they are unable to participate in a cultural activity. Interviewees indicate they have been or would be unable to participate in cultural activities due to different reasons such as the recent pandemic and injuries. Interviewees do not mention any specific emotions and feelings in the situation that they would be or were unable to participate in a cultural activity. They describe more a general, negative mood they would be or were in.

“You can feel left out, you can feel lonely. I think that all those emotions, feelings would somewhat dominate” says interviewee C about how he would feel if he would be unable to listen to music.

“That was really unfortunate and also a depressing period” says interviewee G about the pandemic and being sick with Covid.

Again, affective balance is an interesting topic to discuss especially in regard to interviewees being unable to participate in cultural activities. Interviewees indicate for their mood to negatively change and that they would miss the social aspect of cultural activities (see section on pleasant affect).

No positive emotions are mentioned in the case of interviewees being unable to engage in cultural participation. In this case, it seems as if the affective balance could be affected. Interviewees would experience an increase of negative emotions and feelings and a decrease, or even elimination, of positive emotions and feelings. In other words, the affective balance would be 'out of balance'.

Another question that could emerge in this case is how the unbalanced affective balance would impact SWB as a whole. Could the top-down theory of SWB be applied to this case? When SWB is seen as a top-down theory, an individual's SWB influences the outcomes in their life (Heady et al, 1990). It is possible that the distorted affective balance could then influence an individual's life satisfaction and in turn, affect his/her behavior. There is, however, no evidence or indication of this possibility in the answers of the interviewees. Nevertheless, the affective balance is an important element of pleasant and unpleasant affect and should be taken into consideration when applicable.

4.5 Life satisfaction

Interviewees seem to perceive cultural participation to have an effect on life satisfaction. Cultural participation namely can influence their lives in several, can improve their mental health and is possibly related to pleasant affect.

4.5.1 Influence on life

Seven out of the ten interviewees indicate that engaging in cultural participation influences their life in some way. The way in which cultural participation influences the interviewees' lives differs, but there are some common themes that have emerged.

Firstly, a way that cultural participation influences the interviewees' lives is that interviewees gain a new perspective through engaging in cultural activities. This new perspective is gained through several activities. Three interviewees gain this new perspective by reading non-fiction books. Interviewee C gains a new perspective by listening to music and thereby, he explains, that it changes his mindset.

"It is kind of a certain train of thought that is strengthened or eliminated" (Interviewee C).

Interviewee B explains how attending cabaret shows helps her look at events or situations from a different perspective and facilitates her in developing her own opinion.

Thus, by attending these shows, she gets multiple new perspectives, and it changes her own perspective. Furthermore, interviewee H is a professional photographer and specializes in taking portraits. He explains he does not only create a new perspective for himself through taking photos, but also for others as he explains.

“I show people how I see them ... everyone looks differently at each other, but you also look differently at yourself” (interviewee H).

What is interesting is that all interviewees see the new perspective in a positive light. This could have several reasons related to life satisfaction. Firstly, it could mean that this new perspective positively changes the evaluation of interviewees of the extent to which their lives fulfill their needs and wants. It is possible that through the new perspective their needs and wants are met to a greater extent than before.

Another possibility is that interviewees have realized through the new perspective that their current lives meet their needs and wants to a greater extent than they thought before gaining the new perspective.

Thirdly, the new perspective could have led to a lowering of the interviewees’ standards by which they evaluate their lives and thus, their standards can be met sooner leading to increased life satisfaction.

It is, however, important not to ignore the mood of the interviewees at the time of interview. As explained in chapter two, the mood of interviewees at the time of the interview can alter the recollection of their mood at the time they obtained the new perspective (Diener et al, 1999). It is possible that the interviewees did not agree with the new perspective when they first received it, for example if it clashed with their own opinions, and it took some time for them to accept the new perspective. It should be noted that in this particular case, mood is not related to affect but rather is an element that influence interviewees’ assessment of their lives.

A second way that cultural participation influences interviewees’ lives is that interviewees gain knowledge through participating in cultural activities. The activities through which interviewees indicate they gain knowledge are reading books and magazines, visiting museums, and visiting historical/archeological sites.

