

Governing Black Rotterdam

(Anti-)Racism and the Ambiguities of Local Diversity Governance

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Abstract

This thesis presents the work conducted during a research internship within the Rotterdam Inclusivity Project (RIP), a collaborative initiative between Erasmus University, RADAR, and the Municipality of Rotterdam. Drawing on quantitative data analysis of the 2024 *Omnibus Survey* and qualitative policy analysis, the internship focused on examining discrimination patterns in Rotterdam and identifying gaps and opportunities for local anti-discrimination policy. Centering, on the experiences of Black Rotterdammers, this extended research explores how race affects social life and how local governance responds to these dynamics. Employing the conceptual lens of Black European Studies, the thesis emphasizes race as a structural determinant of inequality and situates Rotterdam within broader European contexts.

Findings reveal that Black Rotterdammers face persistent racial discrimination and material disadvantage, while recent resistance had considerable impact on local policy responses post-Black Lives Matter. Whilst acknowledging emancipatory claims, diversity strategies employ ambiguous frames that simultaneously recognize and undermine anti-racist efforts. Concluding with a reflection on the RIP's role in this governance strategy and on the internship experience, the thesis contributes to debates on the role of race in diversity policy and research and recommends leveraging the RIP's unique position to advance anti-racism in Rotterdam's local governance.

Table of Contents

I.	<i>Introduction.....</i>	1
II.	<i>Contextualizing Black Rotterdam: Theories and Histories of Black Europe.....</i>	3
2.1	Racial Europeanization	6
2.2	Practicing Subordination	12
2.3	Emancipation and Resistance	14
2.4	Policy Background: Rotterdam's History of Diversity Governance	19
2.5	The Rotterdam Inclusivity Project	23
III.	<i>Tasks and Methods.....</i>	28
3.1	Quantitative Data Analysis	28
3.2	Policy Document Analysis.....	30
3.3	Interviews	34
IV.	<i>Black Rotterdam: Patterns of Discrimination, Reactions and Attitudes</i>	35
4.1	Visible Invisibility	35
4.2	Ongoing race-based exclusions.....	37
4.3	Everyday Racism	39
4.4	Reacting to Racism: Between Resistance and Resignation	40
4.5	Toward Preserving Innocence or Overt Discrimination?.....	41
V.	<i>Governing Black Rotterdam: Local Policy Responses to Racial Inequality</i>	43
5.1	Coding Results: <i>Rotterdam tegen Racisme</i>	43
5.2	Coding Results: <i>Samenleven in één stad</i>	48
5.1	Frame Inconsistency and Incompleteness	52
5.2	Dominance of Weak Frames	55
5.3	Locating Blackness in Diversity Policy	57
VI.	<i>Discussion</i>	65
6.1	Making Use of Ambiguity amid Complexity	67
6.2	Delegating Anti-Racism: Empowerment or Avoidance?.....	68
6.3	Risks of Race-Neutral Policy.....	69
6.4	Measuring Race: Conceptual and Methodological Limits.....	70
6.5	The Role of the Rotterdam Inclusivity Project	75
VII.	<i>Internship evaluation</i>	79
7.1	Progression of Tasks & Skills	79
7.2	Challenges and Takeaways	82
VIII.	<i>Conclusion & Recommendations</i>	83
IX.	<i>References</i>	86
X.	<i>APPENDIX</i>	94
A)	Descriptive Tables	94
B)	Regression Tables.....	104
C)	Open Survey Questions with Translations.....	113
D)	Policy Coding Results	114
E)	Figures	116
F)	Interview Transcripts	118

I. Introduction

The Internship within the Rotterdam Inclusivity Project (RIP) was chosen to deepen my understanding of the insights gained in the *Master of Governance of Migration and Diversity* (GMD) during my Erasmus exchange semester at the Erasmus School of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Mobilizing my prior knowledge on discriminations and quantitative methods, the primary aim was to gain more practice-oriented competencies, in order to explore possible career paths in applied policy research and advisory. Within the framework of a six-month part-time Research Assistant position, the internship revolved around two main tasks: 1) conducting qualitative policy research on Rotterdam's anti-discrimination strategy and 2) quantitative analysis of a survey on Rotterdam residents' experiences with discrimination and diversity. The work resulted in an extensive report and outputs in the form of policy briefs directed to the municipality of Rotterdam. This thesis presents the process and results of my work within the project, while adopting an angle focused on the experiences of Black Rotterdammers, as well as critically reflecting on the local governance of this reality. Within this context, I will discuss the RIP as part of Rotterdam's anti-discrimination strategy. The content of this thesis should be understood against the backdrop of the internship, alongside broader reflections on the findings, modes of knowledge production and knowledge sharing.

Although concerns about cultural plurality in 21st-century Europe have largely centered on anti-Muslim sentiments, anti-Black racism became unavoidable with the world-wide protests of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement following the murder of George Floyd in the spring of 2020. Gloria Wekker speaks in this context of a "crisis around the racial contract" amidst protest taking place all over the Netherlands (Gilroy, 2020). For many, this year marks a turning point in European history, where for the first time a political momentum emerged in which the taboo on structural racism was broken and light was shed on colonialism and enslavement from a Black European perspective (Kelly & Vassel, 2023, p.9). These moments did not stay without policy response; the European Commission implemented an anti-racism action plan for 2020–2025 and appointed the first Black female Commission coordinator for anti-racism, Michaela Moua. The scale of these events prompted a group of authors from across Europe to map eight cities and reflect on the influence of BLM, highlighting both the challenges faced by Black communities and their contributions to social, economic, and cultural life, in a volume edited by Kelly and Vassell (2023). This thesis adds Rotterdam to this list, by examining the conditions of Black people in the city, their contributions to, and the resistance they encountered within, municipal anti-discrimination policy post-BLM.

The local level as unit of analysis is particularly relevant following the “local turn” in migration and integration governance (Bereni et al., 2020; Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017). As one of the few Dutch municipalities to have implemented an anti-discrimination framework, the city of Rotterdam responded directly to the demands of the BLM movement by amending its existing policy *Relax. Dit is Rotterdam* (2018), with the *action and intensification plan Rotterdam tegen Racisme* (2020). As part of this framework, the RIP was launched with the aim of providing the municipality with evidence-based policy advice to improve its governance of migration-related diversity (discriminatiewijzer.nl | Rotterdam Inclusivity Project, 2025). Rotterdam, often cited as an example of “superdiversity” (Vertovec, 2007), is a privileged field of study for exploring interethnic relations and the governance of migration related diversity (e.g., Scholten et al., 2019).

However, the specific experiences of Black populations often remain generalized under the category of migration background. The avoidance of race is especially at the forefront after multiculturalism has been declared a failure by European politicians in the early 2000s, in a context of growing immigration, nationalism and anti-immigrant sentiment (Simon & Beaujeu, 2017; Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). Critical voices have challenged the narrative of a multicultural failure, pointing to the discrepancies between the multiculturalist label and the effective practice in the “Dutch material real world” (Nimako in Modest & Flores, 2024; see also Duyvendak & Scholten, 2010). Early on Philomena Essed points out that the practice masks a hidden “ethnicism”, drawing on Mullard’s (1985) definition of an implicit ethnic hierarchization, of public policies (Essed, 1991, p.6.).

With the wide array of insights gained in my internship, Black Europe as analytical lens allows a deeper interpretation of both policy discourse and quantitative patterns, as well of the methods employed to produce this knowledge. One of the main tenets in the field of Black European Studies, is to look at Black people through the lens of citizenship, decentering migration and integration and centering race as analytical lens (Nimako & Small, 2009; Small, 2019b). Accordingly, this study looks at Black populations as stakeholders involved in changemaking. The notion Black Europe is, for Small and Nimako, particularly relevant to people belonging to the African Diaspora in Europe, defined as those whose migration was a consequence of European colonialism, connecting the trans-Atlantic slave trade and twentieth century migration of continental Africans to Europe (2009, p. 229). The present analysis focuses on those four *ethnic* categories, as provided by the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), that have majority afro-descendant populations: *Dutch Caribbean*, *Surinamese*, *Cape Verdean*, *Other African*. Aware of the immense ethno-racial diversity within these categories, the term

Black Rotterdammer should not be taken as a natural category but, as Blakely (2005) puts it, one that has been largely forced upon people by their shared experience of discrimination and racism, which manifests itself in common patterns across the continent.

The research is guided by the question: How can the lens of ‘Black Europe’ make sense of experiences of Black Rotterdammers and what are the implications for local anti-discrimination policy? Using quantitative data from the 2024 *Omnibus survey*, I first examine how the experiences of Black Rotterdammers correspond to those observed of Black populations across Europe. Secondly, I investigate how Rotterdam’s anti-discrimination policies respond to these dynamics through policy document analysis using Martiniello and Verhaeghe’s framework for analyzing local anti-discrimination policy, as well as critical frame and discourse analysis. I argue that Black Rotterdammers’ prevalent experience of racial subordination, as manifested through race-based exclusion and low socio-economic positions, and contested through formal and informal resistance, is both ambiguously recognized and reproduced in Rotterdam’s Diversity policy. To support this argument, the thesis opens with a review of relevant scholarship in Black European studies. This situates Rotterdam within the framework of “racial Europeanization” (Goldberg, 2006), provides historical and conceptual context on “Dutch racism” (Essed & Hoving, 2014), and the governance of diversity in Rotterdam. In a next chapter, Internship tasks, methods, data sources and analytical approaches are outlined. Results are presented in two parts, first outlining the current conditions of Black Rotterdammers, before analyzing municipal policy responses. The discussion critically reflects on these findings, the methods employed and the position of the Inclusivity Project within Rotterdam’s anti-discrimination strategy. The thesis concludes with an evaluation of the internship, followed by recommendations and closing remarks. The objective of this paper is to contribute to the literature that examines Black Europeans presences in local contexts, with the aim of highlighting ongoing race-based exclusion and revealing the role of local policy in addressing or perpetuating these exclusions.

II. Contextualizing Black Rotterdam: Theories and Histories of Black Europe

As a category of historical analysis, the notion *Black Europe* evokes at once a unit of analysis and an epistemological approach, as it foregrounds the intellectual contributions of people of African descent to European history, culture, and society (Thurman & Perry, 2016). In this vein Earle and Lowe (2005) write about “Black Africans and Renaissance Europe”; Ramey (2014) about, the ever-changing and fluid theories of Blackness in the middle-ages, continuing to

influence European histories today; and Germain (2016), about Black workers in post-WWII France demanding citizenship rights and forcing a change in definitions of French Identity. Olivette Otele's "African Europeans" (2021) traces Black ordinary and exceptional presences across Europe through past centuries, to challenge not only the belief of exceptionalism, but that of Black Europeans as a modern phenomenon. These works address the topic of periodization of the Black diaspora in Europe, often categorized as newcomers (Nimako & Small, 2009, p.212-213). Periodization, understood as the analytical division of time into coherent segments marked by shifts from dominant trends, is not only a descriptive tool but also concerned with the origins and consequences of change. In the context of national and global histories, the practice is always contentious when it comes to determining what constitutes a significant change, particularly when older patterns persist (Stearns, 2008).

US American historians, in the field of Black and Black diaspora studies like Tyler Stovall (2009) and Tina Campt (2003) have also taken interest with the history of Black Europe to challenge what is for many, an oxymoron. Allison Blakely, has studied the case of the Netherlands in particular, emphasizing the need for interdisciplinary approaches to studying the 'modernization' of Europe amidst increasing diversification and demands for minority recognition (1993, p. 17). From the outset, African American influences on the concept are undeniable, as the ideas underpinning Black Europe are rooted in Pan-Africanism amongst others, which figures like W.E.B. Du Bois were influential in spreading throughout Europe (Benjamin, 2012). After World War One, Black people came together to form an intellectual movement that brought forth new forms of self-identification and led to the rise of Black Internationalism and the Négritude movement in the 1960s involving figures like the Nardal sisters and Aimé Césaire (Nimako & Small, 2009). Later these ideas were associated with concepts such as "Afrocentricity" (Asante, 1980) or the "Black Atlantic" (Gilroy, 1995), locating Africans and their descendants at the center of historical analysis.

For these scholars, the use of the term Black, was a linguistic act of sociopolitical resistance against white supremacy and centrism (Andrews, 2019). Kehinde Andrews, professor of the first department of Black European Studies, developpes this idea and proposes using Blackness as distinct from race. In this conceptualization, race is a classification system created by European imperialism and embedded in the structures of knowledge, power, and nation. In contrast, Blackness is understood at once as an identity, connecting people of African descent in the diaspora, and as a counter-epistemology, that has emerged through bottom-up agency and activism. Challenging the supposedly 'neutral' academic framework, 'Blackness' is therefore also a political tool, that counters a system that naturalizes inequality and justifies exclusion. In

this sense Black European Studies inscribes itself in the paradigm of postcolonialism, which highlights “ongoing coloniality” addressing the lingering effects of colonial rule (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Kelly & Vassell, 2023).

On an analytical level, *Black Europe* often draws on Critical Race Theory (CRT) which emerged in US critical legal and feminist studies during the 1970 and has more recently been applied in the European context (e.g., Möschel, 2011; Essed & Hoving, 2014). CRT rests on the belief that, rather than being a deviation from norms, racism is endemic. As a result of “racial neoliberalism” (Goldberg, 2009), dominant groups may ignore structural racism if no individual perpetrator is found, resisting change on a systemic level (Freeman, 1978). It insists therefore on a historical and contextualized analysis of racism to reveal how the effects of past racial domination continue to linger on today (Bell, 1980; Freeman, 1978). Consequently, CRT scholars are critical about the legal ideology of color-blindness arguing, that structural determinisms sustain legal systems that reinforce racial subordination (Delgado et al., 2017). At the epistemological level CRT scholars insist on the recognition of the experiential knowledge and critical consciousness of people of color in understanding law, policy, and society (Möschel, 2011); as well as interdisciplinarity, reflecting the idea of intersectionality recognizing that one cannot fight racism without paying attention to other forms of oppression (Crenshaw, 1991; Crenshaw et al. 1995; Valdes et al., 2001).

The legitimacy of applying CRT and Black studies to a non-US context is however not subject to scientific consensus. Arguments are made on a methodological level, as well as conceptual levels questioning the instrumentality and accuracy of race for the European context of immigration (e.g., Siebers, 2017; Siebers & Dennissen, 2015; Wimmer, 2015). For many Black Scholars in the Netherlands, where race is mostly avoided by policymakers and native-Dutch, these debates are underpinned by a general uneasiness surrounding racial issues (Hondius, 2009; Essed and Trienekens, 2007). But even within the paradigm, tensions exist between its American and European strands, with scholars, like Michelle M. Wright, emphasizing the need to distinguish themselves from the former: “Black European Studies, cannot afford to become a subset of African American studies, much less Black nationalist, Pan-Africanist, or Afrocentric ideologies. It cannot afford to erase, as so many Black (and white and global) epistemologies have done, the presence, accomplishments, and contributions of Black women and Black queers” (2025, p.14).

Nevertheless, there is widespread agreement on the need to examine the living conditions of Black people beyond the American context to further deconstruct the foundations of the race binary and denounce systemic injustices in Europe. Mullard’s “Black Britain” (1973), as one

of the first comprehensive sociological studies of Black communities in Europe, is one of the foundational texts. The work highlights how institutional discrimination shaped Black lives in housing, education, and employment, while also stressing community resilience and political struggle. Building on this, the notion of Black Europe lends itself to comparative and transnational analyses at a local, national, and global level. Looking at Black Europe from the point of view of diaspora studies for instance, Patterson and Kelly (2000) have described as “Black Globality” the links, processes and conditions that underlie Black diasporas within Europe and abroad. Other usages include mapping Black diasporas across a chosen European country (see for instance, Black France e.g. Keaton et al., 2012; Black Portugal e.g. Casquilho-Martins (2022) and Garrido Castellano & Raposo (2020); Black Poland e.g. Balogun & Ohia-Nowak (2024), Black Germany e.g. Auma et al 2020; Black Italia e.g. Hawthorne (2017) and many more) or in individual cities across the European continent (e.g. Kelly & Vassell in “Mapping Black Europe”, 2023; or Matera’s “Black London”, 2015). Systematic studies of Blackness in the Netherlands began in the 1990s with the pioneering work of scholars such as Allison Blakely and Philomena Essed. In the early 2000s, scholars such as Gloria Wekker and Kwame Nimako, further deepened the focus on postcolonial continuities and Black feminist perspectives. This extensive body of literature has led to the conclusion that, despite the complexities of each nation-state, diaspora and individual experience of Blackness, there are striking similarities across the continent: The ambiguous hypervisibility of Black people in marginalized roles, entrenched socioeconomic inequality, persistent institutional racism, and irrepressible resistance against hegemonic racial ideologies. (Small, 2019a, 2019b). The following will therefore delve into these core similarities and how they have been found to manifest in the Netherlands, and specifically in Rotterdam. This will provide the basis for an analysis of the current situation of Black Rotterdammers, as well as how policy addresses these conditions.

2.1 Racial Europeanization

The African diaspora in the Netherlands cannot be understood separately from Dutch colonialism and Slavery, as most Black communities were (and still are) shaped by colonial routes (Blakely, 2005). Still, scholars such as Goldberg (1990) and Essed (1991) have long problematized the difficult use of slavery in explaining race relations in the European context. According to them, the representations Europeans possess of Blackness and slavery refer mainly to a repertoire based on United States (US) history or South African Apartheid. The idea of a European exceptionalism is thus closely connected to Stuart Hall’s *historical amnesia*

(2000) over the emergence of Europe in a process that Goldberg calls “racial Europeanization” (2006):

Classic racisms from the onset of modernity in the late fifteenth century were formed and fashioned in the contexts of European expansion, enslavement, and colonization. The white European emerged as a category that must be superior being to the foreign non-white other in order to extract wealth, labor and goods. The prevailing geographies of early modern racisms then are projected as Europe’s externality, the colonial outside, provincial extensions vested largely in the rural slaveries of plantation life (Goldberg, 2006, p.332).

In this respect, Goldberg reveals that representations of European identity are in fact deeply racialized, challenging the notion of Europe as something which did not have until recently, an ethnicity at all (Hall, 1993, p. 105). Contrary to his view of the European Union (EU) as a deeply racialized governance project, the fact that colonialism and slavery are considered irrelevant to the continental project and the formation of European nation-states is reflected in the EU's founding documents, which make no mention of colonialism or postcolonial migration. (Nimako & Small, 2009). However, racial Europeanization is not just a modern governance project that tries to retrospectively whiten Europeanness, but whiteness has been historically safeguarded through legal practices regulating, for instance, the entrance of enslaved and free Africans to the Dutch metropolis from the 16th to the 19th centuries (Hondius, 2011). Hondius argues that by so doing, slavery remained absent not only from view, but also from the historical canon and the common knowledge about the imperial enterprise.

Having cleansed European history from the colonial project, the holocaust remains a racial misdeed that cannot be denied since it took place in Europe and targeted its “own others” (Goldberg, 2006). The ongoing process of dealing with this memory is widely considered successful, while being rarely linked to the histories of extreme racial violence predating the involved nations histories (particularly Germany’s genocide in Namibia, or the French colonial practices in Algeria). As Aimé Césaire has theorized in *Discours sur le Colonialisme*; the holocaust was the execution of colonial practices on European soil, what made it a particularly gruesome case was not the practice itself but the context in which it was imbedded (1950). What Hall (2000) calls the “selective amnesia” surrounding these conversations, allows European nations to claim post-raciality, alluding to a time in which race no longer exists or to be “racially blind” alluding at least to a space in which race is not a relevant category (Lentin, 2008).

The case of Rotterdam

To counter historical amnesia and provide context for the upcoming analysis, this section examines Rotterdam's role in European expansion, slavery, and colonization, drawing on the special issue *Colonialism and Slavery: An Alternative History of the Port City of Rotterdam*. Following a motion by Surinamese council member Peggy Wijntuin in 2017, the City Council commissioned the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) to investigate the city's colonial past. The findings were published in 2021 as a three-volume study, edited by Gert Oostindie, Alex van Stipriaan, Francio Guadeloupe, Paul van de Laar, and Liane van der Linden.

Unsurprisingly, the Netherlands as a one of the major European maritime powers of the time, and Rotterdam which hosts today the largest European port, have a long history of involvement in colonialism and slavery. Officially, Dutch colonial history started in around 1600 with the founding of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1602 and the Dutch West India Company (WIC) in 1621. The city of Rotterdam was a partner in both these companies but truly became involved in colonialism and slavery much earlier. Both the first Dutch voyage around the world and the first Dutch slave ship had Rotterdam connections (Oostindie, 2021).

In the period that followed, it was the financial sector that benefited most from the colonial relationship. De Kok (2021) developpes on the financial impact of the insurance sector, which had interests in the East India Company and the slave trade. He argues that colonial trade was particularly important for the city's industrial development between 1750 and 1850. Moreover, Henk den Heijer (2021) describes the highly interconnected economic and administrative involvement of Rotterdam's elite in the colonies. Rotterdam's merchant elite traditionally had close links with the city authorities and colonial interests were well represented in the city's administration, from city pensionary Johan van Oldenbarnevelt in the late sixteenth century to the mayor Pieter Oud in the twentieth century, blurring commercial and public interests. Rotterdam trading firms were also closely involved in Surinamese plantations. This period glorified as "The Golden Age", refers to the time roughly periodized as the 17th century attached to rapid economic growth, entraining cultural development and urbanization of the Dutch mainland. This period was baptized retroactively, following economic decline, looking back at *the good old times* with an air of what Gilroy (2010) would call "postcolonial melancholia" that is still present in common discourse around this past (e.g., Kešić et al. 2022; Pieterse, 2019). Alexandra van Dongen and Liane van der Linden (2021) look at how these prosperous

Rotterdam residents, missionaries, scientists, and later museum staff, built collections from the late nineteenth century onwards of ancient artefacts, craftwork and everyday utensils brought over from the colonies, still in the possession of the Wereldmuseum, but also collections in the Maritime Museum, Boijmans van Beuningen and Museum Rotterdam still on display today.

The slave trade officially ended in the early nineteenth century and trade with the Caribbean declined, but the Dutch East Indies became increasingly significant and were an important factor in Rotterdam's transformation into a global port. Rotterdam was also actively involved in the trade with the colonies of other European countries throughout this period, especially Britain and France. Tom van den Berge (2021) explores the history of Dutch missionary work in the colonies in this time, where Rotterdam played an important role. In the later stages of colonialism, concerns were shifted to Europeans perceived "ethical vocation" to "developmental aid". According to van den Berge, this did not mean an end to the pursuit of profit, or of the racism and violence that preceded. Christian reasoning came to assert moral superiority over the colonial "Other" framed in paternalistic and mostly blatantly racist terms.

Although slavery was not permitted on Dutch soil, people came to the Netherlands from the colonies, voluntarily or otherwise, from the very beginnings of colonialism. Esther Captain (2021) describes these movements of migration, starting with the often enslaved 'servants' who came to Rotterdam from the colonies with their masters, the 'zeebaboes' (female servants on ships) and sailors. In the Second World War, various people from the colonies played a part in the resistance against the Nazi regime, many fighting in combat. Later, under the "Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands," drafted in 1954, the Netherlands granted Dutch citizenship to inhabitants of its colonies in Suriname and the former Antilles. Suriname gained independence in 1975 (van Amersfoort & Penninx, 1994, p. 137). The Netherlands Antilles refused to opt for the same solution despite being urged to do so by the Dutch government. Instead, they decided to split off from one another but keep the link with the Netherlands becoming the Dutch Caribbean that is still part of the Dutch Kingdom today. In the post-war period, large numbers of migrants from the colonies settled in the Netherlands. The first groups came from Indonesia, then from Suriname when it was clear that it would gain independence, and later from the Caribbean islands. According to van Amersfoort and Penninx, migration from Suriname to the Netherlands increased when the "Dutch endeavored to prevent Surinamese citizens from coming to the Netherlands and even deprive all of those already settled in the Netherlands of their Dutch citizenship" (1994, p. 137). Although this failed, the Dutch

government allowed people to freely migrate from Surinam to the Netherlands only until 1980, when they required them to choose citizenship.

The volume closes with the observation that “postcolonial Rotterdam” has close ties to former colonies through language, networks and administrative ties, and movement between the former metropole and colonies continue. In 2021, people from former Dutch colonies and their descendants number one to two million, or six to twelve per cent of the Dutch population and over twelve per cent of Rotterdam’s inhabitants (Oostindie, 2021). Today Rotterdam is widely characterized as a place of “super-diversity”, because of the complexification through “guestworker” migration from Cape Verde, Morocco, and Turkey, as well as refugee, student, and high skilled migration from all over the EU and the world.

Blackness, Citizenship and Belonging

Broadening the scope to the nation-state as unit of analysis, foundational works by Stuart Hall’s theories on nationhood and belonging and Gilroy’s “There ain’t no Black in the Union Jack” (1987), demonstrate how racial difference is managed and constructed through cultural, political, and institutional frameworks. In the process of nation-building, passing through color-blindness to obscure these histories, race is reconfigured through culture, belonging, national identity, migration, and security, as well as civilizational hierarchies (Goldberg, 2006, 2009). When discussing the Dutch Caribbean, questions of national identity, citizenship, location, and geographical boundaries arise quickly, as in the context of French overseas departments, as discussed for instance by Sharpley-Whiting and Patterson (2009). The former Netherlands Antilles and now the Dutch Caribbean remains a “modern colony”, because of the shared qualities of post-WWII formation, metropolitan citizenship, free mobility to the metropole, and access to rights and welfare from the metropolitan state (Grosfoguel, 2003, p. 180, as cited in Sharpe, 2005). Many Dutch post-colonial immigrants retain the formal citizenship of the colonial host society in a logic of “ideological integration”, in a context of migration of (de facto) citizens to metropolises, that do not belong to the “cultural nation-state” (Castles & Davidson, 2000). Therefore, while migration describes the movement and settlement between two geographically distant areas, it does not capture citizenships or belongings. From the point of view of nativism, Black citizens from former colonies are viewed in most cases as foreigners with a Dutch passport, partly because of their skin color and partly because of the history of subjugation (Nimako & Small, 2009).

As legal scholars attest, while citizenship is supposed to provide social equality, gradations along racial lines occur when looking at the effective access to rights (Bhargava, 2023). In a continental convergence of racial logic, Blackness becomes tied to securitization, eroding civil liberties for minority groups (Goldberg, 2006). Further, Hesse (2009) argues that Black Europeans existence both demands recognition and unsettles the very categories used to include or exclude. For instance, in the early 1980s, the Netherlands attempted to follow the UK example by enacting what it called *Minorities Policy* (Nimako, 2022). The assumption behind this was demographic in nature, since the policy target was considered a small group of people in a larger society. However, after Dutch demographers observed that, immigration exceeded emigration in the 1980s, the concept of minorities was removed from the lexicon and replaced by *autochthoons* and *allochthoons*, followed by a policy aimed at restricting immigration and reducing the budget of minority organizations that had benefited from the initial policy (Nimako, 2022). Martina and Schor (2015), argue that, despite their seemingly neutral appearance, these categories bind race, space, and belonging. Drawing on the term's geological origins, they claim that *allochtoon* evokes bodies as out of place, inherently different from the *autochtoon*, imagined as naturally rooted in Dutch soil. Until 2016, state categories officially classified Surinamese and other Dutch Caribbean people and their descendants as *allochtoon*, despite their entitlement to Dutch citizenship. Following pressure from Black activist groups, the government replaced *allochtoon* with people with a “non-Western migration background” in 2016. Yet this term remains a reference to non-white populations, sustaining racialized distinctions (Nimako & Small, 2009, p. 278).

The Dutch case is exemplary of how Europe deploys a racialized logic by obscuring racial categories, in what Goldberg (2009) calls the “evaporation” of race, and yet still uses them covertly to exclude non-white migrants from citizenship. He argues that neoliberalism intensifies this dynamic, transforming structural domination into individualized “diversity” policies that obscure systemic inequalities while embedding neoliberal, racialized “occupations” in everyday governance. Problematizing Europe's claim to universal liberalism, Pieterse (2008) charts how European identity has and continues to be defined against racialized “Others”, reinforcing exclusions from full citizenship, and belonging. This then raises the question of temporariness for non-white Europeans who are constantly reminded that they are not durably part of the European in-group. Extreme manifestations of this occur when far-right

parties such as the AfD in Germany wish to revoke or deny citizenship to non-white citizens, similar to Donald Trump's efforts towards large-scale denaturalization.¹

2.2 Practicing Subordination

The intertwining of race, citizenship and belonging injects itself into the daily lives of Black Europeans, through mechanisms of subordination. For example, Goodridge (2022) looks at the construction of professionalism around white representations, thus systematically disadvantaging Black people. European racial logics of denial, make these hidden mechanisms of subordination an especially interesting topic for European (outside of the UK or Ireland) policy, where race is almost never explicitly mentioned if not to passively condemn race-based exclusion under the law (Small, 2018). Like in employment we find subordination in social, housing and safety policy. Because of the material implications connected to these policies and practices, scholars rely on material analysis of ethno-racial inequalities to provide evidence for a systemic racial subordination (Nimako & Small, 2009).

Black Europe Studies at the time of its emergence is at the forefront of denouncing the low socio-economic position of Black people in Europe and the relation of this to race as a social determinant (Marchetti, 2014). Finding that race operates relatively independently from class (although class does not operate independently from race) (e.g., Mullard, 1973), this perspective counters mainstream European research that for a long time subsumes Blackness under immigration, measuring indicators of integration and thereby obscuring subordination and its racist implications (Essed & Nimako, 2006).

Situating the Dutch experience within the broader European-African diaspora, Blakely (2005) notes a distinctive feature of the Netherlands is that despite the relatively small size of the Black population, Blackness is very visible through the persistence of racial imagery (e.g., *Zwarte Piet*, slave-trade iconography). This is contrasted with the very little engagement of Dutch people with colonial past beyond this stereotyped idea. He links this to the social stratification of the Netherlands, that places Black people in low socio-economic positions (Blakely, 1993). This notion of *visible invisibility* has become central to the literature by Black European scholars and activists (e.g., Essed and Hoving, 2014; Keaton et al., 2012; McEachrane, 2014; Nimako, 2022; Small, 2019). On the one hand, Black Europeans are ambiguously hyper-visible

¹ (Deutscher Bundestag "Antrag: Reform der Einbürgerungspolitik als Voraussetzung einer wirklichen Migrationswende" May 20, 2025; US department of Justice "Memorandum on Civil Division Enforcement Priorities", July 11, 2025).

in both low socio-economic positions and in mainstream entertainment, on the other hand their invisibility reflects the widespread exclusion of Black Europeans from the networks that drive social mobility (Nimako, 2022). From a comparative perspective, the analysis of (in)visibility across cities and nations in Europe, clearly positions racism as a structural issue of continental convergence (Small, 2019).

Dutch Racisms

Two Black Dutch Women, Philomena Essed and Gloria Wekker, are foundational in understanding how racism manifests in the Netherlands. Wekker coined the term “white innocence” (2016) to describe Dutch racial denial. Here, the self-image as exceptionally tolerant and not involved in the forming of racial inequalities, exempts the Dutch from the responsibility to repair any damage. Linking this to Edward Said’s idea of a cultural archive, Wekker speaks of:

‘A repository of memory’ (Stoler 2009, 49), in the heads and hearts of people in the metropole, but its content is also silently cemented in policies, in organizational rules, in popular and sexual cultures, and in commonsense everyday knowledge, and all of this is based on four hundred years of imperial rule. (2016, p.19).

This archive which is being accessed for meaning-making in norms and policies, embeds “a racial grammar, a deep structure of inequality in thought and affect based on race” (2016, p.19). A deep sense of self has been formed, from this archive which sustains Dutch racial innocence while simultaneously shaping racialized notions of desirability and belonging. Wekker considers the resulting contradiction, between the tolerant image of the Netherlands and the proven mechanisms of institutional racism, “the paradox of Dutch society” (Wekker, 2016). Schuyt (2001) adds that tolerance itself is inherently paradoxical, because it requires accepting beliefs or behaviors one disapproves of. This makes it a “flawed virtue” that depends on self-restraint and is psychologically uneasy (Schuyt, 2001). These contradictions are also found within the application of multiculturalism in the Netherlands, which is said to hide a specific form of racism, where Dutch the self-image remains racially coded and guarded through the tendency to maintain ‘whiteness’ as the fundamental character of Dutch national identity (Wekker, 2009, p. 286).

This, Dutch tradition of multiculturalism is redefined by Essed as a form of ‘ethnicism’, “an ideology that explicitly proclaims the existence of ‘multiethnic’ equality but implicitly presupposes an ethnic or cultural hierarchical order” (Essed, 1991, p.6), in which colonial legacies of paternalism and structural marginalization have a crucial position (1991, p. 14).

Essed defines Dutch racism as a complex, paradoxical, and controversial phenomenon because of the Dutch perception of cultural and moral superiority, over those of migrants from (former) colonies and Muslims (Essed & Hoving, 2014). She speaks of the culturalization of racism as “a set of real and attributed ethnic differences representing the dominant culture as the norm and other cultures as different, problematic, backward, and culturally deficient” (1991, p. 203). Therefore, Dutch racism is expressed through paternalism, that manifests in subtle and everyday practices of subordination (Essed & Hoving, 2014). In her early work she conceptualizes “Everyday racism” (1991) as the routine practices through which racial inequality is reproduced in daily life. In this view, rather than being confined to overt acts of hatred, racism operates through mundane interactions such as stereotyping and microaggressions, thereby becoming a pervasive and normalized aspect of social life. Essed emphasizes that those most affected, particularly Black women, are best positioned to recognize and articulate how everyday racism shapes their lived realities. However, these expressions are difficult to address, not only because Dutch morality is considered superior to that of colonial subjects, but also because of the deep-seated belief in its own racial exceptionalism, which makes it superior to nations where racism is a social problem (Weiner, 2014). Consequently, the Dutch public does not, until recently, recognize existing forms of structural racism (see Ghorashi, 2023; Wekker, 2016; Gilroy, 2020).

2.3 Emancipation and Resistance

Despite difficulties in breaking through the taboo on race, one similarity among Black Europeans is that they continuously confront institutional racism by refusing to break with colonial and slavery past, demanding rights past European tolerance (Small, 2019). Viewing Black Europeans as stakeholders is central to understanding both the impact of Black Rotterdammers on discourse and policy as well as institutional pushbacks to resistance.

Nimako (2018) conceives emancipation as a layered, ongoing process encompassing cultural recognition, citizenship rights, economic justice, and collective memory, requiring sustained activist and political work. Emancipation struggles, he explains, began long before legal abolition, as enslaved people resisted through escape, rebellion, and cultural survival. Even after the formal abolition of slavery in Dutch colonies on July 1, 1863, formerly enslaved people in Suriname endured a decade of “state supervision”, during which the state compensated slave owners but not the enslaved, revealing whose rights were prioritized. In the post-abolition period, descendants of enslaved people faced continued marginalization through restrictions on

land, education, and civil rights, prompting new struggles for political, economic, and cultural empowerment via trade unions, education movements, and cultural organizations. Following WWII and decolonization, Caribbean and Surinamese migration to the Netherlands brought renewed confrontations with racialization, exclusion, and economic marginalization. As a result, emancipation today also entails combating institutional racism, discriminatory immigration policies, and cultural erasure (Nimako, 2018).

Everyday Anti-Racism

The afterword to “Dutch Racisms” (Essed & Hoving, 2014) reflects on the evolution of anti-racist struggle in the Netherlands, from the early 1980s. The first wave was catalyzed by feminist critiques of racism and her landmark *Everyday Racism* (1991), giving activists a lexicon around racism. It featured grassroots coalition work, race-critical academic initiatives, and the mobilization of Black Dutch women, yet also faced institutional backlash and the closure of critical spaces (e.g., CRES). In broader discussions, “Everyday racism” was largely dismissed at the time. At this time, Essed (1991b) observes the difficult Dutch mobilization when comparing the diverging strategies of resistance between the US and the Netherlands. She argues that while American women draw on established historical narrative of racial resistance and structural segregation, Dutch counterparts’ accusations of racism are often dismissed as hypersensitivity, making them hard to confront. As a result, resistance strategies diverge: U.S. women engage in organized, power-focused efforts and affirm collective identity, while those in the Netherlands largely adopt defensive, individual coping strategies.

This demonstrates the importance of cultural, historical, and political context in determining which strategies are possible or common (Lamont et al., 2016). Generally, racialized individuals respond to racism in diverse ways, ranging from passive reactions to active resistance. Passive reactions include, silence, withdrawal, and emotional inexpression, often shaped by fear of authority or social penalties (Ellefsen et al., 2022). In contrast to the organized and institutional actions of US resistance, “Everyday anti-racism” shifts focus to “bottom-up,” day-to-day practices (Lamont & Fleming, 2005; Aquino, 2016). Whitehead conceptualizes these as “moment-by-moment productions” of resistance (2015, p.375). Ellefsen et al. (2022) identify everyday individual resistances, which may scale up, through social movements (Ellefsen & Sandberg 2022). These range from confronting perpetrators directly to seeking contact to educate out-groups, bridging cultural divides, and repairing stigmatized identities. Moreover, minoritized groups resist attempts to render them invisible by asserting presence in

public space, through protest or other forms. Formal avenues include legal action and reporting to authorities.