Especially reading is interesting, as gaining knowledge is both the reason and outcome of the activity for some interviewees. It could then be stated that reading is an example of SWB being a top-down theory.

Because in the case of reading, the interviewees evaluate their lives in the sense of not having enough knowledge, that is the life satisfaction part of SWB, which leads to the outcome of them reading with the purpose of gaining more knowledge. The fact that interviewee B and interviewee G do not read for any other reason than gaining knowledge adds validity to this explanation. When asked if interviewee G also reads for relaxation or any other reasons, his answer was:

“I do read for the purpose of gaining knowledge only really” (interviewee G).

A third way that cultural participation influences interviewees’ lives is that interviewees develop capabilities through engaging in cultural activities. Interviewee A explains that through horseback riding, she has developed and strengthened her discipline and perseverance. Moreover, interviewee B perceives her creativity to be challenged by participating in cultural activities and therefore, develops her capability to be creative.

In contrast with reading, the developing of capabilities seem to be more an example of bottom-up theory of SWB. The assumption that variables influence an individual’s SWB underlies the bottom-up theory of SWB (Heady et al, 1990), as explained in chapter two. Interviewees participate in cultural activities and develop their capabilities. In turn, this development makes them evaluate their lives more positively because they are more content with their capabilities.

4.5.2 Mental health

Although interviewees indicate to experience several positive feelings and emotions while participating in cultural activities, they also mention a motivation and consequence of cultural participation that go deeper than solely enjoyment and is related to the interviewees’ mental health.

Firstly, a motivation for cultural participation that is mentioned by four interviewees is to escape their daily lives. Interviewees have this motivation to escape their daily lives for different cultural activities. Interviewee B explains how she experiences attending theatre shows as an escape from her daily life.

“It is a kind of distraction, just another world, other people, other things” (interviewee B).

The motivation to escape their daily life is related to the concept of life satisfaction. Simply stated, it could be concluded that the daily lives of interviewees are not fully meeting their needs, values and/or preferences. The cultural activities, in this case, could be then a way for interviewees to escape the fact that their lives are not meeting their needs and preferences. Interviewee B gives an explanation on why she engages in cultural activities with the motivations to escape her daily life. She has two small children and therefore, is not getting enough sleep each night. So, her life is not meeting her need of getting enough hours of sleep. One of her reasons for attending theatre shows is to forget for a few hours about, among other things, her lack of sleep.

It could also be, however, that it is in the personality of the interviewees to evaluate their lives rather negatively. If this is the case, the lives of interviewees could be meeting their needs to a suitable extent, but they may not evaluate it this way due to the tendency in their personality to have a more negative outlook on life.

Moreover, a consequence that some interviewees experience while engaging in cultural activities is a mental outlet. Participating in cultural activities is a way for them to process what is happening in their life. Interviewee D is a gym enthusiast but is now unable to work out due to an injury.

“Now I really notice, because I do not really have any mental outlet, that I take it out on those closest to me, that I am more irritated” (interviewee D).

For interviewee H, cultural participation did not only provide a mental outlet but was also a way for him to improve his mental health. During a period of not feeling good mentally, he increased his engagement with photography. When asked how photography helped him feel better mentally, he explained:

“Because I was just busy and I could project my feelings, or actually my emotions, on a screen through which they [the emotions and feelings] left my body. You can do it by putting words on paper, but I make images and that is how it helped me understand myself” (interviewee H).

This is an example that is especially interesting to discuss with regards to the view of life satisfaction as the fundament of individual's responses and therefore, behavior (Ash & Huebner, 2001). In the case of interviewee H, he was not in a good mental state and evaluated his life rather negatively, evidenced by the following quote:

"I needed peace of mind, and I could not find at home, I could not find it at school, I could not find it at work" (interviewee H).

As his fundament, life satisfaction, was negative, he evaluated other aspects of his life as negative as well. The other aspects in his case were his living situation, education, and job which he all evaluated negatively. Through engaging in cultural participation, photography, he released this negativity. This led to his fundament shifting to be more positive, in the sense that he evaluated his life more positively, because he felt better mentally after creating photos.