A New Wave of Resistance

Essed (2014) and Nimako (2018) identify a second wave of Dutch resistance, from the 2000s onward reignited via high-profile flashpoints such as controversy around *Zwarte Piet*, that made international headlines. De Abreu offers a first-person account of the struggle to dismantle this racist depiction of *Sinterklaas*' helper, arguing that Black Dutch women have been central to it, not only as activists but as storytellers reclaiming public spaces. She critiques mainstream narratives that trivialize *Zwarte Piet* as benign folklore, exposing how the tradition perpetuates anti-Black stereotypes, causes psychological harm, and reinforces Dutch notions of belonging rooted in whiteness. By centering trauma and lived experience, de Abreu highlights how challenging *Zwarte Piet* is both a symbolic fight over representation and a vital struggle for Black dignity, social inclusion, and citizenship (2018).

Her wave of activism is more networked, intersectional, and confrontational. It includes pushback against "entitlement racism" (Essed, 2013) (i.e., brazen racist expression under the guise of free speech) and the use of legal tools and social media to amplify Black, Muslim, and migrant voices, linking everyday experiences of racism to structural injustices. Protests in this second wave are larger and more visible (Essed & Hoving, 2014). Nimako (2018) underscores the recent wave's confrontation of Dutch colonial amnesia, such as the push for recognizing Ketikoti (abolition day), removing colonial statues, and reforming education about the "Golden Age". Emancipation today also involves "epistemic freedom", challenging Eurocentric history and reclaiming collective memory. In this context, Esajas (2018) reclaims overlooked histories of Black presence and resistance in the Netherlands, stretching back to maritime labor, colonial soldiers, and postwar migrants, to reframe Black Dutch identity as rooted and ongoing. He emphasizes the power of collecting untold stories and forming autonomous Black institutions (such as Black Archives and the New Urban Collective), situating these efforts within broader struggles for citizenship, memory, and belonging. It follows that in this new wave, resistance is increasingly institutionalized.

This also extends, according to Beaman et al. (2023) to the worldwide and Europe-wide BLM movement. The article positions BLM protests following George Floyd's murder and its distribution through video as a transnational force catalyzing a deeper, more critical understanding of race and inclusion in Europe, and generating new transnational solidarities connected to local issues. While inspired by US events, European mobilizations adapted to local

histories and contexts, often linked to colonial past and current migration regimes. The transformative nature of the movement also is represented in an unprecedented mobilization of youth, often organized outside of traditional political institutions, rather relying on social media, and spontaneous protest.

The Dutch BLM protests (notably in cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Utrecht) drew thousands and were among the largest in Europe. The movement was driven largely by Black and Afro-Dutch youth, building on years of resistance against *Zwarte Piet*, police profiling, and institutional racism. Dutch BLM organizers broadened the discourse to include colonial amnesia, racism in education and healthcare (COVID-19), and the structural exclusion of racialized communities (Ghorashi, 2020; Gilroy, 2020). This impact is according to Ghorashi especially relevant to the awareness it fostered among non-white professionals who saw their exclusion as resulting from ‘personal inability’ and lack of ‘adaptation’ strategies. Ellefsen and Sandberg (2022) also find that the participation in BLM demonstrations has increased people’s confidence to confront racism in daily life. As a result, four municipalities offered their excuses in the summer of 2021. Among them Rotterdam, after results of the investigations into their colonial and slavery past were made public, while the national government under Mark Rutte was still refusing to apologize. Institutional steps were taken by instating a National Anti-discrimination and Anti-racism Coordinator, in 2021. Later, in 2022, apologies from King Willem-Alexander, Prime Minister Mark Rutte, followed and were interpreted as positive signs of public acknowledgment of racism in the Netherlands (NPR, 2022).

Parallel resistances

However, this wave of activism also encountered significant pushback. According to Beaman et al. (2023), many European governments and political elites rejected the relevance of BLM, framing systemic racism as a uniquely American issue and thereby reinforcing national myths of racial tolerance, such as France’s republican universalism or the Netherlands’ pride in multiculturalism. Activists faced police brutality, were marginalized in mainstream media, and often portrayed as disruptive. Private and public institutions occasionally co-opted the language of anti-racism while refusing structural change, leading to the depolitization of the cause, frustrating activists seeking accountability and redistribution of power.

Looking at the EU as unit of Analysis, Nimako explores the intersection of Black European social mobilization, national policies, and EU-level governance (2021). He unpacks how national colonial histories shape policy configurations which activists must strategically navigate at all levels of the governance apparatus. Since the 1990s, mobilization has brought

public attention to Dutch slavery and its legacies, paralleling international developments culminating in the 2001 UN World Conference against Racism in Durban. These converging pressures led the Dutch government to pledge, and in 2002 realize, a national slavery monument, followed in 2003 by the creation of the Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy (NiNsee). In response to the UN's Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024), the Dutch state allocated resources to raise awareness of African-descended populations' conditions in the present. However, many Black organizations' funding requests went unmet because the Decade, Nimako contends is framed not as an emancipation issue but as a matter of social cohesion, enabling “progressive control” i.e., managing change without sharing power. As a result, funding primarily benefits established Dutch institutions, which organize events in the name of Black communities while excluding them from decision-making Nimako (2021).

It is here that lies for Nimako and Small (2009) the problem for understanding subordination through resistance and mobilization, under the assumption that resistance and oppression are dialectical phenomena.

Whereas the issue of subordination breeds a brand of scholarship that can analyze and explain social mobility and inequality in the framework of struggle and resistance, it is doubtful if the same method can be used to analyze and explain violence, criminality, and drug abuse in Black Europe, since struggle and resistance is not the prerogative of the ‘wretched of the earth,’ be they Black, oppressed, poor, or powerless, and for that matter of any particular class. Thus, whether we consider struggle in the context of “building strength through weakness” along the thoughts of Amílcar Cabral and resistance in the context of antiracist struggle against ethnic hierarchy, or in Mullard's formulation, etharchy, we should bear in mind that the privileged and the powerful also struggle and resist (Mullard 1988, 360). The privileged and the powerful resist change that is not beneficial to them and struggle to accumulate wealth and material and moral interest on a daily basis. (2009, p.213)

Take for instance the upsurge of “entitlement Racism” observed in online spaces by researchers such as Shield (2019) and Ortiz (2020) as a countermovement to “political correctness” or “wokeness”. Grounded in the belief that one has the right to be racist, rationalized and justified using the language of free speech, it presents an act of individual resistance. But on an institutional level it complements the language of neoliberalism, which prioritizes individual accountability and personal choice above systems of privilege and disadvantage (Essed, 2013). This opposition could be linked to what Nimako calls in “The Dutch Atlantic”, parallel lives, parallel histories, and intertwined belongings (2011). He explains that people who share the same geographical space may have fundamentally different experiences and memories, leading to parallel constructions of history. These produce different understandings and notions of freedom and emancipation. The formal abolition of slavery made shared citizenship an intertwined belonging, as opposed to just a shared space. The meanings and histories of this are

however constructed in fundamentally different ways, almost opposing ways leading to parallel memories and lives.

2.4 Policy Background: Rotterdam's History of Diversity Governance

As previously mentioned, apart from the anglophone context, most European nations and their cities do not have explicit policies addressing racial inequality (Small, 2018; Simon, 2012). Often the terms are subsumed under Diversity-policies, like in the case of Rotterdam under Diversity and Inclusion. This is a result of the framing of the issue i.e., the “many-dimensional socio-political process grounded in everyday practices and ordinary beliefs” (Hulst & Yanow, 2014). Different policy frames (assimilationist, universalist, multicultural, integrations etc.) place responsibility with different actors and call for a certain policy response, including solutions and policy instruments considered most effective (Huddleston & Scholten, 2022; Ingram et al., 2007; Weiss 1989). Brubaker's (2009) work on the governance of citizenship shows how choices between these models are not just theoretical but deeply rooted in histories, traditions, and institutions. So, if racial Europeanization is a governance project defined through exclusionary practices and enacting racialized distinctions through everchanging language and policy configurations, how has this manifested in the context of Rotterdam?

When it comes to (super)diversity governance in general, scholars have previously pointed out the ambiguous language and framings, employed by policymakers amidst problem complexity (Teitelbaum 1992; Boswell, et al. 2011; Dekker, 2016). In the special issue *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity- The Case of Rotterdam* (2018) authors analyze the ways in which the city of Rotterdam has responded to the increasing diversification of social life. According to van de Laar and van der Schoor, from the 1960s–70s, the substantial arrival of non-*Western* guest workers, disrupted the established narrative, of Rotterdam as a resilient, working-class city, constructed in an earlier period of domestic migration. In this time, it is often portrayed as a positive example of common local identity and cohesion, despite the wide-ranging issues of exclusion and tensions that existed (Van de Laar & van der Schoor, 2018). The debates shifted towards integration and prompted policymakers to question whether these migrants should be viewed differently from earlier Dutch-domestic newcomers. Afro-Surinamese and Caribbean people have been especially in the past for their ‘deviant’ social behavior (Ahmad Ali, 1984, as cited in Marchetti, 2014).

The 1978 *Nota Migranten in Rotterdam* (Memorandum on Migrants in Rotterdam) first recognized the permanent presence of migrants in the city and regulated their equal treatment

(Dekker & Van Breugel, 2019). However, in the 1990s whilst using the language of inclusion and equal treatment, urban policies were implicitly excluding non-white citizens. Aalbers (2005) shed light on the social segregation carefully kept through mechanisms of redlining (i.e., the systematic denial or restriction of mortgages based on neighborhood rather than individual creditworthiness). Banks labeled large swathes of the south “red” zones where mortgage lending was sharply limited, and “yellow” zones where loan-to-value ratios were reduced. These areas, often home to higher shares of ethnic minorities and lower-income residents, experienced compounded financial exclusion in the form of place-based redlining, and race-based hurdles, limiting wealth-building and undermining social mobility. After Rotterdam adopted the National Mortgage Guarantee in 2000, overt redlining largely disappeared, but yellow-lining persisted.

Up to the early 2000s, Rotterdam maintained an integration policy that focused on socio-economic integration in the local housing- and labor market and in education (Dekker et al. 2015). The 1998-2002 policy *Veelkleurige Stad* (The Multi-Colored City) took a multicultural approach, focusing on enhancing social and economic participation of all citizens, while encouraging the retention of cultural identities and providing targeted benefits to specific groups (Dekker & Breugel, 2019). Rotterdam navigated between a generic and targeted policy strategy prioritizing the participation of *allochthonous* citizens in subsidized organizations; their employment in the administration of Rotterdam, particularly in higher level positions; the adjustment of cultural policies to fit the new cultural diversity and the encouragement of ethnic entrepreneurship and labor market participation (Rotterdam City Executive 1998, pp. 12-13, as cited in Decker, 2016).

Following the election of the anti-immigrant right-wing party *Leefbaar Rotterdam*, the murder of party leader, Pim Fortuyn, and the declaration of Dutch multiculturalist policies as a failure, the period after 2002 saw a move towards socio-cultural assimilation (Scholten et al., 2018; Simon & Beaujeu, 2018; Uitermark & Duyvendak, 2008). This government problematized diversity, especially the presence of Muslim immigrants. The city’s executive program at the time pointed out that immigrants were not yet at home, while native citizens felt progressively less at home in Rotterdam, contending that social cohesion in Rotterdam had been lost (Rotterdam City Executive 2002, p.33 as cited in Dekker, 2016). Subsequently, the priority of the city executive was to strengthen citizens’ identification with a prescribed definition of Rotterdam and thus reinforce “social integration” (Decker, 2016). However, the assimilationist problem definition was not consistent with the policy measures which were rather universalist (Uitermark & Duyvendak, 2008). For instance, the *Mensen Maken de Stad* (People Make the

City) program, aimed to strengthen social cohesion, active citizenship, and neighborhood diversity (Decker, 2016).

Simultaneously, this period also brought forth a housing policy often labeled hostile; The 2003 policy *Rotterdam zet door: op weg naar een stad in balans* (Rotterdam Pushes Through: Towards a Balanced City) emphasizing social order and strict integration requirements, linking these to safety concerns. Prieto-Viertel et al. (2025) contend that Rotterdam's "balanced neighborhoods" policy is fundamentally flawed for several reasons: It is ambiguously defined, uses ambivalent indicators, and has imprecise problem definitions that cast too wide a net, its premises about social mixing are not empirically supported, and it risks exacerbating social divides.

Many authors have also problematized the *Act on Exceptional Measures concerning Inner-City Problems* (2003) popularly known as the *Rotterdam Act*, which offered a way around the nationwide anti-discrimination regulations in housing allocation. In Chapter seven of *Coming to terms with superdiversity*, Van Houdt and Schinkel (2018) argue that Rotterdam is treated as an exceptional case, that requires more drastic policy measures than elsewhere. In consequence, Rotterdam becomes a policy laboratory resulting in a Janus-faced governance, placing responsibility on individuals and communities while excusing interventions that displace vulnerable groups, and reconstitute urban space according to normative ideals of social order and belonging. All under the guise of experimentation, innovation, and exceptionalism. Using Harris "whiteness as property" (1993) theory, contending that racialized entitlements, like the right to exclude, are historically embedded in property rights, Arkins and French (2024) draw parallels between Rotterdam's urban gentrification and colonial land dispossession. The authors look at how Rotterdam's municipal housing policy from 2005-2022 Including the *Rotterdam Act*², have systematically facilitated the demolition of social housing in predominantly migrant neighborhoods. The authors argue this strategy operates through three interlinked mechanisms: 1) the conceptual framing of social mixing, rooted in paternalistic, whiteness-centered theory; 2) bureaucratic language that invisibles race while targeting low-income minorities; and 3) unequal implementation, disproportionately impacting migrant communities, reinforcing a Euro-white norm in urban space.

Van Eijk (2010) adds the dimension of safety arguing that in urban policy, it must be interpreted as preservation of social order and national cohesion, motivated by economic and cultural

² As well as Vision Rotterdam 2030 ("Stadsvisie"), South Works! National Programme Quality Leap South, Housing Vision Rotterdam 2030 ("Woonvisie"), Implementation plan for Rotterdam South (2019),

insecurities over community identity. Safety, governed through tools such as the *Rotterdam Safety Index* used since 2001, was problematized by scholar like Martina and Schor (2015) and Noordergraf (2008) as constructing racialized narratives of risk. The Index incorporated an ethnicity variable, lowering scores in neighborhoods with higher shares of *allochtoon* residents, systematically labelling these areas as unsafe. The use of the Index framed ethnic-minority presence as inherently problematic, legitimizing spatial management, intensified policing, and administrative interventions, in ethnic minority neighborhoods.

The year 2006, after democrats regained a majority in the city council, marked a turn towards universalist problem definitions, reflecting broader trends in national policies moving away from group-specific approaches (Dekker et al. 2015). However, Decker (2016) argues that the universalist frame again is rather inconsistent. In line with similar frameworks across “old migration nations”, Rotterdam started mainstreaming its integration policies into various policy sectors (Scholten, 2011; Simon & Beaujeu, 2018). Rather than a consistent frame mainstreaming is a strategy that descends from universalism while adding multiculturalist elements (Scholten & Huddleston, 2022). The approach, according to Dekker can fit both a multicultural and an assimilationist problem definition. In this case, the policy defined areas of focus and policy goals but did not specify which policy problems existed (Decker, 2016).

Custers and Willems (2024) emphasize the divisions caused by these strategies. The city has adopted a populist safety regime centered on the securitized management of urban disadvantage, which contributes to political polarization and discrimination. On the other hand, the city has pursued technocratic, depoliticized urban redevelopment through state-led gentrification to attract middle-class residents and enhance its image as a hip, innovative place.

Ambiguity and social divides are recurring themes in Rotterdam’s urban and social policies, the strive for “balance” and social cohesion uses experimentation to try and resolve deeply engrained issues of racial segregation, while effectively (re)producing social divides along racial lines. On June 3rd, 2020, shortly after adopting the 2019, *Relax. dit is Rotterdam* policy, thousands of Rotterdammers gathered near the Erasmus Bridge to protest structural racism in the wake of George Floyd’s murder. The municipality recognizes the need to address these issues with the *Rotterdam tegen Racisme intensification plan Relax. Dit is Rotterdam and BLM*, which also first formalizes the Rotterdam Inclusivity Project.

2.5 The Rotterdam Inclusivity Project ³

The RIP is a collaboration between the Municipality of Rotterdam, Erasmus University, and RADAR anti-discrimination agency. As such, it is a multi-stakeholder partnership, a collaborative form of governance that brings together civil society, the local government, and academia to share expertise, information, and financial resources. These types of partnerships have become increasingly common and important in policy decision-making and action especially in responding to complex issues, such as diversity and sustainability (Kooiman, 2010). The project came about through an informal exchange between the project's primary investigator (PI) Peter Scholten, project manager Asya Pisarevskaya, and a representative of the team *Samenleven* at the Municipality of Rotterdam. The proposed idea was a contribution of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) to evidence based policymaking specifically focused on the governance of anti-discrimination, with the aim of ensuring ongoing research into patterns of discrimination, racism, and inequality in the city. Evidence based policymaking relies on the assumption that policies can be optimized by understanding how policy mechanisms function to achieve desired outcomes (Sanderson 2002, p. 2). Critics however, point to the inherently political and ideological nature of public policymaking, in which the main objective for different stakeholders is to promote their interests in the best possible way (e.g., Parkhurst, 2017).

In 2020, the project was formalized into the *Rotterdam tegen Racisme* policy in section 3.2.2, *Action 7- Scientific measurement and learning in the neighborhood*, focused on *scientific policy development and management*. According to a EUR press release, the research is aimed to focus on broader structural perspectives on social inclusion and exclusion based on quantitative analyses of available data, but also on qualitative in-depth studies (Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2021). Another focus is the impact of specific measures (policy or other) on the “acceptance of diversity” (*Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, p.15). Accordingly, the research is very practice oriented intended to inform and improve municipal policies. At the same time the project is considered an investment in a structural research agenda in the field of anti-discrimination policy, which is a core interest to EUR (EUR, 2021).

³ This section draws primarily on information from an interview with the RIP project manager, Asya Pisarevskaya (see Appendix F1), unless otherwise cited.

Launched in 2021, the project is now in its third cycle following two pilot years. In 2024 it was extended for four additional years. Each cycle starts on March 1st with annual goals set around that time. During the two pilot years, the emphasis was on mapping the broader landscape of discrimination in Rotterdam and its links to diversity and inequality through quantitative analysis. Making this data publicly available via a website, was the primary focus. The last cycle (2024/2025) includes in-depth policy analysis supported by PhD researcher Adham Aly and me as a research assistant, to examine policy development and implementation from a theoretical perspective and to identify potential improvements to municipal policy. The next cycle is intended to concentrate on qualitative research, with a deeper focus on topics such as how super-diversity is experienced in different neighborhoods and settings, particularly in relation to anti-Muslim discrimination, and discrimination while shopping.

Actors and Activities

Rotterdam, as one of 342 Dutch municipalities (*Gemeenten*), is the level of government closest to citizens within a multi-level governance structure in which authority is dispersed upwards and downwards from the central state (Hooghe & Marks, 2001). As such, they are legally required to implement certain services mandated by the central state, but they also enjoy “decentralized administrative autonomy”, meaning they can decide how to implement national policies locally, provided they remain within the national and EU legal frameworks (European Commission, 2022). Traditionally, the Netherlands is a decentralized unitary state, with local and regional levels assuming increasing responsibilities, due to both longstanding institutional traditions and current functional and situational needs (Groenleer & Hendriks, 2020). Municipalities carry out significant tasks in social services, integration, anti-discrimination, and housing policy. The legal foundation to discrimination governance is Art. 1 of the Dutch constitution prohibiting discrimination on a range of grounds including race, gender, political belief, religion, and disability. This is reinforced by specific legislation such as the *Equal Treatment Act*, the *Equal Treatment of Disabled and Chronically Ill People Act*, and other laws targeting age and gender equality (Government of the Netherlands, 2011). Additionally, a newly appointed (as of 2021) National Anti-discrimination and Anti-racism Coordinator, Rabin Baldewsingh, enacts an inter-ministerial approach to combating discrimination, which seeks to horizontally coordinate administrative “policy siloes” (Scott & Gong, 2021).

Despite legal mandates, the implementation on municipal level varies. Around two-thirds of Dutch municipalities lack any formal anti-discrimination strategy. Larger municipalities especially Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, and The Hague, have taken more proactive steps by signing the Dutch Diversity Charter, promoting both internal workforce diversity and inclusive external practices (European Commission, 2020).

Within the RIP, the main role of the Rotterdam Municipality, specifically the team, is to fund the project and to provide access to relevant data. There is a yearly budget shared between EUR and RADAR. For the pilot year, the *Rotterdam tegen Racisme* intensification plan foresees as Budget of 150.000€, for *Science and Index* (*Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, p.22). The EUR team also adds to this funding with their own budget to extend the capacities of their research. The municipality is also in the position to guide the research based on their needs but has until now, not been very decisive on this. A key priority however, given by the governance approach of the municipality, is to examine how these issues manifest at the neighborhood level. As outlined in *Rotterdam tegen Racisme* this also includes the making of a Discrimination Index in which trends of discrimination can be monitored down to the neighborhood level in the longer term (*Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, p.19).

The research partner of the municipality in this project is EUR, who's Public Administration department, stands among the world's leading centers for research in governance complexity, public management, and policy networks (EUR, 2024). The Project is supported by the Erasmus Initiative *Vital Cities and Citizens* (Dr. Maria Schiller) and the Leiden-Delft-Erasmus research group *Governance of Migration and Diversity* (Dr. Asya Pisarevskaya and Angelique van Dam, MSc). Alongside them, students of the master's in *Governance of Migration and Diversity* contribute to the project through their graduation theses, and by producing policy briefs on their findings (EUR, 2021). The RIP team includes project director Peter Scholten, project manager Asya Pisarevskaya, PhD researcher Adham Aly, supervisor Maria Schiller, and data analyst Tim Pendry. Based in the Department of Public Administration and Sociology, the team applies a governance-focused, bi-disciplinary approach. Their overarching aim is to inform and improve policymaking, reflecting EUR's commitment to societal impact.

This team constitutes the scientific lead of the RIP. Researchers have developed the Discrimination Index, which provides a quantitative overview of predicted discrimination levels ranging from 0 to 200, with higher scores indicating a higher likelihood of discrimination occurring. Most of the data feeding into the index is derived from non-public registry data

provided by Statistics Netherlands (CBS), except for two indicators: the ‘Percentage of Discrimination Experience’ calculated from Wijkprofiel Survey results (a neighborhood survey conducted by the municipality of Rotterdam), and the ‘Number of Discrimination Reports’ based on RADAR data (discriminatiewijzer.nl| Rotterdam Inclusivity Project, 2025). Furthermore, the EUR team is charged with the publishing of the data on a dedicated website, which constitutes one of the major outputs of the project. To communicate findings to policy makers, researchers have produced several policy briefs. These cover key themes such as Muslim discrimination, social cohesion and the relationship between neighborhood diversity and discrimination. A third policy brief, developed with my contribution, offers a detailed analysis of Rotterdam’s policy documents *Rotterdam tegen Racisme* and *Samenleven in één stad*.

The anti-discrimination agency RADAR was included in the project to ensure that collaboration extended to societal partners, their lead project manager bringing experience from the NGO sector in anti-discrimination work. Based on the Anti-Discrimination Provisions Act (2010), every municipality in the Netherlands is required to support an independent anti-discrimination agency. In Rotterdam, amongst 50 other municipalities, RADAR fulfills this legal task, with a total of 3.2 million inhabitants. Residents of these municipalities can turn to RADAR for free advice and support if they experience discrimination (RADAR, 2025). They produce yearly reports about their work with quantitative and qualitative accounts of the received complaints, some of which are included on the RIP website. While initially RADAR’s role within the project was intended to be a connector to civil society, it has since evolved into more of a research partner. Due to limited capacity at EUR, RADAR has taken on research tasks, including deeper analysis of their own data and statistical support. More recently, they initiated independent qualitative studies. One such project set out for this cycle, includes a mystery guest study on discrimination during shopping. RADAR has also supported events, such as organizing launch activities and practitioner feedback sessions during the website development phase.

“Collaborating to make an Inclusive City”

Collaborations between Dutch (local) government and other stakeholders are deeply engrained in its history of neo-corporatist political culture, reflecting state traditions of tolerance, pragmatism, and consensus (Kickert, 2003). This consensus-oriented system facilitates the integration of scholars into advisory processes, often through institutionalized channels (Pattyn & Timmermans, 2022). The collaboration between the three partners of the RIP, also operates

under a formal contract that outlines each partner's responsibilities, serving as a shared reference point. Monthly meetings are held with all partners to coordinate tasks, establish timelines, and ensure support where needed. While responsibilities are generally carried out independently, partners often rely on one another for data, feedback, and redirection.

The research teams retain significant freedom to propose topics, and while the municipality's feedback is taken seriously, final decisions are usually collaborative. In the project's early years, the direction was more ambiguous, (the municipality did not give a clear direction) with researchers needing to determine the agenda and later adjust based on municipal responses. By the third year, a clearer working relationship has emerged, with shared understanding of interests and priorities becoming more evident. The academic team in particular, has been working on aligning scientific interests with practical needs, realizing that this requires ongoing communication and long-term relationship-building. As opposed to the early phases of the project, which were marked by uncertainty due to staff changes and uncertain expectations, stability has improved over time, because partners are now more familiar with their roles and each other's capabilities.

However, the role of providing the link to civil society seems to be less straightforward now, that RADAR has taken up more research tasks. Subsequently, the involvement of grassroots organizations in the project has been limited but is gradually developing. While some civil society organizations were previously invited to provide feedback during a website review session, those connections have not yet been developed further as the focus remained on building the core infrastructure, i.e., the website itself. At this state, the municipality has stepped in, linking the team to community representatives, residents, and organizations like IDEM, for the website launch event for example. With the website now publicly accessible, the university is hoping to gain reach towards relevant organizations.

Finally, The RIP is not alone in its close collaboration with the municipality. EUR maintains a long-standing, institutionalized partnership with the Municipality of Rotterdam. Established formally in 2010, municipal officials and university researchers jointly develop evidence-based policy responses to urban challenges in "Knowledge labs", which have fostered networks and knowledge exchange, especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic (EUR Impact Report, 2024). Within the Department of Public Administration and Sociology, several research groups engage in similar partnerships across a range of topics, including water management, sustainability, and social inclusion. While the Inclusivity Project itself has so far remained somewhat inward-focused, there is a growing interest in expanding collaboration. For instance, links are being developed with the University of Malmö, where researchers are working closely

with their local municipality on issues of inclusion, participation, and the integration of immigrant communities. In the future, it will also be examined whether the program can be extended to other cities, such as Leiden and The Hague (EUR, 2021).

While it is still early to measure the full policy impact of the project, there are signs that it is gaining traction within the municipality. The city has shown strong support, particularly through the *wethouder* (alderman), and has taken pride in launching the project's website. Some findings have already been presented at a City Council meeting, where they were discussed, and the data has been used in conversations with neighborhood actors and practitioners. The RIP team was also invited to present to community representatives and residents. The project's strategic focus on publicly accessible outputs, aims to facilitate broader societal impact by engaging practitioners and municipal stakeholders. With academic outputs still forthcoming, the project is gradually building its influence, with expectations that its contributions will become more integrated into policy and practice in the coming years.

III. Tasks and Methods

This chapter outlines the methods used for some of the tasks confided to me during the internship as well as additional research elements used to develop my argument for this thesis. Consequently, the progression of hypotheses and methods used to test them are at times relative to these tasks and to results established at earlier points of the internship process. As such, this is not a standalone research project, but rather a critical engagement with, and continuation of, the work I carried out within the Project. This thesis draws on several primary data sources in a mixed-methods approach. While the theoretical framework anchors the research in key themes of Black Europe, laying out relevant city history, and underlying assumptions and contradictions in diversity governance, this methodological framework operationalizes these ideas in two analytical phases. The first phase involves empirical analysis using quantitative data to examine how Black residents' experiences in Rotterdam correspond to wider European patterns. The second phase delves into policy analysis to examine municipal responses to the established condition of Black Rotterdammers.

3.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative analysis builds on the report produced during the internship that covered a broad array of topics from discrimination patterns, post-discrimination reactions to diversity attitudes and their link to discrimination, using exploratory descriptive and inferential analysis. The data is derived from the 2024 *Omnibus Survey* provided by the municipality of Rotterdam to the project. The survey was conducted by the research agency OBI and is a representative sample of Rotterdam's population (n=4,896). Previous survey year (2020-2024) datasets were used for trend analysis, always presenting results for the previous year. Thus, in the following I will speak of results up to, and including, 2023. Frequencies and counts have been weighted according to the population distribution of Rotterdam in the respective survey year, provided by the municipality, with regards to age, migration background and neighborhoods (south vs north) and applied using normalized weights.

This part of the study seeks to examine how the experiences of Black Rotterdammers relate to patterns of discrimination and resistance observed among Black populations in other European contexts. Based on the observation of similarities across Europe, it is expected that Black Rotterdammers experience racialized subordination as manifested through the disproportional experiences of discrimination and relative material deprivation, while simultaneously engaging in both formal and informal acts of resistance. The analysis is further guided by theories of European and especially Dutch racisms, including “everyday racism”, “visibility/invisibility”, and “white innocence”, to interpret patterns of discrimination, responses, and diversity attitudes.

Following sub-hypotheses are tested: 1) Black Rotterdammers hold statistically lower socio-economic positions than other Rotterdammers; 2) Independently of their socio-economic position, Black Rotterdammers experience significantly higher levels of discrimination than the average Rotterdammer; 3) Despite high levels of experienced discrimination, attitudes towards diversity amongst Dutch people without migration Background are positive reflecting their tolerant self-image; 4) Black Rotterdammers resist discrimination through informal and formal action.

The variables of interest mirror those of the report, namely: experiences of discrimination (dummy for self-reported experience of discrimination within the past 12 month, in addition to discrimination contexts and grounds), diversity attitudes and Attitude Index (computed as the mean of four conceptually related survey items, including questions on culture, religion and gender/sexual orientation, with internal consistency assessed using Cronbach's alpha), responses to discrimination and reasons for non-reporting. Out of the five individual responses to discrimination identified by Ellerfsen et al. (2022), (ignoring, confronting, sharing

experiences, reporting, protesting) this survey captures the first four but does not include a variable for protesting or other forms of organized collective action. Socio-demographic controls include age, gender, and income, with skill level included where relevant.

For the report the seven ethnicities as provided by CBS categories and the pooled “Migration Background” variable (grouping individuals with at least one foreign-born parent), were used as main explanatory variables. To test my more focused hypotheses, I pool people from majority afro-descendant ethnic groups provided in survey. Hence, when I speak of Black Rotterdammers I speak of Rotterdammers that have at least one parent from a majority afro-descendant ethnicity group. These include “Dutch-Caribbean”, “Surinamese”, “Cape Verdean” “other African”. I also look at these ethnicities separately. Naturally, these populations are far more diverse in their identifications and cannot be neatly subsumed under the labels ‘Black’ or ‘Afro-descendant’ (Nimako & Small, 2009). Considering, ‘Other African,’ may encompass both White South Africans and North Africans outside of Morocco, these figures should be understood as approximations, a methodological simplification seeking to estimate Black populations in the absence of official racial categories (see e.g., Small, 2018).

Another adaptation to respond to my hypotheses, is done to regressions. Unlike the original report, which used logistic regression with Dutch/non-migrant respondents as the reference group, this study employs a QuantCrit approach. Mayhew and Simonoff (2015) proposed effect/deviation coding to avoid reinforcing a perspective in which the dominant white group is considered the norm and racial and ethnic minority groups represent deviations. This method compares groups against the grand mean rather than a dominant white reference category.

3.2 Policy Document Analysis

Deductive Coding Scheme

When it comes to the governance of diversity Martiniello and Verhaeghe highlight the contradiction of “the paradigmatic shift towards diversity and post-racialism on the one hand, and the persistent occurrence of discrimination on the other” (2024, p.2). Having established in a first step the persistent occurrence of anti-Black racism we will examine in a second step the policy response by Rotterdam’s municipal governance. The authors outline three major differences between multiculturalism and diversity policy that are summarized in the table below.

Multicultural policy	Diversity policy
Idea of ethnic or cultural pluralism	Idea of a western post-racial society
recognition, representation, and social participation of ethnic minority groups	focusing on individuals within society in general terms
proactive anti-discrimination (e.g., affirmative action)	Passive approach, stating a person may not be privileged over another in a context where there are no relevant differences
Targeted: focused on origin-based discrimination	General: more discrimination grounds besides ethnic origin
Structural approach	Individual approach

To understand the ways in which a local government responds to the prevalence of discrimination we will use the “framework to analyze local anti-discrimination policy and actions” provided by Martiniello & Verhaeghe (2024). This deductive coding scheme is applied to the two most recent anti-discrimination policy documents of the Rotterdam Municipality: *Rotterdam tegen Racisme. Intensification plan Relax. This is Rotterdam and Black Lives Matter* (2020) and *Samenleven in één stad* (Living together in one city) (2023).

The following hypotheses were formulated prior to beginning the coding process, at the outset of the internship. At this stage, they were primarily based on document titles and an initial overview: 1) Rotterdam is using a targeted and proactive anti-racist frame, centering racial inequality akin to multiculturalist frame in *Rotterdam against Racism* (2020). 2) Rotterdam is using a general and more passive diversity approach in *Samenleven in één stad* (2023), abandoning the anti-racist frame for universal non-discrimination.

The deductive coding scheme by Martiniello and Verhaeghe, is based on four theoretical dimensions relative to the problem definition and policy strategy. Each dimension constitutes a primary code level with several subdimensions.

In the *WHY* dimension, the policymaker establishes the motivations and objectives behind their implementation. The formulation and implementation of such policies can be understood as revolving around three key elements that constitute the subdimensions: *awareness, willingness, and capability* within the local government. *Awareness* relates to the problem agenda, referring to the recognition of an issue and the growing attention it receives, often triggered by the occurrence of a specific event. *Willingness* corresponds to the political agenda, which reflects the distribution of power within a government and determines the readiness to address a given

problem. *Capability* is connected to the policy agenda, as each level of government has its own set of policy responsibilities, which in turn shape its ability to act on the problem.

The *WHAT* dimension focuses on identifying the specific measures and actions that are implemented to combat discrimination. To enable effective coding, these are classified into four opposing pairs, but can also be considered to operate on a spectrum. Subcodes take following forms:

Ranging from *soft* to *hard* approaches; soft policies rely on compliance instruments that aim to convince people to behave in a desirable way, for example through training, the provision of information, or raising awareness. In contrast, hard policies use deterrence instruments that apply a repressive approach, or enforcement measures such as positive/affirmative action measures.

Secondly, policies can be classified as *structural* or *individual*. A structural approach recognizes the systemic nature of discrimination and emphasizes the need for group-level responses and collective legal mobilization. Examples of this include affirmative action, promoting intercultural encounters, and correspondence testing. An individual approach, by contrast, focuses on encouraging individuals to improve their own situation in terms of employability and education, while overlooking the role of power relations in creating and sustaining social inequalities. Examples here include promoting economic self-improvement.

Policies may be *targeted* or *general* in scope. Targeted policies are designed to efficiently address the needs of specific groups, while general anti-discrimination policies are not tied to specific grounds of discrimination or ethnic groups. This raises the so-called dilemma of recognition (De Zwart, 2005): targeting specific groups risks reinforcing social difference and contributing to “othering” while not targeting risks to undermine acknowledgement of inequalities. Three main solutions to this dilemma are identified by the authors. *Accommodation* recognizes and directly targets specific groups as beneficiaries of the policy, following a color-conscious strategy (Schiller, 2015). When using *Replacement* policymakers create new categories to avoid reinforcing existing ethnic categories while still targeting specific groups indirectly (De Zwart, 2005). Situated between the two, *mainstreaming* involves adjusting policies to the increasing complexity diversity. Policies tend to address society as a whole, yet incorporate diversity it into various domains instead of treating it as a stand-alone issue (Scholten, 2020).

A fourth distinction can be made between *direct* and *indirect* approaches. Direct anti-discrimination policies take anti-discrimination as their primary goal. Indirect anti-discrimination measures, by contrast, address discrimination as a secondary goal. These are

most often found in mainstreaming practices, for example through housing assistance, housing enforcement, inclusion initiatives, or information provision.

In the *WHEN* dimension, the emphasis is on the timing of anti-discrimination policies and policy actions. Policies can be implemented in a *proactive* or *reactive* manner. Proactive actions are taken before an unwanted outcome occurs, aiming to prevent discrimination in advance. Examples of such measures include public campaigns or research-oriented correspondence tests. Reactive actions, on the other hand, are developed in response to the occurrence of an unwanted event. These may involve the establishment of complaint procedures or the use of juridical discrimination tests. The timing of policy adoption and implementation is also shaped by historical, political, and social contexts, which can affect both their effectiveness and relevance. In this way, the authors say, the temporal positioning of policies becomes an integral part of their potential to address discrimination successfully.