One could also argue, however, that the example of interviewee H is related to unpleasant affect. After all, he was experiencing negative emotions and feelings, and he was lacking positive emotions such as happiness. When looking closely at the case of interviewee H, this could actually be seen as a great example of all components of SWB coming together.

Firstly, an affective component of SWB, unpleasant affect, is present. Interviewee H was in a negative mood for a longer period of time and experienced negative emotions and feelings. Additionally, he lacked emotions and feelings related to pleasant affect such as enjoyment. Secondly, the cognitive component of SWB, life satisfaction, is present. He used his mental capabilities, thinking and reasoning, to recognize his emotions and the cause of it. The cause was that he perceived no place to exist at the time where he could find peace of mind (see quote above). 'Perceived' is the keyword here, as SWB is a subjective concept, and it is about how interviewee H experienced his circumstances. By recognizing his emotions, he evaluated his life as not meeting his need of having peace of mind. So, the example of interviewee H shows how the cognitive and affective component of SWB complement each other and how SWB as a whole can operate.

4.5.3 Pleasant affect and life satisfaction

It could be stated that interviewees perceive cultural participation to have a positive influence on their life satisfaction due to the positive emotions, feelings, and moods interviewees experience.

After all, if you feel good when engaging in a cultural activity, one could argue that the positive emotions and moods could lead to a more positive evaluation of one's life and thus, lead to a more positive life satisfaction. Even though this seems a logical explanation, scholars are divided about the positive contribution of pleasant affect to life satisfaction.

On the one hand, researchers agree with the reasoning that positive emotions and moods lead to a more positive life satisfaction (Cohn, Frederickson, Brown, Mikels & Conway, 2009). Research by Cohn and colleagues (2009) shows that positive emotions and moods facilitate people having better outcomes and thereby, increasing life satisfaction due to their lives meeting their wants and needs to a greater extent. Additionally, individuals who often experience positive emotions and moods develop personal skills that help them deal with difficult situations in life (Cohn et al, 2009). Cohn et al (2009) give the example of ego resilience, the ability of an individual to deal with stressful factors. According to the results of their research, experiencing positive emotions and moods frequently lead to the improvement of ego resilience (Cohn et al, 2009). In turn, improved ego resilience leads to a more positive life satisfaction as individuals can handle difficult situations better (Cohn et al, 2009).

On the other hand, scholars do not agree with the reasoning that positive emotions and moods lead to a more positive life satisfaction (Diener, 1996). Research by Diener (1996) shows how positive situational changes as well as big life changes have a relatively small and short-term effect. This is due to the theory that humans have a positive baseline to which we return after we have experienced some, positive or negative, emotion (Ash & Huebner, 2001). In this case, experiencing positive emotions does not have any effect on life satisfaction as humans return to a basic level of positivity (Ash & Huebner, 2001).

It should be noted that in the study of Cohn et al (2009), positive emotions should be felt often for it to improve ego resilience. Besides, the explanation of Diener (1996) is focused on changes, whereas the study by Cohn et al (2009) is centered on positive emotions in general and not related to changes. Finally, it should be pointed out that this is just the tip of the iceberg of the debate on this topic.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Summary of previous chapters

The theoretical framework of this thesis consists of a broad definition of culture and cultural participation. An important element of these definitions is the incorporation of daily activities. Furthermore, it was stated that SWB is an individual's perception of their lives and the emotions, feelings, and moods they experience and consists of life satisfaction, pleasant affect, and unpleasant affect. Cultural participation and the perceived effect of cultural participation on SWB were researched in an urban, deprived area. This resulted in the following research question: *How do young adults in urban, deprived areas participate in cultural activities and how do they perceive the effect of these activities on their SWB?*

The method used to approach this research question was semi-structured interviews. The data resulting from the interviews was analyzed using zero coding and subsequently, thematic analysis. Rotterdam South was used as a case study for this research. Rotterdam South is an urban, deprived area in the Netherlands characterized by a serious number of problems of great magnitude.

The analysis of the data resulted in several findings. Firstly, it gave an overview of the cultural activities that young adults of Rotterdam South participate in and presents how young adults participate in cultural activities. Additionally, it is shown how various definitions of culture exist among young adults of Rotterdam South. Secondly, young adults in Rotterdam South perceive to experience several emotions, feelings and moods associated with pleasant affect during and after cultural participation. These are happiness, joy, enthusiasm, and contentment. Social interaction plays an important role in experience emotions and feelings related to pleasant affect.

Thirdly, a few young adults in this research perceive to experience emotions, feelings, and moods related to unpleasant affect when participating in cultural activities. Young adults, however, seem to experience rather more feelings related to pleasant affect than unpleasant. Unpleasant affect is experienced with feelings such as anger. Nervousness is experienced when a cultural activity is work-related, and annoyance is felt when young adults feel obligated to participate in certain cultural activities. Affective balance is an important consideration when analyzing pleasant and unpleasant affect.

Finally, young adults perceive cultural participation to influence their life satisfaction.

They view cultural activities to have an influence on their life satisfaction in the sense that they gain a new perspective, gain knowledge, and develop their capabilities. Mental health is an important part of life satisfaction for young adults in Rotterdam South.

5.2 Answer to research question

The research question is split into two parts for this section. The first part is *how do young adults in urban, deprived areas participate in cultural activities?* The answer based on the findings in this research is that young adults in urban, deprived areas participate in cultural activities in several ways. They participate alone and together, informally and formally, at several places, with different people and they engage in a wide array of cultural activities. It is not possible to provide a more conclusive answer to this first part of the research question as the view of culture differs per young adult interviewed and young adults themselves also have conflicting views on culture.

The second part of the research question is *how do young adults perceive the effect of these activities on their SWB?*

Based on the findings in chapter four, the affective balance related to cultural participation of the young adults in urban, deprived areas seems to be in order. More positive emotions are felt than negative, but the occasional negative emotion is present which is necessary. It can therefore be concluded that young adults perceive cultural participation to mostly have a positive effect on their emotions and feelings. It is, however, not only the cultural participation that can be attributed to this perceived effect. Social interaction is an important element of cultural participation for the young adults in urban, deprived areas. If social interaction plays such a big role, one could wonder to what extent young adults would even need the cultural activities to achieve this effect. Nevertheless, the young adults mention several reasons why they perceive cultural activities itself also to have a positive effect on the affective component of their SWB.

Furthermore, young adults seem to perceive an effect of cultural activities on their life satisfaction, the cognitive part of SWB. They see this influence as positive as it provides them with something they did not have before, such as knowledge or skills.

In addition, young adults seem to perceive a positive effect of cultural activities on their life satisfaction as cultural participation seems to have a positive impact on their mental health.

The positive findings are surprising when placed in the context of an urban, deprived area. Rotterdam South is as a part of the city defined by its problems, yet young adults in this area seem to perceive the effects of cultural participation on their SWB mostly positive.

5.3 Limitations and avenues for further research

As with any other research, this thesis also has its limitations. Firstly, the biases discussed in chapter three and their consequences have influenced the data collection and analysis process. Although measures were taken to minimize the influence of biases, the biases could not be fully eliminated from the research. Related to this limitation is the fact that seven out of the ten interviewees are friends or acquaintances of the researcher. The research would have been more objective if strangers were interviewed.

Thirdly, only five of the ten interviewees currently live in Rotterdam South. A more accurate view of cultural participation and the perceived effect of cultural participation on SWB in this area would have been created if all interviewees were currently living for five years or more in Rotterdam South. The fact that some interviewees are not currently living in this part of Rotterdam, could have clouded their judgments. This limitation is simultaneously an avenue for further research as it would be interesting to see if and how the results would differ if the interviews were conducted with only people who are currently living in Rotterdam South.

Moreover, the interviewees that are not currently living in Rotterdam South were asked about the cultural activities and the perceived effects of them on their SWB right now, not under the circumstances that they were living in Rotterdam South. So, even though these particular interviewees are related to the case study as they have lived in Rotterdam South, the cultural activities they engage in are not necessarily related to Rotterdam South unless it is an activity they have been engaged with since their time of living in Rotterdam South. This could have possibly created a distortion in the results.

Furthermore, an interesting avenue for further research is combining the qualitative research method of interviews with the quantitative method of surveys with regards to the perceived effect of cultural participation on SWB in an urban, deprived area. Mixed methods research would have the advantage in this case of combining a greater dataset with insights on the underlying processes of people's answers to the questions posed in the surveys. A research such as this would have the validity and representability that this thesis is lacking.