Finally, the *HOW* dimension, differentiates between the ways in which anti-discrimination policies are put into practice, including the strategies and mechanisms employed for their implementation. A *top-down* approach involves the government directly implementing policies in the field, with a low level of interaction with civil society. This can take the form of interventionism, where the local government actively assumes a central role in addressing discrimination. In contrast, a *bottom-up* approach involves actors in the field, co-defining the problems that shape policies. Here, civil society plays a relevant role in both decision-making and implementation, with a high number of interactions between local government and civil society.

The strength of this analytical framework lies in its capacity to provide a holistic perspective by focusing on seven theoretical dimensions, whereas existing research often considers only two (Martiniello & Verhaeghe, 2024). However, during my work in the internship, I observed certain limitations in our application of the framework to Rotterdam's policies. First, in the original methodology proposed by the authors, policy actions (*WHAT*) are coded in a layered manner, meaning each of the four pairs is applied to differentiate between awareness, support, and enforcement measures. In our application there were some inconsistencies between my coding approach, which often assigned multiple codes to a single action, and that of my co-researcher, who typically classified actions using one main code. Other ambiguities of the framework include the interpretation of targeted codes, which may mean actions addressing only specific segments of society (e.g., non-vulnerable populations or explicitly named discriminated groups) or to measures aimed at a particular ground of discrimination. In addition,

many of the mostly binary distinctions of the second level of coding were difficult to apply reliably, as the policy texts were unspecific or vague.

Interpretative policy analysis

The final task of the internship was drafting the executive summary of the Omnibus 2024 report, with actionable recommendations to the municipality of Rotterdam, identifying gaps and opportunities for policy action. Preparing this draft required detailed engagement with the policy goals of *Samenleven in één stad*, during which I perceived internal mismatches, not only between the goals and the data but also within the goals themselves, particularly in terms of language and framing. Going beyond the scope of the policy brief, this prompted me to take a closer look at this issue, in the present thesis. Schön and Rein (1994) theorize that different stakeholders in the policy process struggle over the framing of policy situations and engage in symbolic contests over the social meaning of issue domains. Social meaning concerns both the issue definition and *what is to be done about it*. Building on this perspective, I adopt an interpretive approach to examine how the current policy goals navigate multiple stakeholders' interests in a context of high policy controversy. The analysis examines how social policies, using language that functions under the guise of neutrality, may at some instances use symbolic recognition of racial inequality and at others reproduce racial hierarchies and race-based exclusions (Arkins & French, 2024).

The approach combines elements of discourse and framing analysis, with framing analysis tracing how specific themes and contrasts construct policy problems and discourse analysis examining how power dynamics are embedded in language (Van Hulst et al. 2024). First, recurring tensions and oppositions are identified and mapped across the three policy goals of *Samenleven in één stad* and their associated policy actions. Second, these elements are analyzed to examine their discursive framing with regards to how policy language recognizes or reinforces the previously established themes characterizing Black Rotterdam.

3.3 Interviews

In addition to the quantitative and document-based analysis, semi-structured interviews provided contextual insights. A first interview with the project manager of the RIP (see Appendix F1) clarified the project's organizational structure, focus areas as well as goals and

challenges; its content is incorporated mainly into Chapter 2.6 (and to a lesser extent 6.3), which outlines the project.

Additionally, I participated in an interview with an employee of the *SamenLeven* team within the Rotterdam Municipality, conducted by my coresearcher and I, which supported the analyses (see Appendix F2). This interview was a preliminary talk to further investigations into the local governance of Muslim discrimination. In this text it serves, the purpose of illustration rather than as primary evidence. Interviews were held in English and particularly valuable given my positionality, as a new Rotterdam resident and non-Dutch speaker, rather unfamiliar with local governance context.

IV. Black Rotterdam: Patterns of Discrimination, Reactions and Attitudes

Rotterdam is a Minority-Majority city where 42% of residents do not have a migration background while the majority do. Of those who do, 13% of born, or have at least one parent born, in another EU country (see Appendix A1). This, of course, does not tell us about race or citizenships meaning that the term Majority-Minority does not describe ethno-racial majorities or minorities, nor the distribution of Dutch citizens. An important proportion of Rotterdam residents, 17% to be exact, represented in this survey, are from majority afro-descendant ethno-racial backgrounds (see Appendix A2). Precisely, 9.5% are categorized as Surinamese (466 people in this survey), 3.2% as Dutch-Caribbean (156 respondents), 2% as Cape Verdean (88) and 2.5% (121) are from other African Backgrounds (see Appendix A1). The following analysis delves into the patterns of discrimination and reactions to discrimination of Black Rotterdammers, to examine how they relate to the experience of Blackness across Europe.

4.1 Visible Invisibility

When we look at socio-economic status, we observe that the Black-majority ethnic categories are overrepresented in the lowest income category, compared to other groups and thus hold on average lower socioeconomic position than both Dutch people without migration background but also significantly lower than those with other non-Dutch origins (when pooled). 42% of Black people (against 30% of Dutch people and 35% of those with other migration backgrounds) are in the lowest two income levels, (i.e., social minima to low to moderate

income). This is mostly consistent among Black-majority ethnicity groups (between 42-43%) while the repartition between lowest and second lowest income level varies (see Appendix A4). Especially Dutch Caribbeans and Cape Verdeans are highly represented in the lowest socioeconomic category, this effect is statistically significant and remains strong when controlling for gender and age variations (See Appendix B3, B4). For Surinamese descendants, the highest percentage is also found in the lowest financial class, but the repartition is more evenly distributed across income sectors. This mirrors findings from the early 2000s explaining that the socio-economic position of Surinamese immigrants and their descendants has significantly improved during the nineties. Van Amersfoort and Van Niekerk (2006) explain this through declining unemployment rates, higher educational levels, and a subsequent improvement in labor market position. *Other Africans* are the Black-majority ethnicity least present in the lowest income group with 20% but are still highly represented in the lowest two income levels (40% in total) (see Appendix A3).

While the fact that 42% of individuals in the lowest two income groups may seem proportionate given that there are four income levels, the comparison of this distribution to other groups lets us reasonably speak of relative material deprivation. Although Black people make up only 17% of the total population, they represent 25% of the lowest income group. By contrast, individuals of Dutch origin comprise 42% of the total population yet only 27% of this income category (See Appendix A6). This striking overrepresentation is found exclusively among Black-majority groups, some almost twice as present in the lowest income bracket as in the general population (See Appendix A5), despite the presumably favorable legal statuses and language proficiencies of especially postcolonial Black people, which should facilitate easier access to the labor market. These figures point to entrenched socio-economic inequality, reflecting structural disadvantage and the ambiguous hypervisibility of Black people in marginalized roles (Nimako, 2022; Small, 2019). The persistent wealth disparities among Black populations in Europe undoubtedly reflect the historical legacy of economic exploitation between former colonial powers and their colonies, as shown by a report by the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) entitled *Europe's Original Sin*. The report highlights the link between ongoing racial disparities across European countries and colonial policies and practices. These manifest especially in unequal access to wealth, housing, employment, and education (ENAR, Sanaullah, 2024). This pattern alone however does not constitute conclusive evidence of ongoing racial discrimination, as it could be the result of (intergenerational) cumulative disadvantage (Crystal & Shea, 1990; Vauhkonen et al., 2017).

4.2 Ongoing race-based exclusions

We see wealth inequalities however, reinforced by the frequency of present-day discrimination experiences. A third (32%) of people from Black-majority ethnicities in Rotterdam have experienced discrimination in the past year, more than twice as many as Dutch people without migration background (14%) and significantly higher than the general average of 23% (see Appendix A7). *Ethnicity* is also the strongest socio-demographic predictor of discrimination in this survey (accounting for gender, age, and income variations) (see Appendix B7). Dutch Caribbeans are particularly affected with 44% reporting at least one incident in 2023, but Muslim-majority (Turkish and Moroccan) groups follow closely (between 36% and 40%) (see Appendix A8).

Narrowing it down to racially motivated discrimination, 27% of Black Rotterdammers report having been discriminated because of their race or skin color (See Appendix A9), that is over 80% of those who have experienced any discrimination in at all (see Appendix A10). It is thus very plausible to widely interpret the discrimination of this group as related to anti-Black racism. This includes 88% of Surinamese and 72% of Dutch Caribbean people, 81% of Cape Verdeans and 74% of other Africans (see Appendix A11). Interestingly, 33% of Dutch Caribbeans also feel that they are being discriminated against based on their nationality, but because Dutch Caribbeans are entitled to Dutch nationality, one can assume here that nationality is interpreted by respondents as *origin*. This is also relevant for ethnic groups (especially Muslim majority) which might not see themselves as racialized or having non-white skin color despite experiencing high levels of discrimination (See Appendix A11, B8). On the one hand this lets us question about how people (are supposed to) understand this question and on the other may indicate the prevalence of migrant oppression or forms of “cultural racism” (Essed & Hoving, 2014; Goldberg, 2006). The effect of ethnicity on experiencing racial discrimination is highly positive for Surinamese and Dutch Caribbeans. In turn for Surinamese residents there is a highly negative effect on nationality, for Dutch Caribbeans this effect is small and of marginal significance (see Appendix, B8). This, together with the fact that postcolonial Black populations grow up learning the colonial language and are connected to “Dutch culture” (Klinkers & Oostindie, 2010) suggests that it is not so much their foreign origin, as their race that underlies their discrimination. That more Dutch Caribbeans than Surinamese feel discriminated based on their *foreignness*, while being part of the Dutch Kingdom, could be explained through the fact that by the beginning of the 2000s the Surinamese community is regarded as more successful, because of their good command of the Dutch language while *Antillean* immigrants were associated with deviant behavior due to their supposed low

standard of education and poor command of the Dutch language (Klinkers & Oostindie 2010 p.202). This would speak in favor of cultural racism that makes hierarchies between groups based on their perceived proximity to “Dutch culture”, while race continues to play a leading role in the idea of proximity. The fact that we do not see any significant effects of being from *other African* Backgrounds, on either nationality or race-based discrimination, is likely due to the small size and probably very heterogenous nature of this category in the survey.

To test whether racial discrimination operates independently from social class, stepwise regressions examining the association between ethnicity and experiences of discrimination. The first model, including only ethnicity, showed that individuals from Black-majority ethnic groups present significantly higher-than-average likelihood of experiencing discrimination, with ca. 59% higher odds of reporting discrimination than the average person in the sample (See Appendix B6). Controls are added progressively, proving that for Post-colonial Black Populations, discrimination is not dampened by the accounting for other sociodemographic factors, remaining significantly more likely to experience discrimination than the grand mean while keeping age, income, and gender constant (See Appendix B7). On the contrary, the effect increases when adding income indicating that some of the effect of ethnicity/race was masked by wealth disparities. These results demonstrate that ethnicity and income are both independently associated with reported discrimination, but that disparities in odds of experiencing discrimination are even more pronounced when comparing individuals from the same income level. This confirms that the observed racial disparities in discrimination experiences of postcolonial Black Rotterdammers cannot be reduced to wealth disparities and provides evidence for the persistence of race-based discriminations past cumulative disadvantage.

In effect coding, there is no significant effect of reported discrimination between individuals from other Black-majority ethnicities (e.g., Cape Verdean or other African) compared to the average Rotterdammer (See Appendix B7). A possible explanation is that the grand mean includes much larger populations from highly discriminated groups, masking smaller differences for other groups. This pattern may also indicate that colonial ties shape either the extent of discrimination experienced or the intensity of claims to equal treatment, as for the so called “paradox of integration”, whereby characteristics regarded as signs of structural integration like citizenship, language proficiency and education level, reinforce the sensitivity to unequal treatment (e.g., Teije et al., 2013).

Besides Black-majority populations, Muslim majority populations remain highly affected by discrimination after controlling for age gender and income. The size of this effect remains

however consistently lower than those of postcolonial Black populations and size and significance reduces when adding controls, meaning that lower average income and younger age distribution, account for some of the variations in their discrimination experiences (See Appendix B7).

4.3 Everyday Racism

Labor market discrimination has been widely studied, finding that Dutch Caribbean and Surinamese immigrants were significantly less likely to be invited for a job interview compared to *native* Dutch candidates even though professional qualifications were similar (Andriessen et al., 2012). The present analysis provides evidence that in professional settings, Black-majority groups remain the most commonly targeted by discrimination, with 35% signaling an incident in this context. They also experience the most discrimination while shopping (an average of 39% have experienced this in the past year, reaching up to 49% for Surinamese). Black people are also more than twice as frequently as other groups discriminated in school or educational institutions (See Appendix A12, B11). Especially Surinamese, Dutch Caribbean and other Africans are affected (See Appendix A13). Again, the same patterns of exclusion, were found already 20 years prior, where Black school children experience more social exclusion than white Dutch children (e.g., Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002)

Most discrimination (44%) happens in the street, that is almost half of all experiences (see Appendix A12). This is the most common place of discrimination no matter the background, 50% of individuals who experienced any discrimination report it occurring in the public space. This is especially prominent for individuals reporting religious discrimination, with 62% indicating the street as a context (see Appendix A14). Black people are in fact, slightly less likely than average to be affected by street-level discrimination (see Appendix B11). This could mean that what is experienced are speaking less often blatantly racist verbal attacks from strangers, (that people perceived as Arab/Muslim might be subject to) but rather ‘racial microaggressions’ (Sue et al., 2009) during everyday encounters (i.e., in the immediate environment at work, in school, in stores etc.). This corresponds to Essed’s theory of “everyday racism” as forms which are structural but subtle. Further, the discrimination ground race is not significantly associated to the workplace although Black people are *de facto* more likely to experience it in this context than average (See Appendix B1). Affected people might ascribe their experiences to other factors like gender or language, or as Ghorashi (2020) finds, to their ‘personal inability’ and lack of ‘adaptation’ strategies. Responding to an open survey question on reactions to discriminatory incidents, one Black Rotterdammer responds “*as a non-white*

person this is your life. Daily tiny moments, taking action on everything makes yourself crazy or is a second job”, illustrating the frequency and normalization of instances (See Appendix C1).

4.4 Reacting to Racism: Between Resistance and Resignation

Looking at statistical distribution we see some very moderate differences ethnic groups’ responses to discrimination. Black people file complaints slightly more often than others of either migrant or Dutch origin (see Appendix A15). However, the hypothesis of a positive effect of being from a Black-majority Ethnicity group and taking action after a discrimination experience, is not sufficiently supported. When pooled into one common group Black Rotterdammer are only marginally more likely to report than average, and when comparing the individual ethnic groups, to the grand mean the only significant effect concerning majority Black populations is *other* Africans being more likely to discuss instances with their environment (see Appendix B9). What we can observe in turn, is that people from Muslim majorities are less likely to talk to others, and more likely to stay inactive but again, effect sizes are small. The highest likelihood of taking no action is seen among Moroccans, where almost 80% of those who have experienced discrimination, remain passive (See Appendix A16). The effects of ethnicity on reactions are generally of marginal significance because most people across all groups do not take any action that is listed in the survey.

Furthermore, we can observe that experiencing race-based discrimination specifically, increases the likelihood of staying inactive, consistent with Hondius’ finding (2014) that Afro-Dutch people experience both overt and covert racism, but that both forms remain generally unacknowledged. Consequently, Black communities in the Netherlands often ignore instances of racist abuse and react by limiting their own movement in society or ignoring it. Answers to open questions about reactions, by Black Rotterdammers in the survey, also reflect a certain fatigue of reporting in comments like *“This has been happening for years and I don’t care anymore”* or *“It happens so often. I’d have to report it every time”*, signaling a resignation from taking formal action and a *rising above it* coping strategy, common in the encounter of everyday racism, where it is stressed that one should *choose not to get offended* (Ellefsen et al., 2022).

Other reasons for not reporting appear to be more closely linked to distrust in institutions. We find that Black people take their experiences of discrimination seriously (compared to Dutch and other migration backgrounds) but have low trust that institutions will take them seriously or do something about it if they were to report (See Appendix A17). This is also correlated to

the experience of racial discrimination (See Appendix B2). This trust is not exceptionally lower than that of other migrants but lower than that of Dutch people without migration background (See Appendix A17).

Nonetheless, some report the incident even though they do not think anything will be done, like this respondent who says: *“(I) Submitted objection I knew in advance that it would be rejected. But nevertheless, I filed objection anyway. Unfortunately, never got called for a personal interview.”* Others do not even try: *“You’re not being listened to, otherwise discrimination wouldn’t be increasing.”*; *“It’s pointless, society is getting harsher, and in my experience, the problem gets worse when you speak up”*; *“I don’t trust anyone anymore.”*; *“Experience shows that reporting doesn’t help. If you’re friends with the manager, you’re protected. The rest get punished.”* Again others, face structural barriers like this respondent who does not report because of the *“Language barrier”*. Whether people report but without result, or stay inactive because of fear, this implies difficulty in accessing the right to equal treatment.

The data provides limited possibility to capture resistance to structural racism, because it questions about individual instances of (illegal) discrimination, which is often difficult to pinpoint and react to, specifically in a context of everyday racism. And second, because it does not include forms of action like protesting or continuous community organizing.

4.5 Toward Preserving Innocence or Overt Discrimination?

The development of these circumstances over time, underscore that race-based exclusion is a consistent phenomenon. The data from 2019 to 2023 shows that discrimination consistently remains a widespread and persistent issue specifically for Black- and Muslim majority populations in Rotterdam (See Appendix A19). The overall increase in discrimination in 2023 can be partly attributed to being the rise into highest levels of discrimination faced by the Moroccan and Turkish populations in the observed period. The increase in discrimination experiences amongst first generations, closing the 10% gap that existed before 2020, may indicate growing anti-immigrant sentiments (see Appendix A20).

Even though we can speculate over the influence of an awareness raising event like BLM, or public interventions, if there was such an influence on discrimination levels, it was not durable. Looking at the general trends since 2019, experiences of discrimination initially declined for Black-majority populations in the two years after BLM (2021 and 2022) falling from 33% experiencing discrimination in 2019 to 22% in 2022 (See Appendix A18). Most recently, however in 2023, it is at 35% the highest in the observed period, the Dutch Caribbean group

being the main driver of this fluctuation in this sample. Since, this group is relatively small in effective numbers the stark difference can be do random fluctuations. In contrast, levels among Dutch and other European respondents have remained relatively stable over time. This pattern of decline followed by a spike mirrors the development of racial discrimination as well as street-level discrimination (See Appendix E2, E3). These developments appear to relate to what we might call experiences of overt or blatant discrimination (likely related to the rise in anti-Muslim sentiment as we have seen religious discrimination is related to the street- and residential level) and the upsurge of anti-Black racism after a period of deintensification after 2020.

Simultaneously with the rise in anti-Black and anti-Muslim discrimination in 2023, attitudes towards discrimination are more positive in the beginning of 2024 than in the beginning of 2023. Although respondents who experience discrimination tend to hold slightly more moderate attitudes, whereas those who do not are often represented on extremes, experiencing discrimination has no significant isolated effect on diversity attitudes (see Appendix B13, E4). General and Dutch attitudes towards diversity are very positive, suggesting a persisting tolerant self-image. However, amongst Dutch without migration background, this relates especially to LGBTQ tolerance, where they are slightly more likely to respond positively than the average respondent. In contrast, they are slightly less likely than average to react positively to especially religious diversity (See Appendix B12, E1). While these attitude differences are highly significant, still around 70% of the Dutch population either strongly or moderately agree with cultural and religious diversity. Notably, these numbers are quite a bit higher amongst people with migration backgrounds.

Finally, these results reconfirm for Rotterdam what has been repeatedly found in the Netherlands over the past 20 years. Discrimination against postcolonial Black people is still amongst the most common, but manifests in less overt ways than that of for instance Muslim majority groups. It manifests through everyday instances that appear as mundane parts of social life. While the Dutch tolerant self-image persists towards Black people it is not as strong in the encounter of especially religious diversity, as manifested through progressively open instances of cultural racism or anti-immigrant sentiments. Black people visibly resist discrimination through collective and formal action, but most resign from formally reacting to individual instances of discrimination, a response marked by institutional distrust and general fatigue. Nonetheless, knowing that the *Rotterdam tegen Racisme* plan was a result of the large resistance

movement in the form of BLM protests in the spring of 2020, we examine the policies developed since this event and their response to the conditions of Black Rotterdammers.

V. Governing Black Rotterdam: Local Policy Responses to Racial Inequality

5.1 Coding Results: *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*

Two rounds of coding based on Martiniello and Verhaeghe's (2024) framework, produced 348 codes for the "Rotterdam's against racism" policy document. The majority (226 codes) pertain to the *WHAT* dimension i.e., they are descriptive of policy actions. This is followed by 78 codes addressing the intentions or rationale for the policy (*WHY*). 30 codes relate to how the policy was developed or it should be implemented, and eight codes provide a temporal context, distinguishing between proactive and reactive measures (*WHEN*).

WHY?

Awareness pertains to the problem agenda, which gained prominence following, the 2020 BLM protests. The protests are frequently cited throughout the document as the trigger for increased municipal attention to discrimination. Starting from the introduction, where the policymaker (Bert Wijbenga-van Nieuwenhuizen, Alderman for Enforcement, Outdoor Space, Integration & Coexistence) highlights the role of the protests in raising awareness. Then, throughout the text, the BLM organization is mentioned seven times, one of which in the subtitle of the document: *Intensification plan: Relax. This is Rotterdam and Black Lives Matter*. A total of 27 codes reflects the municipality's acknowledgment of the prevailing issues and challenges, portraying how and by whom they have been made aware of anti-Black racism ("We spoke about anti-Black racism with Ketj Koti Rotterdam, Wi Masanga, Stichting Gedeeld Verleden Gezamenlijke Toekomst, Stichting Rutu and MISA", p.6). Conversations are highlighted around the backlash against the branding as a "relaxed" city being perceived as dismissive of everyday experiences of racism and microaggressions. In effect, the problem statement takes an explicit focus on anti-Black racism.

The political agenda determines the **willingness** to tackle this problem. Besides acknowledgment and recognition, the mentions of BLM connect to this second sub-dimension, (e.g., on page 12: "we intensify our commitment to inclusion and diversity based on the Black Lives Matter movement, by specifically focusing on raising awareness of discrimination and its consequences for those who experience this"). Willingness (44 total codes) is emphasized

through the municipality's expressed commitment to enacting change, with 20 explicit references to "wanting to" take action and twelve mentions of "commitment". Hence, the policymaker underlines a significantly high level of willingness to bring forth change.

Lastly, policy agenda, i.e., responsibilities and competencies, shape **capability** in the local government to act on the problem. In contrast, to willingness and awareness, capability is underrepresented with only eight mentions. Of these, five limit the municipality's scope for action (e.g. "In this plan you can also read that not all needs can be met", p.8), including references to financial constraints ("Finally, there are limits to the financial resources, especially in the difficult social and economic times because of Covid-19." p.8) and lack of competency ("The municipality cannot enforce matters where it has no enforcement authority, such as in the personnel policy of other companies or a private market, such as housing rental, or influence the curriculum of education even more than in the good cooperation that already exists", p.8). One mention of authority to act is tied to the mayor's authority over law enforcement, which is immediately followed by a reference to limited resources (p.8). Another case, demonstrating a discrepancy between willingness and capability, can be summarized by the following phrase on page 8: "The municipality uses maximum influence in these areas (private markets and education), even if influence is limited." The only tangible capability mentioned involves an incentive budget for educational initiatives on colonial and slavery history (p.14, section 3.2.1, Action 6). No specific actions are linked to this budget; but examples of potential uses are provided.

The document's *WHY* dimension, suggests a change in attitude and understanding of discrimination. Not only is it clearly stated to be a current and structural problem, but the municipality's role in this dynamic is well developed. The strong willingness and awareness to engage with BLM claims hints to an accommodation strategy metaphorically opening the eyes to racial inequalities. However, through the underrepresentation of capability the rhetoric emerges that, despite being aware and committed to a diverse and equitable society, little can be done by the municipality to affect such change.

HOW?

The question of whether policies are developed using a top-down or bottom-up approach is linked to the level of cooperation between state and society. In **bottom-up** approaches, civil society plays an important role in both decision-making and implementation. *Rotterdam tegen Racisme* presents a strong commitment to including civil society in the policy process starting with the development of the plan in close cooperation with organizations involved in the BLM

protests and other civil society organizations, specifically representing groups affected by racism but also the LGBTQIA+ community⁴. In line with the creation of this document in response to the BLM 2020 protests, the policy maker emphasizes “listening” to citizenry and assigns an essential role to civil society in solving these problems. As a result, the impact of Black Rotterdam emerges as a stakeholder in this policy change through the pressure it has exerted on policymakers to act, as well as in its positioning as the main actor driving this change going forward. Many measures and insights are said to have been gained through these discussions, linking back to the heightened awareness that this event has prompted.

Some bottom-up approaches however, are more linked to the idea of letting the industry regulate itself which Martiniello and Verhaeghe have called a “laissez-faire” approach (2024, p.7) (e.g., “We also focus on self-regulation from the sector itself and the possibility of a covenant or quality mark for landlords, who are at the forefront of developing a discrimination-free rental process.” p.19). Moreover, the 22 actions associated to bottom-up approaches are mostly vague and general, e.g., through general expression of support to communities, leaving it in their hands to come up with ideas and initiatives. This is illustrated by a passage on page 14: “(The municipality provides support) for organizations but also for example for socially involved young people. So that they can organize meetings themselves on a number of themes that are important to them and to the city”.

Most of the seven explicit **top-down** approaches are linked either to cooperation with a higher level of government and/or to the municipality enforcing changes in its role as an employer (e.g., “The municipality of Rotterdam is affiliated with the national Diversity and Inclusion Charter, which is increasingly being structurally embedded in existing initiatives within the organization.”, p.10).

WHEN?

A distinction is made between actions implemented proactively and reactively, in relation to the occurrence of discrimination. The latter was coded seven times, when the focus is put on the document being a reaction to the protests. It is emphasized that the municipality is “listening to the call (p.6)”, but also when speaking about the reporting of discrimination that has already happened or preparing individuals to be better equipped to point out and report discrimination after it happens. All the approaches connected to raising awareness and education are essentially

⁴ namely: Ketj Koti Rotterdam, Wi Masanga, Stichting Gedeeld Verleden, Gezamenlijke Toekomst, Stichting Rutu and MISA, SPIOR, Diyanet, Me&Society, Stichting Mara and people from the Asian community, Queer Rotterdam

proactive, as their goal is to prevent future discrimination. However, proactive measures were not always coded as such, as the intention to prevent discrimination is not specifically mentioned. This leads to the *WHEN* dimension being underrepresented in the findings.

WHAT?

The *WHAT* dimension contains the largest number of codes (226), classified into four pairs to characterize policy actions. The distinction between soft and hard measures is particularly prominent. A total of 81 codes are categorized as **soft** actions, compared to just eleven hard actions. The emphasis is mainly on the visibility of measures, particularly making visible the municipality's commitment (p.12: "*We make the municipal commitment to anti-discrimination visible*") but also on fostering "visible diversity" (e.g., p.10). More concrete actions focus on raising awareness through campaigns and the provision of resources, such as training and information sessions. Obligatory measures, or requirements to engage with these issues are, rarely included. Instead, the municipality "offers", "organizes", "promotes" or "pays attention to" (p.11). Furthermore, there is an explicit rejection of hard measures such as quotas on page 10: "A 'checklist' of numbers that may or may not be achieved will not get us (to visible diversity)." An example of a hard action through enforcement is Action 9, (p.16): "We take a requirement of demonstrable anti-discrimination policy in the new contracts for welfare, neighborhood teams, youth care and Wmo support". Most of the hard measures however, (nine out of eleven) are diffused through vague language about whether the measure will effectively be implemented, such as "we will look into" or "we ask that..." (p.11), leaving the nature of the action to be soft.

Structural approaches are those that recognize the systemic nature of discrimination. With 42 codes, *Rotterdam tegen Racisme* conveys that discrimination is something that needs to be addressed at all levels of society and government. In the plan, this also quickly rendered evident when looking at the weighting of macro- and meso-level approaches as opposed to micro-level policies (p.21). The micro level is least present in this document. The eleven "individual" codes are also rather imprecise in terms of the measures associated with them. Action 2 for instance, references "seeing and treating each other as Rotterdammers" (p.12). However, the interpersonal and individual perspective on discrimination is not absent, as we see that individuals are encouraged to reflect on their everyday choices and report discrimination (p. 14). For example, regarding internships where students should be better prepared for the process to prevent prejudice and discrimination (see p. 18).

There are almost twice as many **targeted** measures as **general** (60 to 35). Six times, the *vulnerable group* is targeted but only once is this target a specific minoritized group; here the *LGBTQ+ community*. Interestingly, groups that would commonly be categorized as non-vulnerable in terms of discrimination, are also targeted as needing protection and acceptance. They are referred to as the *people who feel no longer at home, the people that are concerned, and those who do not want to be labelled as racist* (pp.6,14). More often (nine times) a non-vulnerable group is targeted, mostly this is the municipality or stakeholders in leadership positions who should become more diverse and inclusive, pointing back to the structural nature of the problem (e.g., “This means that our workforce must become visibly more diverse, especially in (higher) decision-making positions.”, p.10). However, the way in which they need to become more diverse or what grounds of discrimination should be paid attention to is hardly stressed (e.g. “And we do that for everyone: visible or invisible diversity, you should be able to be yourself and be appreciated for your talent.”, p.10) This makes the text far more general than initially expected, as it claims to be a plan against racism, without focusing on anti-racist actions. An exemplary paragraph is the following on page 10: “We focus on increasing diversity in the internal pool for potential managers and then retaining and growing them as team managers to higher management positions. The focus is on leaders who demonstrate inclusive behavior. At the same time, we know that more visible diversity (such as origin, skin color) also leads to more room for invisible diversity (such as personalities, beliefs, etc.).” Here, awareness of a need for actual ethnic and cultural diversity (targeted) is expressed, but the action to enforce it is to put people in leadership roles, who demonstrate inclusive behavior (general).

The 35 **general** measures focus on ‘diversity’, ‘diversity and inclusion’ or ‘discrimination’ of ‘all Rotterdammers’ etc. It is repeatedly underlined that, “*this is a plan for everyone*” (p.8) by writing that “*Living together requires mutual acceptance, in which everyone participates.*” (p.14) and that “*We all have a role to play in ending discrimination and it therefore concerns everyone*” (p.14).

With regards to the pair **direct/ indirect**, the fact that this is a separate policy document steered specifically toward anti-discrimination, makes this an inherently direct policy approach. Eleven times, this direct approach is mentioned explicitly. Two references are made to other policies where discrimination is introduced indirectly, namely “bullying protocols” for schools (p.18) and the “action plan good renting and letting Rotterdam” (p.19). The two other indirect codes express the general importance of introducing diversity and inclusion in other policies (e.g., “Inclusion belongs in the heart and in the capillaries of every civil servant, every policy document and every process.”, p.10).

5.2 Coding Results: *Samenleven in één stad*

WHY?

The application of the deductive coding scheme on the *Samenleven in één stad* policy document resulted in the collection of 334 codes. The code *WHY* is present 82 times, most of which pertain to *awareness* and *willingness* with respectively, 34 and 36 codes. No specific event is mentioned, that has brought attention to a specific issue, rather a number of “city talks” (p.9) organized between “residents, council members, district council members, experts and young people” including participants of “(...) varied origin, color, religion, gender and (political) views” (p.9) , are said to be at the basis of creating awareness amongst policymakers. However, there is no further information on the content or results of these talks, or how this information was translated into policy. The introduction provides the legal basis this document rests on “Every resident is a Rotterdammer and according to the law (Art.1 of the constitution) everyone is equal” (p.7). In the cited article the word race appears for the first and last time in the document, as the footnote attached to it states: “‘Race’ does not exist, there is one human race. But race is a social construct in the law. In the rest of the text, instead of race, we use, like RADAR, ‘origin and skin color’.” Awareness of the super-diverse make-up of Rotterdam is demonstrated in phrases like: “In Rotterdam, diversity is a fact. No population group is more in the majority and there are also differences between people in a ‘group’: the layering of personal characteristics makes each person unique” (p. 7); “discrimination can have a major impact of social and individual developments and health of people who experience this” (p.7). These statements take note of the structural nature and impact discrimination can have and further stress the importance of addressing discrimination as to not, “unintentionally and unconsciously contribute to prejudices” (p.7). The text remains, however, vague on the extent to which there currently is discrimination in Rotterdam and who is affected, avoiding group-specific terms, instead using phrases like: *some/not all Rotterdammers, it happens that, people, everyone etc.* Similarly, it is never illustrated whether certain sectors, institutions or organizations are part of the problem. What is emphasized, is that municipality and the police are part of the solution “Police and municipal law enforcement officers help protect Rotterdammers and take action against discrimination (p.14)”.

The commitment to diversity is found in the **willingness** dimension. Here the focus is especially on promoting social cohesion (“The municipality wants to contribute to a city in which everyone is welcome, can be themselves and respects each other”, p.7), with a special emphasis on anti-polarization (e.g., “we want to reduce potential tension and promote social stability, without (unintentionally) contributing to polarization”, p.16) and safety (e.g. “the municipality

wants to protect Rotterdammers against this (violence and discrimination)” and “wants to strengthen the feeling of safety on the streets, in nightlife and in public transport”, p. 13”). Rarer is a direct commitment to equal opportunity appearing only once: “we want people to receive equal opportunities in life and have equal access” (p.17). Mostly commitment is expressed towards either condemning unwanted behavior and/or promoting collective Rotterdam values and identity. The municipality wants to lead by example, by accepting diversity and being diversity-sensitive within its organization (p.17).

Yet, according to the codes the capacity to affect the process seems limited. **Capability** was coded only eight times and was not consistent throughout the document. In fact, very few problem definitions were accompanied by segments where the municipality addresses its capability to influence them. Some examples of existing capability include safety in outdoor space where, “The municipality can also ensure a safe outdoor area with, for example, good lighting.” (p.14), housing (The Good Landlord Act p.18 - In case of violation, the municipality can issue a warning. If necessary, the municipality can and will now also force correct action with a penalty as a sanction. In addition, the municipality can impose an administrative fine.”, p.18) and the internal issues of the municipality. Often, capability is mentioned but not affirmed through phrases like *investigating/exploring the possibility* (e.g., pp.27-28). The municipality, in fact, rarely positions itself in a leading role and on the contrary making sure to highlight its rather limited engagement in certain areas (e.g., “the municipality has no formal role in (education)”, p.22), and completely omits capability in others.

HOW?

The *HOW* code showcases the highest contrast with 20 **bottom-up** codes against just a few **top-down** ones in line with the statement that the municipality makes about how “policies that concern living together must be made with society” (p. 9). Some organizations are named across the text, and support to them is central: “We strengthen cooperation between organizations to support people who experience discrimination and to work on prevention” (p. 12). Anti-Racism, when mentioned, is always in relation to either the *Advisory Council anti-Racism & Inclusion* that was part of the creation process of the document, the City Marine employed to work on racism in the city, or a civil society initiative. In the latter case, it is mostly a call for action, but organizations are rarely named, and the work these actors are supposed to do remains unclear. The apparent lack of capabilities could provide an explanation for this reliance on civil society. In answer to the question about policy implementation, a member of the *Samenleven* team stresses the importance and success of bottom-up approaches, as opposed to the work within the teams of the municipality.

In the sense that we facilitate other organizations to work on anything to do with discrimination in the city, I think that's going great. In terms of all of the other parts of the Gemeente, it's, yeah, it's a bit of a mix. There are so many different teams in the Gemeente that we have contact with that I don't really know what to tell you about it. Is it going well, or should it be going better?

*(...) A lot of the things that were said during, for instance, the city talks which we held before, when we compiled this *samenleven in één stad* we have come back to. We are still doing those by the way, and for instance, at the same time of the *samenleven* we also started subsidies and that is going fantastic.*

(...) I think in that sense, in giving back to the city and letting them also fight discrimination, I think that is a really great method. (See Appendix F2)

WHEN?

The policy as a whole, is rather a future-oriented plan with eleven proactive appearances versus five reactive. The latter are issues pertaining to the past *allowance scandal* and measures said to respond to tensions in the city. However, a concrete timeframe is only evoked in broad terms (e.g., “we will intensify the approach in the coming years”, p.13; “we have been developing an approach in Rotterdam for many years together with the city”, p.15) leading to only 24 codes in this dimension.

WHAT?

The *WHAT* code in its entirety has been deployed 199 times, as this is a wide-ranging document touching on various aspects of social policy. This mainstreamed approach, in theory means an indirect infiltration of diversity into all policy domains that pertain to social life. At the same time this is a separate diversity policy document summarizing the strategies of different policy teams, which makes it both **direct** and **indirect**.

While ethno-racial groups are never explicitly targeted and rarely mentioned, sometimes the policy targets either a vulnerable or a non-vulnerable group. Therefore, the 44 **targeted** codes do not automatically imply that they are group specific. On the contrary, we see again, rejection of initiatives that are too targeted under the section entitled “We offer subsidies under certain conditions to Rotterdam initiatives that contribute to the goals of this action plan”: “We are cautious about activities aimed at one specific group of people. It may be necessary to come together with a homogeneous group in a safe setting, breaking taboos, or agenda formation. But the goal of initiatives should always be equal treatment, mutual respect, and connection with all Rotterdammers (p.31)”. However, in the examples, initiatives that include anti-Black Racism are listed (“Initiatives for women’s emancipation, awareness about gender roles and anti-Black racism, anti-East Asian racism, ableism, etc.”).

The **general** nature of measures is well demonstrated when more inclusive education material is encouraged. Here neither the content of the material, the intended audience nor those in charge of making it are targeted. The only consistent exception to the generality is when we speak of gender and sexuality-based discrimination where women, girls and queer people are explicitly targeted as vulnerable and men are clearly posited as the perpetrators: “The approach to sexual street harassment focuses on women, girls and the LGBTQIA+ target group. These are the people who suffer the most and report sexual street harassment. In addition, the approach focuses primarily on men and bystanders” (p.13).

Pertaining to the pair **soft-hard**, the document includes a significant number of firm measures framed under the tone of obligation. Specifically, non-vulnerable groups like employers and landlords are approached with such measures. For instance: “We exclude companies and organizations that have demonstrably and irrevocably been convicted of discrimination by a judge from cooperation with the municipality for a period of 5 years” (p.11). Further they firmly state that anything including *Zwarte Piet* will no longer be subsidized (p.32). The Good Landlord Act (p.20) is also part of a harder pack of measures. Not only does the municipality clarify its role in the cooperation, but it is using its capabilities through enforcement instruments like penalties and sanctions and including a time frame and obligation to reach compliance from both municipality and landlords by then.

That being said, the soft actions largely outweigh the hard ones with 73 codes. Most measures are aimed at *raising awareness, knowledge sharing, discussing, training, supporting, listening, offering, encouraging, embracing, investigating*. For instance, regarding sports, “we investigate how we can stop discrimination in and around the stadium” (p.26); “we support the strengthening of diversity and inclusion in recreational sports via Rotterdam SportSupport (p.26)”. This is both general and soft. A lot of weight is again put on representation and visible diversity through actions like raising flags and illuminating Erasmus bridge on Human Rights Day (p.16). The soft code, often related to vague language is once again exhibited in relation to measures within the municipal organization. E.g., “We enhance the skills of managers to reach and utilize a diverse workforce. A manager must be able to appreciate differences and to empower people” (p.18). Apart from their application to *reach and utilize* a diverse workforce, there is no information on what skills should be enhanced, and whether managers are required to do this. Similarly, in section 4.1 the document reads, “we select on objective competencies and as little as possible on subjective criteria” (p. 17), another example of the negligible degree of obligation and actionable steps.

The mainstreamed policy approach is **structural** in terms of strategy, which makes diversity part of institutions and everyday life. However, this structural nature is not often explicitly stressed leading to its under-coding. Structural actions focus here especially on diversity within the municipality itself, cooperation with civil society and private partners, and between these actors: “In the National Programme Rotterdam South, the government, the municipality of Rotterdam, corporations, healthcare institutions, school boards, the business community, the police and the Public Prosecution Service are working together on a healthy future for Rotterdam South.” (p.21). In this measure we see the use of the focus on the neighborhood with the highest number of ethnic minorities, as a replacement strategy to circumvent the paradox of recognition (De Zwart, 2005). Other measures, reveal an **individual** framing, especially those relating to the larger Policy goal “Learn to look beyond differences and appreciate each other’s unique qualities. Give attention to what connects us.” The municipality sees its role in revealing and successfully utilizing the *talents* of everyone, focusing on individual improvement instead of structural barriers.

5.1 Frame Inconsistency and Incompleteness

Given its title and reference to BLM, *Rotterdam against Racism* was expected to problematize racial inequality and pursue equal opportunities through concrete, anti-racist, and multicultural measures. In contrast, *Samenleven in één stad* with its mainstreamed strategy, was expected to take a universalist diversity approach, framing diversity within broader social cohesion goals. However, the findings only partly support these assumptions, instead revealing both inconsistent (i.e., where problem definition and policy strategy follow different frames) and incomplete frames (i.e., where no problem definition is elaborated) (Dekker, 2016).

Some indicators, within the *WHY* dimension of the *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, align with the accommodation approach of a multiculturalist problem definition with a strong focus on ethno-racial discrimination. We see a lot of recognition of inequalities and willingness to increase representation and social participation of ethnic minorities as well as the expressed need for a structural, targeted, and proactive approaches to anti-discrimination. The plan takes a strong stance and affirms having recognized through BLM that we, in fact, do not live in a post-racial society. A closer look at particularly the *WHAT* dimension, however, reflects that the policy strategy does not align with its apparent focus. According to Martiniello and Verhaeghe, the targeted code “(...) assesses to what extent local governments reject targeted (here ethnic) anti-discrimination policies (e.g., discrimination tests or providing anti-discrimination training sessions) and instead support color-blind policies (e.g., increasing the number of rental

dwellings and jobs)” (2024, p.5). Despite the title, the policy addresses exclusion in general terms: “This plan is for everyone. For everyone who experiences exclusion based on appearance, origin, philosophy of life, gender, gender identity, sexual preference, age, chronic illness or physical disability, and all possible combinations thereof” (p.8). This diversity-oriented approach is reinforced by the statement: “To keep it simple, this plan is about ‘diversity and inclusion’. It’s about all of us: all Rotterdammers in all our diversity” (p.8). Secondly, the approach is both soft and mostly passive: soft in that it explicitly avoids proactive measures like affirmative action or quotas, and passive in its emphasis on limited capability for enforcement, and reliance on self-regulation and civil society initiatives. Essentially, the plan presents inconsistent frames, that focus on a multiculturalist branding through “visible commitment” (p.12), while leaning in policy strategy towards universalist diversity policy frame.

Pisarevskaya et al. 2024 differentiate between the “mainstreamed universalism” of localities with high diversity and low segregation/inequality, described as an institutionalized and distinct approach that is not targeted at specific groups, but rather at the whole diverse population (i.e., diversity policies); and the “integrationist universalism” followed by localities with high diversity and high levels of inequality/segregation. The latter aligns with the high levels of discrimination that we see in the Omnibus data around the time of policy development, 2019-2020. This approach is described as comprehensive and institutionalized, but with more targeting elements, specifically for those migrant groups that experience more socio-economic inequality and/or are problematized by policymakers. The findings indicate that Rotterdam’s general strategy in *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, follows a logic of integrationist universalism, if also the targeting elements are mostly limited to awareness and willingness rather than actions. Phrases like: “Inclusion belongs in the heart and in the capillaries of every civil servant, every policy document and every process” (*Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, p.10), suggest a general dedication to integrating anti-discrimination policy into the mainstream, laying the groundwork for *Samenleven in één stad*, while potentially recognizing that the city of Rotterdam is not entirely at this point in terms of segregation and inequality.

Samenleven in één stad appears upon first look more consistent in its diversity frame. With regards to the *WHY* Dimension *Samenleven in één stad* is clearly pulling back from a the more explicitly anti-racist rhetoric of *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*. The titles are the first obvious indicator that we are moving from anti-racism to social cohesion. Like *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, *Samenleven in één stad* shows strong willingness to address challenges but avoids defining these challenges. Instead, the *WHY* dimension of *Samenleven in één stad* focuses on

policy goals that center on similarities such as shared interests and hobbies, without referring to how these are also shaped by different social determinants. Consequently, policy actions address structural problems that were never fully defined as such. Take for instance, “Internships discrimination where the problem statement reads simply “Internship discrimination is a serious problem that can exclude young people from participating in society and the labor market” (p.21). Policy actions propose guidance and training for students and companies through the internship process, instead of, for instance, financial aid to those who cannot be supported by parents or urging Rotterdam based companies to remunerate. A further indicator for a diversity frame is the frequent occurrence of neoliberal reasoning: “Discrimination can lead to loss of talent etc. This is at the expense of the people themselves and of society in general” (p.7). Discrimination is seen as something that impeded on the possibility to optimize each person’s potential and capacities, diversity in turn is valued in its “enrichment” (p.6) to Rotterdam.

Samenleven in één stad is also taking a rather passive role with regards to what it means to be an “equal” society. To achieve equality, it highlights mainly the “acceptance of diversity”. The more active but very vague counterpart that is brought forth is to “enhance diversity-sensitivity”. This is not to ensure diversity, leaving open questions about implementation. Further, the “visibility of diversity” appears as a recurrent theme between the two documents. The policy sets broad goals without positioning the municipality in a central role in achieving them. Contrary to *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, the role of Black stakeholders in decision-making is unclear though impact is reflected in some measures that align with New-Wave resistance movements, such as the anti-*Zwarte Pete* movement. Civil society plays a key role in implementation in both policies, but *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, more specifically mentions Black-led or anti-Black racism organizations and their roles. *Samenleven in één stad*, rather than co-defining problems, is leaving this part almost entirely up to civil society.

However, in comparison to *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, the *WHAT* dimension of *Samenleven in één stad*, produces more structural and hard measures. These hard measures also center structural equality revolving mainly around labor market, employment and housing, areas where *Rotterdam tegen Racisme* said to have no capabilities. Nonetheless, these are still very largely outweighed by the soft and general measures even when capabilities to be firmer are present. For instance, they have the capability of being harder on their own employment however just they pledge to employ as much as possible on objective criteria, which again is passive and soft, not obliging the municipality to any action.

The progression we see then is especially that hard measures are not outright rejected. *Samenleven in één stad*'s incomplete frame i.e., lack of a clear problem definition, invites for a wide array of actions, some of which are structural and firm; however, most actions remain focused on broad diversity and social cohesion goals. Arguably, Rotterdam moved in 2023 with *Samenleven in één stad* towards a “mainstreamed universalism”, i.e., an institutionalized and distinct approach that is not targeted at specific groups, but rather at the whole diverse population (Pisarevskaya et al., 2024), despite having even very higher levels of discrimination than pre-2020 (see Appendix, A18).

5.2 Dominance of Weak Frames

Coherency in frames, in terms of problem definition and policy strategy, is often regarded as more effective in communicating a set of beliefs to the public. As Schneider and Ingram (1997) point out, a lack of policy coherence sends confusing messages to policy targets about the importance of their concerns. In turn, incoherent frames are often considered ‘weak’ (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009). In Rotterdam’s most recent policies, considering that the *WHAT* dimension is the most prominent in terms of codes, one might see this in favor of the policies’ actionability. On closer inspection, we find that this view needs to be nuanced. In *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, with a strong anti-racist problem definition the *WHAT* dimension limits effectiveness through imprecise descriptions of the actions to be carried out and the reliance on the initiative and willingness of third actors to reach policy objectives, limiting concreteness. In contrast, the *WHY* dimension conveys a stronger sense of urgency and commitment, articulated through imperative language and expressions of obligation⁵. These statements emphasize the necessity for action and evoke a responsibility of the municipality to do so. A great example of the relationship between a strong why (problem definition) and soft what (policy Strategy) is the following: “We are exploring the possibility of inviting Rotterdammers to come up with proposals or initiatives for inclusive statues and street names, based on the idea that we need to work on a better balance of perspectives” (*Rotterdam tegen Racisme* p.15). This conveys a sense of urgency by indicating a need, but a diffuse action (exploring the possibility) is proposed to fulfill this need. This disparity between the boldness

⁵ such as “Rotterdam must be a city where everyone is free to be themselves, has equal opportunities and where we can deal with the inconveniences that exist in a diverse society in a relaxed manner”, (p.3); “more is needed to achieve sustainable change”, (p.3) ; “We need to delve deeper and better understand each other’s story when it comes to structural, historical and institutional inequality”, (p.9); This means that our workforce must become visibly more diverse, especially in (higher) decision-making positions”, (p.10), and so on.

of the problem definition and the generality and softness of the strategy, mediated often by the expression of lacking capabilities, raises questions about the coherence between the document's stated intentions and its proposed measures. Ultimately, the strength of the *WHY* dimension lies in its ability to provide a rhetorical basis and legitimacy for change (Weiss, 1989), but its effectiveness depends on whether the problem strategy can translate the expressed needs into actionable solutions. In this case, this *action plan against racism* seems better titled *a commitment to diversity*.

In comparison to *Rotterdam tegen Racisme* we see almost a switch in terms of how the dimensions relate to each other in *Samenleven in één stad*. The *WHY* dimension, here, is diffuse and general, but the measures are more structural and at times also more concrete and firm than in *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*. However, the problem definition is regarded by Weiss as elementary in determining the policy direction and set the framework for further action (1989). A *SamenLeven* employee describes the difficulty they encounter with the broadness of their strategy which fails, to construct target groups and is, according to them, inherently exclusive:

We are spreading it thin a little bit, but only because we are maybe trying to be as inclusive as possible, which yeah, that's really difficult because you're always excluding and even now that we are very complete in the topics that we touch and all of that, we get feedback from the Gemeenterat, that we're missing out on certain people, and certain experiences. So, in a sense, I think with inclusion, it's never really enough. (See Appendix F2)

The difficulty with this incomplete frame, is wanting to introduce hard and structural measures while not targeting or excluding any group. Hard measures can thus mainly penalize retroactively, like excluding business partners that have been convicted of discriminatory behavior (p.11), through fines (etc. p.19), or by suspending subsidies to organizations that use racist imagery. In turn, they cannot make use of positive enforcement instruments like quotas and subsidizing group-specific initiatives, since this would require targeting. This limits the attempt at harder and structural actions of the policy strategy to deterrence, which in terms of implementation ever rarely comes into action, as a respondent notes, during the interview (see Appendix F2). This further reinforces the passive role in the diversity frame that is limited to non-discrimination. Ultimately, whether a lack of precise commitment, as in *Samenleven in één stad*, dilutes concrete action, or whether heightened awareness and commitment are channeled into generic instruments, like in *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, the policy lacks operational precision, either with regards to what it is trying to tackle or how it is planning to do so.

On the other hand, the diversity frame remains prominent in both documents', policy strategies. Racial inequality is never directly confronted, and even less through enforcement mechanisms or participation measures. Instead, both policies rely on a more passive non-discrimination approach, while promoting diversity-acceptance and -sensitivity. This demonstrates the strength of the diversity frame in these documents, which remains dominant even when problem definitions deviate from it. According to Ingram et al. (2007), such dominant frames become a part of political and administrative institutions and the wider culture (or as Wekker would put it the cultural archive) through the instrumental, symbolic, and rhetorical effects of policy. Moreover, these dominant frames socially construct target populations which, in turn has concrete consequences on the distribution of resources and opportunities for action, influencing their participation in political processes. This is why, dominant frames do not simply evolve but remain stable unless they are entirely replaced in situations of power change in government.

5.3 Locating Blackness in Diversity Policy

Having established the significance of *Samenleven in één stads WHY* dimension, in shaping policy direction, we examine to what extent policy goals (reflecting political will), address claims of resistances and the demonstrated realities of Black Rotterdammers. Drawing connections to the quantitative data and literature, we analyze whether the characterizing elements are recognized, or reproduced through narratives that reinforce racial subordination. The analysis proceeds from the expectation that *Samenleven in één stad's* diversity strategy mobilizes ambiguous discursive frames, that alternately acknowledge emancipation struggles while simultaneously aiming to sustain an existing racialized social order. Four tensions emerge from the policy text: 1) Ingroup–Newcomers; 2) Freedom–Boundaries 3) Discomfort –Safety 4) Good citizen –Undesirable behavior. These are sometimes foundational to a policy goal or underly the language and actions associated to them.

Periodization and Selective memory

While it is proclaimed, in a universally inclusive manner that “everyone is a Rotterdammer”, I argue that through practices of periodization, a distinction is made between an ingroup and outgroup. Policy Goal 2, to “learn to look beyond these differences and appreciate each other’s unique qualities. Give attention to what connects us.”, relies on two elements: 1) Understanding each other through knowledge development and historical awareness 2) Connect through a common Rotterdam Identity. First, historical awareness codified in chapter 5.4 exhibits the

recognition and active involvement of recent Black Resistances movements. Policy actions are all directly or indirectly linked to grassroots initiatives and activists that work on the commemoration of slavery, colonialism, and emancipation.

“We support the Stedelijk Collectief of Rotterdam organizations for commemorating 150/160 years of the abolition of slavery. The national Remembrance Year runs from July 1, 2023, to July 1, 2024. Rotterdam is also paying attention to this. Initiators of the Urban Collective has a manifesto drawn up, which has been presented to the municipality of Rotterdam. A substantive programme is being developed. In broad terms, it involves a campaign, a number of events throughout the year and a large-scale commemoration and celebration, which is accessible to all Rotterdammers.” (p.33)

“We will continue to support you even after the end of the city program stimulate awareness of colonial history with a focus on its relevance for the present and the future. We do this with the permanent elements from the city program. Such as the public book, the teaching material and information on the website of the City Archives. We reinforce this with structural (information) activities for Rotterdammers about the colonial past and its impact on the present. ” (p.33)

The policy is validating some claims, in a rather concrete manner. However, the second part of the strategy to achieve this goal, focused on connection and a common Rotterdam identity, encourages to look beyond this very past. While the focus of interventions is said to be on the effect of colonialism on the present and the future, the persistence of racisms in the present is never addressed, nor linked to this past and remains in the register of remembrance and commemoration throughout the document. That this is not just a question of expression, is rendered evident when looking at Holocaust remembrance, which in contrast is distinctly framed as important to counter current antisemitism: “We support Holocaust awareness. This is supported by many Jewish Dutch people named as important to counter anti-Semitism. We speak to Jewish Rotterdammers about their wishes and needs regarding the Holocaust in the Rotterdam context. Every year, the mayor visits with schoolchildren” (p.34). While memory is not necessarily selective, in that only certain aspects of racial history are remembered, there is a selective link of this to the present, placing certain forms of racial injustice into a time long passed.

The policy text ends with the following statement, which is one of the few where migrations, race and ethnicity are explicitly present and specific groups are targeted:

“We enrich our consciousness as a city of reconstruction and migration. Think of all the hard work of all the white, Turkish, Moroccan, and other (guest) workers in the second half of the previous century. Think of the different groups of people who arrived here and found their lives. Together we have built this city into what it is today” (p.34).

Rotterdam is defined here based on a carefully selected part of its history strictly delineated in time (“second half of previous century”). The practice of periodization delimits a timeframe

and posits it as foundational, while simultaneously framing anything outside of it as a past less relevant to contemporary Rotterdam. Beyond time, the period is characterized by reconstruction after WWII and by contributions of those to whom the outcomes of this defining period are owed, specifically White people, Turkish and Moroccans. Not only is the neoliberal stance towards diversity obvious, but the term (guest)worker migration (often occurring through bilateral labor agreements) obscures historical ties of forced migration that underpin postcolonial migrations. Selected groups are explicitly recognized, while Black-majority populations, including Cape Verdeans who are also commonly categorized as *guestworkers*, are at best subsumed under *other*. This omission, alongside that of the city's partial construction through slavery and colonialism, conveys that although there should be awareness of Rotterdam's older histories, indicate that this should not enter into the collective identity and consciousness of Rotterdammers. It is almost like the destruction caused by the WWII, in which Rotterdam was a victim of Nazi-Germany's racist project, washed away the racial sins of Rotterdam's past, and restored their racial innocence (Wekker, 2016).

Similarly, the attention given to "recent decades" of immigration history, in policy goal 1 also gives an example of the way time is used to include and exclude:

"The concerns that values and traditions are being lost, the concerns that people no longer recognize themselves in their own neighborhood, the concerns that they feel unsafe, the concerns that your children do not get the same opportunities and the painful experience of discrimination. We pay attention to Rotterdammers who have seen their neighborhood change in recent decades and feel displaced and forgotten. One City also means that we pay attention to their pain and experienced isolation and feelings of insecurity" (p.8).

The temporal markers are used to signal a distinction between those who have always been there and those who have come after (*recent decades*). When Blackness is not enshrined as a foundational component of what makes Rotterdam, we must then assume that Black people are viewed as newcomers against those who *no longer feel at home or safe*. Notably the policymaker chooses to validate the fear of losing Dutch values and traditions, as well as the feelings of insecurity and loss of safety linked to newcomers. Discrimination instead is described as a "painful experience" one that evokes negative emotions. The need to legitimize ones belonging as a Rotterdammer through a temporal component is expressed also by this survey respondents from a Black-majority group, when asked about his reaction to discrimination: "*I am more Rotterdammer than the average native because I have lived here for 57 years! To me they are just poorly educated fools*". This statement, together with the policy passages, highlights the intertwined belonging to Rotterdam, as a shared space and unit of identification, while distinct experiences and memories are attached to this space, what Nimako

terms, parallel lives (2011). As a result, different meanings are attached to this belonging, for some it is rooted in subjugation and emancipation, for others it is grounded in a cultural archive of euro-Dutch tradition and values.

Freedom of (Anti)-Racism in the Boundaries of Comfort and Non-discrimination

The first of the three policy goals aims to “recognize that differences matter” (p.7), in the sense of recognizing the struggles of all affected groups, as outlined for example in the previous quote. The text adds on this topic:

“In Rotterdam, diversity is a fact. No population group is more in the majority and there are also differences between people in a ‘group’: the layering of personal characteristics makes each person unique. Stereotypes images do not do justice to reality. But some Rotterdammers wonder: why this emphasis on all those (partial) identities? (p.7).”

Rather than unequal treatment or material inequalities between ‘groups’, it acknowledges the unique qualities of individuals. A central concern of this policy goal is to accommodate different views and perspectives and the need to limit these within the boundaries of non-discrimination and public order. First, it is emphasizing the struggle against the vilification of people that feel scared about increasing diversity: “Some people are tired of feeling like something is being imposed on them and that they are being pushed into a perpetrator role. Others are tired of fighting for equal treatment” (p.7).

Survey results show that only 14% of Dutch respondents feel discriminated against, mostly due to gender or age (see Appendix A7, A11). There is little evidence supporting that they feel particularly excluded or discriminated against for their political beliefs or for their origin. While those without a migration background are slightly less positive about cultural and religious diversity, overall positive attitudes seem to indicate that feeling pushed or singled out is not a major concern. The strong focus on this particular aspect of struggle then presents here the “perpetrator perspective” (Freeman, 1978), focusing on the intent of the perpetrator rather than the impact on the affected. The idea of being *pushed* into the perpetrator role assumes innocence, as long as one cannot be found individually guilty, and echoes defensive reactions to having one’s racial innocence challenged. By weakly defining the problem and avoiding prioritization, being accused of racism is perceived as equally as concerning as the racism itself and struggles for equal treatment are considered as personal accusations that impose something on the individual.

Despite this apparent two-sided fatigue, the policy states that as long as discrimination exists it needs to be talked about. The goal is then to create an environment where everyone can speak out. Freedom of speech appears as a central value:

“This can only be done by being truly open and honest. In Rotterdam style, saying what is bothering you, being allowed to make mistakes. Being able to speak safely and freely, being allowed to have your own thoughts. Even if it is an unwelcome or unpopular opinion. And without the fear of being cancelled. Freedom of speech works both ways. That freedom is broad, and we cherish it. It requires everyone – in all fairness – to have the ability to take it. But at the same time, it requires responsibility. There are limits: in our city there is no room for discrimination and racism or hate speech in any form whatsoever” (p.6).

Rotterdam identity is framed around openness, honesty, and a willingness to confront issues directly, in a context where most, especially those affected by race- and religion-based discrimination, remain scared or discouraged to speak up. In contrast, the mention of *Cancel-Culture*, which is in the Dutch context commonly linked to left-wing “*wokeness*” (e.g., Norris, 2020; Sluiter, 2021) suggests that free-speech has been limited by one side and needs rebalancing. At the same time, this discourse limits free speech within the boundaries of non-discrimination and the absence of hate speech. Essentially, freedom is bounded in both directions where the lower boundary is the law and the upper is white comfort, as anti-racism must not target or ‘cancel’ (i.e., reprimand) those deemed innocent if not condemnable by law.

A Common Identity and Values for Rotterdam

In policy goal 3, Rotterdam defines itself along the values of *freedom, safety and equality*, an obvious allusion to the French republican motto, rooted in Enlightenment ideals, that heavily influence European political thought. Interestingly, *fraternité*, standing in for a bond of obligation or commitment, solidarity, and social cohesion (Canivet, 2011; Spicker, 2006), is here replaced by safety. While, in the French and EU context, it has repeatedly been disputed whether fraternity should merely be extended towards a predefined in-group, Rotterdam is defining itself as open, which might suggest a less rigid and fixed identity than on the national and continental level:

“Hatred towards any group is not an individual problem, but a threat to our open society, which is based on freedom, safety and equality. It is in the general interest to safeguard these core values for everyone in our city.” (p.8).

“Sometimes there is also verbal or physical violence. The municipality wants to protect Rotterdammers against this and promote the social norm”; “And of course we are all proud of our city Rotterdam. We want to give more attention to that pride and connection.” (p.8).

The policy goal defines the good citizen perspective, a predefined frame of what a Rotterdammer looks like, it reads: “There is no room for discrimination and hatred in Rotterdam” and wants to achieve this state of non-discrimination through the policy concepts of “anti-polarization” (also described as relaxedness), “acceptance of Diversity” and “social safety”. The problem, posing a threat to the open society is here defined as *hatred* with no mention of specific forms of this. Racism must therefore be understood as such a form of *hatred*, echoing again an assumption of innocence, because under this definition people that are not hateful cannot be racist. However, it also posits that; “Everyone has prejudice, we want to free each other from them to raise awareness” (p.8). While prejudice does not lead in this definition directly to *hatred* or racism, the goal is to eliminate it to connect people, through a common Rotterdam identity (linking back to Policy Goal 2). Policy Goal 2 elaborates a targeted example, to show how, without prejudice, race holds little weight in the individual conditions and identities of Rotterdammers:

“One Rotterdammer came as a guest worker, the other with the same background is a young student at Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR). One Black Rotterdammer is a director, the other upcoming Feyenoord talent. One white Rotterdammer is a greengrocer, the other a hip-hop artist. The student, rapper and footballer may have more in common with each other than with the community they belong to or where people classify them. Every Rotterdammer is an individual. We must not forget that everyone’s qualities, talents, expertise, interests, and experiences are the most important characteristics.” (p.8)

While it is explicitly mentioning Blackness, this deepens the universalist frame as it assumes post-raciality. While encouraging people to connect through shared interests rather than presumed ethno-racial “communities”, the reality of (in)accessibility of certain spaces depending on social and economic positions is not addressed, masking existing determinisms. In other words, by ignoring how hobbies and interests are socially and structurally shaped, this statement adopts a colorblind approach that shifts attention to individual traits.

Goal 3 also asserts Rotterdam’s exceptional Diversity as part of its identity. Rotterdammers should thus share the value of “Acceptance of Diversity” (pp.8, 31,32 etc.). Accepting, first is entirely passive thus liberating the municipality from the responsibility to positively reinforce diversity. Second it relies on the idea that we do not have to be actively solidary but echoes the Dutch (‘flawed’) virtue of tolerance. Acceptance of diversity obliges one to non-discrimination, but being anti-racist is not encouraged nor an explicitly desirable trait (as it was expressed for instance in *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*): “Not everyone will want to speak out on all subjects. Every person has the right to their own opinions and whether they are expressed. Not everyone

always has to be ‘for or against’. We believe that you are also allowed to doubt, search and not know exactly (yet)” (p.8).

This then connects closely to the stress the policy puts on *anti-polarization*. It means here that people should accept diversity of opinions, while discouraging extreme opinions. *Anti-polarization* is tackled through promoting *relaxedness* as a core Rotterdam value.

“The municipality of Rotterdam and its partners are working on a relaxed society and want to reduce the differences between groups in the city. The approach to radicalisation, extremism and polarization (REP) aims to make Rotterdammers resilient and resilient against extremist ideologies, extremist excesses thereof and against us-them thinking. Participate safely in our society. That in Rotterdam there is no room for extremist behavior and the legitimization of violence”. (p.15)

When making *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, the idea of being relaxed was criticized by BLM activists, for being paternalistic and dismissive, echoing discourses where people that experience racism are told not to overreact or fuel the disagreement and just be *relaxed*. These are responses characteristic of everyday racisms. Nonetheless, it is in *Samenleven in één stad* again promoted as desirable trait.

We have seen the conceptualization of freedom (through freedom of speech) and equality (through non-discrimination), Policy goal 3 focuses more closely on Safety as a defining value of Rotterdam. Previous quotes have linked already safety-concerns to a group of people *who have been here before* thereby linking insecurity to *those who came after*. We further notice the selective nature of the safety frame in passages like:

“Everyone should feel safe on the streets. Man or woman, straight or LGBTQIA+, young or old, and of any cultural background. Sometimes people feel unsafe on the streets. They then avoid certain streets, adjust their clothing or dare to don’t go outside after dark. Some people feel uncomfortable by the way law enforcement officers or other authorities on the street communicate with them.” (p.13)

Interestingly, people who fear certain areas or streets are described as experiencing feelings of insecurity. Meanwhile, people targeted by the police are described as merely experiencing discomfort. This frames negative encounters with law enforcement as matters of discomfort not safety or harm. Of course, as revendicated especially by the BLM movement, many reports prove that racial profiling is a common phenomenon in the Netherlands, especially targeting people from Black- and Muslim-majority populations, who remain overrepresented in crime statistics (Hayes et al 2018; CBS, 2019). Nonetheless, the municipality voices strong alignment with, and support to, law enforcement:

“Police and municipal law enforcement officers help protect Rotterdammers and take action against discrimination. In order to be seen as a friend and not an enemy and to

treat everyone fairly, it is important that discrimination is also discussed and addressed within those organizations themselves” (p.14).

“It happens that discrimination is accused, while there is no such thing. Discrimination may not be used wrongly as an excuse. Unjust accusations make it more difficult for the police and law enforcement officers to do their good work and distract from the situations in society in which discrimination does occur. This requires a critical attitude towards ourselves and others, without prejudice. The municipality supports the police and enforcement and speaks out against unjustified accusations and framing” (p.14).

Structural racism within the police is clearly denied, as it is maintained that the police protect everyone, while mentioning that some may not perceive them this way. Further, the policy puts those who feel racially profiled in the wrong by default, by protecting the police against the accusation of racism. Contrasting the previous Rotterdam value of *speaking up*, the policy actively discourages reporting in this scenario. It further undermines the need for resistance by positing the police as unproblematic helpers to all, making any accusation of racism illegitimate (Lentin, 2011). This positioning may seem to those who do get racially profiled, like public servants are pitted against them from the start. This could be an explanation for the lack of trust in institutions, in a context where 80% of Black people who faced discrimination did not report it due to discouragement, either fearing dismissal or believing nothing would be done (See Appendix A15). As Essed and Hoving note; as of 2014, few governmental programs impose repercussions on offenders, reflecting an institutionalized ignorance of minority needs and the majority’s dominance in designing such policies. The need here might not even be linked to the actual efficiency of hard deterrence measures, but to the rhetorical relevance of positioning oneself in support of affected communities instead of furthering the idea that victims risk persecution for reporting.

When it comes to law enforcement the idea of public order is central, as there are those who uphold it and those who’s deviance disrupts it. Here it is used explicitly to fend off forms of protest that go past the aforementioned acceptance: “We keep our hands off each other and each other’s stuff, even when we disagree. That means we don’t deface anything. Images, destruction during demonstrations, violence, intimidation, and disruption of public order” (p.8).

While it is unsurprising that the municipality does not endorse violence, it is telling that this is linking violence specifically to resistance and demonstration. Through the lens of Harris’s (1993) concept of “whiteness as property,” this resistance is framed as something that must not challenge property thus whiteness itself. Protest must happen within the established public order, meaning without redistributing power (as was demanded by BLM activists) because racism and discrimination themselves are treated as undesirable individual attitudes (hatred) not as problems of power distribution (Beaman et al. 2023; Nimako, 2021). Then, the unrelaxed

resistance against these attitudes, are seen as equally undesirable. The (dis)comfort–safety distinction implies that the actual safety of *newcomers*, such as protection from police violence, can be sacrificed for the comfort of the *ingroup*. Safety is effectively reserved for the *ingroup*, with *newcomers* framed as the source of feelings of insecurity, while the *ingroup* at most causes discomfort. Safety is obviously superordinated as one of foundational Rotterdam values.

In summary, the policy’s vaguely defined problem definition allows for ambiguous in policy goals, subject to opt-outs to universalist claims of diversity. The result is the acknowledgement of Black resistance within certain boundaries. The first is a temporal boundary through which temporal distinctions between long-term residents and newcomers create a hierarchy of belonging. This is reinforced by a safety boundary that reserves this value for the *ingroup*, an opt-out so often used in the context of (national and EU) immigration policy. Finally, a collective consciousness or identity is evoked within these boundaries: relaxed, open, and accepting, exercising freedoms within the limits of a public order rigorously upheld by its public servants. This order prioritizes white comfort, and tolerates but does not encourage anti-racism, delegating it to civil society and framing race and racism as relics of the past that naturally fade through passive non-discrimination.

VI. Discussion

Contrary to Rotterdam’s image of an exceptional case of cultural diversity and cosmopolitanism (Belabas et al., 2020), the experiences of Black Rotterdammers largely mirror patterns documented across Black Europe, marked by racial subordination as manifested through frequent discrimination and relative material deprivation. While the Dutch tolerant self-image persists, it appears less robust towards religious diversity, giving rise to forms of discrimination that have been defined by some as *cultural racism*s (Essed & Goldberg, 2001; Essed, 1991a; Fanon, 1967) and by others rather *cultural essentialism* and *migrant oppression* (Siebers & Deniessen, 2014; Siebers, 2016). Although anti-Black racism remains one of the most widespread forms, it appears in subtle and normalized ways, which often remain unaddressed.

While *Rotterdam tegen Racisme* problematized microaggressions and the expectation of *relaxed* responses, the *Samenleven in één stad* approach reinforces relaxed coexistence by combating *hatred* and polarization. This is particularly unsuitable for everyday racism, where the perpetrators are not perceived as hateful or disruptive, shifting the burden onto the targeted individuals, who risk being labelled as “unrelaxed” when reacting. As Essed (1991a) notes,

such dynamics delegitimize these experiences and complicate resistance. Nonetheless Black Rotterdammers resist this subordination as observed through large-scale collective mobilization. The impact of Resistance movements is strongly reflected in both policies. However, while especially *Rotterdam tegen Racisme* was expected to take an actively anti-racist approach, this is inconsistent with the universalist strategy it employs. Like scholars before him, Nimako contends that material multiculturalism has never existed in the Netherlands because of an ethnic essentialism that underlies its practice (2024). Like so, *Rotterdam tegen Racisme* also does not present material anti-racism despite its label. The progression to diversity policy in *Samenleven in één stad* is thus more path-dependent than expected. Although the policy presents this frame in an incomplete way, it rhetorically reinforces the departure from anti-racism as inherent responsibility and replaces it with diversity as a societal gain.

The policy touches on a multitude of domains, relevant to material life, which is regarded as essential to overcome Dutch “pillarization” (Nimako, 2024), and engages multiple teams of the municipality. This form of horizontal governance seeks to overcome working in isolated policy “siloes” (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007). However, in continuity with observations of Dekker on Rotterdam’s integration policy from 2006 to 2013, the process of mainstreaming diversity into all parts of social policy, seems to have become the goal in itself, defining “what ought to be while not defining what is” (2016, p. 138). Consequently, the policy avoids mentioning the existence of racial inequality.

Using on a strategy that can accommodate both assimilationist and multiculturalist problem definitions, we see reflected in policy goals both the acknowledgement of resistance movements and the limiting of anti-racism. While policymakers do not posit Rotterdam as entirely post-racial (yet), they are sorting race into at least a time and a space irrelevant to the cities’ future. This resonates with the situation in other European cities where racism is perceived as something of the past, being located elsewhere or linked to marginal extremist milieus (Lentin, 2008; Wekker, 2016). This demonstrates the strength of the Black Europe notion, which lies its ability to expose Europe’s underlying paradoxes (Marchetti, 2014). First, the persistence of both racism and anti-racist efforts that make the issue visible, alongside progressively post-racial policies (Lentin, 2011). Second, what Wekker terms the simultaneous “desirability and impossibility of being Black European” (2009, p. 278). In Rotterdam, it reveals the contradiction between being an “enrichment” to the city’s economic, cultural, and social fabric, while the city is defining itself outside of the realm of Blackness.

6.1 Making Use of Ambiguity amid Complexity

While coherence in policy is assumed to ensure meaningful communication with target groups, governance research has shown that frame ambiguity can play a generative role in driving institutional change, particularly in situations of high issue complexity such as that posed by superdiversity (Feront & Bertels, 2019; Lombardo & Meier 2009; March 1978; Vertovec, 2024). Ambiguity has been found to help launch change processes around contentious issues by fostering collective engagement without the need for consensus (Ferraro et al., 2015). This allows actors to navigate plural and sometimes conflicting demands within a policy controversy (Meyer & Höllerer, 2016). In Rotterdam, this was evident during the socio-democratic executive periods from 2006 to 2013, when an ambiguous universalist framing of immigrant integration was deployed through a mainstreaming strategy, allowing for strict participation measures for immigrants while rhetorically applying them to all citizens (Dekker, 2016, p.140). In this case incomplete framing enabled the accommodation of a broad range of political perspectives in the city council, specifically appeasing opposition from right-wing nationalist actors pushing for stronger assimilation demands.