A third recommendation for further research is the comparison of Rotterdam South with other urban, deprived areas in the Netherlands. Do citizens of other disadvantaged areas in Dutch cities have the same level of cultural participation? It would also be fascinating to see how these citizens perceive the effect of cultural participation on their SWB and if there are any differences or similarities. Besides this kind of research being interesting, it could also have societal relevance.

If there are differences or similarities between various urban, deprived areas in the Netherlands, the government could adapt their improvement plans on this evidence.

Moreover, a comparative research as mentioned could be interesting to investigate in more detail if the problems in Rotterdam South are as 'un-Dutch' as Deetman and Mans (2011) claim they are. The research of Deetman and Mans (2011) is about twelve years old at the time of writing this thesis. What is the current situation of these un-Dutch problems? Are they still considered un-Dutch? Or were the problems actually never un-Dutch to begin with?

Appendices

A. References

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B. Table of interviewees

Inter- viewee	Age	Gender	Occupation	Place of living in Rotterdam South	Living situation	Relation- ship status	Nationality	Education level
A	22	Female	Student	Feijenoord	With parents and sister	Single	Dutch	University education
B	30	Female	Communi- cations advisor	IJsselmonde	With partner and two children	In a relationship	Dutch	Higher professional education
C	29	Male	Visual designer	Charlois	With partner	In a relationship	Non-Dutch	Higher professional education
D	24	Male	Business analyst	Charlois	With parents	In a relationship	Dutch	University education
E	29	Male	Teacher at elementary school	Feijenoord	With partner and child	Engaged	Non-Dutch	Secondary vocational education
F	31	Female	In-school counselor at elementary school	Feijenoord	With partner, child, and children of partner	In a relationship	Dutch	Higher professional education
G	29	Male	Traineeship at the municipa- lity of Rotterdam	Charlois, IJsselmonde	With partner	In a relationship	Dutch	University education
H	26	Male	Photo- grapher, supervisor at trampoline parc, exam coordinator	IJsselmonde	With mother and sister	Single	Non-Dutch	Higher professional education

I	27	Female	Geography teacher at high school	Feijenoord	With room-mates	Single	Dutch	Higher professional education
J	24	Male	Customer service employee, movie maker	Feijenoord	Alone	Single	Non-Dutch	Secondary vocational education

Table 4: overview of interviewees

C. Interview guide in English

Part 1: introduction

Information about the interview (including signing consent form): you are free to withdraw yourself from the research at any time before, during or after this interview. You will remain completely anonymous, no information in the thesis will lead back to you. The interview will be recorded, whereafter the recording will be saved on my laptop. Transcripts of the interviews will be sent only to my supervisor and second reader for grading purposes. Do you have any questions before we get started?

Information about thesis: one of the main concepts of this thesis is culture. The general association of culture within society are museums, opera, ballet, those kinds of things. In my opinion, however, culture is so much more than that. Research shows that culture can also include everyday activities, such as cooking. More specifically, I will look into the relationship between cultural participation, taking part in cultural activities, and well-being. So how do certain cultural activities make one feel? What do these activities do to your well-being?

I am studying the relationship between culture and well-being in an urban area. The area I chose as a case study is Rotterdam South. My parents are from this area, my grandmother still lives here, but I did not grow up here nor live here.

Information about me: I'm Juliette, 24 years old and I have been living in Rotterdam for over five years now. I'm currently doing a Master called 'Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship' at the Erasmus University. I work as a bartender two nights a week and in my free time I like to run, do yoga, and hang out with my friends.

So now that you know something more about me and my research. I want to know more about you. Again, you are free to not answer any questions if you do not want to. These first questions are really for me to get an idea of who you are.

- How old are you?
- What is your gender?
- Are you studying, working or both? What do you study/what do you do for a living?
- Where did you go to school? What studies have you completed?

- What is your living situation like? (household composition)
- Are you single, in a relationship and/or married?

Part 2: general questions

Broad definition of culture: As I have explained before, I'm using a rather broad definition of culture. Daily, normal activities can also be considered culture under this definition, such as cooking for example. So now that you know what I will consider to be culture, I'm curious to find out what you see as 'cultural'.