In the present city council (2022–2026), Rotterdam’s governing coalition, unites *Leefbaar Rotterdam* (right-wing populist/localist) with the biggest share of seats, *VVD* (conservative-liberal), *D66* (social-liberal, progressive), and *DENK* (multiculturalist, progressive). Similar to earlier periods, ambiguity in policy framing is here instrumentalized to bridge the diverse and often competing political actors within a policy controversy. One interviewee describes this current political landscape, leveraging limited capabilities and the instrumentality of vagueness in policymaking:

“There are just some things that the Gemeente can do or that the Gemeente doesn’t influence that much. And one of those things, for instance, is the police. We get, time and time again, we get the feedback on how the police themselves are racist and how the policy or organization is racist inherently and all of that. And that’s important to take with us and we do have good contacts with police, so we try to help them where we can, but in the end it’s not our main, area where we can make change.

So, a lot of the things that political parties say are also sometimes, for the stage. And time and time again we get that white people are not represented enough. So, for instance, Leefbaar Rotterdam will say, oh, and what about the white people? What about the older people that feel pushed away from their homes? And that’s all very important. But we are talking about anti-discrimination.

So, in the end what we had to do with Samenleven, we have to make sure that everybody agrees because they’re all speaking with one voice, right? So, that means sometimes you have to water it down a little bit and sometimes you have to, um, amp up something

else that one of them really has to have in in that policy document. Otherwise, they won't agree. So, it's a bit of a juggle. All of those political colors together, I think, especially when it's a coalition that's so diverse as we have now" (See Appendix F2).

This also aligns with the policymakers focus on anti-polarization to form a relaxed societal whole. What have been titled here as weak but dominant frames, might in fact be what Dekker calls the "Strength of weak frames". In this view, supported by May et al. 2016, greater coherence does not necessarily imply better policy, because it tells us little about the appropriateness of a given set of policies to the issue at hand. Also, coherence of policy does not necessarily reduce inequality (Browne et al., 2023). This strategy with regard to anti-racism and its impact on Black Rotterdam could enable political decision-makers to introduce certain aspects of resistance without positioning themselves as anti-racist, in a majority right-leaning government.

6.2 Delegating Anti-Racism: Empowerment or Avoidance?

This could mean by extensions, that by taking a passive role in issues of anti-racism, the policymaker strategically enables non-state actors to take the lead. Some of the more concrete actions of both *Samenleven in één stad* and *Rotterdam tegen Racisme* are related to the funding of civil society organizations, allowing for significant impact of Black Stakeholders. These measures are also the most foundational and successful of the policy as evaluated by a *Samenleven* team member (see Appendix F2). Martiniello and Verhaeghe (2024) theorize that, in contrast to interventionism, where local governments take an active and central role, some governments resort to "crowding-out" (Cianetti, 2020). Motivations for this form of *laissez-faire* may include wanting to avoid the reinforcement of differences or the perception of favoring specific individuals or groups at the expense of others. This approach could then present a way to circumvent the *paradox of recognition* to accommodate without targeting and achieve ethnic equality while remaining race neutral.

Authors like Martina and Schor (2015) see these practices, more critically. Looking at the civil enforcement officers Rotterdam employs to surveil and protect public order, also formalized in the *Samenleven in één stad* policy, they interpret the delegation of coercive power as a form of Foucault's Biopower: "In Rotterdam, the municipality delegates its coercive power to the citizenry and private agents in matters of 'quality of life and nuisance factors,' and bestows such 'State agents' by proxy with the privileged status of gearing police action. By so doing,

spatial control becomes more diffuse and widespread. The State effectively becomes omniscient and omnipresent through its coercive delegates (Martina & Schor, 2015).”

My analysis suggests rather that through delegation, while allowing for widespread participation, the municipality withdraws from the responsibility to be actively anti-racist in areas where civil society organizations have no reach, like within the municipal organization, limiting the reach of impact to outside the “boardroom” (Simon, 2008; Nimako, 2022). While handing over the greater part of responsibility to civil society may represent a considerable collaborative effort, the framework for this collaboration is vague with no clear distribution of responsibilities and oversight. This also blurs transparency and accountability, as it is not specified how successes are determined and who is held responsible for potential failures. Another key driver of this delegation is also a neoliberal consideration of market “self-regulation” which is also referenced in the *Rotterdam tegen Racisme* and *Samenleven in één stad* documents, specifically with regards to employment and housing discrimination. While *Samenleven in één stad* is more firm on the (private) labor and housing market than *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, within its own organization it is relying on free-market mechanisms in solely pledging to hire based mainly on objective criteria.

Lastly, Schiller et al. (2022), offer a nuanced perspective on the mechanisms of the current multi-level governance networks in Rotterdam. Their findings reveal a stratified governance network, where a few large organizations serve as brokers, facilitating exchange but also reinforcing existing power relations. The *Samenleven in één stad* approach similarly prioritizes partnerships with these larger associations, reflecting a form of “civil corporatism” that shifts attention from specific minorities to a broader, individual-based diversity agenda. Resulting from this, governance relations between local authorities and civil society can then fall back into a pattern of top-down governance and may risk inadvertently reinforcing a more general diversity framework which dilutes the focus on specific inequalities and marginalized groups and, in practice, leads to defunding of smaller group-specific associations (Schiller et al., 2022).

6.3 Risks of Race-Neutral Policy

Supposing that the strategy is to avoid overtly race-consciousness to sustain political consensus while in theory being open to accommodate anti-racism when it comes *from below*; in practice

it results in the marginalization of smaller and targeted initiatives. Many authors have thus taken to the issues of diversity policy and its symbolic and practical implications.

Colorblind diversity has been especially problematized in the French context. Bereni et al. (2020) highlight the paradoxical effects of the diversity label at the local level, where it both institutionalized and simultaneously deracialized anti-discrimination policies. They invite a closer examination of the contextualized meanings of “diversity,” a term that is flexible and ambivalent. In practice, “diversity” often refers at once to ethno-racial differences and to “all individual differences,” thereby diluting the ethno-racial dimension, even in contexts where race is the core target of public policy.

Keaton (2010) adds, that while diversity purports neutrality and denies systemic racism by suppressing the use of racial categories in law and public discourse, it paradoxically reinforces anti-Blackness, as efforts to avoid racial categorization erase the visibility of Black people and their specific forms of discrimination by denying targeted policies, the legitimacy of racial identities and statistical tracking. Recognizing this malleability, is crucial for my analysis, as under the heading of diversity we see both the acknowledgement and reinforcement of racial hierarchies. In a context where no problem is asserted, diversity can be stretched to fit virtually any type of problem definition.

6.4 Measuring Race: Conceptual and Methodological Limits

Evidently, the avoidance of race in legislation influences the way that race is treated in national registry data, and subnational surveys (including the *Omnibus Survey*). How and whether to measure race has been discussed at lengths, particularly in light of the mutually reinforcing nature of statistical representations in research and policy (Scholten, 2018). Both official and scientific statistical categorizations simultaneously *reflect* and *affect* the representations in society (Simon& Piché, 2013). The political and moral concerns to use racial statistics in the European context have been summarized as such: “These categories are echoing wrong-doings by totalitarian or colonial regimes in the past; giving too much visibility to ethnic groups may foster a fragmentation of the nation and undermine social and political cohesion; equality laws do not require statistics and therefore there is no incentive to collect such data; ethnic statistics reify and reinforce ascribed identities which are unstable and flexible” (Simon, 2017, p.2328).

These arguments evolve around the fact that beyond analytical purposes, categorization is also an essential tool of political power, as Foucault (1969) has theorized about *l'état civil*. Building on this, political scientists argue that state-defined categories are central to understanding how

the state and politics govern the lives of citizens (Ingram & Schneider, 2015; Ingram et al. 2007; Yanow, 2015). The way a state measures and registers ethnic data depends greatly on which “diversity models” it implements (Brubaker, 2001). The difficult justification of race statistics within a universalist framework aligns with what Bonilla-Silva refers to as “racism of omission” (2021, p.51; Kramer et al; 2025). In practice, Mijs et al. (2023) find that the omission of presently existing racial inequality in official communication leads to an overestimation of equality amongst the general population in the US and the Netherlands. This means that racial gaps are psychologically minimized or ignored unless made salient by data.

In the Dutch context, arguments against collecting racial data have been ascribed by Wekker (2016) to an attempt to safeguard the (apparently) raceless nature of the European mainland, by using migration-related terms. Simon (2012) roots this ongoing reticence in a post-WWII strategy of colorblindness. He critiques this de-racializing approach, particularly in the context of migration from former colonies, where racial hierarchies were historically enforced. The hidden racial aspects in these seemingly neutral categories, have been criticized in the Netherlands at every stage. Van Schie (2018), for instance, demonstrates how, from 1980 onwards, an increasing focus on immigrant integration and data-driven governance led to the formalization of nationality categories. In cases of dual nationality, the non-Dutch identity began to take precedence, thereby reinforcing notions of otherness. Like in the progression of many European categorizations, we see the here process of racial Europeanization, in that the practice of ethnic data collection, finds its roots in the process of nation-building and the maintenance of national minorities within the nation-state (Simon, 2012, p.1387).

The current chosen opt-out of race-conscious data in the Dutch context is to focus on geography and territory. The CBS categories of ethnicity, of course, do not relate to an ethnicity as it would be defined through a constructivist definition. What they do tell us about is migration background through nativity for two generations but fail to capture discrimination experienced by third generations (Simon, 2012, p.1387), many of whom are now in school or entering the labor market (Zorlu & Van Gent, 2024). There also remains unclarity about what these categories mean exactly. For instance, if someone has two foreign parents from different regions, or has a parent from outside the EU and is themselves born in the EU etc. Which category takes precedent? Is the perceived distance to the Netherlands still more important than the proximity?

Rotterdam’s mainstreamed diversity approached once again finds itself in an in between strategy, when trying to circumvent racial data collection without ignoring ethnic inequalities. The municipality’s anti-discrimination strategy can fit both the assimilationist (i.e., data

intended to monitor assimilation) and the multiculturalist perspective (i.e., preventing the disappearance of ethnic groups in data after two generations shifting to self-declared ethnicity), but its rationale relies on statistical monitoring of discrimination grounds identified by the respondent (Simon, 2011,2005). The general limitations with the survey design to efficiently capture race-related discriminations are intricately linked to the general anti-discrimination strategy of the municipality. For example, the *contexts of discrimination* variables lacked important structural markers for key domains such as healthcare, interactions with public servants, and law enforcement. The positive construction of the police, in the sense of Ingram et al. (2007), shows a reluctance to cast certain actors in the perpetrator role and leads to a lack of focus on monitoring this aspect. These interactions would have to be subsumed under the respective categories “in my residential area” and “in the street”, but such categories are geared toward measuring social cohesion on an interpersonal and neighborhood level, rather than within institutions.

Similarly, responses were queried only in relation to immediate reactions to individual instances of discrimination. This is not adapted to the reality of everyday racism and misses resistance strategies like protesting or continuous organizing. Furthermore, the discrimination ground “nationality” was presumably understood by some respondents as (perceived) origin, and by others as legal citizenship. For the former, this category stands in for xenophobia, particularly among those who do not identify as racialized but feel discriminated against because of their *foreignness*. At the same time this gets conflated with both (non-Dutch) Europeans, who may face administrative or linguistic barriers, and Dutch natives belonging to visible minorities. This heterogeneity makes the category difficult to interpret and raises the question of why citizenship status and perceived foreignness are collapsed into a single notion of national belonging.

The Limits of Black Europe

The debate around ethnic statistics directly touches the categories and approaches of Black European Studies. On a methodological level, the grouping of diverse populations into a blanket ‘Black’ category, as I did here and as other scholars have done to estimate Black populations across Europe, is imprecise and inherently flawed. *Surinamese*, *Dutch Caribbean*, *Cape Verdean* and very clearly *other African* are not ethnicities following a constructivist definition. Nimako and Small note that it is insufficient to even use the blanket term *Creoles* to describe people of Surinamese descent in the Netherlands some consciously define themselves as afro-Surinamese instead. This implies that apart from history and color, official classifications and self-identification have become defining features of Black Europe (2009, p.226). By grouping,

we are losing these complexities and using an oversimplification that ascribes a racial characteristic to geographical boundaries. However, the practical relevance of such grouping emerges here when certain inequalities, such as discrimination in schools, become visible only when (presumably) Black respondents are considered as a pooled group. Because this context appears less frequently overall, due to the age distribution of the survey, it risks being overlooked, even though its impact on this group is significant.

On a conceptual level, the focus on postcolonial Blackness also has limits in its application of a critical race approach in the European context. Michelle Wright critiques the “Middle Passage epistemology” (2015), arguing that mainstream understandings of Blackness in research, are built around a definition of Black identity in terms of a linear timeline, starting with African origins, disrupted by slavery (Middle Passage), followed by emancipation and civil rights struggles. This constructs a shared memory of trauma and oppression, centered on the Atlantic slave trade and diasporic continuity. This approach, Wright claims, privileges certain Black experiences (particularly African American) while excluding others (e.g., more recent African immigrants), which in the context of most European countries make up the majority of Black people. This emphasizes the need to be cautious about seeing Black Europeans as a homogenous group and give space to the contextual differences. I agree that a key limitation of the Black Europe concept is its exclusionary use of race and Blackness, which can assert a separation, and, implicitly a hierarchy, between Black European citizens and immigrants. For instance, in the Dutch context, the conceptualization of subordination, through emancipation and resistance, excludes immigrants that do not have colonial ties to the Netherlands. This further complicates the incorporation of Muslim-discrimination into a framework of racialization where resistances have not taken the same shapes. This also affects the policy outcome which relies heavily on the mobilization of actors and on a certain level of institutionalization.

The potentially exclusionary function of race leads to debate on whether the concept is applicable to Europe at all (Wimmer, 2015; Winant, 2015). Siebers (2019) argues against the use of CRT in the Dutch context, contending that Black European Scholars fail to contextualize race and racism within the specific historical and institutional premises of the Netherlands. According to the author, this leads to an essentializing notion of racism that undermines its explanatory power and has limited relevance for policy and activism aimed at migrant oppression. In his view, this form of exclusion is ontologically distinct from racism, as it is framed less in terms of biological hierarchy and more in claims of cultural incompatibility and

is thus more an ethnicism. By transposing Winant's *race-centrism* onto this context, he argues further, CRT undermines the need to empirically prove the existence of racism. Conversely, his argument, is equally reductive, effectively equating Blackness with migranhood in Europe. His critique of *cultural racism* reduces *classic racisms* to the underlying conviction of biological difference, which is easily rejected and invalidates any subsequent accusations of racism. Citing Bourdieu, he demonstrates his positivist stance on a separation between scientific knowledge and that of everyday people, that disregards embodied experiences of Blackness and concepts such as Du Bois' *double consciousness*.

While I reject the claim to quantitative neutrality and find here a particularly paternalistic form of *epistemic oppression* (Grosfoguel, 2015), the necessity of racial statistics lies precisely in this argument. In the face of policy resistance that insists on empirical proof before acknowledging racism, engaging with these categories then responds to a social demand by researchers, activists, and human rights organizations, to provide data on racial inequality (e.g., ENAR & Center for Intersectional Justice, 2020). Responding to political and social demands for evidence-based policies requires acknowledging the link between statistical categories, social change, and policy development (Simon & Piché, 2013). In other words, social change is, not only contingent on the collective experience of racism, but on the ability to prove and enforce it. Acknowledging this reality, even though race is not a scientifically fixed category, then might present a form of *epistemic emancipation*, seen as claims for group rights and recognition of minority status, have often led to the development of multicultural policies or positive action measures (Grigolo et al. 2011).

Applying Race to Rotterdam

Validating these claims with statistical data requires new approaches that break free from the rigidity of statistical research categories. To address the shortcomings of statistical analysis in grasping the complexities of race and ethnicity, QuantCrit theory has emerged mainly in education research, applying a critical race approach to quantitative research. Different ways to categorize emerge; an interesting approach is to supplement existing ethnicity categories with a question about whether one feels they belong to a racial or religious minority in the Netherlands (Civitillo et al., 2025). Mayhew and Simonoff (2015) have proposed effect coding to circumvent the often-implied dominant white group is held as the normative standard, and the racial and ethnic minority groups represent deviations from that norm. While Civitillo et al. (2025) assesses that effect coding itself does not make research more equitable and inclusive, it is for them, a step towards recognizing the limitations in interpreting dummy coding and moving toward a more critical approach.

In application with this I found that group differences appeared less stark, reflecting how effect coding centers group means and distributes variance more evenly. This contrasts with the report I made within the project, where dummy coding made group differences more pronounced. In the context of integration research, I see the value of effect coding in challenging the implicit assumption that the white majority group is the default standard of integration, as it allows for comparisons that do not privilege any single group, especially useful for majority/minority cities like Rotterdam. However, when analyzing discrimination, this approach is less straightforward. Since discrimination often operates relative to a normative ideal (typically the white European male) retaining this group as a reference point, as in dummy coding, can offer analytically meaningful insights into the extent and direction of unequal treatment. For example, in my analysis, *Cape Verdean* and *other African* groups were not always significantly different from the grand mean; however, they did emerge as significant in dummy coding, likely because larger minority groups reported even higher levels of discrimination. Using the mean as a reference risk normalizing this relatively high level of discrimination as an acceptable baseline. In this case, measuring the distance from the dominant group remains a relevant and revealing metric, because we assume that it is not systemically disadvantaged. Additionally, effect coding was initially proposed for respondents identifying with multiple races, making it particularly suitable for multiple-choice questions. In hindsight, applying it to models covering all contexts or grounds of discrimination would have been advantageous, as dummy coding proved difficult to interpret meaningfully in these cases.

6.5 The Role of the Rotterdam Inclusivity Project

The RIP is one of the more concrete measures of both *Rotterdam tegen Racisme* and *Samenleven in één stad*. Specifically, the project is found in the policy section 3.2.2, Action 7- *Scientific measurement and learning in the neighborhood (Rotterdam tegen Racisme)*. Here the document touches on four focus points. 1) “*Measuring is knowing*”, *focusing on the objectification and ‘scientificisation’ of discrimination through the use of an index and monitoring* .2) *Collaboration between science and practice, through co-production and involvement of students*. 3) *A multi-year and cyclical process focusing on circular and scientific policy development and management*. The following reflects on how these three focal points relate to the municipality’s general anti-discrimination strategy.

Collaboration

The RIP is an example of collaborative governance, in which government agencies, academic institutions and civil society organizations work together to develop evidence-based policy through a formal process of knowledge sharing, guided by the belief that the complexity of superdiversity requires and benefits from contributions outside of government. (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Kooiman, 2010). In this way researchers and civil society are integrated into policymaking processes through advisory functions (Pattyn & Timmermans, 2022). In this case, this happens through an institutionalized channel, the work operating under a formal agreement with actors relying on each other for information, expertise, and resources.

In 2018, the project's PI, Peter Scholten stresses that in migration research, "the institutionalization of privileged research-policy relations is likely to promote paradigmatic closure and absence of the mutual critical attitude that is required both for policy innovation and good social science research" (2018, p.301). In situations of high structural interdependency, such as that between the RIP and the municipality, it is essential to constantly reflect and reinject a critical attitude to avoid slipping into a purely bureaucratic function and inadvertently aligning data to a specific model that aims to symbolically support policies or (de)legitimize certain actors.

This includes a reflection on why this project, with its tools and approaches, is welcomed rather than another. Essed and Nimako (2006) analyze the "(co)incidents" of scholarly research and public policy on minorities in the Netherlands revealing how state-funded "minority research" has historically framed ethnic minorities as integration problems, ignoring colonial histories and the epistemic authority of whiteness. Simultaneously, there has been repeated institutional resistance toward race-critical scholarship, exemplified by the closure of the Centre for Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES) in the early 90s and the defunding of NiNSee in the 2010s. After this, the authors say, 'Race and Ethnic studies' was replaced by 'Migration and Ethnic studies' with close ties to policymakers.

More recently, the concept of integration has faced increasing criticism (e.g., Schinkel, 2018; Favell, 2006), and has since also been abandoned in Rotterdam's policy language. In the same vein, the Inclusivity project does not measure integration of migrant communities, and instead measures discrimination and its relation to diversity of neighborhoods. An "anti-discrimination strategy" (Simon, 2005) is employed for data analysis, focusing on grounds of discrimination as provided by the legal framework. However, instead of the institutionalization of critical race approaches as called for by Essed and Nimako, integration was replaced by "Diversity and Inclusion", which is criticized for further marginalizing collaboration with organizations and approaches targeting specific groups (Nimako, 2022). The attempt at safeguarding race-

neutrality is also reflected in the description of the RIP's core functions in the *Samenleven in één stad* policy, especially favoring a neighborhood diversity strategy, as well as in the inclusion of a large and broadly focused association like RADAR as civil society representative. This agreed upon function is the outcome of a process in which the RIP had to adapt its categories to those deemed acceptable after criticism from members of the city council who considered the use of discrimination ground 'ras en afkomst' (race and origin) racist. To ensure the project's continuation, the category was renamed to 'huidskleur en afkomst' (skin color and origin), illustrating the broader tensions with the term race and necessity of aligning research categories to policy strategies.

Measurement

The RIPs formal role in the municipality's strategy is to provide scientific evidence mostly based on quantitative analysis. Measuring the extent and nature of discriminations is widely regarded as an essential element to the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of anti-discrimination policies (Simon & Piché, 2013). The project does this mostly through a Discrimination Index, that functions on neighborhood level and links self-reported experiences of discrimination to structural factors like education, income, housing, and diversity. By making this data public the project hopes to have an impact on civil society and municipal policymakers. This research tool, then becomes a governance tool to legitimize intervention in high Discrimination-Index neighborhoods, found to be correlated with a high degree of ethno-racial diversity and income inequality. While this proves that a diverse and "balanced" city does not automatically reduce discrimination, depending on the political agenda, this finding could lead to various strategies for promoting social cohesion at neighborhood level. For instance, it allows for targeted proxy-strategies, without needing to first elaborate a targeted problem definition that would require affirming the existence of ethno-racial inequalities. This demonstrates that evidence alone does not automatically reduce ambiguity (Carney et al., 2016).

Nevertheless, the project's focus on making information on discrimination readily accessible could help to address the overestimation of equality. As Mijs et al. (2023) demonstrate, this is important for supporting policies on racial inequality. Like the *Rotterdam Tegen Racisme* policy, the RIP emerged in response to the 2020 anti-racism protests and is led by scholars specializing in migration and diversity, naturally they place significant emphasis on ethnicity-based discrimination. However, until now, the discrimination dashboard displays data based only on migration background and has taken a whole-society approach. This convergence of policy and

research categories exemplifies the mutually reinforcing relationship between research and policy, which co-create dominant frames on integration Scholten (2010).

More than mutual reinforcement, the RIP operates in a relationship of interdependence. Because of the political and social demand for evidence-based policies, both policymakers and civil society rely heavily on engagement from researchers to advance policy formulation (Simon & Piché, 2013). The RIP responds to this need, but in turn relies on funding and data from the municipality. Given the RIP's limited budget and reliance on existing large-scale surveys (CBS, Wijkprofiel, and the Omnibus Survey), the analysis is contingent on the available categories, further limiting the possibility to accurately measure racialized experiences. This leads to a situation where an omission in the dataset turns into a lack of evidence, which in turn inhibits policy action. The project is also restrained in its foreseen function in monitoring because there is a mismatch between available data and policy objectives; so that it often does not allow for meaningful evaluation of whether goals are reached, or whether specific measures are effective. In particular, policy goals are broad, and no indicators of success are included. As a result, policies may be labelled 'evidence-based' because researchers have been consulted, rather than because their outcomes are systematically monitored, evaluated, and adjusted.

A multi-year cyclical process

Reflecting on this collaboration in light of the broader policy strategy, the initial absence of clearly articulated research priorities or urgent focus areas in the municipality's engagement with the RIP, aligns with the general reliance on third-party actors to define problems and take action. This affords the research team considerable autonomy to investigate topics beyond predefined policy goals of a commissioned research agenda and means that what is prioritized then partially depends on the interest and knowledge of the team members. The university generally appears to occupy a leading role in the project, positioning it as a significant actor in shaping problem definitions and subsequently, policy direction. The RIP makes use of its relatively autonomous research agenda, to diverge from the general framing and include targeted perspectives in their analyses, i.e., through a strong focus on Muslim-discrimination.

This relationship is all the more relevant, with regards to the aforementioned evidence-policy gap (Cairney, 2016). Evidence often fails to shape policy not because it lacks quality, but because it conflicts with political agendas or prevailing problem framings. That means that ambiguity, is not just a result of "bounded rationality" (Jones, 1999) and cannot be resolved by

simply producing more or better data. According to Cairney et al. (2016), bridging this gap requires researchers to strategically frame and present findings. This involves communicating in policy-relevant ways and cultivating trust-based relationships with policymakers. The RIP offers a strong example of such engagement, having invested in long-term, collaborative partnerships. Pisarevskaya underscores the value of multi-year continuity, stable research teams, and a shared language/ understanding in fostering trust and productive collaboration (see Appendix F1). The research partners are taking initiative to define problem agendas while anticipating municipal research needs. However, the project is not yet listed among the contributing advisors in the *Samenleven in één stad* policy, and its role formally includes monitoring and evaluation, which appears to be limited, at the moment, by the available data and resources. Consequently, it is at this stage not entirely transparent how the findings ultimately shape policy (i.e., policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation).

VII. Internship evaluation

7.1 Progression of Tasks & Skills

This internship was intended to tie logically into my Erasmus exchange semester in the *Governance of Migration and Diversity* master's program, by mobilizing the learnings in policy and governance theory and linking them to the critical sociological perspectives I have previously gained. The primary aim was to gain more practice-oriented insights to explore possible career path in applied research and policy advisory.

My time within the project was divided into two phases. The first phase involved conducting qualitative policy analysis in support of the project's PhD candidate, Adham Aly. I began by familiarizing myself with the context, by reviewing Rotterdam's recent anti-discrimination policies (*Rotterdam tegen Racisme* and *SamenLeven*), exploring the theoretical framework used for deductive coding (e.g., Martiniello & Verhaeghe, 2024), and investigating Rotterdam's institutional and historical approaches to discrimination. I translated the coding scheme into color-coded categories and subcodes and transferred it into Atlas.ti, although we ultimately conducted coding of the main documents using the comments function in Adobe. I quantified and visualized the coding results by creating tables and graphs comparing the two key policy texts and carried out a detailed qualitative content analysis for *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, for which I served as the primary coder. In retrospect, having the same primary coder for each document might have ensured greater consistency, as our coding styles differed considerably.

Although in a second round of coding, we exchanged documents and revised each other's codes to improve consistency, some differences remained. Some ambiguous definitions in the framework, also contributed to discrepancies in how we each understood the coding scheme. While the close collaboration allowed for fruitful exchanges of ideas, it also required additional efforts to establish a shared understanding and approach. Adham's openness and availability for discussion greatly facilitated this process.

In addition to analyzing themes and structures in *Rotterdam tegen Racisme*, I conducted theoretical research to support our interpretations. We then discussed and merged our findings, with Adham drafting a consolidated analysis that I provided feedback on. I concluded this phase by coding and briefly analyzing anti-discrimination policies from other European cities, particularly Berlin and Paris, in Atlas.ti for comparative purposes. These findings were later used to inform policy recommendations, in the executive summary. Through this first phase, I developed in-depth knowledge of Rotterdam's anti-discrimination policies. Although I had prior experience coding and quantifying qualitative data from interviews and social media comments, working with policy texts required a different approach. Here, the use of the deductive coding scheme proved useful.

The second phase of the internship was carried out under the guidance of project manager, Asya Pisarevskaya, and focused primarily on quantitative data analysis of the *2024 Omnibus Survey*. In weekly meetings, we discussed progress, methods, and next steps. She provided clear expectations and maintained a detailed task list on *Asana* (project management software), which greatly facilitated workflow tracking. Her availability and responsiveness ensured a smooth process, while still allowing me to work independently and explore my own ideas and interests.

I conducted in-depth statistical analysis using R-programming language, building on skills developed during my previous research internship. This included first exploratory descriptive and intersectional analyses of discrimination experiences by ethnicity/migration background, age, gender, and class. I examined grounds and contexts of discrimination, post-discrimination reactions, barriers to reporting, and diversity attitudes. Inferential analysis was done using logistic and linear models. Working practically with logistic regressions for the first time, required me to learn how to interpret coefficients in log-odds. I also learned in this process how to make and work with weighting factors in R. Further I used different tools and packages (Excel, Quarto, Stargazer) to produce visualizations (graphs, tables, charts) and communicate findings.

Due to differences in the software used for data analysis between my supervisor and I, a few misinterpretations arose when it came to coding-specific issues. These were resolved with the help of the RIP's data analyst, with whom I could exchange on the use of R-programming language. Another communication challenge concerned weighting, which was carried out using the template provided by the municipality. I only received this after I was already well into drafting the report, and it took a long time before I could apply it, because results deviated from those of the municipality. There was some back-and-forth communication with the municipality via Asya, but the problem was never fully resolved. Since the difference in the results was small (0.5% deviation), we ultimately decided to continue using our results.

Finally, I ended the quantitative analysis with trend analysis using *Omnibus Survey* datasets from 2020 to 2024 onward.

The internship produced several deliverables, including a comprehensive 60-page report of the survey analysis results. The executive summary of this report was then linked to insights from the qualitative policy analysis to ground recommendations in both empirical evidence and policy insights. For this step, I had to take a closer look at the policy goals, which we had not explicitly focused on during policy analysis. This first engagement with these then prompted me to examine them more closely in this thesis. I linked municipal policy goals to specific data points, identifying gaps and opportunities for intervention, and incorporated relevant examples from other European cities. I received and incorporated feedback to refine my analysis and adapted outputs for policy audiences. This required me to shift my focus toward policy-relevant findings, actionable recommendations, and accessible language. In the final week, I updated and organized all outputs into a coherent, accessible format with referencing and Appendices.

During my internship, I also had the opportunity to attend several events and seminars, which were both personally enriching and relevant to my work. I participated in multiple thesis circles with master's students working on project-related topics, presenting my results, and exchanging on their topics. In one of these, representatives from the municipality and RADAR were also present, allowing me to meet other project collaborators. These sessions provided valuable insight into the municipality's engaged and open approach to exchanging ideas. Fitting the general approach, representatives were repeatedly encouraging students to look towards the positive aspects of diversity (e.g., in the form of intercultural friendships) instead of highlighting only difficulties. The sessions highlighted the impact orientation of EUR and the innovative approaches and opportunities to connect young researchers with practitioners.

I also attended three PRIMUS seminars, monthly internal meetings of the Policy Politics and Society team-members focusing on migration, discrimination, and diversity. Particularly impactful was the session with Dr. Robin Vandevoordt, who presented the “Beyond Integration” project, which combines critical perspectives with policy research to have an impact on policymaking in Belgium. His and participants’ reflections on the possibility of balancing reflexive and instrumental epistemologies resonated with challenges I encountered during my internship and thesis process.

Another event was organized by IDEM and RADAR in honor of the International Day Against Racism and Discrimination, where the RIP presented its website and results. While the event was held in Dutch and my comprehension was very limited, it was an opportunity meet more team members and Rotterdam-based practitioners in the field. The presence of engaged Rotterdam citizens reinforced the societal relevance of the RIP and its research.

Finally, I attended an open guest seminar featuring Mr. Rabin Baldewsingh, the National Coordinator Against Discrimination and Racism. Like the RIP, his post was instituted after the BLM protests which underscored the national-level impact of these events. His proposal to introduce a general equal treatment policy modeled after the UK and Ireland and the stress he put on the need for empirical evidence in combating denial of racism in the Netherlands offered, political insights relevant to my work.

7.2 Challenges and Takeaways

A recurring and expected challenge was related to working language, since neither I nor my co-researcher Adham, speak Dutch fluently, relying on Google-translated policy documents which produced at times incoherent phrasing and complicated nuanced interpretation. These language barriers also reduced direct engagement with other project partners as meetings were conducted in Dutch, and interview requests to RADAR were declined, the reason given that their work is conducted in Dutch. This restricted both dialogue and contextual understanding of the quantitative analysis, especially as much of the relevant literature is also in Dutch-language.

The most significant challenge, and learning, was the practical application of knowledge. My academic training prepared me primarily for reflexive and critical analysis, rather than for designing actionable solutions. I was guided in this learning process and reminded by my

supervisor to keep in mind, whether the municipality can actually influence the content of the findings I present them with. This redirected focus and motivated me to look at the things that went beyond this scope more closely in this thesis.

After writing the report, I was tasked with linking policy goals to data to identify how they align and how goals could potentially be achieved more effectively. I often found myself confused with the way the goals were framed, while the data did not necessarily enable me to assess their efficacy accurately. This dynamic was further shaped by a mismatch in “languages” of communication: while I was aiming for critical engagement with terminology, I was told that policymakers prioritize clarity and practicality. Initially, I had difficulty overcoming the belief that the labelling is an essential factor in shaping the outcomes. Like my supervisor was speaking about a trial period in which it took time to find a common language, between different collaborators of the project, I also felt that it took me time to understand expectations. Through feedback on the policy analysis, I made the experience of municipal expectations for straightforward recommendations and problem-specific solutions. I feared that such solutions risk serving as quick policy add-on, branded as evidence-based solutions, rather than challenging the systemic inequalities the policy sustains.

Through these challenges, this experience deepened my understanding and sympathies for the reality of policy making, working within political and administrative constraints, navigating competing agendas, and finding feasible strategies. It also emphasized the need for frameworks and projects that bridge reflexive and instrumental knowledge and for strategic approaches to the evidence-policy gap. Ultimately, my greatest challenge and learning was striking a balance between critical perspectives and policy relevance to navigate research impact. Looking ahead, I am keen to participate in similar projects who find themselves at the intersection of critical research, civil society, and policy. Despite (or maybe thanks to) the challenges, I found the process intellectually stimulating and professionally rewarding. The internship demonstrated that collaborative, governance-oriented research is complex but exceptionally valuable for developing practical responses.

VIII. Conclusion & Recommendations

Through a likely convergence of policy and research interests, most studies focusing specifically on the discrimination of Black people in the Netherlands, and more specifically Rotterdam, date back to the 2010s. While one could think that discrimination in the Netherlands has widely changed its target to people categorized as Muslims, the results produced by this

research suggest that anti-Black racism remains a prevalent issue, particularly affecting those with historical ties to Dutch colonialism. In this respect, Rotterdam is not exceptional in national nor European comparison.

Recently, large scale mobilization, has pushed anti-Black racism onto the political agenda. Rotterdam's immediate policy response reflects a rhetorical shift to anti-racism, yet the dominant diversity frame prevails in both policy strategies adopted since the protests. The omission of persistent racial inequalities in the problem definitions results in tensions in policy goals, which are based in part on *cultural archives* founded on Dutch racial innocence and simultaneous symbolic exclusion. This demonstrates how broad diversity frameworks can simultaneously acknowledge and obscure racial inequalities, revealing gaps and opportunities for action for activists, researchers, and policymakers.

This study is subject to several limitations. First, the use of various data points collected at different points during the internship may limit coherence between chapters. Second, the race-based approach is not entirely adapted to the pre-collected data and necessitates a cautious interpretation of the findings. Finally, my limited understanding of Dutch language and cultural context, limits the reliability and accuracy of my interpretations. Interviews with community representatives and BLM activists could have enriched the analysis on lived experiences of discrimination, resistance strategies, and their impact on policymaking, but time constraints limited this possibility.

Despite these constraints, the thesis contributes to the field of Black European Studies by providing valuable insights on the specificities of Rotterdam. My work within the Rotterdam Inclusivity Project, and by extension this thesis, highlights not only the persistence of diverse forms of racial inequalities but also the need for innovative conceptual, methodological, and collaborative frameworks to address them, particularly considering the already existing research-policy nexus. Ultimately, this work can be considered a preliminary investigation into questions raised during my internship. By exploring these through frameworks and methods outside of dominant frames, multiple avenues for future inquiry, policy development, and the RIPs role in this emerge.

Future research should address the persistent conceptual difficulty in understanding the various forms of racism and migrantization in Europe, through a common framework. Rotterdam constitutes a particularly rich field for this study. Comparative perspectives could prove especially fruitful, for instance, exploring alliances and divisions between Black and Muslim communities in Rotterdam and their impact on policy, or contrasting the postcolonial experiences, of Asian and Afro-descendant populations. Such research could help disentangle

the roles of race, colonial legacies, and migration in constructing parallel lives and intertwined belongings. Quantitative research should continue to strive for data that reflects meaningful categories. QuantCrit methods present an interesting avenue to overcome rigidity of categories and allow for a targeted analysis of discrimination patterns. Beyond this, however, the interdependence in evidence-based policymaking, requires moving beyond the positivist notion of evidence toward a more reflexive framework, when it comes to issues around race.

As a multistakeholder collaboration, the RIP is in a unique position to influence diversity governance in Rotterdam. Thus, it can counter tendencies toward civil corporatism by reinforcing collaborations with smaller grassroots initiatives. Consideration should be given to supplementing RADARS function, with more targeted organizations. A promising example is the planned co-designed research on *Islam-hatred* with SPIOR. The RIP could also connect with the other Dutch municipalities that deploy anti-discrimination frameworks to exchange expertise with policymakers and researchers, expand influence and promote mutual learning.

Moreover, the research partners can use their relative freedom in the research agenda to propose alternatives to dominant discourses and strategies. Inevitably, compromises must be made in the naming and framing of contentious racial issues, however, making the available data on ethnic inequalities publicly accessible through the website can help render inequalities visible and legitimize claims for recognition. This could encourage the municipality to define precise, prioritized problem statements and move beyond making mainstreaming the primary goal. While ambiguity can foster participation, policy should be specific enough to guide concrete action (Feront & Bertels, 2019).

Lastly, the RIP should aim to strengthen its role in monitoring, to reinforce its regulatory function. For this it necessitates the alignment of policy goals to measurable indicators to enable evaluation of progress and outcomes, as well as adjustments in a circular policy progress. This includes first clearly defining the municipality's role in anti-discrimination efforts and ensuring that goals align with capabilities, to build trust among target populations. It also involves introducing greater transparency on the integration of evidence into policy.

IX. References

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X. APPENDIX

A) Descriptive Tables

Table A1: Survey Distribution by Ethnicity

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>freq</i>
<i>Nederland</i>	2,066.9	42.22%
<i>Suriname</i>	463.7	9.47%
<i>Nederlands-Caribisch gebied</i>	156.2	3.19%
<i>Kaapverdie</i>	87.8	1.79%
<i>Turkije</i>	355.4	7.26%
<i>Marokko</i>	179.8	3.67%
<i>Indonesië</i>	180.9	3.70%
<i>Europa (exclusief Nederland)</i>	651.3	13.30%
<i>Overig Afrika</i>	121.2	2.48%
<i>Overig Azië</i>	464.9	9.50%
<i>Overig Amerika en Oceanië</i>	167.8	3.43%
<i>Column Total</i>	4896	1

Frequencies and counts are weighted

Table A2: Survey Distribution by Migration Background

	<i>n</i>	<i>freq</i>
<i>Black-majority migr.</i>	828.9	16.93%
<i>Other Migr. Backgr.</i>	2,000.2	40.85%

	<i>n</i>	<i>freq</i>
<i>Dutch</i>	2,066.9	42.22%
Column Total	4896	1

Frequencies and counts are weighted

Table A3: Distribution of socioeconomic status per Ethnicity in percent

For example, 23% of people in the Surinamese ethnicity category are in the lowest income group.

ETNICBS_NW	Sociale Minima	Lower-Middle	Upper-Middle	High-income
Suriname	23	19	20.8	17
Nederlands-Caribisch gebied	35.3	8.3	13.8	23
Kaapverdie	34.3	8.6	13.4	11.2
Turkije	23.5	13.9	20	16.8
Marokko	27.2	11	17.9	14.4
Indonesië	8.2	14.1	29	36.5
Nederland	11.3	18.4	23.9	31.1
Europa (exclusief Nederland)	17.3	16.9	23.5	23.8
Overig Afrika	20.8	21.2	10.2	19.7
Overig Azië	27.5	9.5	15.1	17.9

Table A4: Distribution of socioeconomic status per Migration Background in percent

For example, 26.2% of people in the Black-majority ethnicity categories are in the lowest income group.

Migration Background	Sociale Minima	Lower-Middle	Upper-Middle	High-income
Black majority	26.2	16.2	17.2	17.9
Other Migr. Backgr.	21	13.7	20.8	21.6
Dutch	11.3	18.4	23.9	31.1

Table A5: Distribution of Ethnicities per Income group

For example, People from the Dutch ethnicity category constitute 52.5% of the highest income category.

Question: Ethnicity										
grouped by: Household Income										
	Sociale Minima		Lower-Middle		Upper-Middle		High-income		Rowwise Total	
	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count
Nederland	26.81%	233.4	48.25%	380.2	46.98%	494.9	52.52%	642.1	42.22%	2,066.90
Suriname	12.24%	106.6	11.19%	88.2	9.17%	96.6	6.47%	79	9.47%	463.7
Nederlands-Caribisch gebied	6.33%	55.1	1.64%	12.9	2.04%	21.5	2.94%	35.9	3.19%	156.2
Kaapverdie	3.45%	30.1	0.96%	7.6	1.12%	11.8	0.81%	9.8	1.79%	87.8
Turkije	9.58%	83.4	6.26%	49.3	6.76%	71.2	4.89%	59.8	7.26%	355.4
Marokko	5.62%	49	2.52%	19.9	3.06%	32.2	2.11%	25.8	3.67%	179.8
Indonesië	1.70%	14.8	3.23%	25.5	4.98%	52.5	5.41%	66.1	3.70%	180.9
Europa (exclusief Nederland)	12.92%	112.5	14.00%	110.3	14.51%	152.9	12.69%	155.1	13.30%	651.3
Overig Afrika	2.89%	25.2	3.26%	25.7	1.17%	12.3	1.96%	23.9	2.48%	121.2
Overig Azië	14.70%	128	5.58%	44	6.68%	70.4	6.80%	83.1	9.50%	464.9
Overig Amerika en Oceanië	3.76%	32.8	3.10%	24.4	3.52%	37.1	3.42%	41.8	3.43%	167.8
Columnwise Total	17.79%	870.8	16.09%	787.9	21.51%	1,053.30	24.97%	1,222.60	100.00%	4,896.00
Frequencies and counts are weighted										

Table A6: Distribution of Migration Background per Income group

For example, Dutch people constitute 53% of the highest income class.

Question: Migration Background										
grouped by: Household income										
	Sociale Minima		Lower-Middle		Upper-Middle		High-income		Rowwise Total	
	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count
Black majority	24.91%	216.9	17.06%	134.4	13.50%	142.2	12.17%	148.8	16.93%	828.9
Other Migr. Backgr.	48.28%	420.5	34.69%	273.3	39.51%	416.2	35.32%	431.8	40.85%	2,000.2
Dutch	26.81%	233.4	48.25%	380.2	46.98%	494.9	52.52%	642.1	42.22%	2,066.9
Columnwise Total	17.79%	870.8	16.09%	787.9	21.51%	1,053.3	24.97%	1,222.6	100.00%	4,896.0
Frequencies and counts are weighted										

Table A7: Discrimination Experiences by migration background

Question: Discrimination experience in the past 12 months								
grouped by: Migration Background								
	Black		Dutch		Other Migr. Backgr.		Rowwise Total	
	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count

No discrimination	61.40%	509	82.32%	1,702	67.34%	1,347	72.66%	3,557
Discrimination	32.37%	268	14.30%	296	26.78%	536	22.46%	1,100
NA	6.23%	52	3.38%	70	5.89%	118	4.89%	239
Columnwise Total	16.93%	829	42.22%	2,067	40.85%	2,000	100.00%	4,896
Frequencies and counts are weighted								

Table A8: Frequency and number of people who have experienced discrimination per Ethnicity

Ethnicity (new classification)	Experienced discrimination	
	count	frequency
[1] Suriname	151	34.26%
[2] Nederlands-Caribisch gebied	65	44.39%
[3] Kaapverdie	25	31.49%
[4] Turkije	121	36.35%
[5] Marokko	67	40.23%
[6] Indonesië	32	18.08%
[7] Nederland	296	14.80%
[8] Europa (exclusief Nederland)	124	19.93%
[9] Overig Afrika	28	24.76%
[10] Overig Azië	149	35.07%
[11] Overig Amerika en Oceanië	43	26.79%

Table A9: Count and Percentage of people who have experienced racial discrimination per Migration Background

Question: Race based Discrimination								
grouped by: Migration Background								
	Black majority		Dutch		Other Migr. Backgr.		Rowwise Total	
	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count

No Racial discrimination experienced	5.73%	48	10.52%	218	14.03%	281	11%	545.6
Has experienced Racial Discrimination	26.49%	220	3.59%	74	12.49%	250	11%	543.6
No Discrimination of any kind	67.78%	562	85.89%	1775	73.49%	1,470	78%	3,806.90
Columnwise Total	16.93%	829	42.22%	2067	40.85%	2,000	100%	4,896.00
Frequencies and counts are weighted								

Table A10: Count and Percentage of racial discrimination amongst respondents who have experienced any discrimination in 2023

	Black majority		Dutch		Other Migr. Backgr.		Rowwise Total	
	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count
Non-racial discrimination	17.80%	47.5	74.55%	217.5	52.91%	280.6	50.09%	545.6
Has experienced Racial Discrimination	82.20%	219.6	25.45%	74.3	47.09%	249.7	49.91%	543.6
Columnwise Total	24.52%	267.1	26.79%	291.7	48.69%	530.3	100.00%	1,089.1

Frequencies and counts are weighted

Table A11: Grounds of discrimination per Ethnicity in percent

For example, 25.5% of people in the Dutch ethnicity group, that have experienced discrimination in the past year, have experienced Discrimination based on their race or skin color.

ETNICBS_NW	n	Race/ Skin color	Gender	Religion	Age	Nationality
Nederland	2067	25.5	33.9	6.4	29.2	19.7
Suriname	464	88.1	19.3	16.1	14.2	15.9
Nederlands-Caribisch gebied	156	72.4	16.1	13.2	6.6	32.6
Kaapverdie	88	80.5	20.7	16.5	24.4	14
Turkije	355	41.5	11.9	63.6	10.8	63.7
Marokko	180	46.9	17.6	65.4	6.5	57.1
Indonesië	181	54.8	34.9	14.2	18.9	29.3
Europa (exclusief Nederland)	651	19.5	28.5	10.4	13.1	69

Overig Afrika	121	74.3	19.2	38.7	33.6	54.3
Overig Azië	465	71.7	16.1	16.7	3.7	46.1
Overig Amerika en Oceanië	168	51.3	13.3	17.3	8.1	47.9

Table A12: Context of experienced discrimination by Migration Background

Reading guide: 16% of Discrimination experienced by people form Black-majority ethnicity categories, occurs in the context of school/ educational institutions.

	count	school	workplace	job application	residential area	housing	sports	going out	shopping	transport	On the street	internet	Other
Black maj.	268	15.76%	35.23%	14.20%	25.77%	8.84%	4.88%	14.76%	39.11%	16.54%	43.67%	14.29%	11.72%
Other Migr. Backgr.	536	7.64%	32.38%	17.70%	24.31%	17.81%	4.90%	19.38%	30.73%	17.73%	48.06%	18.87%	7.90%
Dutch	296	7.65%	22.68%	6.35%	27.91%	8.53%	5.70%	17.78%	22.93%	16.61%	57.97%	16.66%	13.02%

Table A13: Context of experienced discrimination by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	count	At school	workplace	job application	residential area	looking for housing	sports activities	While going out	While shopping	public transport / taxi	On the street	On the internet
[1] Suriname	151	16.17%	35.54%	13.46%	29.12%	6.95%	3.41%	11.94%	45.07%	18.21%	49.97%	13.97%
[2] Nederlands-Caribisch gebied	65	15.11%	36.02%	14.20%	22.01%	4.63%	4.44%	21.03%	32.41%	13.51%	18.56%	6.60%
[3] Kaapverdie	25	5.73%	24.32%	6.53%	25.23%	12.27%	5.73%	16.28%	24.72%	14.97%	63.93%	19.50%
[4] Turkije	121	3.68%	36.88%	14.64%	23.37%	16.34%	4.79%	12.68%	36.25%	15.39%	45.59%	28.85%
[5] Marokko	67	11.34%	42.05%	24.01%	29.17%	13.84%	8.69%	16.13%	39.83%	17.12%	67.15%	29.31%
[6] Indonesië	32	3.00%	14.58%	16.46%	36.97%	3.00%	3.00%	25.93%	30.50%	21.49%	63.72%	16.30%
[7] Nederland	296	7.65%	22.68%	6.35%	27.91%	8.53%	5.70%	17.78%	22.93%	16.61%	57.97%	16.66%
[8] Europa	124	9.49%	32.50%	17.73%	24.00%	23.64%	6.99%	19.19%	16.82%	13.49%	40.78%	11.79%
[9] Overig Afrika	28	23.73%	41.25%	24.87%	16.99%	25.67%	13.04%	14.10%	35.11%	15.94%	50.09%	29.16%

[10] Overig Azië	149	7.24%	29.49%	15.81%	21.25%	13.58%	2.49%	27.25%	33.81%	21.17%	44.32%	14.33%
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Table A14: Context of experienced discrimination by discrimination ground

For example, 61% of people who experience gender-based discrimination have experienced discrimination in the street in 2023.

Location	Street		Workplace		Residential		Shopping	
Ground	n	freq	n	freq	n	freq	n	freq
Gender	153	61.4	93	37.4	72	28.7	83	33
Race	293	53.8	177	32.6	154	28.3	217	39.9
Religion	145	61.7	80	34	75	32	98	41.8
Nationality	212	50.9	149	35.7	115	27.7	148	35.6
Age	81	46.3	58	33.5	46	26.3	58	33.1

Table A15: Post-discrimination reaction by Migration Background

For example, 60% of people from Black-majority ethnicity groups took no action after at least one of their experiences of discrimination.

	Black maj.		Dutch		Other Migr. Backgr.		Total	
	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count
Took no Action	60.03%	159.2	53.79%	157.3	57.60%	306.3	47.71%	622.7
Talked about it with people in my environment	36.76%	97.5	40.76%	119.2	32.09%	170.6	29.67%	387.3
Solved it Myself	15.50%	41.1	14.00%	40.9	14.63%	77.8	12.24%	159.8
Other	5.78%	15.3	10.13%	29.6	7.35%	39.1	6.44%	84.0
Reported it	6.78%	18.0	2.88%	8.4	4.72%	25.1	3.95%	51.5
Total	25.36%	331.0	27.23%	355.4	47.41%	618.8	100.00%	1,305.3

Frequencies and counts are weighted

Table A16: Post-Discrimination Reactions by Ethnicity

Ethnicity (new classification)	Count	Talked about it with people in my environment	Solved it myself	Reported it or filed a complaint	Took no Action	Other
[1] Suriname	151	33.74%	14.30%	4.06%	61.54%	5.58%
[2] Nederlands-Caribisch gebied	64	40.61%	17.15%	9.94%	55.14%	7.82%
[3] Kaapverdie	24	18.99%	20.30%	13.76%	74.48%	8.03%
[4] Turkije	119	27.23%	21.37%	4.67%	54.93%	8.33%
[5] Marokko	64	24.77%	13.14%	0.00%	79.36%	3.45%
[6] Indonesië	32	30.66%	6.91%	8.19%	54.62%	13.82%
[7] Nederland	292	40.76%	14.00%	2.88%	53.79%	10.13%
[8] Europa (exclusief Nederland)	124	41.09%	12.00%	1.79%	54.09%	5.45%
[9] Overig Afrika	27	60.71%	13.98%	8.34%	50.10%	0.00%
[10] Overig Azië	149	29.70%	15.51%	8.08%	55.15%	8.79%
[11] Overig Amerika en Oceanië	43	39.94%	8.37%	6.12%	53.26%	6.12%

Table A17: Reasons for not reporting by Migration Background

For example, 48% of people from Black-Majority groups that have experienced discrimination, have not reported an incident because they believe that nothing would be done about it.

Question: Why did you not report?								
grouped by: Migration Background								
	Black majority		Dutch		Other Migr. Backgr.		Total	
	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count
Nothing will be done about it	48.14%	119	49.79%	141	45.16%	227	33.97%	487
Was not serious enough	37.66%	93	47.58%	134	42.83%	216	30.92%	443
I will not be taken seriously	29.59%	73	20.48%	58	28.70%	145	19.22%	276
Don't know where	10.43%	26	7.92%	22	15.87%	80	8.94%	128
Other	12.03%	30	11.70%	33	6.77%	34	6.76%	97
Frequencies and counts are weighted								

Table A18: Respondents who have experienced discrimination by migration background and year

Discrimination by Ethnic Group and Year										
Number of respondents and percent discriminated										
	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	n	fr	n	fr	n	fr	n	fr	n	fr
Black maj.	548	32.6%	501	30.2%	390	23.4%	527	21.8%	572	34.9%
Other migra	1699	20%	1529	23.2%	1177	21.7%	1557	20.2%	1607	28%
Dutch	3102	11.9%	2867	13%	2281	12.7%	3169	11.8%	2717	14.3%

Table A19: Respondents who have experienced discrimination by Ethnicity and year

Discrimination by Ethnic Group and Year										
Etniciteit	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency
Surinamers	340	30.10%	338	29.90%	233	22.80%	323	24.20%	381	33.20%
Antillianen	118	43.60%	113	27.50%	102	28.90%	132	14.30%	118	43.20%
Kaapverdianen	90	30%	50	36.40%	55	17.90%	72	25%	73	30.30%
Turken	363	23.90%	341	24.80%	264	26.70%	284	19.10%	266	36.50%

Marokkanen	289	22.50%	192	30.10%	142	18.30%	183	28.40%	140	39.50%
Overigniet-Westers	406	23.60%	363	26.40%	301	24.20%	406	27.20%	521	32.70%
Autochtoon	3102	11.90%	2867	13%	2281	12.70%	3169	11.80%	2717	14.30%
ov.EU_27 (2007)	379	16.30%	347	16%	249	17.40%	373	19%	370	20.70%
overig westers	262	12.80%	286	21.10%	221	17.70%	311	9.20%	310	17.20%

Table A20: Discrimination by Migrant Generation and Year

	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency	Count	Frequency
autochtoon	3102	11.90%	2867	13%	2281	12.70%	3169	11.80%	2660	14.30%
1e generatie allochtoon	1426	19%	1287	23.50%	993	23.70%	1291	19.80%	1465	28.90%
2e generatie allochtoon	818	30.20%	738	27.70%	572	18.80%	788	21.50%	771	30.60%

B) Regression Tables

Table B1: Effect of being affected by race-based discrimination, on the context in which discrimination is experienced.

	Dependent variable:			
	Workplace (1)	Residential (2)	Shopping (3)	Street (4)
Discr Ground: Race	0.0002 (0.146)	0.342* (0.154)	1.108*** (0.156)	0.446*** (0.134)
Matig tot boven modaal inkomen	0.003 (0.173)	0.311 (0.194)	0.286 (0.191)	0.365* (0.166)
Sociale Minima	-0.466* (0.210)	0.091 (0.225)	0.380 (0.216)	0.223 (0.190)
Age: 31-45	0.259 (0.174)	-0.172 (0.198)	0.062 (0.198)	-0.349* (0.169)
Age: 46-60	-0.251 (0.215)	-0.001 (0.229)	0.643** (0.223)	-0.149 (0.199)
Age: 60+	-1.572*** (0.312)	0.554* (0.225)	1.110*** (0.229)	-0.137 (0.208)
geslachtVrouw	0.288 (0.152)	-0.175 (0.156)	0.198 (0.156)	-0.109 (0.137)

Constant	-0.692** (0.219)	-1.357*** (0.241)	-2.141*** (0.251)	-0.247 (0.205)
Observations	834	834	834	834
Log Likelihood	-548.732	-531.815	-536.562	-646.169
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,113.464	1,079.630	1,089.124	1,308.337
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001			

Table B2: Effect of being affected by race-based discrimination on reasons for not reporting

	Dependent variable:		
	Was not serious (1)	Nothing will be done (2)	won't take me seriously (3)
Discr Ground: Race	-0.407** (0.141)	0.418** (0.137)	0.508** (0.157)
Matig tot boven modaal inkomen	-0.179 (0.172)	-0.128 (0.169)	0.438* (0.197)
Sociale Minima	-0.734*** (0.204)	-0.128 (0.196)	0.166 (0.233)
Age: 31-45	-0.547** (0.175)	-0.048 (0.172)	0.137 (0.195)
Age: 46-60	-0.786*** (0.210)	0.233 (0.204)	-0.115 (0.239)
Age: 60+	-1.020*** (0.230)	-0.012 (0.215)	0.034 (0.247)
geslachtVrouw	0.299* (0.146)	-0.069 (0.141)	-0.195 (0.160)
Constant	0.538* (0.215)	-0.222 (0.210)	-1.495*** (0.247)
Observations	790	790	790
Log Likelihood	-587.788	-617.101	-503.358
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,191.576	1,250.203	1,022.715
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001		

Table B3: Effect of Migration Background on Household Income with controls

	Dependent variable:	
	HHINK	
Black majority	-0.419*** (0.053)	
Other Migra Backgr.	-0.153*** (0.043)	
geslacht1	0.438***	

	(0.059)
age_group1	-0.218*** (0.052)
age_group2	0.620*** (0.049)
age_group3	0.323*** (0.057)
Observations	3,935
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table B4: Effect of Ethnicity on household income with controls

Dependent variable:	
HHINK	
Suriname	-0.072 (0.097)
Nederlands-Carib.	-0.367** (0.165)
Kaapverdie	-0.791*** (0.239)
Turkije	-0.301*** (0.112)
Marokko	-0.403** (0.157)
Indonesië	1.118*** (0.140)
Nederland	0.829*** (0.062)
Europa(exc.Nederland)	0.281*** (0.085)
Overig Afrika	-0.079 (0.185)
Overig Azië	-0.410*** (0.108)
geslacht1	0.436*** (0.059)
age_group1	-0.177*** (0.052)
age_group2	0.665*** (0.050)
age_group3	0.307*** (0.058)
Observations	3,935
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table B5: Effect of Ethnicity on Discrimination experiences

Dependent variable:	
Discrimination Experience	
Suriname	0.345** (0.113)
Nederlands-Caribisch gebied	0.773*** (0.173)
Kaapverdie	0.059

Turkije	(0.260) 0.290*
Marokko	(0.128) 0.442*
Indonesië	(0.174) -0.448*
Nederland	(0.195) -0.821***
Europa (exclusief Nederland)	(0.084) -0.510***
Overig Afrika	(0.111) -0.221
Overig Azië	(0.232) 0.281*
geslacht-vrouw	(0.118) -0.159***
25-44 jaar	(0.040) 0.184**
45-64 jaar	(0.068) 0.243***
65-74 jaar	(0.064) 0.039
75 jaar en ouder	(0.076) -0.200**
minimum tot modaal	(0.062) 0.023
modaal tot 2x modaal	(0.053) -0.916***
	(0.055)
Observations	3,959
Log Likelihood	-2,089.666
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,213.331
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table B6: Stepwise regression Predictors of perceived Discrimination (Migration Background)

Dependent variable:			
	Discrimination Experience		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Black majority	0.464*** (0.057)	0.496*** (0.063)	0.510*** (0.064)
Other Migra Backgr.	0.182*** (0.047)	0.195*** (0.052)	0.117** (0.053)
income_group1		-0.163*** (0.058)	-0.238*** (0.061)
income_group2		-0.032 (0.051)	-0.004 (0.052)
geslacht1			-0.148*** (0.039)
age_group1			0.195*** (0.066)
age_group2			0.275*** (0.063)
age_group3			0.040 (0.075)
Constant	-1.104*** (0.037)	-1.048*** (0.041)	-1.093*** (0.043)

Observations	4,675	3,959	3,959
Log Likelihood	-2,576.124	-2,153.432	-2,113.563
Akaike Inf. Crit.	5,158.249	4,316.864	4,245.125
=====			
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01		

Table B7: Stepwise regression Predictors of perceived Discrimination (Ethnicity)

=====			
	Dependent variable:		
	Discrimination Experience		
	(1)	(2)	(3)

Suriname	0.257* (0.103)	0.283* (0.112)	0.345** (0.113)
Nederlands-Carib	0.683*** (0.158)	0.757*** (0.171)	0.773*** (0.173)
Kaapverdie	0.131 (0.224)	0.084 (0.257)	0.059 (0.260)
Turkije	0.349** (0.114)	0.358** (0.126)	0.290* (0.128)
Marokko	0.513*** (0.151)	0.482** (0.172)	0.442* (0.174)
Indonesië	-0.603*** (0.183)	-0.582** (0.192)	-0.448* (0.195)
Nederland	-0.842*** (0.074)	-0.912*** (0.083)	-0.821*** (0.084)
Europa	-0.482*** (0.103)	-0.470*** (0.110)	-0.510*** (0.111)
Overig Afrika	-0.203 (0.204)	-0.256 (0.230)	-0.221 (0.232)
Overig Azië	0.293** (0.104)	0.376** (0.116)	0.281* (0.118)
income_group1		-0.129* (0.059)	-0.200** (0.062)
income_group2		0.003 (0.052)	0.023 (0.053)
geslacht1			-0.159*** (0.040)
age_group1			0.184** (0.068)
age_group2			0.243*** (0.064)
age_group3			0.039 (0.076)
Constant	-0.909*** (0.048)	-0.846*** (0.053)	-0.916*** (0.055)

Observations	4,675	3,959	3,959
Log Likelihood	-2,542.642	-2,123.992	-2,089.666
Akaike Inf. Crit.	5,107.284	4,273.984	4,213.331
=====			
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001		

Table B8: Effect of Ethnicity on Discrimination Ground

	Dependent variable:	
	Race (1)	Nationality (2)
Suriname	1.748*** (0.272)	-1.045*** (0.241)
Nederlands-Caribisch gebied	0.779*** (0.287)	-0.490* (0.285)
Kaapverdie	0.741 (0.491)	-1.467** (0.628)
Turkije	-0.711*** (0.215)	1.031*** (0.221)
Marokko	-0.340 (0.283)	0.693** (0.288)
Indonesië	-0.202 (0.357)	-0.294 (0.399)
Nederland	-1.309*** (0.173)	-0.965*** (0.192)
Europa	-1.588*** (0.238)	1.377*** (0.224)
Overig Afrika	0.453 (0.429)	0.370 (0.411)
Overig Azië	0.649*** (0.211)	0.448** (0.200)
Age 31-45	0.032 (0.132)	0.126 (0.131)
Age 46-60	0.207* (0.125)	0.133 (0.126)
Age 60+	0.064 (0.150)	-0.156 (0.156)
Middle Income	0.172 (0.121)	-0.506*** (0.126)
Low Income	0.050 (0.103)	0.003 (0.104)
Female	0.088 (0.079)	0.127 (0.079)
Christianity	-0.015 (0.026)	0.030 (0.026)
Islam	0.359** (0.163)	-0.724*** (0.170)
Observations	818	818
Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01		

Table B9: Effect of Ethnicity on post-discrimination reactions

	Dependent variable:		
	Talking to Others (1)	Reporting (2)	Taking no action (3)
Suriname	0.220 (0.156)	0.306 (84.039)	-0.133 (0.152)
Nederlands-Caribisch	-0.076 (0.195)	0.984 (84.039)	0.135 (0.188)
Kaapverdie	0.355 (0.262)	1.983 (84.039)	-0.144 (0.259)
Turkish	-0.500* (0.232)	1.325 (84.039)	-0.002 (0.208)

Moroccan	-0.549 (0.312)	-14.340 (840.383)	1.060** (0.339)
Dutch	-0.176 (0.370)	1.692 (84.041)	-0.214 (0.351)
Other African	1.263** (0.428)	2.021 (84.041)	-0.442 (0.411)
income_group1	0.118 (0.110)	0.030 (0.239)	0.028 (0.107)
income_group2	0.153 (0.094)	-0.252 (0.218)	-0.116 (0.091)
age_group1	0.054 (0.121)	-1.149** (0.393)	0.337** (0.119)
age_group2	-0.034 (0.113)	0.257 (0.246)	0.029 (0.109)
age_group3	0.073 (0.135)	0.300 (0.301)	-0.010 (0.132)
Constant	-0.638*** (0.104)	-4.201 (84.039)	0.334*** (0.099)

Observations	839	839	839
Log Likelihood	-603.305	-167.286	-636.052
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,238.611	366.572	1,304.105
=====			
Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001			

Table B10: Effect of Migration Background on post-discrimination reactions

	Dependent variable:		
	Talking to Others (1)	Reporting (2)	Taking no action (3)
Black majority	0.049 (0.107)	0.469* (0.234)	0.098 (0.105)
Other migr. Backgr.	-0.211* (0.093)	0.250 (0.221)	-0.022 (0.090)
income_group1	0.102 (0.108)	-0.015 (0.235)	0.026 (0.106)
income_group2	0.132 (0.092)	-0.294 (0.214)	-0.108 (0.089)
age_group1	0.062 (0.117)	-1.102** (0.387)	0.348** (0.115)
age_group2	-0.033 (0.111)	0.357 (0.243)	0.001 (0.107)
age_group3	0.064 (0.134)	0.250 (0.295)	0.009 (0.130)
Constant	-0.572*** (0.076)	-3.157*** (0.204)	0.278*** (0.074)

Observations	839	839	839
Log Likelihood	-610.856	-174.849	-642.626
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,237.712	365.699	1,301.252
=====			
Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001			

Table B11: Effect of migration Background on Location of Discrimination Experience

	Dependent variable:			
	School (1)	Shopping (2)	Workplace (3)	Street (4)
Black majority	0.493*** (0.171)	0.410*** (0.111)	0.210* (0.115)	-0.256** (0.104)
Other migr.-Backgr	-0.281* (0.162)	0.117 (0.099)	0.113 (0.098)	-0.084 (0.089)
income_group1	-0.096 (0.189)	-0.152 (0.120)	0.175 (0.113)	-0.209** (0.106)
income_group2	-0.141 (0.162)	0.095 (0.099)	0.188* (0.098)	0.138 (0.089)
age_group1	1.069*** (0.227)	-0.425*** (0.127)	0.394*** (0.132)	0.154 (0.113)
age_group2	0.386 (0.240)	-0.351*** (0.120)	0.614*** (0.124)	-0.121 (0.107)
age_group3	-0.033 (0.300)	0.179 (0.137)	0.134 (0.152)	0.016 (0.130)
geslacht1	-0.123 (0.126)	-0.063 (0.076)	-0.142* (0.076)	0.058 (0.068)
Constant	-2.754*** (0.197)	-0.800*** (0.082)	-1.118*** (0.099)	-0.031 (0.075)
Observations	838	838	838	838
Log Likelihood	-253.971	-556.850	-546.414	-648.216
Akaike Inf. Crit.	525.943	1,131.700	1,110.828	1,314.433
Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01				

Table B12: Effect of Migration Background on Diversity Attitudes

	Dependent variable:	
	General Attitudes (1)	LGBTQ+ attitudes (2)
Black	0.044 (0.036)	-0.067 (0.047)
Other migr.-Backgr	0.070** (0.028)	-0.089** (0.037)
Dutch	-0.115*** (0.028)	0.156*** (0.037)
geslacht1	-0.029 (0.020)	-0.027 (0.025)
skill_level1	0.120*** (0.028)	0.220*** (0.036)

skill_level2	-0.028 (0.036)	-0.051 (0.047)
age_group1	0.057* (0.034)	0.020 (0.044)
age_group2	0.129*** (0.033)	0.032 (0.043)
age_group3	-0.075** (0.037)	-0.028 (0.048)
Constant	3.130*** (0.024)	3.163*** (0.031)

Observations	1,502	1,470
R2	0.060	0.050
Adjusted R2	0.055	0.045
Residual Std. Error	0.754 (df = 1493)	0.960 (df = 1461)
F Statistic	11.829*** (df = 8; 1493)	9.697*** (df = 8; 1461)
=====		
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table B13: Effect of discrimination on Diversity Attitudes

=====	
	Dependent variable:

	Diversity Attitude

Discrimination	-0.056 (0.048)
MIGRATIE	0.187*** (0.041)
skill_level ^{low} -skilled	-0.141** (0.056)
skill_level ^{medium} -skilled	-0.213*** (0.047)
geslacht ^{vrouw}	0.063 (0.039)
age_group ³¹⁻⁴⁵	0.073 (0.053)
age_group ⁴⁶⁻⁶⁰	-0.136** (0.059)
age_group ⁶⁰⁺	-0.169*** (0.057)
Constant	2.983*** (0.080)

Observations	1,496
R2	0.059
Adjusted R2	0.054
Residual Std. Error	0.753 (df = 1487)
F Statistic	11.718*** (df = 8; 1487)
=====	
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

C) Open Survey Questions with Translations

Table C1: “Other” post-discrimination reactions of people from Black majority ethnicity categories

Original (Dutch)	English Translation
• Omdat er toch niet naar je geluisterd wordt. • loop weg van discriminatie • is in onderzoek • Dit gebeurt al jaren en ik trekt me niet meer aan • gehuild • als niet blanke is dit je leven. dagelijks tig momenten / actie ondernemen bij alles maakt jezelf gek of is een tweede baan. • Ik ben meer Rotterdammer dan de gemiddelde autochtoon omdat ik hier al 57 aar woon! Voor mij zijn het gewoon erg domme en slecht geschoolde gekken. • is nog niet opgelost. • De persoon aangesproken. • Bezwaarschrift ingediend wist ik al vooraf dat het afgewezen zou worden. Maar desondanks toch een bezwaarschrift ingediend. Jammer genoeg nooit opgeroepen voor een persoonlijk gesprek. Zit mij nog steeds dwaars. • Deze kwestie gaat nog verder aangekaart worden • Besproken op het werk • Mijn 7 kinderen verteld. Vader was politieagent.	• Because you won’t be listened to anyway. • walk away from discrimination • is under investigation • This has been happening for years and I don’t care anymore • cried • as a non-white person this is your life. daily tig moments / take action on everything makes yourself crazy or is a second job. • I am more Rotterdammer than the average native because I have lived here for 57 years! To me they are just very stupid and poorly educated lunatics. • hasn’t been solved yet. • Addressed the person. • Submitted objection I knew in advance that it would be rejected. But nevertheless filed objection anyway. Unfortunately never called for personal interview. Still sits me dwaars. • This issue is going to be raised further • Discussed at work • Told my 7 children. Father was a police officer.

Table C2: “Other” reasons for not reporting of people from Black majority ethnicity categories

Original (Dutch)	English Translation
““	(Empty response)
“Wordt niet naar je geluisterd, anders zou de discriminatie toch niet toenemen.”	“You’re not being listened to, otherwise discrimination wouldn’t be increasing.”
“Language barrier”	“Language barrier” (already in English)

Original (Dutch)	English Translation
“Dit zijn dingen die vaak gebeurden in het dagelijks leven en voelt als iets waar politie niks tegen kan doen.”	“These things often happen in daily life and feel like something the police can’t do anything about.”
“wil geen problemen”	“Don’t want trouble”
“Er wordt toch niks meegedaan”	“Nothing is done with it anyway”
“Het word als een grap gezien maar het raakt altijd”	“It’s seen as a joke, but it always hurts”
“Over de achterburen wacht ik het nog even af.”	“Regarding the neighbors behind me, I’ll wait and see for now.”
“Je wordt niet serieus genomen”	“You’re not taken seriously”
“Het heeft geen zin, de maatschappij verhard en in mijn ervaring wordt het probleem groter op het moment dat je er iets van zegt”	“It’s pointless, society is getting harsher, and in my experience, the problem gets worse when you speak up”

“RETALIATION”	“RETALIATION”
“wie bepaald waar de grens van ernstig ligt.”	“Who decides where the line of seriousness lies?”
“ik heb de personen zelf aangesproken”	“I addressed the individuals myself”
“er werd niks mee gedaan.”	“Nothing was done about it.”
“Ik laat het altijd gaan”	“I always let it go”
“ik vertrouw niemand meer.”	“I don’t trust anyone anymore.”
“Ervaring leert dat een melding geen zin heeft, als je goed bevriend bent met de leidinggevende wordt je gedekt. De rest wordt gestraft.”	“Experience shows that reporting doesn’t help. If you’re friends with the manager, you’re protected. The rest get punished.”
“ik wil de media inschakelen zodat de burgers kunnen zien wat de gemeente en andere instanties met mij allemaal gedaan hebben”	“I want to involve the media so citizens can see what the municipality and other agencies have done to me.”
“Komt zo vaak voor. Ik moet dan telkens een melding maken”	“It happens so often. I’d have to report it every time”
“Het gaat mensen niet veranderen”	“It’s not going to change people”
“Mijn dochter heeft een melding gemaakt.”	“My daughter made a report.”
“er is geen sprake van strafbare discriminatie.”	“There is no criminal discrimination involved.”