- What activities that you do, do you consider to be culture?
- To what extent/on a scale of 1 to 10, would you say you engage with culture?

Part 3: specific questions

Now we will continue with some more specific questions about cultural activities that you engage in. I made a list with a variety of activities that are considered to be cultural.

- Can you indicate some activities that you engage in on this list the most? The activities should have some sense of culture. For example, cooking just because you have to eat is not considered cultural, but if you cook with your friends or family because you like it, then it is considered cultural.
 - Is there a cultural activity on this list that you engage in, but that is not on the list?
- Can you rank these activities based on how much you enjoy participating in these activities? The first activity of your ranking is the one you like the most and the fifth/last one is the one you like the least.
- How often do you participate in these activities/ activity x?
- Do you participate in these activities with other people or alone?
- Where do you engage with activity x? Is that at home or at another location?
- Is it an activity in which you really engage/participate, or do you have a more passive role?
- How did you get introduced to these activities/activity x?

- What motivates you to continue with these activities/activity x?
- So when you engage in activity x, can you walk me through what that looks like/what a typical day engaging in activity x looks like?
- Do participating in activity x/these activities change how you feel about your life in general?
- What emotions do you feel when participating in these activities/activity x?
- Do these activities/activity x change your mood?
 - If so, how?
- If you are not feeling your best, do you engage in any of these activities? Not feeling your best meaning you are having a bad day, sad, angry, grumpy.
 - If so, what activity and why?
- If these activities/activity x were to be taken away from you, how would that affect you?
- Has there been an instance in which you could not participate in any of these activities?
 - If so, can you explain me why you could not participate anymore?
 - How did that affect you?
- Are there any activities on this list that you are required to do or feel obligated to do?
 - Why do you have to do activity x/what makes you feel like you have to engage with this activity?
 - How does engaging in this activity make you feel?
- Is there anything you consider to be 'cultural' but that you may think others might not see as culture?
- Two final questions:
 - Do you have any questions for me?
 - Is there anyone you recommend I should also interview?

D. List of cultural activities in Dutch

	Een boek/tijdschrift lezen
	Naar de bioscoop gaan
	Kunst maken Bijvoorbeeld: fotografie, pottenbakken, schilderen, tekenen, graffiti
	Naar een concert gaan
	Dansen
	Tuinieren
	Sporten
	Naar muziek luisteren
	Zingen
	Meedoen aan/gaan naar een evenement Bijvoorbeeld: carnaval, festival, circus, parade, lezing
	Naar een voorstelling gaan Bijvoorbeeld: theater, dans
	Een historische/archeologische plek bezoeken Bijvoorbeeld: monument
	Lid zijn van een culturele instelling
	Een museum/tentoonstelling/atelier bezoeken
	Muziek spelen

	Koken en eten
	Fashion Bijvoorbeeld: winkelen
	Vrijwilligerswerk doen
	Gaan/kijken naar sportevenementen
	Godsdienst uitoefenen Bijvoorbeeld: bidden, naar de kerk/moskee/synagoge gaan, rituelen
	Spiritualiteit uitoefenen Bijvoorbeeld: astrologie, readings, reiki
	Anders Zoals:

E. Codebook

Codes	Code group
active/passive	About activity x
age	Demographics
anticipation	Feelings/emotions
consequence: appreciation of beauty	Consequences
consequence: be in the moment	Consequences
consequence: increased concentration	Consequences
consequence: influence on life	Consequences
consequence: negative	Consequences
consequence: new perspective	Consequences
consequence: no consequence	Consequences
consequence: no negative influence	Consequences
consequence: peace&quiet	Consequences
consequence: personal development	Consequences
consequence: reality check	Consequences
consequence: relaxation	Consequences
cultural activities respondent engages in	About activity x
description activity	About activity x
experience with activity	About activity x
feelings/emotions: (increased) happiness	Feelings/emotions
feelings/emotions: anger	Feelings/emotions
feelings/emotions: being a provider	Feelings/emotions
feelings/emotions: better feeling	Feelings/emotions
feelings/emotions: better physique	Feelings/emotions
feelings/emotions: embarrassment/awkwardness	Feelings/emotions
feelings/emotions: laughter	Feelings/emotions
feelings/emotions: mental outlet	Feelings/emotions
feelings/emotions: none	Feelings/emotions
feelings/emotions: several	Feelings/emotions
feelings/emotions: shock	Feelings/emotions
feelings/emotions: togetherness	Feelings/emotions
frequency	About activity x
gender	Demographics
general motivation	Motivation
grade	About activity x
highbrow/lowbrow	About activity x
history of activity	About activity x
home-based	About activity x
living situation	Demographics
mood	Feelings/emotions
motivation: connection with animal	Motivation
motivation: creating memories	Motivation
motivation: enjoyment	Motivation
motivation: escape from daily life	Motivation
motivation: getting better	Motivation
motivation: money	Motivation
motivation: necessity	Motivation
motivation: none	Motivation