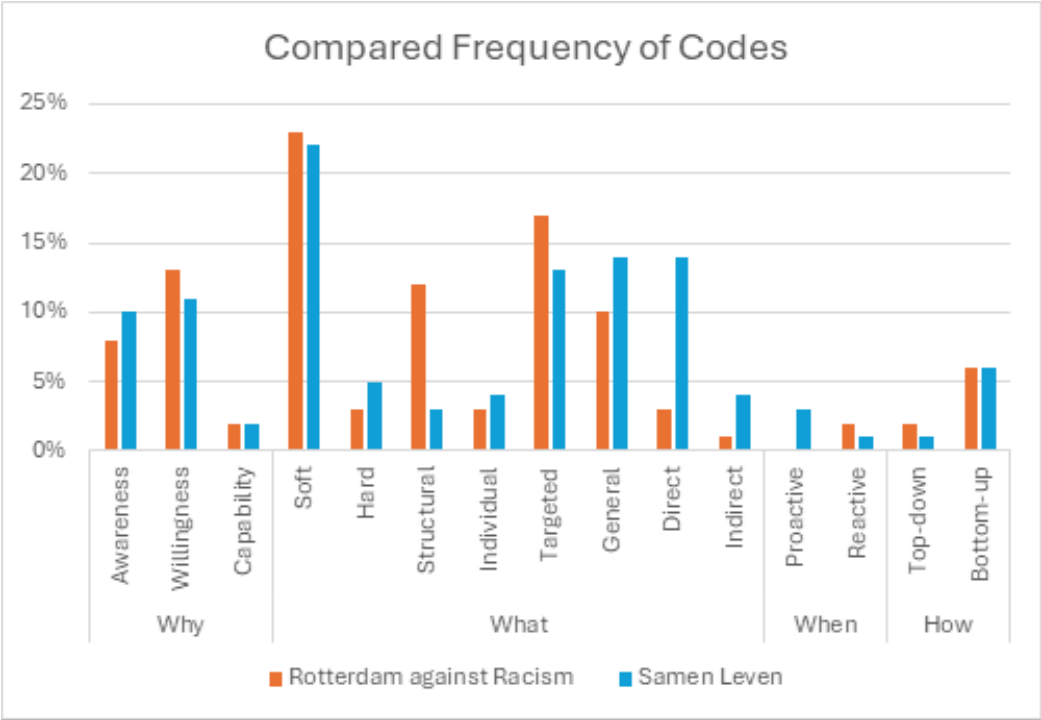
D) Policy Coding Results

Table D1: Rotterdam tegen Racisme and Samenleven Code counts

	Rotterdam vs Racisme	Samenleven
Why	82	78
Awareness	27	34
Willingness	44	36
Capability	8	8
What	226	199
Soft	81	73
Hard	11	17
Structural	42	9
Individual	11	13

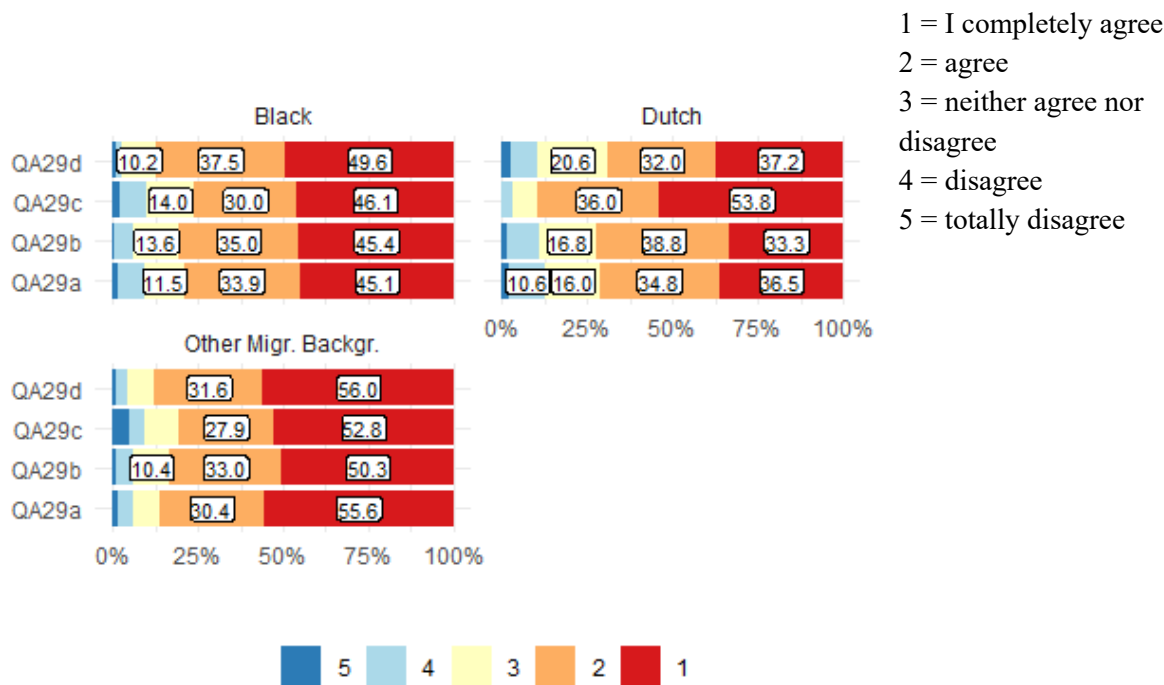
Targeted	60	44
General	35	47
Direct	11	46
Indirect	4	15
When	8	24
Proactive	1	11
Reactive	7	5
How	30	31
Top-down	7	2
Bottom-up	22	92
TOTAL	348	334

Figure D2: Rotterdam tegen Racisme and Samenleven Code frequencies



E) Figures

Figure E1: Diversity Attitudes by Migration Background



QA29a =Everyone should be able to live life as they wish. This also applies to people from other cultures.

QA29b =Everyone should be able to live life as they wish. This also applies to people with a different religion.

QA29c =Everyone should be able to live life as they wish. This also applies to homosexual men or women or transgender people.

QA29d = It is nice to live in a city with people from so many different backgrounds.

Figure E2: Occurrence of discrimination grounds from 2020 to 2024 in percent

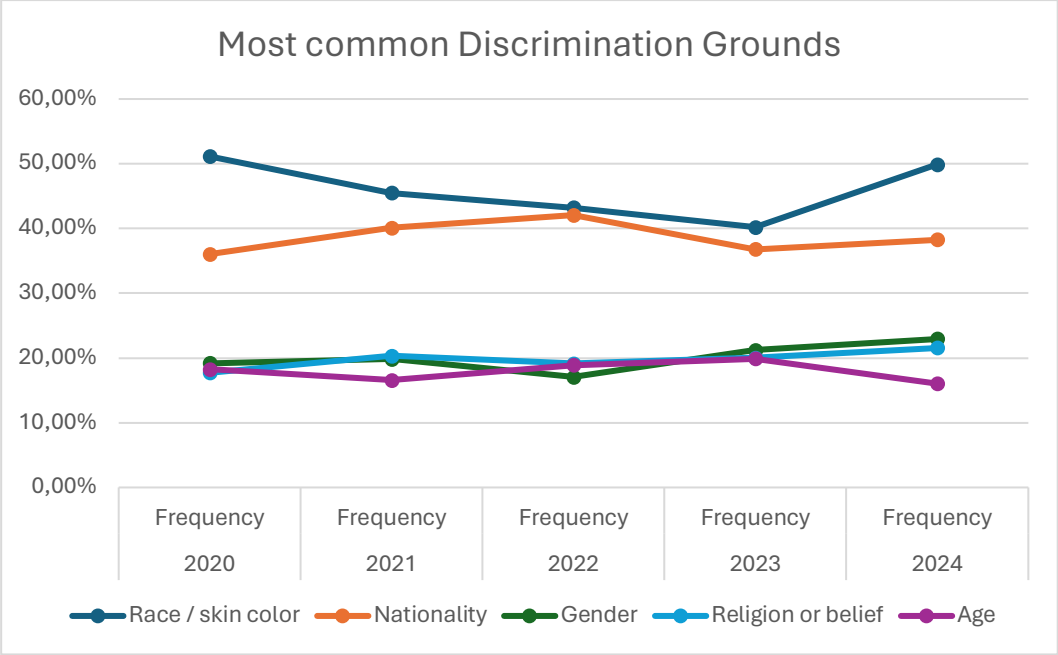


Figure E3: Occurrence of discrimination contexts from 2020 to 2024 in percent

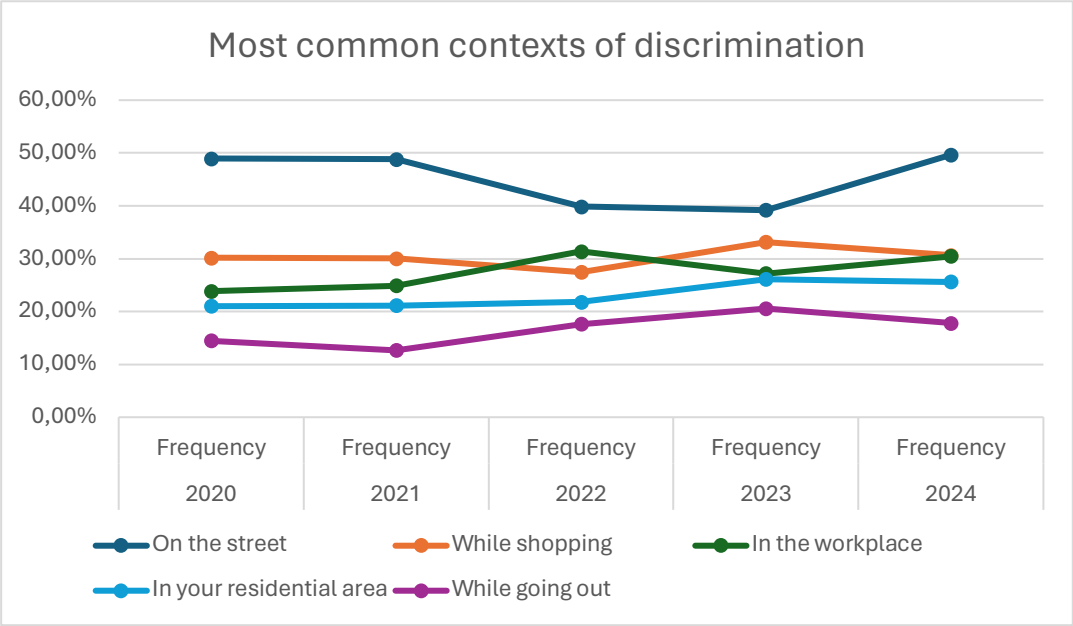
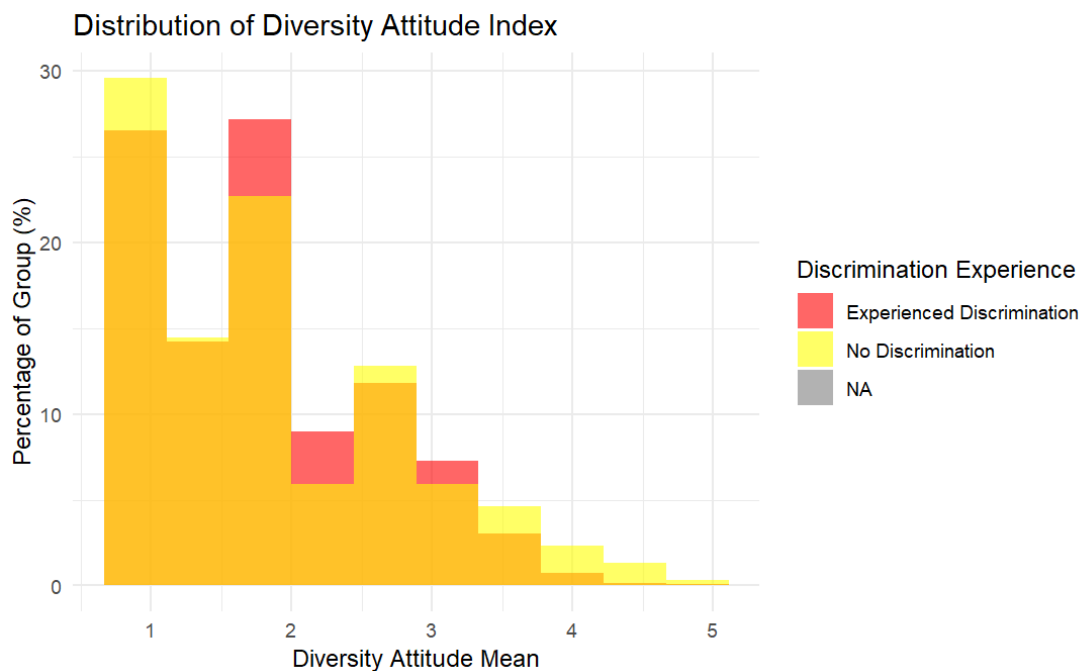


Figure E4: Mean Diversity Attitude by Discrimination Experience



F) Interview Transcripts

Interview F1: Rotterdam Inclusivity Project, Interview with Project Manager Asya Pisarevskaya 22.04.2025

Interviewer

Alright, so yeah, as you know my thesis will also have a part just going to talk about the project itself and also what I’ve been doing with my internship. So yeah, that’s what I would like to talk about a little bit. Are you OK with me recording this interview?

Respondent

Yes.

Interviewer

Great. OK. I want to start talking just generally. About the project, so if you could just maybe describe it briefly and give a little bit of context on how it came about as well.

Respondent

So the Rotterdam inclusivity project is a Project to help municipality of Rotterdam to improve their anti discrimination policy based on evidence so it’s a contribution of Erasmus University to evidence based policy making specifically focused on governance of anti discrimination. It came about think in 2021. As a let’s say it, it is a result of a rather informal. Exchange between the project PI Peter Salton and I Think. Who is he? Well, a representative of the team Samenleven at the Gemeente Rotterdam. So they discussed his initial idea. In 2021 and then Peter came up with a research proposal, project proposal that would basically aim the need of the humans to improve their discrimination policy. Yeah. And we also included in this proposal anti-Discrimination Agency RADAR because we well, Peter, In that case, thought that it’s really important not to just do it as a university with the municipality, but also include

societal partners and this anti-discrimination agency RADAR is a an NGO which. Is part of the actually national program of the Netherlands to make visible discrimination instances so they accept complaints from people and they can inform people to what to do about it. Sometimes they refer them to the police, sometimes they just listen and counsel. Yeah. And these kind of discrimination agencies, they are In place in several municipalities in the Netherlands, and they all kind of produce reports regularly.

Interviewer

OK. Yeah. Thank you. So what does each branch of this collaboration kind of add to the project or what are the roles, I guess?

Respondent

Yeah, So the scientific lead is Erasmus University. So it's our team, Peter Scholten, it's me, it's and well, we have also included. Not included, but the idea was that with the funds that we received from the municipality that we also hired the PhD researcher. So now it's Adham as well. And Maria Schiller is a supervisor, also together with Peter and me, is a supervisor and copromoter of the PHD, and for the data analysis we have a Research junior researcher data analyst on the project. So that's our team. So scientific brain basically of the project then municipality, they fund the project. So, there is a yearly budget. Erasmus University receives and also they pay to RADAR, so RADAR is also partner. They also receive a portion of funds from the to run this project to participate. But there are initially, their role was thought as a connector with the civil society, and now it gradually transformed into more like more another research partner. So for example, in the past year. And in the coming years, they will be doing part of research that's Erasmus University doesn't have capacity to do. But it was not thought like this initially. And also maybe important to say is that even though we receive funding from municipality, we also have put in this project on funding because it's what we receive from this part is not enough to fund all the stuff. That's yeah, put that's involved in this project. Meaning from the university. So yeah, it's from our, from our department, from our research team. The politics, policy and society, yeah.

Interviewer

Ah, yes, OK, OK.

Respondent

So roles did well. Do you have other questions about the roles.

Interviewer

No, I think, you summed that up quite well with the roles. I was wondering about RADAR, but because I understood that they also kind of have more qualitative data or kind of are working more with that. Is that still that way?

Respondent

Well, so. Let's say in the first few years. Their role was providing us with data on discrimination complaints. So this is an anonymized data with categorization of complaints. By grounds there is information what happened with each complain some limited information, what kind of person that. Was and also sometimes qualitative, descriptions. But these qualitative descriptions of what happened in each complain in each situation, they are not always available. So there all was basically data provider and we also hope that they will be the.

Once analyzing policy and like activities of the municipality in this governance area of anti discrimination. But reality was a bit different than planned, so they were not able to do that. And what happened last year, for example, is that they analyzed their own data much more in detail than we could do, because we also didn't have so much time. So that's how their role became more research role. So they don't have, so they have this complaint that they can analyze, but it's very small description. So they plan to, they are also involved in other research projects from which they can generate some

more Information that is useful for the project and then this year they are embarking on the qualitative research. So outside of this complaint story, we just made a proposal which was accepted to do a mystery guest analysis of discrimination During shopping. OK, so that's what I mean, that they moving towards the as a research partner. And they're are going to run this research independently by themselves as part of the project. Yeah. And they received also additional financing for this.

Interviewer

Yes, OK. But as part of the project, OK.

Respondent

Yeah. Yeah. And they received also additional financing for this. So they also in a way helped us to organize the launch event this year and in previous years, they helped us to organize Like. Discussion with practitioners when we were building the website they have invited from their network some practitioners into this session to show them the preliminary version of the website and get feedback. That was what they did in terms of connectivity. But yeah, frankly speaking, I was expecting more.

Interviewer

Yeah. Yeah. OK. Yeah. And so if I understand correctly like each of the partners works pretty much independently or is there like 1 overarching structure or coordinator that yeah, kind of also divides the roles and activities?

Respondent

UM. Well, we work. There is a contract that outlines rules of responsibilities, so we all. Use it as a guideline and we meet with all the partners Every month, almost so in these meetings, we discuss what are we doing and who is doing what and by when so we implement The responsibilities that we agree upon independently and where needed we let's say support each other so.

Yeah, well, for example, we cannot analyze RADAR data without RADRA giving us data. So in that sense, we are dependent. They also have a say into they have provided feedback on the website several times and we adjusted the website based on their feedback, but then because we are the budget holder for the website building, we still have a more responsibility for actually building the website making it Happen thinking through providing data everything right so they are the role is less central But I cannot say they're completely not involved. With regards to the, let's say this research project The mystery shopping that they thought of, they did it based on our previous year analysis, which showed that a lot of discrimination happened during shopping, so they took it as a lead, so they were dependent on us doing this analysis. But then they, from their own initiative, but agreed it was agreed with us. We sat together, we delineated 4 topics, and Erasmus University said OK, we're going to do 3 topics, the Muslim discrimination, the policy analysis and the Super diversity. And then RADAR say, OK, we want to do. Labor market integration. They first wanted to do discrimination during labor markets participation, but then the municipality said we know a lot about it. We don't want that. So they proposed the discrimination during shopping instead.

And they are going to implement it rather independently because we, well, we feel it's good for them to be fully in control and we also have a lot of other topics that we find important and that we want to focus on from our research team. Yeah. So we cannot be everywhere. Yeah, that's why we Separate these work streams OK, but I expect that we will provide feedback on their outputs as well as they did for our output.

Interviewer

Yeah. OK. And the municipality as the main funder is, would you say that they're kind of the ones who would give, like research direction or like topics like in this instance where they said, OK, no, we know enough about labour market and they give kind of the last go on which topics are important to them.

Respondent

Yeah, I wouldn't say they are very decisive on that. So we have a lot of freedom to propose things that we find important and we want to research. But because we also want these research to be relevant for the needs of the municipality, we take their reactions to our proposals very seriously. Yeah, I don't think they have like the final say, but we usually try to meet somewhere in the middle and. Yeah. And in the first two years of the project, it was very open, like it was sometimes even for me. The project manager was difficult to know.

Where we're going because they also didn't know what they want. So it was very independent in that sense. We were we had to decide basically everything and then see how they react. And now I think in this last, the third year that we just completed.

It became much more like we sort of found a way to work together, and they also realized more based on our previous reports where they would be interested to go more in depth.

00:15:08 Interviewer

OK, I see. I think this is good. You already answered a lot of things. That's great. Yeah. I wanted just to ask about a little bit like the people working on it. You already said like there's Adam doing the PhD and you as the project manager, Peter as the lead. But in terms of like disciplines that are represented.

Would you say they get interdisciplinary project or is pretty much straightforward public administration?

Respondent

Yeah, I think, well, our team is based in the Department of Public Administration and Sociology, and I think it's. We do look at it from the lens of governance research. So because we are we want to contribute to policy making and this is something that's very natural, naturally fitting into the public administration. But I mean, a lot of discrimination research. Has been done within the sociology discipline, right? And so we cannot neglect this theory, these findings. So we build upon them, but we try. And even though in our mapping of the discrimination experiences in Rotterdam. We use Yeah, quantitative data and also qualitative insights to that are maybe sociological. Our ultimate goal is to inform policymaking, and that's where the public administration thinking comes in in terms of policy formulation, policy implementation, policy, tools targeting. So I would say it's bi-disciplinary project.

Interviewer

Yeah. And also in terms of maybe like the research, I don't know how much you know about it, but like the researchers at RADAR are they also coming from that same discipline with that same focus? Maybe or sometimes of like methodologies and.

Respondent

No. They are. Well, I know that current lead researcher from the other side is a social psychologist. Before that, there was a historian before that there was an anthropologist and their project. Like the manager from their side, I don't know actually. And he's not a researcher. He's just like a Project manager who has a lot of experience in the field. He has worked. I don't know how many years in in this NGO world of fighting and discrimination at RADAR and Yeah. In that sense, disciplinary background, there is already much less relevant. Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer

OK, got you.

Oh, yeah, I just want to know also the project cycles like what are kind of the time frames and yeah, what you decide on missions and responsibilities.

Respondent

Yeah. So we have first two years were pilot years. And then since last year, we have concluded an agreement for four years, OK. And every year, like around March, April,

we define new goals for one year. And so our project cycle goes from first March to 1st March.

Interviewer

Yeah. And how would you say that? I mean you said already like the first two years were a little bit like undecided, I guess in terms of goals, but have you seen kind of a shift or like some progression in research focus over the years?

Respondent

Yeah. So, in the first years, what was important for everybody to just get a general sense of what, What is going on in Rotterdam in terms of discrimination and how that relates to diversity and inequality? And we like that our priority was quantitative mapping really and putting this in a in a website for public access so that it is clear. And also having this neighborhood focus. So we it was also request, it was since the beginning the project proposal that we needed not to just study city as a whole but to see how that plays out in the neighborhoods. It was one of the very clear priorities. And well, we also thought it was interesting. And so after the first two years, we have done a lot of quantitative mapping and in the third year we decided OK, now it's really time to go more into qualitative direction and that's why this year there will be more in depth research.

On a few topics so that is the Super diversity in neighborhoods. How these aspects are experienced in terms of discrimination, so by different people in different neighborhoods and anti-Islam hatred Or Muslim hatred or anti Islam discrimination. This is the topic also that we will study qualitatively and this year with the help of Adam, the PhD. And the more in depth policy analysis which you have also contributed to. But then we will continue more and more analyzing also theoretically The policy formulation, policy implementation and also hoping to define better what the municipality could improve in terms of policy making. So these are How topics, we're changing for the years.

Interviewer

OK thank you. All right. Now I just want to understand a little bit more about like I guess like the institutional structure in terms of Like the project is part as you were saying of the Department of politics and...

Respondent

So the project is part of Yeah, it's basically Peters project. For he is the primary investigator, and because Peter is the team lead of politics, policy and society team It also falls under that theme. And then we are all in the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Science.

Interviewer

What exactly is the PRIMUS group and what? Where does this relate to?

Respondent

The Primus is the is the research group of scholars from. This team that focuses on migration and Diversity.

Interviewer

OK, perfect. And then I see also, yes, I see also a lot this inclusive 010. Is it just another title for the project or in which when does this yeah related to the project.

Respondent

It was an initial website name inclusive new team inclusive Zero Ten. It was our first domain, but then we discovered that there is another domain that exists. No teams, no team inclusive which. Is an already established platform to tackle. I think inclusive work environment or something.

Interviewer

OK. Yeah, because I saw that and I thought if it's like part of the project or related.

Respondent

To no, it's not related at all like. I mean it's related by the topic, but we have no contact with them. Yeah, so. And that's why we changed the domain name. So now it's discriminatie visor. It's a domain, right? But the name project that was there since the start and I guess.

Interviewer

Yes, sure. OK. And I wanted to know because like this project focuses mainly on like migration related diversity, but is do you know some projects in, in other policy areas that are similar to this one?

Respondent

Sorry, which other projects what?

Interviewer

No, just if you know, like, I just want to like understand a little bit whether this is something that the municipality is doing in all kinds of policy areas or whether it's really just with this project. I mean, maybe also don't have necessarily knowledge of this.

Respondent

Yeah, I think we are not the only one who collaborates very closely with the municipality of Rotterdam. We have at this department, so Department of Public Administration sociology, we have several research groups and you can even say, like research agencies That work very closely with the municipality on various topics, from water management to sustainability to participation of underrepresented. groups and they like. I think there's this Gov lab.nl . Also I think it's called. So, it's like a Kind of a consultancy, so the municipality gives some assignments to this unit. Engage in very applied research. Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer

And also like other projects that focus also on migration and diversity, but in other. Either other municipalities of the Netherlands or other countries even do you know people that are doing similar work? Or are you also maybe in contact Even with other projects like this.

Respondent

So the projects that are kind of collaborative with the university and the municipalities ?

Interviewer

Yeah. For instance, I know that last time there was a meeting that Adam told me about with people from Helsinki or something like that, that apparently we're doing similar work and that you were kind of like exchanging with and yeah, I was just wondering if there's like a. Let's say and like a community or network of similar projects that are working in similar ways, and I guess there could be anywhere or also in other municipalities of the Netherlands.

Respondent

Yeah, I think so. Yeah. We don't really have a network, I would say. In the past, we were quite inward focused in the project has been quite challenging because there were also people changing stuff, people falling out, so it was not the easiest project to run. And we didn't have, I think only now we're at the stage where we can go outward and start networking. And building that community of practice or research community. So, I'm aware that there are other research that was co-founded by foundations in the city of Rotterdam focused on refugees, refugee integration and the team of Yakov darhavos. Have been very heavily involved in this research. They still continue. I think receiving grants to follow-up research and currently there is a PhD that is investigating. I think how integration process of refugees living in a boat that is located in Rotterdam is going mega rents. So she's involved in that. But I have to be honest, we don't exchange with her on that.

Like, I mean, she is invited to the Primus meetings and part of group. But we didn't really had like any bilateral discussions. OK, here is a Rotterdam project. What can we mean for each other? We didn't organize these kind of things yet.

We know that other researchers in the Netherlands study issues of discrimination, and we know their names. We build on their research. We also have an Advisory Board with whom we have been meeting a couple of times a year. Especially in the beginning, in the 1st 2 pilot years. Mm-hmm. They were invited to. Yeah. Have a critical look on our research.

But yeah, that's it. So limited. But we're open.

Interviewer

So that's already, I mean that's also very much like a young, I guess this project and expect that it's like a Huge network but.

Respondent

Yeah. So I think, yeah, we, it would be interesting to explore what is going on this topic. Elsewhere and we I think are already building these collaborations with the University of Malmö, for example, they are also engaged with their municipality of Malmö to study inclusion and Participation and integration of people of migrant origin in the city of Malmö and they are very interested to learn from us In that process And we can also learn from them, of course, in some way or another.

Interviewer

Thank you. Yeah. Then it's kind of coming to the end of my questions. I just wanted to see like in terms of impact, have you seen? Any specific ways in which the findings of the project have influenced? Also like the policy, for example in *samenleven*, because I think the policy came after the start of this project or just in general like a direction or a discourse from the municipality.

Respondent

Well, I'm not sure, to be honest. I know that For us, it's very important that the municipality is engaged, they're interested and they also are proud to have this website to be launched, so they were fully on board. And they promoted also this website the vet howder is seems to put a lot of significance on this project. So there is also a very close collaboration between the vet howder and the PI of our project.

We presented the findings I think couple of years ago at the City Council meeting and they were debated about, they were discussed. In terms of policy development, umm, I don't know yet if something is cooking. You know, based on our findings.

But I know that they have been used by some actors. They were used in discussions with the neighborhood actors, sometimes by..., for example, he's *stats marinier* and he's and he's in the city and.

Respondent

I mean, he invited me and also one of the students to give a presentation to some participants. So people from the home and from the neighborhoods. So I think that's already like important to just. Have this have data focused on Rotterdam, some theoretical discussion, and with to do it with practitioners together. It's the first step. So I think in a couple of years we will see more use. Of what we have done so far.

Interviewer

Yes. OK. So kind of maybe also the importance of having like the difference governance bodies is also to get the data or like get the findings I guess out there because maybe also what you were saying what I was supposed to do like creating this Connection to practitioners, and it's also the municipality and the end or representatives that are also doing that.

Respondent

Yeah, exactly. Yeah. So municipality are doing that and. If we, I think it has to be done together. I mean they can, they are willing to support us, they have interest and we also have interest in that. But we need to. And that's why actually, why we why we have been working on this public output rather than research or scientific output. So after these three years, we still don't have any academic part article on this because all our efforts were focused on the website and giving talks. And I mean, the students that have been engaged in this project, they have produced briefs already for 3-4 years. So we have organized presentations with them. Yeah, I think it has a lot of potential, but it's like Unfolding. Yeah, I think that's it. What I want to say.

Interviewer

Yeah. Then that's also it for my questions. I don't know if there's anything that you want to add or that you think I've missed?

Respondent

Yeah, I think what I want to add is through this project, I think all the partners are learning gradually to work together. So we as researchers and scientists from the university learning Align our research priorities with the priorities of the practitioners how to make their priorities researchable so it's and we realize that it's not just one time communication.

It's going to be resolved in one meeting. So a lot of time and effort have been going and will still be going into maintaining this long term relationships having many meetings that are transparent and respectful and based on the mutual trust in each other's goodwill and capabilities.

And so I have been seeing I've been since I started this project and in the beginning it was. Yeah, very confusing because I was not used to work like this. It was too open. Like I didn't know what they want. I didn't know what I want or like what we want. So it was a lot of figuring it out. Right. And now I see like three years in.

We have found we start, we're starting to find the common language and it has only been possible because of this long term collaboration. So that's my kind of learning point for all the future. Applied collaboration research that might come is that It makes no sense to just do it. One all yeah, it has to be multi year structural relationship. And then preferably with people or the contact people That also stay In their organizations for many years.

Yeah. So it has been detrimental to the progress of the project and this building of mutual trust and understanding when people just change on the goal and it has happened. So the new person would come in and start it. It feels like as if we're starting from zero.

Interviewer

OK. Yeah. And also, yeah, maybe something that I missed like is it something? Is it a project that you would say is maybe growing or declining in size or do people like have people left and come, is it like very dynamic in that sense or?

Respondent

I think it's. It's so in the beginning there were a lot of changes and the teams were kind of smaller and less permanent and now it has stabilized I think. I don't think we will grow much more, but it I think we have. People that. And now know what is expected of them. They know their roles. They know each other. They know what to expect from each other.

And I hope that we can maintain this stability in the next two years.

Interviewer

OK, nice. Sorry, I'm just thinking of things as we go. Just last question like the contact to civil society kind of because you were also saying like it's been a little bit difficult with RADAR. But then I remember we had this. Event last time that was hosted by this organization, where there was also the contact. But how has that been Kind of like bringing civil to society like into the project?

Respondent

Yeah. So. Well, we have managed to organize this launch event through links between the RADAR and this other organization. IDEM so, but also the commenter actually was it was their idea to organize it through IDEM so I don't think so. If we would be doing it by ourselves at university, we would do it. Yeah, I don't know how we'll do it, but it might not have been through the civil society because we don't have very. Close connections with them.

So I think maybe in the future we can improve it so to have more.

Well, now we have the website that is public, right? So on that basis, I think we can engage with more actors from civil society also with SPIOR. So the organization that is focusing on.

Well, they are, I guess, representing interests of Muslim population and RADAR. And so they will be our partners in this research on anti Muslim discrimination. So they will through that sub project within the Rotterdam inclusivity project, we can reinforce this collaboration. So they will be partners of anti Muslim discrimination research. Yeah and hopefully more organization will also be connected to us. Yeah, we will reach out to them and invite them.

This one OK? Yeah. And just seeing what. Yeah. So in the making of, we only were connected with RADAR and with some other partners we which we have invited.

Well, not partners, but they were like external NGOs that were invited to this session. I was telling you about where they gave feedback on the first version Of the website.

So there were like 5 or 6 organizations, but we haven't really developed this connection. Further again, because we had to really focus on building.

Interviewer

Yeah, but then I see kind of as you like, I guess the ideas like as you go more specifically into certain topics that you would work with, organizations that are kind of experts on that specific topic.

Respondent

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And also our communication strategies, like we had thought about, OK, we need to roll out a communication campaign. And it was prepared. But because we had the Requirements of accessibility in the in the website, which came quite late, we basically were not allowed to open the website for public for let's say, eight or nine months. So a lot of work has been done on the background for accessibility to People with functional impairment, for example. And that also was one of the reasons why we couldn't roll out this communication campaign yet, and I hope we will do it this year. And that will then connect us more to civil society.

Interviewer

Yeah. Nice. OK, so I think then that's really it. Thank you so much for taking the time.

Interview F2: Municipality of Rotterdam, employee of team Samenleven 09.07. 2025**Adham Aly 0:12**

Maybe I can just say a few things about our chat today, although we already exchanged a few emails. Um, I'm excited because this is the first interview of the round. It's a preliminary talk, so actually in in many ways this will also allows us to understand if we're asking the right questions or not. And the idea is to understand better the summer living in installed policy, do it through the knowledge and insight that you have been that you work there and then we can discuss of course your role in the policy.

And then also checking whether sort of what is your informal opinion on our assessment of the policy. So we wrote this policy brief a few months ago and also running it by you.

Can give us also a lot of knowledge in in the next section, because as you know, the next step is interviewing people that have dealt with the policy. We want to interview your colleagues and also want to interview or try to interview.

Members of each of the organization that are mentioned in the policy, so that we basically interview everybody that that was part of the deal today. We already met a few times. I don't know if you've met Kekeli in real life, so I'm going to give her the word. Kekeli is our research Assistant. She's been with us for the past six months. It's her last month, but she will not leave before having on this conversation. And maybe you can introduce yourself and also your thesis and the connection with this with this talk.

Kekeli Ayivi 1:40

Yes, of course. Nice to meet you. First of all, it's very nice that you agreed to do this. Yeah, I'm Kekeli Ayivi. I am doing a Masters in Migration Studies in Paris, actually, but have been working in the Rotterdam Inclusivity Project for the past six months.

Respondent 1:54

Nice to meet you too.

Kekeli Ayivi 2:04

And the reason that I'm sitting in this interview is also that my thesis will be on the work that I've been doing in the project. I want to focus specifically on the lived experiences of Black people that experience discrimination in Rotterdam and also link it back to the work that Rotterdam is doing in terms of anti-discrimination and especially anti-racism.

So, I'm very excited to hear what you have to say about it.

Adham Aly 2:29

Amazing. Um, let's start.

Respondent 2:32

Yes, before we start, maybe just one remark from my side. It has been quite a while since I've read your assessment, so I'm not sure if I can today without looking at it again, say much about that.

Maybe either we could like just try and see where we get or we can, um, you know, schedule another like maybe 15 minute conversation sometime to talk about that specific part. Um, yeah.

Adham Aly 3:04

No worries at all. And thank you actually, because I was gonna jump straight in without going and asking you. But no, don't worry at all. And I'm gonna, you know, I'm gonna throw you the question, but also I'm gonna introduce it. It's not like I'm testing your your memory. I'm just gonna tell you a little bit of what was our assessment in two sentences and then feel free.

Respondent 3:24

Yeah, of course.

Adham Aly 3:24

And everything that you give us for us is is valuable. So don't worry. I see that Kekeli started the recording and of course afterwards we will send you the transcript for you to review and and so on. You told us in the e-mail that.

Maybe just in a few minutes or however long you want, if you can tell us your position at the Gemeente, your team, and then maybe also your connection with the policy.

Respondent 3:59

Of course. So right now I am working as a policy advisor. I'm not going to translate everything. I figure that it's going to be OK.

I work mainly on the themes of gender emancipation and LGBT teams, as well as discrimination based on having a disability or chronic disease. That's what I work on mostly now. I've been doing that for about a year now, year and a half, and before that I was a bit. I only just started at this team, so I kind of did everything a little bit.

And before that I was a trainee and that was the time during which this policy document was written and researched before that. So my role now is a bit different from my role back then because I was a trainee, but I did have the. I studied a masters in social inequalities at the EUR so I did have the background with that was relevant for the policy and I did a trainee period there because that was just really interested interesting to me and.

So because, yeah, I just wanted to see how, you know, creating such a policy document and such, you know, policy action statements and stuff like that, yeah, came about. And then my role in that was that I was in contact with all the different team members and collected all of the input from them. They also had all their, you know, all their contacts within the organization. Obviously it's a very big organization and we work together with a lot of other organizations as well, but within the Gemeente already it's a massive organization. So it's yeah, all of us were really active in keeping our contacts warm. So I collected all of the input that they gave me on all of the different subjects that that are in the current policy documents, which I'm sure you know quite well now.

And then I, together with my team members we compiled this into the document that it is today, in which my role was mostly writer and um... What's the English word?

Adham Aly 6:59

Data collector.

Respondent 7:02

Yeah, but also, like making sure that I decide, you know, yeah, a little bit, yeah, I would say.