new cultural activity	New cultural activity
new cultural activity: gain knowledge	New cultural activity
new cultural activity: new perspective	New cultural activity
obligatory (feeling)	Obligatory
obligatory (feeling): positive feeling/outcome	Obligatory
obligatory (feeling): socializing	Obligatory
obligatory feeling: annoying	Obligatory
obligatory feeling: necessary for health	Obligatory
original motivation	Motivation
original motivation: approval of others	Motivation
original motivation: creative expression	Motivation
original motivation: family	Motivation
original motivation: marketing	Motivation
original motivation: taking responsibility/accountability	Motivation
outside based	About activity x
place of activity	About activity x
ranking of activities	About activity x
reason: be in the moment	Reasons
reason: effort	Reasons
reason: gain strength	Reasons
reasons: gain knowledge	Reasons
reasons: not do anything else	Reasons
reasons: relaxation	Reasons
reasons: socializing	Reasons
relationship status	Demographics
respondent's view of culture	
Rotterdam South: culture	Rotterdam South
Rotterdam South: description	Rotterdam South
Rotterdam South: negative image	Rotterdam South
studies	Demographics
time of activity	About activity x
together/alone	About activity x
transportation/travel	About activity x
transportation/travel: obstacle	About activity x
unable: feelings/emotions	Unable
unable: frequency	Unable
unable: missing social aspect	Unable
unable: mood	Unable
work	Demographics
work-related activity	

F. Consent form

CONSENT REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, CONTACT:

Juliette van der Meij
Westersingel 164, 3015 LJ Rotterdam
468373jm@student.eur.nl
06 45 339 399

DESCRIPTION

You are invited to participate in a research about cultural participation. The purpose of the study is to understand how culture can influence an individual's well-being.

Your acceptance to participate in this study means that you accept to be interviewed. In general terms, the questions of the interview will be related to your experiences with, opinions on and feelings about culture.

Unless you prefer that no recordings are made, I will use an audio recorder app for the interview.

You are always free not to answer any particular question, and/or stop participating at any point.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

A. As far as I can tell, there are no risks associated with participating in this research. Yet, you are free to decide whether I should use your name or other identifying information not in the study. I will make sure that you cannot be identified, by only using general identification, pseudonyms and not include any information that can lead back to identification of you.

B. I am aware that the possibility of identifying the people who participate in this study may involve risks for your reputation. For that reason—unless you prefer to be identified fully (first name, last name, occupation, etc.)—I will not keep any information that may lead to the identification of those involved in the study. I will only pseudonyms to identify participants.

I will use the material from the interviews exclusively for academic work, such as further research, academic meetings and publications.

TIME INVOLVEMENT

Your participation in this study will take approximately one hour. You may interrupt your participation at any time.

PAYMENTS

There will be no monetary compensation for your participation.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

If you have decided to accept to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular

questions. If you prefer, your identity will be made known in all written data resulting from the study. Otherwise, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact –anonymously, if you wish— Erasmus University Rotterdam.

SIGNING THE CONSENT FORM

If you sign this consent form, your signature will be the only documentation of your identity. Thus, you **DO NOT NEED** to sign this form. In order to minimize risks and protect your identity, you may prefer to consent orally. Your oral consent is sufficient.

I give consent to be audiotaped during this study:

Name

Signature

Date