Kekeli Ayivi 7:06

Editor?

Adham Aly 7:14

Yep.

Respondent 7:15

Um, so that was mostly my part in this specific documents.

Adham Aly 7:20

Amazing. I'm gonna follow up on a few things here at some point later on. When I'm looking down is because I'm writing notes, and when I'm looking up is because I'm writing it looking at my questions. Also, Kekeli is gonna be our quality control, so she might jump in and out with the follow-ups.

Adham Aly 7:35

You mentioned the team a few times. The Gemeente of course is huge, but I was wondering without going into too much detail, how big is the sort of the diversity and inclusivity team? So you of course you and the writers. But how big is the team that meets to discuss this sort of items centrally?

Respondent 7:56

That's already a bit hard because we have a larger team which also includes also integration. I'm not. No, they don't call it integration anymore. It's imbergering. I'm not sure what the word is. But and then we have inclusive, inclusive Samenleven, which is about 8 to 9 people who then, yeah, we discuss all of these themes.

Adham Aly 8:22

From your answer I understand that you received a lot of information and you had to compile a lot of things in this in this Samenleven policy. What I wanted to maybe ask you to start with. OK, it's been a few years so as much as your memory can recall. What was the fuel for this policy? What were sort of the the bubbling issues that made this policy get on the table and be written?

Respondent 9:03

There was a different policy before, which was a lot less explicit in regards to what we were doing and more a bit more broadly themed like, oh, we all think inclusivity is important. That was more that, but a little less about the yeah, the pressing matters in within society. Then of course in 2020 there was a huge Black Lives Matter movement. Um, which that was in Rotterdam also very big and that influenced, I think a lot of the thinking within the municipality as well. Also of course from the political parties that all had very strong opinions, whether it was very pro Black Lives Matter or against it. Either way there was a lot of attention for it.

That resulted in an amendment to that previous policy documents. So that was the main driving motivation for that. And then the newest documents of Samenleven is on the one hand, just, yeah, continuation of the previous policy documents, but much more focused on actually, you know, saying where the pain points in society are rather than. Just focusing on. So the previous one was much more focused on, „OK, this is the way it is. Let's now all just kind of live together and relax a little bit“, a bit more like that, which is very charged. But yeah, we figured it was time to actually address some of the more pressing matters rather than kind of dance around it. Um, so that was for this policy. So Samenleven in één Stad, also one of the Uh motivations. And then of course it was also a new Um.

Kalasia. So, when you, um, uh, that's outer. Seismeier. I'm not sure that's outer. Um.

Who also, of course, wants to create his own stamp on policy. So those were some of the driving forces and then.

Respondent 11:32

Our team also has a lot of contact with different organizations within the city. So we always hear about, yeah, all of the all of the things that are relevant. So for instance, also during the pandemic, the rise of anti Asian discrimination, anti Chinese mostly. Yeah, also just issues within the different areas within the city. So people feeling like their neighborhood is no longer representative for who they are, or neighborhood fights, which also a lot of the times are based on either discrimination or some form of it, or some form of hate or intolerance. So yeah, this document is very, very big, but we really try to also combine all of the different parts that the Gemeente works on. So rather than just being about living together and not discriminating, it's much more also about how

do we do that when we are in a sports organization? How do we do it when we're going to the library?

How? How do we do it when we're driving our cars, much more focused on all of these different aspects of living together?

Adham Aly 12:57

Yeah, you know, I have so many questions I want to ask because you're going with us all sorts of places. So I'm very happy. No, no. First of all, I'm going to touch on two things here and to Kekeli, I'm jumping a little bit back and forth.

I agree. First of all, I lived in Rotterdam for eight years and I love the city. This is my third home and I'm happy that I always say that I'm happy that I'm working with you folks because I grew up in Milan. It's a nice city, but I've never seen this commitment to change like I've seen it in Rotterdam. So I love how Rotterdam.

You know, recognizes problems and tries to improve it. You you've said that this policy is very big and I agree, me and Kekeli agree. I mean, it's a huge document. It touches on many domains and before I talk on the domains, I even just wonder.

Isn't this a lot of work for three authors to write about all of these things? You get all these data, all these inputs about this commission that can happen in multiple spaces and places in in your daily life and then having to produce such document. How was it for you to to write this?

Respondent 14:11

I mean, it could have been a lot bigger, so it was a lot. But what really helped was the structure. I think we tried to create beforehand. So, all of the so all of my colleagues touched upon the different topics which we will also go in, I think later. So, for instance, one of my colleagues has good ties with someone at sports, team sports. One of my colleagues has a good has good ties with a safety domain.

And they all we had this format in which they should write about the policy areas that are relevant when it comes to diversity and inclusion.

And they all had this specific format, which was you can only write like 3 sentences about your area and that's the maximum. And then we gathered all of that information and then made another selection and then that resulted in what we see today.

It was a lot of work. It was very intense. I think it was mostly also intense to kind of create a sense of urgency with all of the people in the different domains, because for us this is full-time work, but for a lot of them it's just.

One of those, yeah, side tasks, yeah. Oh, right. We are doing sports, but we also have to do something with diversity and inclusion. We, I think we all maybe I'm saying we, but maybe it was just me. But I think I can also speak for my colleagues. We'd really hope that the document would also create or keep that sense of urgency going with all of these different teams, which it turns out it's still a lot of work on our part to, yeah, to keep that alive in all of the different areas.

But no, it was a yeah, it was a massive, massive deal to collect and compile and yeah, edit and all of that.

Adham Aly 16:18

Yeah, I can only imagine it was a lot of work for us to analyze it, let alone for you to write it. I'm gonna touch again on urgency..

So I talked about that would mean a lot for you. I want to touch one second about the output and that is the summit even instead touches on everything, touches on housing, hiring, internship, religious discrimination, allowance scandal.

Racist and ethnic discrimination. It really touches on everything. And I thought also that it almost spread itself thin because it tries to touch on everything and at the same time you mentioned urgency. All diversity and inclusion matters are important, and they are all equally important. But one could also imagine a citizen that say that some matters are more oppressing than others. Did you? How did you, how did you feel about this sort of idea of touching on so many topics?

Without maybe dropping the hammer on two or three and saying these are the most important ones for Rotterdam.

Respondent 17:31

Yeah, I think that's a discussion that our team has had a lot as well because when you're talking about inclusion, you're always excluding. It's something that we are, we have a hard time with because just because so for instance.

The the data that we use to base these policies on is mostly, for instance, data from RADAR, data from the university research about acceptance rates, research about discrimination. What's it called? Like when people are discriminated and they make a melding?

Adham Aly 18:09

Reporting

Respondent 18:24

Yeah, exactly. We base it on data and from those data you get obviously you get results like ethnic.

Discrimination based on ethnic, ethnicity or religion is one of the highest, like one of the least accepted. So yeah, exactly.

We use that, but then that does not mean that all of the other forms of discrimination are less important in a sense. In practice, I think we do act mostly based on you know that division of this is what most people have experience and then this is after that and then this is a little less. And here we don't even really get any reports at all, but we don't want to, yeah, take that as the golden Division or something like that, because it's just not fair to the people that do actually experience it, but may not make a report or something. So I understand what you're saying. We are, we are spreading it thin a little bit, but only because we are maybe trying to be as inclusive as possible, which yeah, that's really difficult because you're always excluding and even now that we are very complete in in the topics that we touch and all of that we get feedback from the Gemeenterat, that we're missing out on certain people, so and certain experiences. So in a sense, I think with inclusion, it's never really enough.

Adham Aly 20:01

No, I understand. And then you're right. I mean the by default inclusion means excluding somebody and I as an academic it's you know our job is to give opinions and I think as a policy maker in a in a tougher proposition. But I understand and I'm going to, I'm going to get back to it in a second when you talk about urgency and again Kekeli, feel free to jump in at any time. By the way, this question has been drafted together with Kekeli. It's been a together effort. I'm going to ask you the so-called \$1,000,000 question and then we of course go from there.

Adham Aly 20:37

The Samenleven in één stad, correct me if I'm wrong, is a four year. It's based on four years spent. So, it's a 2023, 2027. This is the time frame that the policy looks at. We are halfway through.

As a as a policy maker, as an insider, I'm going to just say it how I wrote it. Do you think it has been successful so far or how do you define success or what? What is your assessment halfway through the journey of the of the policy?

Respondent 21:09

We have actually just done reports. Yeah, I don't know if you've actually seen that or if it's open to public. I can have a look and if it's open to public, I can send it to you.

Adham Aly 21:15

Please.

Respondent 21:26

Of course, which was also a very big task again, because we had to touch upon all of these different action points and all of these different themes with the people that maybe two years ago we spoke to that don't work there anymore or people don't really know what we're talking about. So, but if I can, if I'm allowed to send it to you, I will. From that I think it's difficult because some of it has become a bit of a check mark situation, so.

Some teams that just that have contributed to the policy, they have since then just not really thought about it. And this is again, you know, the sense of urgency, the sense that it's important for their specific.

A part of what they're doing for the city. So maybe they have delivered to us back then they gave us one or two action points and now we during the evaluation we came back and we asked OK, so how is it going with these?

One or two action points and they'll have given us. Sometimes it's, Oh yes, we checked that box and that's it. And sometimes it's, Oh yeah, we didn't really know that we actually had to do something about it. So, it's a bit of a mix, but in some ways.

So, the specific things that are reserved for my team that we do daily, I think it went OK.

A lot of the things that were said during, for instance, the city talks which we held before. When we compiled this samenleven in één stad we have come back to, We are still doing those by the way, and for instance we at the same time of the samenleven we also started subsidies and that is going fantastic. So, I think in the sense that we facilitate other organizations to work on anything to do with discrimination in the city, I think that's going great. In terms of all of the other parts of the Gemeente, it's, yeah, it's a bit of a mix. There are so many different teams in the Gemeente that we have contact with that I don't really know what to tell you about. Is it going well or should it going better?

Adham Aly 24:13

Right, right, right. No, I this is also in line with some of our expectation. I mean the organization is huge and I mean governing diversity in my opinion, it's an incredibly tough task and evaluating the good and the bad is also tough because you talked about check marks, you talked about also.

This sort of stop and go process that you, you know, stop two years ago, talk about it and then you have to move on with dealing with your life because for some this is a side task. Before I move on, you mentioned one thing that I took note, but I don't know if you can. The aiming you said is going fantastic.

Adham Aly 24:50

Oh, all the subsidy... as a response to the subsidy scandal. Or is this something else?

Respondent 24:55

Oh, no, no. This is something else we have. I'm not sure what the English word for it is, but it's called actually the same as the Oxy plan. It's called the subsidy. You can look it up online.

Adham Aly 25:09

Good. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Respondent 25:13

We have for each of the different discrimination grounds and we have decided there are five. For each of them we have a set budgets that organizations can get subsidy from. So for instance, an organization that has great projects with regards to fighting discrimination based on religion, for instance, they can write to us for a subsidy.

And this has been going so great that we've upped the budget twice and we won't even be able to, yeah, to subsidies all of them because there are so many. I think this year we have received hundreds applications.

I think in that sense, in giving back to the city and letting them also fight discrimination, I think that's a really great method.

Adham Aly 26:15

I'm gonna, I'm gonna go back to your first answer, but just a curiosity. What are these 5 diversity grounds? If you remember them by heart.

Respondent 26:25

They're kind of grouped together. I'm not sure from the top of my head. I'll send it to you.

Adham Aly 26:31

I'm gonna, I'm gonna look it up, but I was, I was just curious that amazing. So if I can go back to the to the to the assessment, you give us a lot of insight on how these things are sort of evaluated. You mentioned at some point that you.

Respondent 26:34

Yeah, and I'll send it to you as well.

Adham Aly 26:49

You believe that overall went OK. So can I then say that you believe the summary so far is moving along positively or it really needs to go, let's say chapter by chapter and domain by domain and we cannot do such a wide brush.

Respondent 27:06

I think it's, yeah. I think chapter by chapter, domain by domain, and also discrimination ground by discrimination grounds, really. Because, yeah.

I don't know. There's a rise of anti-trans discourse. There's a rise of anti-Semitic discourse. There's a rise of anti-Muslim discourse. There's a rise of a lot of discrimination, really. So.

In the sense of acceptance and discrimination, I'm not sure if we can say it's going better, but in maybe in the sense that we are now noticing a little bit more urgency by the rest of the teams than we used to two years ago.

When it comes to these themes, yeah, I think that's yeah. Again, it's always very political. All of everything that we do is always political and that you can you really notice that with the way that, yeah, diversity and inclusion is also governed. So in order to get something like Oxyplan Samenleven through and get it actually. What do you call

it? Accepted or like through the through the coalition. Yeah, you also have to make some judgments, adjustments. So that's, yeah, everybody will agree in the end and we have a very interesting coalition, with regards to political color. So yeah, it's always, I think a bit difficult and we always, always get the same questions from the and the same points that that they want us to focus on. But it's also they also have their political agenda, obviously so.

Adham Aly 29:03

If I know Kekeli well enough, after six months, I have to ask you a question right now because it was part of our schedule and I'm happy to spoil it. You mentioned the political aspect. Of course, politics and policy go hand in hand. It's also the name of my team Politics, policies, society.

To what extent is this political support important? Because on one hand, as you said, you know the city can have a certain political color and on the other hand you see the commitment of the municipality, this wide range of commitment of the municipality to fight different grounds of discrimination.

Can you, I mean you already mentioned a little bit, but can you talk a little bit more about?

The struggle between the political support and still the need or the request from the municipality to do something about discrimination.

Respondent 29:56

It's I think it's what me and my team do daily is the the juggle that basically see how we can move in between that space as well because obviously we have a vet houter who is affiliated with one party. That party has very different viewpoints than another party in the same coalition. But they are a coalition and they all speak with one voice. That's what they always say, right? So every member of this coalition speaks with the same voice.

That means that my vet houter has to be very tactical about what he does or does not say and what he does or does not do. And policy, of course, he gave us the direction for our policy and he's the one that signs his name under it. So he has to be careful about what am I going to put in there and what am I not going to put in there. So one, I think one aspect that the political parties might sometimes have a bit of friction in the coalition is probably migration and discrimination based on ethnicity, where my vet houter is very much also from his political party, very much enticed to speak up about it and to address it. If it if it comes to, for instance, anti-Muslim behavior in the city, but then there's another party within the same coalition who are very no. Well, maybe I wouldn't say anti. Well, I guess they are.

They don't care about anti-Muslim rhetoric and they might even add to it. Um so, but they are in a coalition together. So in the end what we had to do with the Oxyplan Samenleven as well is we have to make sure that everybody agrees because they're all speaking with one voice, right? So, that means sometimes you have to water it down a little bit and sometimes you have to, um, amp up something else that one of them really has to have in in that policy document. Otherwise, you won't agree. So it's that's a bit of a juggle juggling.

All of those political colors together, I think, especially when it's a it's a coalition that's so diverse as we have now. And also when we talk to other Gemeentes about these types of things, we are sometimes a little bit jealous because in other coalitions they're a bit more aligned, yeah. And I think with our coalition, it's a bit harder sometimes to actually put through. And then also all of these different teams that we work together with, they have different vet houters, so they are all affiliated with their own political party.

So, they may, yeah, we have this document. Obviously, they all have signed it, so they all have to stick to it. But the sense of urgency that they give to their teams, I always mention sport because it's just one of those things. But for instance, they might have a different vet houter there that doesn't really care that much. So he's not gonna push the subject of inclusion and diversity to their teams as much as we want as team inclusion. So it's always very much a yeah, a juggle between all of those different, yeah, political colors and and opinions and senses of urgency and all that. So, it really, yeah.

Adham Aly 33:47

So, so there's a lot of diplomatic work that you and your team have to do, a lot of, as you said, juggling. I can only imagine sort of this, this, this need to to meet and and and understand each other's interest. And but then the question is, how much does this juggling and this diplomacy impact your policy writing? Do we have to compromise a lot or or are you able to?

Respondent 34:16

Sometimes it's compromised, sometimes it's just in the way of phrasing things. So that was also when I started, I think I was a lot less sensitive to or a lot less, yeah, sensible maybe to phrasing of certain things.

And I would just say, well, this is what it is. So I'm going to write it down the way it is and just, yeah, bump into certain things. But yeah, we are now, we're already looking forward towards new policy. So and we're also having these discussions again, like how are we going to phrase everything? When it comes to inclusion and diversity, so that it will be accepted not just by all of these political parties, obviously, but also in the city.

Adham Aly 34:58

Yeah, I have. I have one more question about politics. Since we're on the topic, you detailed very well for us in our knowledge and understanding the situation in Rotterdam. I also wanted to ask you about the Netherlands as a nation state.

Adham Aly 35:23

Is this a, in your view, is this a Rotterdam affair? Is this about, you know, some living in instead in Rotterdam or does also the sort of the national conversation and you know, the builders of, you know, the past few months and this sort of narrative? Does this enter your office or is this a Rotterdam conversation?

Respondent 35:45

No, I think it definitely enters our office, I think, because that's a very hot theme nationally, but obviously that also influences us when we're talking about inclusion. Yeah, we're also talking about migrants and refugees. And so, yeah, it does influence us mostly when it comes to national law. So for instance, we act on Article 8.

If there would ever change anything with regards to Article 8 or if there's ever something up for discussion, then yeah, it definitely is very impactful for us. And the same goes also I think for things like.

The yeah, the Vetilika. So for instance the ADFA so like RADAR anti-discrimination bureaus, it's in law it is it is a task from the to have one of these anti-discrimination services, yeah, this might change. They might change that it's not no longer a main attack or they might say it's all on a national level or. You know those things. So in that way it does in influence us.

Adham Aly 37:10

I understand. I'm gonna circle back a little bit. And by the way, we have a I have a follow up with Kekeli afterwards to discuss this, this wonderful conversation. So I'm actually looking forward for that too.

Respondent 37:27

You're like, oh, I can't wait to discuss all this.

Adham Aly 37:29

Can't wait to assess all the juices that you gave us. So we go back to the policy in itself and I'm going to give you just a brief idea of what we said. We said that the Samenleven is an incredibly. Comprehensive document. We have analyzed it based on a framework from a colleague. This framework basically assesses diversity policies on four main simple question. What? So what does it do? When does it do it? How does it do it and why does it do it?

And to make a Long story short, we say that the the Samenleven instead does incredibly well in in the in the why because we think that the problem statements are very much put forward and the idea of the Rotterdammer is is explained defended and it's idea of unity and the beauty of diversity and we believe it's a wonderful problem statement. We had some some great critical points on how concrete the policy was and we say basically the policy is so spread out that inevitably it cannot do it all and it lacks a bit of A concrete action plan, concrete timelines and also hard. What? Sorry.

Respondent 38:50

Not smart. It's not formulated smart, right?

Adham Aly 38:54

No, not at all. We basically said it. It misses some hard measures, let's say some direct measures. One school of thought says, well, the discrimination must be addressed in a soft and gradual way. And then another one says you must put in some sort of hard principles to avoid.

And to to counteract potential changes in society. Long story short, we say that the policy needs a bit more concreteness. How do you feel about this, this, this assessment?

Respondent 39:15

Yep. Yeah, no, I can totally understand that. And I think just a short while ago there was also a report by the Reichenkamer, which was mostly about to Hanklikheit, but they also.

Briefly assessed Oxyplan Samenleven and they said the same thing. So, I just said it's not formulated smart. I mean the SMART like the way of. Yeah, so I I'm not sure what it stands for, but all of these different things. So, one of them is obviously measuring like being able to measure your actions. I have very conflicting feelings about this because on the one hand, yeah, I think if you want, if you have a goal and if you formulated that goal, then you should have a very concrete plan of how you're going to get there and how you can measure how you're getting there and who are the stakeholders, who are the people that you do it for, you know, all of these, these very concrete things. I think, yeah, if you really want to get there, it's you have to be able to do that in a bit more concrete way.

But what we are seeing now is that we've called it an oxiplan rather than a blight stick or whatever, because we wanted to focus on actions and some of these actions that we have formulated. They have become a bit, a bit of, yeah, like I just said as well, like a

like a checkbox. And I think that's the risk as well. On the other hand, that we are still really, yeah, searching for a way to rather than just have a checkbox. Yeah, let it's like integrate into the entirety of the of the Gemeente.

Kekeli Ayivi 41:20

Can I ask on this point because you already mentioned data, what do you think is like the role of data in I guess like of measuring data, of measuring things and also acquiring this data in then influencing I guess like the next policy cycle or also just how you Report back to these individual teams about their progress or non-progress?

Respondent 41:43

I mean it's I think it's a sense it's a way to create urgency with these teams. So for instance if we get if there's research done I keep going back to sports but if there's research done about how exclusive being how.

There's a lot of discrimination, um, in uh, uh, sports organizations, for instance, or, you know, something like that. Then we can give that information back to our team in sports and we can say, listen, you really have to do something about this because.

You know, so and so. So it's a way to create urgency with different teams. I think that's working. I think right now it's mostly working on LGBT themes because that seems to, I don't know why, but in other teams it seems to land a little bit better.

Um, also I think maybe cause there's a lot of research about that and recently like there are the annual trackers of acceptance rates and uh discrimination cases and all of that. So there's quite a bit of data that we use in that regards.

And that for us also creates a sense of urgency. So if we see, yeah, that one thing is going really, really badly, then for us that's a stimulant to, yeah, intensify or focus towards that.

And with regards to policy making as well, like we obviously writing something down is also making choices about order and order is also sending a message to the people that read it. So for instance, if we start with LGBT as the first ground on which you can be discriminated, then that sends a message to the people that read it. So we don't, but yeah, we do make a decision in that as well. So we usually use data for that, those types of things as well.

Kekeli Ayivi 43:38

Yeah. So, would you think that certain areas would just need better or more data to be collected?

Respondent 43:47

Yeah, sometimes. Like for instance, something that we really lack inputs on which we don't, we don't just want to use, we obviously also wanted to use more qualitative data. Like there are certain groups that never reports. So for instance a lot of the anti-Chinese and anti-Asian discrimination that's in Rotterdam, it's definitely there, but we just didn't really have any view on it because they don't really go to reports or we don't. They don't, they don't scream as loud, basically, um, when they talk about their experiences. So now we also have City talks focused solely on, um, trying to get into contact with communities and that that usually don't report for instance. So, we are really trying to get all of the data so that we can also push that agenda forward to our Stewards, yeah. So it's really important, I think.

Adham Aly 44:57

You know, to add to this, I mean in the policy for example in in Section 4 you mentioned the need to measure diversity and safety and safety and social safety and I think going

back to the to the to writing it in the smart way in the in the sort of listen, the diversity policy, as you know, much better than us, Martha, because you are a policy advisor and we are not. It's not black and white. Nobody intended, but.

Respondent 45:25

Oh. Sorry, I lost you for a second.

Adham Aly 45:28

No, I was. I was saying, can you hear me now?

Respondent 45:31

Yeah.

Adham Aly 45:32

I was saying that as you know much better than us, policy and diversity policy is never just black and white, no pun intended. But what I thought was also missing a little bit is basically and and it goes back to what you said, the checklist thing. So it's difficult.

But how would you say, how would you assess the discrimination in the housing department or housing domain has improved in in three years? What is what would be a set of goals that you would have to or how can you go back and evaluate it?

That's also what we thought was a bit missing and I and I also understand that this is a huge mountain to climb. But this idea of a timeline and this idea of certain specific goals that you that you can go back to the limit and say this and this and this has been done, this not yet. So we need to work on that for example, but. I'm not sure what your what your thoughts are on something like this.

Respondent 46:22

Yeah, yeah. Like I said, I personally, I think it would be good to have this, if not in this policy document than elsewhere, which like in the background, we obviously do. We track all of these things, but we don't, we haven't formulated these things mostly in in all of the policy documents. Yeah, I think we could get a little bit more concrete about that. It would be good to know where you're going, like what? What are the specific goals?

Um, I'm not sure why we didn't, to be honest. I think you should ask one of the others, maybe.

Adham Aly 47:00

And I also understand it's, I mean on one hand I think it can also help your work and on the other hand it's it goes back for example to the quota conversation, right. So where do you where do you draw the line you know what is what is good inclusion and how do you standardize that but.

Respondent 47:16

Yeah, and I think it's it also gets a lot of critique because for instance, there is the checklist, which it's more of a wish, but it's the Reicher Borstenbus accords. I'm not sure if you're familiar. but it is a bit of a checklist with regards to LGBT inclusion actions. Um. Yeah, there are. There are also a lot of things that we can say we want, like for instance, we want. I don't know. We want at least one rainbow crossing whatever, right? But then if you if you say it like that, you get lots and lots and lots of critique. Not just political critique, but also from the city. Like why would you say you want at least one rainbow crossing, right? Like that's it's weird to put it like that or something. So a lot of that is also just, yeah.

You'd have, you'd have a very, very long list, I think of the things that we would want to do and then that also limits our team in what we can and can't do the sometimes if we phrase it a little bit broader, it's also easier for us to work within it.

Kekeli Ayivi 48:52

Yeah, I wanna come back. Sorry. Yeah, I would like to elaborate maybe a little bit on that if you can, because you brought up phrasing multiple times and I'm just wondering, I guess like how much do words matter? Because I'm wondering if you think that a different phrasing or maybe. Talking a little bit like around things and not naming them exactly specifically as you think, I guess if it can still achieve the same results on the back of that or if you think it even opens up like you just said like a little bit more like room for.

But I guess interpretation by the people that do it. But at the same time, on the other side, I wonder if it doesn't also give room to those that maybe don't really want to act on it or just, yeah, check it off and don't think about it again to then Not, yeah, go so deep into it.

Respondent 48:53

So, it's a yeah, it's a bit of both. Uhm I'm just trying to think what I wanted to say. I just had something in mind and now I kind of just escaped.

With regards to phrasing, yeah, so one of the discussions now is also how useful is being really specific, right? I am very much pro specific, so I think you should just mention what you're working on. And how you're working on it and all that. But I also know that there's a bit of a trend going where, yeah, inclusion policy is becoming a bit more policy based on Respect like using language like, oh, we respect everyone or, um, you should be able to be yourself or, you know, all of that. And we do use that language, but then we try to back it up with a bit more specific statements. Uh, I think it's very dangerous, honestly, to be that vague. Um.

But yeah, we do prepare for it just because we don't know what coalition will have next and we do still want to get money. So if we if we then say OK, so for instance one of the trends that I that I mentioned earlier is there's anti LGBT and especially anti-trans trends going on. Uh, it's one of the themes that I'm working on and it's something that worries us that we see obviously in the US that might travel to the Netherlands. Um, if it does, I on the one hand, I think we have to, you know, stick to what we write and say we're doing this and this and this, this for trans people. But then if we get a very right wing coalition next time and we have something in our policy that says we're doing this and this for trans people, we're not going to get money for that anymore. If we say everybody should be who they want or everybody should be who they are, I should be able to do that safely, then we can still get enough money to also work on trends safety, for instance.

So it yeah, it it's really, really complicated and we are really struggling as well right now like what is the best way to go about this? Because like I said, this is again the mid, the midsection in between, yeah, policy and politics I think. Thinking tactically, like, yeah, the choices that you make, what are the consequences of that? And if the consequence is we're not getting any money anymore from the next coalition for this theme, then I think we'd rather be a bit more vague. But yeah, personally, I think, I think it should be the best case scenario. We mention everything. We say everything we do for each and every single person. Yeah. But I think in reality, we also have to consider, yeah, the political side of it, yeah.

Adham Aly 53:18

Can we still 5 more minutes from you or do you have a meeting after this?

Respondent 53:24

Um, no. I think I don't have a meeting, so that's perfectly fine, yeah.

Adham Aly 53:27

OK, we have because uh, we have a few more question, but I'm gonna try to condense it.

I'm going to latch on to a few things that you said. For example, before when you were talking about the anti trends and you said that you mentioned you said this statement. Some topics just land better than others, some diversity, some discrimination. And I found this interesting because for instance, one of the studies that the Gemeente has commissioned that I'm working on is the Muslim discrimination.

Topic and the Muslim conversation, although is widely documented in police reports and other reports, that is one of the most pressing issues, does not seem to land as well as, for example, what you just mentioned before.

Why do you think that's the case? Is it situational to, for example, Muslim discrimination? What's your thoughts on this?

Respondent 54:40

I think. It's really it's I don't. I'm not sure if I can pinpoint it exactly. I was going to say I feel like some topics, so for instance, LGBT inclusion, they are in other teams they get more attention only because usually there's one person that thinks it's super important and has to include it in their in in their work, right. So it's it is dependent on what mostly one person in that team to drive that up with Muslim Discrimination. I think there are so many Muslim people working at the Gemeente, so that it would make a lot more sense if that was much bigger a topic in all of the different work fields. But I also think it's Maybe less Political. Um, so for instance Um, the political party like left wing, left wing political parties are a little bit less, outspoken about it. So LGBT issues are usually one of the first things that they'll um use as you know, or use. I that's very negatively, but they'll address and anti-Muslim behavior a lot less actually or discrimination. So I'm not sure where that comes from, but I also feel like within the organization if we're talking about all of these different teams.

Um, that um, Muslim people tend to just not really engage much. So where I think queer people might, um, speak out a lot about their rights and their treatments and all of that. I feel like Muslim people might do that a little less loud, which no judgment about that at all, but yeah.

Adham Aly 56:47

And could it be that they might, you know, sometimes you don't want to fight a certain battle because you don't want to become too loud, right? I mean, I see this in my office as well.

Respondent 56:59

Oh yeah, for sure. It's it might also be more dangerous. They might have more to lose. I think it's anti-Muslim behavior is also very normalized, so I think it might be a little a little more, a little bit harder to Pinpoint what exactly is um discrimination, whereas maybe with when you have discrimination um based on sexuality, it's a bit easier to pinpoint this is discrimination. Um yeah, I'm not sure it's it's yeah, pretty complex.

Adham Aly 57:36

I understand. I understand. And as we go towards the end, we want to try to respect your time. Few more questions. Feel free to last one about concreteness. At some point in the study, for example, you and your colleagues mentioned that.

The municipality will stop working with an organization for five years if they are deemed or judged that they have partaken in discriminatory behavior. This is exactly the sort of very concrete things that that are not super spreading in the in the in the in the policy.

We liked it a lot. And I'm looking at you nodding. It seems that you liked it as well. Um, but it oh, or maybe not. Go on, go on.

Respondent 58:17

No, I like it. I think it's good. But I don't think in practice it makes a lot of difference because there are hardly any organizations ever that that hear from a judge that they have acted discriminatory. So in reality, yes, it is very concrete.

But in practice it does not matter as much than some of the other points.

Adham Aly 58:38

OK, I understand. And then this speaks a little bit on the hardship of writing very concrete, let's say action points, but few last questions. One of them is about.

Collaboration. The team, the Gemeente is huge. You talk with a lot of folks also outside city talks, talks with other organizations.

What we were wondering is also one, do you think the municipality could have taken a more leading role in the process? Because in a few statements in the policy you say the municipality does not have capacity to do to affect too much. So, we use the help of others and we wondered are is the municipality giving too much?

Responsibility to the city and to the citizens and to the to third party actors. Or how do you deal with this complexity of collaborating inside and outside?

Respondent 59:39

Um. Yeah, that's it's a very difficult question, I think. Is the Gemeente giving too much responsibility to people themselves? That's a political choice, I think, with regards to how active Gemeente should be in the lives of the of the people that live there.

Yeah. One of the things that we do get is money. So we can distribute that money to facilitate other organizations to do it. So in that sense, we do give the Font word guides.

Not sure. Yeah, you understand what I mean. The font were like to other organizations, but we do pay for it. So that's one way to do it, I think.

Adham Aly 1:00:24

Thanks. Right, right, right, right.

Yeah. Last question for me, maybe then I if there's one thing that Kekeli wants to ask and then back to you, if there's anything that we missed, what's next? We are halfway through the policy you were, you mentioned before between the lines that you're already thinking of the next step of writing something new because the Seven onward policy will be written, I guess in the next few years. Um, what's next for the the for the inclusivity team?

Respondent 1:01:03

Well, we just had a Fortran Robertage evaluation. It should have been published or published. It should have been going gone through the in October that I think it happened in February, so. That's the speed of the domains, which by now we also means that we're almost ready to start another round of evaluation in October, before October. So that's the next round and we'll see how everything stands then.

And at the same time, we are looking for, yeah, really, really broadly still. But yeah, the future of this, this theme, the future of this policy, whether or not it should be, we should try and find a way to.

Maybe embedded more in different teams or stick to this one team that we are now or. But yeah, those conversations are still very, very early on, so can't really say too much about that actually.

Adham Aly 1:02:13

I understand. OK. Is there anything last that you want to ask?

Kekeli Ayivi 1:02:16

Yeah, yeah. Maybe kind of to round it up, but there's two kind of things that I wanted to touch on. 1st is a little bit looking like back in the past to how it has evolved now and then maybe to the future. Like for me, what I'm wondering is a little bit the switch from Rotterdam Against Racism, which you already talked about was also Within the Relax This is Rotterdam framework, yeah, that was maybe not so concrete, but the Rotterdam Against Racism add-on as we understood it was very explicitly an anti-racist framework, you could say, versus now like kind of the move a little bit more towards like.

Diversity and social cohesion, maybe you can touch a little bit on that. And then if you want to just round it up by also saying where I think, where do you think it should move? Also maybe touching on the feedback that you get from the Gemeente rat. Sorry if I pronounced that very wrong. Because you've been saying that you've been getting like the same feedback again and again.

Respondent 1:03:18

Your first question, I'm not sure if I can answer that really because I wasn't really involved with the previous policy or the add-on at all. It's just what I've known from like reading about it and hearing my colleagues talk about it. So it's I think that's probably a question better suited for other colleagues.

Have worked on this a bit longer and your second question.

It was where we shouldn't, where I think we should move towards a little bit, right?

Based also on the feedback that we've been getting.

Kekeli Ayivi 1:03:54

Yes. Exactly.

Respondent 1:03:59

Yeah, I have, I have a hard time answering that one as well because I think we should be, I think it would be good if we became a bit more concrete and we attached really goals and ways to get to those goals and like a time path and everything to all of the actions that we That we are doing now and then some, but also yeah, we are only a team of eight, so it's also heavy workload. So with that in mind, I would like to do not more, but then yeah, obviously if we would get more colleagues and yeah.

Definitely do more. The feedback that we that we get from the and the questions that we get from the, I have a little bit conflicted feelings about that because.

As important as the things are that they say, they also say them every year, and a lot of them are also their framework that we should try not to be too sensitive for, I think. So obviously they are different, so they're chosen and everything, so that's.

Obviously very important to take with us. Um, but there are just some things that the gemeente can do or that the gemeente doesn't influence that much. And one of those things, for instance, is is the police. Um, yeah, we get, we get time and time again, we get the feedback on how the police themselves are racist and how the policy or organization is racist inherently and all of that. And that's it's important to take with us and we do have like good contacts with police, so we try to help them where they can,

but in the end it's not our main, area where we can make change. So a lot of the things are also the a lot of the things that political parties say are also sometimes, for the stage, yeah. And a lot of things that that we time and time again we get that white people are not represented enough. So for instance, Leifbar Rotterdam will say, oh, and what about the white people? What about the older people that that feel pushed away from their homes? And that's all very important. But we are talking about anti-discrimination. So while we do try and build some space for that, that also I my own personal opinion is we shouldn't really focus too much on that. But it's always, yeah, we hear it. And sometimes we also just have to, yeah, leave it. Yeah. But yeah, that depends.

Adham Aly 1:06:51

Thank you. Thank you very much. And before I completely thank you, is there anything that we missed that we should include for our next talks with others or was this already a lot of questions?

Respondent 1:07:04

Um, no. I mean, amount of questions is fine. I just talked very long. Um. I'm not sure. I feel like I have. I feel like the others might be more able to tell you if they want to talk to you, that is, but they might be able to tell you a bit more about the. Yeah, the reasons why certain phrasing, phrasing or the reason why, yeah, certain things are and aren't done. So for instance, measuring and those questions, those are really good questions. I just don't really have the answer as to why we haven't written it like that. So that might be a good. Question for uh, one of the others if you speak to them. Um, yeah. Other than that, I'm not sure.

Adham Aly 1:07:54

Yeah. Well. First of all, I cannot thank you enough. I I will be looking up all of your colleagues if I can find them online to to message them. I think there should be a page with all of your names somewhere online, but although I haven't found it yet, but maybe you can direct me there.

Respondent 1:08:08

Mhm. Not sure.

Adham Aly 1:08:18

If you can send me the evaluation, that would be great if it's public, if it's shareable. But besides that, me and Kekeli, I think is speaking, speaking for her too, cannot thank you enough for this wonderful conversation. It sets the the mood for the upcoming ones starting September and.

I will also send you the transcript and I'm sure that maybe he came up because she will be traveling a little bit, but I will see you again in the next meetings with and we can have a follow up coffee about this conversation, yeah.

Respondent 1:08:46

Absolutely. Perfect. OK. Well, thank you guys so much.

Kekeli Ayivi 1:08:51

Yes, it was so nice to meet you. Have a nice day. Thank you.

Respondent 1:08:54

Enjoy your summer. Bye.